Mediating Transitions

Local Radio and the Negotiations of Citizenship in Rural Nepal

Jacob Thorsen

Mediating transitions: local radio and the negotiations of citizenship in rural Nepal
By Jacob Thorsen

A dissertation submitted to the Faculty of Arts, Aarhus University, for the award of a Doctor of Philosophy degree in Media Studies at the Department of Aesthetics and Communication.

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Cover photo by Jacob Thorsen, 2010.

Content

List of Abbreviations

ACORAB	Association of Community Radio Broadcasters Nepal
AM	Amplitude Modulation
BBC	British Broadcasting Service
B&C	Bahuns and Chhetries
CRSC	Community Radio Support Centre
DAO	District Administration Office
DFID	Department For International Development
FNJ	Federation of Nepali Journalists
FM	Frequency Modulation
HUGOU	Human Rights Good Governance Programme
HURAC	Human Rights Awareness Centre
ICG	International Crisis Group
ICT	Information and Communication Technology
INSEC	Informal Sector Service Centre
NC	Nepali Congress
NGO	Non-Governmental Organisation
NPI	Nepali Press Institute
PAMP	Poor And Marginalised People
SLC	School Leaving Certificate
SMS	Short Message Service
VDC	Village Development Committee
UML	United Marxist Leninist
UN	United Nations
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UNESCO	United Nations Educational, Scientific, Cultural Organisation
YCL	Young Communist League (Maoist youth wing)

List of Figures

List of Tables

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English Abstract

Within the last decades, Nepal has experienced significant political, socio-economic, cultural and technological changes. Two succeeding people's movements in 1990 and 2006 respectively broke with centuries of systemic caste-based discrimination and paved the way for the entry of independent media and new actors in civil society, backed up by newly granted civil rights and freedom of speech. In the context of such significant changes this thesis sets out to examine how notions of citizenship are negotiated by means of local radio in rural Nepal. With a focus on poor and marginalised people (PAMP), this thesis examines how PAMP engage with local radio to negotiate and articulate everyday practices of citizenship.

On the basis of data obtained through a mixed methodological approach (qualitative interviews and quantitative survey) over a two-year period (2009-2010), this study reveals the intricate complexities of the transitions taking place in contemporary Nepal. In particular, the study shows how PAMP in rural Nepal are experiencing simultaneous multiple transitions (from war to peace, autocracy to democracy and from subjects to citizens) and critically presents in detail the ways and extent to which local radio is appropriated by PAMP to negotiate, articulate and shape the emerging experiences and aspirations with different notions of citizenship.

By focusing on citizenship and being a citizen as a produced and negotiated notion that goes beyond the commonly used *de jure* framework, this study contributes with insights on how local radio has helped to shed light on local spaces of decision-making and influence, as well as the subtle and much more incremental acts that increase PAMP's room for manoeuvre in times of political transition. Overall, the thesis provides a contextually informed empirical basis for critiquing the prevailing 'media optimism' that tends to predominate discourses about the relationship between media and processes of social change in post-conflict societies.

Dansk resumé

Inden for de seneste årtier har Nepal oplevet betydelige politiske, socioøkonomiske, kulturelle og teknologiske forandringer. To folkelige opstande i henholdsvis 1990 og 2006 brød med århundreders systemisk kastebaseret diskrimination og banede vejen for etableringen af uafhængige medier og nye aktører i civilsamfundet. Disse blev understøttet af nytildelte borgerrettigheder og en grundlovssikret ytringsfrihed. I forbindelse med disse væsentlige omvæltninger undersøger denne afhandling, hvordan forestillinger om medborgerskab forhandles ved hjælp af lokalradio i landområder i Nepal. Med fokus på fattige og marginaliserede befolkningsgrupper undersøges, hvordan disse befolkningsgrupper engagerer sig med lokalradio for at forhandle og formulere hverdagspraksisser for medborgerskab.

Med afsæt i data indsamlet ved en blandet metodisk tilgang (kvalitative interviews og en kvantitativ spørgeskemaundersøgelse) over en toårig periode (2009-2010), viser denne afhandling de komplekse overgange, der finder sted i Nepal. Især viser undersøgelsen, hvordan fattige og marginaliserede befolkningsgrupper i landområder i Nepal oplever samtidige forskellige overgange (fra krig til fred, autokrati til demokrati og fra undersåt til medborger), og afhandlingen præsenterer i detaljer, hvordan og i hvilket omfang lokalradio er relevant for fattige og marginaliserede befolkningsgruppers forhandling, formulering og skabelse af nye erfaringer og ønsker i forbindelse med disse befolkningsgruppers forskellige opfattelser af medborgerskab.

Ved at fokusere på medborgerskab og det at være en medborger som et konstrueret og forhandlet begreb, der går ud over den almindeligt anvendte *de jure* tilgang, bidrager denne undersøgelse med indsigter i, hvordan lokalradio kan være med til at kaste lys over lokale rum for indflydelse og hvor beslutninger træffes, samt de mere subtile og gradvise handlinger der øger fattige og marginaliserede befolkningsgruppers spillerum i en tid med politiske overgange. Samlet set giver afhandlingen et empirisk grundlag for kritik af den fremherskende 'medieoptimisme', der har tendens til at dominere diskurser om forholdet mellem medier og sociale forandringsprocesser i et post-konflikt samfund.

1. Introduction

My first visit to Rolpa district was in the summer of 2008. There is only one road connecting the district capital Libang in the hills in Nepal's Mid-Western region with the main highway going east-west through all of Nepal's southern lowlands, Terai. I recall leaving Butwal (a large town in the southern plains of Terai) early in the morning and arriving in Libang some twelve hours later, exhausted from having spent most of the day on a scary, zigzag, dusty and bumpy road. Fall 2010 was the last time I visited Rolpa, and travelling to Libang was still a fascinating experience but this time much more comfortable. Although the journey still had all the zigzags, this time the road had been nicely blacktopped and consequently the overall time of my journey was nearly cut in half, giving me sufficient time to take a nice walk around the bazaar in Libang in the afternoon.

As infrastructure has improved in the past few years, giving new and more efficient avenues for interaction, the media landscape in Rolpa has likewise changed dramatically in this short span of time. On my first visit to Rolpa, the only local media available was the fortnightly print magazine *Rolpa Awaj* (the voice of Rolpa). There were no local electronic mass media, and mobile phones were scarce although increasing in number. At my last visit in Fall 2010, Rolpa Awaj was still there, and, in addition, there were two local radio stations on-air, a local cable television provider and a public cyber café in the bazaar. I also noticed an increasing number of satellite dishes on the rooftops and it seemed as if mobile phones were in the hands of almost everybody. In the bazaar, there were several new shops providing all kinds of media devices and fancy phone gadgets.

I was especially amazed to experience how radio broadcasting so quickly had gained popularity among the Rolpali audience, the rural population in particular, who in so many other aspects of life seems to have been left behind and cut off from access to basic needs. Experiencing the drastic changes of radio's acceptability in Rolpa gave me flashbacks to my first hand experiences from when I lived in Nepal and worked as a media advisor with a local radio between 2004–2008. These recollections also made me take stock of Nepal's remarkable public broadcasting story that commenced with *Radio Sagarmatha* in 1997. As the first independent radio broadcaster in Nepal and the South Asia region, Radio Sagarmatha broke away from forty-six years of monopoly of the state-run Radio Nepal, which served as the central mouthpiece of state and royal ideology during the monarchical *Panchayat era* (1960-1990).

Since the emergence of Radio Sagarmatha, there has been a remarkable growth of independent radio stations that have provided important communicative avenues; both as means for struggle to safeguard press freedom and democracy, as well as important means for communication in a country with high illiteracy. Throughout the 1996-2006 armed conflict, many radio stations performed a vital role resolving the conflict and have thus to many become the symbol of free speech and the new democratic Nepal. In general, programmes from these radio stations are recognised as different compared to the state-run Radio Nepal and many connote independent radio with 'FM', simply referring to technical specifications and the bandwidth they are broadcasting on in contrast to Radio Nepal that uses the AM bandwidth. In contrast to Radio Nepal's association with 'the establishment', immediacy, directness and transparency are often attributed to FM radio, presuming this voice to be a neutral indicator of presence, consciousness and agency, which are key aspects of modern discourse on democracy that has characterised Nepal since the reestablishment of democracy in 1990 (Kunreuther 2010).

While I lived in Nepal, I saw how freedom of speech and the Nepali media in February 2005 was threatened when king Gyanendra suspended the constitution and assumed direct authority, as he commanded the army to seize radio stations, newspaper offices, server rooms of internet providers, cable operators and television stations. All communication by mobile telephones was ceased, the landlines were annulled, news was not allowed to be broadcast on radio, and television and print media were censored. It was a total information shutdown, and I remember standing on the rooftop of my home in Butwal with a satellite phone communicating with my family in Denmark and colleagues in Kathmandu about the very delicate and extraordinary situation and with a strange feeling that I was one of the few able to communicate

electronically, besides the army and Maoists. ZNet Asia issued a report about the situation on February 3, 2005:

> The following report was brought out by courier from Kathmandu, where all communication with the outside world is cut off, except from satellite telephones and internet connections mostly controlled by embassies. The general public had no access to communication with the outside world from 10 AM on 1 February 2005 until at least 7PM on 2 February 2005. All domestic telephones are also shut off, both mobile and land lines. People are travelling from one place to another to communicate.[1]

Television and phones were up and running one-two weeks later, and the newspapers gradually started testing the boundaries of censorship. However, the military paid special attention the radio stations. The king had noticed how the radio stations could influence public opinion, and the army was thus deployed to secure control at all means. Minister of Information Tanka Dhakal lectured publicly on how news is not allowed on radio anywhere in the world,[2] and that the radio stations therefore were not allowed to broadcast news, only music. Station managers knew this was bizarre, but with the soldiers present at the radio premises they had to follow orders.

To challenge the oppressors, radio reporters, activists and producers got together and set up the *Save Independent Radio Movement* (SIRM)[3] in resistance of the junta. Innovative means were used to follow the orders not to broadcast news but only music. I participated in some of the SIRM meetings, and I remember hearing accounts of how humour and satire were used by some to test the regime. Some radio stations brought their studios outside their premises and read the news aloud every evening until large crowds started to assemble and the news reading ritual itself became a form of protest. Other radio stations sang the news in traditional Nepalese folk music (*Lok Geet*), while other radio stations broadcast laments at midday.[4]

The creative ways of fighting the regime continued for months, and as the journalists and managers gradually built their confidence, they eventually took the case to the

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[1] http://archives.econ.utah.edu/archives/marxism/2005w05/msg00287.html [checked August 15, 2012]
[2] www.nepalitimes.com.np/issue/2005/08/05/Headline/664 [checked August 15, 2012]
[3] http://asiapacific.amarc.org/index.php?p=Support_Nepal_Radio&l=EN [checked August 15, 2012]
[4] www.ifj.org/en/articles/nepalese-government-stands-by-new-media-restrictions--1?format=print [checked August 15, 2012]

Supreme Court. In a groundbreaking verdict on August 2005, the Supreme Court proclaimed that news should be permitted on radio.[5]

In this period, people's anger against the king's direct authority started to spread to the streets. As the protests accumulated strength, I remember the radio station I worked at had wide coverage of the different pro-democracy events taking place in the district and broadcast studio discussions, voxpops and phone-in programmes so that the protests got extensive coverage. I recall cycling to work February-March 2006, watching happy and enthusiastic people on their way to and from different demonstrations in different parts of the district. The local radio stations played a major role in ensuring that the audience was informed about the various demonstrations organised around the district, and this gave a wide scope to the leaders of the democratic movement as they could coordinate protests in the district and nationwide, which all helped to amplify the impact. When demonstrators in one part of the country heard that others were defying tear gas and the curfews, they did the same. The media followed the different pro-democracy events, as the movement in the early months of 2006 gradually gained momentum in the streets of Kathmandu, and while television was popular in the urban areas, it was radio that brought coverage of the protests to especially those areas of the country where television and newspapers had less reach and to sections of the population without electricity or literacy.

By mid-April, it became obvious that the king and his accomplices had lost control. Thousands of people were marching to Kathmandu despite curfews and orders to shoot demonstrators. Likewise, in the district capitals throughout the country there were daily demonstrations in sympathy with the events in Kathmandu. The nationwide demonstration was now referred to as *Jana Andolan II* (the second people's movement), and as the protesters planned to launch another series of even more massive protests and it became clear that the masses ultimately planned to storm the palace, on April 24, 2006 king Gyanendra gave in and announced that he was willing to restore the parliament. The king's withdrawal came too late and a seven party alliance together with the Maoists (SPA) reached an agreement to end the decade-old conflict and restore peace through a six-point agreement.[6] Since this moment, Nepal has experienced a dramatic transformation of state structure. The king is no longer supreme commander of the army and royal succession is now to be determined by the parliament as Nepal has been declared a secular republic.

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[5] www.dailytimes.com.pk/default.asp?page=story_12-8-2005_pg4_19 [checked August 15, 2012]

[6] www.satp.org/satporgtp/countries/nepal/document/papers/spa_maoists_agr.htm [checked December 1, 2012]

During this political transition, local radio brought the news from Kathmandu to the remote rural areas that returned with feedback and reactions. Broadcasting networks facilitated this public horizontal nationwide two-way conversation between the centre and periphery. As coined by Kanak Mani Dixit, a prominent Kathmandu intellectual and editor of *Himal South Asia* while in prison for participating in the second people's movement: 'A voiceless people discovered the power of speech; they developed a confidence unprecedented in their history'.[7] Over the past fifteen years after independent radio went on-air with Radio Sagarmatha for the first time, local radio broadcasting in Nepal has become a mainstream phenomenon that continues to contribute to the creation of public spaces underpinning the political transition. Today, with peace and democracy restored, there are now issued 380 licenses of which 319 are on-air (Infosaid 2011: 12), and they are all perceived to be important in raising awareness (*Cetna Uthaune*), facilitating dialogue and expanding public spaces to create conditions for democracy and development to thrive, also encompassing the *poor and marginalised people* (PAMP) that normally have been outside the radar of social, economic and political influence. In the course of this development, voice has been figuratively invoked in discussions about the promises of democracy and transparent government and is often used as a metaphor to describe consciousness and empowerment (Kunreuther 2006), particularly among the groups of people who have not been effectively represented in politics and history. Local radio supposedly conveys an alternative notion of citizenship by emphasising equality and countering the caste and gender hierarchies that still structure social life in many parts of the country. So besides having a central role during the war and the second people's movement, there is the expectation that local radio can re-establish a sense of belonging and facilitate citizenship negotiations, encompassing PAMP, that can contribute to national development required to foster change in this period during democratic transition after the war (Onta 2009: 354). Given these developments are fairly recent, so far this has been based on assumptions rather than actual assessments of PAMP's experiences and aspirations, and the ideals guiding their future becoming and the processes through which these are produced.

Sharma and Donini (2010: i) argue that 'the combination (and sometimes competition) of the political agency work of the Maoists and social development work of civil society organisations has resulted in historical transformation of consciousness'. Moreover, they argue that the present transition in rural Nepal is more about the 'symbolic and

[7] www.thedailystar.net/2006/04/30/d604301501108.htm [checked August 15, 2012]

awareness' aspects of social relations and less about changing actual structural conditions. Whether this holds true for PAMP is less clear, as research exploring PAMP's lives and the role of local radio broadcasting in the present transition is limited, given that the tremendous growth in the number and popularity of local radio stations is recent - and the significant socio-economic, political and cultural transformations in Nepal are currently unfolding as Nepal's constitution is up for discussion and is being redrafted.

Against a background understanding of the central role that the media played during Nepal's tumultuous years as discussed above, the recent growth in the number and popularity of local radio stations, alongside the current significant political and socio-economic transformations in Nepal, provide the opportunity to critically examine how Nepalese in general and PAMP in particular (re)think values and notions related to citizenship and in what ways these are influenced by and negotiated through local radio.

2. Research Objective

In a Nepalese context, descriptions and experiences of PAMP rely primarily on caste and on gender. In Chapter 4 I provide a more thorough discussion on how gender and caste relations are constructed and re-constructed in a context of social networks, families as well as the towns and villages within which individuals reside. What is important to highlight here, however, is that PAMP in this thesis is perceived emically and etically to capture both how PAMP themselves talks about caste and gender and, moreover, to describe how everyday practices take place within a context of status and inequality. I am thus not only concerned with rules, regulations and norms of social positions and categorisations but also with how PAMP act and negotiate social change from their position through reproduction, reinterpretation and resistance. In this regard, communication is perceived both as a tool and a as way of negotiating and articulating processes of social change and empowering people to influence their own lives and those of their fellow community members (Hemer & Tufte 2005: 11). Local radio is a means for articulating and translating processes of social and political changes into everyday practices, and it thus constitutes a main entry point into research on how political transitions affect ideals of citizenship. Based on studies of PAMP and their mediated and non-mediated civic and political engagement in the Rolpa district in Nepal during times of political transition, the main objective of this research is to explore how notions of citizenship are negotiated by means of local radio in rural Nepal.

To do so, the study addresses two main debates in the literature. One is the literature on the role of local radio encouraging social change, providing news and information relevant to the needs of PAMP, engaging members in public discussion and contributing to their social and political empowerment in democratic transition. This is

linked to another debate on PAMP's lives and their future aspirations to make the point that PAMP not only apply local radio in their struggle for social change, but appropriate multiple sources to orient themselves towards immediate and imagined futures. In this study, I attempt to show that through a focus on everyday practices and PAMP's appropriation of ideals and formulation of future aspirations, it is possible to come to contextualised conclusions about the changing prospects of PAMP and local radio during times of democratic transitions and about how PAMP negotiate notions of citizenship in these processes.

Analytically, PAMP are thus central subjects of this study; local radio is an important institution that facilitates negotiations; and citizenship is what connects them analytically to the changing political context. This leads to the following research questions, which also structure the thesis:

I. What are the historical traces that define the present state of local radio broadcasting, political transition and ideals for citizenship in rural Nepal?
II. How are ideals and practices of citizenship conveyed through local radio broadcasting, and how are these appropriated by PAMP?
III. How are PAMP's future aspirations formed during political transitions, and in what ways do PAMP negotiate these aspirations?

The study takes place in the immediate years after the armed conflict in a period of peace. In combination with the transition from war to peace, since the end of the war in 2006 Nepal has undergone a political transition with major events that influence the shaping of ideals of citizenship in this transitional period: the end of 238 years of monarchy and the initiation of an on-going process of redefining the new republic of Nepal, including the writing of a new constitution. Both the coming of peace and the political transition have implications for PAMP and how they perceive themselves as citizens; both providing them with a future, but also making them aware of the fact that even fundamentals like the monarchy can change. These political changes have occurred in parallel with an unprecedented growth of independent local radio stations throughout the country that have transformed the media landscape completely.

2.1 PAMP in Times of Transition and the Influence of Local Radio

Transitions are thus central in contemporary Nepal and in this study transitions are not only perceived as movements between past, present and future, but, moreover, as

movements towards a future, which is 'not yet there' and is therefore built on assumptions and the hope of what is to come (Bloch in Nielsen 1982). Bloch (ibid.) asserts that political transitions are fertile conditions for generating hope and utopian thinking. To understand transitions, whether personal or political, and the extent to which transitions nurture changes, we need to explore what hopes and aspirations are put into the transition. For example, the assumption that communication is both a tool and a way of articulating processes of social change and empowering people to influence their own lives and those of their fellow community members, builds on the kind of hope that Webb (2007: 71) calls 'critical open-ended hope'. Such hopes concentrate on a transition *away* from a present condition, 'negating the negative', which is a strong motivation for PAMP in Nepal, where abolishing earlier oppression and inequalities are fundamental issues of change. If hope and aspirations are directive of transitions, PAMP's aspirations can potentially denote what they may become as citizens.

PAMP's transitions are likely to reveal continuities and ruptures in both ideals and practice. The reason is that to challenge norms and practices and to inherit them are part of the same token (Bloch in Nielsen 1982: 61). This study thus focuses on citizenship and being a citizen as a produced and negotiated notion, and thereby reaches beyond the commonly used *de jure* understanding applied by conventional state-centred approaches (Kabeer 2005), as I understand the transition in which PAMP negotiate notions of citizenship as a specific process interlinking personal and political transitions. Therefore, if it is the future, and not only the past (history, structure, norms), that directs the present, then PAMP's hopes and aspirations, their perceptions of the political future, are all central to understand. In analysing aspirations, I thus look for continuities as well as ruptures, as one always cultivates the other (ibid.), as both are jointly constitutive of personal, political and social transitional processes.

This thesis is engaged with two interrelated bodies of research, as it both aims to contribute to debates on the role of local radio in a country in democratic transition *and* how PAMP negotiate barriers and possibilities in their attempt to shape their everyday lives and potential futures. Many of the local radio stations in Nepal have emerged within the last few years in rural locations that previously have not been exposed to local electronic media. The study thus critically assesses the role of local radio stations and examines how they are incorporated into the lives of PAMP. It further questions the assumptions underlying both academics' and practitioners' arguments that local radio is central to the formation of citizenship in countries in democratic transition (e.g.

Sein and Harindrath 2004).[8] Such assumptions constitute what I call 'media optimism'. In some studies, it has been argued that radios tend to reproduce inequalities, and in post conflict situations it risks sustaining the conditions that led to the conflict (e.g. Strauss 2007). Moreover, as Bailur (2007) shows in her study of community radio and ICT in India, media intervention is a complex and contradictory resource and provides next to nothing in terms of improving life possibilities. Based on this, understanding citizenship negotiations thus calls for an analysis of whether local radio challenges the underlying inequalities in the Nepalese society, especially caste and gender inequalities in my study area, and whether new norms and ideals are introduced, and, furthermore, what ideals are initiated and how these ideals are introduced.

A second and related body of literature that the study draws on and aims to contribute to concerns PAMP, especially in countries in democratic transition. Much literature and donor assessment reports have focused on how PAMP negotiate barriers and possibilities in their attempts to shape their everyday lives and potential futures. Many of these findings are pessimistic, providing accounts of impossible lives for PAMP without a future (e.g. Bhattarai 2003, Pokharel & Carter 2004: 65). As this study focuses on citizenship and being a citizen as a produced and negotiated notion, local radio is perceived as a means for articulating, facilitating and translating political changes into everyday life. The combined focus of PAMP and local radio adds an alternative perspective to the understanding of PAMP in a country undergoing democratic transition. And to underpin my analysis, I develop an analytical framework allowing for a contextual analysis of PAMP, local radio and citizenship. Within this framework, I include ideals of citizenship and future aspirations to provide new insights for understanding how notions of citizenship are negotiated by the means of local radio.

2.2 Structure

To unravel my research questions, I have designed the research into four sections. Part I, *Initiations*, introduces the research and the analytical and methodological framework. Part II, *Context*, centres on the past and contextualises the research historically. Part III, *Everyday Citizenship*, explores the present by concentrating on local radio broadcasting and audiences' appropriation of citizenship ideals. Part IV, *Future Citizens*, involves

[8] The need to support free media is internationally acknowledged. Danish development assistance is an example of the increased bilateral focus on media and local radio in particular, not least in the programme country Nepal.

PAMP's direction towards the future and their understandings of the political transition and their role in it, their future aspirations and, in conclusion, their becoming citizens.

Part I: Initiations.
In Chapter 3, 4, 5 and 6, I outline my analytical method, drawing on Bourdieu and the concept of habitus, along with the concept of negotiations to reveal how PAMP are guided by their agency and influenced by structural constraints. I develop an analytical framework incorporating literature on PAMP, local radio broadcasting and citizenship. This enables me to examine PAMP as being embedded in particular social and cultural conditions, the transformation of ideals fostered by the means of local radio broadcasting and the day-to-day strategies of PAMP's appropriation of notions of citizenship.

In Chapter 7, I outline the methodological ramifications of my analytical framework. I review my case selection, asserting that, though not generalizable, it offers crucial knowledge on several points, including insights on an often overseen group of rural, non-spectacular PAMP and their creation of ideals of citizenship and aspirations during political transition through the influence of local radio. I also contemplate the semi-ethnographic methods applied in order to acquire information. Lastly, I examine the effects of my position as a researcher who has been working in this field in Nepal and how this may have affected my position as a researcher.

Part II: Context.
Chapter 8 considers the national level of my area of study. It presents the ramifications of the past sixty years of media policies and nation-state citizenship ideals in order to comprehend the things that today influence the formation of citizens by means of radio broadcasting. I scrutinize the ways in which alterations of political authorities have affected media regulations and radio broadcasting and the notions about nation and citizenship. The chapter, moreover, reveals how the Maoist uprising, the war and the ensuing political transition have tested prevalent citizenship ideals and furnished other options.

Chapter 9 zooms into the local level. It offers an assessment of the way in which media and local radio emerged in Rolpa and examines the impacts of the recent war and the present political transition. This includes a study of the ways in which PAMP are perceived by the two local radio stations and the radio stations' multiple ritualising and structuring procedures along with their use of persuasive communication. Aside from that, the chapter assesses how radio broadcasting and local life have been influenced by

war and peace and how historically composed power structures of caste and gender structure social life and PAMP's everyday lives. Lastly, the chapter provides a number of essential understandings about the two local radio stations as well as the town and the villages in which data for the empirical material has been gathered. This is all necessary in order to commence the analysis.

Part III: Everyday Citizenship.

In Chapter 10, I study the discursive and non-discursive facets of PAMP's daily lives. I assert that PAMP's appropriations of the apparently oppressive customs are not just to be deemed at face value. Their genuine appropriation affirms that PAMP are capable of reinterpreting strategies and turning situations in a constructive direction. Additionally, I pay attention to distinct ideals of equality, which are transmitted by the radio stations that challenge the fundamental conditions underpinning the war and the caste and gender power structures. I analyse these representations in radio programmes alongside PAMP's appropriations of the ideals concerning caste and gender-specific issues. Inequalities and discrimination continue to persist in social life in the area of the study, despite the fact that, simultaneously, the radio stations are confronting these oppressive structures. I demonstrate how PAMP, whatever their caste or gender background, strongly assert their support for equality. PAMP's everyday practices, nonetheless, are influenced by space; for instance, in the villages and the bazaar separation as well as discrimination remain, and PAMP may well, in fact, participate in replicating the inequalities, notwithstanding that this is contrary to their values. They do so in order to negotiate between what is feasible in the immediate present, where the older generations are likely to determine and also reinforce social conventions, along with what they envision in a future, which, in particular, the younger generation tends to define on their own.

Part IV: Future Citizens.

In Chapter 11, I assess PAMP's perception of the political situation, especially their understanding of the 2006 people's movement and the New Nepal; of democracy and their own individual role in it. I demonstrate how PAMP's political ideals have been formed by the influence of Maoists' counter-hegemonic ideals and a vigorous collective sense of obligation and responsibility to contribute to the making of a 'New Nepal.' The chapter, for that reason, looks into PAMP's aspirations with regard to the transitional state as well as their own personal role in it. I review PAMP's individual aspirations with regard to the future, and, based on vignettes, I demonstrate how aspirations reveal solid collective alignments, despite the fact that these are individually formed in complex structures and processes of influences in each individual's life. Many PAMP express optimism and confidence in their capacity to make a difference in the future, even despite day-to-day encounters of discrimination, uncertainty, absence of development, as well as 'false' promises made by the politicians. PAMP aspire to multiple forms of capital amongst which some are motivated by local radio.

Chapter 12 then wraps up the research around the three points concerning my research questions. This includes a discussion of PAMP and local radio broadcasting as platforms for change on the basis of past formations, the distinct features and possibilities emerging in times of transitions, and lastly my analytical combination of PAMP, radio broadcasting and citizenship, paying attention to the mediated and non-mediated ideals and aspirations that have influenced the formation of citizens in transitional conditions. Past developments, current experiences and practices, along with future expectations and aspirations, all influence PAMP as citizens, which is why their citizenship negotiations are characterised by both continuities and marked ruptures with historical and institutional ideals. Revisiting my analytical approach that concentrates on negotiations, I conclude that citizenship negotiations occur in a continual oscillation of negotiations towards an immediate and imagined future. PAMP's appropriations of citizenship ideals, day-to-day practices and future aspirations inform PAMP's negotiations towards an envisioned future, which is where we find the prospects of placing PAMP in a sense of optimism and adherence to collective social responsibility.

PART I: INITIATIONS

3. Analysing PAMP, Local Radio and Citizenship

This research is concerned with PAMP and local radio as means to facilitate citizenship negotiations during a time of political transitions. As this research is situated within different subfields, to set up the ways into which PAMP, local radio and citizenship interlink in practice and analytically, I establish a method wherein I integrate various theoretical tools in the analysis. In the opening chapter, I placed the research within the existing literature on local radio and PAMP in a country undergoing democratic transition and justified the significance of pursuing this research. Now, I focus my attention on unravelling my analytical approach, which entails explaining what influenced me to pursue this research and accounting for the analytical framework composed of the three elements, namely PAMP, local radio and citizenship. These are combined in an analytical nexus,[9] as they overlap and are mirrored in one another. Initially, I examine PAMP and their concurrent existence of struggles, negotiations and conditions. Subsequently, I examine local radio as a media and an institution in PAMP's lives that influences their insights. Finally, I relate these processes through the concept of citizenship, where I regard both PAMP and local radio as influencing the processes of citizenship negotiations in the course of political transition.

3.1 Negotiations in a Context of Transition

I perceive individuals to be socially constituted individuals with genuine backgrounds and who choose to act for many personal reasons, and yet people are also influenced by

[9] 'Nexus' is used to emphasise that I perceive the three elements as different although related and overlapping, as well as being reciprocally constituting in the overlap.

structures.[10] People are agents, but still there are distinct social, cultural and economic structures in which individuals barely change. However, structures, institutions and individual agents exist not in isolation but in interdependence with each other, and they continuously alter and are influenced by others (Moore 1978). To this study, it means comprehending the concurrence and mutual constituencies of agency and the structural phenomena in practice. In my research, this implies that local radio, PAMP's practices and aspirations, and social, cultural and political influences prevail in what appears to be mutually constitutive production, entailing processes of remaking and contestation. My understanding of structures is inspired by Bourdieu's (1990) practice approach, and I thus position my research of everyday life as the central arena to examine the intersections of practice.

Since PAMP are embedded in a context of different socioeconomic and cultural influences, the research is based on Bourdieu's notion of habitus in order to comprehend how social and historical conditions and personal experiences are embodied, giving individuals 'subjective expectations of objective probabilities' (Jenkins 1992: 84). The structuring aspects are social and cultural norms alongside formalised structures of legislation and policies that explicitly influence the conduct of individuals. Agency is the acting of individuals or groups of people, and I develop on Bourdieu's notion of habitus in my comprehension of agency in an extremely structured social environment, but I proceed to evolve this comprehension by incorporating an explicit focus on the future, intending to transcend the at times deterministic attribute of the habitus concept. This study thus associates agency with the concept of aspirations to comprehend just how agency, apart from being remodelled by structural influences embedded in the past, is actually guided by a future component (Appadurai 2004). 'Aspirations' as a concept is here understood as a personal 'negotiating' capacity with strong collective cultural connotations. It contrasts expectations permitting an emotional element of 'dreaming'. Personal aspirations are the consequence of imparted values from the various cultures and communities to which individuals align themselves (shared religion, caste, gender, being rural and PAMP), and yet these are not necessarily uniformly accepted (Gupta and Ferguson 1997, Appadurai 2004). Distinct 'socialising agents', including families and communities, also powerfully influence PAMP's aspirations. For that reason, this research pays attention to the diverse communities towards which PAMP align themselves, the various sorts of collective

[10] A 'structure' in this thesis is understood as relationships between different individuals and the groups into which they are organised, where individuals have a set of roles with different functions, meanings and purposes. In this regard, 'agency' refers to the capacity of individuals to act independently and to make their own free choices. 'Structure' can be influenced by factors such as gender, ethnicity, customs, etc., which reduce or influence the opportunities that individuals have.

organisation that they participate in and the impact of socialising agents, local radio in particular, as essential for shaping their aspirations and strategies.

While habitus is useful to clarify what is taking place when individuals try to negotiate in a context in which norms and other people's practices are influential, tensions may develop in a time of political transition where strong cultural and social pressures coincide with mutually influential norms and ideals that might be contrary and maybe continuously changing. Suppose PAMP are simply not merely formed by their past and present practices that pursue to reproduce the conditions wherein they were formed, but equally (or perhaps even more so) by way of their aspirations for the future? In order to resolve this question, I design my analytical approach around the concept of negotiation to describe how PAMP have to negotiate in a context of unpredictability and instability, which are normal conditions for a country in political transition.

3.2 Negotiations Linking the Past, Present and Future

My interest in the concept of negotiation is owing to the ramifications this has for comprehending the shaping, reshaping and making of actors and their actions. This concept is useful to describe PAMP's actions as directed by norms, social structures, alongside their very own aspirations and the information that they listen to and appropriate by the means of local radio.

This study focuses on citizenship and being a citizen as produced and negotiated and follows researchers who have reacted to research and policy neglect on the ways policies are received and reacted to by people (Kabeer 2004, 2005, Hickey and Mohan 2004, 2005). Contrary to mainstream debates on citizenship, which tend to be dominated by a liberal understanding that concentrates on legal bestowment of the state (Jones and Gaventa 2002), these observers argue for a need to grasp how rights, responsibilities and entitlements are perceived, negotiated and struggled for by people. They link such an understanding of citizenship to social policy and the role people play in seeking influence. They perceive people as active 'makers and shapers' of policies (as opposed to users) and reject the notion of service providers (givers) (Cornwall and Gaventa 2001).

The process of seeking influence is often a process of negotiation that may consist of subtle acts that gradually increase people's room for manoeuvre. Stories of such subtle acts of negotiation emerge powerfully in Penny Johnson's (2010) account of Palestinian

women who prefer education and working outside the home over marriage. The testimonies show just how tough these choices are, when set against a background of hard struggle against society's expectations. It is difficult for women to transgress social norms even in the most liberal of contexts. When they do, as Jaya Sharma (2009) points out, transgressions may be accompanied by compliance with certain norms in certain circumstances, 'as women negotiate precarious pathways through thickets of prejudice and constraint' (ibid.). As these stories reveal, it may hold true that in order to become capable of acquiring certain freedoms, PAMP have to acknowledge certain societal expectations: wearing certain kinds of clothes, keeping quiet as opposed to speaking up. Such negotiations are especially helpful for what that they express about PAMP's very own possibilities and risks. These negotiations may be essential parts of PAMP living their daily lives and accomplishing the most positive outcomes that they can given their circumstances. Since PAMP negotiate through a range of built environments with immensely different histories, they must negotiate a range of competing and coexisting systems of value and meaning, and PAMP's meaning and experience of citizenship lies in balancing on a daily basis the demands and opportunities of transforming social and material context against those of a deeply rooted cultural milieu of moral values, systems of status and notions of respect.

However, not all of social life and all built environments with vastly different histories are negotiable. In Nepal, the repetitive strikes, *Bandhs*,[11] blockades, parliament disruptions and political struggles saturated with hollow promises (Lawoti 2007) are putting large constraints on people's scope for negotiations. Moreover, not all stories and news are put on display by the local radios for scrutiny and negotiation amongst the audience. Ownership, self-censorship[12] and editorial policies largely determine which stories and news are prioritised for broadcasting. All this provides the backdrop for PAMP's attempts to negotiate in their daily lives and make aspirations for the future in a way that provides them with a sense of stability.

[11] Unlawful strikes where traffic, public offices, schools, shops and often businesses are forced to shut down for one or more days due to violence.

[12] Journalists in Nepal continue to face numerous threats. The Committee to Protect Journalists (CPJ) ranks Nepal number twelve among countries where killers of journalists are not prosecuted (http://cpj.org/asia/nepal/). [checked August 16, 2012]

3.3 Negotiating by Habitus and Aspirations: Agency Structured by History, Aiming at the Future

In this study of PAMP, I previously argued why it makes sense to apply Bourdieu's notion of habitus to explain social practice; habitus both produces practice and is produced by practice. Zooming further into the interfaces and encounters in which such production takes place, Bourdieu defines habitus as:

> Systems of durable, transposable dispositions, structured structures predisposed to functioning as structures, that is, as principles which generate and organise practices and representations that can be objectively adapted to their outcomes without presupposing a conscious aiming at end or an express mastery of the operations necessary in order to attain them. Objectively 'regulated' and 'regular' without being in any way the product of obedience to rules, then be collectively orchestrated without being the product of organising action of a conductor (Bourdieu 1990: 53).

Dispositions are structured structures formed by social, cultural and historical conditions along with former experiences, which means that there is a strong collective aspect to them, though they are understood independently and practiced like culture. It is exactly this particular focus on former experiences combined with how structures have altered these experiences and continuously influence practice today, which is helpful for my study. The habitual elements combined with an imaginative capacity that results from 'an experience and also a possession, a capital' (Bourdieu 1985: 13), permit me to employ PAMP's descriptions of their former experiences as well as their present daily life experiences, in order to contemplate how issues raised here influence their future aspirations.

To Bourdieu, aspirations and perceptions are formed by habitus in ways that aim at being consistent with earlier socialisation. I suggest, however, the incorporation of the future aspect of wishing, hoping and imagining, which allows for changes to happen. I comply with Bourdieu in stating that aspirations are formed by the habitus. Having said that, I find that the very *futureness* of the notion of aspirations suggests the options for new impulses in order to make future practices that differ from what would have reproduced the conditions that initially formed habitus. It is precisely this particular opening for new imaginations, enhanced from the ruptures of political transition as argued previously, which I explore in this study.

Aspirations and hope are not the same, and I suggest that hope constitutes the more utopian aspect of aspirations. Aspirations address desired but also foreseen futures. Hope, while also including wishes and dreams, is more indicative of uncertainty and unpredictability. Hope and anxiety are thus related (Hage 2003), and as hope might be generated to escape intolerable life conditions, the anxiety that the dream could be impossible is always implicitly there (Webb 2007). Hage (2003) asserts that hope exists inside the person, but as Crapanzano (2003) states, neither hope nor aspirations can possibly be detached from social participation and implications. Appadurai (2004) similarly asserts that aspirations are usually collective. My approach to citizenship negotiation as an individual and yet collective process makes this an essential insight.

Whilst hope might be produced regardless of any sort of viable possibility to act to materialise it, aspirations and the 'capacity to aspire' signifies not only hoping and dreaming, but also intending to make those hopes happen (Appadurai 2004). In other words, aspirations seem preferable when it comes to capturing possible agency, while hope provides a mental frame to escape without necessarily being linked to practice. Nonetheless, both connect to social change and the possibility to generate different futures and thus for redefining notions of citizenship, given that hope and aspirations may direct agency. Consequently, in habitually and routinely shaping day-to-day practices, habitus can only be partly or spontaneously influenced by new impulses, creating hope and aspirations. This is particularly so in social and political ruptures that usher fundamental redefinitions and utopian thinking (Bloch in Nielsen 1982). The transition period in Nepal has enabled altered social and political conditions, but this is also a time of unpredictability that may make things possible for PAMP not only to hope but, more so, to imagine, wish and aspire beyond the constraints of the habitus.

To differentiate PAMP's different aspirations and the influences these may have on agency, I find it helpful to make use of Bourdieu's (1986) concept of capital and the concept of 'room for manoeuvre', which I take to be the potential and prospect to work as an agent and manoeuvre in the aspired direction. Room for manoeuvre is understood as a mental and physical space for PAMP to voice viewpoints and make choices and decisions about their lives. It is composed both of external elements and individual habitus. In concrete terms, I take room for manoeuvre as being each poor and marginalised person's 'equity' and combination of capital. Bourdieu (ibid.: 243) distinguishes between four types of capital: economic (money and material property), cultural (forms of knowledge, skills, education), social (relationships and networks) and symbolic (honour, status, recognition). The different sorts of capital are inter-transferable: social capital, for example, functions as symbolic capital offering status. I

will use this to analyse the directions of PAMP's future aspirations and to analyse to what extent they are determined by individual or collective aims.

To summarise, I use negotiation as an approach to examine the interlinked and mutually constituting processes of PAMP negotiating multiple notions of citizenship in a range of mediated and non-mediated contending and coexisting systems of value and meaning within a changing context of political transition. I put further emphasis on aspirations, as I suggest that is where the possibility for social change may be traced and thus new issues of citizenship negotiations can be analysed. While this section has shed light on my understanding of PAMP's interlinked past, present and futures in a transitional context, I now move on to clarify my understanding of the three elements of PAMP, local radio and citizenship, on the basis of the historical traits of citizen ideals. Although overlapping, I discuss each part separately for analytical purposes.

4. Poor and Marginalised People

> Any event befalling at present has some resonance of the past. We are an improvised mimic of men of the past, acting at present – at times, hiding our tears or baring our teeth and braving into the unknown future, for better or for worse (Gurung 2008: 164).

History can be tricky and full of surprises and unanticipated curves. Although the present condition of a situation counts on decisions made in the past, we can never, quoting the Greek philosopher Heraclitus, step twice into the same river as other waters are ever flowing on to you, which also is insinuated in the above quote. The same applies to PAMP, in the sense that they are not simply in the process of being constructed; someone is continuously constructing them. Attention to the agents through whom and by whom PAMP are constructed and re-constructed avoids the assumption that PAMP and social groups are conterminous. Identities are reproduced in the context of social networks, families as well as the towns and villages within which individuals are brought up and live, and again these identities are acquired within the context of changing institutions, schools and families. Ideas about custom, nation state, caste, gender and culture are modified by practice and adjusted according to discourses emphasising particular values.

This research focuses on PAMP, and this group represents one of these human categories that often tend to be given an a priori meaning. I preserve the term 'PAMP' but also question the representations as I come across them in the field and my analysis, and I unravel the most prevalent perceptions in the literature here. In a Nepalese context, descriptions and experiences of PAMP rely primarily on caste and on gender. To start with caste, caste-based discrimination and marginalisation has for

centuries been the organising rationale of the Hindu social model and national code of 1854, the *Muluki Ain* ('law of the country'), that consolidates Nepal's various peoples into a nation state (UNDP 2009). The code defined caste in regards to ritual 'purity' and 'pollution', and Bahuns/Chhetries (B&C) and Dalits take up the top and bottom echelons of this hierarchy respectively, whilst the ethnic groups nowadays referred to as *Adivasi Janajatis* (indigenous population) take up the middle ground, though with numerous distinctions among them also. This nationwide structure regulated all facets of social life, including things like marriage and food exchange. It additionally generated a caste-geared body of legislation, wherein the penalty of what was recognised as criminal conduct stemmed from an individual's caste, as opposed to the act with which he or she was charged (Lecomte-Tilouine 2009, Lawoti & Guneratne 2010). Although diluted, caste still functions as an essential node of claimed identity. With regard to especially the older generation, caste and occupation remain linked, if not directly (e.g. Dalits traditionally work as landless agricultural labourers), then indirectly in the sense that an individual's traditional caste occupation functions as a benchmark below which one rejects to go (e.g. to someone's home) or perhaps share food with, while anything above is thought to be acceptable. Similarly, caste based marriages remain the rule, although slowly changing primarily in urban areas. Having recognised caste as a key feature of identity, one must acknowledge the influence of modernity. In Kathmandu and urban and semi-urban areas throughout Nepal, in settings such as schools, offices, suburban residential areas, factories and even public spaces like busses, restaurants, and parks, people seem less likely to be affected by their caste traditions with regards to whom they work, study and socialise with (Mishra 2007: 24).

When it comes to gender, a patriarchal culture has for centuries been prevalent in Nepal, which from birth to old age grants priority to men. Women's work has traditionally been given little status whilst the capacity of males to make money brings respect (Ijjat). Moreover, the traditionally male role of provider has yielded higher economic and social status to men. In most households, women's decision-making role and control over resources is minor. Concerns involving property, matrimony, expenditure and education have traditionally been the male's business and women can exert little or no influence over the outcomes. In all communities of Nepal, property is inherited from the father to the son. In the 2001 Census, only about eleven percent of households reported any land in female legal ownership and seven percent recorded female ownership of livestock. Moreover, less than one percent of households reported female possession of all of the three assets: house, land and livestock (Unequal Citizens, WB & DFID 2006: 24). Thus, women are discriminated against when it comes to

inheritance as well as property rights in general. Furthermore, women in Nepal do, in general, have less economic assets, lower wages, inferior education, higher rates of illiteracy, limited insights of their legal rights, less self-esteem in public, and are bound to their responsibilities at home. However, there are sharp distinctions in the empowerment and inclusion levels of women depending on class, caste, ethnicity, religion and age. Moreover, patriarchal values lead to subjugation of women not only by men but also by women, e.g. a mother-in-law discriminating against a daughter-in-law or higher caste women discriminating against lower caste women. The overall lower economic and social status of women reduces their ability to influence community dialogues, negotiations and decisions.

Given the enormous diversity within PAMP, it is difficult to give a substantially detailed overview of how women and people in the lower strata of the Hindu caste hierarchy experience male Hindu domination and discrimination. This notwithstanding, there are some characteristics that are generally applicable to those in the lowest echelon of the Hindu caste system. Below is an account of Ramani Ram, a woman aged thirty-six and member of the current constituent assembly, who has worked a number of years with Dalit women's rights and now has also been elected member of the constituent assembly. She explains:

> Dalits of the Madhesh [Nepal's flat southern region] are still barred from entering many public places of worship and approaching water wells. In many places, they are not allowed to touch or draw water from public waterworks and wells. If a Dalit touches water, it is considered impure and is discarded. The state of Madheshi Dalit women is horrifying. They have been made victims of child marriages and the veil-system in the name of religion and tradition. Many women suffer because of the dowry system and from violent domestic abuse. No small number of women is tortured in many ways after being accused of witchcraft.
>
> Dalit women haven't been able to take proper care of their children or maintain basic hygiene around the household due to extreme poverty and lack of consciousness. Because women are confined to playing out the reproductive, productive and communal duties as defined by Hindu religion and culture and Dalit traditions, Dalit women face numerous problems daily. The landless and economically weak Dalits of Madhesh work on the farms and homes of local

> Zamindars[13] in order to earn a living. Madheshi Dalit women, who cannot even go to a hospital to give birth to their children, have their lives confined to child rearing, cooking and cleaning and working in the fields. The children of most Dalits cannot afford to attend school because of extreme poverty (Darnal 2009: 107).

With the political transition Nepal is undergoing, after decades of seeing themselves as subordinate to feudal oppressors, an increasing number of PAMP today see themselves as democratic citizens, also in the light of the fact that an increasing number of women and Dalits are elected for the constituent assembly. Despite the fact that the progress of this fundamental shift in self-perception is uneven among Dalits, women and Janajatis, PAMP gradually have altered their self-perception, which also has consequences for their expectations: PAMP do not need favours from the powerful. Rather than patronage, they want rights; the very same rights granted to every citizen by law.

4.1 Change in Self-Perception

The alteration of self-perception has sparked new debates about PAMP and caste, gender, identity, national culture and inclusion. To understand the nature of these debates, one has to go back to the first people's movement in 1990 that prepared the gradual development of political awareness and was a key factor in promoting widespread politicisation.[14] The political changes taking place in those years brought an end to the *Panchayat* system,[15] absolute monarchy and the beginning of constitutional democracy. However, as the state in those years was not fully open and responsive to meeting some of the more progressive demands that could have contributed to the deeper consolidation of democracy, some of the activists and political parties in opposition began employing more coercive and violent methods. Mahendra Lawoti (2007: pp. 34-40) has clustered Nepal's various identity movements and collective mobilisations after 1990 into three broad categories: the Maoist insurgency, national and ethnic movements and collective public protests - and he concludes that if the demands of the Maoists and ethnic groups had been recognised and addressed earlier, the human cost of the insurgency in Nepal may not have been as extensive (ibid.: 335) as that of the civil war.

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[13] The word 'Zamindar' is derived from the Persian 'Zamin', which means 'earth/land'. In Persian the word means 'land owner'. http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Zamindar [checked August 16, 2012]

[14] Nepal's 1990 revolution did not only come as a result of a raised level of political consciousness. 'The revolution itself made people politically conscious' (Hoftun, Raeper and Whelpton 1999: xi).

[15] 'Panchayat' is the Sanskrit name for the assemblies through which the country was governed.

In parallel with the various identity movements that were established in those years, many NGOs opened and grew in number from a handful in 1990 to more than 5,000 registered, engaging over 50,000 workers in different capacities (Shakya 2008: 273). The development of the Nepalese democracy and the donor-driven development of NGOs were closely linked, both equally pursuing the objective to ensure development (Bikaas). Bikaas came to be essential to the constitution of democracy, and in 1990 Nepal thus commenced a period of 'Bikaase democracy' based largely on engagement with donors (Des Chene 1996), mainly in areas such as education, poverty alleviation, farming productivity, fertility, empowerment to marginalised groups, hygiene and mortality, which were major development issues of the time. Also mass media received increasing donor's attention in those years. In Nepali, 'Bikaas' signifies growth, evolution, just like its English equivalent does. However, in everyday conversations, Bikaas for the most part means things, especially commodities that come from elsewhere. Stacy Pigg (1992) has aptly explained how the Bikaas ideology, which was initially meant to unite the nation through the common goal of the struggle to modernise Nepalese society and the economy, has paradoxically turned out to be a logic that also divides the country (both materially and symbolically) into areas of lesser and greater development (*Abikaasit* and *Bikaasit*, respectively). The key axis around which these developmental distinctions arise in Nepal is that of rural and urban society, as well as between the so-called higher and lower castes. Meanwhile, as a country, Nepal itself is characterized as *Abikaasit* in relation to other countries, such as India, which is relatively more *Bikaasit* (developed). Pigg (1992) argues that although 'development' is embodied in objects (such as new breeds of livestock, water pipes, electricity, schools, commercial fertilizer, roads and health posts) and as such is quantifiable, as areas are classified as being in greater or lesser development depending on how many of these things they have, the essence of development is the relationships that then exist between these areas and the people who inhabit them. Whilst urban areas are places of 'much development' (*Dherai Bikaas*), rural areas and villages tend to be, at best, places of 'little development' (*Thorai Bikaas*), or even 'no development' (*Bikaas Chaina*). According to Pigg:

> …this inverse relation between rural areas and degrees of Bikaas gives rise to two ways of representing national society and locating oneself in it. One uses the terms of Bikaas as coordinates to demarcate social territories and pinpoint social positions; the other turns Bikaas and villages into the compass points according to which socially located people oriented themselves (1992: 499).

'Development', in other words, has become one means of categorisation and representation in Nepal, and some communication and movements across these fissures in the socio-economic landscape are also structured according to the logic of *Bikaasi* ideology. These structurations inadvertently have implications for the nature of inter-citizen interactions and perceptions, as there are groups of people who are perceived to be less developed than others and thus in need of development – namely PAMP.

There are scholars who see the emergence of many of the NGOs, by and large, as driven by Bikaas and an expansion of the global bi- and multilateral assistance programme (Mishra 2001). Critics argue that traditional community associations like *Guthi Bihar*, *Dhikur* and *Parma* (Dahal 2001, Chand 2001) are different from what is perceived as civil society and NGOs (Gyawali 2001, Shah 2002) and argue that 'a genuine civil society is yet to evolve in Nepal' (Dahal 2001: 42). Despite the different observations on the extent to which Bikaas influences civil society and NGOs, NGOs appear to have contributed towards raising the civic awareness of the masses (see Chheteri 2001: 37) and the support to identity movements and empowerment of poor and marginalised groups, as one of their common denominators is their pursuit of inclusion and their struggle for social change and the improvement of conditions for PAMP. A major point of contestation in this struggle is the desire of elites to describe and encourage a unified and homogeneous national culture based on the values of high-caste Hindu hill society and the demands that the government treat the multiple languages, cultures and religions of Nepal equally. Non-Hindu populations in particular argue for more varied and inclusive representation in the state apparatus, including the bureaucracy and the parliament. In this process, issues of exclusion and inclusion have been brought into public debate, and various discourses are generated from various corners in civil society, as well as the political establishment and the international community present in Nepal. In discussions on social inclusion and exclusion, Walker (1997) defines social exclusion as:

> A more comprehensive formulation that refers to the dynamic process of being shut out, fully or partially, from any of the social, economic, political or cultural systems which determine the social integration of a person in society. Social exclusion may, therefore, be seen as the denial (or non-realisation) of the civil, political and social rights of citizenship (Walker and Walker 1997, cited in Byrne 2005: 2).

Social exclusion contrasts social integration and reflects the perceived importance of belonging to society, of being integrated. It is a multidimensional concept as it refers to

the economic, social and political exclusion. It transcends the analysis of resource allocation mechanisms and includes power relations, agency, culture and social identity (Aditya 2007). The definition of exclusion and inclusion in Nepal is widely contested, as there is no one definition of either social exclusion or social inclusion (Ajit 2008). As Pradhan (2006) asserts:

> Yet, as several commentators have pointed out, social exclusion and social inclusion are contested terms, used in a variety of ways and in a variety of contexts, such that questions have even been raised as to whether it is possible to define these terms in a manner acceptable to all (ibid.: abstract).

One among various explanations why exclusion and inclusion are widely contested terms could be that the terms have not been institutionalised for very long. Although successive governments after 1990 came a long way towards recognising the need for targeted programmes for PAMP, there was reluctance to address the issue head-on because of the associated political overtones. In the government's Tenth Plan (2002-2007), the notion of social exclusion is for the first time explicitly used by the government, with a separate poverty analysis on 'Social Exclusion, Backward Groups and Areas' (Bhattachan 2009: 20). The government's recognition of 'backward groups and areas' with concrete provisions for affirmative action in state bureaucracy and proportional representation in parliament, as well as an overall gradual change in discourse in civil society and the donor community, has brought the issue of social inclusion and exclusion on the public agenda. It should be mentioned that this was also fuelled by the increasing aggression and visibility of the Maoist revolt, which had social inclusion on the agenda. Likewise, the Nepali scholarly community gradually changed their discourse on this issue. As Pradhan (2006) writes:

> It may be immodest to claim that the *Social Science Baha*[16] was instrumental in bringing the concept of inclusive democracy (Samaveshi Loktantra) into popular discourse in Nepal. The international conference on this theme organised by the *Baha* in 2003 as well as the summary of the papers published in Nepali helped to popularise this concept' (ibid.: 1).

Numerous reports and assessments have been issued dealing with inclusion and exclusion. The Human Development Report 2004, one of the first reports published by

[16] The *Social Science Baha* is an NGO established in 2002 with the objective of promoting and enhancing the study of and research in the social sciences in Nepal. www.soscbaha.org [Checked August 31, 2012]

a major institution, raised the issue of political, economic and social exclusion based on cultural identity in a chapter on challenges for cultural liberty (UNDP 2004: pp. 34-37). In general, the international community in Nepal (represented by different UN agencies, diplomatic missions and INGOs) has deeply influenced the government's policies, plans and programmes and has also been tracking its progress on different aspects of human development. For instance, as Bhattachan (2009: 21) has pointed out, the 2004 UN Human Development Report, which focused on cultural liberty, influenced Nepali policy makers to start acknowledging the issue of social exclusion and a need for inclusion of diverse communities in development policies and projects.

The Nepali state's explicit acknowledgement that PAMP *de facto* have been excluded from state benefits and privileges is to some extent a shift in orientation from a solely vertical view on citizens as subordinate subjects, to now also a horizontal view recognising people's multiple identities and values. The state's inclusive approach is a move in the direction of meeting a need to view man ontologically as both a social and biological being. The meeting of this need comprises aspects of *recognition*, and, according to Axel Honneth's (2006) conception of recognition in contemporary sociological theory, there are three different types of recognition in modern society. The first type of recognition is emotional in nature in the form of, for example, caring for children, love between spouses or close friendships. From this primary recognition, the individual achieves a fundamental self-confidence. The second type of recognition is associated with the larger society's recognition of the individual's 'moral sanity', i.e. the individual is subject to a universal treatment as a responsible person before the law in society. This recognition is rational in nature and takes the form of voting, protection against discrimination, etc., and it results in a fundamental self-esteem in the individual. Thirdly, there is a partly emotional and partly rational sense of recognition of the individual as 'a person whose abilities are of fundamental value for a particular community' (ibid.: 93) in, for example, a work related or political context. This form of acknowledgment is not absolute, like love, or universal, like voting rights, but it is the conditional care for others subject to the achievement of common goals, e.g. solution of assignments in a working place, obtaining political influence in a political organisation, ensuring good relations in the neighbourhood, etc. By being recognised in this way as part of a mutually supportive community in solidarity with others, the individual achieves self-respect. Although the initial form of recognition is perceived as conditional for people to engage in inter-subjective relationships with each other, they are not ranked as relative to each another. Gaining confidence, self-esteem and self-respect are all important for an individual to exercise agency in all areas of life, which is why recognition stands in contrast to violation,

discrimination and bullying, as these constitute a danger to the individual's self-esteem and autonomy.

The Nepali state's increasing horizontal and inclusive approach breaks with centuries old systems of rule that had room for masters and subjects but no place for citizens. Yet, notwithstanding the state's more inclusive approach, nationhood might not be the most significant amongst PAMP's many affiliations. To act as a citizen, it is essential that one can see oneself as a citizen and subjectively incorporate the attributes of agency that this social category may contain. This compels a conception of civic agency, which is premised on the ability of people, motivated by reason and or passion, to see themselves as participants in meaningful engagements. Such agency, involving the capacity to make decisions and act in accordance with a coherent sense of self, of identity, can never emerge or function in a vacuum; it must be an integrated and vibrant part of a larger cultural environment that has relevance for politics (Dahlgren 2009: pp. 102-103). Nepal's political transition, in whatever concrete version it manifests itself, is a complex undertaking that requires many conditions to be fulfilled for it to have a successful outcome. These conditions include, among other things, a functioning legal system, as well as a judiciary that operates in an optimal balance of power with the lawmakers and executive branches. Having said that, there must also be real efforts to move toward universalism in the treatment of citizens and their rights, in the sense that all citizens have equal rights and opportunities. Nepal's political transition must also measure up to the democratic ideals and the character of public discursive communication between citizens (Benhibab 1996), as will be discussed in a following chapter. This also has social and cultural ramifications, as I shall discuss in the paragraphs ahead, given that it is the engagement of citizens that legitimises and vitalises democracy, as something impelled by conscious human intentionality, not just habit or ritual. King and Stivers (1998) claim that democratic knowledge must be constructed from re-presented to experienced knowledge by opening up the public space and thereby easing processes that let human thoughts and ideas be tested by the examination of other citizens. Here it is essential to be able to put oneself in another's place, to understand from another's viewpoint. Citizens create their sense of the common through active conversations with neighbours; that is when 'government becomes us' (ibid.: pp. 46-48).

4.2 PAMP Everyday Life

A structuralist understanding of the citizen cum state interaction moves citizenship beyond its legal parameters and situates it thus within the realm of social theory. It entails analysing PAMP's subjective experiences of political participation and the conditions and forms of such actions that can shape civic agency and thereby impact on citizens' engagement, forms of negotiations and participation in democracy. This is in line with Stewart's (2001) perspective on citizenship, as he underscores that civic agency ultimately is grounded in experience. He cites Wolin (1996), who posits that genuine democratic participation is something that every now and then 'breaks out' among citizens, something that alters the normal mode of interaction. For democracy to be viable, however, such 'outbursts' of effective engagement and motivated participation are in themselves not sufficient. Echoing civil society notions about virtues and skills, Blaug (1999) argues for the necessity of communicative civic competencies that will enable PAMP to make use of such sudden appearances of democratic activity. Stewart (2001) also describes the importance of having the ability to recognise and interpret different kinds of political situations and being able to judge what kinds of actions are suitable and necessary in each situation. This is a learning process, in which one can gradually, not least through one's mistakes, acquire civic expertise.

Agre (2004) adheres to a similar line of reasoning, underlining citizenship's need for social skills that are anchored in everyday life. He takes many of the proponents of republicanism to task for largely ignoring the character and substance of social skills that civic agents must actually apply. He is critical of social capital theory (associated with Putnam 2000, and others), which builds on the notions of networks and trust, as these proponents ignore that both networks and trust are predicated on concrete competencies of interaction. These skills have to do, among other factors, with social interaction, communication, rhetoric, the capacity to define issues and the capacity to recognise, define and exploit the relevant political situations. Agre (2004) precedes the line of argumentation that citizens must have the ability to function strategically in their 'public personae', and, while civic values are vital, agency in political contexts is dependent on skills. There are many differentiated versions of citizenship, yet they all require different types of skills that are developed through practices in the context of one's lived realities. To achieve, to enact citizenship, to develop the required virtues, skills and identities for civic competencies thus call for practices that provide experience, in the sense of the dynamic development of the subject. This implies not only the apparent point that citizenship is in part a question of learning by doing, but also that these kinds of civic skills cannot derive solely from political society, and that

we have to open the gate for crossing the boundary between politics and non-politics and the private domain. This approach also makes sense when the media is included in the discussion, given that media use is very often a private activity.

To bring to a close, we can summarise that PAMP's everyday life is historically informed, situated and contextual. It is lived and has to be examined as such by means of ethnographic research of both spectacular and ordinary life. In commencing a study of PAMP in a country undergoing political transition, I therefore pay attention to their being as well as their becoming, and I situate and contextualise PAMP by exploring the representations and self-representations in practice. In this study, these processes are connected to the specific institution of local radio and how notions of citizenship are negotiated by the means of this institution. The next section further explores the occurrence of these processes.

5. Mediated Discursive Spaces

> This slow, collective and spontaneous accumulation of everything a social group did … is scattered with long public silences, blanks in the soundtrack. Periods of advance and periods of withdrawal … the difficulty of formalising experiences of struggle, to reflect together on what has happened to the group, sometimes because of the impossibility of doing so, other times because of a latent desire for amnesia as a defence mechanism against failures and errors (Mattelart & Siegelaub 1983: pp. 18-19, cited Kidd & Rodríguez 2010: 13).

After the first people's movement in 1990, Nepal entered a new political era with constitutional guarantees from a set of fundamental rights as outlined in the 1990 Constitution of Nepal. This historic transformation eventually paved the way for new actors in the media landscape in Nepal, including non-state radio stations as described earlier. These radios have been the most important new media in Nepal in the past decade (Onta 2009: 335). With the emergence of independent radio stations new voices and new issues entered the public arena. The 'uncovering of faces', the bringing into the public eye taboos and previously private issues, created avenues to help overcoming social discrimination and possibilities for a more pluralistic and inclusive society, contributing to an opening of spaces for participation more generally. Citizen engagement can result not only in greater inclusiveness but also enhanced forms of social cohesion in communities with embedded inequalities and strained social interaction between various identity groups. In this section, I theorise on the implications of the opening of independent media for enabling new communicative practices, cultural interaction and understanding of public affairs.

5.1 Local Radio in a Global Perspective

Article Nineteen of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights declares that 'everyone has the right to freedom of opinion and expression. This right includes freedom to hold opinions without interference and to seek, receive and impart information and ideas through any media regardless of frontiers.'[17] The ways whereby people of different social, gender, political or ethnic identity access, use or share information have become a point of contention among academics and practitioners, and of specific interest has been the connection between access to information and unequal power distributions within countries and across the different parts of the world. Since the 1970s, developing countries have tried to 'negotiate reforms in the global political economy of trade, finance, investment, aid and information flows' (Uvin 2007: 598), having recognised that the unequal distribution of information and communication flows has hindered people's rights to being informed and active participants in shaping their everyday lives. This was also concluded in the set of recommendations from the 2006 World Congress on Communication for Development, which highlights the importance of 'ensuring that people have access to communication tools so that they can themselves communicate within their communities and with the people making decisions that affect them.'[18] Considering the media as central for bottom-up and participatory approaches to empowering communities in taking control and constructively changing their own lives, by themselves and for themselves, Clemencia Rodríguez in her acclaimed book *Fissures in the Mediascape* (2001) highlights the essentiality that people are provided with the opportunity to find their own voice and become the tellers of stories that reach the ears of those who exercise influence over their lives (Rodríguez 2001: 34). Having citizens as active and creative in their 'own' media production, media have the means to contest social codes, legitimised identities and institutional social relations (ibid: 20). In an apt encapsulation of this approach of media as key to self-empowerment, Rodríguez coins this notion of 'citizens' media' also to emphasise the strong sense of identification with the audience and dialogic form of interaction achieved through these media.

The increasing focus on possibilities of citizen's media has over the past number of decades led to a growth in interest and research in localised media initiatives. Breaking with Habermas' 'old' conception of the public sphere and the media as embedded in

[17] http://www.un.org/en/documents/udhr/index.shtml#a19 [Checked August 31, 2012]
[18] ftp://ftp.fao.org/docrep/fao/010/ai143e/ai143e00.pdf (page xxxiv). [Checked August 31, 2012]

the constitutional unit of the nation-state,[19] an increasing number of researchers acknowledge that deliberation is occurring through numerous paths of connections and is facilitated and hindered at different levels and by multiple agencies (Fraser 1990, Lunt and Livingstone 2013). Today, focusing on the organisation and operation of local media within their broader social and regulatory environment has highlighted the distinctiveness of the sector compared to commercial and public service broadcasting. At lot of the evidence of the role of local radio in building communities by enabling dialogue between different sections of the community come from Latin America, which has been the epicentre for much participatory communication activity, such as the Bolivian miners' radio, whose sixty-year run modelled local participation and governance (Dagron 2005).

A number of researchers have deepened the theorisation with the richness of particular places, peoples and media, or created new syntheses with the adaptation of theory from other disciplines or research practices. Contesting earlier conceptualisations of community radio, Tanja Bosch (2003) examines Bush Radio in South Africa through the prism of Deleuze and Guattari's notion of the rhizome, an underground grass-like tuber with multiple entry points and routes. Her mapping of the station's multiple, fluid and disjunctive patterns of impact on producers, other media and audiences suggests more complex ways to think of evaluation than the usual. The distinctiveness of this model of broadcasting has exposed the constraints that localised media initiatives face from the increasing control by the state and the commercial elites, and has inspired a new generation of research. In a study of community radio in India, Saeed (2009) focuses on the legislative challenges to local activists' attempts to reanimate their locality, while in a study of the sector in Australia, Meadows et al. (2005) argue that, in providing communities with 'alterNative' ideas and assumptions (ibid.: 183), community radio has extended the idea of the mainstream public sphere. In a contribution to this discussion, Stiegler (2009) demonstrates the failure of mainstream broadcasting as a public sphere within the US and draws in particular on Benjamin Barber's model of 'strong democracy'[20] (Barber 1984, Stiegler 2009: pp. 50-51) to

[19] Habermas has moved away from a singular conception of the bourgeois public sphere, now recognising a plurality of public spheres. Habermas now thinks of the public sphere less in terms of a geographical metaphor (a place where people gather) and more as a consequence of certain forms of communication, recognising the diverse identities and multiple forms and sites of deliberation (Lunt and Livingstone 2013: 92).

[20] In a strong democracy, citizens govern themselves to the greatest extent possible rather than delegate their power and responsibility to representatives acting in their names. Strong democracy does not mean politics as a way of life, as an all-consuming job as it is for so many professional politicians. But it does mean politics (citizenship) as a way of living: an expected element of one's life. It is a prominent and natural role, such as that of 'parent' or 'neighbour' (Daly, Prugh and Costanza 1999: 112).

reveal what small-scale mediated discursive spaces might look like within the context of community radio.

Having highlighted the potentials of localised media initiatives, we should, however, be aware of the possibility of an uncritical view of these organisations. In the context of Nepal and in the wake of the aforementioned two people's movements, two massive influxes of local radio stations emerged, which have also raised critical concerns. During the *first wave* from 1997 to 2006, fifty-six independent radios in twenty of Nepal's seventy-five districts got licensed. The growth of radio stations in this period was to some extent limited by the government's slow process of issuing licenses, which, however, was speeded up in the aftermath of the second people's movement in 2006. In the *second wave* between April 2006-April 2007, a total of 140 radio stations were issued licenses and with a coverage of more than seventy districts. By 2009, a total of 380 licenses had been issued, and in 2011 319 of these radio stations were on-air. About forty percent of the independent radios are owned by a commercial entity, forty percent are owned by NGOs and about fifteen percent are cooperatives (Infoasaid 2011: 12). The opening of new local radio stations occurs in parallel with the emergence of several production houses and NGOs in Kathmandu that provide services, trainings and produce and distribute broadcast media products to the radio stations. These include the *Antenna Foundation* and *Search for Common Ground*. Both organisations produce a number of popular radio and television programmes, including dramas and talk shows. The broadcast networks *Ulyalo 90 Network*, *Nepal FM*, *Community Information Network* (CIN) of *ACORAB* and *ABC Network* distribute news and current affairs programmes to partner stations throughout the country. They also incorporate contributions from their partners into their own programming. The *BBC Nepali Service* broadcasts thirty to sixty minutes per day and is relayed by more than 150 radio stations across the country. Some of the larger Kathmandu radio stations cover most of the country on the FM band. State-owned *Radio Nepal* and the private stations *Radio Kantipur* and *Image FM* have built a network of FM relay stations that gives them a broad national coverage. By the end of 2009, it was estimated that seventy-five to eighty percent of the total population had access to radio (Onta 2009: 338). This figure is expected to be even higher today.

The rapid growth and wide accessibility of radio broadcasting in a relatively short span of time has raised concerns that radio has 'become too much of a good thing' (Dixit 2008: 28). Today, numerous radio stations face problems in relation to commercialisation, overt party political interference, lack of professional training and plans for business sustainability, as companies, political parties and organisations

sometimes enter into radio broadcasting without necessarily understanding its technical, managerial and editorial aspects. A report prepared by Pringle and Subba for UNESCO in 2007 states that:

> There is technical congestion in the capital region and high redundancy of licensed services, even in some rural areas; there are major policy gaps and limited means to ensure accountability of broadcasters. The current system of regulation does little to promote a diversity of services or to ensure that broadcasters meet public needs or address national development priorities (ibid.: 4).

The concern is that commercial powers deteriorate the public service values expected to be delivered by the radio stations. As radio stations, with the increasing competition, adapt and begin to identify their own particular niche, several are becoming entertainment-driven. Large media houses in Kathmandu are growing into national networks, primarily broadcasting music that satisfies young urban middle class audiences, along with centralised news content. Critics assert that news and stories coming from the periphery are not returned in the same fashion and volume to match the centralised content. Poor government planning and legislation have not only resulted in congestion of frequencies on the FM band in urban areas throughout the country, but have also put pressure on the government to make the licensing process more transparent, also in light of the worries about overt politicisation as broadcasting licenses are handed out to politicians and business cronies (Dixit 2008: 29).

The concern of ownership and influence is not only related to commercial and political bias but also regards the community radio stations (most of them affiliated with ACORAB), as many radio stations identifying themselves as community radio (*Samudayik Radio*) do not have the organisational structures that are genuinely democratic, participatory or representative. While most of these radio stations carry responsibility by virtue of being part of and in constant dialogue with the local community, this responsibility is not equal to accountability, nor is it a legitimate means of community ownership, nor does it guarantee community groups' participation in policy and decision-making (Pringle and Subba 2007: 28). Many of these local radio stations, which are not genuinely owned and embraced by the community and have large dependence on voluntarism, find it hard to sustain themselves, and there is a real threat that they will become donor-driven mouthpieces if compelled to depend on sponsorship from development organisations.

It would be impossible to encompass all Nepal's radio stations within one single definition, and Rodríguez (2001: 164) also cautions us that the polymorphic nature and definition of community or citizens' media rejects a tight definition and offers instead a useful framework, describing citizens' media as the result of 'a complex interaction between people's attempts to democratise the mediascape and their contextual circumstances.' The broadcasting sector in Nepal is manifold and encompasses a broad range of popular cultures with multiple interests. It embodies commercial interests as well as views coming from the extreme left with radios that broadcast underground during the armed revolt as *Dhoka* ('basket') radio stations - and to the far right, sympathisers with the former king. The large majority of radio stations are situated somewhere in the middle of the political spectrum, which is why they do not easily fit into definitions drawn from specific social, political and cultural ideas because all are represented. Maybe the commonality many share is that each sees itself as unique and broadcasting in a particular public sphere. Adhering to this perspective, instead of accepting the idea of a single public sphere, we should perceive radio stations as broadcasting polycentrically in parallel and overlapping 'public arenas'; spaces/spheres where audiences' with similar backgrounds or 'communities of interest' engage in activities concerning issues and interests of importance to them (Fraser 1992: 126). A 'public arena' or a 'public sphere', then, can be understood as the distinct formation that develops in a unique context; as Fraser (1992: 127) notices, 'the unbound character and publicist orientation of publics allows people to participate in more than one public and it allows membership of different publics to overlap.' It should be emphasised that not all radio stations in Nepal perceive themselves as unique and broadcasting in a particular public sphere. In fact, many would consider themselves as mainstream in terms of their broadcasting content and ideology, yet they work within the discursive arena of their local context. As shall be discussed in greater detail in Chapter 9.5, the emergence of local radio broadcasting in Rolpa occurs within these confines and in a national context where roles, categorisation, legislation, regulation and definitions of radio broadcasting still are subject to contestation and negotiation.

In this thesis I explore the extent to which local radio broadcasting both ceases and reproduces inequalities and their ability to open up spaces for negotiating notions of citizenship, and I have therefore purposefully made a demarcation between radio stations with constrained influence and membership access, and those radio stations aligned with the aforementioned citizens' media approach that have a closer affiliation with communities/'neighbourhoods' and have open or easy access to participation in the radio activities (Jauert 1997: 94). With this in mind, I apply the term 'local radio' in discussing the two local radio stations in Rolpa analysed in this study, thus indicating

that both have constrained access to open community membership as shall be discussed later - but also to emphasise their geographical position and programmes in the formats of local news, local service information (events, greetings, weather) and the local audience that from time to time participate with letters and in phone-in programmes (ibid.).

The focus on open access and easy ways of participating in radio production is crucial in this thesis, as I attempt to explore local radio broadcasting and whether radios cease or reproduce inequalities, the extent to which they open up spaces for influencing and negotiating notions of citizenship, and I focus on how PAMP appropriate these spaces and notions and discuss whether they produce, reproduce, challenge and negotiate the ideals of citizenship. In his ethnographic study on local television's role in social and cultural reproduction and change in rural Nepal, Michael Wilmore (2008) applies Faye Ginsburg's notion of 'mediation' and Stuart Hall's notion of 'articulation' to discuss how these terms serve to describe the ways in which the cultural representations made by a person or a people *speak of* their identity in ways that enable them to both *speak to* and *be recognised* by others (ibid.: 32, emphasis added). I find the terms useful in this study as well, as I seek to explore PAMP's lives and their future aspirations and the multiple non-mediated and mediated sources in their negotiations towards immediate and imagined futures. As these groups previously have been disadvantaged socially, politically and economically, their potential access to local media provides them with an opportunity for 'a more positive model of exchange' (Ginsburg 1991: 106), given that it enables them to both express themselves and be recognised by others. This scope for a more balanced exchange of viewpoints applies not only to spatially arranged social relationships, but moreover, as Wilmore (2008: 32) notices referring to Ginsburg's work on the aboriginals in Australia, also to relations in time: 'many in this generation [of Australian aboriginals] want to engage in image-making that offers a face and a narrative that reflects on the present, connects them to a history, and directs them toward a future as well' (Ginsburg 1991: 106).

Against this background and the current challenges that radio broadcasting in Nepal is undergoing, my analysis will explore the mode and content of local radio broadcasting and how ideals and values are represented in their programming. This entails scrutinising the strategies of power and asking to what extent they reproduce or challenge the aforementioned power structures. It requires me to focus on whether radio broadcasting creates an ability to both cease and reproduce inequalities and their ability to open up spaces. Chapters 8.7 and 8.8 comprise a more elaborate discussion on 'space' and 'the opening up of spaces' and how local radio, as a mediating instance

of public discourse and citizenship negotiations, appears vital to the process of anchoring and directing sense making with regards to issues of local public life.

Concerning negotiating notions of citizenship, I analyse how PAMP appropriate those notions, i.e. how they produce and reproduce, challenge and negotiate the ideals of citizenship that they encounter as part of practice in the course of everyday life and to what extent they assimilate, reinterpret or reject the knowledge and ideals presented to them by the local radio stations. The analytical understanding of radio broadcasting enabling PAMP a space for citizenship negotiations is tied together by the last concept of my analytical approach: citizenship.

6. Citizenship

> The roots of one's identity are buried in one's religion and cultural heritage. To lose these social phenomena is to suffer loss of identity – that is, to become a misbegotten and directionless being. Religion and social traditions have an inter-relationship that finally calculates to the cultural identity of an individual tribe or community. Genocidal suppression of religion and cultures in a multi-ethnic nation may impair bio-diversity in the long run. Nepal is currently enduring such a crisis owing to the subversive policies imposed upon the indigenous religions and cultures of the ethnic minorities, inherited from centuries of elitist military rule based on Hindu caste hierarchy. Apart from the spiralling Maoist guerrilla insurrection across the country, a strong ethnic assertion for religious and cultural identity has become a visible trend in today's democratic Nepal (Gurung 2008: 58).

One of the most prevalent features of human communities has been the definition of the attributes and qualities that serve to differentiate their members from the rest. How communities are granted rights, privileges and duties determines a community's internal relations as well as its relations with the larger society. Therefore, belonging to one group or another has social, political and economic consequences. The ways communities relate and accommodate with ethnic and cultural processes, centralising policies of the state and the global 'scapes' (Appadurai 1990) vary from community to community, country to country and change in the course of history, often on the basis of major shifts in the political system, as will be discussed in greater detail in this section.

Prior to the first people's movement in 1990, caste-based discrimination was, as outlined earlier, an organising principle that consolidated Nepal's diverse peoples into a nation state. The two succeeding people's movements in 1990 and 2006 respectively broke with centuries of systemic suppression and paved the way for the entry of independent media and new actors in civil society, backed up by newly granted civil rights and freedom of speech as mentioned before. However, as the success of the people's movements still is not firmly grounded in the constitution, the destiny of Nepal's political transition is still unknown. In this uncertain situation with general instability, it is vital that there are civic mediated and non-mediated spaces, where notions on citizenship can be negotiated and the future of Nepal can be discussed.

In modern-day societies, citizenship is applied as the central principle to distinguish between people who can enjoy full membership and those who cannot. The principle can be related to, for example, *Article Fifteen* in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, which declares that everyone has the right to a nationality and nobody shall be arbitrarily denied of his or her nationality nor rejected the right to change nationality.[21] Contemporary ideas of citizenship can be traced back to the Enlightenment and to the French and American revolutions of the late eighteenth century. A conventional way to approach the debate on citizenship is to depart from the identification of citizens as members of polities and communities, which during the last two centuries or so have added more responsibilities and obligations to states to grant their citizens security, property, liberties and rights. Over the years, the debate about citizenship has become more complex, or multifaceted in the words of Paul Close (1995), because the concept has been connected with diverse principles that vary from the recognition of a more legal status to the awarding of economic or cultural rights as well as rights to information, plus to the attachment to a community.

A quite basic yet inevitable facet of citizenship links its development with the augmentation of various kinds of rights that are bestowed to all members of a community who may be defined as citizens. This way to conceptualise citizenship as a legal status has been strongly criticised from various perspectives. Authors who champion progressive perspectives on citizenship (see for instance Kabeer (2004, 2005), Gaventa (2002) and Dahlgren (2009)) claim that a basic attribute of citizenship, more important than the more legal status, is the active exercise of civic responsibilities and participation. Feminists tend to argue, as well, in favour of balancing rights and responsibilities (Philips 1991). In many aspects, as discussed in Chapter 4.2, the

[21] www.un.org/en/documents/udhr/index.shtml#a15 [Checked August 31, 2012]

contentions on citizenship centre on the concern of how to cultivate such involvement and participation in public matters or a least in those topics that concern the different groups of citizens. And yet, as Kymlicka and Norman (1994) pointed out, the idea of a strong public involvement and participation seems to be markedly at odds with the way most people behave (ibid.: 362).

Discussing citizenship is not a simple task given that the concept entails various elements of identity, cooperation, tolerance, participation, responsibility and rights. The liberal classic view of citizenship is to depart from equating a citizen to an individual and then favour treating everyone as an individual with the same rights, obligations, liberties and responsibilities. Real life does not work much like that, since people identify with and feel attached to different languages, institutions, traditions, regions and communities, even within the same frontiers, as the case is in Nepal. At the end of the twentieth century, Iris Marion Young (1989) published an influential article wherein she underlined the need for acknowledging such differences if we are to generate a meaningful debate on the concepts of citizenship, of a 'differentiated citizenship.' In comparison to the classic liberal view, she argues that:

> The attempt to realize an ideal of universal citizenship that finds the public embodying generality as opposed to particularity, commonness versus difference, will tend to exclude or to put at a disadvantage some groups, even when they have formally equal citizenship status. The idea of the public as universal and the concomitant identification of particularity with privacy make homogeneity a requirement of public participation. In exercising their citizenship, all citizens should assume the same impartial, general point of view transcending all particular interests, perspectives and experiences. Such an impartial general perspective is a myth. People necessarily and properly consider public issues in terms influenced by their situated experience and perception of social relations. Different social groups have different needs, cultures, histories, experiences and perception of social relations that influence their interpretation of the meaning and consequences of policy proposals and influence the form of their political reasoning. These differences in political interpretation are not merely or even primarily a result of differing or conflicting interests, for groups have differing interpretations even when they seek to promote justice and not merely their own self-regarding ends. In a society where some groups are privileged while others are oppressed, insisting that as citizens, persons should leave behind their particular affiliations and experiences to adopt a general point of view serves only to reinforce that

> privilege; for the perspectives and interests of the privileged will tend to dominate this unified public, marginalising or silencing those of other groups (Young 1989: 257).

Many critics of the 'differentiated citizenship' thesis argue that paying attention to what makes people different instead of what people share, brings an end to all hope of creating a larger community, as it ends up being an unreasonable perspective since there is no clear way to identify who ought to be given differentiated status (Taylor 1992). As the case of Nepal reminds us, nonetheless, it is still true that nowadays the rights and identities of groups based upon ethnic identity are at the forefront of the debate on citizenship, as Nepal currently is in the middle of the process of reviewing its constitution where these issues are up for public debate and scrutiny. Taking Young's perspective, one cannot but realise that the dominant discourse on an ideal universal citizenship is, to say the least, provocative as strong local identities have risen to contest a broader national discourse (see for instance Gurung 2008 cited earlier).

Kymlicka (1995) emphasises the value of acknowledging the 'differences' in the creation of a new theory of citizenship that permits a framework for diverse groups to promote their particular cultural characteristics and identity. He asserts that, as opposed to the fear that the acceptance of 'difference' would threaten liberal democracy, its recognition follows certain modern liberal principles of individual freedom and justice, and hence would promote incorporation and inclusion without having those participating compromise their identities. Kymlicka's line of reasoning has some resonance with Amartya Sen (2010), who has argued that the success of democracy is not simply a matter of having the most perfect institutional structures. It depends, inescapably, on our concrete behaviour and the functioning of political and social interplays (ibid.: 354).

To Sen (2010), in the pursuit of justice we should not just make reference to some kind of ideal situation, but rather, in very concrete ways, assess the outcomes of existing policies and contemplate the way these are executed in the name of impartiality and fairness. He suggests that we look at social structures as wholes and scrutinise their influence in broad all-inclusive terms without being fixated by rules and procedures. To do so, he applies the Sanskrit literature on ethics and early Indian law and describes the distinction between *Niti* and *Nyaya*. Both terms can be translated as 'justice' but they summarise rather different notions (ibid.: pp. 20-21). Niti concerns correct procedures, formal rules and institutions, while Nyaya is more comprehensive, a more inclusive concept that looks to the world as it actually evolves in people's everyday lives, instead

of focusing merely on the institutions and rules themselves. In order to make the distinction between Niti and Nyaya even more apparent, Sen uses the example of the Roman emperor Ferdinand I, who in the sixteenth century claimed: 'Fiat justitia, et pereat mundus' (Let justice be done, though the world perishes) (ibid.: 21). This tough maxim could figure as a Niti, a very rigid Niti, but if actually the world should perish, there would not be much to applaud in that accomplishment.

Sen's comprehension of justice in the broader form of Nyaya examines whether there is a universal account of justice that applies everywhere and at all times and questions the extent to which a single account is feasible and needed. To illustrate his point, Sen tells the account of three children, Ann, Bob, and Carla, who argue over a flute: Ann claims the flute because she is the only one who can play it; Bob wants it because he has no other toys to play with while the others do; and Carla's claim is because she made the flute (ibid.: 12). All of these accounts are taken to be true, and Sen's point is that one can produce, without effort, feasible reasons for giving the flute to any of the three children. Utilitarians would argue for Ann, egalitarians would favour Bob and libertarians should prefer Carla. And despite their differences, what Sen is pointing at is that there is no reason why we need to single out which of the three responses is the right one. At times, life presents a plurality of 'right' responses, which contrast the belief in one single kind of universal just society where all others represent secondary positions from this ideal. There may not indeed exist any identifiable perfectly just social arrangement on which impartial agreement would emerge, as argued by Sen (2010: 15).

Instead of solely looking for 'ideal institutions' we should therefore examine what is in fact occurring, including how people's lives are lived out, and with that focus explore not ideal happenings or perfect social realisations but how the social realisations could be enhanced. An account of what is actually occurring must obviously feature the various institutions that exist and the influence they have on people's lives. Yet the overall picture should be extended effectively beyond that institutional picture and include the actual lives that people are able to lead, affected not just by institutions but by all factors that can have impact. This moves our discussion beyond, for example, periodical voting in elections electing public officials, which in major public laws is considered amongst the most apparent ways of exercising citizens' democratic rights.

The focus on participating in political and civic affairs beyond ballot casting is a fundamental preoccupation in the work of Robert Dahl, as he asserts that effective participation and enlightened understanding are necessary preconditions of a working

democracy (1989: pp. 108-114). However, participating in the political system is not an easy proposition and the lack of citizen participation should not be seen simply as failure of civic virtue. Instead, it should be comprehended in regards to both social structural attributes and the landscape of everyday life with its psychological and cultural dimensions. For instance, 'citizen' does not automatically vibrate with meaning for all people, as some might perhaps find the term uninspiring. Different political cultures use different terms, and absence of engagement and participation can be divulged in several ways such as through distrust, ambivalence and indifference (Dahlgren 2009: 64). Problems of poverty itself, the lack of basic survival needs and security, also affect severely on people's agency in that it undermines not only capacity to act as citizens but even the time for and opportunity of contemplating such actions (Kabeer 2002: 11). A problem with citizenship comes from definitions and practices associated with it, which sometimes serve to reinforce instead of eradicate pre-existing forms of social inequality, as members of all social classes, religious and ethnic groups are enabled to transport their identities and affiliations of the private sphere of family, kinship and community into the public arena of state and civil society. This kind of behaviour reproduces within the public arena various forms of inequalities, reflecting social relations in the private (ibid.).

In this study, I thus examine how ideals are presented in discourses, rituals and day-to-day practices, how they are enacted and appropriated and, not least, how these are integrated into the future aspirations of PAMP. Following my overall analytical approach, I moreover explore how notions of citizenship are represented in practices in the local radio stations and their programming; this includes the programme producers' interpretations and PAMP's (audience) perceptions. I pay attention to how representations of citizenship are associated with notions of ideals that are specific to certain social groups and peoples. This is of utmost relevance, as categorisations are central to demarcating citizenship as outlined previously in this section, distinguishing the citizenry from external as well as internal outsiders.

An analytical framework of negotiation informs this empirical study with a focus on the relations and processes of citizenship negotiations. PAMP are those who are negotiating notions of citizenship and they do so led by their habitus, influenced by the programmes broadcast by local radio and directed by their aspirations. Local radio is perceived as an institution facilitating citizenship negotiation, where ideals are mediated through programme producers' interpretations. PAMP appropriate or reject these ideals upon listening to radio. My specific analytical focus on the production of ideals and values of PAMP is on the ramifications for citizenship, which I perceive as

encompassing the local radio-citizen nexus, as they are played out in situated, localised practices. In studying PAMP negotiating notions of citizenship by means of local radio in rural Nepal during a period of political transition, I approach PAMP, local radio and citizenship as mutually constitutive in processes of citizenship negotiation. All three are part of the PAMP local radio-citizenship nexus, as they are constitutive as well as products of each other. PAMP embody those who negotiate notions of citizenship, the local radio provides the forum, mode, content and thus strategy of doing so, and citizenship is what partly structures local radio and PAMP's future aspirations. This analytical approach has methodological implications, which is the concern of the following chapter.

7. Methodology

The analysis of citizenship negotiation by means of radio in rural Nepal is an inductive study drawing on empirical material from qualitative and quantitative data collected during field studies conducted during fall 2009 and 2010 in the Rolpa district. This district has been selected as the location for my case study for the following reasons: First, it is among the poorest districts in the country, with pervasive inequalities, which makes it relevant to study PAMP and how they negotiate notions of citizenship. Furthermore, two local radio stations recently started broadcasting in the area, which, as indicated earlier, was previously unexposed to local electronic media and severely affected by the armed conflict. This situation therefore gives us the opportunity to follow the reinterpretation of values of citizenship through local radio in a location undergoing political transition.

According to the most recent 2001 census, Rolpa is ranked as the sixty-fifth poorest district among Nepal's seventy-five districts (Mega Research Centre and Publication 2010: 766) and is regarded as vastly remote from the decision and policy-making centre of Kathmandu. One road connects the district capital Libang with the rest of the country. The district has a Dalit population of fifteen percent (Dalits comprise thirteen percent of the total population in Nepal) (Pyakurel 2007: 14) and has experienced severe caste and gender discrimination (UNDP 2005, 2009). These are issues that underpinned the violent conflict and are central to most development interventions. Maoists struggled to remove gender and caste inequalities, and, as revealed in an extensive study of Nepal titled 'Unequal Citizens' (the World Bank and DFID 2006), these inequalities are central to current struggles over definitions of citizenship. Riven by poverty and discrimination as well as decision-making processes that are dominated by high-caste elites, the district resembles exactly what the counter-hegemonic powers

of the Maoists were striving to change (Hutt 2004). Rolpa was a Maoist hotbed throughout the armed revolt, and PAMP, particularly the younger people, were the main focus for recruitment and abduction in the attempt to gather fighters and helpers for the people's army and the people's war. Rolpa is thus a district wherein PAMP have been affected, both physically and mentally, by the conflict, and consequently a district where the political transition can be assumed to have a vast impact.

7.1 The Construction of Knowledge

Epistemologically, I perceive knowledge as socially constructed. Knowledge and research data are not simply gathered but purposefully produced in a process of social interaction between the researcher and people involved in the research (Dahler-Larsen 2002). In this process, all participants are repeatedly reflecting and redefining the research object. In this study, I apply a mixed method where I combine a quantitative method with the view of making statistical reasoning about the population I research with a qualitative reflexive method. Like Haraway (1988), I assert that there are indeed real world issues and relations. Although these issues and relations are continuously remodelled and challenged by actors, the issues do not acquire unified understanding, and my work, then, is to unravel the obvious and the taken-for-granted. The account I arrive at, finally, is my reading of the relations and processes being researched, produced in dialogue and in relation with different theoretical positions (and inspirations) and the subjects of the research. My account is thus neither completely arbitrary nor an objective depiction of reality, but a qualified, reflexive account of a positioned researcher, situated and localised in a specific context that influences the research process and outcome. How I transpose this approach methodologically is explained below.

7.2 Fieldwork and Methods

Semi-ethnographic fieldwork was conducted in Rolpa with additional interviews in Kathmandu (for a full overview of fieldwork see Appendix 1). In Rolpa the main language is Nepali, and only a few people speak English fluently. I speak Nepali myself to some extent but not sufficiently to make ethnographic interviews myself. Although it is never an ideal situation in qualitative interviews to use research assistants to conduct some of the interviews, it was thus the only viable option for obtaining the needed empirical material. When using research assistants in an interview situation, the material will inevitably be influenced by this choice, and I have attempted to take into

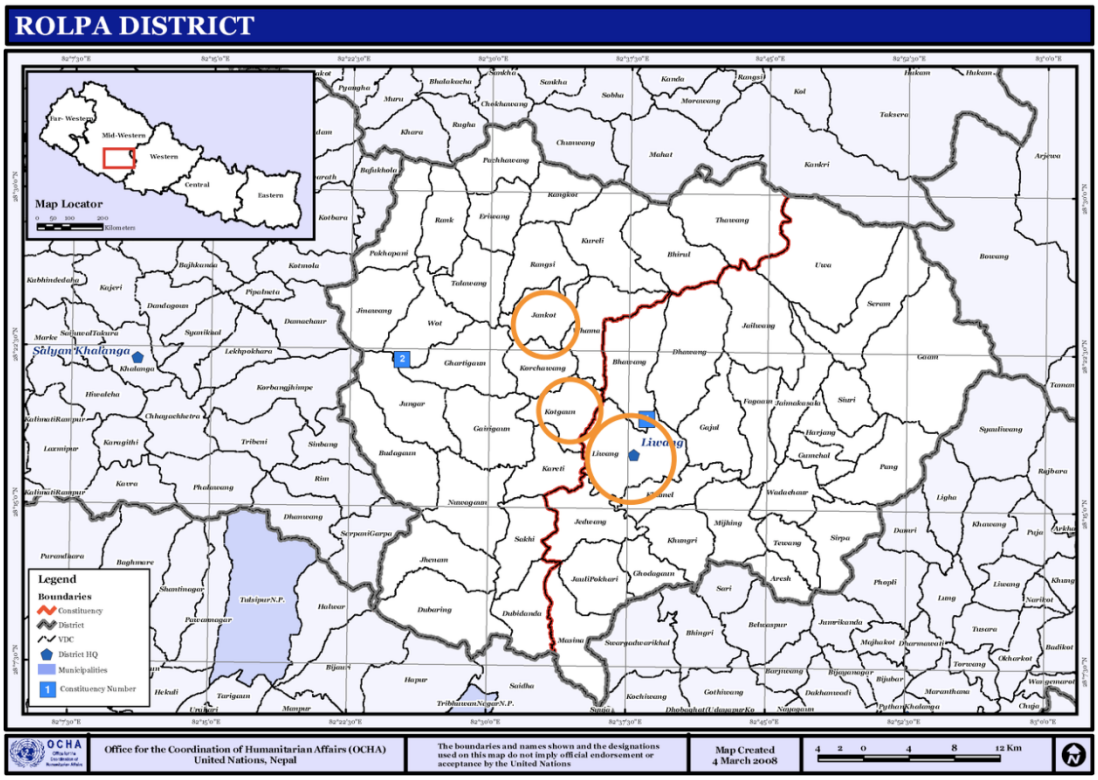
account this influence by laying down some ground rules prior to the selection of the research assistants as well as during the interviews. In this study, one male and one female research assistant have conducted large parts of the interviews, which ensured that we could respond to interview situations where gender sensitivity was required. We found this particularly useful when interviewing older respondents, where in some instances we sensed hesitation regarding cross-gender encounters. Another concern in the selection of my research assistants was that they should be familiar with rural Nepal and the lives and conditions of PAMP in this context, as well as have some insights into doing ethnographic studies. Both my research assistants fulfilled those criteria, as they both have studied sociology and have worked and received training in this field. Moreover, both my assistants are from the Tamang ethnic group, which as an ethnic group in the Hindu caste system has been subject to suppression. This made it easier for the interviewed PAMP to identify themselves with my research assistants (and vice versa). The fact that they both have a university degree and a good command of English gives them a higher social status than many of those interviewed – even so, both seemed to connect well with the respondents in a way that made most of them relaxed.

I undertook my fieldwork over two periods of time: Six weeks in 2009 (October-November) and six weeks in 2010 (October-November). The initial period of fieldwork in the fall of 2009 took place three years after the Janaa Andolaan II (the second people's movement, April 2006), which concluded the armed struggle. In the course of that period of fieldwork, the war was still visibly present in painted slogans on walls and in the shape of ruined buildings, but the immediate recollections of war had faded away in the minds of most of the people I spoke with. In 2008 there were groundbreaking elections for the constituent assembly in which the Maoists received the highest number of votes. The very first Maoist could take oath as prime minister of the newly declared republic of Nepal, and during fieldwork I sensed that the Maoists were no longer feared to the same extent as earlier, as they embodied optimism for many people. In talks I had with people, the war was recalled frequently but they all paid vigorous attention to the present with the opportunities of the newly elected constituent assembly and the foreseeable future.

A year later in October 2010 I commenced the second period of fieldwork. This time it seemed like many people I spoke with recovered from hangovers from the euphoria of the revolution and elections for the constituent assembly. People were impatient and wanted immediate social changes, employment and democracy; however, many gradually realized that political transition is a slow process that can be messy, chaotic

and with many agendas in play. In the design of the study, my ambition was to see if I could pinpoint a perspective of change between the two periods of fieldwork, and while I sensed the change from optimism in 2009 to impatience in 2010 amongst informants in Kathmandu and Libang, this perspective of change was more difficult to detect amongst PAMP interviewed for this study. Political transitions occur in various paces and are not experienced to the same extent throughout society. We shall see this in the pages ahead in which I will discuss people's perception of the current political transition.

Figure 1: Geographical location of selection of respondents



Adhering to my theoretical argument that local radio and PAMP must be explored and understood in their situated everyday practices, I selected my respondents in two geographical locations (throughout the thesis called urban and rural) to attain as broad a perspective as possible, presupposing that space is vital for citizen formation. The urban location is the district capital Libang VDC[22] and the rural areas comprise the two VDC's Kotgaun and Jankot, located approximately eight-ten hours walk northwest

[22] Each of Nepal's 75 districts is divided into a number of VDCs, approximately between 20 and 50. These are the lowest decentralised government unit and cover about 20 villages each.

of Libang (Figure 1). By focusing the research on two separate geographical locations, it is not my aim to make a comparative study. Instead, I compare when relevant or when such comparison reveals supplementary insights or illuminating perspectives concerning the issues of analysis (Stake 1994). Selecting my respondents in urban and rural locations, the objective was to examine how proximity to a locality may influence how radio broadcasting is appropriated, ideals are conveyed and negotiated, and how PAMP experience the political transition.

In the design of this study, the ambition was also to analyse the impact of the armed conflict and post-war recovery on current citizenship negotiation. Throughout Nepal, the rural areas were typically more exposed to Maoist influence, as the Maoists did not engage violently to the same extent in urban areas due to the stronger presence of soldiers and police whose barracks were located here. This influenced the experiences of war, as PAMP, additionally, in the urban area had access to information and political insights from a variety of sources, unlike PAMP in the rural areas. In other words, there are quite likely more sources influencing the creation of ideals of citizenship in the towns and cities than in the rural areas. The rural-urban locations in this study, representing the relatively urban and the relatively rural respectively, in a national context of remoteness, enabled me to explore the multitude of stories from PAMP with different experiences of the armed conflict and different sources from which to gain insights into what happened during the political transition. It also sheds light on which issues have been brought up for discussion and negotiation far from the centre of politics and decision-making.

While I was able to discuss the war and post-war recovery, sometimes also the painful incidents, with respondents in Kathmandu and Libang, in the interviews with PAMP there were relatively few quotes referring to the armed conflict. There can be various explanations to this: On the one hand, it could be that it is still too painful and the wounds are not healed yet, which is why the events are tabooed; on the other hand, their reluctance could be due to the fact that the ethnographic methods were insufficient and unable to grasp the subtleties of people's experiences from the war. Thirdly, it could be that because of the peace accord, the war today is articulated differently, despite the fact that PAMP's lives and the structures leading to the war, by and large, remain the same. It likely is a combination of the three, and whatever the reason, the armed conflict and post-war recovery are not dealt with separately in the analytical chapters, as in my data I have not been able to harvest sufficient material to produce solid arguments on these issues. Having said that, as the current political

transition is reminiscent of the armed conflict, throughout the thesis there will be references to the armed conflict and the structural conditions leading to the war.

7.3 The Semi-Ethnographic Case Study

I have based my research on a semi-ethnographic case study. Although this gives constraints with regards to the generalizable scope, I assert that such a case can offer substantial insight into issues and processes that can be both valid and reliable (Flyvbjerg 2006) and even point to what could be of significance elsewhere, without thereby being the truth. For that reason, I comply with Abu-Lughod (1991: pp. 150-151), who advocates 'ethnographies of the particular', which do not privilege the micro or diminish the limitations of particularities.[23] While ethnographic case studies can illuminate a plethora of aspects, the knowledge obtained is, obviously, always only partial and it will always be a subjective account, although a relevant and qualified one.

Grasping how notions of citizenship are negotiated by the means of local radio necessitates an approach that can reveal mutually constituting elements of PAMP negotiating notions of citizenship, along with their encounters. As I use a case study as the means to analyse how PAMP negotiate notions of citizenship by means of local radio in a period of political transition, it gives in-depth insights into the processes and mechanisms of PAMP's practices, experiences and aspirations – and additionally, it embraces contexts and situations.[24] The research thus fosters a comprehensive study of the lives of PAMP in the present period of transition. And it provides an in-depth illustration of how past, present and future, in the form of experiences, practices and aspirations, expose how notions of citizenship are negotiated by means of local radio. As an example of specific dynamics of citizenship negotiations in a country in democratic transition, the study can moreover feed into broader debates about PAMP, local radio and citizenship as dilemmas for development, thus theoretically questioning the way we theorise and research such issues.

Staying in Rolpa for two extended periods, roaming around at the radio stations and the bazaar and villages, I had plenty of opportunities to talk to different people from all

[23] Booth (1994: 14) warns against using such ethnographies as mere 'celebration of difference'.

[24] There is disagreement concerning the valid reasons for selecting a case (e.g. Stake 1994, Flyvbjerg 2001). I do not argue the case to be representative and I oppose scholars (e.g. Yin 1989), who argue that cases are only valuable in so far as they reject or represent the general. A qualitative case ought to be chosen not in order to be critical but to provide the possibility to learn the most. Flyvbjerg asserts that it is indeed possible to generalise from a single case: 'One can often generalise on the basis of a single case and the case study may be central to scientific development via generalisation as a supplement or alternative to other methods' (2001: 77).

walks of life, with and without my research assistants. During both field studies we stayed at the same places, so as I returned for the second period of fieldwork, my two research assistants and I were instantly recognised, which verified my sincerity and in return people opened even more up. Inasmuch as the first period of fieldwork demarcated issues of relevance, the second clearly provided the depth of research, as we could build on the rapport developed during the first visit.

7.4 Selection of Respondents for Qualitative Interviews

I concentrate the study on respondents aged fifteen and above with a particular focus on issues of caste and gender as factors affecting citizen negotiations, encompassing PAMP of various backgrounds in the study. I am concerned with both relatively privileged PAMP (i.e. those having employment, or attend school or have members of family attending school) but who live in an unprivileged context (rural, defined as remote, poor, vast inequalities), as well as those who are unprivileged and live in an unprivileged context. Moreover, age, gender, ethnicity and location are set as criteria to frame the selection of respondents in a balanced manner to purposively ensure a variety of PAMP respondents.

Table 1: Respondents in 2009 field interviews

		Gender		Age						Ethnicity				Location	
Respondent	**TOTAL**	**Male**	**Female**	**15-19**	**20-29**	**30-39**	**40-49**	**50-59**	**60+**	**B&C**	**Magar**	**Dalit**	**Other**	**Urban**	**Rural**
Local leaders	**5**	4	1	0	1	2	2	0	0	3	2	0	0	3	2
Relatively privileged PAMP	**11**	6	5	3	5	2	0	1	0	2	5	3	1	5	6
Unprivileged PAMP	**14**	6	8	2	1	3	3	3	2	4	2	6	2	8	6
TOTAL	**30**	**16**	**14**	**5**	**7**	**7**	**5**	**4**	**2**	**9**	**9**	**9**	**3**	**16**	**14**

In the first round of interviews in 2009, we recruited a local Dalit youth, who was home on vacation from his engineering studies in Pokhara, to guide us to different locations of privileged as well as underprivileged residential neighbourhoods in Libang, Kotgaun and Jankot. As we went to the different neighbourhoods to conduct our interviews, on the location I decided which criteria to apply in the selection of our respondents to assure broad representation, based on the set criteria (Table 1). Once the criteria were set, our guide assisted us in identifying our respondents, making the introductions and giving the initial explanation of the purpose of the interview and this study.

In the fall of 2010 I conducted my second round of field studies. A year in between fieldwork allowed for initial analysis of the former fieldwork, informing and adjusting the approach. In this round of field studies, besides doing interviews, the aim was to conduct an audience survey and do recordings of news and magazine radio programmes. As the recorded radio programmes subsequently were transcribed and translated for analysis, there were constraints in terms of how many respondents the translator/transcriber could manage within a reasonable time. I thus decided to reduce the scope of respondents and return to four of the respondents we interviewed the previous year (see full list of interviews in Appendix 1). This gave the scope to confront some of the same respondents with some of my preliminary findings, understandings, interpretations, doubts and uncertainties and allow the respondents to critically address some of my findings. Although four respondents is a small number, I attempted to assure as broad representation as possible amongst the four respondents (age, gender, ethnicity, location). Moreover, based on my analysis of the 2009 interviews, I found that these four respondents could reveal further insights on specificities related to citizenship negotiations. With Goma, for instance, I was particularly curious to discuss further with her how the praxis of 'Bolaune' (to make someone else speak) is unfolded in the NGOs she is engaged with. And with Arjun, I was eager to learn more about his experiences as a young male and his struggles to reconcile elements of feudalism from the past with modern aspirations of citizenship.

Returning to some of the same respondents and confronting them with my preliminary findings meant we could listen to their reflections and moreover acknowledge that those interviewed faced many of the same puzzles as I did. This is the research standpoint that George Marcus (1999) has called 'complicity' (see extended discussion in Couldry 2006: 61). As Marcus argues, a good way to express what is at stake in 'ethnographic' encounters is a 'mutual curiosity and anxiety' felt by both researcher and researched about their relationship to a 'third' – that is, to the sites elsewhere that affect, or even determine, their experiences or knowledge here (Marcus 1999). If, say, 'citizenship' theoretically is dispersed across many practices and sites, then my research must, in that spirit of complicity, be open to a range of images, languages and models of connection. Returning to some of the same respondents enriched the interviews with further depth and helped me gain further insight into the subtleties of how different strategies are applied when elements of feudalism from the past are negotiated against present ideals of inclusion.

7.5 Interview Guide and Semi-Structured Interviews

Based on the research questions, an interview guide was developed with two overall primary aspects that were to be discussed during the interview, and a number of questions were developed in line with the two aspects of the research question (see Appendix 5). While the interview guide provided the overall framework, the interviews were semi-structured with an inbuilt flexibility so that improvisation was allowed during the interview, collecting narratives and examples that relate to the two aspects. Thereby, it was not necessary that the questions be followed strictly; rather, they should be asked in an order that was natural in the interview situation. Inspired by the work by Suruchi Sood (2002: pp. 156-159), adjusted to the research questions for this thesis, the following is a short presentation of the two aspects discussed during the interviews:

1. How PAMP understand the inter-related concepts of citizenship, rights and social justice and their capacity to aspire to alternative visions of society.
    a. *Self-efficacy*. People's belief about their capability to exercise control over events that affect their lives.
    b. *Collective efficacy*. People's belief in their joint capacity to forge divergent self-interests into a shared agenda, to enlist supporters and resources for collective action, to devise effective strategies and to execute them successfully, and to withstand forcible opposition and discouraging setbacks.

2. Examine how Radio Rolpa and Radio Jaljala shape and are shaped by PAMP's strategies and aspirations and what negotiations these give rise to.
    a. *Reflection* (the degree to which audiences consider a radio message and integrate it into own lives). Divided into (a) *referential reflection* (the degree to which audiences relate radio message to their own personal experience), and (b) *critical reflection* (the degree to which audiences distance themselves from and engage in (re)constructions of radio programme at Radio Rolpa/Radio Jaljala and/or begin new life activities in the village).
    b. *Parasocial interaction* divided into (a) *affectively oriented interaction* (the degree to which audiences identify with characters or other salient characteristics of a radio programme (e.g. place or community), (b) *cognitively oriented interaction* (degree to which audience members pay attention to programme and think about it once it is over), and (c) *behaviourally oriented interaction* (the degree to which individuals talk about

media characters and rearrange their schedules to make time for exposure to media programme).

My research assistants conducted the semi-structured interviews with PAMP and some of the local leaders. Equipped with the interview guide of the major themes that I wanted to be covered in the interviews, the attempt was to make the interview as open and as close to normal dialogue as possible (Kvale 1997). Each interview took in average about seventy-five minutes. The most important aim of these interviews was not only to acquire people's insights on specific issues of PAMP's everyday lives, appropriation of local radio and futures, but also equally to notice the *way* things were addressed in terms of social relations and perceptions of PAMP. Knowing that building rapport and trust are vital to gaining information, some people were interviewed more than once during both fieldwork periods.

While my research assistants conducted the interviews with PAMP and local leaders, with translation assistance from one of the research assistants I interviewed some of the local leaders and representatives from local NGOs, who had a stake in the lives of PAMP: programme officers in NGOs working with different issues concerning PAMP in the district, the representative of the Federation of Nepalese Journalists (FNJ), VDC secretaries and representatives from each of the three most prominent political parties, namely the Maoists, the UML and Nepali Congress. Moreover, at Radio Rolpa and Radio Jaljala I made interviews with managers and staffs to achieve an understanding of their core values, the history of the radio station, why it was established and what it is they wanted to achieve. Furthermore, I wanted to grasp issues of roles and responsibilities: how are policies developed, how are staffs recruited and who are their alliances. My translator was instructed in the following procedure: I asked the question in English, and she would then translate it to the respondent in Nepali. As I understand some Nepali, I would then signal to her if I needed the answer back translated in English. Sometimes there was perhaps a word or an expression I was uncertain about, and conducting the interviews as such assured me that I understood and I got the meaning of what was said right. Using this approach, we made an effort to minimise the distance naturally created by the language barrier so that I could focus my attention on the respondent and not the interpreter when asking a question, smiling, nodding and in other ways encouraging the respondent to go on.

Moreover, in Kathmandu I made interviews with the Association of Community Radio broadcasters (ACORAB), the Community Radio Support Centre and the intellectual forum for discussions and research, Martin Chautari, with the purpose to understand

interpretations of media policies and their view on the current challenges for radio broadcasting. I also interviewed officials from Danida's programme in Nepal, HUGOU, who is a major donor and responsible for Denmark's bilateral support to the media sector. Furthermore, I interviewed the representative for the regional radio broadcasting association, AMARC (see full list in Appendix 1).

7.6 Translations and Transcriptions

Of the total number of seventy-three interviews conducted face-to-face both in Nepali and English, fifty-three of the interviews in Nepali were recorded and subsequently translated and transcribed to English. Moreover, twenty-one news and magazine radio programmes have been translated and transcribed. A Nepalese-English translator, who has worked as a translator for more than twenty years, has translated and transcribed the interviews and radio programmes. The act of translation and transcription implies that the data undergoes a certain amount of processing. Attempting to maintain most original details from the interview situation, I carefully took notes during the interviews I did (noting interviewees' mood, body language, emotional utterances, etc.), whereas with the interviews conducted by my research assistants, I took notes of the discussions I had with them subsequently to the interviews they conducted. In this way, by reflexively going through the notes, I acquired a sense of the field material beyond the strictly textual. This iterative process provided the opportunity for continuous building on experience and to make the necessary adjustments and improvements if needed. It was during such moments of reflection, for instance, that I early in the 2010 field studies discovered that the political changes felt and experienced by people I talked to in Kathmandu and Libang were not experienced in the same fashion by PAMP, and in concordance with my research assistants I thus decided to modify our methodology slightly. In order to have better conditions looking for subtleties of how notions of citizenship are negotiated, we decided to put even more emphasis on narratives, allowing our respondents to speak more freely on issues they found relevant. We did this purposefully, knowing that this might include the risk that an interview situation sometimes went astray.

The local radio stations are inseparable from the contexts in which they are situated. PAMP listening to the radios are part of, influenced by and shape their everyday lives. Likewise, radio management, paid staffs and volunteers are actors in the local context, from different backgrounds, with different affiliations and connections that inform their practice at the radio and their interpretations of the ideals to be broadcast. Also, the

radio station as a local institution and space is formed by its context, constituting an arena for struggles beyond what takes place in the studios. Political actors who aim to influence the radio, for instance Radio Jaljala and their affiliation with the Maoists, is also of concern to the study. Representations of ideals for future citizens are exposed in the radio programmes broadcast by the local radio stations. Therefore, I have done in-depth analysis of transcripts of selected news and magazine programmes to reveal conveyed and contested 'languages of citizenship'. I have spent time at the radio stations and listened and noted what was broadcast and talked with producers, managers and journalists.

To examine how Radio Rolpa and Radio Jaljala respectively inculcate civic values, the six o'clock evening news programme on both radio stations was recorded every day for one week (week 43/44, 2010) and was translated and transcribed later on. Furthermore, I asked the managers at both radio stations to give suggestions on radio programmes that bring up contemporary societal and political issues for public discussion. Radio Rolpa suggested *Samaya Sambad* (time dialogue), and Radio Jaljala suggested *Bichar Manch* (thought forum), and for one month (week 42-45, 2010) every week the two radio programmes were recorded and subsequently translated and transcribed.[25]

7.7 Data Analysis of Interviews

To prepare the data for further analysis, categories and condensed meanings in the form of codes were extracted from the statements in the interviews. All the transcripts were processed into NVivo qualitative data analysis software, and I went through the transcripts of the interviews one by one, inductively coding what was said. The coded data was organised in the following categories (Table 2), which were constructed based on (1) redundancy in certain topics that were addressed in similar ways by the respondents, and (2) topics brought forward by the interview guide.

Having completed the categorisation of the condensed material, I made a summary of each category, which gave me an overview of the major points, discussions and arguments stated in the interviews (see Appendix 10).

[25] It is only *Bichar Manch* that during the weeks of this sample has phone-ins from the listeners. The station manager of Radio Rolpa explained to me that the programme producer on *Samaya Sambad* was on leave and that his replacement had decided not to have phone-ins while he conducted the programme.

Table 2: Codes of condensed extracts of non-mediated and mediated citizen engagement (see also Appendix 10)

Practices of mediated and non-mediated citizen engagement
Civic and political knowledge
Sense of empowerment and agency
Capacities for collective action
Forms of participation
Networks and sense of solidarities
Knowledge dependency
Tokenistic or captured forms of participation
Accountability and representation in networks
Responsive and accountable authorities
Access to state services and resources
Realisation of rights
State responsiveness and accountability
State services and resources
Social, economic and political reprisals
Violent or coercive state response
Cohesive societies and mediated discursive spaces
Actors and issues in public spaces
Social cohesion across groups (ethnicities, gender, caste, age)
Social hierarchies and exclusion
Horizontal conflicts and violence

Different media reports and studies undertaken by donors have not been systematically coded but read like 'normal literature'. I have, however, analysed Radio Rolpa and Radio Jaljala's written vision and mission declarations to understand the two radio station's citizenship ideals and the languages used and thus notions of citizenship conveyed through specific scripts, which in this case were made up primarily from the these statements that define and guide the two radio stations (see Appendix 3). I have studied these documents, and in the subsequent chapters the ideals and representations of citizenship in these documents will provide the basis against which the programme producers' interpretations and audiences' appropriations of citizenship ideals are discussed. Following Basit (2003: 147), the quotations from the interviews or documents used in the course of presenting the findings were selected on the basis of their 'illuminative' potential. However, in presenting the findings I have gone beyond describing the 'most important themes' from the data, as I have examined in detail excerpts from the interviews through a textual analytic approach to reveal how language practices carry the power that reflects the interests of those who speak. Some of the quotes from the transcripts have been edited, solely for language purposes, in order to make the flow of the sentences more consistent.

7.8 Participant Observation

Participant observation is core to ethnographic research (Dewalt and Dewalt 2002) and it was an essential component of my fieldwork. To me it implied informally sharing

moments and space with people, and I found the casual interactions often greatly insightful. Often I visited the radio stations, observing how they produced and aired the programmes, organised and managed the radio stations and collected and put together stories for the radio programmes. I did not always have a fixed schedule for my visits. Often I was just sitting or standing in the studio (next to the technician, not with the host), or at the manager's/administration office, or in the corridor or on the veranda without participating as a non-interfering observer (although I have no illusion that the situation was unaffected by my presence). Often I ended up small talking with one of the staffs or volunteers. When I was not doing interviews, visiting the radio stations, doing observations or coordinating the survey or the like, I took part in whatever activity occurred: went for a walk and talk with the landlord in the house we lived, conversed with his wife in the kitchen while preparing for the evening *Dal Bhat* (rice with lentils) and 'hanging out' and chatting with people in the bazaar, in the shop when I bought something or when people were working or merely on their way to somewhere else. In this way I could attain an idea about daily life, and whenever possible, through informal inquiring, I tried to question my own presuppositions and some of theirs.

Regarding the timing of the periods, fieldwork took place at the time of and right after the paddy harvest and encompassed the period during the biggest annual Hindu festivals, Dashain and Tihar, during which many migrants, students and married daughters go back to their parental homes. That made it easy to meet people in their homes.

7.9 Survey

During the second period of fieldwork, I conducted a survey with the aim to get an overall insight about the media landscape in Rolpa and PAMP's use of local radio and their perception of various notions on citizenship. Based on the main objective of this study, to explore how notions of citizenship are negotiated by means of local radio in rural Nepal, initially a questionnaire was developed (see questionnaire in Appendix 2).

The construction of questions was developed along the lines of the research questions and to set quantifiable measures and variables. To overcome the difficulties in establishing reliable and valid measures in terms of the questions and scales used, some precautions were made. First, to assure applicability of the questions in a Nepalese context, I thoroughly discussed the questionnaire with my two research assistants to

assure that terms, notions, beliefs, attitudes and intentions were mutually understood and correctly translated into Nepali. Second, in order to prevent misunderstandings when the questions were asked to the respondents, the questionnaire was piloted with the students who assisted in conducting the survey.

Cluster sampling is used in the three VDC's of my study area: *Jankot*, *Kotgaun* and *Libang*, implemented as multistage sampling. The survey is a representative sample of 520 respondents in the three VDC's based on the *2006 Voter's List* from the Election Commission in Kathmandu, which states that the three VDC's comprise a total of 2,608 households (Table 3). Each of a total of 2,608 households in the three VDCs was allocated a unique number, and 'random number generator' software computed 520 random numbers amongst the 2,608 numbers (equal to twenty percent of the households of the three VDC's represented in this study), where each number then corresponded to a specific and unique household (see Appendix 6).

Table 3: Number of households by Ward (Election Commission in Kathmandu, 2006)

Ward/Hamlet	Jankot	Kotgaun	Libang	TOTAL
1	86	73	113	
2	37	68	94	
3	45	89	118	
4	50	137	88	
5	57	85	133	
6	53	119	199	
7	57	122	221	
8	36	101	142	
9	81	88	116	
TOTAL	**502**	**882**	**1,224**	**2,608**

My two research assistants and I trained twenty students from a local secondary school in Libang for half a day on how to do the interviews. The students were instructed on how to localise the households and select the respondents, and how to act in the interview situation (see instruction in Appendix 4). Initially, we did pilot interviews where the students interviewed each other. Subsequently, we collected all the questionnaires, and together with the students we identified possible mistakes and used these examples to discuss the *do's* and *don'ts* in the interview situation.

Once the students returned with the filled questionnaires from the field, these were checked line by line by my two assistants, while the student was still present and possible doubts were cleared immediately. The collected data from the questionnaires were subsequently entered into SPSS statistics software for analysis. To assure that the entering of data into SPSS had not been skewed, fifty-one randomly selected

questionnaires were checked for mistakes. In six of the questionnaires, only minor mistakes were found, like in form No. 225 where in Q49 there should have been entered 'longer than a year' but it was mistakenly entered 'between half a year and a year'.

The use of SPSS extended the scale and scope of the analysis and helped in revealing patterns of relations underlying the data, as well as correlations between variables by cross-tabulating results. To unfold what stories my data told and the basic patterning in the data, I initially looked at descriptive statistics to provide numeric maps of the data set. After having mapped the responses to every variable, reporting both the number who selected that category and the percentage answering, I could then start exploring how the variables interact, evaluating the implications of the main findings from my qualitative data and explaining how they relate to the research question. The quantitative data has thus been used mainly to complement the qualitative data, as the survey has been analysed in light of the qualitative material.

The use of complementary methods has allowed me to triangulate my findings and to capture a more complete, holistic and contextual portrayal of PAMP and their negotiation of notions of citizenship by means of local radio. Moreover, the use of multiple measures has also uncovered a unique variance, which otherwise may have been overlooked had I used single methods. It is here that the application of qualitative methods, in particular, have played a prominent role by producing data and suggesting conclusions to which other methods might have been blind. In this sense, triangulation has been used not only to examine the same phenomenon from multiple perspectives but also to enrich my understanding by allowing for new and deeper dimensions to emerge (Jick 1979: pp. 603-604).

7.10 The Researchers' Position

Before starting my research for this doctoral thesis, I lived and worked in Nepal, working with a Danish NGO as an advisor (from 2004-2008). It was in this time period that the civil war ended, and Nepal commenced the ongoing political transition, and I was placed in the centre of all this, enduring the curfews and constraints as part of everyday life and with some of my closest Nepalese colleagues and friends deeply involved in political incidents prefacing the second Jana Andolan in April 2006. All these events made a deep impact in my life and have influenced this research. With those important personal life events in the back of my mind, I enter my research guided

by a democratic egalitarian habitus. Being a middleclass citizen coming from an egalitarian democracy, I was raised in a home of leftist political viewpoints and was academically schooled in a critical environment scrutinising structures of inequality. While all this naturally impacts my stance in the field as well as in the analysis, it does not do so unreflectively. Being reflexive and continuously examining one's personal presumptions is a requirement for good research. I have no illusion that I can eliminate my habitus, and instead I put forward my own position to equip the reader for my analysis.

While I worked and resided in Nepal, I worked mainly with local radio and the mitigation of issues related to caste and gender discrimination. I decided to work with these issues of inequality, because this was consistent with my own egalitarian habitus. My study likewise exposes my habitus, which is not necessarily a disadvantage, though there is a risk that I over-emphasise unequal relations. Having this in mind, I aim at being reflexive and questioning not merely with regard to grasping what I research but also my very own position in creating, analysing and reporting my findings.

7.11 Ethical Issues

During some of the interviews, the respondents recalled and recounted difficult moments in their life trajectories, experiences during the war as well as various events and relations that caused emotional distress. For instance, in one of the interviews with a woman in her early thirties, at one point my research assistant asked about whether the woman ever discussed HIV/AIDS with her friends and family. The woman was uncomfortable sharing her viewpoint, as there was someone present in the room while the interview took place. Later, that person left the room and the woman then returned to the topic and more freely expressed her opinion as to how she discusses these issues with her friends and family. With my two research assistants, we agreed that in delicate interview situations, such as this, people were always asked if they felt uncomfortable sharing these difficult events and preferred to change the topic. PAMP's names have been anonymised and pseudonyms have been applied. Of course, I have the names of all those involved.

7.12 Methodology in Sum

In sum, this study is essentially empirical. I have investigated how PAMP negotiate notions of citizenship by means of local radio through a semi-ethnographic case study

in which the main objective has been to explore and learn. Based on my analytical approach, I research the processes and practices of how PAMP negotiate notions of citizenship, influenced by local radio, in the course of political transition in rural Nepal. My semi-ethnographic fieldwork has allowed for detailed insights into some crucial themes of historically constituted norms and ideals, transitions, inequalities and future aspirations, while the survey has provided an overview of some of the larger patterns of the changes in people's appropriation of the new media available in Rolpa, as well as their perceptions of the changing political structures during political transition. The primary subjects of the research are PAMP situated in towns and villages respectively. Complying with my analytical framework, the research incorporates multiple locations and actors that influence PAMP and the local radio stations. Therefore, I have also applied different methods in triangulating as many stories and insights as possible, as I aim to make the research reflexive in all respects, being transparent about my different methodological choices and their ramifications in the complex processes of citizenship negotiations by the means of local radio. Finally, there is the familiarity with Nepal and its language, along with my personal experiences of the armed conflict in combination with my democratised egalitarian habitus, which have affected the production of data for this study. I am not an observing outsider, but neither am I a native. I am not neutral, nor am I aware of all my biases. Hence, my account is a personal reading that lives up to the criteria of validity, as I assure transparency in revealing my methodological considerations underlying the analysis and findings presented in this study. So far I have revealed how this study is composed theoretically and methodologically. The next step, then, is to provide an account of what historically constitutes the overall context of local radio and citizenship negotiation in rural Nepal.

PART II: CONTEXT

8. Historical Traits

> The entire event was ridiculous. Not just the ceremony, but the breathlessly orientalist coverage it received on TV the world over: we looked, suddenly, like the medieval kingdom that the outside world saw us. Right now, for example, people didn't want Hindu rituals; they wanted scientific evidences for the truth about the massacre. They wanted to regain their lost civil liberties. And they wanted political direction. The international media preferred to overlook all this in favour of the fey cultural antics of a dying order, antics that confirmed, in their minds, that Nepal was (is still!) indeed a *Shangri-La*[26] (Thapa 2005: 33).

The quote above is from Manjushree Thapa's widely acclaimed novel *Forget Kathmandu* (2005) and her afterthought about *Saiya Daan*; the Hindu bed donation ceremony that was televised eleven days after king Birendra's death in the 2001 Narayanhiti royal massacre. During this period, the Maoist-led armed revolt was increasing in strength and left clouds of political uncertainty hanging over Nepal with thousands of people killed and internally displaced. The king's sudden and dramatic death, as heir to the throne prince Dipendra supposedly[27] killed nine members of his family and himself, added numerous questions and additional uncertainty about the future leadership of the country. Watching the funeral ceremony on television, Thapa sees 'the ridiculous' from a distance, as she reflects on how Nepal's rich culture, fey symbolism and picturesque beauty can perplex observers to Nepal's underlying chaotic struggle for reason and genuine democracy.

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[26] Shangri-La is a fictional place described in the 1933 novel Lost Horizon by British author James Hilton. Hilton describes Shangri-La as a mystical, harmonious valley, gently guided from a lamasery, enclosed in the western end of the Kunlun Mountains. Shangri-La has become synonymous with any earthly paradise but particularly a mythical Himalayan utopia — a permanently happy land, isolated from the outside world. In the quote, Thapa relates to the tint of 'orientalism' and preconceived archetypes foreigners often have trying to understand Nepal.

[27] Diehard conspiracies circulate that do not back the official version. Most Nepalese believe that there was a conspiracy involved in the elimination of the royal family, so that the last king Gyanendra could succeed his brother Birendra to the throne (read for instance Thapa (2005) and http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Nepalese_royal_massacre) [checked August 19, 2012].

A growing media sector has indeed shed new light on Nepal and the country's democratic transition, which, during the last sixty years after the transformation of the autocratic Rana regime (1864-1950), has undergone a tremendous transformation into a modern political system of parliamentary multi-party democracy. Along with all the challenges in the transformation of the state structure, something more fundamental has changed the ways people engage themselves in decision-making. In the slipstream of the two succeeding people's movements in 1990 and 2006 respectively, a new kind of public has emerged and a new political culture that made it possible to create new social dynamics and mediated and non-mediated spaces for citizens to reflect upon and negotiate the future outlook of the country. This chapter establishes the historical context and discusses the major threads that over time have influenced these mediated and non-mediated discursive spaces in Nepal, and how these have influenced the contestation of notions of citizenship and played different roles at different times in the transition of Nepal's political system.

8.1 Characteristics

Nepal is a small country sandwiched in between the two age-old giants of India and China. Tied with the accessible lowland Terai, it has always been closely connected to India in regards to trade, culture and politics, whereas China, even throughout the Maoist uprising, has stayed an obscure neighbour (Gellner 2008). The country extends from vegetative planes over green hills to high mountains. Because of its rough topology, developing modern transportation has been challenging, and many rural villages continue to be accessible only by foot. Many districts take days of walking to arrive at, thus large parts of the country have remained relatively isolated until recently. The sense of being part of a Nepali nation appears to fade with the number of days it takes to travel there from Kathmandu. The only representations of the state in many rural village areas are the public schools and the health post (in so far as these are functioning).

The country consists of a wide range of different castes, ethnic groups and languages. The caste system, resembling the Hindu system's hierarchical ranking originating from India, has long infused and significantly structured relations between groups of people in Nepal.[28] To this day, it functions as a durable principle of social and cultural ranking

[28] In-migrating Hindus introduced caste and Hinduism from India, and Hindu values and practices were appropriated and adopted by several non-Hindu groups in the country. The Hindu category has been fundamental

and exclusion alongside gender and ethnicity (DFID/World Bank 2006), and caste and gender bias continue to be persistent, especially in rural hill areas, like the one of this study.

8.2 Rana Autocracy

Modern Nepal emerged in the late 18th century when Prithvi Narayan Shah, the ruler of the small principality of Gorkha, after decades of conflicts between medieval kingdoms, formed a unified country from a number of independent hill states. Prithvi Narayan Shah decided at an early age to conquest the Kathmandu Valley and create a single state, which he accomplished in 1768.[29] The heirs of Prithvi Narayan Shah proved unable to maintain firm political control over Nepal, and a period of internal turmoil followed (Joshi and Rose 1966: pp. 24-26). A conflict between Nepal and the British East India Company over the states bordering Nepal and India led to the Anglo-Nepalese War (1814–16), in which Nepal suffered a complete defeat. The Treaty of Sugauli was signed in 1816, ceding large parts of the Nepali territories of Terai and Sikkim (nearly one-third of the country) to the British in exchange for Nepalese autonomy. The *Rana dynasty* subsequently ruled Nepal from 1846 until 1950 and used the Shah monarch as figurehead and made the position of the prime minister and other government positions heritable (Joshi and Rose 1966: pp. 35-39).

During those days infrastructure was poor. There were only approximately 100 kilometres of railroad tracks and a few kilometres of paved roads in the entire nation. Telephones, electricity and postal services combined served only one percent of the population and only in certain pockets (Savada 1991). Publications were strictly controlled by the state, and for a long time there was only the newspaper *Gorkhapatra* founded in 1901 (Adhikary 2000: 13), which had a very small readership due to high levels of illiteracy. Only two percent of the adult population were literate, the infant mortality rate was more than sixty percent and average life expectancy was thirty-five years. Less than one percent of the workforce was employed in modern industrial jobs, and eighty-five percent of the national income came from agriculture, mostly done by tenants using ancient methods and working under uncertain contracts (Savada 1991).

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to nation-building since the sixteenth century and was officially reinforced by the state during the Rana regime, especially through the *Muluki Ain* (the country code of 1854), which categorised and ranked all groups of people (e.g. DFID/World Bank 2006).

[29] http://citizendia.org/History_of_Nepal [checked August 19, 2012].

A usual portrayal of Nepal by the mid 20th century is that it was thoroughly a hierarchical society. Caste, ethnic and linguistic differences thrived, and only the B&C and a few Newars had any say in the national government. Government expenses were mainly for salaries and benefits for the army, police and civil servants. Nepal continued having autonomous principalities (Rajya) based on agreements with former local kings, and the landlords acted as small dictators on their own lands (Savada 1991). The government completely disregarded the Terai, the breadbasket in the southern lowlands of the country, and many of its inhabitants thus had more affiliations to India than Nepal. National integration was in general a major problem, and in the 1940s there were a number of developments preparing the ground for a more open country. Political parties were founded outside Nepal in exile in India, and there was also a lively publication of newspapers circulating among the Nepali diaspora in India (see Gaenszle 2007), preparing to overthrow the autocratic regime.

Despite the fact that underground political activities gradually created a parallel world and a counter public, and the Rana regime must have 'felt the heat', the political entity that was the Nepali state continued to exist. Wilmore (2008: 67) notes that the regime 'had neither the resources nor the political will to use the available communication technologies to do anything other than ensure the maintenance of their centralised control of the different parts of the kingdom'. Moreover, he quotes Seddon (1979: 28) to describe how the state apparatus 'under these circumstances was quite incapable of laying down the technical and social infrastructure essential for national integration and development.' A similar observation is made by Joshi and Rose (1966: 490), who describe how the leaders of the 1950 revolution, who eventually overthrew the Rana regime, 'soon discovered that the governmental machinery that had seem omnipotent from the outside was, when viewed from the inside and in its reality, quite weak and fragile.'

8.3 Panchayat Homogenisation: the King and his Subjects

Despite the fact that the democratic opposition succeeded in overthrowing the Rana regime, which eventually led to Nepal's first democratic elections in 1950, democracy was short-lived for barely a year, as king Mahendra used the emergency powers granted to him in the constitution to grasp all powers. Three decades thereby followed in which the state and the monarchy proceeded to develop an ideology that would preserve a viable nationwide union of interests. This ideology had three main elements: the promotion of Hinduisation, modernisation and development (Bikaas) as the guiding

principles of government policy, and the extension of a legislative system based upon partyless Panchayat 'democracy' (Pradhan 2007: 14).

Jha (2010) describes how the strong centralisation of the rule and the homogenisation of the citizens in those days were used by the state as ideologies of how to grant citizenship on the basis of an individual's place of birth and descent. In the 1962 Constitution, there was a provision of two years of residence for a person of 'Nepali origin' and a minimum of twelve years of residence for a person of 'non-Nepali origin'. Moreover, restricting provisions on the 'ability to speak and write Nepali' were made mandatory for obtaining citizenship on the basis of naturalisation (ibid.). Jha (2010) outlines how the 1962 Constitution and the 1964 Citizenship Act did not declare how the term 'Nepali origin' should be defined, and it was thus assigned to the officials issuing the citizenship certificates to interpret the term 'Nepali origin'. The government officials interpreted a person of Nepali origin as Pahadi origin (the Indo-Aryan ethnic group of the hills, basically the Bahun/Chhetries) (Jha 2010), and many women and people from ethnic poor and marginalised communities, who were inefficient or less effective in oral and written abilities in the Nepali language, were thus denied citizenship certificates.

Although caste-based discrimination became illegal in 1963, it continued to define interactions between social groups. It therefore spilled over, too, into the ways in which the descendants of the so-called low-caste groups experienced barriers to participation in Nepal's political system and thus access to government opportunities, resources and services (UNDP 2009: 19). Richard Burghart (1996) speaks about the Panchayat period as a 'lordly political culture' that legally and ritually represented the body politic, as public order was understood to exist in this unity. The notion of 'public' (*Sarkari*) figured in three different socio-legal contexts: it referred to something belonging to the person of the ruler, something pertaining to the state and something to which all people had access (ibid: 302). One might refer to this as corporatist culture: 'loyalty to the group is more important than individual needs and desires', and different measurements were taken to ensure control and loyalty. At this time, the government inaugurated a policy of nationalism: the '*Ek Bhasa*, *Ek Besh*, *Ek Desh*' (one language, one dress, one nation) policy (Gellner 2008: 10), which implied an ideology of non-antagonistic politics. This official position was not enforceable in the long run, and a culture of 'counterfeit reality' gradually emerged, especially mobilised by the exile political parties in India. A unique and lively public debate in the diaspora communities of Banaras and Darjeeling, inspired by the Hindi language movement and making use of a growing print capitalism, began to publish journals, newspapers

and experimenting with new genres of writing (Gaenszle 2007). Many lived 'double lives' in the monarchy (government of one), living both a life as dictated by the will of their lord and master and in parallel a life of their own (Burghart 1996: 306), and it was thus not everyone who actually believed in the official ideology. The suppression of an open public was not total, and there was more control of action than control of thought. Besides the influx of publications from Nepalese diasporas in India, there was a lively production of literature comprised of hidden transcripts (Grandin 1994). As the different social groups and political groups that existed in Nepal could not be politically subsumed within the framework of the Panchayat system, political opposition to the Panchayat system throughout the 1980s finally forced king Birendra in 1990 to recognise the political realities that could no longer be hidden.

8.4 First Multiparty Democracy

In April 1990, politically motivated groups, primarily in urban areas, spearheaded the *Janaa Andolan* towards ending the Panchayat system and established (or restored) democracy. As politics in the period leading up to the people's movement was banned, many of the activists involved in overthrowing the Panchayat system organised themselves in forums. Some of the renounced forums are Democratic National Unity Forum, National People's Forum, Civic Rights Forum, People's Right Protection Forum and Human Rights Protection Forum (Basnet 2010). The forums were civil in name but political in objective, and when democracy was restored in 1990, it became difficult to distinguish the civil from the political among people organised in the forums. Hence, members of the political parties had strong ties with civil society (and vice versa), and the line of separation was very thin. The dominant political parties began to establish NGOs, unions and professional groups, i.e. students, teachers, professors, lawyers, doctors, journalists, etc., and later also caste- and ethnic-based affiliated organisations to sustain their membership base and implement their political programmes and activities (ibid.). This created a paradoxical situation: on the one hand, spaces for civic action were broadened, and at the same time these civic spaces became deeply politicised.

In more or less the same pace with Nepal's political transition, foreign donors opened their offices in the country to support the government as well as civil society. In Chapter 4.1, I discussed how Nepali NGOs in these years opened and how the development of the Nepalese democracy and the donor-driven development of NGOs were closely linked, both equally pursuing the objective to ensure Bikaas (development),

thus commencing a period of 'Bikaase democracy' based largely on engagement with donors (Des Chene 1996). Despite the different observations on the extent to which Bikaas influences civil society and NGOs, NGOs appear to have contributed towards the empowerment of marginalised groups and the improvement of socio-economic development in Nepal (see Parajuli 2003). A consequence of these efforts today is a constitution that since 1990 has guaranteed civil rights and freedom of speech, which also has paved the way for the entry of new actors into the media sector. Especially radio stations have a strong hold ensuring development, also with good support from the donors that were particularly fond of this medium. The first license to an independent radio station was issued to *Radio Sagarmatha*, which opened in 1997 in Kathmandu and later became a source of inspiration for multiple communities to establish their own radio station, not only in Nepal but throughout South Asia. *Radio Madanpokhara* and *Radio Lumbini* followed shortly after *Radio Sagarmatha* and were the first independent broadcasters outside the Kathmandu Valley, and many more soon mushroomed in different parts of the country. All this brought about a booming and lively political culture and increased the scope for public debate, which slowly reached the villages as well. However, there are critics who argue that the elite captured the many radio stations and NGOs opening these years, as most are owned and managed by the already privileged (see e.g. UNDP 2009: 163, Pringle and Subba 2007: 4). Moreover, many lack internal democracy, transparency and accountability and are highly dependent on foreign donors, which also puts English language constraints on those who can (and cannot) engage with the donors (Tamang 2003, Bhattachan 2003, Mishra 2001). As Dilli Ram Dahal stated (2001: 113): 'Almost all NGOs in Nepal survive with donor funding. Once the donors withhold the money for some reason, most of those NGOs will collapse immediately.'

Despite the fact that the state in these years indeed became more inclusive, critics argued that the history of a deficient democratic culture exercised during the Panchayat period persisted. Along with elements of caste discrimination, neopatrimonialism continued inside the political parties, NGOs and the mass media, and created counter publics and hindered an open, public debate. More people gained access to positions, decision-making and resources, but privileges were distributed highly unequally. Based upon the cultural practices of *Aaphno Manchhe*[30] (own people)

[30] *Apphono Manchhe*, one's own people, is a dominant social principle in Nepal. Apphno Manchhe is a persons' inner circle (it can cover family, extended family and different loyalty positions). People strongly differentiate between Aaphno Manchhe and the rest, between us and them, between those you have to take care of and the rest, who are almost regarded as non-persons (Bista 1991: 97).

and *Chakari*[31] (literally 'to serve', a Nepalese system of patron-client connections), which ensure and legitimise nepotism and privileges, combined with a naturalised corruption (legitimate abuse of national resources by a small elite), all kinds of corruption augmented and politics turned into a bitter fight to acquire one's hands on communal resources for one's own good (Raj 2006). Moreover, on-going street demonstrations and Bandhs encumbered life. After three decades of strict absolute Panchayat rule, people wanted change, and the political disputes along with a rising corruption and an apparent lack of progress for the general public nourished an increasing sense of frustration.

8.5 The Maoist People's War and the Royal Massacre

The Maoists tapped into the anger and frustration sensed by many, and with the spread of the 'People's War' that began in February 1996, the Maoist Party made a list of forty demands and claimed to fight for a secular republican state free from discrimination and inequality, fighting for social and economic reforms. They developed their own counter culture (anti-bourgeois lifestyle) – a counter-public with their own underground papers and *Dhoka* mobile radio stations. To many, the Maoist move did not come as a surprise. In February 2001, even the US ambassador to Nepal expressed sympathy as he made the following remarks about the Maoist demands:

> I've never addressed the Maoist situation directly – the conditions that have bred the Maoist movement are very serious and most of them should be addressed. I would tell you quite frankly that if you look at the forty points I think most sane people would agree with a large percentage of it. You can quote me if you want, but I do look at them regularly: should there be property rights, should discriminatory treaties [with India] be abandoned?[32]

The struggle started as an insurgency, but turned into war between the Maoists and the royal army. Initially, the Maoists indoctrinated and trained villagers and attacked government officials and police posts. In some key districts (primarily remote hill districts, Rolpa included) in which they had considerable control, they set up their own

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[31] *Chakari* is a practice of secular offering used by those who are seeking to win promotion or access to some privilege. It is a practice that sustains relations between superiors and inferiors in secular life. It is a system that judges loyalty and obedience and that uses these criteria instead of qualifications to access power and resources. (Bista 1991: pp. 89-94).

[32] Nepali Times, Issue #29, 2001 (www.nepalitimes.com/issue/2001/02/09/Interview/8735) [checked August 19, 2012].

Janaa Sarkar (people's government). The police were sent in to combat the Maoists, but they were insufficiently prepared to respond to the Maoists' strikes. This became clear after a large amount of police personnel had been killed in numerous attacks in early 2001 (Hutt 2004). After peace talks with the government broke down, Maoist attacks came to be more regular and ruthless. The government wanted to use the army to fight the Maoists, but the king stopped this. Instead, a paramilitary unit of armed police was set up to counter the Maoists.

The royal massacre in 2001, referred to in the introduction to this chapter, was a major turn, which brought the king into the public arena as an active figure in the conflict. The extensive conspiracies that king Gyanendra had orchestrated the massacre challenged the public imagination of the monarchy (government and state 'as one'), and gradually this image dismantled for various reasons. First of all, there was the realisation that a 'god' can be killed, and this wrecked the image of a godly immortal king that people had internalised (the king as the incarnation of the Hindu god Vishnu). The extensive use of drugs and alcohol in the palace also dismantled the heavenly image.[33] Gradually, people started criticising the monarchy as it was increasingly scrutinised in the media and the royals gradually became 'earthly figures'. Cartoons were made about the royal family in various newspapers. Feminism was also up for public debate these years, and discussions circulated as to whether the crown princess could become the future queen, breaking the tradition of males as sole successors to the throne. The Maoists contributed to this by severely criticising the new king and launched several large-scale attacks. In many places, people took down the mandatory photos of the king and the queen, either intentionally or the Maoists forced them. This was a strong symbolic action against leading national ideals.

During the fall of 2001, the Maoists and the government launched negotiations. Maoists demanded an interim government to draft a new constitution by an elected constituent assembly and to declare Nepal a republic. In other words, they aimed to redefine the nation state. Maoists pulled back the demand for a republic, and the government released sixty Maoist captives in response. The demand to elect a constituent assembly was, however, disapproved by the government. The Maoists withdrew and launched major attacks in November 2001, and for the first time they attacked the army, which changed the insurgency into a war between the Maoists and

[33] According to reports, Dipendra had been drinking heavily and had 'misbehaved' with a guest, which prompted his father, king Birendra, to tell his son to leave the party. One hour later, Dipendra returned to the party armed with weapons and killed nine members of his family, including the king and himself (e.g. Thapa (2005); http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Nepalese_royal_massacre) [checked August 19, 2012].

the royal army. The king then declared a state of emergency, limited political and civil freedoms and used the army to fight the Maoists. This was only a few months after the 2001 terrorist attacks in the United States, and backed by the US government, the government tagged the Maoist terrorists and a new terror statute was composed. This was the outset of a very violent period in the armed conflict, in which large numbers of people were abducted and civilians were killed for cooperating with the army or on charges of being Maoists. In rural areas, the war fostered immense insecurity and obstructed normal everyday life. Villagers were sandwiched between the two forces: during nighttime, the Maoists came for food and shelter, and at sunlight the army arrived to ask about the Maoists. Many people coped with steady pressure from both sides, and they constantly feared for their lives (Hutt 2004, Thapa 2004).

Being engaged in the war, the Maoists carried out various activities in rural areas through which they imparted their ideals of citizenship. They took firm action against caste and gender discrimination and domestic violence. They banned and penalised the consumption of alcohol and playing cards and forced rural people to stop brewing the local *Rakshi*. Rural people noticed that Maoist commanders were often women and Dalits, which confirmed their egalitarian ideology.[34] They made people supply workforce to public facilities (irrigation, trails, shelters, etc.) and claimed cash, especially from schoolteachers (Gellner 2008). They terrorised landlords into fleeing (or killed them) and distributed the land to landless people, along with doing arbitrary punishments against the opposition. By taking charge of local development and executing the rule of law, Maoists in some places became the state (ibid.).

In June 2002, the king put an end to the House of Representatives, and half a year later he expelled the prime minister and seized executive power for himself, reassembling a small cabinet of pro-monarchy ministers who also had functioned under the Panchayat (Hutt 2004). The king now encountered dual opposition: from the Maoists through their people's war and from most political parties. India, the US and the UK now interfered to support the royal army and urge political parties to negotiate with the king, fearing a Maoist takeover (Hutt 2004, Baral 2006).

In the subsequent years, violence intensified and attacks escalated from both the royal army and the Maoists. Notwithstanding the aggressive nature of these violent incidents, they forced people to consider their relationship with the state. Where before the king lived a quiet and almost parallel life inside the palace compounds, he now began

[34] Joining the Maoists was the fastest way for PAMP to transcend social stigma and gain status (Gellner 2008).

paying more and more visits around the country and appeared at religious festivals like Dashain, thus displaying his insignia of power and habitus of royal sovereignty. The police and army became increasingly visible in their fights and hunts for the Maoists. The state's visibility had an effect of demystifying the state, and this enhanced people's overall political awareness, although the Maoists and the king's manifestations and representations were decadent representations of a democratic state.

Throughout the armed conflict and the culture of violence, the public arena was heavily intimidated and back-door negotiations and deals took over, dominated by the fear of betting on the wrong side. In this situation, civil society (intellectuals, NGOs and journalists) took over a crucial role as a kind of a 'fourth state'. News broadcast by the radio networks allowed listeners to be aware of what was happening in different parts of the country (Onta 2009: 357). Many radio stations also encouraged people to participate in the democratic movement in support of the Seven Party Alliance (SPA), supported by the Maoists.[35] The head of the Community Radio Support Centre (CRSC), Raghu Mainali, has claimed that the large and non-violent participation in the 2006 Jana Andolaan can be attributed to the work of independent radio (ibid.).

8.6 Jana Andolan II: Political Transition to Democratic Republic

In March 2006 the civil agitation escalated. From April 6, 'Democracy Day' (in remembrance of the first Janaa Andolaan in 1990), people went to the streets in large numbers, as the SPA organised a four-day national strike. To control the mobs,[36] the king enforced curfew. This was not merely morning to evening, as had been the practice for years, but also throughout the day. The balance of power changed when common people started to counter the curfew and demonstrated courage to walk out in the streets regardless of the risk of being shot. The protests continued for nineteen days across the country, now publicly called Janaa Andolaan II. This led the king to declare that he would surrender executive powers on April 20. Rallies carried on until April 24, when he declared to withdraw his direct rule and reinstate parliament. A twelve-point road map was then signed between the SPA and the Maoists and people celebrated all over the country.

[35] SPA (Seven Party Alliance) consisted of the seven largest parties, including the major two parties: Nepali Congress, United Marxist Leninist (UML) and the Maoists.

[36] Partly in reaction to two major Maoist attacks on April 7 in the Terai. Butwal was one of the towns attacked, where I lived at the time.

Both sides declared ceasefire and serious negotiations commenced between the SPA and the Maoists. A peace agreement was finally reached in November 2006 and encompassed many of the Maoists' central demands: an interim government, the election of a constituent assembly, the integration of the People's Liberation Army with the national (by then still royal) army and appropriate reforms to benefit the marginalised groups of the country.[37] The UN set up a mission to oversee the management of Maoist weapons and check the cantonments for former combatants. Several discourses emerged over the construction of the interim government, which delayed elections for constituent assembly three times. In April 2008, the election was held, which was generally seen as the most peaceful in Nepal's history of democracy (i.e. fewer killings and threats than in earlier elections). The Maoists attained the majority vote but not an absolute majority.[38] Scholars (see for instance Baral 2008) assert that the Maoist triumph can be regarded as an indication that people recognise the Maoists' contribution in bringing about the revolution. Their success can be seen as reflecting strong criticism of the old parties for their failure to provide an alternative vision for a New Nepal.

The new constituent assembly has more representation of women, Dalits and ethnic representatives than ever before because of proportional representation.[39] In the first meeting, the assembly declared Nepal a republic and prepared the handing over of royal assets to the newly elected government. The constituent assembly allotted itself two years to proclaim a new constitution, but ever since the election there has been backbiting and political quarrelling. The political parties defeated in the elections struggle to avoid new political groupings extending their dominance. The Maoists, for their part, give the impression of having entered mainstream politics, adjusting their ideals and is striving for their own position. They still proclaim their people-centred ideology. Ethnically based groups struggle against each other, as well as against the Maoists and the political parties, to assure a firm grip of power in the different parts of the country as they may end up turning into self-governing federal regions if the constituent assembly decides so.[40] Legislative processes within the constitutional assembly have frequently been obstructed by protests. In other words, the period of

[37] http://theworkersdreadnought.wordpress.com/2011/04/21/baburam-bhattarai-post-conflict-restructuring/ [checked August 19, 2012].

[38] They won thirty-eight percent of the seats, with the two old major parties, Congress and UML, winning nineteen percent and eighteen percent respectively.

[39] There are almost thirty percent of women and about fifteen percent of Dalits, the latter equal to their share of the population.

[40] Federalism is a matter of great debate and generates much controversy. At both the local and national levels, present-day politics are concerned with the right to lead, the right to be in charge of the process of redefining the country, much more than with the visions and ideals of where it is heading (ICG 2010).

political transition, which constitutes the historical context for this thesis, is characterised by the culmination of a ten-year armed conflict and the outset of a new period, where the lack of an absolute ruler has caused many trivial yet growing frictions to prosper. Nepal has come to be a republic and has proclaimed itself a democracy, but the 'New Nepal' has yet to be defined. Meanwhile, in the rural areas, people have not seen any substantial changes in their lives. Observing the political power struggles and lack of action does not make those living far from Kathmandu feel included as equal citizens.

8.7 Transitional Challenges

Since independent radio went on-air for the first time with Radio Sagarmatha fifteen years ago, the massive influx of local radio broadcasting in Nepal, alongside other mass media, contributes to the creation of public spaces underpinning the democratic transition. The rapid growth has, however, raised concerns as mentioned earlier. These concerns include worries about excessive commercialisation, overt political interference, lack of professional training and business sustainability (Pringle and Subba 2007). Companies and organisations enter radio broadcasting, not always understanding its technical, managerial and editorial facets, which threatens to erode the integrity of the radio station. As the production of quality radio programmes is demanding, the work of the Kathmandu-based production houses, and syndicated and simulcast content is appealing and is a resource in demand at many local radio stations. The backside, however, is that many face the prominence of national-level news and programming, which risk undermining local content. Some local radio stations fill airtime with as much as four hours of nationally syndicated news and current affairs programmes daily. A number of radio stations have made it a rule not to air syndicated material and make local content their distinct broadcasting profile. Others say they cannot just broadcast rural news, as there is a great deal of interest in the politics in Kathmandu because it affects the whole country. Clearly, the solution is a sensible balance between local and national programming.

Yet another concern is the tendency for political leaders to invest in radio. While some radio stations are secretive about their political affiliation, some station managers publicly disclose that their aim is to diffuse a particular party line. Other politicians have either bought shares or established their own stations to be ready to do campaigning for elections in the future. The worry is, in this particular crucial time of Nepal's political transition, that party politics will exercise more overt influence on the

radio stations. Against a background where the constitutional process is not yet grounded, concerns have been raised that party political influence peddlers will exercise more overt influence over radio stations in a political culture, where an open public remains under threat. In a recent briefing The International Crisis Group (ICG) concludes that:

> For most of Nepal's political actors, the major elements of the peace process, namely integration and the new constitution, have been reduced to bargaining chips in the struggle for the immediate benefits of power sharing and longer-term re-alignments between and within parties. This is partly due to fatigue from upholding a fictitious notion of consensus and from managing the contradictions between a normative understanding of the peace process as demanding selfless, moral behaviour, and individual and party interests. (ICG 2011A: 19).

The conclusion above underlines a crucial challenge in Nepal's current political transition where, besides the concern of 'narrow' struggles for power and overt political influence, there is an illusion of 'consensus' that contrasts with real politics with a polity that is fragmented and too broad and immediate to be contained by consensus. The emphasis on power through the state and its organs, which now is open to more actors and in more ways than before, is very much part of the political transition, as sidelined groups have seen that they can get Kathmandu's attention by challenging the state, sometimes through violence. Multiple stress points thus remain, including hardliners amongst the Maoists and future splinter groups, a potential alliance of radical royalists, identity-based groups in the hills and the Terai, Hindu groups and army loyalists, and all their attempts to channel public frustration in order to replace a perceived dysfunctional government with the support of a 'strongman'.

During the monarchy (government of one), there was only one 'strongman', as the label designates, and according to Hindu mythology this strongman was Nepal's king who was 'venerated' as the incarnation of the Hindu god Vishnu. According to Hindu belief, devotees of Vishnu have an identical subtle substance that unites them within the subtle body of Vishnu. The 'transposition' of this logic into the political realm meant that, by implication, all Nepalese, conceived as 'identical' or 'one and the same', had to have an unrestrained devotion to the king (as incarnation of the state) like they would have to Vishnu (perceived to also be incarnated by the king) (see Burghart 1996: 257). The final break with 238 years of monarchy as a symbol of sovereignty and national unity, can be seen both as a symbolic condensation of a democratic

development that commenced much earlier, as outlined before, but also as the symbolic disembodiment of the monarch and position of power in Nepal. Power, and along with it the structures of law and knowledge, were no longer positioned in the 'two bodies of the king': the earthly and the transcendental (see also Marchart 1998). As the empty space of power can no longer relate to any transcendental ideal and is now 'vacant', it has been subject to political struggle and appropriation, as we have seen. Without such a transcendental principle, Nepal is faced with the continuous undertaking of refounding itself. As the king 'left' the palace and the place of power and sacral legitimation is now vacant, society is continuously referred back to itself in its quest for legitimation. With the detachment of the empty space from the royal palace, and with this the separation of the realms of power in the forms of law and knowledge, comes the emergence of autonomous spaces of civil society and the public arenas in which the legitimised foundations of society, having lost their transcendental raison d'être, can be renegotiated and defined anew (Marchart 1998, Lefort 1986).

This compels a conflictual composedness that is located not at the ontic (physical) level, but at the ontological level where the very debates about the foundations of society take place about, for instance, what is legitimate and is not being debated and negotiated in public. It is crucial to underline that these public spaces for negotiations are not pre-existing spaces wherein these negotiations can unfold. On the contrary, these public spaces have to be created continually precisely by the means of conflictual debates and negotiations about the foundations of society and the extension of means and rights to people, who beforehand may have been expelled these negotiations and debates (Marchart 1998). Following Lefort, Deutsche (1996) refers to this necessary construction of public spaces as she writes: 'the political sphere is not only a site of discourses, as it also is the discursively constructed site.' This position applies theoretical backing from radical democracy in the sense that politics cannot be reduced to something solely taking place within the constraints of a public space or political community that is merely perceived as 'real' (Marchart 1998). Politics, as Chantal Mouffe argues, is about the construction of the political communities.[41] In other words, it is the political intervention itself that actually creates the space for politics, as it is not only the political spaces that create politics. The reasonable consequence, then, is that conflict, division and instability do not threaten democracy *per se*, as they are the conditions of its existence. Political intervention and the opening up of spaces for conflict and debate emerge in an antagonism between the aforementioned empty space of power and the state. Lefort (1986) makes the important observation that the

[41] http://anselmocarranco.tripod.com/id68.html [checked August 19, 2012].

antagonism has to be institutionalised in society, as public political debate must not be ceased. Should political debate be suspended, then the empty space of power would be ceased and the division between the spheres of power, law and knowledge would consequently be annulled (Marchart 1998). The name of this situation, according to Lefort, is totalitarianism. In totalitarianism, this antagonism is lessened, the debate is halted and consequently the public spaces implode. It thus becomes crucial that the conflictual composedness of society, politics and the public spaces are not constrained, as it is implied in politics that emphasise consensus and disregard discursive conflicts in and within public spaces (ibid.).

8.8 From Space to the Becoming of Place

Despite the notion that consensus is worth pursuing as an ideal, the politicians' 'narrow quest' for consensus can be seen as their need to control conflict to assure a stable position for the self and thus reluctance to opposition and the political interventions that generate the 'social spaces'. This, for instance, is seen with all the sidelined groups that remain 'sidelined' and can only get the politicians' attention by challenging the state through aggression (ICG 2011B). 'Space' here constitutes an abstract term for a complex set of ideas; where people of different backgrounds and cultures diverge in terms of how they divide up their world, grant values to its parts and measure them. Spaces are thus not unbiased but are shaped by people in power relations, who both surround and enter them (Cornwall 2002). For French social theorists (Lefebvre, Foucault, Bourdieu), the concept of power and the concept of space are deeply linked. To quote Lefebvre: 'Space is a social product ... it is not simply "there", a neutral container waiting to be filled, but is a dynamic, humanly constructed means of control, and hence of domination, of power' (Lefebvre 1991: 24). Implicit in the idea of space is also the imagery of 'boundary.' Power relations help shape the boundaries of spaces, what is possible within them and who may enter, with which identities, discourses and interests. Using the idea of boundary formulated by Foucault and others, Hayward asserts that we may understand power 'as the network of social boundaries that delimit fields of possible action.' Freedom, meanwhile, is the capacity to participate thoroughly in shaping the social limits that define what is possible (Hayward 1998: 2). In this sense, power is not only about the right to participate in a given space, but also the right to define, negotiate and to shape that space.

The notion of 'space' is extensively used in studies on power, democracy and citizen action. Some works examine 'democratic spaces' wherein citizens can interact to allege

citizenship and influence governance processes (Cornwall and Coehlo 2006). Spaces can be considered as opportunities, moments and means, in and with which citizens can act to possibly influence policies, discourses, decisions and relationships that affect their lives and interests. And some writers describe 'political spaces' as those institutional channels, political discourses and social and political practices through which poor and marginalised people, and those organizations collaborating with them, can pursue poverty reduction (see Webster and Engberg-Petersen 2002). Others describe spaces as 'democratic spaces' wherein citizens can engage to claim citizenship and affect governance processes (Cornwall and Coehlo 2006). Moreover, there are works that concentrate on 'policy spaces' to examine the moments and opportunities that allow citizens and policymakers to interact, along with 'actual observable opportunities, behaviours, actions and interactions, that sometimes signify transformative potential' (McGee 2004: 16).

'Space' can be placed on a continuum, where 'universal' can be seen as scalar or spatial and 'local' primarily as relational and contextual. Discourses on, for example, the universal declaration of human rights, create spaces in which different accounts of life and new ways of demanding change can be created. These discourses offer a set of overarching principles to frame alternative visions of justice without dictating the exact content of those visions (Kabeer 2005). These discourses must relate to different localities, which are life worlds constituted by relatively stable associations, by relatively known and shared histories and by the collectively traversed and legible spaces and places (Appadurai 1996). Discourses help create local feelings that are products of long-term interactions of local and global cascades of events that build up structures of feelings, which are both social and historical and part of the environment within which, gradually, it becomes possible to envisage a neighbourhood (ibid.).

Universal values might seem to be poles apart from local embodied realities in the sense that those local priorities and the narratives local people use to define themselves in different contexts and how they see themselves in relation to others may not be universal. Yet local narratives are widespread enough to suggest that they constitute a significant aspect of the organisation of collective life of the way in which people connect with each other. In an anthology on how PAMP in developing countries understand and claim citizenship and the rights they associate with it, Kabeer (2005) argues that aspirations for citizenship often entail common core values, including the impulse for social justice and self-determination, recognition and a sense of horizontal solidarity with others. Citizenship is here understood as an emergent concept, the realisation of which will vary across contexts and historical moments. According to

Nyamu-Musumbi (2005: 31), such claims for rights are 'shaped through actual struggles informed by peoples' own understandings of what they are justly entitled to'. Since it is particular groups that have experienced exclusion in some form or another that often express this, these values also articulate the groups visions of what a more inclusive society might imply.

People's 'own understandings' in contrast with any 'universal' understanding of, for example, human rights or 'the common good' are the crux in any discussion and negotiation of notions on citizenship. This approach breaks away from what Coleman (in Dahlgren 2009: 140) calls the 'hopelessly narrow conception of politics that still prevails and ignores the concerns people have in their daily lives such as ethics, identity, justice, taboos and social power relations.' As the line between here and universal, me and other, is thin and constantly contested and negotiated, there is need for a 'repertoire' to critically engage in discussions to assess and understand the extent to which there is a struggle for access to space (and place) at stake, when we talk about rights and the different notions of citizenship attached to that. In an apt encapsulation of this contention, Paulo Freire has pointed out that:

> Critical thinking contrasts with naive thinking, which sees historical time as a weight, a stratification of the acquisitions and experiences of the past, from which the present should emerge normalized and well-behaved. For the naive thinker, the important thing is accommodation to this normalized 'today.' For the critical, the important thing is the continuing transformation of reality, in behalf of the continuing humanization of men (Freire 1970: 81).

It thus becomes crucial that citizenship negotiations are not solely perceived intrinsically as an end-in-themselves and constrained by narrow party political interests or consensus for that sake (although worth to pursue as an ideal), but instrumentally and as a means of achieving 'something else.' The universal builds upon local realities under conditions of anxiety and entropy, social wear and flux, ecological uncertainty and cosmic volatility, as Appadurai (1996) figuratively expresses it. Moreover, he argues that the central dilemma is that localities are both contexts and at the same time require and produce contexts and spaces in the sense that they provide the frame or setting within which various kinds of human action (productive, reproductive, interpretive, performative) can be initiated and conducted meaningfully (ibid.). The way in which localities are produced and reproduced thus requires the continuous construction, both practical and discursive, against which local practices and projects are imagined to take place (ibid.).

Against this background, and although consensus is worth pursuing as an ideal, consensus can also create illusion as concluded in the ICG 2010 report, in the sense that it perplexes the involved to believe that such a non-antagonistic space of consensus is pre-existing. Rather, politics is political intervention itself that creates the space for politics, which at times creates discursive conflict, counter hegemonies, division and instability. It is important to remember, however, that discursive conflicts do not ruin democracy: they are the conditions of its existence, as mentioned by Lefort (1986). In Nepal's democratic transition, where many political issues remain unsettled and the perception of the king is challenged and changed, in such contexts nothing seems to be what it is. It thus appears that it is vital to anchor such mediating instances of public discourse and direct sense-making with regards to issues of public life. It is in such contexts of experienced transitions that local radio in the context of Nepal arguably appears as a key player, as a mediating force with regards to perceptions and negotiations of citizenship ideals and roles in transitional Nepal.

8.9 Past to Present in Sum

During the past sixty years, Nepal has undergone a continuous, stage-wise transition from a mono-religious, elite-based regime of sovereign rule to a country of diversity. Several major ruptures have directly affected local radio broadcasting, PAMP and ideals of citizenship: the ending of 238 years of monarchy, which is a fundamental challenge to hierarchical perceptions of power and authority; the end of war, which has prevented a generation from becoming citizens; and finally, a change from being one of the most conservative regimes in South Asia to being the most progressive in terms of radio broadcasting and the representation of previously excluded groups in the constitution-making process. For clarity, I have listed the main periods of political rule and their corresponding ideals and discourses in Table 4.

Table 4: Periods of rule and their related ideals, mass media and citizenship discourses

Period	Political system	Mass media (focus on radio)	Discourse of nation	Citizenship ideals
Rana 1864-1950	Oligarchy, strictly hierarchical	The only indirect means of personal inter-communication was the postal system 'Hulak' carried on foot along the trails of the Himalayas; first national newspaper Gorkhapatra opened in 1901	Very limited contact to outside world for the general public – only trade relations. Hinduism promoted	Subjects unaware and uneducated in not to dissent; reinforcement of caste hierarchy; suppressed subjects; Ranas the only citizens
Attempted democracy 1950-1960	Democracy under Shah monarch's direct rule, parties allowed	First radio station, Prajatantra Nepal Radio established 1950 in Biratnagar by Congress Party in opposition to Rana regime; Congress later joined mainstream politics and radio renamed Radio Nepal and became state property	Gradual opening up to the world; embracing the discourses of modernisation, development and democracy	Nepali language uniting the subjects of the nation; subjects of development and modernisation; citizen ideals were those of the high-caste elites
Panchayat 1960-1990	Hindu autocracy, partyless Panchayat democracy lead by the king, centralised rule, ban of political parties	Few newspapers circulating in Kathmandu valley – not critical; lively Nepali public debate in diaspora in India; suppression of open public not total, production of literature with hidden transcripts; state Radio Nepal on shortwave, from 1985 on medium wave covering all Nepal	Nationalisation; strong national focus on modernisation and development; one country, one dress, one language. Hinduism promoted	National, patriotic, uniform subjects, loyal and obedient to the king; educated to ensure national development; ideal was high-caste urban elite
First multiparty democracy 1990-2002	Multiparty democracy with a constitutional monarchy that continued controlling the army; prajatantra democracy (Praja=subjects)	Radio Sargarmatha first independent radio in 1997; approx. 56 licenses issued in this period; some influence from donors and party politics	Development and external actors as implicit to development; focus on national unity but in respect for the diversity of the country; differences seen as strength of the nation; king still the symbol of unity	Citizens with rights to be included, to be an equal, to receive education, and also subjects to the historical monarchy; development and the image of middleclass, urban elite is the citizen ideal
Violent conflict; Maoist 'people's war' 1996-2006[42]	Democracy challenged; Maoist parallel rule in certain hill districts, fragile nation-state under serious internal attack; voice for Janaatatantra – the people's democracy (Janaa=the people)	Approx. 50 radios on-air, 65% of populated areas covered; 5 Maoist Dhoka radios underground; media in the eye of the storm and major resources and symbolic factors to be gained from the involved, serious incidents of press freedom violation	Competing views of nation; Maoists claimed a people's republic of Nepal; nation defined by its people, not by its ruler; strong nationalist anti-hegemonic discourse of foreign non-interference, egalitarianism	Citizens in the image of rural, poor and marginalised groups; emphasis on non-academic, productive, skilful labour as the ideal; national patriotism

[42] The Maoist insurgency overlaps with periods of official state rule, but my concern with major continuities and ruptures in ideals of citizenship justifies the armed conflict and Maoist ideals has a period of their own.

Political transition to democratic republic 2006-	Nation-state up for negotiation, new republic; discussion of federal states; present drafting of constitution; political struggles between old parties and Maoists about the right to define the nation; Loktantra – people democracy (Lok=people)	319 radio stations on-air, nearly all populated areas of Nepal covered, still serious incidents of press freedom violation (Nepal ranked 12th in the world in unsolved cases of journalists' murder). Concerns regarding centralised content in radio production and overt influence from party politics; definition of community radio unclear.	Focus on pluralism, Nepal is multi-ethnic, multi-lingual, multi-regional, multi-caste, multi-class, etc.; strong divisions and struggles appear to be between identity movements which weakens national unity and focus	Equal rights and focus on community aspects (ethnicity, caste, region, gender, language, etc.) as defining diverse ideals of citizenship; struggle to find unifying ideals

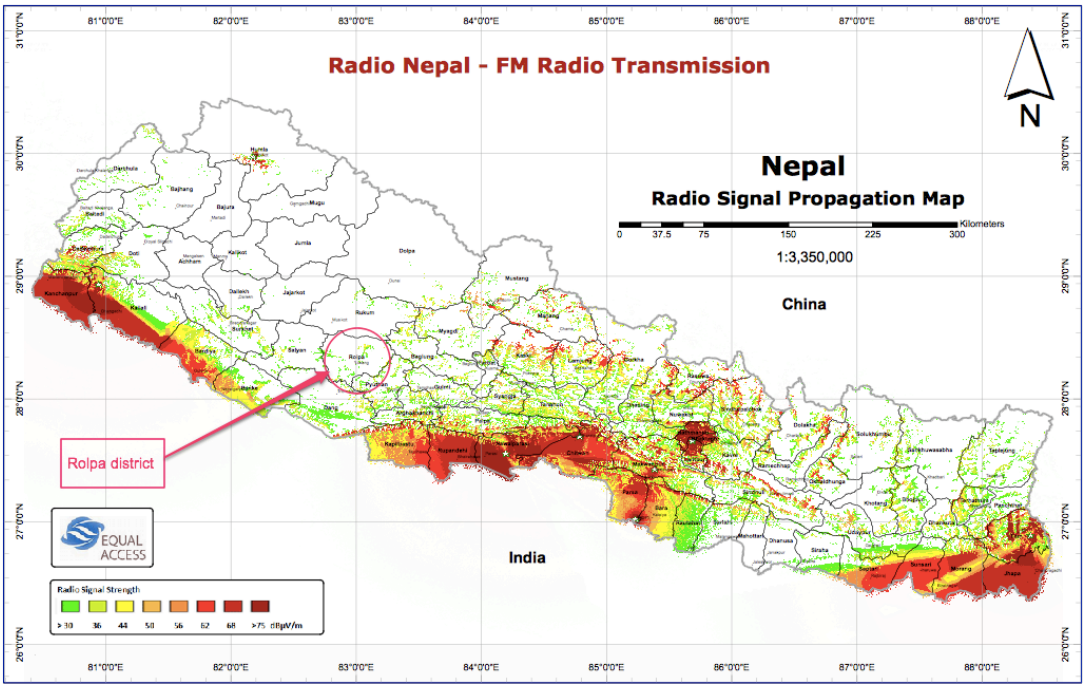
This chapter has shown the relevance of studying media when political regimes are changing. In Nepal there has been an important link between the two, and ever since the establishment of the first newspaper Gorkhapatra in 1901, media has been an important component of nation building. Hegemonic ideals of citizenship promoting the lives and norms of urban high-caste Hindus alongside national pride and loyalty to the king were contested, initially with the lively public debates in diaspora in India and later with the increasing donor support in the 1990s that promoted ideals of equality and inclusion, and also supported financially the massive influx of independent local radio stations. The Maoists' counter-hegemonic agenda was the first to fundamentally challenge the modernisation view of Bikaas and the urban, high-caste citizen as its ideal, which had thrived almost unchallenged since its introduction in the 1950s. By means of indoctrination and the Maoist underground Dhoka radio stations, for the first time PAMP in rural areas were exposed to other ideals including their rural lives and notion of them being as central to and of major value to the country's development. As local radio now have surfaced throughout the country in areas that previously were unexposed to local electronic media, in the phase of political transition, this study will explore how development and political discourses are appropriated, negotiated and lived locally, also in light of those ideals that have been promoted throughout Nepal's democratic transition, namely Bikaas, modernisation, democracy as well as the global agenda of inclusion and equality.

In the next chapter, I further emphasise the local context for citizenship negotiation by the means of local radio in my study area, demonstrating how local historical preconditions, prevailing norms and social relations are shaping conditions for citizenship negotiation by means of local radio in this location.

9. Contextualising PAMP and Local Radio

This chapter develops the former contextualisation of national history by offering an account of local radio in the period of democratic transition. While the recent chapter dealt with national-level politics, this chapter situates the study in the period effectively lived by PAMP in the context of the Rolpa district and the broadcasting area of the two local radios, Radio Jaljala and Radio Rolpa, where PAMP lead their everyday lives. This chapter describes general social, political and cultural issues of relevance for the subsequent Part III of the thesis, and the aim is to provide insights about the local context of PAMP. The primary focus for this contextualisation will be on areas that are significant for comprehending the analysis of citizenship negotiation by means of local radio, especially socio-economy and living conditions, caste and gender inequalities, rural and semi-urban dichotomies and fundamental insights about the two local radio stations. I aim to make progressive contextualisation and provide relevant contextual insights as I move stepwise through the analysis.

Figure 2: Map of Nepal and radio signal propagation map as of August 2007 prior to the launch of Radio Rolpa and Radio Jaljala[43]



9.1 Rolpa District: Remote, Poor and Influenced by Inequality

The Rolpa district is located in the hills of Mid Western Nepal, some 300 kilometres west of Kathmandu, and covers an area of 1,879 km² with a population of 210,004 according to the latest 2001 census (Mega Research Centre and Publication 2010). It is composed of the district capital, Libang, as the only town and numerous villages around the fifty-one VDCs. Most of Rolpa is rough highlands inhabited by the indigenous *Kham Magar* ethnic group (forty-four percent, B&C thirty-three percent, Dalits fifteen percent, and eight percent 'other' ethnic groups) (Dahal 2006: 126).[44] The topography of the district is characterised by 3,000 to 4,000 meter hills about fifty kilometres south of the Dhaulagiri Himalaya (the seventh tallest mountain in the world). This mountainous barrier historically confined Rolpa, encouraging travellers between India and Tibet to circumvent Rolpa to follow easier routes. Irrigated rice fields along the Mardi Khola (river) go through the district but are of minimum use as

[43] www.nepalradio.org/p3_radio_nepal.htm [checked August 19, 2012].

[44] Within the Hindu caste system, Hindus are separated into four main castes (Varnas): *Brahmin* (in Nepali *Bahuns*), *Kshatriya* (in Nepali *Chettris*), *Vaishiyas* and *Shudras* (in Nepali *Dalits*). Within these there are numerous specific castes or *Jat*, also called *Adivasi Janajatis* (indigenous population) with numerous distinctions among them. Magar is the predominant ethnic group (*Jat*) in Rolpa.

the river has a limited inner gorge. A few landlords possess those fields that exist, leaving a large majority of farmers with upland fields inadequate for rice farming. Highland crops of maize, millet and barley produce only little, which is why Rolpa has chronic food deficits.[45] Food deficits have pushed upland farmers into growing market crops better suited to the terrain. Efforts to cultivate new sorts of fruits, like apples, are complicated due to weak infrastructure to access markets. The district has been drawn into projects of Bikaas through the establishment of various NGOs and government projects, and yet by Nepalese standards Rolpa remains an underdeveloped area, ranked among the poorest districts. The rough living conditions and the lack of life-improving prospects, particularly for the people at the lowest part of the caste hierarchy who often rely utterly on high-caste patrons, lead to the migration of a large part of the population, mostly men, who migrate to earn an income through manual labour.[46] For many families this is the only way to survive.

Hierarchical caste and gender relations structure a large part of social life. Dalits are discriminated against, and in some parts of the district they are restrained from entering sacred and public places as well as high caste houses. Several high caste people, the older generation particularly, still practice untouchability and refrain from any close encounter with Dalits. Dalits in the district reside in distinct hamlets (Tole) and most do not own land, depending instead on day labour and patronage for their livelihoods. The majority of Dalit houses are small and of poor quality, stuffed side by side and without having access to water and other facilities. Gender wise, a patriarchal culture has for centuries been prevalent, which from birth to old age gives precedence to men. Women's work has traditionally been given little status, while the capacity of men to earn money gives respect, plus their traditional role of provider has traditionally offered them higher economic and social status. In most households, women's decision-making role and control over resources is minimal. Issues involving property, marriage, expenditure and education have traditionally been men's businesses, and women can exert little or no influence over the results. Until recently, only a few girls were sent to school, but that norm is gradually changing.

This area was seriously affected by the Maoist insurgency. In the years leading up to the Maoists launch of their armed revolt in 1996, the district suffered numerous political clashes (some lethal) between Jana Morcha activists (which later splintered into

[45] http://muktikumar.wordpress.com/2008/09/17/rapti-zonerolpa-district [checked August 19, 2012].

[46] During my field studies, I visited some of the poorer VDC's of Rolpa, and in many places I hardly saw males aged eighteen to forty. Independently of each other, various sources told me that up to seventy percent of males in this age group have migrated from these areas.

the Maoists) and Nepali Congress activists. As the Maoists decided to go underground because they felt persecuted, in November 1995 the police launched Operation Romeo in an attempt to capture the Maoist leaders. The police marched through Libang and villages throughout the district to conduct door-to-door searches, beating and threatening innocent civilians. The operation was later referred to as a 'massive brutal retaliation with widespread human rights abuses including torture, rape, detention and murder.'[47] The Informal Service Sector Centre (INSEC) made this assessment of Rolpa in their Human Rights Yearbook for 1995:

> 6,000 people left their villages, most presumably temporarily, and 132 persons were arrested without warrants. That the police physically abused or tortured prisoners, confiscated chickens and goats, and stole personal property and jewellery from houses they searched.

Some of the first Maoist attacks in 1996 on army and police camps were launched in Rolpa, and throughout the war Rolpa was a Maoist hotbed, and consequently the area was heavily militarised as the royal army searched for Maoists. Many families were divided because especially the young men joined or were abducted for the ranks of either the royal army or the Maoists, or migrated to avoid being involved in the war. Today, post-war, the district has two national constituencies, and in the 2008 elections the Maoists won both seats, which underpins the point that this district remains in a Maoist stronghold.

9.2 Rural Context

For this study, semi-ethnographic research was carried out in Kotgaun and Jankot VDCs that are located approximately eight-ten hours (by walking) northwest of Libang (Figure 1). Land is rich and fertile in this part of Rolpa, and the majority of the population living here are Magars occupied with farming. There are also 'older' Magars of whom several are retired Ghurkha soldiers from the British army, living from their pension, and many live in some of the nicer and well-maintained houses. In the valley, where most of the fertile land is and where most people live, only Radio Rolpa and Radio Jaljala are tuneable, whereas if you move towards the hilltops, the signals from the radios in the neighbouring districts are tuneable. It is also on the

[47] USAID's report 'Democracy Under Threat', November 2001 (page 14). http://pdf.usaid.gov/pdf_docs/PNADT881.pdf [checked August 19, 2012]

hillsides toward the hilltops, where land is less fertile that you will find the Dalit hamlets.

These areas are not electrified and most houses have solar power, which gives just enough electricity to provide lights, run a radio and recharge the battery for a mobile phone. Mobile phone is popular, also among the poorer households. The solar power systems that most households have do not provide sufficient electricity to run television. Recently, however, a few houses in Kotgaun had electrification from grid, and fifteen-twenty households have cable television.

There are three NGOs operating in this rural area. One supports conflict-affected families and children, ensuring that these children go to school, have clothes, receive medical support, books and pencils. Another NGO supports farmers and give them training and skills so that they can prolong the season and farm other crops outside the season. The third NGO works with women's health. This area was heavily affected by the armed conflict and many people here sympathise with the Maoists. One of the Rolpa Maoist constituents also comes from this area.

Figure 3: Photo of Libang and surrounding areas

9.3 Urban Context and the Location of Local Radio

Semi-ethnographic studies were likewise conducted in the district capital of Libang. Both radio stations are located in Libang and broadcast in a radius of approximately 120 kilometres, encompassing Kotgaun and Jankot VDCs and large parts of Rolpa's rural villages. As a district capital, Libang constitutes the local form of 'urban' space in a context of a predominately rural livelihood, being a relatively affluent town with a bazaar[48] comprising several shops, hotels and teahouses. Moreover, a number of NGOs have their offices in Libang, alongside municipal offices, public and private schools and the offices of the political parties. The district hospital and bus park is also located in Libang and the town functions thus as the district's principal nucleus of people and goods.

[48] Towns in rural areas are usually called bazaars. The bazaar is literally the area in which there are shops, tea stalls and 'hotels', i.e. places serving food.

Being located in a town and the district capital, both Radio Jaljala and Radio Rolpa are close to the other mass media emerging in Libang, as will be discussed later, as well as the influence of officials and information and various sorts of state practices and alternative social actors working to challenge existing inequalities and social practices. Radio Jaljala's building is located close to the bus park and shares their building with a family living on the ground and first floor. The radio station itself is on the second floor. Radio Rolpa is located on the outskirts of the bazaar and has their own building but share the facilities with HURAC (Human Rights Awareness Centre) that is the license holder of the radio.

Entering both radio stations is easy, as none of them have closed gates or security. Both radio stations have almost the same office setup: an office for management/administration with a PC and landline telephone, and a studio with a window that separates the host and the technical staff that operates the studio equipment (managing phone calls, mixing speech/music). Journalists and producers do not have their own office, but frequently enter the management/administration office to write their stories, borrow the phone and use the PC. The office is often vacant, since there is no secretary and none of the station managers are present at the radio full time. Despite the numerous similarities, I immediately sensed one marked difference in the ways the two radio stations decorated their studios. On Radio Rolpa, the studio is wallpapered with the fabric called '*Dhaka*'. You see this fabric everywhere in Nepal, typically used for the Nepalese Dhaka *Topi* (hat), but you can also find babies dressed in Dhaka clothes, Dhaka tablecloths, etc. Dhaka Topis are often worn by government employees, but also by commoners during special occasions such as weddings and important meetings, and form part of the national male dress code.

On Radio Jaljala, in comparison, the studio has a 360-degree wall painting depicting the natural beauty and scenery of Rolpa, including 'Jaljala' from where the radio got its name. Jaljala is located two days walk from Libang and is a remote plateau, elevated more than 3,000 meters above sea level and is a sacred place used for pilgrimage (Hinduism, Buddhism and shamanism) and increasingly also tourism. Jaljala is located close to *Thabang*, the 'pedagogic locus' of the Maoist revolt, and because of its remoteness and plane spacious area, the Maoists often used Jaljala for military trainings and mass gatherings during the armed revolt (read an extended description of Thabang and this place influence on early Maoism in Gidwani 2011). This literal inscription of history and political geography on the walls of the studios is part of a strategy for structuring radio broadcasting, as these pictures and decorations make ideologies

present, and staffs and invited guests see them every day upon entering the radio station.

Figure 4: Photo of Radio Jaljala's studio

9.4 The Emergence of Local Mass Media in Rolpa

In parallel with the opening of Radio Rolpa and Radio Jaljala, within the last few years Rolpa has experienced an unprecedented growth of new media. As mentioned in the introductory chapter, in my first visit in Rolpa in 2008, the only local mass media was the fortnightly print magazine *Rolpa Awaj* (voice of Rolpa). At that time, both Radio Rolpa and Radio Jaljala were in the process of acquiring licenses and doing their organisational and infrastructural preparations prior to their launch. Talking to the local post officer in Libang provided a good insight into the rapid changes the media landscape in the district has undergone in recent years.

Prior to the launch of local radio, the local post office in Libang distributed more than 1,000 letters daily throughout the district. Sending a letter from Kathmandu to a village in Rolpa would take six days on average. Today, the number of daily-distributed letters has gone down to 200-300, and amongst those several are listeners writing to Radio Rolpa and Radio Jaljala with song requests, announcements and greetings. Other letters are distributed mainly for official purposes, and only few are personal letters.

Local print media is still available with *Rolpa Samachar Saptahik* (Rolpa Weekly News – a rebrand of *Rolpa Awaj*), which has gone from fortnightly to weekly distribution of 500 copies. Major national dailies are available with a delay of one or two days and circulate mainly in the district capital Libang. Public cyber cafés in the bazaar in Libang have surfaced within the last couple of years, providing basic IT facilities such as internet browsing, email, photo editing, word processing and IT trainings. Furthermore, *Jaljala Cable Television* opened in 2010 with currently 200-300 subscribers in Libang and some twenty-thirty households in Madichau (Kotgaun VDC). Jaljala Cable Television broadcasts four hours daily, mainly music videos and a daily half hour of in-house produced news bulletins in the evening. An unknown additional number of households in mainly Libang receive satellite television via satellite dishes. Television in rural areas in Rolpa is not yet that widespread due to poor electrification. Many households in rural areas do have solar panels and batteries mainly used for lights, battery recharge and running a transistor radio, but most solar power systems are too small for bigger electronic equipment such as television.[49]

[49] Most of those rural households, who have a solar power station, run a twenty to thirty Watts station. One needs approximately forty Watts to run a television and ten to twenty Watts to run a radio and to charge the battery for a mobile phone respectively (see Figure 5).

Figure 5: Photo of solar power system used for radio

As in most parts of the world, the use of mobile phone is booming these years in Rolpa. Nepal has almost full terrestrial signal coverage including most parts of Rolpa. Seventy-one percent of the population in Rolpa use mobile phone, although the official number of subscribers is far less, as many households share the same phone.[50] All the major mobile phone operators, NCELL (former Mero Mobile) and NTC, have their offices in Libang. I did a small unscientific sample in a random mobile shop in the bazaar in Libang, which showed that the most popular mobile phone is a Nokia N1280 (approximately seventy percent of sales) with inbuilt flashlight and radio at a price of about €20. Second hand mobile phones are also popular and available from €5, which makes it possible for poorer households to also buy a mobile phone. It is possible to make 'fake calls' free of charge, where the caller can call without speaking, but where the receiver gets the phone number of the caller displayed, knowing this caller wants the person to return the phone call. Many in scarcity of money use this feature if they want to talk to someone on the phone.

[50] This figure derives from the survey.

The number of journalists in Rolpa has increased with the new local media platforms available. The Rolpa branch of the principal union of Nepalese journalists, the Federation of Nepali Journalists (FNJ), has forty-three members, who fulfil their membership criteria by having worked for at least two years as journalist. Another thirty journalists or so work without membership of FNJ. The journalists' working situation was difficult during the armed conflict but is gradually improving although journalists still receive threats today. In Rolpa, about three to five cases of death threats to journalists are reported annually, mostly due to Maoist related aggression. Most of the journalists are not only affiliated with FNJ but also with the political parties' journalistic branches: *Nepal Press Chaudari* (UML), *Nepal Press Union* (Nepali Congress), and the Maoist *Karantikari Patrakar Sangh* (Revolutionary Journalistic Forum). Besides working with local media, some of the journalists are working part-time as correspondents for national media, such as *Kantipur*, *Gorkha Patra*, *Nepal Samachar Patra*, *Annapurna Post*, *Radio Nepal*, and television channels such as *ABC Television*, *Image Channel*, *Sagarmatha Television* and *NTV*.

9.5 Local Radio and the Mediatisation of Space

Considering Rolpa's topographical constraints, high levels of illiteracy (sixty-three percent according to 2001 census, Mega Research Centre and Publication 2010: 767), poor electrification and the low cost of radio,[51] local radio is envisioned to play an important function in Rolpa to allow PAMP a voice and access to news and information on local terms and conditions (content, vernacular), as radio enables new communicative practices, cultural interaction and understanding of public affairs. The establishment of Radio Jaljala and Radio Rolpa is to a large extent an outcome of the political transformation Nepal has undergone in recent years. As independent radio stations have opened throughout the country in the past ten-fifteen years, technical know-how has been accumulated, which makes it possible for local people in remote areas to pull from Kathmandu based support and know-how and thus establish their 'own' local radio station. Moreover, international donors have invested large sums of money in the support of local radios in Nepal for training, monitoring of aggressions, legal support and purchase of technical equipment.[52]

[51] The availability of cheap Chinese radios costing around €1 has helped to make radio popular amongst the rural poor.

[52] The international development agencies and their support of the directness associated with the genres and material aspects of radio transmission is semantically linked to the development and the symbols of a new democratic movement, particularly transparency and free speech (see Kunreuther 2010: 8).

For the establishment of Radio Rolpa, the radio received financial support from donors (Danida primarily) for the purchase of studio equipment, transmitter, parabolic antenna and satellite equipment, which was a major threshold in the establishment of the radio. Likewise, donor supported community radio networks such as ACORAB provided technical support and helped to identify suppliers of equipment and the subsequent technical installations. Various NGOs, journalistic associations and donors have provided journalistic trainings to the staffs and volunteers. The establishment of Radio Jaljala was done with funding from the Maoists and the basic skills they already had from when they were broadcasting underground.

The local political transformation in Rolpa has likewise had a major influence on the establishment of the two local radio stations, as they were the two major players during the armed conflict that acquired broadcasting licences almost simultaneously. *Manav Adhikar Sachetan Kendra* (Human Rights Awareness Centre, HURAC) is a local NGO affiliated with INSEC and was the principal actor during the armed conflict mitigating between the conflicting parties. HURAC established Radio Rolpa in Libang in July 2008 and began shortly after its broadcasting. Radio Jaljala did not wait for their license, as during the armed revolt they broadcast underground as one of the Maoists' five Dhoka radio stations. For security reasons, during the armed conflict Radio Jaljala frequently changed location in the hills in Nepal's mid-western region with their equipment and antenna camouflaged. Radio Jaljala legally surfaced in Libang in April 2009 and was formally established by *Mandabi Bahudhesya Samaj Bikash Kendra* (Mandabi Multipurpose Society Development Centre), whose members also form part of the Rolpa Maoist politburo.

Table 5: Organisational characteristics of Radio Rolpa and Radio Jaljala

	Radio Rolpa	Radio Jaljala
Established	July 2008	April 2009
Owner of license	Human Rights Awareness Centre, HURAC. Organisation not open to membership.	Mandabi Multipurpose Society Development Centre. Members form part of the Maoist politburo. Organisation not open to membership.
Board	9; fair balance of gender and ethnicity. Males: 1 Dalit, 2 B&C, 1 Magar. Females: 1 Dalit, 1 B&C, 3 Magar.	5; majority of B&C male; 3 B&C males, 1 male and 1 female Magar. No representation of Dalits.
Paid staffs	6; most are B&C males (4). Further 1 male and 1 female Magar. Poor representation of Dalits.	13; most are males (1 Dalit, 4 B&C, 3 Magar, 1 'other'). 2 Magar and 2 'other' female staffs. Poor representation of Dalits.
Volunteers	28; high number of volunteers. Poor representation of Dalits.	12; most are male: 3 Dalit, 5 B&C, 1 Magar. 3 Magar female volunteers.
Transmitter[53]	500 Watts	500 Watts

Both radio stations rely significantly on volunteers, Radio Rolpa in particular as more than three out of four staffs are unpaid volunteers.[54] A situation such as this, where a significant proportion of staffs are unpaid and only loosely affiliated with the radio station, raises concerns about the editorial depth in the radio stations. News are too often not ostensibly cross-verified because of lack of time, and accordingly Onta (2009) describes how Nepalese radio stations in general are understaffed and thus poor on news judgment, which at times manifests as abuse of the editorial authority on the part of unscrupulous radio producers (ibid.: 360). This creates a vicious circle, where the lack of investments in personnel risks decreasing the quality of the programmes produced, and this further discredits the independent radio sector limiting the scope for further investments to upgrade the radio programmes.

The fact that none of the organisations behind the radio stations are open membership organisations, and the board, management and staff composition on both radio stations are dominated by male high castes, give cause to concerns that local hierarchies and power relations are transferred to the radio stations and younger staffs and volunteers have little room to complain and acquire influence, as they are related by either kin or patronage to the older members (Table 5). The numerical gender imbalance manifests not only in terms of gender bias in decision-making at the radio stations, but also on the gender 'signature' the radio stations have amongst their audiences, as most programme hosts are male. Women are also poorly represented, which will be evident if you pay

[53] As no technical study has been made, it is difficult to tell exactly the coverage, as FM signals travel in straight lines, and tall buildings, hills and mountains thus limits the range of the signal. During unusual upper atmospheric conditions, FM signals are occasionally reflected back towards the earth by the ionosphere, which means the signals of Radio Rolpa and Radio Jaljala occasionally might be audible at further distance than normally. Radio Jaljala and Radio Rolpa have both placed their transmitter antennas in *Satdobato*, a hilltop nearby Libang, to have the best coverage possible. Estimated coverage area of a 500 watts transmitter is a radius of approximately 120 kilometres.

[54] Read an extended description of the situation of understaffed radio stations in Nepal in Onta 2009: 359.

the radio stations a visit. Moreover, many people in Rolpa are aware of the fact that the Maoist party established Radio Jaljala and refer to this radio station as *Maobadi* (Maoist) radio. Likewise, several Dalits complain that they do not find themselves represented in the programmes broadcast on the radio stations, as they are not equally represented.

9.6 The Influence of Bikaas on Local Radio

The historical tradition of Bikaas, as a means of eradicating discrimination and as an ideal of citizenship as described in the previous chapter, is influential in the two local radio stations, not least because PAMP are the target audience of some of the radio programmes, and they are regarded as those who primarily need Bikaas, either from outside agents or by mobilising resources from within the villages. Both radio stations broadcast news and magazine 'awareness' programmes concerning development, produced in-house or sponsored by donors as syndicated content from Kathmandu on issues such as gender, Dalits, agriculture, sanitation and health.

In the two local radio stations' articulation of the ideal of Bikaas, two central aspects emerged, as shall be further elaborated in the pages ahead. One is Bikaas, as a language of the educated and cultivated, something that can and ought to be brought about. The other is the constituted image of non-development this discourse produces, which is somewhat constructing a self-image of backwardness. While talking about different interventions of Bikaas towards PAMP, the station manager of Radio Rolpa, Gyaneshyam Archya, reveals that they have programmes specifically targeting Dalits and women with the objective to empower these groups, as well as programmes with the objective to develop the villages. He explains:

> There are separate programme quotas for Dalits. We have Dalit programmes, women awareness programmes. In various programmes we broadcast their rights. We have Dalit consciousness programmes, especially about public awareness for Dalits. And especially we focus on those things that empower them. Because our focus is 'to make them'. If they want, they can do. Our focus is on inequality. To conduct the Dalit programmes, we promote producers from Dalits. They conduct the programmes themselves. We worked with media and human rights during the time of armed fight. When the situation was grave, our organisation thought that if we really want to make Rolpa's people rational, we have to conduct on-air and on-ground activities. We thought of

> 'on-ground' activities to carry out many programmes in the villages on human rights and peace. Likewise, agriculture, construction, development and good governance activities could also be carried out 'on-air', which means to make the public hear from radio and then do the activities directly in the villages. (E10 2009: 14).

In the quote, it is evident that PAMP are granted separate programmes for positive development for Dalits and women. The main concern is 'to make them', teach and show them the right way by means of programmes with awareness (*Cetna Uthaune*). Moreover, the quote reveals the radio's self-perception, being a mediator in a dialectic 'on-air'-'on-ground' relationship with its audience and the villages, as the two are mutually connected and supportive. The station manager's perception of how PAMP should gain awareness by means of radio programmes is in line with Radio Rolpa's written vision and mission declaration that states that the radio's vision is to '*make* a society with human rights, social justice, community development and awareness'. Similarly, Radio Rolpa's mission declaration states: 'to be a devoted organisation to *build* an equal society' (emphasis added) (see Appendix 3). In sum, Radio Rolpa perceived itself as an external agent that can *make* and *build* a society by means of awareness (*Cetna Uthaune*), thereby creating an impact on the individual as well as larger impacts in society to ensure equality and community development. The perception of an audience, who receives and appropriates a message disseminated by radio and who subsequently implements the intended activities, resonates with Everett Rogers' (1995) concept of diffusion of innovation, which is a set of generalisations regarding the typical spread of innovations within a social system where change through the mass media can be promoted in a social system through a domino effect and eventually the tipping point is reached.

Radio Rolpa's self-perception, as an external agent supporting PAMP in generating community awareness and development, contrasts Radio Jaljala that has a different take on PAMP discrimination. To grasp Radio Jaljala's perception of development interventions for creating changes and removing PAMP discrimination, one has to see Radio Jaljala as the legal and official continuation of the Maoist Dhoka radio stations broadcasting underground during the armed revolt. Many of the staffs and those involved in legally founding Radio Jaljala are identical with those who broadcast illegally underground. Now Radio Jaljala has surfaced and achieved a license, the objective is to continue to propagate the Maoist party's ideals and objectives but now within a legal framework. Nar Bahadur Mahara, vice-chair of the Maoist party in Rolpa, explains:

When establishing this radio, at first we at the Maoist party discussed establishing a radio in Rolpa. During the war period, we were broadcasting radio from the other side of the Jaljala hills. After the peace process, that radio was stopped. Then many people said: 'why did you stop the radio? The radio should broadcast.' Yes, the radio was needed, but before we were in war so we were not under the government's rules and regulation, and we were allowed to operate the radio from anywhere because at the time we were not following the government's rules and regulation. Now we cannot broadcast like that so now we have to go according to the government system. Because the Maoist party's district level has established this radio, people say this radio is the Maoist party's radio. But when we have to give chance, we give chance to the Nepali Congress people, as well as UML supporters to conduct programmes. Neutral people also conduct programmes. People say this is the Maoist's radio because the Maoist party's board decided to establish a radio here. Even though we speak nicely and equally to everybody, other people think that this is the Maoists. It is possible to think that way but we are not doing (like) that. We broadcast a programme called *Bichar Manch* (thought forum). Our goal is to collect all kinds of thoughts, so we broadcast that programme. In *Bichar Manch*, we use local, national or international issues as subject. And in that subject we collect their view, concept and idea. If we the Maoist party make mistakes then the *Bichar Manch* programme gives us the guidelines to improve ourselves. Even the other parties also come in right line after listening to the listener's reaction. That is our goal. Therefore, we do not bias any political party and our mission is to develop people's thoughts and make them aware about science and technologies. Educational knowledge. We do not have any political aim nor abuse any party. We did plan to highlight our party but that is not our goal any longer. […] We have started to broadcast news and soon we are going to broadcast programmes about agriculture, programmes about Dalit awareness, about women and about martyr families – people who sacrificed in the revolution. To remember them we are broadcasting a programme that is called '*Birata Ko Gatha*' (stories of heroism). And we are also adding some programmes on knowledge and educational programmes. Recently, we have planned to add agricultural and health related programmes as well. And we are going to transmit some centrally broadcast programmes. This way we are trying to bring changes in public (E08 2009: pp. 13-14).

Amongst Radio Jaljala management there is an understanding that many label and perceive Radio Jaljala as a Maoist radio, and accordingly there is a concern to balance the use of sources to assure broad representation in the programmes in order to dissolve 'the aura of Maoism' that the radio has ('we did plan to highlight our party *but* that is not our goal any longer'). Despite these efforts, there are traces that the Maoist propagation has not evaporated completely. While the programmes on Dalit issues, gender, agriculture and health at first glance appear to have a similar objective as similar programmes broadcast on Radio Rolpa, the programmes on martyrdom have clear traces of the armed revolt and Maoism. Moreover, zooming further into how Radio Jaljala engages in the work on discrimination, their approach on PAMP discrimination differs compared to Radio Rolpa. The following quote from the station manager of Radio Jaljala, Mausham Rokamagar, underlines this:

> Regarding class discrimination such as on women, Janjati, Dalit, every day we attempt to remove this discrimination. This is our guiding principle. We have six-seven bullet points on this in our guiding principles. […] We focus on bringing the feeling that we have to give more strength to develop our own village by ourselves. If someone comes from outside and does some kind of development work, that community has to be active and aware to develop that village, and not wait for someone from the outside to develop ones own village. We give focus on these issues and our target is that. Now we don't have programmes related with that. These issues are brought up randomly. In programmes such as *Nagarik Sarokar* (citizen concern) and *Bichar Manch* (thought forum) we give more focus on these issues (T09 2010: pp. 3-4).

In this quote, discrimination on PAMP is something that has to be removed. It is the structures into which PAMP are embedded that discriminate PAMP and thus have to be removed, more than it is PAMP themselves that need awareness and empowerment in order to change their situation. This view also informs how development intervention in the villages should be executed. Here, it is not external agency that should intervene but the village and its people themselves, by mobilising their own resources to develop 'their own village'. The radio thus does not bring awareness *per se*, but it is rather a matter of 'bringing the feeling', in the sense of motivating people and encourage them to mobilise and develop their own resources and strengths. The station manager's statement resonates with the radio station's written objective, which declares that their objective is 'to conduct social and cultural transformation to remove ethnic, regional, religious and gender discrimination, and to provide equal opportunity to all according to feeling of "unity in variety"' (see Radio Jaljala's objectives in Appendix 3).

In other words, Radio Jaljala's self-perception operates on the level of symbolic meanings that Nepal traditionally and historically has assigned to oppressive cultural practices, and the radio's objective is thus not so much the transformation of individual behaviours, but rather the transformation of cultural norms. Their approach to social change is collective and not individual-based, as cultural meanings are defined collectively and therefore have to be deconstructed and reconfigured by the collective. Radio Jaljala's approach has resonance with the Freirean assumption that each individual should participate fully in shaping his or her own destiny fighting subjugation (Freire 1970). Radio Jaljala perceives themselves as working towards the *concientisation* and empowerment of individuals by means of radio production, which will in turn collectively dismantle discrimination and dominating cultures and reinvent new forms of more equitable interaction.

So far I have outlined the two radio stations' self-perceptions in terms of how the legacy of 'Bikaas' is instrumental in removing discrimination and as an ideal of citizenship. I now proceed to discuss how the structures of the two radio stations enable them to engage with their audiences.

9.7 The Structure of Local Radio Broadcasting

Entering a local radio station in Nepal is a distinct and remarkably uniform experience. It is like entering a world of its own, where day-to-day practices and time structuring are quite different from those outside. Although established in different places and on relatively different backgrounds, the two local radio stations share several characteristics in their daily practices. In the pages ahead, the practices of the two local radios will be discussed, and I will identify variations of different aspects as they appear.

While local radio is part of the locality, it is also a space of its own with office and broadcasting facilities, and it is ritually distinct from the place in which it is located. In the village and town area alike, most PAMP come from rural backgrounds where the structuring of time follows agricultural and domestic tasks. A radio station, however, circumvents the invariant relationship between people, information and space. Radio assimilates a substantial part of the knowledge previously reserved to a determined space and group of people, and disseminates this across spaces, in mass and in structured timeframes. The spatiality, dissemination of information in mass and the timed structuring of dissemination are some of the central features of local radio, which distinguish it from its locality.

Time structuring is a subtle and yet powerful way for a radio to engage with its audience. The structuring of a day is almost similar in the two radio stations. The radio stations broadcast every day and begin at 5:30 AM in the morning until 10:00 PM in the evening, except Radio Jaljala that has a break between 11:00 AM and 3:00 PM. In their programme schedules, both radio stations follow the structure of a rural family, as their profiled news programmes are broadcast from 6:00 AM to 8:00 AM in the morning and 5:00 PM to 9:00 PM in the evening, which is when people are not occupied with fieldwork and are likely to have time to listen to the radio.

Table 6: Categories of radio programmes. Weekly hours broadcasting

	Radio Jaljala	Radio Rolpa
Programme content, in-house production:		
News	15H 45M	26H 20M
Programmes on development (agriculture, health, gender, caste/ethnicity)	1H 30M	9H 30M
Debate (e.g. Samaya Sambad, Bichar Manch)	4H 30M	2H 15M
Literature programme	30M	None
Radio drama	None	None
Entertainment (e.g. quiz)	45M	45M
Sports	15M	None
Children's programme	2H	30M
Folk music	6H	2H 15M
Modern music	None	45M
Music programmes (without speak)	43H 15M	52H 15M
SUBTOTAL	73H 30M	95H 30M
Syndicated content: ACORAB, Uyalo, BBC Nepali Service	14H	20H
TOTAL	**87H 30M**	**115H 30M**

News is the most prominent programme and the main news programmes are broadcast primetime six o'clock in the morning and evening respectively on both radio stations, and news programmes occupy a significant portion of the programmes broadcast (Radio Rolpa forty percent, Radio Jaljala thirty-four percent, Table 6).[55] The six o'clock in-house produced news is followed by the syndicated content distributed by satellite from the Uyalo and ACORAB networks, and a substantial part of the news being broadcast is syndicated content from production houses in Kathmandu (Radio Rolpa forty-three percent, Radio Jaljala forty-seven percent). This supports the concern expressed by Pringle and Subba (2007) that syndicated programmes have high priority and large scope, introducing Bikaas as a certain teleology and progression adjusted towards national progress, improvement and development, however reinforcing the

[55] In the calculation is included the syndicated content, as most syndicated content is news. One or two programmes of the syndicated content are not news but magazine programmes on contemporary issues (gender, health, environment, etc.).

centre-periphery power imbalance, and disregarding local news and stories as backward and trivial. Another important observation in terms of the radio stations' priorities of programmes is Radio Rolpa's relatively high share of programmes on development (agriculture, health, gender, caste/ethnicities). This underpins the radio stations appropriation of this discourse and their self-perception as an external agent providing awareness and development to the villages. The fact that Radio Jaljala, compared to Radio Rolpa, has more hours allocated to radio programmes on debate underpins Radio Jaljala's relatively stronger approach towards having each individual participate in shaping his or her own destiny by means of debate and concientisation. The latter will be further discussed in the pages ahead.

9.8 Content in Programme Production

How the radio stations prioritise content and select their sources and accounts reflect their priorities and perpetuate power relations and representations within and between different groups of people. I now focus my attention on the six o'clock evening news programme broadcast on Radio Rolpa and Radio Jaljala to explore how the two radio stations have made their priorities in terms of selection of content and their use of sources.

Table 7: Content in-house produced news stories[56]

Content	Radio Rolpa	Radio Jaljala
Legal/bureaucracy	5%	2%
Politics	32%	39%
Culture/religion	6%	4%
Diplomacy	6%	9%
Sports/entertainment	0%	3%
Business/finance	9%	7%
Civil society/NGO	14%	12%
Infrastructure/transport	4%	3%
Peace/reconciliation	8%	7%
Health	7%	3%
Crime/accident	7%	11%
Agriculture/environment	3%	2%
TOTAL	**100%**	**100%**

Over the course of this sample week, the total number of news stories broadcast on the six o'clock evening news was fifteen to seventeen news stories per programme. Most of

[56] Sample taken from the six o'clock evening news over the span of one week from Radio Jaljala and Radio Rolpa, week 43-44, 2010. N=224

the stories relate to national politics and the transitory and polemic issues on drafting the new constitution by the interim government. The radio stations' priorities in terms of selection of sources and content situate both radio stations firmly in Nepal's current political transition, as most of the primetime news stories relate to national politics (Table 7). It is also worth noticing that a significant part of news content also relates to local development activities of civil society and NGOs. These stories concentrate primarily on their different activities taking place in the district; e.g. health camps, agitation programmes and the establishment and restructuring of local associations and youth clubs.

Table 8: Angle on in-house produced news stories[57]

Angle	Radio Rolpa	Radio Jaljala
Orientation	66%	60%
Opinion	33%	40%
Analysis	1%	0%
TOTAL	**100%**	**100%**

The majority of the news stories comprise orientations that come from press cuttings and press releases read aloud by the news hosts, or unedited audio statements from press conferences in which political parties, unions or NGOs express a particular cause or concern (Table 8). While most stories are orientations about activities or programmes taking place in the district (e.g. a youth club conducting a sanitation campaign, a political party doing an agitation programme or road maintenance work taking place in particular places), some of the stories voice opinions on particular issues on, for instance, the process of drafting the constitution. Among the 224 news stories from this sample, only one story was contextualised and nuanced with a comparative and critical perspective. This tells us that the radio stations tend to be 'microphone holders' and still pursue the formation of their own identity, and they function to muster the skills and resources that allow them to engage critically with the news stories and their sources.

[57] Sample taken from the six o'clock evening news over the course of a week from Radio Jaljala and Radio Rolpa, week 43-44, 2010. N=224

Table 9: Source of in-house produced news stories[58]

Source	Radio Rolpa	Radio Jaljala
UML	10%	16%
Maoist	15%	15%
Nepali Congress	9%	10%
Other political party	3%	5%
Bureaucrat/authority	22%	12%
NGO	30%	27%
Own	1%	0%
News agency	0%	2%
Civilian	3%	5%
Unnamed	9%	9%
TOTAL	**100%**	**100%**

The political transition seems to be covered fairly well, given that, by and large, both radio stations balance their use of political sources; however slightly granting priority to the UML and the Maoists (Table 9). Although Radio Jaljala was established by the Maoists, it does not seem to bias their selection of political sources, as they seem to balance their use of sources among the different political parties fairly well. Compared with Radio Rolpa, Radio Jaljala used far less bureaucrats and authorities as their sources, and this illustrates the disinclination that the Maoists still have with the state apparatus (and vice versa). Moreover, as discussed briefly above, both radio stations make significant use of NGOs as a source. If we compare the number of stories that are based on NGOs as a source (Table 9) with the number of stories with NGOs as content (Table 7), we see how NGOs are not solely used as sources on 'NGO issues', but also sources on issues related to politics, infrastructure, peace/reconciliation, etc.

Table 10: Location of in-house produced news stories[59]

Location	Radio Rolpa	Radio Jaljala
Village	13%	3%
Libang	10%	18%
National	76%	68%
International	1%	10%
TOTAL	**100%**	**100%**

To a higher degree Radio Rolpa prioritised news and stories from the villages, whereas Radio Jaljala had stronger emphasis on stories from Libang and international news (Table 10). Among the thirteen percent of news stories from the villages broadcast on

[58] Sample taken from the six o'clock evening news for a week from Radio Jaljala and Radio Rolpa, week 43-44, 2010. N=224

[59] Sample taken from the six o'clock evening news for a week from Radio Jaljala and Radio Rolpa, week 43-44, 2010. N=224

Radio Rolpa, nearly all (eighty-six percent) were stories about activities in village youth clubs, such as elections of new board members, programme activities and agitation programmes to orient the people about the constitution writing process. During the sample week, except from two days, the Radio Rolpa evening news had a news story from the village as either the first or second story in the programme. Radio Rolpa's stronger presence in the villages and their priority on content from these areas underpin their self-perception as being a radio in a dialectic 'on-air'-'on-ground' relationship with its audience in the villages, and an external development agent mobilising and facilitating awareness and Bikaas to these areas, as discussed previously. In comparison, in their selection of content Radio Jaljala is more focused on the structural constraints and symbolic meanings. This is also seen in the sample of magazine programmes used in this study. While all Radio Rolpa's programmes relate to regional and local issues, Radio Jaljala in their magazine programmes also touch upon international issues, as shall be discussed later.

9.9 Representation of Bikaas in Programme Production

By looking into some of the magazine radio programmes broadcast on the two radio stations, I now continue my exploration of how notions related to Bikaas are represented by the two radio stations and manifests as a category through which they see themselves and the world. The following excerpt is from the magazine programme *Samaya Sambad* (time dialogue) broadcast on Radio Rolpa, which brings up contemporary issues related to politics, culture and development. The extract is from a programme on maternal health and introduces an ideal for what Rolpa should be like when it comes to medical facilities for pregnant women. The guest in the programme narrates:

> Maternal mortality is a worldwide problem and underdeveloped countries have bigger problems than other countries. An underdeveloped country like Nepal has horrible conditions, although now in Nepal there are improvements because many organisations and the government have made new plans for mother's care programmes. […] Last year we discussed to bring a doctor or specialist on women's diseases. Some organisations have given some amounts for that but doctors don't want to come to Rolpa. The reason why doctors don't want to come Rolpa is because there isn't a blood bank in Rolpa, why it's not possible to do blood transmissions. And there isn't an x-ray. Like this, doctors do their evaluation of this area. Doctors don't want to come to this remote

> district. If there are no good facilities then a doctor might also face problems. If they are not able to work properly then it will make no sense coming here. Another point is salary, which also isn't enough for them. Therefore, if financial, medical facilities and service work together, then definitely they will come. The state is pivotal. Because the government is not able to make proper planning and arrangements, because of that Rolpa and other districts are backward (T29 2010: pp. 1-2).

The excerpt reveals how Bikaas s deeply rooted in Nepalese society, as it manifests as a category through which people think, act and guide their perception of themselves and the world. The health worker in this excerpt interpreted and highlighted ideals that resemble the conditions in a developed country with good healthcare and where doctors are well paid. In contrast, the image he portrayed of Rolpa was negative and focused on what is lacking, thus devaluing the everyday lives of a large majority of people living in Rolpa, while also carrying a strong historical legacy. The audience listening to the programme and the assessment of the maternal mortality situation in Rolpa learned that Bikaas means distancing oneself from being rural, remote, backward, poor, uneducated, poorly paid, lacking modern technologies, and thus suffering from disease, lack of health care, horrible conditions and high death rates. The discursive production of 'the developed, civilised citizen' (in the image of the doctor) entails that many people perceive themselves as backward subjects leading lives that are ordeals. Such conceptualisations create a backward sense of self amongst PAMP, as shall be further discussed later.

We see this further exemplified in the following extract from the programme *Samaya Sambad* (time dialogue), broadcast on Radio Rolpa. The programme was about a new small enterprise initiative in Rolpa, and the guest explained about the benefits of implementing such a programme. He narrates:

> United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) and the ministry of industry, in an agreement with the District Development Committee, decided to start this programme in Rolpa district from August 13, 2009. The small enterprise development (Bikaas) programme is a business depending on local resources, and this way is to be developed economic success and income by the means of enterprise development. People can start a small industry staying at home and increase their income and improve their livelihood. With this objective, the programme was established. Small enterprise development means it is established on local resources and producing goods on basis of the demands

> from the local bazaar. Getting income by selling own products in the local market is small enterprise development. […] We focus on local resources, especially *Allo*[60] materials. In the same way we are also providing training for sewing and cutting. After learning how to sew and cut, various businesses have started by those energetic people. In this district we focus on Allo to make thread. We try to leave the old technology of making thread, where people had to pull the thread through their mouth and other old methods. Now we are making thread in a new way with new technology using iron machine. This way we make good quality thread. Now in village 'mouth made thread' can be sold for 400 rupees per kilo and 'machine made thread' [Lathe] can be sold for 800 rupees per kilo. In our programme we must have to cover forty percent of Dalit and sixty percent of women and we also have to cover Janjati according to their population in district (T30 2010: pp. 1-2).

The excerpt from the radio programme demonstrates how development ideals also are aligned with certain ideals when it involves the actual agency of development. The radio programme confirmed Nepal as a country depending on external aid and support, managed by international organizations in alliance with local partners. Here Bikaas is regarded as something from the outside, however simultaneously also stressing the significance of building upon local experiences and resources, targeting the programs to PAMP. The international organisations are perceived like a relief that is expected to bring wealth and make the ignorant repent, where the connection between the two perceptions of development agency (organisations as synonymous with development and the implicit responsibility of the 'cultivated' programme producer and guest to 'ease' their backward home place). This is sustained by the legitimacy of development related programmes, such as AIDS Day, Sanitation Day, UN programmes, health camps, Red Cross initiatives, etc., promoted by the radio stations with PAMP as their main target audience. In this particular programme, the Bikaas discourse represented PAMP as backward and incompetent, as they used their mouths to make thread and only made 400 rupees per kilo; however, at the same time, appointing the 'cure' to resolving all the symptoms by showing the 'right way' for PAMP, using 'new technology' and 'iron machines', thus enabling them to transcend the categories that stigmatise them. Local radio provides Bikaas and the adequate awareness, whereby PAMP can 'learn right from wrong'. By listening to the radio, PAMP learn that the cultivated can change things, they are the ones who can teach others, they know what kind of living is correct, they know how to be clean, healthy

[60] The Himalayan nettle plant (*Girardinia Diversifolia*) is commonly known as 'Allo' as a weaving thread for shawls, blankets, bags and clothes (Wikipedia) [checked August 19, 2012].

and make good money. The cultivated[61] are simply more developed, educated and civilised than 'the rest'.

9.10 Structure and Representations in Radio Broadcasting

Each radio programme has its unique structure with its own particular jingle, style and sound. Radio Rolpa's six o'clock evening news, for instance, begins the programme with a jingle of bells ringing followed by a *Bansuri* flute going up and down in scales and accompanied by *Tabla* drums. As this highly familiar one-minute musical introduction fades, a female announcer, reminding the audience of this evening's news, reads a concise prologue:

> Now it's six PM. *Namaskar*. Welcome to Radio Rolpa's six PM Rolpa news. I'm Pratibha Shrestha. Now at the beginning our news headlines: the meeting between the Prime Minister of Nepal and United Maoist President Dahal '*Prachanda*'[62] was cancelled in the constituent assembly meeting. Discussions between *Andolanrat* (agitator) of the Petroleum transportation trade union and Nepal Oil Corporation ended inconclusively. One person is arrested in accusation of trafficking in Banke. An ambulance with a sick person and a truck collided in Pyuthan and three persons are injured. Immediately after Tihar, YCL[63] Nepal Rolpa area number two will organise agitation to make people oriented about the constitution. Now to the news in details. [And the news programme continues with the first story.] (T14 2010: 1).

Radio Jaljala similarly has a jingle using traditional folk instruments leading up to their news programmes, and, moreover, in their jingle a male and female voice sing a tune that is similar to traditional Nepalese folk music (*Lok Geet*). Because of the singing, and as the jingle is one and a half minute long, it makes it difficult to distinguish the jingle from a folk song. The jingle goes like this:

> [Chorus]
> Male: Rolpa's dream
> Female: Rolpa's dream
> M: In the pathway of progress

[61] Personified in the programme producer and the guest invited in the programme.
[62] Puspa Kamal Dahal, also known as '*Prachanda*', is chairman of the Maoists. Prachanda was his nom de guerre and can be translated 'the fearless', 'the wild' or 'untamed.'
[63] Youth Communist League. Youth wing affiliated with the Maoists.

F: In the pathway of progress
M: Always striding (walking with quick paces)
F: Always striding (walking with quick paces)
M: In the world of sound
F: In the world of sound
M: Rolpali voice
F: Rolpali voice
M: Always being melodious sound

M&F: It is playing *Shankha* (conch shell), whistle of peace and flowing with the whizzing sound of gems.[64] It is laughing, spreading out the beam of light on the rainbow of golden shades. Our Jaljala, FM Jaljala, our Jaljala, FM Jaljala, community radio Jaljala FM 104.5 megahertz for community. Rolpa's dream is always to stride [walk with quick pace] on the pathway of progress. In the world of sound, the Rolpali sound is the melodious sound [verse repeated].

Always being together in times of happiness, sadness, pain and difficulties, filling colour in life and giving courage to all. No discrimination with higher and lower, yours and mine. Radio Jaljala is like that we all have to listen. Radio Jaljala is in the village, city and in the heart. It is a natural platform for all. It is a natural platform for all. Rapti, Bheri, Dhaulagiri is in the laps of Himal (the Himalayas). It crosses the border, be it Gandaki and Lumbini.[65] It brings news of the world and the local together, spreading information and massages of education to the village and the city [verse repeated].

[Chorus repeated]

Very close with your thoughts and emotions is community radio Jaljala FM 104.5 megahertz. We do hard work, we see life in common work. Mount Everest is ours and it is proud to know us. We feel communion in our own creation. We will be known in every corner of the world, continuing to hope for changes (T33 2010).

Having a musical introduction of one minute and more with a soundscape of Nepalese traditional musical instruments, the radio programmes create an intimate connection

[64] A piece of mineral, which, in cut and polished form, is used to make jewellery or other adornments (Wikipedia) [checked August 19, 2012].
[65] The places listed are nationalistic icons on religious, tourist and natural sites in Nepal.

with its audience. As these soundscapes are linked with memories, feelings and sentiments of 'Nepaliness', either experienced or imagined, they evoke a state of mind and mood that the audience can relate to based on their own experiences or imaginations. Radio Jaljala's use of voice in their jingle, singing about Nepalese deep-rooted nationalistic icons of mountains, rivers and religious places in a lyrical language, further underpin the soundscape's sentiments denoting 'Nepaliness'. This gives the radio programmes familiarity, and I observed myself the extent to which radio has indeed become integrated into people's daily routines. One day during my field studies in Madichau (Kotgaun), in the house we lived in, I sat in the corner of the kitchen and observed the daughter-in-law to the landlord preparing the evening Dal Bhat and listening to the radio at the same time. The following is an extract from my field notes from my kitchen observation from 5:30 PM to 6:30 PM on November 3, 2010:

> The radio hangs on a nail on the wall in the kitchen and is tuned into Radio Rolpa. While she is chopping vegetables for the Dal Bhat, the radio runs in the background (not very loud) with Tihar music and Tihar greetings from local shops and business people. The music, the radio host's reading of greetings and the occasional 'bursts' from the rice cooker dominates the soundscape in the kitchen. The woman seems to be relaxed while she sits and chops the vegetables and look after the pots, assuring the food doesn't burn. Her activity is only interrupted for a short while when her two sons come and ask her a question and immediately leave her again. At six PM the jingle from the six o'clock news sounds and the news begins. I don't notice a change in her moves, attitude and activities as she in the same pace continues looking after the pots and preparing the food.

As the radio ran in the background with a soundscape linked with memories, feelings and sentiments related to the *Tihar* celebrations,[66] the woman unremarkably carried out her daily routine preparing the evening Dal Bhat, almost as if the radio accompanied her through her activities. When the six o'clock evening news was broadcast and there were no noticeable changes in her behaviour or activities, it underpinned her familiarity to the radio station no matter the programme being broadcast, and, moreover, how the radio programmes by routine and unremarkably ran in the background while other household activities took place simultaneously.

[66] Tihar is together with Dashain one of the major annual Hindu festivals celebrated in late autumn.

9.11 Respect, Repetition and Ritualised Performance

The radio-audience encounter has several ritualised aspects that structure their relationship. One aspect is the repetitive mode of greeting, which serves to strengthen a bond between the two, as the following example from the programme *Bichar Manch* (thought forum) broadcast on Radio Jaljala revealed. The programme host, Amarjeet Pun Magar, narrates:

> *Namaskar*, you are heartily welcome to Radio Jaljala's programme *Bichar Manch*. I am Amarjeet Pun Magar. Our technician friend is Ghanashyam KC. Audience, we usually talk about current major issues of the nation, such as politics, social issues, health, education etc., and we try bringing forward your valuable thoughts to the related place. And whatever you have in your mind, feel free and without any doubt or fear. This is the only one programme where you can bring forward your thoughts. It is the programme Bichar Manch and this programme we broadcast weekly four times on Sunday, Tuesday, Wednesday and Friday from 9:15 PM to 9:55 PM by the means of Radio Jaljala's sound wave. Audience, today is Friday and today we'll discuss on an issue and we collect your views. Audience, our nation always faces foreign interference. Sometimes, a country continuously interferes in our country and especially our neighbouring country India interferes in our country. We usually say India is our neighbouring country but many times that neighbouring country India openly interferes in our country. They interfere directly or indirectly; they interrupt the work of the government. To form a government is an internal affair, but there is interference going on. Sometimes our country's parliament members get threatened on their lives dangerously from India. As they threaten to kill a parliament member, we can understand that they interfere in our nation. In the same way, yesterday Indian people interfered and attacked in the Rupandehi boarder area our nations security [the police/army]. These are an important part of our nation. What do you think and say about these incidents and what do you expect from the government about these issues? We will discuss it with you on these issues and we collect your views and try to bring forward your views to the related place. To express your thoughts you can dial our station. Our stations phone number is 086-440271 (T25 2010: 1).

This is an example of an introduction to the storyline of a programme; an introduction generally used by programme hosts on both radio stations. Initially, the host greets the

audience with a 'Namaskar', which is a formal and yet conventional salutation in Nepal. When spoken to another person face-to-face, it is commonly accompanied by a slight bow made with hands pressed together, palms touching and fingers pointed upwards in front of the chest. 'Namaskar' or 'Namaste', which is more commonly used and less formal, derives from Sanskrit and is a combination of two words: '*Namah*' (bow) and '*Te*' (to you). Namaste thus literally means 'I bow to you'. As it is most commonly used, Namaste is equivalent to 'greetings' or 'good day' in English, but it has its variations depending on context and social status and caste. When, for instance, a younger family member meets older relatives, junior staff meets senior staff, or a low caste meets a higher caste, the person with lower status, age and caste has to perform the Namaste first to show respect. The fact that the host in the programme used Namaskar as the very first thing to greet his audience, no matter their age, caste and social background, circumvents those established hierarchies. Later, in the quote, he changed his way of salutation to 'audience', which is neutral and without connotations of power, status or hierarchies. Now the host and the audience are on equal terms and can communicate equally.

Whereas the salutation is welcoming and open, the structure of the programme is persuasive, directed to effect behavioural or attitudinal change. The storyline of the programme is about unacceptable Indian influence in Nepalese domestic affairs, and the strong patriotic rhetoric is very much aligned with the Maoist political agenda and identity politics. During the thirty-minute programme, the host received ten phone calls from a broad spectrum of people.[67] Despite the plurality of backgrounds, all ten callers affirmed the standpoint of the host that Indian interference into Nepalese affairs has gone too far, as is asserted by this male listener, Nabin, who echoes the host's concern:

> Yes, what kind of a foreign interference that is going on our country! I feel that it is same like a termite from four sides eats wood. The same way other country is being transgressed from four sides. Foreign lands attack our land. To stop these things, all political leaders and all people as well, those who are intelligent persons in our village, they should unite and fight against this matter (T25 2010: 4).

[67] The callers comprised seven male and three female. Amongst those, three Dalits, three Magars and three B&C plus one where we could not identify the caste from the surname.

As the audience, or at least those ten people calling in, already were 'convinced' about the host's claim of excessive Indian influence into Nepalese domestic affairs, they simply reproduced the host's point, and the programme thus created a closed loop of argumentation where caller and host throughout the programme repeated the same point a total of ten times, sometimes in an exaggerated form. This created the structure of an echo chamber, as the participants in this programme found their own opinion echoed back to them, which only reinforced their conviction. As the programme had no scope to shed further light on the proclamation regarding India's influence (nuances, contradictions, disagreements), it created significant barriers for critical discourse to take place.

I have chosen this example because it underlines the paradoxes that occur in periods of change. Although the host in his salutation and introduction is respectful, inclusive and encouraging to his audience and the callers, who, by and large, come from different parts of society with different gender and caste backgrounds, the way the host structured the programme was a persuasive communication with exacerbated distinctions and them-us antagonisms between Nepal and its neighbour India. Although the host did everything to the best of his intentions, he used the powerful space created by radio and his authority as a programme host to broadcast biased claims, not critically examining these claims and providing nuances and contradictions.

Figure 6: Maoist poster on Indian influence in Nepalese affairs. Photo was taken in Radio Jaljala, but was seen in different offices and teashops throughout the district.

9.12 Introducing New Ideas

I will now introduce another edition of *Bichar Manch* (thought forum) that brought up the issue of how to celebrate Tihar, the festival of lights, which is one of the important annual Hindu religious festivals celebrated late fall. Hinduism is one of the religious structures that have cemented people into predefined castes and groups, as discussed previously. Especially in the past, every year during these festivals Dalits were reminded about their place in the Hindu system and hierarchies, and occasionally there have been incidents where Dalits were beaten as they refused to participate in traditionally assigned practices during Dashain and Tihar, including disposing of buffalo carcases following sacrifices at the local temple.[68]

The host received twenty phone calls[69] during the thirty-minute programme from listeners with greetings and Tihar testimonies, explanation of how they were going to celebrate Tihar in their family, and in-between these calls the host talked about the important religious and communal things to remember during the celebrations. The host, Gyanendra Sharma, narrates:

> We have to celebrate Tihar with happiness and fun, playing *Deusi Bhailo*,[70] raising awareness in society. We have to celebrate Tihar with the slogan 'changing community,' but we don't have to celebrate Tihar expensively and to show off to bring damage in society. And Tihar should give a new massage for the republic of Nepal. We have to say this is the third Tihar after establishing the republic of Nepal. And we all should celebrate Tihar with fun and take Tika from sisters and playing *Deusi Bhailo*. And we don't have to celebrate expensively and to show off. We have to celebrate in our capacity. Karan Khadka [a participant calls the programme] from Sirpa Rolpa has come to participate in the programme, Karan Ji Namaskar (T26 2010: 8).

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[68] In Hindu religion, Dalit caste is the caste with the role to clean up dead animals in public places. During Dashain and Tihar festivals, non-Dalits traditionally sacrifice animals at the temples. When the festivals are over, Dalits have to clean the carcasses. Dalits are also supposed to eat the meat of the sacrificed animals, which are considered 'holy', despite a few days having passed since the sacrifice and consequently the meat is often rotten. Refusal to submit to such roles is considered a rejection of the traditional belief, and could lead to stigma as well as violent repercussions from non-Dalit persons. (OHCHR 2011: 54).

[69] The callers comprised fourteen male and six female. Amongst those, three Dalits, ten Magars, one Tharu and two B&C plus two from whose surname we not identify their castes.

[70] Children and teenagers sing Bhailo and Deusi songs and dance as they go to various homes in their community, collecting money and food and giving blessings for prosperity. Girls generally sing Bhailo, while boys sing Deusi. At the end of these songs, the woman of the house will serve food and give money to these Deusi/Bhailo singers and dancers. In return, the Deusi/Bhailo team will give blessings for high income and prosperity.

Like in the previous edition of *Bichar Manch*, the host used persuasive communication with the intent to effect behavioural and attitudinal change. The producer had predefined pro-social behaviours that he wished to promote (do not show off, do not spend too much money). But he also introduced the slogan 'changing community' and 'the new message for the republic of Nepal', which are both new and alternative discourses in relation to Tihar and Hinduism, which are ancient religious traditions. During the programme, he does not make explicit what 'changing community' and 'the new message for the republic of Nepal' means, but the fact that he dared to talk about the issues and brought in new discourses from Nepal's current political transition, make this approach appear as a new alternative. PAMP and the broader audience listening to the programme can have no doubts in their minds about what he referred to, and yet his mode of conveying information and relating to the audience reproduced the common persuasive communication with the intent to effect behavioural and attitudinal change.

What has been revealed in terms of persuasive communication used in the magazine programmes to some extent contradicts the intentions expressed by the management of the two local radio stations, since both voiced their commitment to providing their audiences with news and magazine programmes in a balanced fashion.[71] I suggest that while the predominant mode of magazine programme production focused on persuasive communication with the intent to effect behavioural and attitudinal change, the 'alternative' mode shows other communicative aspects inclined towards actively participating and showing independence. Both aspects are important. The submissive form can be used as a tool to negotiate through the local social reality of hierarchical power structures, whereas the alternative and more progressive approach to communication plays a strong role in PAMP's future aspirations, as I will discuss in greater details later.

9.13 Audience Appropriation of Local Radio Broadcasting

Having reviewed the two local radio stations' priorities of content and the ritualised aspects of the radio-audience engagement, I now proceed to discuss PAMP's day-to-day experiences and appropriations of ideals broadcast by local radio. As opposed to assuming that the introduction of new mass media in a locality fosters radical cultural

[71] While the use of persuasive communication in particular is prevalent in the magazine programmes, the news programmes did not prove to have a one-sided coverage.

change, the introduction of such media is perceived as being the continuation of an on-going process of cultural innovation. Local radio extends the communicative boundaries by adding new social dimensions, and in the discussion of mediation attention is thus drawn to the potential (new) ways in which people are socially positioned as the result of these mediations. This section is concerned with mediation as both the objectification of social relations in practice, but also the processes of negotiating agreement between different parties. Nick Couldry (2003: 2) refers to 'the myth of the mediated centre', the idea that there is 'a centre' to the social world and that, in some sense, the media speaks 'on behalf' of that centre. Couldry's work alerts us to the postulations of representations of pre-existing communities. Regardless of the motives and criteria for defining community identity, this kind of 'mythmaking' restricts the imagination of a community and the scope for aspirations and political action, and we cannot take for granted that people will endorse this myth of the mediated centre and give mass media a privileged place in the construction of their social and political relations.

This is also the case in Rolpa, since, despite the fact that an increasing number of people in Rolpa have access to new and different types of media, traditional face-to-face means of communication (conversations with family and friends, village meetings and gossip) have not evaporated, as these are still important means of communication on local issues, affirmed by just about one-fourth of the respondents (Table 11).

Table 11: Most important source on local issues[72]

	Urban	Rural
Local radio	59%	57%
Friends/family	10%	17%
Gossip in village	10%	5%
Meetings in village	5%	9%
National radio	1%	6%
School or health post	6%	2%
Other/unknown	0%	2%
Not interested in local issues	4%	0%
Newspaper	3%	1%
Television	2%	1%
Internet	1%	0%
TOTAL	**100%**	**100%**

Even though Radio Jaljala and Radio Rolpa have not been on-air for that long, and within the last few years an increasing number of different media platforms have become available to people in Rolpa, local radio has become *the* main source of information on local issues, with more than half of the respondents citing local radio as

[72] Q35 in survey. N=501.

their main source. In Rolpa, a total of eighty-four percent of the population listen to radio. Seventy-five percent of the urban population and sixty-six percent of the rural population have a radio receiver at home, which is where most people would listen to the radio, as close to eighty percent of the audience prefer to listen radio at home. Twelve to sixteen percent of the audience listen to radio at their friends'/relatives' homes (slightly higher for the rural audience).[73]

Comparing the popularity of two local radio stations broadcasting from Rolpa, Radio Rolpa is by far the most popular with a share of listeners of approximately three-quarters of the audience (Table 12). In comparison, Radio Jaljala has a share of listeners just above twenty percent. Despite the fact that Radio Rolpa has been on-air nine months longer than Radio Jaljala and thus should have assured a stronger base of listeners, the difference between the two radio stations is significant and cannot be explained solely in terms of the time they have been broadcasting on air.

Table 12: Local radio stations' share of listeners[74]

Radio Rolpa		Radio Jaljala	
Caste/ethnicity:		Caste/ethnicity:	
Urban:	Rural:	Urban:	Rural:
Magar 83%	Magar 65%	Magar 17%	Magar 23%
B&C 71%	B&C 71%	B&C 26%	B&C 20%
Dalit 74%	Dalit 81%	Dalit 22%	Dalit 17%
Gender:		Gender:	
Urban:	Rural:	Urban:	Rural:
Female 75%	Female 74%	Female 24%	Female 20%
Male 76%	Male 66%	Male 21%	Male 22%

Zooming into Radio Jaljala's share of listeners, the fact that the share of rural Magar audience is slightly higher compared to the other ethnic groups could be explained through Radio Jaljala's linkage with the Maoist party and the Maoist's mobilisation of ethnic groups for increased federal autonomy along ethnic lines for the establishment of the autonomous state of '*Magarat*', which has some resonance particularly in the rural areas.[75] This, however, is primarily a rural phenomenon, which is also emphasised by the fact that the share of urban Magar listeners is significantly higher at Radio Rolpa.

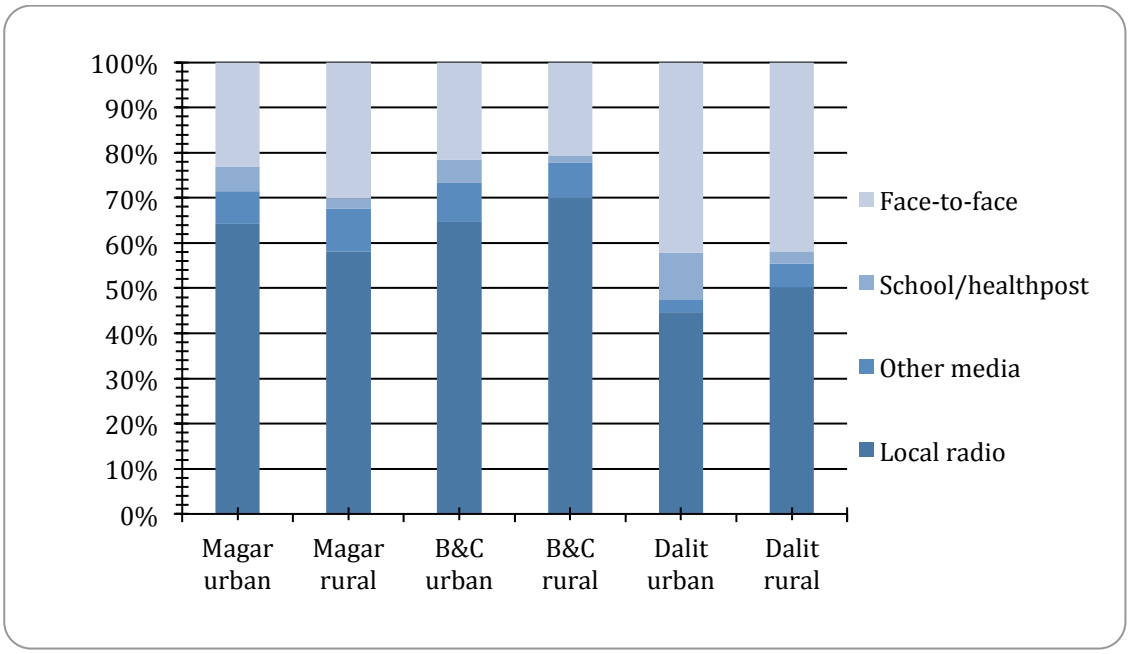
[73] These figures are derived from the survey.

[74] Q10 in survey. N=414. On the questionnaire, besides the options 'Radio Jaljala' and 'Radio Rolpa' was 'Radio Nepal' (state broadcaster on AM signal) an option. 'Radio Nepal' has only a marginal listenership, except amongst rural B&C and Magar male, age sixty and above (approximately ten percent).

[75] 'Magarat' comprises of the districts of Palpa, Gulmi, Myagdi, Baglung, Rolpa, Rukum, Salyan, Pyuthan and Argakhachi. www.telegraphnepal.com/headline/2009-12-18/magarat-and-tamuwan-states-declared-in-nepal-more-in-pipeline [checked August 19, 2012].

As the aforementioned findings suggest, media appropriation and use do not function in a vacuum, as the use of new media occurs within a framework of existing communicative practices and socio-economic conditions. Looking further into the different castes and their main sources of information on local issues, Dalits, compared with other castes, rely less on local radio as well as other media when it comes to information on local issues (Figure 7).

Figure 7: Caste groups' most important source on local issues[76]



The explanation to this is that fewer Dalits, compared with the other ethnic groups, have ownership of a radio (Table 13).

[76] Q35 in survey. N=498.

Table 13: Caste groups' access to media[77]

Radio in home			
	Magar	B&C	Dalit
Urban	67%	83%	55%
Rural	74%	65%	53%
Television in home			
	Magar	B&C	Dalit
Urban	12%	41%	15%
Rural	2%	3%	1%
Used the internet (home or outside)			
	Magar	B&C	Dalit
Urban	3%	5%	0%
Rural	4%	2%	0%
Mobile phone in household			
	Magar	B&C	Dalit
Urban	76%	87%	65%
Rural	75%	68%	41%

Among those with a radio at home, approximately two-thirds of the audience, no matter their ethnic background, receive the most important information on local issues from the radio (Table 14). With this we can assume that people's appropriation of radio is not a matter of caste but is rather determined by the extent to which people have access to this medium.

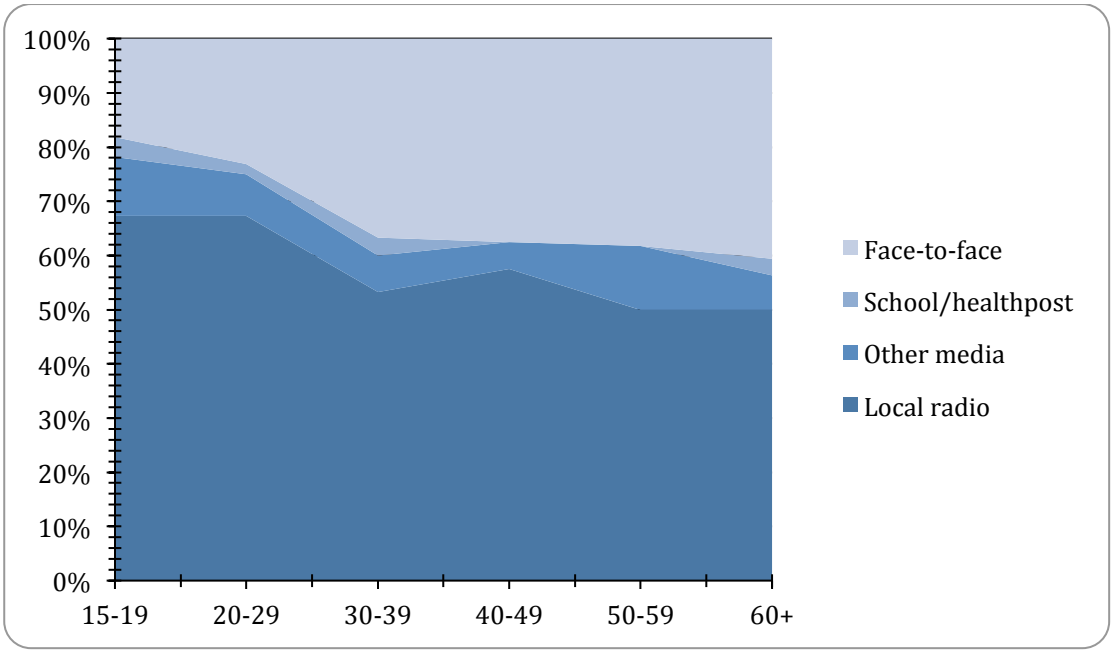
Table 14: Caste groups' preference for radio as most important source on local issues amongst those with a radio at home[78]

Magar	B&C	Dalit
64%	69%	69%

With the introduction of new media in Rolpa, youths navigate differently in the way they acquire information on local issues compared to other age groups. Zooming into youths in rural areas, for instance, we see how youths, compared with other age groups, in a bid to obtain information on local issues have replaced much of their face-to-face means of communication with local radio, whereas 'other media' (television, newspaper, and the internet) by and large remain constant throughout all age groups (Figure 8).

[77] Q1, Q14, Q23 and Q29 in survey. N=498.
[78] Q35 in survey. N=356.

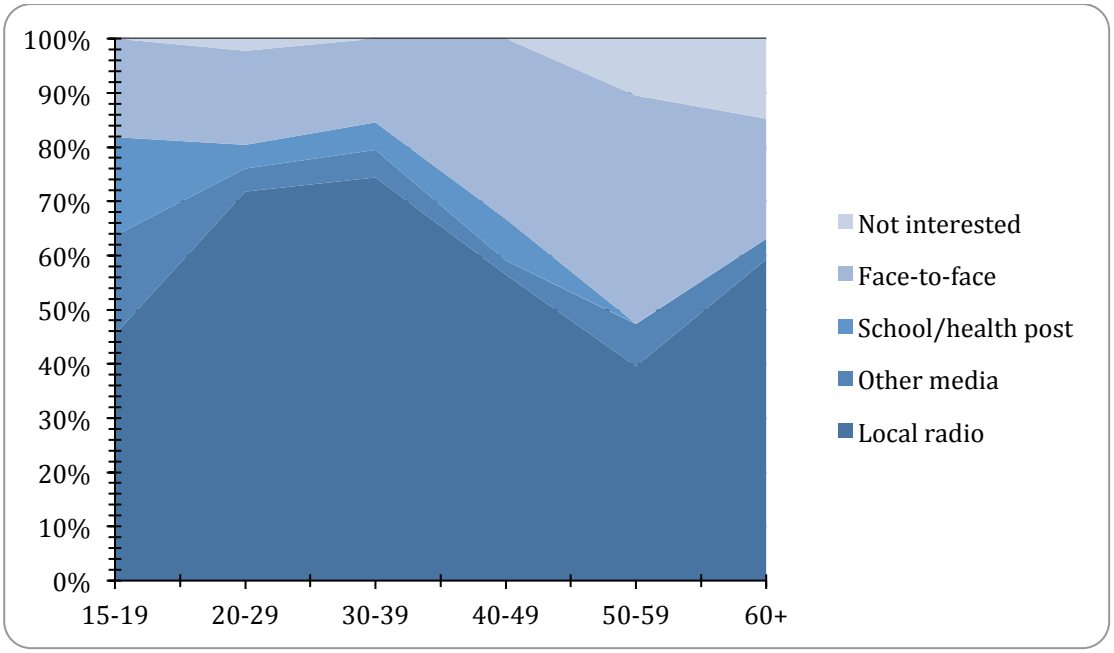
Figure 8: Rural age groups' most important source on local issues[79]



Comparing rural-urban divides and the different age groups' acquirement of information on local issues, we see other communicative patterns and dynamics in play. Looking into how urban youths acquire information on local issues (Figure 9), we find that local radio does not have that strong a hold of urban youths compared with their rural compatriots (Figure 8), as this age group in urban areas is diverted onto the 'other media' platforms as well (television, newspaper, and the internet). Moreover, public authorities such as health posts and schools also have an important place among urban youths, which likely is due to the fact that these institutions, after the reintroduction of democracy, especially in urban areas have a stronger foothold and thus representation of and influence on urban youths.

[79] Q35. N=279

Figure 9: Urban age groups' most important source on local issues[80]



Among those who most likely never listen to radio, besides Dalits as discussed previously, it is especially those without formal education who never listen to radio (Figure 10). Furthermore, there is a group with secondary and SLC[81] educational background from urban areas, who never listen to radio. This is identical with the twelve percent of urban teens that claim that they never listen to radio (Figure 11). This could suggest that the twelve percent of urban educated youths not using radio as their main source of information on local issues (Figure 9) are those pioneering and gradually embracing 'other media' (television, newspaper and the internet).

[80] Q35. N=222.
[81] School Leaving Certificate, the final examination in the secondary school.

Figure 10: Educational background and those never listening radio[82]

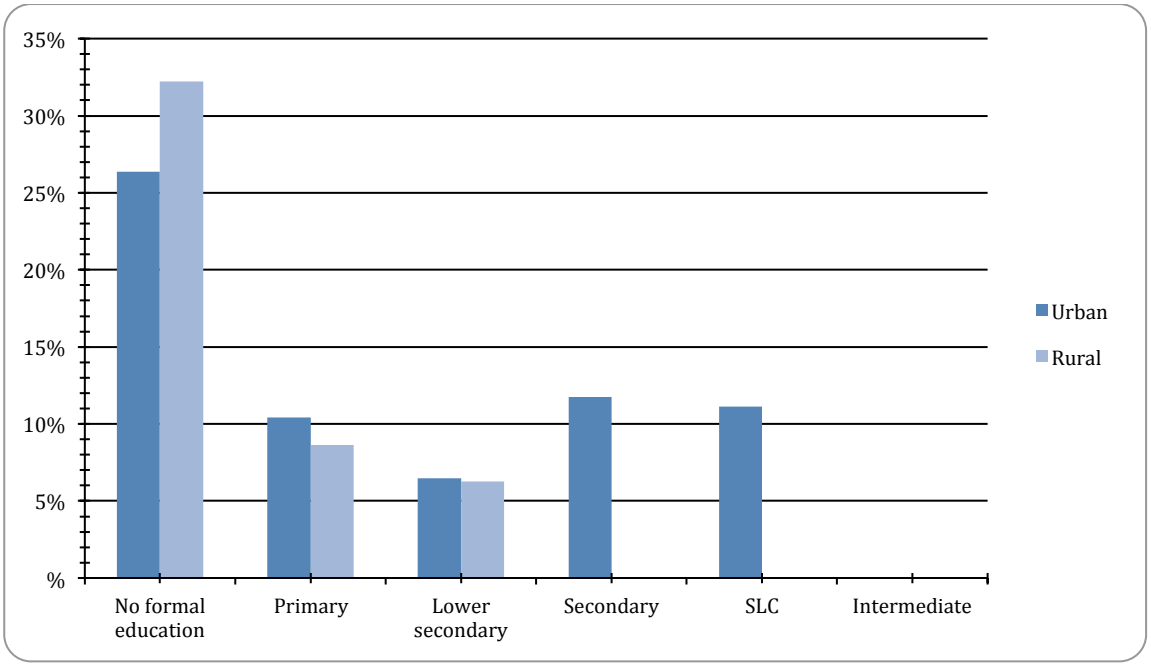
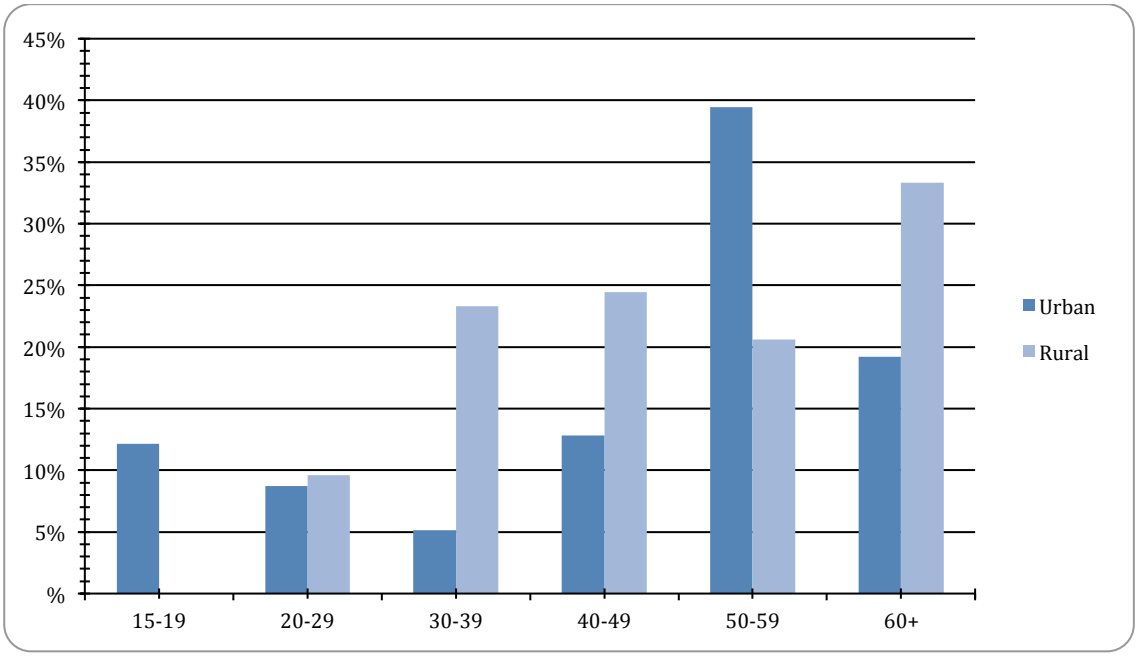


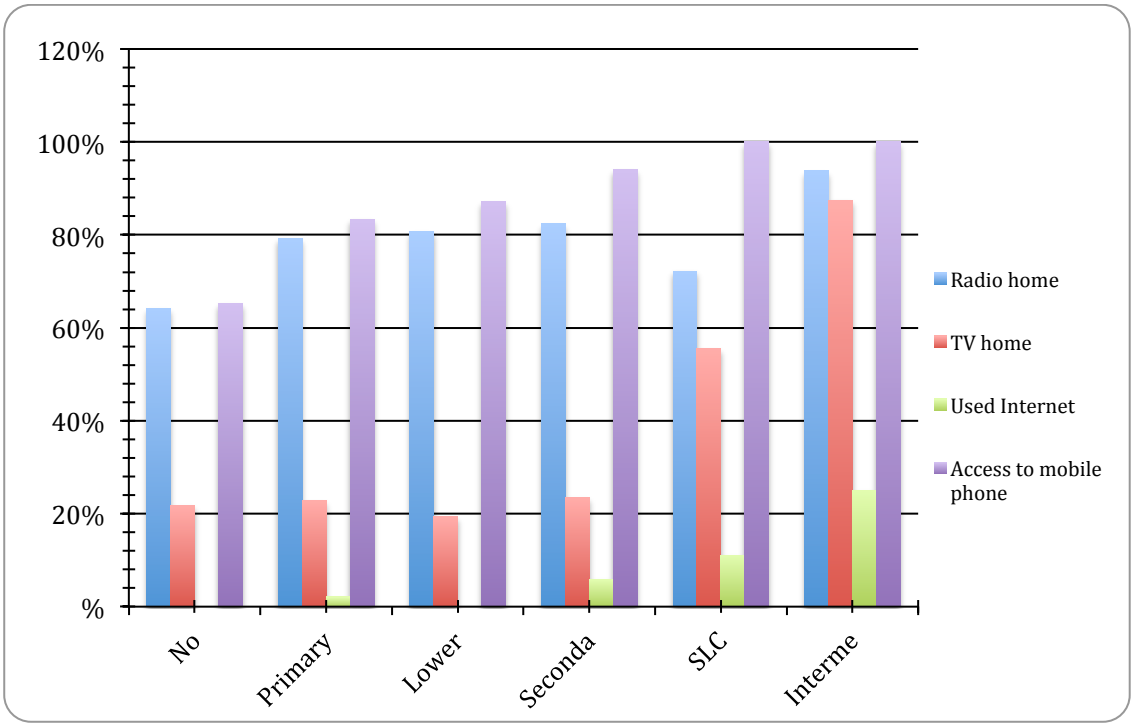
Figure 11: Age groups and those never listening to radio[83]



[82] N=498.
[83] N=499.

As we can see, people's educational background is an index of people's access to the different media. The higher their educational backgrounds, the larger the scope to the various media outlets available (Figures 12 and 13).

Figure 12: Urban access to media based on educational background[84]

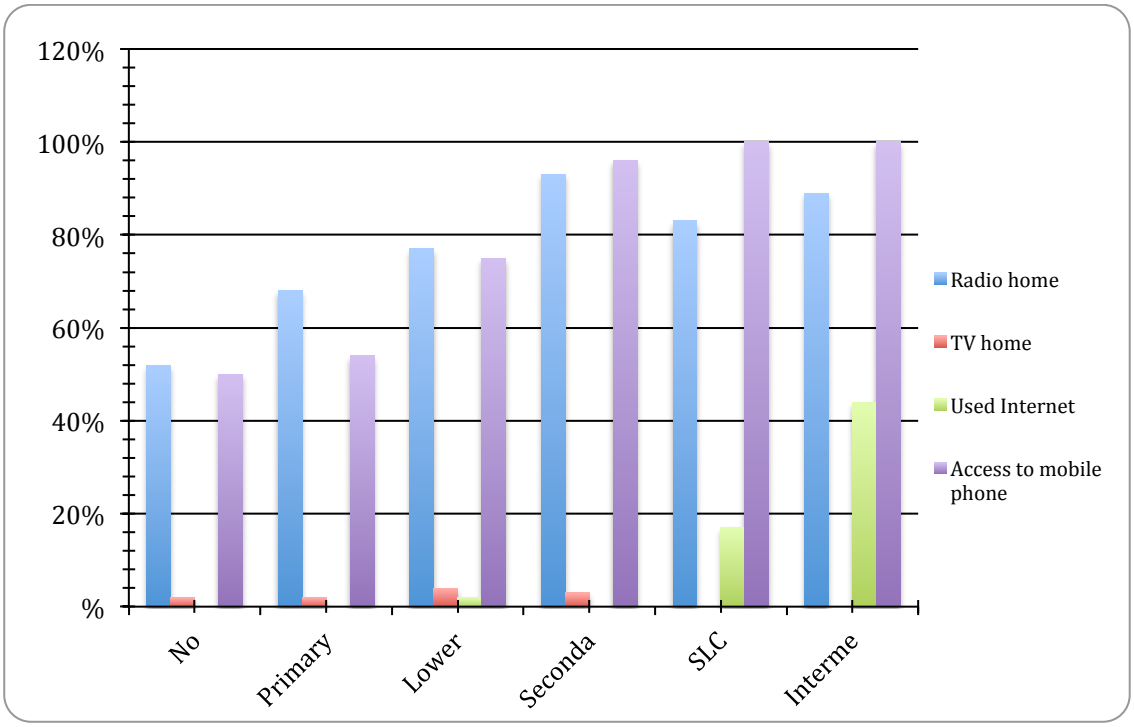


By and large, access to radio and mobile phone is almost identical up to around lower secondary school; whereas, among people with educational backgrounds around secondary school and above, there is a tendency (although marginal) for people to prioritise access to mobile phone over radio. For the urban audience, we see it especially among those with SLC and above, where television is significantly popular. This phenomenon might be explained by the novelty of cable television in Rolpa, which likely has made some people choose television over radio, and it is more likely to apply to people with a higher educational background, who have employment and thus the financial means to acquire this medium. Furthermore, the popularity of the Nokia N1280 and similar mobile phones with inbuilt radio can explain why some people decide not to have a radio at home, as they listen to radio on their mobile phone instead. As some literacy skill is required for the usage of the internet, people's

[84] Q1, Q14, Q23 and Q29. N=222.

educational background clearly is an index that influences people's usage of this medium.

Figure 13: Rural access to media based on educational background[85]

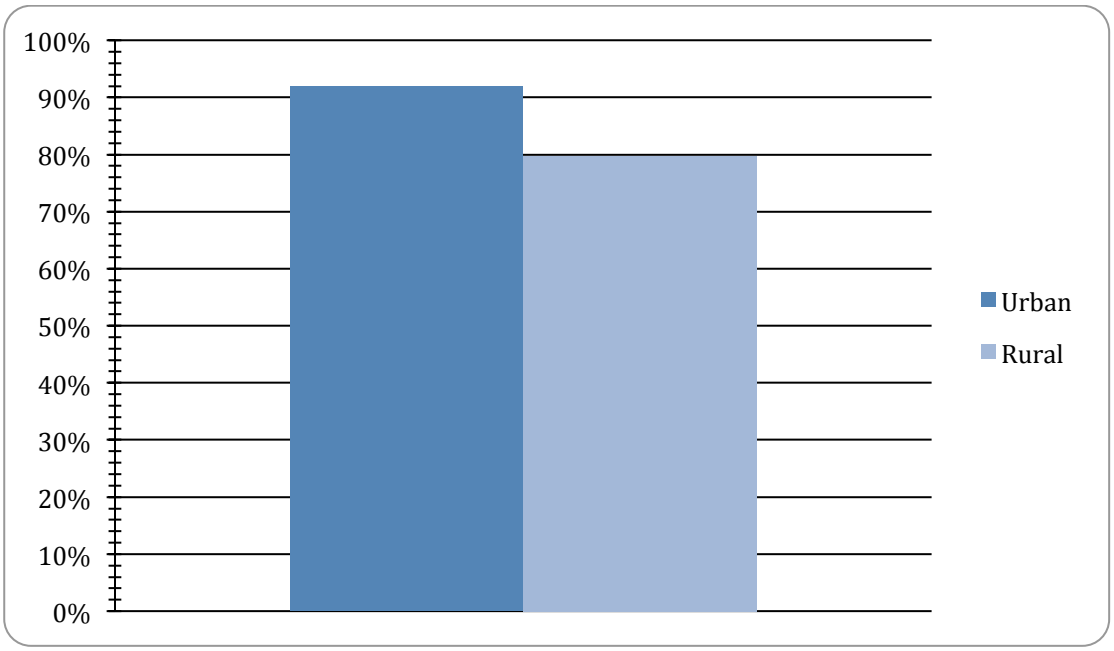


People in general trust the media.[86] In the rural areas, people's overall trust in media is ninety-six percent compared with eighty-nine percent in urban areas. In Libang various mass media outlets are available (radio, newspapers, television, cyber cafés), whereas most people in rural areas only have radio at their disposal, due to fewer financial resources and poor electrification and road access. This makes it more difficult for people to verify and compare information received through the mass media in rural areas, which could suggest why people in rural areas to a greater extent trust information from the media. Moreover, Libang is the nucleus in the district where NGOs, educational institutions, shops, state bureaucracy and the district's transportation hub is located. This location thus has a larger flux of people travelling and ideas that circulate, whereby information from the media more easily can be

[85] Q1, Q14, Q23 and Q29. N=278.
[86] The question asked in the survey was (Q37): 'Do you trust the information you get from the media?'

scrutinised and compared with other sources of information. Another factor that could explain why people in rural areas, comparatively speaking, have more trust in the media is that the received information is not shared and discussed with others to the same extent as people do in urban areas. That reduces the possibility of providing nuances, contesting and challenging the received information.

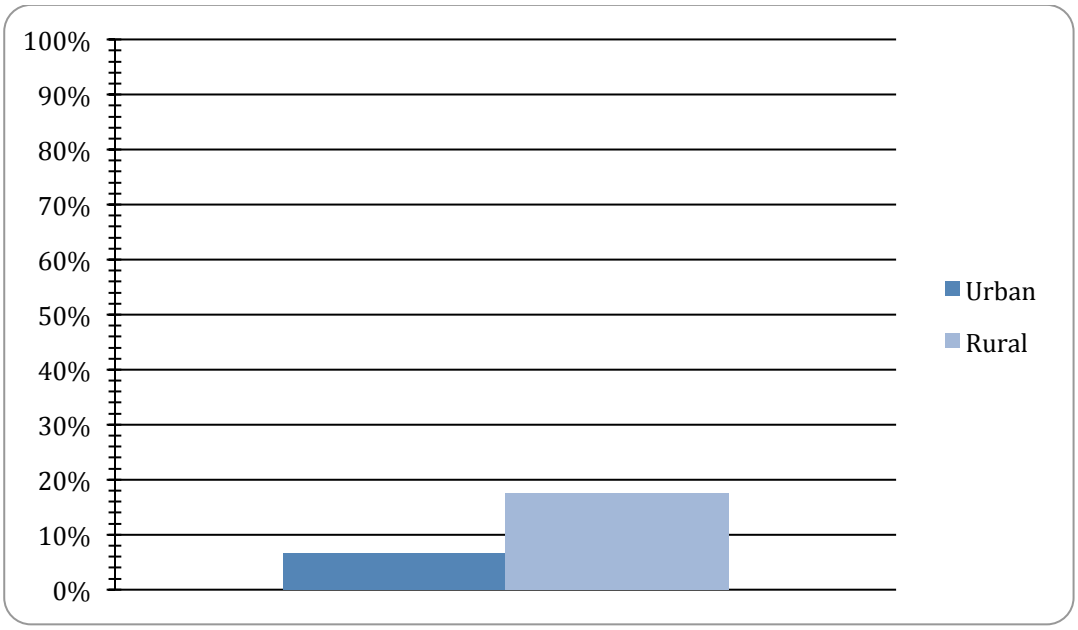
Figure 14: Discussing and sharing information from media[87]



The majority of people discuss the information they receive from the media. Yet, there is a fraction of the population between eight to twenty percent (highest in rural areas) not discussing the information. Zooming further into those not discussing the information they receive from the media cross-tabbed with those with a radio at home, we see that those not discussing the information from the media remain consistent. Even though people have a radio in their household, it does not increase the likelihood that the information they receive from the media will be discussed with others.

[87] Q39. N=498.

Figure 15: Those with radio never discussing and sharing information from media[88]



The approximately twenty percent in rural areas that do not share and discuss the information from the media, even though they have a radio at home, could be explained by the fact that this group of the population do not have the time. Aasha BK (Dalit woman, fifty-two years old) is a point in case, and when asked if she and her neighbours ever discuss and talk about the programmes they listen to on radio, she replies:

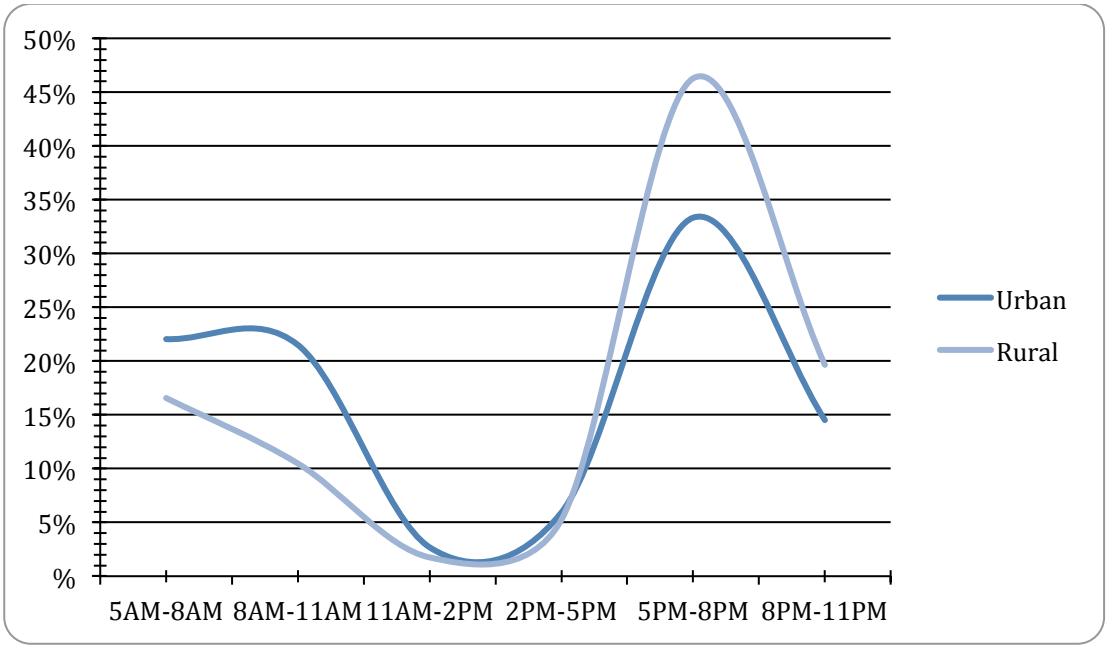
> People in towns and cities are talking [about the information they hear on radio] but here [the village Kotgaun] we have no custom of doing that. We are all busy farming and we don't have time to talk about that (R05 2009: pp. 19-20).

The overall high trust in the information from the media and Aasha's remark are indications that those people in the villages not discussing the information from the media simply trust the information from the media 'as it is', as there is neither custom nor time to further discuss the information. Aasha is aware that custom in Libang and other towns is different, but her work as a farmer does not allow time for discussing with others. Aasha, like many other farmers in Nepal, has a busy life, leaving her home very early in the morning. Farmers like Aasha typically walk for hours to collect

[88] Q1 and Q39. N=498.

firewood and grass for their livestock and return to their homes in the afternoon. When they return home in the afternoon, they often have to look after the children, do the cleaning and laundry, and later in the afternoon they begin the preparations for the evening meal.

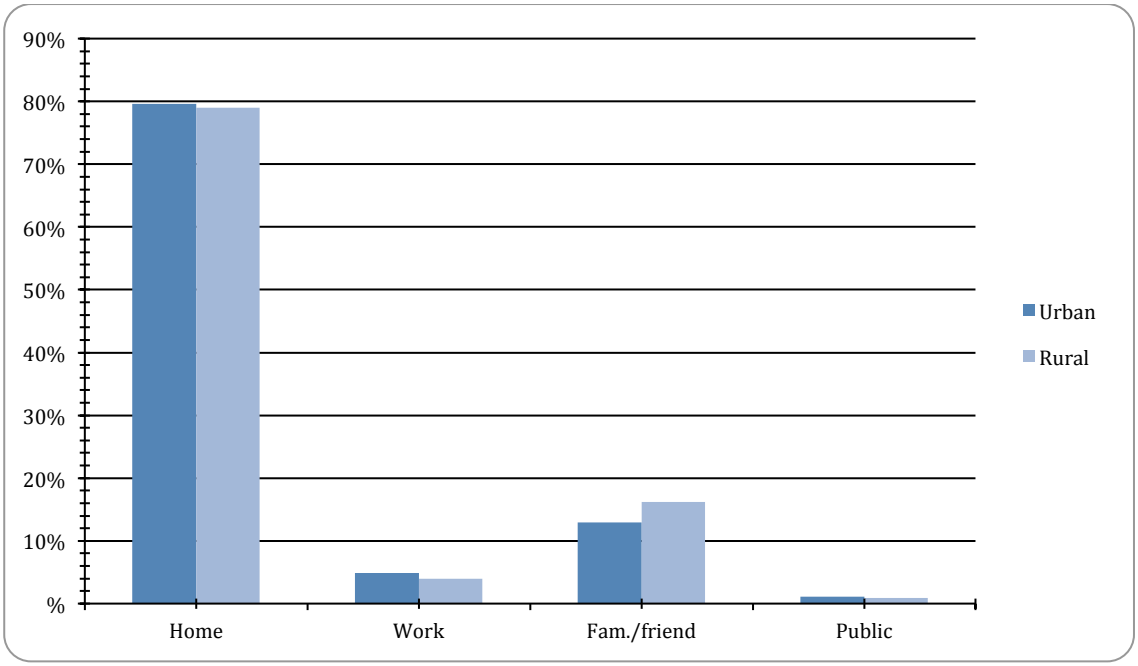
Figure 16: Time listening to radio[89]



We can see that the preferred time to listen to the radio somehow follows their daily schedule, as it is typically at home in the kitchen in the late afternoons during the preparations of the evening meal and the following dinner that most people have time to listen to the radio.

[89] Q9. N=424.

Figure 17: Location listening to radio[90]



Some people do listen to the radio at their friends' and relatives' home, and it happens that on these occasions the audience listen together and subsequently discuss the issues brought up by the radio. This can be exemplified with Durga BK (Dalit woman age twenty-one), who sometimes gathers with her extended family in one of their homes. After having listened to a radio programme, it happens they will sit and discuss the issues brought up by the radio programme. She gave the example of how she and her family discussed witchcraft, after having heard about it in a radio programme. Durga explains:

> We discuss about old traditions, superstition and literacy in our village. Maybe we can't find this in our headquarters [Libang], but in other places people used to accuse people of doing witchcraft. We have discussed this and [concluded] because of literacy there isn't such thing as witches (T03 2010: 6).

It seems to be on occasions such as this one exemplified with Durga and her extended family that radio can breach the public-private divide and bring in issues of more sensitive nature for discussion into the private family realm for discussion, in this case the superstitious imaginations circulating in the public world. As different issues are discussed in the public world, people apply different strategies depending on the

[90] Q8. N=415.

context and sensitivity of the particular issue they wish to discuss. Priya Dahgi, a Chhetry woman age thirty-two, sometimes meet with a small circle of friends to discuss issues brought up on radio. However, Priya will only speak freely if she feels comfortable with the people she assembles with, when discussing issues of more sensitive nature such as HIV/AIDS. She explains:

> No, community people do not talk about it [HIV/AIDS] freely. I remembered this issue from the beginning [of our interview] but I could not say to you.[91] But when you raised this topic I could say. Yes, we talk among the women. But we don't talk with my mother in law or other men in our family. Only if some women meet separately, then we talk about it. Radio used to inform about the VCD centre [HIV examination centre] but we do not know where that VCD centre is. People say that it is in Libang (L09 2009: 15).

To Priya, trust is influential to who can be a member of the group or who not to discuss sensitive issues with. When Priya decides whom she trusts to discuss these issues with, she grants trust to the others in the group, whereby she suspends her disbelief and the possibility of a negative course of action. She could maybe be worried that her mother-in-law would start rumours if Priya begin sharing sensitive issues and taboos. Hence, trust functions to reduce social complexity, which allowed Priya to pursue actions that might otherwise appear too sensitive to be considered, such as conversations with close friends on issues that in some contexts might be subject to taboo or bringing the risk that gossip and backbiting will start to flourish. Priya's example shows how radio can breach the public/private divide to bring issues of more sensitive nature into the private realm for discussion, if those who discuss those sensitive issues are in a supportive environment in a closed circle of trusted people.

Overall, my study has revealed a very high level of passion for local radio. Several speak about the strong appeal of 'ordinariness' in being able to identify with the presenter: 'I know almost all staff of this radio and while listening radio, I can notice their voice', as one female listener expressed it. Others send in letters with greetings and poems that are read aloud, and yet others refer to concrete benefits, as the radio stations provide information about news and local events that people can use in their daily lives. A male listener gave the example that 'if any vacancy has opened, people can know it very soon because of radio. Many have got job opportunities, although

[91] There was some disturbance and other people present during this part of the interview. Maybe because of that Priya Dahgi did not feel free to talk at that moment.

they live two days walk from here.' These are strong indications of the varied ways in which audiences are engaging with local radio. It indicates a high level of interaction, either perceived or actual, between audiences and producers, and it suggests a significant dismantling of the idea of an audience-producer barrier. One stark example came from this female Magar listener aged twenty-four, Hemata Kumar Garthi Magar. While talking about the changes that have happened in her village after the armed conflict in the area, Hemata reveals:

> On radio, we mostly listen to the programmes on social change. On the caste issue, there are Dalit programmes and much more. I feel such programmes have made progress on the caste issue. Listening to the Dalit programmes, they conduct the programmes conveying the message that we never should accept tyranny. And the people who depress others, they too understand that such activities shouldn't be done (R07 2009: 9).

Whereas Hemata after the armed conflict has not noticed any major changes in her village, except from reduced alcohol consumption, she has noticed changes on caste relations and gives credit to the programmes about Dalit issues on radio that speak about 'never accept[ing] tyranny', providing the listeners with inside views on how Dalits perceive discrimination. Several other non-Dalits echoed similar statements, and this underpins that the progressive roles of local radio are not confined to the PAMP audience alone, as the alternative views provided through the broadcasting does challenge mainstream versions and perceptions by providing listeners with a sense of community.

9.14 Initiating Semi-Ethnographic Studies

The purpose of this chapter has been gradually to lead the reader away from the theoretical, methodological and historical contextualisation into the core of the semi-ethnographic analysis. The purpose has been to provide a sense of the local context of PAMP and local radio broadcasting in the area of concern to this study. It is not exhaustive, and by making use of progressive contextualisation I have shed light on particular local contextual aspects, as they appear relevant for the analysis of actual practices of citizenship negotiation by means of local radio.

The most important point made in this chapter has been how the country's political transition has had a major influence on the establishment of the two local radio

stations, and how people associated with the local radios (board members, staffs and volunteers) have been altered by war and political influence and are woven into the local fabric of power relations and norms of authority. While there are many resemblances between the two local radio stations, for instance, their use of persuasive communication, there are some vital differences between the two radio stations as well. Most notably Radio Rolpa's overall stronger share of listeners, which might be because the audience perceives Radio Jaljala as a mouthpiece of the Maoists. This also seems to have implications for PAMP negotiating notions of citizenship by means of radio, as the different political orientations of the founders of the two radio stations manifest themselves, as Radio Jaljala seems to communicate with a predefined congregation, whereas Radio Rolpa, with the drive for Bikaas, has a stronger presence and focus on mobilising the villages. When it comes to the significant differences between Libang and the rural areas, the most central difference, in terms of implications for PAMP negotiating notions of citizenship, is first the exposure to Maoist influence and the anguish during the armed conflict, which was more pervasive in the rural areas. PAMP living in Libang have more diverse experiences than people in the rural areas in terms of exposure to information and alternative political and non-political actors, and are also more likely eager to discuss the information they receive on radio. In combination, this chapter and the previous chapter provide the basis for the next chapter, in which I analyse actual everyday practices of citizenship negotiation by means of local radio in rural Nepal.

PART III: EVERYDAY CITIZENSHIP

10. Citizenship and the (De)construction of Hierarchies

This chapter examines the discursive and non-discursive means of local radio engagement with PAMP and PAMP's everyday experiences and appropriation of citizenship ideals by the means of local radio. These practices lay down the foundation for an analysis of how certain issues of relevance for citizenship negotiation are addressed or ignored. Following my analytical framework, I referred earlier to the recommendations set by the 2006 World Congress on Communication for Development, 'that people have access to communication tools so that they can themselves communicate within their communities and with the people making decisions that affect them.' Despite the seemingly strong use of persuasive communication and influence of party politics on local radio (Radio Jaljala in particular), in this chapter I explore how PAMP appropriate the (biased) information as a progressive ideal that will allow them to negotiate notions of citizenship.

In the previous chapter I presented the perceptions and understandings of PAMP by Radio Jaljala and Radio Rolpa and how Bikaas is prominent in their direction of programmes targeting PAMP. In this chapter, I initially explore PAMP's appropriation of the notion of Bikaas. Thereby, these sections are not detached, as they comprise the categorisation of PAMP that is influential to the definition of selves and representations of citizenship.

10.1 PAMP's Own Perception of Poverty and Marginalisation

As shown in the previous chapters, definitions and experiences of PAMP depend especially on caste and on gender, and these groups are often given an a priori meaning with connotations of being people that are discriminated against, excluded, marginalised and with little status. Several of the people interviewed, PAMP included, described how being uneducated and not knowing the local social norms and etiquettes exclude PAMP from engaging in village meetings and other local civic activities. This was a main concern for many PAMP as, for instance, expressed by Aasha BK (Dalit woman, fifty-two years old):

> In our time we [Dalits] are dumb. We don't understand anything. If we understood, we would have good education and after being educated we would have been able to understand the meetings. We are not able to understand – we cannot understand what you [people in general] say. I have a strong desire to go there but they are not telling me [about the meetings] (R05 2009: 14).

Aasha explained her difficult situation and constraints in engaging in civic affairs, as she created a demarcation between 'I have a strong desire to go there' *but* 'they (high caste people) are not telling me about the meeting', whereby she established her inferior position in relation to the high castes. She thus appropriated her marginalised representation as PAMP. In the social events she referred to, important communal social practices take place, and not being able to participate in these is something that severely degrades one's respect (Ijjat), which is a concern shared by many. PAMP like Aasha, thus, were not offended by being referred to as marginalised and in need of formation, awareness and education. Rather, many perceived this as an insight that justified intervention of Bikaas as an important process of formation, ensuring a desired becoming. Shambhu Bahardur (Dalit male, twenty years old) explains:

> Because of Bikaas, one day my village will have scientific cultivation and it will make high production. Because of that our fields can change life in the village and we will also have skilled manpower. Therefore, this village will get more Bikaas than today and before (R11 II 2009: 4).

As Shambhu envisions his village in the future and describes its outlook, he sees Bikaas as an important component towards elevating his village, and he uses the continuum of lesser and more development to create a marker in time between before, today and the future. Bikaas is embodied in objects (Shambhu refers to scientific cultivation and

skilled manpower that will assure high production for the villagers), which is quantifiable with greater or lesser development depending on how much production and things the village has. Here we thus see an example of how Bikaas has become one way of categorising and representing (Pigg 1992); an objective and a means to measure and communicate a person's or village's position to others along these parameters. PAMP's appropriation of their backward position was formulated by several; such as in the conversation with Aasha BK I referred to previously. She proceeds to explain:

> I think education is very important. Because of that, I made my youngest son to study, and told him you have to study. No one will be as great like the educated person. It was not possible for my oldest son although I 'hit by nettle and stick' to make him study [I did my utmost to make him study]. He left his studies and nowadays he has migrated [to India] to suffer. My youngest son is surviving by pen [using his education]. Sometimes small, sometimes big, my youngest son is getting job here, while my oldest son migrated somewhere. There is no life for an uneducated person. Since my late husband passed away, we have had many problems. In our Nepal, Kotgaun is very poor of money. I hope it will be better like Libang. I hope it will be better and the future will become better (R05 2009: 8).

The uneducated and PAMP represent all the incorrect actions and lack of possibilities, while the educated are regarded as having the means to transcend some of the structural constraints. The representation of the weak PAMP, as in need of education and awareness in order to become 'as great like the educated person' and civilised and thus agents of Bikaas, is closely aligned with the representations of what PAMP is and what they should become, as defined by the local radio stations and discussed in the previous chapter. These representations are also linked with the spatiality and powerful distinctions between the rural and the urban. The next section provides some general reflections before commencing the analysis of how these hierarchies are learned and de-learned.

10.2 Ruralness and Urbanity: Spatial Hierarchies of Belonging

The idioms of 'the rural' and 'the urban' have previously been described as being part of the historically constituted ideal of Bikaas. Here, I will discuss how the rural-urban signifiers influence people's identities and are integrated into PAMP's lives and their relations in particular contexts and situations. Above, I showed how Aasha BK appropriated her difficult situation and her viewpoint on how people live in rural and

urban areas respectively. I will now pay further attention to the representation of the rural and urban and PAMP's own representations of these. As Nelson (2001) reminds us, a rural identity is often a stigmatised one, infused with images of being stagnant and with conservative spaces heralding 'traditional' cultural norms and social relations. I, however, adhere to Mishra,[92] who argues that the highly intensified interaction of the rural with the urban has altered social relationships and reshaped the sense of belonging (and thus ideals of citizenship). Thereby, the rural and urban are not plainly separated, as they have to be understood as two spatial values at the opposite ends of the continuum between which different spaces are categorised. In other words, the role of rural-urban binaries in identity formation is not merely a question of opposing finite territories of belonging, but of opposing degrees of 'ruralism' and 'urbanity' that are referred to in specific localities by their people in specific contexts.

In my study, people make use of rural-urban dichotomies to signify prevalent national and personal discourses of backwardness and development; to qualify specific central parts of Nepal against parts regarded as peripheral, i.e. Kathmandu and the central region vis-à-vis the Mid-Western region, the abundant Terai districts versus the rough inaccessible hills, the hill town (e.g. where the VDC office, secondary school and district hospital) versus the rural VDC's. There is a rural and urban dichotomy for each measure and every situation, a dichotomy that is intertwined with notions of identity to which people relate themselves, whether with honour or indignation. In Rolpa, the most prevalent rural-urban dichotomy is the contrast between the rural villages, perceived as backward, and the district headquarter, Libang, regarded as a place of opportunities for education, jobs and different exposure. In the following extract, Shambhu, whom I introduced previously, gives an example of how this urban-rural dichotomy plays out in Rolpa. He explains:

> I did inter-caste marriage. I married a Magar caste. While we lived in Libang, we liked and loved each other and got married in Libang. Now she is also studying BA First year. We were at the same level but because I have a paper failed, she is ahead of me. Now we are studying in the same class. We didn't face any problems, compared to what I thought and heard from other people about inter caste marriage. I did not get that much problems because she herself is educated and her relatives also live in the capital of district, Libang. […] the condition of my village is miserable. *They* have lots of pain and problems inside. If there is more development in our village, *we* would be

[92] Notes from interview October 2010 with Chaitanya Mishra, professor of Sociology at Thribhuvan University.

> happier. If there are means of communication and transportation, those youths who had gone abroad they may get a job here in this VDC. Lots of youths are going abroad for labour work, but if they have opportunities in our village, they would work here. Stay with their loved ones and practice their culture and rituals. I feel like that (T11 2009: 4) (emphasis added).

In this quote, we see how Shambhu distanced himself from the rural villages (*they* have lots of pain and problems), although he lives in this location himself. While many talked about urban and town areas as developed and as places for opportunities that not are possible in villages, such as inter-caste marriage, there were also contradictory connotations, and some also talked about the town as a place where people 'only compare you with money. If you have money, then the entire world is with you. And if you don't have money, you have nothing' (Dalit male, twenty years old, T07 2010: 1). Urban areas resemble development and opportunities, but they are also indicative of moral deroute. In other words, the established binaries are not unanimously defined and accepted, as this relies on the context and the person.

Having reviewed the structuring of Bikaas and rural and urban as signifiers affecting identities, the next section should be viewed in light of these representations and self-perceptions of rural PAMP as backward, uneducated and lacking Bikaas, and in need of awareness in order to become civilised.

10.3 PAMP Appropriation of Bikaas – Some Paradoxes

Up until now, it has been demonstrated how representations of PAMP by the local radios and the strategies of citizenship negotiation, in the form of structuring practices of Bikaas, are appropriated by PAMP. While subjected to submissive practices, PAMP do not necessarily appropriate these in submissive ways. As a matter of choice, they concentrate on the ideals that these practices stand for and use them as means for their future aspirations. The explanation is that such ideals provide status and the means to define those who are not PAMP.

PAMP are categorised according to two categories by the two local radio stations: either it is the structures into which PAMP are embedded that discriminate PAMP and these structures have to be removed – or they are considered as backward rural people that needs Bikaas, awareness and empowerment in order to change their situation. Their emergence as citizens then implies moving away from this backward being. This

potential can be accomplished if PAMP listen to the awareness raising radio programs and adapt to the ideals promoted. Through PAMP's appropriation and reinterpretations, obtaining awareness and motivation by the means of persuasive communication as a personal benefit, as a cultural capital, PAMP acknowledge this awareness as a necessary means to ensure that they level with the non-PAMP. Persuasive communication thus becomes a practice that points towards the future. The strategies of citizenship negotiation facilitated by local radio broadcasting and exercised by PAMP creates a paradoxical sense of backward and submissive self, mixed with desire approaching the apparently submissive programs as a primary means and self-identity that detach one from exactly that submissive self that is simultaneously personalised.

10.4 PAMP's (De)construction of Social Hierarchies

As I aim to grasp how PAMP negotiate notions of citizenship within a social world that has been dominated by discourses of Bikaas and caste and gender hierarchies, I now proceed to examine how PAMP appropriate these practices of social hierarchies as part of the process of negotiating notions of citizenship by means of local radio in the local context. PAMP in Rolpa are socialised into unequal relations, and social hierarchies thus form their habitus as it conforms to experiences. A primary ideal for PAMP negotiating notions of citizenship is to challenge this habitus, as local radio explicitly broadcast the taken-for-granted in radio programmes by means of awareness programmes and persuasive communication, whereby PAMP are confirmed to comprehend relations in terms of social hierarchies. At the same time, however, local radio attempts to make PAMP aware of how to de-learn the hierarchies and imbued discrimination as modern citizens practicing and embodying equality.

Against this background and following my theoretical assumption that local radio broadcasting should be seen as integrated into the contexts of PAMP's lives, I now analyse how PAMP appropriate these notions of social hierarchy and positions. I pay close attention to how these acquired notions support and challenge each other and focus on the consequences of this for PAMP's self-perceptions and ideals. Consequently, I move on to discuss how PAMP negotiate the conflicting discourses and practices of hierarchical social norms and the egalitarian values as disseminated by the local radios. Insomuch as the previous section analysed PAMP's appropriation of primarily submissive ideals transmitted as persuasive communication and discourses of

Bikaas, the subsequent section mainly emphasises their appropriation of progressive ideals of equality broadcast by the local radio stations.

In the pages ahead, I begin by outlining the notion of hierarchy and gender in relation to local radio. I analyse the representations provided by the radio stations and how hierarchies are practiced in people's daily lives. On this basis, I analyse how PAMP appropriate diverse mediated and non-mediated notions of citizenship in their everyday lives, and how PAMP's habitus simultaneously reproduces, resists and reinterprets these ideals in the on-going process of negotiating notions of citizenship.

I use vignettes to describe PAMP appropriations of local radio and negotiations of notions of citizenship, while simultaneously situating these within individual lives. Vignettes of individual lives can reveal insights into wider social and societal aspects and not just individual experiences. The strength of these particular stories is that they produce rich, textured insights into the processes that form human life; yet I agree with Jeffrey and Dyson (2008) that we should be careful in synthesising each individual story to signify a specific analytical aspect.

10.5 Hierarchies and Policies of Equality

In this thesis, I proceed to employ the notion of hierarchy regardless of its connotations of being reified, unchangeable and uncontested (Dumont 1980). I do so for various reasons. First, the notion of hierarchy captures how PAMP themselves talk about *Jat* (caste). Secondly, it depicts how everyday practices take place within a context of status and inequality. In other words, I am not only concerned with rules and norms of social position and relationships but also with how PAMP act and negotiate from their position through reproduction, reinterpretation and resistance. I thus follow Cameron's (2005) definition of hierarchy: 'Hierarchy is neither a predetermined structure nor an epiphenomenon; it is an everyday practice and their consequences rather than their structures alone' (ibid.: 2). She argues that analysing, for instance, caste and gender as social and cultural practices 'allows us to view social hierarchy as an on-going discursive and material process' (ibid.: 57).

Socio-cultural hierarchies, especially of caste and gender, have long existed and dominated human relations in Nepal (World Bank/DFID 2006). Since 1990 and the donor supported focus on inclusion, discussions on inclusion and equality have circulated amongst media, donors, practitioners and scholars (Pringle and Subba 2007,

Onta 2002: 264). The number of radio programmes broadcast in different languages spoken by marginalised communities has increased amongst Nepal's radio stations. Moreover, thousands of radio receivers have been distributed to poor people funded by donors (Onta 2009: 339); listener clubs have been established in marginalised areas; donor supported programmes targeted untouchability and gender discrimination are broadcast throughout the country; and most radio stations are open for personal visits, letters, SMS, emails, phone calls and faxes from people from all walks of life. Notwithstanding these advancements, independent radio has largely been unavailable to members of the Dalit community, as they have limited influence on management and radio production (Onta 2009: 344, Onta 2002: 264, Pringle and Subba 2007). There are still considerably fewer Dalits and women managers and journalists than their general proportion of the population would suggest. The staff composition within the two radio stations used in this study likewise underpins this bias (Table 5), and shows how radio broadcasting is contested when it comes to practices of equality and inclusion.

10.6 Levelling Caste Hierarchies

Caste is a thoroughly theorised and researched social feature of South Asia and there are disputes amongst scholars and activists about how we should comprehend this social system, which intrudes and regulates a large part of people's lives and relations (Lind Petersen 2002). One line of argumentation, and the most critical one in this discussion of inequalities, is concerned with whether or not caste is a hierarchical system of reciprocity built upon relations of mutual dependence (Dumont 1980), or whether it is simply an exploitative system determined by the interests of those on top of the hierarchy, the Brahmins (Sharma 1999). The first would require that untouchables acknowledge their status; but as scholars (e.g. Mitra 1994) have asserted, most untouchables refuse their subordinate status discursively. One other related discussion is whether caste is the essence of South Asia (especially India) or basically a principle useful for analysing inequality in line with caste and ethnicity. Here there is an on-going discussion about whether caste is exclusively a Hindu institution or rather a social phenomenon represented differently in different communities and religions throughout the world. Concerning this analysis, it suffices to say that perceptions of caste and caste relations rely on the caste position of those being asked. Unequal relationships are seldom the same for the oppressed and the oppressors, and in this way I align myself with Sharma (1999: 60), who asserts that 'perhaps caste is only ever what those who practice it say it is at any given time, a fluid and variable category with little

stable content.' This does not entail removing the historicity and the relative consistency there is to caste. Rather, it calls for caste and practices of separation and exclusion to be investigated as constant struggles over power and not as bounded cultural relations.

10.7 Gendered Discussions in Times of Transition

In most parts of Nepal, patriarchy and patrimonial residence and heritage are the foundation for gender roles and relations. Numerous studies have explained the seclusion, inequalities and pain felt by women in Nepal (e.g. Bennett 1983, Cameron 2005, Tamang 2002). Tamang (2002) asserts the need for and relevance of researching into relations between women of different castes and not just isolated accounts, as it is relations that constitute, reproduce and renew hierarchical systems. Cameron (ibid.) and Tamang (ibid.) alert us to the fact that if Dalit, and especially Dalit women's lives and views have been analysed, the analyses have usually been based on the norms of the high castes. In other words, their rituals, practices and ideals have been explained through the lens of Hindu high-caste expressions, which has generated discussions about the extent to which high-caste norms are replicated or not, and not about the productions of Dalit expressions in their own words.

In this section, I focus my analysis on discourses and practices of caste and gender (in)equality. I explained earlier how both of the local radio stations condemn the social harms and in their broadcasting attempt to remove inequalities either, as in Radio Rolpa, by teaching the low castes 'the right way' by means of radio programmes with awareness – or as with Radio Jaljala, who attempt to work towards the concientisation and empowerment of individuals who will, in return, collectively dismantle discrimination and dominating cultures and reinvent new forms of more equitable interactions. In this section, I explore how PAMP negotiate their way through and within the terrain of gender and caste discrimination, structured as it is by norms of caste separation and gender hierarchies, which at times might be influenced by local radio and their radio programmes attempting to remove caste and gender discrimination.

10.8 Puja: at Times One Has to Risk Ijjat to Achieve Something

I now introduce Puja Kumari KC, who is a Bahun woman aged forty-one, a single mother living in Madichau in a rented room with her two daughters and one son. They

live on the first floor in a shared building with another family, as Puja's husband ran away with another woman eight years ago and left her and her children without land and property. There is no electricity in the building, and they use solar panels for lights and to charge the battery for the mobile phone and radio. Like most families in this area, Puja's family does not have television due to poor electrification. Puja likes to listen to the radio: 'I listen to the radio but I am not taking it with me. It is in home with the children and whenever I am at home I listen. When I go to the field, at that time I do not listen' (R04 2009: 4). Puja sustains herself and her children with the single income she receives as a women and children's health worker. From her experience, the arrival of radio in Rolpa has provided greater exposure to issues regarding her work in the field of women's and children's health: 'we get information also from radio. If they give information to Public Health office then we get information from radio. If they do not give information to Public Health office of our district then we do not get information' (R04 2009: 13). Puja has worked as a health worker for more than fifteen years and has had great exposure to fieldwork, as twice a month she has to leave home to travel and visit villages around the district. Nevertheless, Puja has the experience that women still inhabit certain public places only at their own risk, as they at times risk their Ijjat (respect) upon entering certain spaces. Where men can more easily be 'alone' in public places, in many rural areas it is seen as unacceptable for women to experiment with this kind of public individuality. A woman who is alone is one 'outside' of the family and house, which have traditionally defined (confined) women's legitimate boundary. The free, public, individual is a role not necessarily closed to women, but it is a role that women in many cases will adopt with unease, if at all, knowing full well the potential consequences. We see this in the following case, where Puja explains how she intervened in a public meeting about the replacement of a woman who had been raped by a policeman. I quote this intervention at length because it significantly shows the societal perception of women and that the boundaries they have to transgress can appear almost insurmountable. Puja explains:

> In a village there was a woman, who had had sexual relationship with a policeman. That police violated the woman while her husband was abroad and she got pregnant. It was announced that all male and female have to come there [to a public meeting] and all people had gone there. At that time there was another mothers' group meeting and I was in the mothers' group meeting. The women from this ward [hamlet] didn't go to the meeting and I questioned myself why they didn't go. Then I went there [to the public meeting] and all women were there except those at the mothers' group meeting. I just looked around and found all women and other people were staying outside the house

and the few decision makers and *respected people* were sitting inside the house. And I heard and thought and then I used my mind. And while I used my mind I, as an honest person, asked what they were doing inside the room? They replied they are asking questions and making decisions. I replied that all people have to hear about the discussion in the presence of all people - we have to ask question for both sides, isn't it? Then I asked one or two why they made their decision secretly? And they replied, *Khai* (don't know) – it has always been like this. Suddenly, I got angry and I asked the person involved making the agreement if everybody involved is coming for the making of the agreement? He replied: 'yes, they are doing inside' and again I asked: 'what is happening?' He replied: 'she has to stay in her parent's house until her husband will come. After the arrival of her husband then he will make decision if he sends her with the person [the police who raped her] or if he keeps her with him. That is his decision. Now she has left her in-laws house and went to her parent's house.' I do not know if it was good or not because I didn't ask with anybody. Only I did with my mind and again I asked: 'you are sending her out from working home to her birthplace. Why are people doing this; this decision is not from people. You yourself have done this decision. If there isn't any telephone then you say, but there is a telephone. If her husband says that I do not keep that woman with me then you have to make a written document according to that. But without her husband's opinion you are not allowed to take her from her house. I don't agree at all! You are insulting women and why did this police post come here? Did they come to give people security or did they come to treat women as a wooden toy?' I cried out by saying I will not agree at all. I alone shouted, no one else. I shouted strongly and all were terrified. I was like a mad person. I was full of anger and shouted: 'oh women you are useless! Someone make you like a doll and you enjoy that. Now when you have to make a decision you sit in silence – what does that mean? When I asked you to come and listen and learn about health, then you don't come. Did you get insulted now or not? Tear that paper and throw it into the river - we don't need that paper!' Later they asked: 'why don't you agree?' Then I said: 'I will not agree at all. I don't care and I'm not satisfied. You have to call her husband and then write decision according to him. Otherwise, you are not allowed to make decision against their will.' Then they asked the woman to bring her husband's telephone number and after searching the whole village they found the phone number and called her husband and asked her husband. Within a week her husband came. Later, following the husband's advice they decided for an abortion according to

> Nepali law and the man [the police who raped her] paid all the expenses (R04 2009: 6) (emphasis added).

Puja took an enormous risk when she intervened in the public meeting, as this space traditionally and exclusively has been restricted for high caste males. When she approached the respected people negotiating the destiny of the raped woman, as she took the woman in defence and requested them to take the woman's husband's opinion into account as well, she mentioned how she cried out and shouted full of anger like a mad person. In this process, she redefined the boundaries and praxis for dealing with these issues, as the 'respected' people took her advice and decided to consult the husband of the raped woman. The extraordinary emotional outburst gives us a hint of the deeply felt emotional frustrations and sense of impotence felt by Puja, and today these aggravations still exist and occasionally surface, as in this instance. The deep sense of empathy and gender injustice that Puja felt for the raped woman derives from experiences from her own childhood when her mother was subjugated after her father married another woman. Puja explains:

> From my childhood I had a feeling in my mind that I will serve the people anyway, either doing job or without job [voluntarily]. I already said this when I was eleven years old. From that time I had strong desire in my mind to study. When my father married another wife and my mother got subjugated then I realised that I have to be cleverer so I studied. After studies I thought that I must serve the people either doing job or without job [voluntarily] (R04 2009: 13).

Although Nepal over the last years has experienced a noticeable change in gender relations and women's increasing participation in the public domain (education, offices, assemblies, NGOs, local clubs), some constraints remain; for instance, in situations such as Puja's, where she reached the venue for the local meeting and 'looked around and found all *women and other people* were staying *outside* the house and the few decision makers and *respected people* were sitting *inside* the house' (emphasis added). She felt a deep sense of indignation and injustice for the raped woman, and it was her anger and courage that made Puja transgress the boundaries and spaces in which the destiny of the raped woman was being negotiated. It is also within this area that Puja claims that radio can contest the gender discrimination that still prevails in society. Puja explains her perception on how radio can help people connect and understand each other:

> Both male and female are speaking in FM. Like east place's people are talking with west people and making friendship with each other. Although they don't see each other, but they are talking. So I think it is good (R04 2009: 22).

In an area dominated by masculinity, the mere prominence of the female voice would normalise women's presence in the public realm. Moreover, this could also assure greater representation of women's issues and the communication of women's perspectives to the public. Experiencing herself the hardships of being a single mother, Puja wished for more comfort, and for her two daughters and one son she wishes a different future: first and foremost that they receive a better education than she did, but also that they are honest, so they do not have to experience or expose others to the experience of having a spouse run away, as she did with her farther and her own husband. When asked what she hopes for the future, Puja explained: 'I wish my children to receive more and better education. Are good and honest and get a job. For myself, I wish a comfortable life. That I hope for the future' (R04 2009: 16). Education is not only perceived as a key to a brighter future; it is also a key to freedom. Educated girls and women are less vulnerable to sexual exploitation, and are more likely to marry later, raise fewer children, who in turn are more likely to go to school and make important contributions to family income. Puja is well aware of this from her own lived experience and working with these issues as a social worker with women and children's health. Moreover, many women link growing freedom with access to education. Women recognise in education a kind of liberation of potential, a sense of equality with men and an entrance into public life. With education women can recognise their potential and do things in society without the hardships, restrictions and hesitations that Puja has herself experienced.

10.9 Kumud: Contesting Social Norms to Improve Ijjat

Kumud is a Dalit woman aged thirty-one living in Libang with her husband (also Dalit) and two children. Kumud was brought up by her Nepalese parents in India and moved to Nepal after having passed her SLC exam in India. Both her parents have passed away, and Kumud lives today in Libang with her husband and two children and works as a schoolteacher in a boarding school. Kumud and her husband are in a love marriage in spite of their different upbringings. Kumud graduated with a SLC and her husband 'only' studied up to the tenth grade. When asked if the fact that she is better educated than her husband created any problems in their respective families, Kumud replies:

> No problems. Everybody have his or her own problems at home. We went to India. My children are also born in India. Because of the Maoist conflict, my husband couldn't study longer as other people at school blamed him. There was a dispute between two groups and a person was beaten. My husband was blamed and he ran away to India. At the time we were studying in *Gajul* [a village near Libang] and the conflict started from here. Our headmaster was Maoist himself and we followed him. The agitation started in 2048/49 [1992/1993 in Gregorian calendar] and he [Kumud's husband] went to India and then later returned back and married me and he took me to India. Later, we got our son and we returned back and then again my husband went to India for then, later, taking me to India and we had our daughter. We then returned back again and we thought we couldn't continue having a family this way. By the time the factory closed and we got money from the factory, sixty to sixty-five thousand [equivalent to approximately €1,000 – Kumud's farther had ownership of a factory he sold]. My parent's home is here in *Sulechaur* [a hamlet in Libang] and here I built a home. Afterwards, sewing training came [to Libang] and I sent my husband for the training. Later, I sent him to *Puthana* tailor [the name of a tailor in Libang] for training and after the training in 2063 [2007 in Gregorian calendar] we opened a tailor shop (L15 2009: pp. 2-3).

Her reply suggests that her upbringing in India gave her opportunities in life that she otherwise would have had difficulties pursuing in Nepal. Besides the fact that her childhood in India gave her the possibility of a good education that only very few Dalit women her age in Rolpa have, India was the safe haven for her and her husband during the civil war and the birth of her their two children. Moreover, India is the country to which Kumud promptly points when asked how she as a woman could marry someone with an inferior education. As custom traditionally dictates, it is the male who is educated and the female who has no or an inferior education. With their educational backgrounds, in Nepal Kumud and her husband quite likely would have faced people who contested their relationship. In India, however, they could seal their love with 'no problems.' Besides the fact that India provided a space for Kumud and her family, a safe haven, during the armed revolt, where they were allowed to seal their love in marriage, India is also the country where the conventional male-female responsibilities seem to have been contested. When it comes to the conventional male-female responsibilities and etiquettes in terms of who is supposed to propose, Kumud's husband performed the conventional male responsibility 'returning back and married me and took me to India.' A similar situation occurred when 'he took me to India and

we had our daughter.' Kumud's description of her husband, 'he marrying me' and 'he taking me to India', carries meanings of cultural value (brave masculinity and pure submissive femininity) and hierarchical relations (men above women). Kumud's submissive femininity, however, changed when they moved from India to Libang, as Kumud immediately after their arrival to Libang made some major decisions involving the whole family: '*My* parents home is here in Sulechaur [a hamlet in Libang] and here *I* built a home.' Likewise, after arriving in Libang, Kumud also decided to 'send' her husband to training in tailoring. These decisions are a significant shift from the seemingly submissive woman, who was 'taken' by her husband to India for marriage, to a strong-minded woman making decisions on important issues regarding her family's life, e.g. where to build 'their' home and the future career of her spouse. What provided her with the respect (Ijjat) and the strength and means to make the decisions was a combination of Kumud inheriting a sum of money from her parents, the house being built on their land as well as her educational background.

Kumud's exercise of agency not only played out within the premises of her family. She is aware that her educational background has been influential to others in the community as well. When asked about how many children in her community go to school, Kumud replied: 'because I'm a little educated, so from my *Tole* [hamlet] all are sending their children to school.' Yet, although Kumud had both the financial means and educational background to 'level' herself with the high castes, she still experienced discrimination. She explained, for instance, that she has never been inside a Chhetry house. She has thought of what would happen if she entered a high caste house and has asked high caste 'friends', why they are reluctant to allow her to enter their homes. She got the reply: 'we don't feel like that [allowing you to enter]. What to do? Our father and grandfather feel like that and we cannot make them angry' (L15 2009: 5). While in India she experienced the ideas of self as relatively non-traditional, progressive individuals with specific aptitudes and goals allowing her to take an education and marry in love, in Libang she has experienced that issues of respect (Ijjat) have an enormous impact on how people socialise with her and create we/they demarcations. She explains:

> Dalits don't get respect (Ijjat). I already said that because of these Brahmins, no one gives respect for Dalits even if he/she gets a high education. These Bahuns create a feeling that Dalits are not able to do anything. And because of this they follow them [people trust the Bahuns] and people do not have that kind of knowledge [whether to trust or not]. There was a goat-tending programme and I said this is good and I asked how much has come this time for the Dalits? Two

> years ago there was a goat-tending programme where they [the Bahuns] distributed one goat for each participant. Suppose if I had taken a goat, then I had to give back the first baby of that goat and then all the other goats became mine. It was like that. They gave me a very small goat but I don't keep goats myself. I gave my goat to another. I told them: 'this programme has come for Dalits. I am busy with my job so when they [the Bahuns] bring goats, then see and take the goats yourself' (L15 2009: pp. 17-18).

Kumud struggled to reconcile her identity as a modern educated Dalit woman with the realities of experiencing being categorised as a poor Dalit as she, for instance, experienced when she was involved in a goat-tending programme lead by Bahuns. Although she was educated, she had to confront the dominant notion of respect (Ijjat). And although she was engaged in civil society (in the goat-tending programme, for instance) and was free to enter public events, she risked losing her own self-respect (Ijjat) by attracting the insults reserved for those who transgress the bounds of traditionally acceptable behaviour; for not accepting the small goat, as in this case. As an individual Kumud felt excluded and not respected by the high castes. Kumud believed that Dalits as a group were still being discriminated, and Kumud gave the example that she thinks Bahuns cheated when major constructions in Libang were taking place, such as the central bus station and the district hospital. This further extended her criticism and made her put forward serious accusations. She explained how she likes to listen to the radio in the morning and evening, and it was while she was listening to the radio one day that she became aware of the misconduct. Kumud explains:

> On radio I like local songs, news and other information. Actually we don't have time listening; we are busy in our own work. Only morning and evening I listen. I like to listen about the activities in the villages, job vacancies, or any on-going new development projects. Actually they don't involve us in any programme, the influential leaders themselves make decisions and do the activities. Like the district hospital; we Dalit people were not involved and those leaders themselves made decisions and without our knowledge or information they built their own area for their own benefit. They had no competition to sell their lands. And the bus station they also built based on their own decision and in their area. They didn't involve us. Once in a Dalit programme, they themselves wrote the names and they didn't involve us. Afterwards we complained and we asked why they wrote the names. Later, they called us and involved us and wrote our names also. We gave application to the District Police Office and District

> Administration Office but they didn't look at our application. But later when they split the land of *Chintamani* [name of neighbourhood] as well as the areas further down where many Libang Bahuns live, then they [the Bahuns] went there secretly and got compensation, but they didn't inform us about that. From then on we understood they are very selfish. We heard they received compensation. Even a Bahun came and told that 'we received compensation after giving application – did you receive?' We don't know anything, then how could we get [compensation]? At that time, again I submitted an application and when I submitted the application then the officer told me that the other villagers [the Bahuns] received compensation because they had submitted their application above [at the central office] so now it isn't possible to get compensation. Then we realised that if you are a respected and prominent person, then you'll receive (L15 2009: 3).

Kumud listens to the radio regularly, and she wishes to listen even more frequently. Moreover, she seems to be well informed about local events such as major development projects in the district. This made her able to triangulate the available information on descriptions of the development projects broadcast on the radio, such as the aforementioned bus station, with the actual incidents played out in her community. When she subsequently experienced being cheated, manipulated, uninformed and subjugated, this created very strong them-us demarcations. However, the ambiguity of them-us demarcations are not only polarised 'outside' positionings. As outlined previously, ambiguous emotions of both sorrow and disappointment run parallel to each other, and moreover, the sense of being cheated created a stronger quest for increased self-dependence and sense of self-assertiveness. When asked how she thinks Bahuns look at her, Kumud explains:

> They wish we should go to their place to work but because of god's grace we are standing on our own feet. Till now we don't go to anyone's house to beg and we don't need to go to anyone's place to work. We don't go to anyone's house to bow down – we don't eat outside anyone's house. We are a little different than others – we all four sisters are educated [Kumud has three sisters and no brothers.] They [Bahuns] would get pleased if we say *Hajur* [a very respectful greeting] and send my husband to work their house. Therefore, they don't behave well and likewise I don't give them that much respect (Ijjat). We have our own way of behaving (L15 2009: 12).

Several issues are involved here: one, of course, is the fact that she, being educated and employed (standing on her own feet) dares to break with social norms. Moreover, Kumud's experience of subjugation has not only led to moments of sorrow and confusion but also a sense of indignation and confidence that she and her family can sustain themselves, so they do not have to bow down and humiliate themselves in front of the Bahuns. Again we see it is the trade with Ijjat that is at stake, as Kumud experiences that Bahuns do not behave well because Kumud and her family do not give them respect. To Kumud, it becomes a choice of either to buy into the traditional local codex of how to work for, greet and eat with Bahuns *or* sustain her sense of self-respect by not engaging in the exchanging of respect. She decided to do the latter and she therefore experienced that she and her family are different with regards to how they behave. Her sense of being peculiar is not only in relation to Bahuns. Within the Dalit community, Kumud likewise has her own way of doing things:

> Even amongst Dalits there are various thinking people. Some may think that she [Kumud] is doing this and why should we follow her. And some think she is raising the right voice. And some may follow because of that. And some may think she is only speaking but not able to do so herself. Therefore, we don't do that much in village because they may feel jealous and they may think 'they are earning some money and therefore doing that.' They may feel jealous and we've tried to assemble them, but because of that feeling they don't come. Maybe that's the reason (L15 2009: pp. 8-9).

While Kumud in her interaction with Bahuns consciously decided not to engage in the exchanging of respect in order to sustain her own sense of self-respect, she applied a different strategy when engaging with fellow Dalits in her village. For instance, she suspected issues of jealousy were at stake and could be the reason why people did not show up when she attempted to assemble the village to make joint efforts. Feelings of being respected and feelings of jealousy both relate to self-esteem and the vertical positioning in relation to others (feelings of superiority/inferiority), and where Kumud seemed to have clearly made up her mind on how to deal with Bahuns' expectations of respect, she seemed to be more insecure about how to deal with her fellow Dalit's jealousy. This might be due to the fact that sentiments of jealousy and envy are complex as they encompasses a mix of emotions, including low self-esteem, distrust, feelings of inferiority and desire to possess some of the qualities and means that Kumud possesses. Probably, jealousy is taboo and is thus not widely discussed in the hamlet, and it is therefore difficult for Kumud to trace exactly why she felt the jealousy from her fellow Dalits. It is probably because of jealousy and mockery that Kumud cannot

see herself as part of the Dalit movement and thinks that Dalit organisations are poor at making changes. Kumud explains:

> They [Dalit organisations] are not doing anything. What can they do? We have that 'stamp'. We cannot go to anyone's door. There is even the possibility of fight if we go there (L15 2009: 13).

The feeling of being 'stamped' is a designation Kumud likewise applied when she reflected about the possibility of entirely eradicating caste-based discrimination:

> Because we have the 'stamp' from our parents we are not able to enter their [high castes] house. I think it not will be removed in the future. If this generation also get this habit, such as Dalits have to do a particular job, and Mongolian, Magar and Chhetry have to do this job, if this happen then I don't think discrimination will be removed (L15 2009: 19).

Kumud used the term 'stamp' to describe how Dalits are stigmatised, also by the parents, indicating that discrimination is not solely something projected and done onto Dalits from high caste subjugators, but is also a trait that is carried on from generation to generation within the Dalit community. The fact that Kumud has liberated herself from many of the traditional Dalit 'stamps' through her education, employment and love marriage has engendered suspicion and envy from the other villagers. Kumud thus finds little support in the Dalit community, and moreover, as she has little faith in politics, which she does not 'give that much interest,' she struggled on her own to claim her and her villagers' rights and make the changes she finds necessary. Like, for instance, when the VDC threatened to cut off the water supply to her *Tole*. She explains:

> Some time ago they [the VDC] threatened they will not allow us to have our only water tap. Then I said to them if you cut that tap and if there is not one tap in *Dalit Tole* [hamlet] then we'll not allow you to take water from this river. Also we said that if you cut [the access] then we'd make hole in your pipe and drink water from yours because we local people also need drinking water. This way I threatened them. It is not possible to do anything from one person's voice alone (L15 2009: 8).

Kumud's remark, that it not possible to do anything with one voice alone, indicates that to Kumud the act of giving an account oneself is not sufficient for changing things.

More voices together give scope for collective action and realising social change. However, as Kumud experienced that her community is poorly organised, and taking Nepal's transitory situation into account, with its political instability and law-binding mechanisms that have not been fully implemented, citizen engagement such as Kumud's to assure water supply to her *Tole* help to secure and extend social and economic rights, as the authorities are compelled to respond to citizens' claims. Radio seems to be an important source of information that helped Kumud orient herself about events taking place in her community and learn about local issues and development projects, whereby she could subsequently strategise her claim-making. The line between claiming legal rights and a culture of resistance where citizens see struggle as an important means of holding the state to account is, however, very thin. The times of civil war is not that far away, and to some people (armed) struggle rather than claim making remains the most feasible solution, as we shall see in the following vignette.

10.10 Arjun: Struggle as Means to Achieve Change

Arjun Pun Magar is twenty-three years old and Magar. He is married to a Chhetry woman and they have two sons. Together they live in Madichau (Kotgaun) with Arjun's mother (his farther has passed away), his younger brother and two younger sisters. Moreover, Arjun has an older brother and younger sister who have married and live outside the home. Arjun has passed SLC and has attempted to pass the exam at intermediate level but failed in the Nepali language exam. After failing, he has given up pursuing further studies, and he is now unemployed and is helping with agricultural work on his family's soil, besides spending some of his time as instructor in the local karate club. He regrets not finishing the exam, watching his friends who qualified, but he finds relief at the karate club where he successfully has passed the second *Dan*.[93]

Arjun expresses how the process of struggling for rights and development has taught many the skills and competencies necessary to make their concerns and needs heard by the authorities. The support of the Maoists as allies in the passage and implementation of basic development facilities such as roads and access to water has showed people how a movement of (armed) struggle can help create a new framework and culture of

[93] Karate uses a twenty-step grading system known as the Kyu/Dan karate system. The system uses a number of coloured belts to represent different standards. To pass a grading, the karateka is required to demonstrate specified techniques and drills. Someone with a second Dan is ranked twelve in the twenty-step Kyu/Dan karate system. (http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Dan_rank and http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ky%C5%AB) [checked August 19, 2012].

accountability practices. The fact that the new democratic government's inclusive provisions have not been fully implemented blurs the distinction between struggle and claiming rights. People have seen examples of how claiming rights, (armed) struggle and participation, often where a multiple and a mix of strategies are used, contributed to development outcomes and increased responsiveness from the authorities. Arjun explains:

> In the past elections, like the midterm election, politicians gave some assurance, but this time they haven't made advertisements or given assurances. Automatically, people have voted for the Maoists because they have felt now the Maoist have done this big war, then there is the possibility they will do anything for work and development. And comparing with the past, now development is happening slowly. It is not possible to have many things at once. Before it was zero, but now it is increasing one-two percent and slowly it will go and I believe that they [the Maoist] will do the job (T06 2010: 11).

More and more people face the challenge of struggling to manage often extremely limited (even declining) resources and therefore leave the village to pursue chances elsewhere. Like many others, Arjun has experienced that members of his family and people in his village increasingly migrate to Kathmandu, Terai or abroad to make a living. Arjun was conscious about these struggles, and the powerful pressure to migrate can likely be accounted for by an intense and deep sense of economic and social insecurity often found amongst young people. Arjun explains:

> To earn money people leave their village. This is to get as much money as possible although it will be insufficient. Some friends are going abroad and some are in the army. Once I had a desire to join the army so I applied to the Indian Army. I reached the final level and at the time there was a recruit training. During the training I saw one officer treating one of the recruits like a dog. They were treating us like dogs. While eating food they were asking us to bring shoes and polish shoes. When I experienced that kind of behaviour I decided going back, saying 'I don't join the army.' And now I don't have that much desire work as an employee – in every job a senior dominates a junior, which is why I don't want to work. About the many youths going abroad, they are forced to do so. If they are responsible of a family, then they must have to go there to earn money. Everywhere people need to get job. Although you might have good qualifications, it's difficult to get a job. I don't know if Nepal is

> the only place where it is like this, but without showing power you will not get a job (R08 2009: pp. 17-18).

Observing his friends and villagers who have migrated, he found that many struggled to meet expectations of family members and with one another both to conceal and display their social and economic resources. While many youths in Rolpa construct their dreams around imagined lives in a distant global culture or nearby in India, for most youths, as in the case of Arjun, their perceptions of the future are still very much centred on Nepal. One of the most important implications of this is the creation of new class-based peer groups, where young people begin to consider themselves and others increasingly in material terms rather than solely in terms of caste. Arjun gave this example:

> Educated people don't think about village and if they get job then they will only be interested in the job. After getting their education they start feeling 'we are important people and no one are more expert than me'. And they expect people to come to their place and they feel everyone should respect them (T06 2010: 11).

Being educated generates expectations of receiving respect (Ijjat), and this can be used as means of deconstructing caste stigmas. As an increasing number of people migrate and are educated, the socioeconomic strata have become far more fluid and open to change and movement. It is the sense of mobility, whether regarded with aspirations or fear, combined with a more powerful awareness of class and the need to communicate one's social standing that begin to convey some idea of the experience of living the modern life and being ready to migrate and educate to achieve this. The village schools and the college campus in Libang produce graduates far in excess of Rolpa's service and business sector's ability to offer relevant employment. Education, media and migration converge to provide a 'frame' for people that to some extent is alienating', as it instils a 'self-peripheralising consciousness', because the increasing amount of information is a specific kind of information that widely broadens people's frames of reference and context, and impels people's own lived experience to the margins of an ever-expanding world of opportunities. Arjun is an example of how youths in Rolpa live in a structure that continuously dissolves and reconfigures, and of how youths strive to make the new and modern impulses fit with the present and vice-versa. And they thus find themselves living in a 'nowhere place', a present that seems to resolve the contradictions between a devalued local past and an unreachable foreign future. Arjun explains:

> Most youths of this village live outside. They try to get freedom so they don't have to deal with the old generation and fear. Now there is a system of Dan [grading system from karate]. This system has kept me busy and I can't understand why someone attempts to improve in Dan when they [at the same time] establish a group and drink alcohol, smoke cigarettes and not respect the older generations. They are also like us [a group of youth], trying establishing relations with the older generations and gain knowledge from them, and yet they are different compared to others. For example, there is a *Ma.Shi.Ka.* [Mothers Child Care Worker] *Bhauju* [sister in law][94] downtown in a shop. She was going to attend a mother's group meeting and I told *Bhauju*: '*Bhauju*, I'm fed up with this village's groups and meetings. What kind of meeting is that where you have to attend and sit in a meeting for three-four times each week?' And *Bhauju* replied me: '*Babu* [younger brother] I'm also fed up after seeing all this village boys.' Then I asked: 'Why *Bhauju*?' I already knew the answer myself but I pretended I didn't know, so when I asked: 'why *Bhauju*?' then she said: 'Tell me, what do these village's boys know except from eating, drinking and roaming around?' She was right because in the past period boys have been just like that. And I said: 'Yes *Bhauju*, but how to correct them?' Later *Bhauju* said: 'don't ask how to correct them because the village boys are obeying you. Slowly you have to correct them.' And I said to her: 'I have tried to correct them and they tried showing that they are obeying me. But if I am not there, then they were walking their own ways.' Then she said: 'they will remain like that but when they become our age, then they will correct themselves. In the past you were also like that' (T06 2010: pp. 13-14).

Arjun observing the character of his fellow youths and comparing theirs with the discipline he has learned from karate has led to introspection and a growing sense of critical awareness, but also serious despair when speaking about the situation of youths in his village. In school, doing sports (like karate), youth clubs, NGOs, at home, in the media and talking to friends and relatives that have gone abroad, young people learn that they are responsible for pursuing their own modern lives. Yet for most youths, there are very few 'modern' role models, and the 'successful' adults around them are often peculiar examples. Arjun thus finds himself in a position where the past (as embodied in his peers' 'roaming around' and his village background) simply became

[94] Although the two address each other as *Bhauju* (sister in law) and *Babu* (younger brother), it does not mean that they are necessarily in the same family. This way of addressing each other is common between two people in a good relationship.

irrelevant in his attempts to further engage with his peers and imagine and implement his own future. With no a valued past, and having a concept of the future as something that is influenced by foreign powers like India, Arjun is left in a vulnerable position. What he seems to lack is a sense of connection, a sense of 'place' in a meaningful sequence from past to future. Arjun expressed this:

> All are saying peace has arrived in the country but while there was the fifteenth election for the prime minister, the nation hasn't got their prime minister yet. And even after extending the time for writing the constitution, we are not able to finish writing the constitution. Thus, I don't think there will be peace and reconciliation. If it continues like this I think Nepal will be slave of India (T06 2010: 8).

Arjun, just like many others, can find no solid ground on which to unify an array of often irreconcilable identities into a viable, meaningful sense of self. The past is devalued, yet a 'modern' future is out of his reach, apparently defined by alien foreign powers that are not Nepal. To Arjun, the past represents poverty and backwardness, which he explained as being

> filled with old thoughts where you need power to get any job. A kind of environment to serve 'them' [the traditional elite] and without serving 'them' no one will get a job. Old structures thus must be destroyed and a new structure has to be built. Only then it's possible, and yet there are still very few possibilities (T06 2010: 6).

The structures of feudalism and neopatrimonialism that still echo from the past, and the apparently few opportunities of the future that is yet to be constructed, is the type of life Arjun experiences in the present. It is a life of ambiguity in an 'in-between' space; between aspiration and reality, between past and future, between limitations and possibilities, between the village and the possibilities of the 'outside' modern world, between high and low class, between schooling and purposeful job opportunities.

Besides the strong influence of education and migration in his village, media increasingly influence people and stake claims in people's imaginations. Although Arjun experienced media bias, as some media tend to cement predefined political positions rather than exploring new positions, he acknowledged that radio overall has broadened people's horizon and the scope to assure better understanding among ethnic groups. He explains:

> I don't believe in the media, because media is also party-based. Media people maintain party-based views. For example, our Radio Jaljala is surely operated by the Maoists so they praise the Maoists. And about Radio Rolpa, whoever operates that radio, they don't have well towards the Maoists. A few days ago I went to Kathmandu for a Maoist *Andolan* to demand the resignation of the prime minister. We were about three hundred people from Rolpa plus people from four or five other districts – altogether around seven thousand people were assembled. The television channel AV News were there to take pictures and in the evening we watched the news on television and they said that hundreds in numbers of people had come to the *Andolan* to ask for the prime minister's resignation although we were thousands. The other day Nepali Congress had a rally and we saw mainly people on motorcycle and a few walking. When this was broadcast on news they said *Lakhs* [hundreds of thousands] in numbers of Nepali Congress workers participated in the rally. Some time ago I switched on the radio and listened to the programme *Dalit Jan Jagaran* [Dalit awareness programme]. I felt happy because although media hasn't done any [positive] contributions, they raise issues about Dalit's rights and media also tries to put other humans [Dalits] on equal terms with us. I thus felt happy (T06 2010: pp. 8-9).

Arjun's perception of Radio Jaljala as a Maoist mouthpiece is a concern echoed by several interviewees. Moreover, many, especially those who were engaged in political or social work, also repeated Arjun's overall negative perception of media as politically biased. Despite his criticism, he acknowledged the various programmes broadcast on radio, as he, for instance, sympathised with the Dalit magazine programmes. It is interesting to notice that although Arjun is a political activist sympathising with the Maoists, he perceived the Maoists' overt influence over Radio Jaljala as inappropriate. Notwithstanding, he seemed to be aligned with the station manager's approach (Chapter 9.6) and use of concientisation to dismantle discrimination and dominating cultures in his community in order to reinvent new forms of more equitable interaction, as we shall see in the following quote. This suggests that the biased and persuasive programmes broadcast on Radio Jaljala might not be aligned with the objectives stated by the station manager. The following quote is an example of how Arjun applies concientisation to the dismantling of discrimination:[95]

[95] I might take this example too far, claiming this is an example of concientisation to dismantle discrimination, but since Arjun is politically active and sympathises with the Maoists, I dare take the risk. However, his act might just as well have been a plain ironic performance, which also has been used politically in Nepal. Richard Burghart (1996)

We have to behave equally to everyone and not dominate other castes. But in some places they don't do like that. Once I had been to *Khumre* [a village in Rolpa close to the neighbouring district Pyuthan]. There is a club called *Chaturbhuj Youth Club* and it has about five-six years of experience. We had received a letter and they were inviting us to participate in their club's birthday celebration. So we went. At that time I was studying in class nine and we went there with a volleyball team from secondary level. After arriving, our teacher and their teacher became friends while we played volleyball. And their teacher also became like our [the students] friend. He was Mendra Malla, a teacher of Khumre. We went to his house and it was Thakuri and Giri community [closely related with the Chhetry caste – high caste]. Still they are relatives with the king's family and they addressed us with '*Ta*'.[96] For example, I said: 'sister may I get water to drink?' Then they replied: 'go to your own house to drink!' Among themselves they used a very high form [of 'you'] to speak to each other and they used a very low forms for us. Later, I met a friend of that place, whose name is Barat Bahadur Malla or something like this. Now I've forgotten his name. Then I asked him: 'what is the system of your village? If there still is king's dynasty in your village, then please try to improve.' Then he invited us to his house and I went to his house with him. And in his house there was his younger sister. She was the same girl to whom I asked water while playing volleyball. And I asked my friend: 'is this your sister?' He replied: 'yes!' Then I told him: 'you have a very good sister. When I asked for water to drink then she replied: 'go to your house to drink!' So she is a very good sister.' And I also said to that sister: 'definitely you will become something in future.' Then she felt so ashamed because I was the friend of her brother. Immediately after noticing that I am the friend of her brother she told me: 'brother don't get angry.' To remove corruption, *Aaphno Manchhe*, bribe, we have to start with ourselves. The much I used to love my own people that much we have to love people. The

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writes about political activism during the Panchayat period (1960-1990) when the public sphere was heavily censored and regulated by the king's government, and notes that indirect or ironic speech was the primary means by which activists or civil servants voiced their dissent with the current regime: 'The form that public criticism takes is insincere praise, procrastination, and so on. Officially, one says yes, but then delays the enactment: one has a headache, one's daughter is getting married, etc., etc. (…) What it is said (…) the king is the greatest that Nepal has ever had, is irony perhaps intended? What on the surface registers praise may then be taken as a criticism… It follows that criticism can be indirectly expressed by irony, because in irony the interpretation of the statement entails the interpreter making inferences about the speaker's intentions. And these intentions remain, in the public spheres, opaque (Burghart 1996: 307).

[96] In Nepali '*Ta*' is a very low form of 'you'. In Nepali there are three forms to apply 'you', which depends on age, caste and social status. '*Ta*' normally is used as a designation to address children and low castes, or as a sign of disrespect.

> much I used to love my brother, that much I have to love you. After that, the much we do for our relatives and think about them, that much we have to do for other people. Then the aforementioned activities will disappear (T06 2010: 12).

I quote Arjun at length because his account provides a solid foundation for discussing how different communicative strategies are used in dismantling discrimination. In this narrative, we learn that Arjun was addressed with a disrespectful 'you' and scolded when he asked for water after a match of volleyball. Being confronted with such a humiliating behaviour, Arjun could have decided to engage in a direct confrontation with his offender. However, he decided to use irony as a way of emphasising the wrongdoing of his friend's sister without telling exactly what he thought she did wrong. By using irony, Arjun introduced an element of humour, which made the criticism seem more polite ('you have a very good sister, definitely you will become something in future') and appears less aggressive. Understanding the subtlety of this message requires the ability to interpret the speaker's intentions, which his friend's sister clearly does, and this has the pedagogical effect that the claimed offender suddenly sees her actions from the side of the offended. This sophisticated understanding can be lacking in some people and may thus not travel well in all situations, but in this case Arjun succeeded in making his point heard without his friend's sister having to 'lose her face'[97] and be humiliated in front of her brother. This approach is in line with Freire who champions that a pedagogical situation should allow the oppressed to regain their sense of humanity, in turn overcoming their condition. Nevertheless, he also acknowledges that in order for this to occur, the oppressed individual must play a role in their liberation. As Freire states:

> No pedagogy which is truly liberating can remain distant from the oppressed by treating them as unfortunates and by presenting their emulation models from among the oppressors. The oppressed must be their own example in the struggle for their redemption (Freire 1970: 54).

The friend's sister's strong and warm family, blood-linked 'brother' designation of Arjun could be interpreted as her appreciation of him not openly and directly displaying the embarrassing 'water scene' at the teacher's house to her brother, and that she regretted her wrongdoing and indirectly apologised to Arjun.

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[97] The term 'face' may be defined as the positive social value a person effectively claims for himself by the line others assume he has taken during a particular contact. Face is an image of self-delineation in terms of approved social attributes (Goffman 1955: 213). The attribute of not losing face is an ascribed value in a Nepalese context.

With Arjun we learn about youth experiences, of uncertainties during times of transition, how the media can be perceived as representing predefined political positions, and how the use of irony and indirect communicative strategies are applied when elements of feudalism from the past are negotiated against present ideals of inclusion.

10.11 Goma: Wish to Teach Women to Speak in Public[98]

Goma is a Bahun woman aged forty, who runs a small restaurant and lives with her husband and two children in Libang. As a social mobiliser, Goma is occasionally used as a source for interviews on radio programmes at Radio Rolpa. Inspired and encouraged by her father, ever since her childhood she has been engaged in NGOs and social work as a social mobiliser in her community. She works with women especially, but has also occupied other positions of trust, such as in local community forest groups and as board member of a school. When Goma described how she and the community leaders address a community on the radio or in the villages and invite them for a meeting or social programme, she states:

> We invite all people from the ward [hamlet]. They make us group leader. And they make requests; we do not have drinking water nearby, we do not have drain channel here. They say we don't have this and that. From thereon we make a decision and we make programmes (L03 2009: 6).
> [WadaKa sabai vaktaharooLai *Bolaune*, uhaharooLe hamiLai group leader Banaunuhunchha, emphases added]

Goma utilises the verb '*Bolaune*' to address how she and the community leaders invite the community to come to meetings to discuss development related issues, in this case topics of access to drinking water and irrigation. Bolaune is the causative form of the verb Bolnu 'to speak', and as a common Nepali word Bolaune is often translated to the innocent term of 'inviting' or 'addressing'. However, translating Bolaune using the more pointed English glosses captures the social relations embedded in the word:

[98] A part of this section was published as 'Discourses of Positionality and the Challenges of Democratization in the Global South: The Case of Nepal and Cameroon' (2012) in MedieKultur. Journal Of Media And Communication Research, 28(52). The article I co-authored with Teke Ngomba.

summoning, calling or hailing. Translated literally into English, Bolaune means 'to make someone else to speak.'[99]

Bolaune is a central practice to analyse in the context of challenges of entrenching democracy and civic spaces, because it reveals tensions between the ideas of democratic speech and political consciousness. Kunreuther (2009) traces the relation between voice, subjectivity and shifting notions of intimacy, and according to her Bolaune appears to be a harmless, everyday practice that has little to do with the broader political significance, as the term is used in many contexts to simply refer to the act of calling out to someone on the street or inviting a friend or relative to a party, a wedding or to one's house. However, in the particular context of a social mobiliser calling or inviting someone to a meeting, the word carries within it hierarchies of power. The act of calling out to someone, Bolaune, is the act of constituting that person as a speaking subject through the speech of another. This calling is also a request for response. A caller anticipates recognition through the participation of the other, serving to reinforce his or her identity. On a fundamental level, then, Bolaune is a practice of mutual, but asymmetrical, recognition between citizens, vis-à-vis each other and themselves.

Practices of Bolaune produce forms of recognition, speech and agency. Following Louis Althusser's (1971) notion of interpellation, Kunreuther (2009) suggests that practices of Bolaune in some instances are constitutive of caste-based subjectivity and the means by which people position themselves in relation to one another, as the term reveals and defines the hierarchies of caste. Bolaune characterises a subjectivity defined through relationships of duty and obedience, which characterises the hierarchies still existing in Nepal. Kunreuther (2009) continues her line of argumentation that the practice of Bolaune corresponds to what Lois Althusser (1971) calls 'hailing': a mode of address that establishes a person's subjectivity, and even body, through speech. Hailing, or using Althusser's more technical term 'interpellation', reveals the discursive nature of identity and subjectivity.

Interpellation occurs through reiterated forms of address and conventions that delineate a social position. Through interpellation, a person comes to recognise him or

[99] The figure of voice activated in this debate suggests thinking about connections between the patterns of recognition established within the subjects of Bolaune and the relations emerging between citizen and state during this transformative moment. For a historical precedent, one can turn to Richard Burghart's analysis of voice and listening during the monarchical Panchayat regime (1960–1990) when, he suggests, criticism against the state was simultaneously an effort to communicate with the king. He argues that only after the creation of a moral space (which is assumed to be part of civil society in Euro-American liberal democracies) do subjects acquire voice (Burghart 1996: 317).

herself not only as an individual but also as a subject positioned within a social world. The process of interpellation thus continuously transforms individuals into subjects. Bolaune does not so much construct a single subject as constitute a social relationship and the subjects formed within it. The practice of Bolaune compels the recognition of the caller by the called, thereby creating their differences, their identities and their subjectivities. The practice both recognises someone's presence in the community and marks his/her absence and exclusion from the activities in the community. In doing so, in a sense the practice of 're-members' a member of a community that he/she is not a member of.

The following excerpt from Anjana, who I introduce in the following vignette, further elucidates this point.

> Interviewer: And you said that you are not going for the village discussion programme, why did you not go there, is that because you dislike or what?
>
> Especially they don't invite us. They themselves with head people are doing all things but they don't call us (L13 2009: 5).
> [Nimata pani gardainan. Uniharoo Thulathula Manchheharoole Garchhan ra Hamilai *Bolaudapani Bolaudainan*.]

Anjana's statement reaffirms her subjectivity and indicates implicitly that she expected (or at least wanted) an invitation from 'they' (the Bahun and Chhetry leaders). If Bolaune is a way to interpolate a Dalit temporarily as a member of a community, the process can only work if Anjana actually begins to act and speak about herself in the same fashion as the Bahun call to her (*Hamilai Bolaudapani Bolaudainan* – not invite us), as interpellation rests on the notion that a 'speech act brings the subject into being, and then… that very subject comes to speak, reiterating the discursive conditions of its own emergence'.

As Webb Keane (1997) has pointed out in his book on ritual language in Indonesia, it is not only language that grants recognition in a symbolic world but also the way language and material objects work together to create social connections and divisions. Keane's analysis was specifically about ritual and performative language, but his point can be extended to everyday forms of performative speech and practice. The imagined effect suggests that a birthright to be a community leader (Bahun/Chhetry) is what drives Goma to lead and invite the community – even by force if needed.

> Interviewer: Are you including all castes in your community's programmes, meetings, discussions and decisions?
>
> Yes, now in our forest society we are saying there have to be Janjati, Dalit, Brahman, Chhetry, but they are not willing to come, so by force we are keeping one from each caste (L03 2009: 10).
> [Hajur, *Ahile* Hamro Ban Samuhama Pani Janjati Huna Paryo, Dalit Huna Paryo, Bahun Huna Paryo, Aphno Chhetry Huna Paryo Bhanera Hamile …, Aba Unhaharoo Aunaimannuhunna Aunaimannuhunna Aunaimannuhunna Jabarjasti Ek Ek Jana Rakheka Chhaun.]

The combat of caste inequalities by means of quotas and affirmative action has for a number of years been a development strategy of NGOs and social mobilisers to assure equal gender representation and inclusion of all castes in programmes. It is interesting to note that Goma mentions: 'Yes, *now* in our forest society (…)' (Hajur, *Ahile*…), indicating that this is a new practice. Hence, perhaps, Goma's eagerness to assure that her work includes equal participation of all castes. Not surprisingly, however, this forced approach to deal with issues of community concern is not an appealing way for everyone invited. To Anjana, the public space is not always a comfortable space to enter. As Anjana expresses it:

> If we go to a friend's home they go inside [the Brahman/Chhetry house] and we [the Dalits] have to stay outside. That makes us feel sad. That time I ask myself the question why this happens? When we are at home we are like a king so there are no problems, but when I go outside then I feel a little sad (L13 2009: 22).

Although in this quote Anjana talks about access to private houses and not public space per se, her remark suggests that 'outside' to her connotes discomfort, and leaving her house involves the risk that she might be confronted with discrimination. Agency and equal societal status, however, would have enabled Anjana to also do the calling and speaking, so she could argue and require of the Bahun to respond to her and explain why she is not invited inside the house. Instead Bolaune has become a practice and a one-way circuit in which there is dominance, wherein the Bahun/Chhetry addresses and the other castes are addressed.

The previous discussion shows that differential positionings have implications for inter-citizen perception, relations and senses of agency. The practice of Bolaune underscores

the differences within social relations along caste lines in particular, and also highlights how problematic it can become to entrench processes of Bikaas and democracy (Pigg 1992). In examining the way Bolaune operates and its potential implications, and in this case in the function of being a social mobiliser member of NGOs occasionally interviewed on the radio and stimulating various processes of Bikaas, it became clear that having the capacity to 'make someone to speak', is by definition an indication of the attributions of different individuals according to their 'position in the social order of things'. This provides deeper understandings of the broader social relations that constitute and are constituted by the process of inter-citizen interactions and how these are learned and de-learned. To grasp the challenges and how these processes influence PAMP, we need to pay further attention to the quality of citizens' self-perceptions in relation to their local milieu, inter-citizen perceptions and relations at the local level, and the attendant consequences for citizens' sense of agency. Anjana, who was introduced earlier, is a point in case, as she struggles to find ideals countering the image of Dalits as backward, even despite all the setbacks that she has inherited from her parents.

10.12 Anjana: Wish to Decide Herself

Anjana is an eighteen-year-old Dalit woman, who lives at home in the outskirts of Libang with her parents and sister, sister in law, nephew and niece. Her older brother migrated to Saudi Arabia two years ago for work. Anjana represents a new generation of youth coming from a poor, marginalised background, who, in spite of all the new possibilities she sensed about a new country in its making, has inherited some of same misfortunes her parents had. A major obstacle was her lack of education, which restricted her possibilities in life. She explains:

> I can't do anything. If I do, the only thing I can work are stones and soil [farming]. I can't do other things. Another possibility is to get married and live with a husband, but I don't think that will be a happy life. I'm an uneducated person and it is not possible to stay in *Mait* [the maternal house of a married woman] (L13 2009: 14).

To Anjana, marriage is not necessarily a shortcut to a happier life: 'if we can't get support from own legs, then it is worthless to get support from other legs' (L13 2009: 16). Her understanding that one has to stand on one's own two feet prior to engaging in marriage is a move away from the notion of arranged marriages that is still common

practice in many places, where youths have no or only a little say in whom they marry. Her remark indicates that she wants to be treated and contribute on equal terms with her husband to be. Despite the hardships she experiences and her pessimistic outlook for the future, Anjana is aware that her parents and the generations before them had to face even tougher times regarding lack of possibilities and discrimination:

> Older people are not doing like that [older people from high castes are not inviting Dalits inside their homes] but younger generation are doing that, however, only outside the house they sit and eat with us. We can't go inside their homes and they won't eat with us there (L13 2009: 4).

To describe her feeling of being discriminated and not allowed to socialise and have a meal with high castes, Anjana applied animalistic metaphors: 'we are all equal and we are the same humans. We are not animals. They [high-castes] are treating us like animals' (L13 2009: 21). The use of animalistic metaphors to describe her sentiments parallels the reality that women like Anjana have to face when they menstruate. Anjana's mother and the women of the generations before her had to sleep in a cowshed during their periods of menstruation. Nowadays, when Anjana menstruates she can sleep inside the house, but she has to sleep in her own room and is not allowed to touch the stove in the kitchen. Every month until her menopause she is reminded of what she is not: not as pure as her brother, father and the other males in her community.

Although superstition suggests that certain groups of people and gender are purer than others, this form of discrimination remains a social practice in contemporary Rolpa, and it influences how different groups and family members position themselves vis-à-vis each other and classifies those who are inside and outside – literally and figuratively speaking. The practice also informs those who can and cannot make decisions, as Anjana experienced how she and her family are not provided information about meetings in the community:

> They [high-caste people] don't inform us anything. There is much training for Dalits, but these trainings the head people [leaders] of the village *also* provide to other castes. They don't give us [Dalits] a chance (L13 2009: 9) (emphasis added).

The experience Anjana has from not being informed about community meetings and being excluded from the trainings she believed she was entitled to creates a sense of

subjugation, as discussed in the previous vignette, as well as a them-us demarcation: 'they' who have a piece of information that they withhold, and 'us' who believe that this piece of information could have been put to better use if distributed equally. Although officially dissolved, according to Anjana, the Panchayat system has been maintained in the villages. If there is any major dispute in the village, as Anjana said, then people will approach the District Administration Office (DAO) or the court system in Libang. But regarding smaller cases, it is the *Jimmuwal* (the rich and influential people, the bourgeoisie)[100] who decides in quarrels. Besides knowing the hierarchies and how to identify the influential people in her village area, Anjana expressed the view that she has no knowledge of the political issues discussed in her neighbourhood, nor does she take any interest in them. Yet, it became apparent during the interview that there were issues in her village that she was concerned about, such as access to water, which is a major problem expressed by many Dalits. Whereas the other hamlets in Libang had access to water at household level, in Anjanas' hamlet, which consists of five Dalit households, they have to share one water tap. Anjana explains:

> The water tank is just here. A tap is given for our Tole and we ourselves open and close. We only have one tap, whereas the other Toles all have a domestic tap (L13 2009: 7).

Although Sanjhana thought it was unfair that others can have domestic tap when she and her neighbours have to share one (and with undertones implying that it is because it is a Dalit Tole that they have not been prioritised), Anjana does not give any indication of whether she wished to contest or attempt to change this situation, for instance in collaboration with her neighbours. She simply seems to have accepted that 'this tap is given' - thus, there is no sense of ownership as such, but an understanding that, although someone from outside the hamlet have provided the water tap, it is a property she is has no influence on and where conditions not are contestable and changeable.

In terms of media use, twice or thrice a month Anjana and her family are in contact by mobile phone with their brother/son living in Saudi Arabia. Furthermore, Anjana likes listening to the radio. She expresses ambiguity about listening to radio, as she seems to recognise both that radio does give her insights about other people's lives and information about, for instance, a healthy lifestyle:

[100] Jimmuwal and Thauri were the state-appointed local village officials during the Panchayat era.

> They [at the radio] are saying, for example, not to eat unclean, not to sit in dirt, that we have to dress tidy, and have to eat fresh food and drink clean water, and that food and water has to be covered (L13 2009: 13).

Yet, she is also aware whom 'they' are who give the advices and information. When asked about if radio has any influence changing the caste situation, Anjana replied:

> Most of them at the radio are Magar and one is Dalit. And those Magar are not doing that much [improving the relations between different castes]. Brahman, Chhetry, Thakuri [a caste closely related with the Chhetry] and Magar are orthodox (L13 2009: 12).

Anjana grasped the development communication and the messages about hygiene provided by the radio stations, but she also insinuated that the radio programme producers did not properly address the immediate caste discrimination that she experiences in her village. There is merely one Dalit on the radio, who can speak about how Dalits experience discrimination. The other programme producers speaking about caste issues are 'orthodox' and therefore do not have the sufficient insights about Dalits' lives and problems. Although Anjana recognises the importance of education for improving her overall opportunities in life and changing people's attitude on discrimination, she believes that what can really make a difference is if one leaves one's home and acquires a new perspective on things:

> I think the situation [of discrimination] improves because of meeting others and visiting new places. There is a huge difference between staying at home and visiting many places. If you visit many places, then you can understand much (L13 2009: 16).

Anjana's emphasis on practical experience - that a person has to leave his home to really see an outsider's perspective on caste discrimination - resonates with her conviction that it is only a Dalit programme producer who can talk on the radio about what Dalits feel and think about discrimination. The Bahun/Chhetry and Magar programme producers are 'orthodox' in the sense that they are embedded in their own perceived caste reality, not having the outsiders' genuine objective understanding of the situation, nor the subjective lived experience of a Dalit.

Despite the fact that Anjana was able to list the many challenges facing Dalits, for instance poor access to water, she did not refer to party politics as adequate to deal with these issues, as she made references to the fact that authorities from the Panchayat era solve the problems in the villages. Anjana is an example of a Dalit, who has appropriated the learning and rhetoric of the radio stations, but was yet aware of the ideals countering the image of Dalits as backwards, as she, for instance, thought that the radio stations poorly represented the Dalits.

10.13 Aasha: the Future Rests with the Youths

Aasha BK is a Dalit woman and agricultural labourer aged fifty-two, who was widowed as her husband passed away sixteen years ago and thus left her with her two sons and two daughters. She lives alone in Kotgaun with her youngest son, who also stays in Libang some of the time. Her oldest son has migrated to Saudi Arabia, while both her daughters have married and live with their spouses. Talking to Aasha revealed that her focus on being treated unjustly and overworked as a widow is as deep as or even deeper than her focus on caste oppression. The fact that she was left all alone with the children after her husband passed away clearly has marked her, and she felt left all to herself, as no one has supported her in the upbringing of her children – nor does she have any support today when she suffers from poor health. Aasha is ambiguous about education, as she revealed some cynicism about literacy and being educated, 'wasting' her time in meetings, yet knowing her scope in life would have increased had she been educated. She explains:

> It is said that in that village there are members and president of a women party. And without any reason they [the literate] sit in meetings in the village and do hither and dither. For me there is no reason to go and sit in meetings (R05 2009: 4).

At the same time, however, she recognises that the fact that she is illiterate excludes her from these community gatherings and her say and influence on the direction of the community where she lives. In her own words: 'I think if I had studied I would have done a lot. I would have learned to talk and to take rest from this body' (R05 2009: 8). Aasha recognised the opportunities that literates have of expressing their viewpoints and engaging in discussions. These are qualities that she does not possess herself, which is why her alternatives are few if any. The only viable road left for her is the manual labour work that is too hard for her body to handle. Aasha conceived of her poverty

and backwardness as something not caused by karma or caste but by her ignorance. Education thus functions not only as a road to advancement but also as a means to have influence on her own life. This made her ambiguous about her own situation, as she both has to reconcile herself with being a Dalit, who historically has been excluded, and also knowing that her situation could have been different had she been provided the opportunity to study. Her ambiguity manifests itself as a sense of inferiority, of being a simple, passive victim of outside circumstances. For instance, she expressed interest in attending village meetings to discuss issues in her community that affect all households, and yet she is not invited to attend the meeting. She justified her feeling of inferiority by creating a demarcation between 'I have a strong desire to go there' *but* 'they are not telling me about the meeting' (R05 2009: 6), lamenting that outside agency did not include her. She did not express remorse or interest in pursuing more information about the venue of the meeting and how she could attend, time and place, etc. Rather, she directed her focus towards her two sons, whom she expects will do differently. As she felt very deeply the reduced scope of chances she has had in her life because of lack of education, she reacted strongly to her older son's decision to leave school and migrate for an underpaid job in Saudi Arabia, in spite of all her sacrifice. Her younger son, on the other hand, stayed behind and 'survives by pen' (R05 2009: 8). Hence, her 'ranking' of her two sons is clear. Although her older son migrated and is employed, she expressed greater admiration for her younger son, who is unemployed but 'survives by pen.' There are no doubt in her mind that education is the entry to advancement in life and engagement in public life, and it is thus her younger, educated son who, when he has the time, attends the village meetings on behalf of the family as 'he is talking and is more expert than me' (R05 2009: 15).

Aasha BK's esteem for education frames not only those places and venues she does and does not go to (public meetings for instance) but also her usage of media, as she has excluded herself from, for instance, listening to the radio, because she does not understand the content being broadcast. She explains:

> *Khai* [What to say]. It [the radio] says *deep deep*[101] things. In our village people feel a little ashamed or shyness (R05 2009: 10).

She explains that she sometimes listens to the radio but does not remember what she heard, as 'it could not be possible to understand the talking' on radio. '*Khai*' she expressed, as she has adapted the discourse of neglect and thus delegated the use of

[101] In Nepali when an adjective is repeated it translates 'very'. In this case '*deep deep*' translates '*very deep*.'

media to her younger son: 'wherever my son goes, the mobile also go with him' (R05 2009: 2). Likewise, although she expressed ambiguity about it, the radio stayed with her younger son: 'I'm fighting with my son and tell him please give the radio to me. I will listen while I'm alone' (R05 2009: 19). Yet, the radio has so far remained with her son, as the programmes are difficult for her to understand, which is why her son has the authority to keep the radio with him. Her feeling of shame and shyness, as a reaction to the exposure of 'deep deep' things broadcast on radio, might be due to the fact that those deep issues are too difficult for her to understand, and this fosters a sense of inferiority. Or maybe the programmes touch upon issues such as her poor health, hygiene and sanitation that she already knows about but have difficulties implementing, and she thus feels embarrassed when reminded of it by people on the radio. The radio stays with her younger son who gives her a summary of the programmes he finds important to her.

Aasha perceived of her village Kotgaun as backward compared with Libang, because of lack of electrification and poor facilities and infrastructure in general (R05 2009: 15). Earlier I also quoted Aasha saying about her village that there is no practice of sharing or discussing information and news from the media, 'because people in rural areas are too busy with their farming' (R05 2009: 20). She assumed, however, that people in the towns and cities have time to listen to the radio. Aasha BK identified herself with her place of living; for instance, when asked about changes coming because of the radio, she answers that for those who understand there are numerous changes, but 'for people who don't understand like us, there are no changes' (R05 2009: 19). Location is a means as to how Aasha BK orients herself, and she dreams that things will be better in the future, *like* in Libang with facilities of electricity and roads. However, those changes will not come from people like herself, but from educated people and external agency, as 'changes come from someone who understands.'

With this outlook, Aasha BK somehow is locked without agency and being positioned in a locality where she feels lonely and perceives herself as backward, does not attend community gatherings, nor share and discuss the ideas she receives from her younger son from the radio. Education and Libang remains the yardstick for the better life with better facilities and infrastructure, which is also where people have the time to discuss issues from the radio programmes. Although the programmes on the radio can create sentiments of shame, it is something she wants to explore further, as she knows there might be news and programmes she can learn from that can improve her life. However, as she has given authority to her son, who does not regularly live at home in Kotgaun, it is only when he is at home with her that she has access to radio and news

through him. Hitherto, she has put herself in a position of dependency on those with knowledge, on her younger son's occasional visits and his dissemination of the information from the radio programmes.

10.14 The Appropriation of Ideals of Equality in Sum

This chapter has exposed how PAMP appropriate mediated and non-mediated ideals of equality and how they have appropriated these ideals through a combination of both reproducing dominant ideals of hierarchy through their daily practices, but also appropriating new ideals as part of their future navigation, which may guide their future practices. There are three aspects that are prominent in the vignettes, regardless of their individual uniqueness.

PAMP's appropriations of egalitarian ideals can only partially be ascribed to their actual positioning in a context of inequalities. This is mainly due to the fact that it is difficult to challenge the authority of the traditional elites, as *practices rely on space*. As discussed in Chapter 8.8, Lefebvre (1991) suggests that we examine spatial representations along with representational spaces, which is in line with a Foucauldian approach to comprehending how power generates impacts on the very local, everyday, practical life, as this can reveal representations of spaces at work in the 'social production of space.' Democratic spaces in Rolpa are still not firmly rooted as most areas are still under the influence of the Jimmuwal and Thakuri and the power structures established during the Panchayat era. It is especially Dalits who are excluded from these spaces, but we learn from Puja that Bahun women can also have difficulties entering certain spaces, as she had to resort to emotional outbursts in order to transcend and enter the inner circle where decisions about the fate of the raped woman were made. Local radio has created spaces where information is circulated and has broadened people's understanding of societal issues. We learn, for instance, from Kumud that she received information from the radio about the construction of the local bus station and subsequently figured out that it was only the Bahuns in her hamlet who were financially compensated for the expropriation, while Dalits did not receive anything. Many PAMP cope with continuing inequality and discrimination, and they even participate in perpetuating these practices. This is apparent in the example of Goma, who, with the best of intentions, reminded PAMP about their inferior position. These practices also operate on more subtle levels in language practices, as was also seen in the example with Anjana, where PAMP at times are involved in reproducing these practices unknowingly. Constrained by the generational hierarchy, youths in

particular seem ready to challenge discriminatory practices, precisely because this generation has acquired knowledge through education, Maoist indoctrination and migration - but also in light of the fact that this age group to a large extent expose themselves to local radio and other media outlets and from these broaden their horizons.

Practices are dependent on generation. The generational hierarchy remains dominant and is further influenced by gender hierarchy. Male elders continue to have the primary say and they have to be given respect. The older generation of PAMP seem to have understood that they have difficulties with altering the prevailing discriminatory structures, thus hoping that the younger generation can do things differently. As practices of equality are associated with generation, many of the youths have integrated egalitarian ideals into their future aspirations. We see this exemplified with Arjun, who is aware of egalitarian ideals and he tries to implement these ideals himself, however struggling with the feudal traditions that still persist in society. Based on my argument that aspirations are essential for influencing people's habitus, such aspirations have the potential to change people's future practices. This cultural capital of ideals, however, can only be brought into active use once the social capital of age and generational status has been acquired. In a similar vein, the older generation seems not to have appropriated the new media available in Rolpa to the same extent as the youths have. This can be because of a lack of 'simple' technical competencies regarding, for instance, how to switch on a radio, or problems understanding the content and messages that are being broadcast. Aasha, for instance, has allowed her son to be in charge of the family's mobile phone and radio, as the content is too difficult for her to comprehend. In most of the audience's everyday practices there were traces of radio influence, and we can see, especially amongst the younger generation, how particular radio programmes have created greater exposure to egalitarian ideals. Arjun, for instance, made references to how radio programmes have displayed Dalit issues and concerns, and insinuated that this has fostered a greater understanding of caste issues amongst the radio audience.

Practices depend on exposure to alternatives. The most remarkable example was Kumud. She belonged to the bottom of caste and gender hierarchies, and her upbringing in India allowed her to appropriate the ideals of equality, also in practice. From time to time, she struggled to reconcile her identity as a modern educated Dalit woman with the realities of being categorised as a subordinate Dalit. We often see this experience amongst those who have migrated or studied outside, who return home with new ideas but have difficulties implementing these within the existing structures. Radio has

provided people with greater exposure to alternatives, spanning from news about current affairs to information on hygiene. This information gradually intermingles with tradition and people's everyday communicational practices that vary extensively and depend on context. One predominant communicative practice is indirect speech/non-speech: due to fear, sense of inferiority, mockery, lack of communicative skills or as a conscious choice of strategy some PAMP choose indirection as a more effective and appropriate means of expression, at least in some instances. For instance, by the use of concientisation, Arjun dismantled discrimination and saved the face of the offender, and this example revealed a variant of indirect communication. Many PAMP experienced constrained access to public spaces, which impeded direct speech. Puja revealed, for instance, how constrained access to space affected direct speech, as she had to resort to emotional outbursts to communicate her message. Occasionally, more direct means of communication to contest and challenge inequalities were used, for example in the case of Kumud, where she directly asked her friend why she was not allowed to enter the high caste house and she received a straight answer to her question.

As the local radio stations have only been on-air for two years, it is still too early to see the long-term influence that local radio has had on people's everyday life. There were examples of how this medium has become part of people's lives and generated popular interest and debate on issues such as public construction work, Dalit rights and information about basic hygiene and sanitation. Local radio communicates information on these issues, and the medium also influences how the audience learns about local and national affairs and interact with one another, as personal and institutional relationships now become mediated. Where previously PAMP's knowledge of state concerns was based primarily on accounts from high castes or a public forum, people now can base their knowledge of state affairs on broadcast news accounts rather than solely on personal experience. Kumud's perception of the municipality, for instance, changed once she heard on the radio how the municipality had expropriated land to build the bus station. Radio now mediates civic affairs, and people can obtain a broader perception of 'the other'. Listening to the radio, for instance, influenced Arjun's perception of Dalits, and Puja expressed how the combination of both male and female voices broadcast on the radio could help balance gender inequalities. As members of a civic and political community, their comprehension has broadened, and along with this comes their perception of themselves and their resources as citizens to make influence and choices.

Previously Rolpa was by and large settled onto a narrow comprehensive perception of the world, embedded religiously or ideologically. Where the backbone of society was tradition that called for repetition, Rolpa is now becoming a society with several outlooks where each individual has his/her own perception, as there is no single centre where society can be observed at a single glance. We learned this from the magazine programme Bichar Manch (thought forum) through a discussion of the celebration of Tihar, where new 'republic' ideas of celebrating Tihar were blended with the religious traditions. Freedom thus trumps 'truth' and future trumps past, as the desire for renewal cannot be halted. Truth is not given and cannot be determined solely by authoritarians, but truth calls for an infinite discussion where both premises and conclusions are continuously negotiated. Local radio broadcasting contributes to the plurality of outlooks of society, as the radios form part of the local network and create links between different moments in time and positions of the national and global mediascape and the scapes of ethnicity, technology, finance, and so forth (Appadurai 1990). In this process, notions of citizenship through shared meanings, values and ideals are 'imagined', which helps people make sense of the world and their place in it. In this way, local radio both produces and maintains the culture of a community, and in doing so plays a central role in generating local public dialogue. Radio Jaljala and Radio Rolpa thus become resources for building media and cultural literacies on a localised and personalised scale. In this process, local radio broadcasting should not be seen as the starting point for organising people, but rather as the extension of an existing desire to communicate, to establish a sense of personal and communal identity. Some expressed concerns that political interests bias the information disseminated by the media, and that radio producers are 'orthodox' caste representations not representing genuine Dalit viewpoints. These practices obfuscate exposure to nuanced and alternative perceptions, and yet they complement the blurry picture of the processes and practices outlined in this section. Local radio broadcasting in Rolpa plays an important role by encouraging dialogue between diverse public arenas, as a unique way of making spaces integral to the formation of the broader democratic spaces that enhance the scope for citizenship negotiations.

PART IV: FUTURE CITIZENS

11. Transition, Aspirations and a New Nepal

This final analytical chapter concerns aspirations and the making of a 'New Nepal'. It examines how norms, values and hopes inform and direct the aspirations of PAMP. In other words, I am interested here in how different mediated and non-mediated ideals conveyed by means of radio broadcasting and everyday practices form and fertilise aspirations in specific directions. This chapter first presents statistical findings on people's perception of the second people's movement in April 2006 and the current political transition. Subsequently, I approach the notion of aspirations, which is linked to chapter 3.3. This is followed by the presentation of five vignettes of PAMP that reveal their dominant aspirations. Each vignette exposes a central form of aspiration identified amongst PAMP. I do not attempt to turn these into reified 'ideal types'. Rather, this is a way to analyse prevalent aspirations of individuals. The vignettes are followed by a section including other PAMP's views, and finally these insights are discussed in regard to the type of capital to which PAMP aspire, to illuminate their room for manoeuvre.

11.1 Political Transition and Different Perceptions

The second people's movement in 2006 is a landmark in Nepal's political transition, as popular sovereignty and parliamentary powers definitively replaced the autocratic regime. As we shall see in the following pages, there are different opinions in terms of the impact of this change on people's everyday lives. Only few would say that their situation has worsened, but it is contestable to what extent people think their social situation actually has improved due to the movement. As the second people's movement in April 2006 came in succession of the ten-year Maoist armed revolt and ended the civil war, people had mixed feelings about the movement and the impact it

had on their lives. Many were relieved that they did not have to be sandwiched anymore between the Maoists and the Nepalese army and again can continue their peaceful lives as before the war. To others the movement did mark a change, as it catalysed a number of possibilities for civic activities that had not previously been possible, and it changed people's perceptions of one another. For instance, Durga, a Dalit woman aged twenty-one, experienced how the movement changed people's attitude towards issues of touchability, as these practices ended. She explains:

> Yes, the public agitation has also played role, as the slogan was that we don't have to do touchable and untouchable work and we have to end this practice of touchable and untouchable activities. It was said mostly by slogans and processions. The public agitation did play a good role for that. From the public agitation, maybe they have got to understand, become educated and realised that we have to develop our nation and this kind of war had to end because our country has got damaged and deceived from development (L16 2009: 8).

As we shall see in the pages ahead, notably Dalits and youths like Durga think their social situation has improved with the second people's movement, as their situation contrasts the poverty, discrimination and inequality that was widespread amongst the population living in the rural areas in the years leading up to the people's movement. In Rolpa, household food security and poor nutrition was a major concern in especially the rural areas, as many here depend on subsistence farming for their livelihoods. Rural PAMP generally were locked into structural inequalities, being landless or having very small landholdings on unfertile lands, thus suffering from chronic food deficit. High rates of illiteracy were prevalent, and most of the poor households were concentrated in specific ethnic, caste and minority groups, predominantly the Dalits. Most of these households had little or no access to basic services, such as primary health care, education, clean drinking water and sanitation.

Table 15: Impact of the 2006 Janaa Andolan[102]

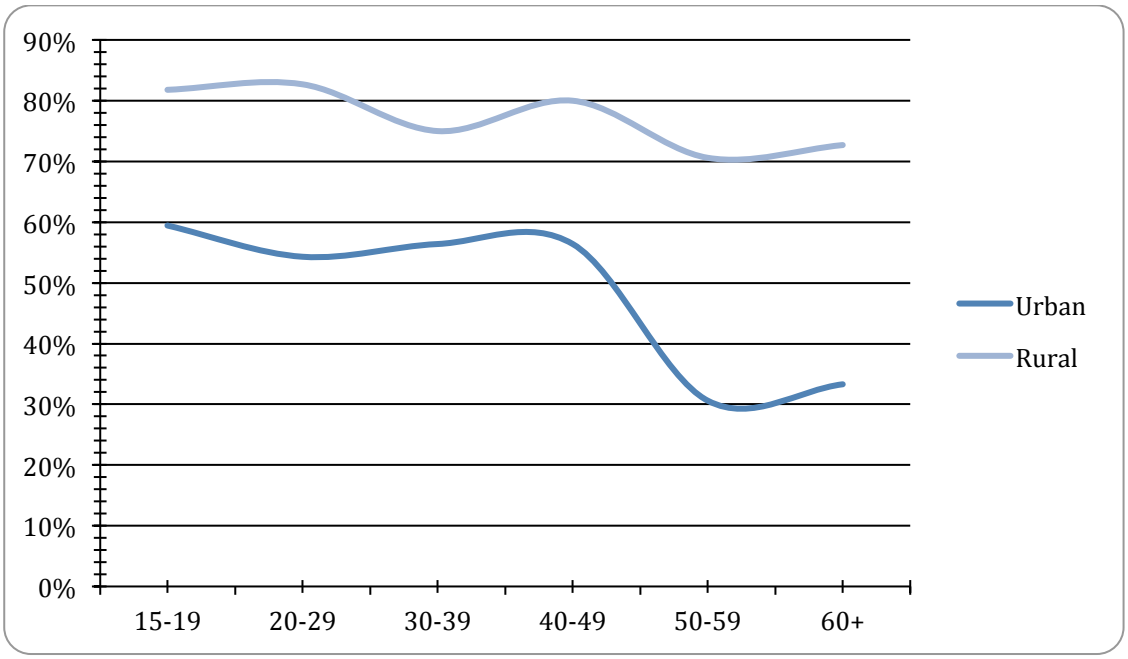
	I think my situation has improved	I think my situation is unchanged	I think my situation has worsened
Urban	49%	49%	2%
Rural	78%	19%	3%

Besides the fact that people in general are content with the end of the armed conflict, rural people's strong overall support of the Janaa Andolan II also underlines that the

[102] Q60. N=498.

popular mass movement did address the structural inequalities. In urban areas, in comparison, structural constraints were less widespread, as the lifestyle in a town dilutes people's differences and to some extent provides greater and more equal opportunities for jobs, education, livelihood and friendship and life partners - as well as forums such as public transportation, market places, clubs, educational institutions and work places, where people from different backgrounds can mingle and exchange viewpoints and ideas in public spaces. Hence, the impacts of the people's movement are not felt as deeply in the town areas; although it should be noted that a significant proportion of people in town areas likewise think their social situation has improved because of the second Janaa Andolan.

Figure 18: Age groups' improved situation post 2006 Janaa Andolan[103]

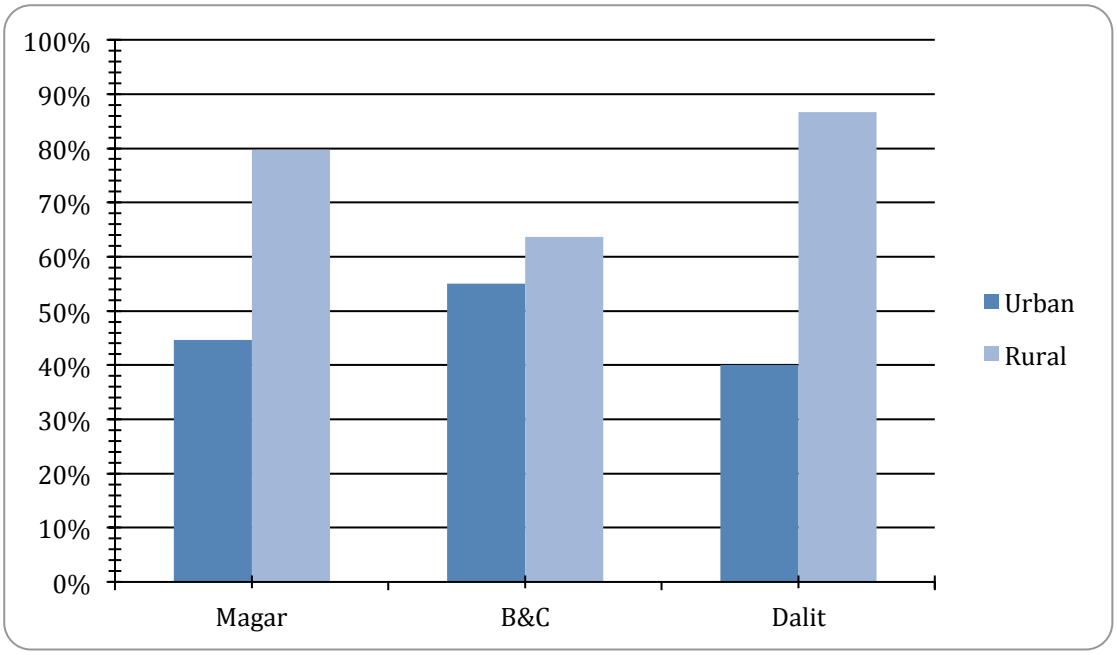


Zooming further into those who think their social situation has improved because of Janaa Andolan II, youths more likely tend to think that their situation has improved. The fact that the movement addressed the structural constraints and paved the way for the subsequent political changes has fostered greater optimism and aspirations amongst the younger population. They want to make their own decisions and form their own future lives. Obviously, not all are pleased with the political changes, as the transitory situation is messy and also creates unpredictability and new social dynamics, which

[103] Q60. N=498.

might be more difficult to comprehend and deal with for the older members of the population, who have lived with the structural constraints for most of their lives.

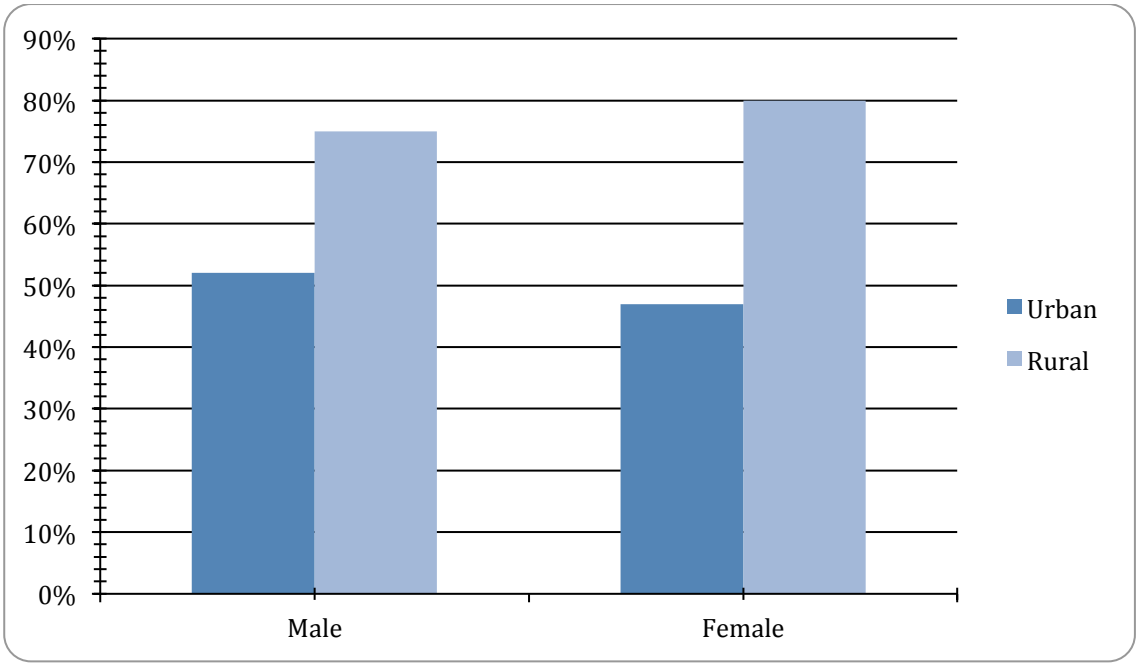
Figure 19: Caste groups' improved situation post 2006 Janaa Andolan[104]



The fact that inequalities in rural areas are largely a structural phenomenon related to caste is emphasised by the fact that Dalits and Magar in rural areas think their situation has improved. By comparison, Bahun and Chhetries in rural areas have not experienced the same level of structural inequalities, which may explain why the experience of Janaa Andolan II for Bahun and Chhetries is not so different, if we compare rural and urban areas. Because caste inequalities are less widespread in urban areas, caste here is to a lesser degree a marker of the structural constraints. The marginalised groups in rural areas have thus felt the effects of Janaa Andolan II much stronger compared to those living in urban areas.

[104] Q60. N=495.

Figure 20: Gender improved situation post 2006 Janaa Andolan[105]



Significant gender differences are not evoked in terms of gender improvement of the social situation because of the 2006 mass movement. This indicates that although gender equality was on the political agenda during the mass movement, fundamentally the mass movement was about the abolishment of Hindu autocracy to ensure ethnic and caste inclusion.

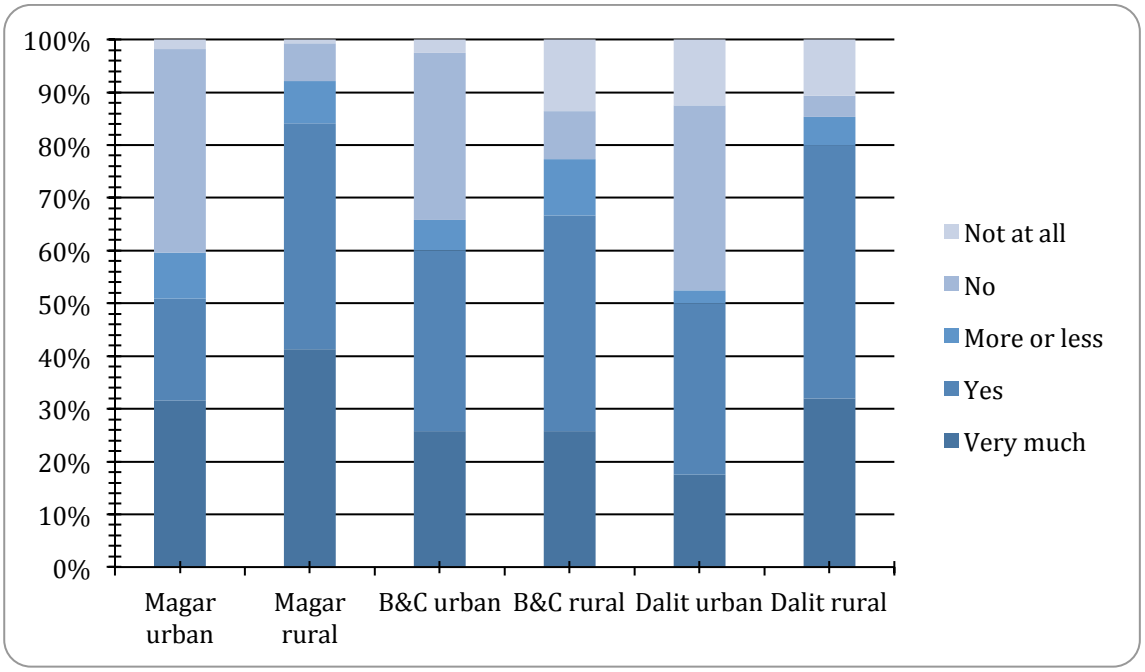
11.2 Ethnicity as a Marker of Citizenship

Federal restructuring of the state has become a principal demand of ethnic and regional activists in Nepal. The debate about this has been politicised, as federalism is not merely the decentralisation of political control; federalism has emerged as a powerful symbol for a larger agenda of inclusion, encompassing institutional reforms to ensure ethnic proportional representation, and a redefinition of Nepalese nationalism to acknowledge the country's ethnic and cultural diversity (see also ICG 2011B). Activists demand further reservations to ensure proportional representation of marginalised groups in government and bureaucracy. They want districts being named after the most numerous ethnic and regional groups and borders marked to make them the dominant minorities. Some claim to be indigenous to these regions and ask for

[105] Q60. N=497.

special rights to natural resources and privileged entitlements to political leadership positions in the future districts (ibid.).

Figure 21: Caste groups' perception of ethnicity as maker of citizenship[106]



For an understanding of the extent to which caste and ethnicity are important for people's citizenship identity, it is relevant to consider the weight of history, of 'evolution', modernisation, urbanisation and the bringing together of discrete and separate groups of peoples. These suggest how to explain why caste and ethnicity, as important elements of the notion of citizenship, are diluted in urban areas. In rural areas, to combat the widespread inequalities especially found here, 'ethnicity' was used as a means of struggling for equity, which also explains why the differences between B&Cs living in urban or rural areas are not as diverse compared to the Magar and Dalit castes. They are not involved in this struggle to the same extent.

Despite the diluted effects of ethnicity as part of people's citizen identity in urban areas, ethnicity has made a prominent inroad into contemporary politics, as approximately eighty percent of Nepal's population live in rural areas. Ethnically sensitive rules of political representation, along with positive discrimination on a number of issues, have been implemented in the aftermath of the events of 2006, and the 'ethnic issue' has

[106] Q61. N=496.

become prominent within political parties, including those on the hard-line left that have suddenly become ethnicity centred. Approximately eighty percent of Dalits and Magars believe that their ethnic identity is an essential part of their citizen identity (Figure 21), and we find a similar tendency amongst Magar and Dalits in rural communities (Figure 19), who think that their social situation is improved because of Jana Andolan II. 'Ethnicity' is thus for many people not only part of their identity and sense of membership to a larger community of people, but also as an efficient means in people's struggle for equity. Politicians obviously are aware of this fact, which helps us understand why the issue of ethnicity is one of the current dominant political questions being debated and negotiated among people, in the media and amongst members of the constitutional assembly. A federal structure was promised in the 2007 interim constitution, and the debate in the constituent assembly now centres on whether or not the federal structure should be platformed on ethnicity. Ethnicity thus remains an important marker of being a citizen in Rolpa, especially in the rural areas amongst the Dalit and Magar ethnicities. But what is this struggle all about? Is it only about ethnic sentiments, identity and struggle for equity, or can other notions of citizenship and qualities of democracy that people aspire to in Nepal's transitional period be found now that the country's future is up for negotiation?

As discussed earlier in Chapter 4.1, nationhood may not be the most important among PAMP's multiple affiliations, despite the Nepalese state's increasing horizontal and inclusive approach, which breaks with the centuries-old political system that had room for masters and subjects but no place for citizens. Besides the necessity of a conception of civic agency that is premised on the ability of people, motivated by reason and or passion/emotions, to see themselves as participants in meaningful engagements, Nepal's political transition, in whatever concrete version it manifests itself, is a complex undertaking requiring many conditions to be met for it to have a successful outcome. These conditions include, among other things, a functioning legal system with a judiciary that operates in an optimal balance of power with the legislature and executive branches, as well as genuine efforts to move toward universalism in the treatment of citizens and their rights, in the sense that all citizens have equal rights and opportunities. Moreover, democracy must also measure up to the democratic ideals and the character of public discursive communication between citizens (Benhibab 1996), which can function on different levels and in different political and civic spaces. Democracy has social and cultural requirements as well, given that it is the engagement of citizens that gives democracy its legitimacy as well as its vitality, as something propelled by conscious human intentionality, not just habit or ritual. As these democratic ideals are interrelated and mutually supportive, no element can be singled

out as more important, as they all form part of a coherent whole. Yet in an attempt to identify if some qualities of democracy matter more than others, people were asked which quality of democracy is the most important.

Table 16: Qualities important in a democracy[107]

	There are several political parties	All have food and housing	Men, women, rich and poor, no matter caste, all are treated equally	People can criticise and protest	People can participate in unions and associations
Urban	26%	14%	41%	17%	4%
Rural	15%	29%	42%	10%	5%

If we first take a look at the rural-urban continuum, it is widely agreed that equality is the most important quality in a democracy. Priorities are, however, different if we look at the other qualities associated with democracy. Livelihood is a major concern in rural areas, as poverty is more widespread and extreme here and basic needs are urgently needed. Political parties and the option to criticise and protest is thus perceived as less important here compared to those living in urban areas, where basic needs are covered to a larger extent.

Table 17: Caste groups' perception of qualities important in democracy[108]

	There are several political parties	All have food and housing	Men, women, rich and poor, no matter caste, all are treated equally	People can criticise and protest	People can participate in unions and associations
Magar urban	21%	16%	35%	23%	5%
Magar rural	17%	27%	38%	13%	5%
B&C urban	27%	13%	41%	17%	3%
B&C rural	19%	36%	26%	11%	8%
Dalit urban	30%	15%	45%	8%	3%
Dalit rural	8%	26%	58%	5%	3%

Zooming into people's ethnic/caste background and the qualities they perceive to be important in a democracy, we see that urban Dalits' perception of political parties as an important quality in a democracy increases significantly. The structural constraints and inequalities that Dalits experience in the rural areas are far less significant in urban areas, and here many Dalits see that the political parties are better at dealing with the

[107] Q59. N=480.
[108] Q59. N=477.

political issues and structural constraints that still might be pending. For urban Magars, the quality of political parties increases slightly, whereas the right to criticise and protest increases significantly. The Magars' emphasis on criticism and protest as important in a democracy might relate to the fact many Magars sympathise with the identity movements of the indigenous nationalities that are quite strong in Rolpa. The political parties have only partially succeeded to capture this agenda (Lawoti 2010), although in Rolpa some of the indigenous movements are sympathetic towards the political parties, the Maoists in particular, as in their programmes they explicitly work for increased federal autonomy along ethnic lines and the establishment of the autonomous state of *Magarat*.[109]

Table 18: Gender perception of qualities important in democracy[110]

	There are several political parties	All have food and housing	Men, women, rich and poor, no matter caste, all are treated equally	People can criticise and protest	People can participate in unions and associations
Female urban	20%	14%	45%	17%	4%
Female rural	15%	34%	37%	7%	7%
Male urban	31%	13%	36%	17%	4%
Male rural	15%	24%	46%	13%	2%

From a gender perspective, we see that rural women notably list shelter and food as their main concerns, whereas, in comparison, urban females tend to prioritise issues of equality and the right to criticise and protest. Urban males perceive political parties as an important quality in a democracy, which may explain male domination in party politics in Nepal. Although the years of democracy since 1990 have been fruitful for women, as laws and legal decisions have been made to ensure women's rights to property, abortion and their bodies (via court decisions) (Tamang 2002: 161), overall advocacy on women's issues has been widely undertaken by women's forums and NGOs, which have, however, been largely captured by the elite (ibid.: 164). Women, therefore, to a larger extent have their reservations about whether the political parties to the same degree represent their concerns and the structural inequalities they still experience, which also explain urban women's increase in perceiving the quality of people can criticise and protest as the adequate forum expressing their concerns.

[109] www.telegraphnepal.com/headline/2009-12-18/magarat-and-tamuwan-states-declared-in-nepal-more-in-pipeline [checked August 19, 2012]
[110] Q59. N=479.

Against this background of how PAMP with their different backgrounds and identities appraise the different aspects and qualities of democracy, I now continue my exploration of how norms, values and beliefs inform and direct future aspirations of PAMP, motivating them to improve their conditions in order to meet their aspirations as citizens in a democratic New Nepal.

11.3 PAMP's Hopes and Aspirations

In Chapter 3.3, I asserted that a person's 'stock' of capital composes his or her room for manoeuvre and thus provides a certain capacity to plan futures. In this regard, it becomes essential to examine what forms of capital (social, cultural, symbolic, economic) PAMP can extract to improve their room for manoeuvre and scope to negotiate in order to improve their conditions and have their aspirations met in a democratic New Nepal. To Bourdieu, PAMP's choices and actions are not necessarily strategic; rather, they are practical and dispositional, reflecting the encounter between the accumulated capital and related dispositions from past experiences on the one hand, and the present prospects for the fields in which they are positioned on the other hand (Bourdieu 1977). Bourdieu finds that individual aspirations tend to 'correspond to the formative conditions of their respective habitus' (Swartz 1997: 103). The explanation for this is that the possibilities of success and failure for people with different stocks of capital are internalised and transformed into individual aspirations and expectations, which then create scope for action that tends to reproduce the conditions that formed the life chances in the first place. Habitus thus calibrates aspirations and expectations depending on the likelihood of success or failure in Bourdieu's optic. This notion helps us understand people's sense of collectiveness despite people's individual habitus, but it fails to capture the difference between hopes, plans and actual chances for different groups of people. Differentiating expectations, like those future hopes that take the collective experience of success and failure into account, from aspirations, which may also point into a new future, makes it possible to discuss different prospects for change.

I now use five vignettes to describe PAMP's aspirations while at the same time situating these within individual lives. As argued in the previous chapter, vignettes of individual lives can reveal insights into wider social and societal aspects and not just individual experiences, although one should be careful in synthesising each individual story to represent a specific analytical aspect (Jeffrey and Dyson 2008). Here I strive to show

that, while each PAMP may aspire first and foremost to one type of capital, aspirations always reflect an interwoven mix of several such types.

11.4 Durga: Wishes Education, Employment and Improving Ijjat

Durga is a woman aged twenty-one and employed at the Red Cross. She lives with her mother, two brothers, sister-in-law and niece in a Dalit family at the outskirts of Libang in two rooms in a family house made of clay. They have very little land, and the settlement with thirty to forty families in which they live faces constant water shortages. Although her father passed away some years ago and money is scarce, Durga's family is among the less vulnerable because of her employment and her older brother's service in the army in Far-West Nepal. Durga and her family have television and radio at home, and while most of Durga's family prefer to watch television, Durga likes listening to the radio, particularly to magazine programmes touching upon issues related to social awareness such as youth and Dalit issues. Durga believes that radio can make people understand overall societal issues and challenge superstition and the many 'false' notions circulating in the communities. I quoted Durga earlier with her mention that in her family they discussed superstition and witchcraft after having listened to a radio programme. Durga believed that superstition and poor knowledge are widespread in the Dalit communities, and this has profound consequences, not only when it comes to superstitions such as witchcraft. Ignorance is also of consequence when it comes to social organisation in the communities. Durga mentions that in village meetings, for instance, some of the participants do not understand what is being discussed:

> Those Dalits who come for the first time, they don't speak that much because the first time they don't understand that much. From the second and third time of participation, they start to speak and they ask if they don't understand. Then we explain and make them understand. We listen to their suggestions and we make corrections if they have done some mistakes (T03 2010: 5).

Durga is aware that it is a lack of education that has led Dalits in general to be less involved in meetings, have no influence on the decisions in the communities and overall they are poorer compared to other ethnic groups. She explains:

> High caste people are educated since long ago, which is why they have enough food. For low caste people, however, some of them have very hard times

> managing food for both the morning and evening. Some of them have just enough (T03 2010: 18).

Besides self-sustainability, Durga associates being educated with respect (Ijjat) and the feeling of happiness. She mentions:

> Although I'm a *Janjati* female but I passed a degree [Masters level]. And I am free and work similarly as a man. I think education makes one happy. After one's mother and father comes education. If we have education then I think in any situation we are able to eat by standing on our own feet. We can solve any kinds of problems. Wise people understand and get respect, but other who don't understand they don't get respect (L16 2009: 12).

The fact that Durga has an education allowed her to pursue her dream of getting a job at the Red Cross, to support her family and attend village meetings and thereby influence her community and to gain respect (Ijjat) on equal terms with males. The emotional undertones of happiness the she feels and relate to being educated are similar to how she relates to those radio programmes she appreciates the most. What had great appeal to her, are magazine programmes on Dalit issues, dealing also with genres of poetry. Durga explains:

> Radio broadcasts various kinds of stories, poems and *Gajal* [a kind of Urdu poem] for youths and the radios encourage to the audience to write stories, poems and Gajal – feelings from the youth. Then the radio broadcast their feelings and youths are inspired from those programmes, improving their artistic skills and make them move ahead (T03 2010: 11).

The radio programmes containing youth poetry evoked motivational feelings and made Durga see her fellow youths in a different light, as they exposed their 'artistic skills.' Their exposure of poetry is highly motivational, as Durga sees that it makes 'the youths move ahead.' To Durga, the emotional appeal of pathos is not necessarily in the eloquence of the speech but in the appeal of the message to the audience. For that appeal to exist, those who write the poetry have to understand the dreams of their peers. The magazine programmes broadcast on radio with poems and Gajal thus create a common ground on which to build a shared dream and 'move ahead'. It is this dream of moving ahead that Durga has tapped into, and this is what she wishes to happen in her village, along with the eradication of poverty, discrimination, and not the least an increase in development and employment. She explains:

> The district headquarter doesn't give that much care. The government likewise doesn't care that much. Nor do the political parties and the organisations [NGOs]. Maybe they think we are near the district headquarter and therefore don't need help. But in our village there are not that many educated people and they don't understand. To make them understand, it will take long time and hard work. I wish there would come some development to our village and I wish they would get a job (L16 2009: 6).

Durga perceives herself to be a role model for future Dalits, because she is one of the few in her village with a proper education and employment. Being educated, informed and employed, Durga displays modern aspirations and enjoys respect (Ijjat). Thereby, she becomes the example of a Dalit woman, who embodies the ideals of development. At the same time, her aspirations revealed that she is concerned with appropriating ideals countering the image of Dalits as poor, dirty, backward, etc. Her wish for improved possibilities of education, access to information and employment supported her aspiration to raise Ijjat, which is what she has experienced herself and what she aspires to happen for her Dalit community as well.

11.5 Urmila: Wishes Basic Livelihood and Youth do not Bow Down

Urmila is a Dalit woman aged sixty-three, who lives in her youngest son's house in Madichau with her second husband (her first husband passed away eighteen years ago), daughter in law and grandson and granddaughter. It is a poor family, the house is a simple clay house and they only have a small piece of land. Her youngest son migrated to Saudi Arabia for work, while her oldest son left for India eighteen years ago, as her first husband passed away. They have not been in contact for the past six years. Moreover, she has four daughters who live with their husbands (one daughter married without the parents' consent). None of her children have gone to school, except from her youngest daughter who married without consent. Urmila was in poor health and was in pain most of the time. She has been hospitalised a few times and she thinks she has a gastric disease.

Life is not easy and she said she often weeps due to the pile of problems in her life. Most of all, she is worried about her poor health and that she has not been in contact with her oldest son in a long time. Moreover, their land is too small for subsistence

farming, as they only have enough food six months out of the year. They rely entirely on the money that her youngest son remits from Saudi Arabia. Urmila explains:

> Yes he sends money, but he sends to daughter in law's hand. After the money gets to my daughter in law, she buys the things we need to eat. If he sends money that has to come in my daughter in law's hand. There is no way the money comes in my hands (R09 2009: 3).

When it comes to livelihood (food, shelter, health, medicine, clothing), she is completely dependent on her youngest son and the goodwill from her daughter in law, which worries her. They lack basic facilities that will give the family better comfort and hygiene, and Urmila and her family are aware of issues related to basic sanitation and that toilet composting and boiled water will improve their overall health condition. But since money is scarce, very tough priorities have to be made, and sanitation is a secondary concern. She explains:

> I drink boiled water, always I drink boiled water, after being sick not having boiled the water. I boil the water and I drink that boiled water and my grandchildren also drink that water. Radio already said that we have to drink boiled water. Radio has broadcast information about if we make toilet, then all the dirty things will go into one place. Around the house there has to be clean, and then the children will also be clean, and there will not be flies and houseflies. But what to do, if we have money we would have made those things (R09 2009: 8).

Radio has authority and Urmila wishes she could obey the instructions from the radio. And although Urmila listens to the radio and is aware of how she and her family could improve their living conditions, for instance through hygiene, this piece of information is not enough to eradicate the constraints that prevent her family from improving their conditions. Instead she blames herself and her first husband for not providing their children with proper educations, so that their situation would not have been as miserable, and their son did not have to migrate. Urmila explains:

> My son did not study well and he got too much trouble. His father was not able to do anything and was not able to add wealth. Therefore, hardly I brought up my children by doing labour work. Although I've done wrong, my son is taking care of me, saying: 'we have to take care of our mother in her old age.' I shouldn't be unjust. My son gives me food and a house to stay. He is doing well.

> About my clothes, still he has not come. I hope he'll bring clothes when he comes (R09 2009: 3).

Despite her difficult situation, she is pleased that her youngest son takes care of her although she 'did wrong'. But she is even more pleased that both her grandchildren get to study, so that the same 'wrong' is not repeated.

> Son and daughter, both are equal. Both are equal. We always wish them to get good education, good knowledge and good job. We have expectation to make them doctor, teacher, etc. We do not know if that happens or not, and we do not know about their future (R09 2009: 18).

Although Urmila's immediate survival is her biggest concern, and she would like a new piece of clothing, Urmila has reconciled herself with the fact that the future rests on her grandchildren. She hopes that both her grandchildren will get good jobs, although in the same vein, she expresses her concern that this might be too much to wish for. The fact that the future rests with her grandchildren is also exemplified with the discrimination she experienced, as discrimination has become such an integral part of her everyday life. She is not resisting it, even though it is still painful when it takes place. Yet, when it comes to her grandchildren, she hopes that they will not bow down as she has done.

> New generation people may speak strong and try to enter but we old people have long time experience of caste discrimination so we feel odd to enter a stranger's house. Therefore, I don't enter at all. Till now I have never entered any people's house. I feel I'm equal to others, but what to do? We are not able to speak strongly. If high castes speak strongly then we get afraid. We are all humans but we are not able to speak strongly with them. If we were able to speak strongly with them, then it would be well. Or if we are able to compete with them on equal terms that would be fine, but we are not able to do that. Therefore, we get afraid (R09 2009: 6).

Urmila did practice the discourse of equality although equality was not something she experienced for real. Rather, equality to her was something connected with fear and facing hardship, and Urmila saw her future mirrored in her grandchildren and aspired for both of them to be as well educated as possible, so that they will not have to face discrimination.

11.6 Sangini: Finish Education, Do Social Work to Change Village

Sangini is sixteen years old and lives at home in Jankot in a Magar family with both her parents and three younger siblings. They live in a small house and have a piece of land to sustain the family. Sangini is studying SLC, and in her leisure time she is very active in the local youth club, supported by Save the Children that does various programmes primarily related to health and sanitation. Her older brother lives in Butwal and works as a bus driver. Sangini is a regular radio listener and, like Durga, it is particularly the radio programmes evoking feelings that have the greatest appeal to her. Sangini explains:

> I like *Rolpa Sanjaal* [Rolpa Network] that is broadcasting *feelings*. Especially it is broadcasting feelings about Nepal that I like very much. I have listened to Krishna Kunwar's feelings. He is from Dharpani and after listening to his feelings I got so happy. He is our friend and we were taking training together. He knew about the club from the beginning [they both jointed the same youth club in the past]. Once he went to Kathmandu to share stories from Rolpa and Rukum and what happened here during the public battle [the Maoist revolt]. He shared a very sad experience about Rolpa and he cried. From that I felt very happy because he used to make very good poems and used to show his talent, and also singing songs for his own country and own place. Therefore, I like his *feelings* very much (R02 2009: 13) (emphasis added).

At a first glance it seems peculiar that Sangini feels happy listening to her friend crying on the radio. However, the radio's ability to broadcast feelings, projecting to Sangini the words of her friend through the radio, conjured the illusion of a strong sense of presence and connection, which helped create much of the emotional power and appeal of his story. Her empathy with her friend, the ability to share his sorrow and the fact that she felt connected and could resonate with him made her feel happy. And her friend's voice on the programme alerted Sangini to storylines that resonated with her own experiences and the many concerns and worries she felt herself during the war. Sangini was a small girl when the war broke out, and yet she has vivid memories and can recall the fear and uncertainties that she and her family experienced. Another radio programme she listens to is *Samaya Sambad* (time dialogue). The programme brought up issues related to health and sanitation, touching upon issues such as diarrhoea. Sangini explains:

> Our Rolpa is a remote place so the programme used to focus for diarrhoea. They use to give examples, like in this place this is happening and people are getting trouble from diarrhoea and getting damage their life. So we have to care our life. This way, they teach us to use 'Jeevan Jal'[111] and do sanitation programme. Now there is more improvement than before. Before people did not give interest to sanitation. There were no one doing cleaning. When they heard that diarrhoea is attacking many people then most of the people started to drink clean water and stay clean. With FM little changes have come (R02 2009: 7).

It is not only programmes evoking feelings that have appeal. Sangini highlights how magazine programmes on development have changed people's behaviour when it comes to preventing the spread of diarrhoea. Sangini is very concerned with such improvements, and her wish to improve people's lives and the conditions in the village was very strong. As soon as she graduates from SLC she aspires to continue with intermediate level education: 'there isn't any value with an SLC so I have to pass for the Intermediate, so that I can make my village happy.' Sangini's future aspirations centre on collective societal changes and ideals, and she lives out her desire to improve the conditions in her village in the local youth club. She explains:

> I want to change this village. I think that I have to change this village but the villagers think our organisation can give them money. I have heard villagers telling me: 'she is doing a lot of work for the youth club so she will get lots of money.' There are lots of complaints like that. The villagers say: 'she gets benefits, so therefore she is working for the club. Otherwise, why would she spend so much time working for the club?' Therefore, I have to work on my habits, behaviour and character to improve my skills. Also to learn how to speak if someone comes from very far away. How to welcome a guest, how to speak at home and how to speak in the village – all these things I think about. I think about these things, but villagers think that: 'she gets something out of this, why she works like this?' Therefore, sometimes I feel sad. Though all the work I do for my village, but they don't believe. Then what can I do? I wonder how sometimes people can be disappointed if there is someone with enthusiasm. Nevertheless, I keep thinking I have to do something (R02 2009: 15).

[111] A rehydration package called *Jeevan Jal* is found everywhere in Nepal and is quite effective if you have diarrhoea.

Sangini's aspirations are mostly collectively oriented, but her educational aspirations are individual. She adhered to ideals inspired by radio, and despite her experience of jealousy and mockery in the village, she had not lost faith in the importance of helping her village change for the better. Her greatest aspiration is to work for the development of her village.

11.7 Deepak: Wish Children to be Educated and Understand Society

Deepak is a thirty-eight-year old Chhetry, and we met him the first time in the middle of his work as a labourer carrying piles of paddy for a landlord (Figure 22). He has worked as a labourer his entire life, mainly carrying loads for people. He never got an education, as he had a tough start to his life. He was born in a village four hours walk from Libang and both his parents passed away when he was a small child. During his childhood, he lived from mouth to mouth with different families, and as a young child he was forced to tend livestock. Seeking opportunities, in his youth he went to India to see if he could make money and save up, but as he was illiterate he was cheated all the time. He spent a year in India and returned to Nepal with what is equivalent to €50. He admitted that he is naïve, but also that he simply does not understand much: 'I do not know hither and thither. There are people who play political, who walk and visit a lot, who understand and speak. They know all. I do not know even the place to pay the electricity bill' (L08 2009: 7). When he was in his twenties he got married and he, his wife and their three children moved to a village in the outskirts of Libang, as opportunities for employment, food and education were said to be better there. Deepak explains:

> The reason of leaving that village is because there was not enough food to eat. To educate the children, the village's situation was the same [it didn't make any difference educating the children]. Not educating the children and not enough food, a very little house and land made us leave in order to get a work. So we came here – to work and educate the children (L08 2009: 4).

Although the family moved to Libang to pursue opportunities, they still had to face numerous hardships. Deepak dropped out of school, and both Deepak and his wife are illiterates. Deepak took a loan so the family could buy their own small piece of land and he struggles to pay down the loan and to understand the conditions of the agreement; how much the interest rate is, the exact size of the plot, etc. Thus, he has had some

problems with purchasing his land and has been threatened by the lender, although he still does not understand why. Money is scarce in the family, since working as a labourer pays only one-two hundred Nepalese Rupees per day (equal to about €1.50), so every penny counts. Notwithstanding his troubles, Deepak seemed to face the difficulties head on, as his greatest dream was unfolding:

> Yes, I had my own house and land [in the village they moved from, where he didn't have a loan], but I came here with my wish. We came to work, especially to educate our children. In the village, doing the work like I do does not require any specific education. However, Libang is a bazaar. Here, everybody is concerned with education and teaching. To see the future of my children, we came here. There is a school in the village, but how can it be like here? In the village they say there is more teaching now, but the teacher is still the same (L08 2009: 5).

Education and turning children into educated persons was a major aspiration of his, as this would lead to changes for the better in the family and eventually someone to take care of Deepak and his wife when they retire. Moreover, the family's level of reputation could also be improved. Deepak explains:

> After being educated, my children can become teacher. If not getting a job as a teacher, they may get a job as an office helper, cook, carry bags, etc. It is good to have any type of job - even a small job. In our village, the teacher is the most respected person. Employees and officers also get respect but teacher are getting most respect from all (L08 2009: pp. 15-16).

However, it is not just money, employment and respect that are at stake with the children's education. It is also a matter of having the skills to understand and navigate in society. Throughout his life, Deepak has been pulled around, cheated, humiliated and manipulated, and recently when they bought their piece of land, he was threatened, and yet he does not fully understand how to solve the problems he encounters on his way. Deepak hopes this will end with his children's education. He explains:

> My plan for them to give them a good education and if there is job, we join them with their job. Even though they don't get jobs, if we give them a good education, they are able to see the land map [the map that illustrates exactly the plot of Deepak's land], the landowner's certificate and the receipt. And they can

> write their names. Others cannot threaten them. They are still threatening. Someone (*Gha*) is threatening. I hate him![112] (L08 2009: 13).

Deepak does not make explicit how and in which forms he is threatened, but clearly he is frustrated. By moving close to town, they will not only benefit from the education of their children. Deepak also senses other opportunities that would follow if they moved to Libang to pursue education for their children. He explains:

> In my village I hear many organisations [NGOs] are coming. I hear many are opening. I don't know, but they are opening and working. They say, that they do homemade trainings, spinning [Lathe] trainings. Nowadays, there are many coming from place to place. People get intelligent and clever, and they do reading and writing [get educated], and they are doing business (L08 2009: 12).

It is difficult to say whether Deepak got the information on the spinning training from Samaya Sambad (time dialogue) that broadcast a programme on that topic (Chapter 9.9) or from gossip circulating in the village. Deepak and his family have a radio and sometimes he listens if his children turn it on, as he does not know himself how it works: 'I never listen radio. The children turn it on but never me. I want to listen but I need money [?] and I have to be skilled how to open [turn on] and close [turn off]' (L08 2009: pp. 3-4). Moreover, Deepak at times watches television at his neighbours' home. He explains the following about the programmes he watches:

> Programmes on politics played out in Kathmandu, playing ball. They show politics and which party play what. They show big big soldiers playing ball. These [programmes] I hear [watch]. Otherwise, I don't have interest. These programmes are needed for those people who have education and big big leaders who do politics (L08 2009: 4).

Although only his children know how to manage the radio and Deepak feels the news on television are only for those with education and the leaders, his exposure to media has provided some insight into political issues. While bewildered about the democratic terminology he knew, for instance, that there had been a change in leadership of the country: 'TV is saying there is not king, now comes Prachanda king or someone. Krishna Mahara [a Maoist member of parliament from Rolpa] or someone, they are

[112] Deepak swears and the transcriber did not translate this passage of the interview. Throughout the interview when Deepak refers to the piece of land he bought, he uses swearwords referring to the person with whom the deal was made.

king or we do not know who is king. I watched it on television' (L08 2009: 17). Surely, the media has provided greater insight into politics, and moving closer to Libang has provided Deepak and his family with greater scope for education and possibilities in life. Deepak's aspirations primarily focus on his family's domestic issues and the possibilities that his children's education will give to him and his family in the future.

Figure 22: Photo of 'Deepak'

11.8 Shambhu: Wish to Eradicate Discrimination, be Recognised and Develop Society

In the following I introduce Shambhu, who is twenty years old and from the Dalit caste. Shambhu has entered into an inter-caste marriage with a Magar woman and lives in Jankot with his wife, his parents and six other relatives. Their house is located in a Dalit hamlet on a hilltop, and Shambhu and his family have been listening to the radio for as long as he can remember, also prior to the opening of local radio as they tuned into Radio Nepal on the AM bandwidth. Now he listens only to local radio, and he is particularly fond of programmes where people can voice their life stories: 'I do not listen to the local FM news because I [prefer to] hear those type of programmes where people share their own life incidents and pain, troubles etc.' (R11 2009: 6). According to Shambhu, nowadays many people listen to the radio, and despite the positive contributions, Shambhu is also concerned about the bias and divisions created by the radio stations. Shambhu explains:

> Comparing to past time, most of the people were not listening to radio but nowadays they are listening radio more. Because of that radio a lot of people or political parties divide our village, because our village they named 'Dream Village'. They named Kotgaun 'Dream Village'. Along these lines our future generation are thinking. Many clubs are being organised. We have a club here. It is named 'Bright Land Youth Club'. They are organising child clubs. They give awareness to be clean. Children five to nine years of age are doing cleaning, even small pieces of paper they see on the way they are collecting and they burn on Saturdays. This way they are doing. About sanitation, the radios are giving much teaching now (R11 2009: 7).

Shambhu finds that especially the youths appropriate the new media available in Rolpa and has also noticed how the political parties, by the means of radio, with some success have mobilised the youths in his village. Despite the divisions created by the radio stations' mobilisation of people, Shambhu is also pleased with the children's help cleaning the village. Whereas the older generation seems to be fixed with superstition and tradition, because of education young people have a broader perspective and are more open to new thoughts and ideas. Shambhu explains:

> Men broke with the various traditional and superstitious thinking and practices. This is because of education. We did not have phone, FM, radio etc. Now we have lots of awareness rising programmes through the radio. This is because of

> education. If there weren't education, people wouldn't hear radio. They would hear cassette and enjoy songs, but they wouldn't listen to news. Because of education, mobile phone came up to here. Education impacts on children and adults. For example, I have a cousin age six and she can play with my mobile. Because of education she can do that. But if I give it to my grandmother and ask her to dial a phone number, she will fail to do so. Because of education my cousin can do that. This is because of education (R11 2009: 17).

The above quote reveals Shambhu's perception on how the different issues brought up by the radio stations will only be appropriated by the audience if they are educationally predisposed. As information in general and knowledge about ICTs primarily is appropriated by youths, authority rests with the new generations (even Shambhu's six-year-old cousin knows how to make a phone call on the mobile phone, while his grandmother does not). Yet the introduction of new ICTs does not happen in a vacuum and it is not all the 'old' thinking that is eradicated with the introduction of new ICTs. Shambhu gave the following example of the discussion of health and religious issues:

> Wizards and witch doctors are still very alive in the villages but they also give the advice and suggestion saying: 'don't believe only in us. Do both sides equal.' Here is one point and that is that everything is not possible only at the hospital. I want to tell you about a thing. Most people say there are deities. Because of that reason, if anyone gets ill, easily they can be healed. That means if we take those conditions of the sick people directly to the hospital, however much treatment we do in the hospital, it is not possible to heal. At the end they have to be taken back here [to the traditional healer] and immediately they get healed here. I have seen this many times (R11 2009: pp. 9-10).

> Let's talk about radio. Radio talks about the traditional healer and the radio deny it. If it doesn't happen in his place, but if he comes here, he may get it proved in the village and thereafter believe in that. I have an example from an incident in our village. A policeman once got sick and went through treatments at different hospitals but he didn't get well. But when he went to a traditional healer in our village, one of my uncles is a traditional healer, then he became well. So he started to believe in religion. Yet the meaning of religion is changing. For example, before when people got sick they used to go to the traditional healer but now if somebody becomes sick, people do not wait for religious thinking. They go to the medic also. It is changing (R11 2009: 18).

Shambhu has recognised the increasing presence and appropriation of radio in his community, and he has noticed how this medium attempts to be in tune with traditional beliefs and customs, as it, in the above example, attempts to merge modern scientific medicine with the traditional public folklore. Local radio becomes a hybrid merging modern ideas of medicine with the public, civic centred tradition of local healers, as more and more people approach modern medics and hospitals if they get sick, however still with the knowledge that the traditional healers can heal some of the diseases not curable at the hospitals.

The outside changes in society run in parallel with changes in Shambhu's own family, and he has experienced from a close range how the modern intertwines with tradition, as fundamental changes have taken place in Shambhu's family over the span of just two generations. Although Shambhu comes from a family with few financial resources and his parents did not get a chance to study, Shambhu and his younger brother and older sister managed to break their social heritage as they have all gone to school. Shambhu is active in the local youth club and is the owner of a small photo studio and computer business in Libang. Shambhu explains how his grandmother 'was not able to do anything except household work – she couldn't read or write.' His father was only able to study until the fifth grade and then had to work as a labourer with the Bahuns. Later, his father migrated to India so that he could support the family. Shambhu explains:

> My father went to India to earn money because of our poverty. In the time of festival my mother went to bring meat, but she returned without meat. I will never be able to forget that moment. At one point I thought that I would never eat meat in *Dashain*. I have many times pertained as if I had pain in my stomach. I thought why should I celebrate the festival because my father did not get chance to celebrate it (R11 2009: 16).

Shambhu describes his father as his great source of motivation, and despite all the pain Shambhu is thankful that his father made the sacrifice so that he and his family today do not have to work as labourers. Shambhu hopes that he does not have to migrate and be separated from his family as his father did, even if that means that they have to reduce their material possessions. Shambhu explains:

> For me, I would love if I can stay with my family. We could live in this type of house [they don't need a more sophisticated house than what they have now]

> and in a beautiful settlement, respecting each other's feelings rather than having a physical building. I wish to live together in harmony by sharing a beautiful love. These kinds of things are important in life (R11 II 2009: 1).

Shambhu's view reveals how forming aspirations may not always be about imagining a new and different future. It may also be aspiring to have a future where he does not have to be separated from his family like his own father did. The aspiration not to migrate should also be seen in light of the fact that now his family has a relatively stable source of income and that Shambhu and his family do not experience the discrimination that his grandparents and parents did. Shambhu explains:

> If I remember past time there were lots of discrimination. Just here, the water tap is near and this water tap we were not allowed to touch. If we touched the top of tap people went back [to their homes] without water. If we filled water we had to say to the other that 'I am lifting my *Gagri* [water carrying pot].' We used to feel very sad about these kinds of things. Now it has been removed so when I remember past time and compare with now I feel much more respected. I think education made that change – definitely because of education. Because of increased educational level they [high caste] also think this view is wrong. We also gave pressure to them on some issues, saying this is not good to do things. We had to do it this way [remove discrimination]. I don't think radio played that a significant role at the time, but here is politics and because of this remote place, I would like to give many thanks to the Maoist party. Because of the Maoist party's pressure, the caste system has been changed. In some place they created awareness and sometimes they also gave pressure. Because of much pressure, the situation changed fast (R11 2009: 13).

This quote reveals several issues. First, observing Shambhu's changing emotional state during the short narrative: there is a change from a *we feeling sad* during the times when Shambhu, alongside members from his caste, publicly had to announce that they were lifting their *Gagri* at the water tap - to a subsequent *I* that *feels much more respected* because discrimination has been lifted. Shambhu's feeling of respect (Ijjat) is recognition, as discussed in chapter 4.1, of his individual personal attributes, and it constitutes a break with the vertical perception of anonymous masters and subjects, to a horizontal recognition of equal citizens with personal attributes. What we experience in this case is the practice of citizenship next to the water tap where individual agency between self-integrated independent individuals collecting water has replaced we-they dichotomies and caste-based bonds. Shambhu both experiences and sees himself as a citizen, as he

subjectively encompasses the attributes of agency. Before the water tap was associated with insecurity, stigma and discomfort, and now Shambhu feels that this is a safe place where he can manoeuvre freely. His positive emotions cause positive evaluations of reality that gives aspirations for the future and love for his country. Shambhu explains:

> In the past there were very dirty roads. Unmanaged livestock and no toilets. The passer-by would say: 'what a dirty village!' But this has changed and I see my village has a golden future. My village's future is beautiful. Geographically, this is our village and we have the field's below. Because of Bikaas, these changes will come. […] Because I want my Nepal, I have my favourite song *Bihana Uthna Bittikai, Nepal Dekhna Paiyos, Nepal Lekhna Paiyos* [Every morning when I wake up, I wish to see the Nepal, write the name of Nepal]. I wrote this song in my wall and I set it as my mobile ring tone also. I'm married and sometimes my wife asks me: 'why do you always listen to that same song? You have to change it.' I downloaded Nepal's map from the internet on my computer desktop as well. I have much love for Nepal. The feeling came to me as I one day watched drama on TV. In that drama on hero came with the Nepalese flag. There was one girl behind the scene. Some villains were trying to damage the flag but that hero saved it and wrote Nepal on it and then the song *Bihana Uthna Bittikai, Nepal Dekhna Paiyos, Nepal Lekhna Paiyos* followed the scene. So that song influenced me. Because of that I feel we must do something for Nepal. (R11 2009: pp. 19-20).

Although Shambhu comes from a poor family, thanks to his father's sacrifice he succeeded in acquiring knowledge through schooling. Moreover, during the war he was exposed to the Maoist meetings and saw them reprimand people who behaved badly towards women and Dalits or cheated the poor (R11 2009: 14). Consequently, Shambhu has found that radio had some role to play in providing awareness and mobilising people, and we also learn from Shambhu that television has influenced his perception of Nepal, creating stronger patriotic sentiments. Shambhu's aspirations are mostly collectively oriented, as he aspires to do something for the development of his village and his country.

11.9 Perspectives on Political Transition and Aspirations in Sum

There are three facets of these vignettes that are prominent, regardless of the vignette's individual uniqueness. All the vignettes highlight the importance of education and the

aspiration to acquire further knowledge for individuals or their relatives. Education is basically the single most important means and for some also the only objective for the future. A different commonality here is the authority of the older generation's conceptions and aspirations. This reveals the strong generational hierarchy within which young PAMP are brought up. Parents and grandparents are essential for enabling aspirations to turn into realities, as they provide an orientation that enables possibilities for the future. Finally, there is the hope of being able to 'do something good for our community and country', the dream of being able to give something back to society, often in the form of a development, which are all very important aspects of young PAMP's future aspirations. The older generation's social circle, on the other hand, often tends to be limited to the immediate family and their future wellbeing.

Gender variations were aroused through the aspirations. Especially young PAMP females spoke about aspirations 'to get educated, to get knowledge.' In the village, young PAMP females mentioned their aspirations to relieve themselves of the behaviour that is generally deemed proper for women. Young women said: 'we have to learn to get outside the house, we have to learn not to be shy when we talk to outsider, and we have to learn to walk freely,' as expressed by Sangini. Having the capacity to revise the norms for female presence in the public domain and to become equipped to engage in the social world was a concern articulated by many young women. Some women had been engaged in development work through NGOs, youth clubs, employed as teachers or had their own small businesses. While all aspired for themselves or their kin to work in organisations or to become a doctor, engineer, teacher, social mobiliser, etc., those living in villages outside the town would prefer to return to work in their village in the future. While connecting their future lives to their home places, in the same vein as PAMP in town, many wanted to acquire useful skills.

Although traces of radio influence appeared in many daily practices as well as in their expressions of hope, some PAMP mentioned this openly. Sangini expressed her hopes about what listening to radio broadcasting might lead to:

> I think radio will inform about all kinds of things, such as what kinds of development technologies are available in our country, what kinds of communication is happening, what kinds of events are happening and all people will get to know. And today's generation is a sharing generation, isn't it? If information is shared, then people from other places will think, that we also have to do something like that. They will take that as their own goal. Thereby changes will improve in this country. This is not possible to achieve by one

person only. All kinds of people have to think that oneself has to contribute. I think that will happen (R02 2009: 22).

These aspirations underline the end of the civil war and the impact of the current political transition that has legitimised open civic engagement. PAMP have the chance to openly present their personal and political aspirations to challenge existing structures of inequality by applying the rhetoric of 'oneself has to contribute' and serving their community and country. Many like Sangini see modern communication technologies, including radio, as important means in this quest to share information and knowledge. What can all these accounts from PAMP tell us about their future aspiration? How substantial are these vignettes for understanding their mediated and non-mediated negotiations of notions of citizenship? I will first seek to answer the former question by discussing the aspirations expressed in terms of the form of capital that people aspire to and the rationale causing such aspirations. Answering the latter question will sum up the chapter and be continued in the concluding chapter.

11.10 PAMP Aspirations Obtaining Capital

PAMP spoke about individual hopes and aspirations that reflected their situation, context and experiences in life. The individual and unique aspirations place them within certain broad categories of collective horizons, which supports the argument that aspiring is a collective capacity although individually formulated (Appadurai 2004). Most PAMPs' aspirations concentrated on obtaining a combination of economic, social, cultural and symbolic capital, although certain groups of PAMP (especially younger women) put a stronger emphasis on one aspect. As Bourdieu suggested, aspirations resemble the products of both external circumstances and personal capacities.

11.11 Economic Capital: Livelihood, Employment and Income

At the outset of this section, I address economic capital, since for most PAMP in this study, attaining economic capital is critical. For a large majority of these people and their families, it is a question of survival and finding a job and making an income to sustain the family and enhance their living conditions. In the rural areas with rampant poverty and few future alternatives, most PAMP are concerned with creating the leeway to find some kind of employment that can generate economic security for the family.

Bourdieu (1986) regarded economic capital as the most basic form of capital, as he claimed that attaining other forms of capital are ways to obtain economic capital. While this held true for a majority of PAMP, who aspired to attain employment, not all PAMPs' aspirations for capital complied with this logic. Arjun, for instance, who was a political activist, stayed in his village regardless of the fact that many of his friends and villagers migrated to earn money. His aspirations were directed towards making social changes by virtue of political work.

Despite the fact that economic capital seems to be crucial to most PAMP's aspirations, this does not necessarily mirror their own wishes, as these aspirations were also nurtured by NGOs, educational institutions and programmes on the radio (i.e. the magazine programme broadcast on small-scale enterprise). Thus PAMP's habitus is formed alongside institutional intentions that promote opportunities for salaried work, business opportunities and for individual Bikaas.

Assessing PAMP's more specified aspirations, attaining economic capital was also rather a matter of the level of poverty. PAMP who had to deal with extreme poverty, who were unprivileged (i.e. poor access to employment, do not attend school or have members of family attending school) and live in an unprivileged context (rural, defined as remote, poor, vast inequalities) had economic capital as their main concern. To PAMP who are relatively privileged (i.e. those having employment, attend school or have members of family attending school) and live in an unprivileged context, young people especially, economic capital seemed secondary in comparison with the more collective goal of attaining social capital by obtaining the capacity to 'give back' in the form of moral and social support to their villages.

11.12 Social Capital: 'Giving Back' to Family and Community

Those PAMP who are relatively privileged, although they might live in an unprivileged context, were often interested in 'doing something good, to educate the uneducated'. Social capital very often signifies networks, people's correlations and contacts. This also applies to the aspiration to 'do something good for the community and the country'. By repeating the almost hegemonic discourse of Bikaas and turning it into something local and personalised by declaring 'I want to help my village', PAMP aspire to complete their social obligations, to give something back to the family and community that have supported them, and perhaps also to the country that have supported them with

education. Completing one's social obligation, or, if we take the analogy of gifts, the act of recompensing gifts, is basically to establish and preserve social relations and networks and thereby having the option to make use of them and gain their support on later occasions.

One may thus claim that relatively privileged PAMP have been formed to 'selflessly give back', and they have appropriated this understanding in a manner by which it becomes a personal aspiration. This coheres in a context where there is a record of patron-client affinities as a structural mechanism to survive, find jobs, be promoted, etc., especially for PAMP. In other words, by aspiring to support one's place, PAMP wish to affirm their social belonging and social status and thus attain social capital. The creation of social capital, attained through working collectively, being engaged in a youth club, NGO work or the like, may at the same time be outward-oriented and a way to escape (into town/abroad), move up and become mobile and independent, thanks to new connections. This might sound as though relatively privileged PAMP form these aspirations purposefully. That is not my postulation. These PAMP are devoted, using their abilities and their relatively privileged position to help others. By viewing it as a facet of being relatively privileged, PAMP are bound to form these aspirations to attain social capital as a consequence of their experiences in and outside their home. Underpinning this argument is also the fact that nearly every relatively privileged PAMP, despite their core aspiration, their background and actual possibilities, had this social aspiration.

Whilst many of the accounts regarding supporting the community and country were given in conversations related to social work, organisational work and activities in youth clubs, individuals who aspire to work politically also aspire to social capital. Arjun stressed the need to understand and involve himself in politics, and by doing so he establishes his aspiration to attain social capital to support and change society. Such dreams constitute a very specific form of capital, which makes it possible for those having it to act politically and seek to alter structures of inequality. This capital is similar to the above as it establishes and confirms social relations and membership of different social groupings. Social and economic capital is to some extent linked through the notion of Bikaas, and the two are associated with a third form of capital, namely cultural capital.

11.13 Cultural Capital: Becoming a Citizen

Given that my focus in this study is on PAMP who have been denied, excluded and marginalised, cultural capital has a distinct part to play in PAMP's future aspirations. Knowledge, abilities and education make cultural capital, and this is what differentiates night from day, backwardness from Bikaas, clients from patrons and subjects from citizens. In Nepal (as elsewhere), education and knowledge is key to a bright future for the individual and society alike. The knowledgeable understands and has the means to develop, and it is particularly the youths who attain this form of capital through migration, education and their greater appropriation of mass media. Being knowledgeable has a value in itself, because one can understand, participate and use more information and services, and this is particularly important because this cultural capital is what qualifies PAMP to become equal citizens. Cultural capital is indispensable for acquiring the symbolic capital that can improve one's overall social status and position in society.

11.14 Symbolic Capital; Status, Ijjat and 'Middleclass-ness'

'The Jimmuwal and the Thauri are getting honour and respect. We are not getting respect even when we get good education. No one listens to us' (L13 2009: 6). This phrase expressed by Anjana encapsulates the last form of capital that I will unfold in this chapter, namely symbolic capital. This is the most subjective and identity-related form of capital that people aspire to, and it is deeply intertwined with Nepal's political transition. Although the Panchayat system was abolished with the first people's movement in 1990, the feudal social structures are still pertinent and are largely influential on people's everyday lives. These structures, which also feature politicians, leaders of NGOs, business people and journalists, encompass people who have influence, people others pay attention to, people who receive respect (Ijjat) from others, and those who have the means to decide over others. Moreover, these structures also serve as a social hierarchy. People inside these power structures can lay claim to resources and can get Bikaas for themselves and their village. Most PAMP aspire to get inside these structures to raise their own Ijjat and the Ijjat of their family and village. Attaining such symbolic capital can open doors, and most likely symbolic capital can be converted into other types of capital (economic, for instance), as Bourdieu also shows. Anjana's expression above reveals just how crucial it is to attain symbolic capital when regarded as a low caste. To her it implies finally being paid attention to and provided the rights that high castes have denied Dalits for a long time.

Moreover, there is an additional facet of symbolic capital that relates to the discussion on aspirations in regard to earlier discussions of Bikaas and high-caste urban ideals. This is the somewhat obvious affirmation of middleclass aspirations by using displays of symbols, postures and tastes in order to pertain to the middleclass culture exhibited in larger cities (displayed in movies, fashion, songs, etc.; Liechty 2008). Suvash KC is a case in point. We met Suvash during both field studies, and we spent several days with him as he guided us around in Rolpa. He was home on Dashain and Tihar vacation from his engineering studies in Pokhara,[113] staying with his Dalit family in the outskirts of Libang. I noticed his haircut and clothing was somewhat different from that of most of the local youths; he always wore smart jeans, design t-shirt and sneakers and sometimes also fashionable sunglasses. To me he could have been any urban youth from a larger city anywhere in the world. Noticing how his appearance and attitude seemed to contrast the local youths, I asked him what he found to be the biggest difference moving to Pokhara. Suvash replied:

> I felt totally different. Rolpa's culture, environment, dressing, locality is different. It was totally different. Everything was different. In Rolpa, there was not that much vehicles but there in Pokhara, there was so many vehicles. And also there were all kinds of facilities like email, internet and everything you can buy there. Consumable things and everything you need, you can buy easily and fast. And I also felt it is a large city. I felt I had come to a very big city. Those things I felt. Here [in Rolpa] we say neighbour and relatives, but there [in Pokhara] they are only comparing with money. If we have money then the entire world is with us and if we don't have money, then nothing remain with us (T07 2010: 1).

In his book on the making of middleclass culture in Kathmandu, Mark Liechty (2008) comprehensively describes how the making of middleclass culture is fundamentally associated with consumer practices. The same cannot be argued about the making of middleclass aspirations in Rolpa, as the economic resources and sites for consumption are limited. However, the mechanisms are present and since fashionable clothes and sunglasses are still rare, those few who wear these clothes and accessories are highly visible and influential in terms of attaining symbolic capital and Ijjat. As Liechty (2008: 66) asserts, specific commodities, particularly clothes, 'often effectively distinguished class groups, especially lower from the middle class.' I find Liechty useful here given his understanding that class is about creating a particular social space and cultural and

[113] Pokhara is the second largest city in Nepal with approximately 250,000 inhabitants.

social practices. I propose to consider certain practices and aspirations of the PAMP in my study as taking part in a social space of class formation:

> where people negotiate what it means to be both Nepali and modern, a place in which to carry on a dialogue about how to wed the realities of a transformed material and social universe with powerful pre-existing cultural values and discursive frames. What constitutes this sense of middleclassness is not necessarily a common lifestyle or a uniform set of values but rather a shared project of locating oneself in a new and legitimate space between two devalued poles. Striving to be free, new and modern, yet upholding moral values and cultural practices denoted as 'traditional' and 'Nepali' (Liehty 2008: 67).

The notion of Ijjat, which Anjana addressed in the beginning of this chapter, comes up as a conceptual way to grasp the connection and merger of opposite values. She is striving for symbolic capital that is at the same time traditionally and culturally important, yet pointing out that she belongs to the new generation as a modern, vocal and educated woman. While Ijjat has been used in the communities, rigorously referring to honour in the conventional sense (to honour elders, be an obedient daughter, a respectful wife), it is now essentially used to denote 'proper behaviour', incorporating specific cultural values of decency aligned also with radio conveyed idioms (do not drink alcohol, improve hygiene, do not gamble, do not spend too much money during Tihar, make a small business and create an income, etc.). As Liechty (2008: 83) states, Ijjat 'bring[s] together old and new logics of prestige in competing and often contradictory hierarchies of value.' Consumer habits and information from radio and proper behaviour are not themselves Ijjat, but they can provide or enhance Ijjat and thus bring about symbolic capital, which can be turned into both social and in some cases economic capital. I have earlier asserted how rural-urban differences alter some of the ideals associated with citizenship. The notion of Ijjat nuances this discussion, as the idea reveals how fluid notions of middleclass-ness intermingle with predominant dichotomies of rural-urban, backward-developed, high caste-low caste. 'Middleclass-ness' may thus function as a hybrid between some of the former divides (of caste, gender, rural-urban, etc.) for especially new generations of citizens.

Similarly, hybrid features of how radio conveyed idioms form part of merging conventional notions of prestige and respect with contemporary values of 'proper behaviour' was also seen in the aforementioned case with Shambhu. He noticed how radio functions as a hybrid merging modern ideas of medicine with the public, civic-centred tradition of local healers, representing both modern medical science but also

traditional faith healers when modern medicine is insufficient to cure deceases (Chapter 11.8). In his ethnographic studies on local television in rural Nepal, Wilmore (2008) cites Homi Bhabha (Rutherford 1990) when he argues how media forms arise from the intersection of diverse positions in the mediascape, and it is the dynamic links between conventional and new forms and practices that create the particular hybrid as a 'third space'[114] (Wilmore 2008: 206). His studies provide a very interesting parallel to the aforementioned observations in Rolpa, as he describes how the hybrid character of the local cable television programme in this locality was seen as the merging of private, commercial concerns with the public, civic-centred workings of a non-governmental organisation, and how this helped change many people's perceptions about what types of organisations could produce media and in what locations (ibid.).

11.15 Citizen Aspirations in Sum

With the aforementioned reflections on the hybrid features of radio broadcasting in mind, the thesis is now approaching the completion of the analytical quest through which I have linked PAMP's habitus formation with their everyday lives and appropriations of citizenship ideals broadcast by local radio in order to demonstrate how these become aspired for into the future. It is an attempt to answer how PAMP, their appropriation of ideals broadcast by radio and their understanding of the shifting political grounds, form their future aspirations through negotiating notions of citizenship. PAMP's aspirations take various directions of which one is directed towards a 'third place': a hybridity that enables other positions to emerge, displacing the histories that constitute it. I argue that there are four main directions in PAMP's aspirations, which I shall outline below.

One is the link between radio broadcasting and personal Bikaas, where knowledge is perceived to be directed towards social mobility. Radio supplies knowledge and inspiration, which can be used by PAMP both to breach worlds (the rural and the urban, male/female, peasant life and middleclass-ness) and to contest what has hitherto been conceived as fundamentals, such as the social hierarchies. Durga, Sangini and Tej, for instance, expressed how poetry and personal testimonies broadcast on the radio evoked motivational feelings and personal insights, which made them perceive of

[114] The importance of hybridity is that it bears traces of those feelings and practices which inform it, just like translation, so that hybridity puts together the traces of certain other meanings and discourses. It does not give them the authority of being prior in the sense of being original: they are prior only in the sense of being anterior. The process of cultural hybridity gives rise to something different, something new and unrecognisable, a new meaning and representation (Rutherford 1990: 211, cited Wilmore 2008: 207).

their fellow citizens in a different light. Radio programmes on hygiene and sanitation assist to breach the dirty and backwards with something clean and new.

Another direction found in the aspirations emphasises personal independence, having the ability to look after oneself and thus have a larger influence on one's own life, act differently than previous generations and have new ideals. These aspirations were in particular found amongst younger women, who strive to work on their habits, behaviour and character to enhance their skills to attain a better position compared with older generations of women. The various radio programmes on development issues accompany these aspirations. The aspiration to personal independence is related to a third direction for PAMP's aspirations, which is towards political changes. PAMP aspire for equality, which in return, in case it is fulfilled, brings about a positive favourable situation whereupon various other aspirations are nurtured. This aspiration is associated with the final direction towards social improvements: the desire to help in mitigating poverty, injustice, poor sanitation and health and perceived backwardness.

The five vignettes highlight that although individual context is influential in the formation of aspirations, aspirations in general are collectively formulated according to groups of belonging (i.e. gendered, caste-based, spatial, level of poverty), though a few aspirations, like to become educated, are shared by all PAMP. Moreover, the aspiration to give back to the country and community is shared by those PAMP not in extreme poverty (relatively privileged PAMP, i.e. those having employment, or attend school or have members of family attending school, but who live in an unprivileged context, i.e. rural, defined as remote, poor, vast inequalities). This latter point reveals, as Appadurai (2004) argues, that future aspirations, although independently expressed, are essentially collective. The fact that PAMP have experienced the war and its culmination has nurtured their faith that things can change, even apparent fundamentals such as a sovereign monarchy.

In assessing aspirations based upon the sort of capital aspired for and the emerging room for manoeuvre for citizenship negotiations, I find that economic capital is aspired to on a personal level, whereas social and cultural capital are collective aspirations, which point towards the notion that collective actions are performed by members belonging to specific communities of people (NGO, political activists, gender, ethnicity, the educated). All these capitals aid towards providing the last form of capital aspired to, namely symbolic capital. This capital of status is of immense importance for broadening young PAMP's room for manoeuvre for immediate negotiations. This is especially the case for Dalits, because Ijjat enables changing the image of Dalits as

dirty, backward and ignorant. The other forms of capital are useful for broadening the room for manoeuvre for imagined enhanced personal and collective futures. Bourdieu suggests that the increase of capital is mostly an issue for the middleclass, as lower-class people have only few possibilities to accumulate capital. I argue that, exactly because possibilities are few, the importance of those opportunities that are available, like education, behaving 'modern' and pursuing civic and voluntary community activities, become magnified in the shaping of PAMP's self-representations and in the shaping of their future aspirations.

Notwithstanding their unprivileged everyday realities, PAMP endeavour to aspire and hope and this is not merely thanks to their lack of awareness of possible future failures. As Arjun's and Shambhu's cases reveal, PAMP understand that one possible scenario for many is to migrate or to do manual labour. My study shows the strength of the national (and optimistic) development discourse and the patriotic sentiments, which also is promoted by the two radio stations, of doing something for one's community and country, as many particularly young PAMP seem to be equally concerned about their collective responsibilities as with their own individual futures. This study of PAMPs' aspirations shows that future ideals transcend the immediate, the local and the possibly attainable. Their aspirations are filtered through by messages and information from the local radio, viewpoints of politics, with de-learned hierarchical social structures, and the notion of Bikaas and middleclass ideals. Most importantly, they are fashioned in a hopeful atmosphere, at times inspired by local radio broadcasting, as many PAMP feel that they have gained the right to a future. In the concluding chapter, I further elaborate on the ramifications of these findings for PAMPs' future negotiations of citizenship.

12. Conclusion

> Now *we* can all speak *our own* voice. *Before* there were some leaders of village, such as the *Pradhan Pancha*, the *Mukhia* and the *Malik*,[115] who used to discuss among themselves and take some bribe and make decisions among themselves. But now it is not like that. *Now we discuss openly* with the general public, which I think is the best way. I listen to the radio and I feel everything is transparent. And I feel these things are good and it says the same as what I think in my mind (Kumudtai BK, Dalit woman age thirty-three) (R06 2009: 7) (emphasis added).

Kumudtai underscores in the above quote a principal issue for PAMP in Rolpa in the current political transition. She highlights the significance that the collective experiences of this transition have on PAMP like herself. She points to the significance of being able to speak freely *now* that the Panchayat leadership has been removed. She emphasises that bribe and corruption have ended and describes the fact that she and others now freely can speak their *own* mind and discuss openly, which is a fundamental precondition to citizenship negotiations. Finally, her remark also addresses the rupture created by the transition, the break with 'before', which fosters a new future in which radio ensures transparency. Radio accompanies Kumudtai and others during the political transition.

In this thesis, I have examined how PAMP negotiate notions of citizenship by means of local radio in rural Nepal. The main aim has been to comprehend what role local radio plays in the process of political transition when the nation and its citizens are to be

[115] *Pradhan Pancha*=president in the Panchayat system, the *Mukhia*=leader of village and the *Malik*=rich person in the village.

defined afresh. By way of a semi-ethnographic study of PAMP in two rural locations and the district capital of the Rolpa district, I have explored how PAMP appropriate different ideals of citizenship and form their aspirations by the means of local radio. Local radio is an institution where multiple processes of societal transitions merge and where PAMP can negotiate their way towards new futures. Regardless of the terrible experiences of war, uncertain futures and a local context of rigid social hierarchies, many appropriate local radio programmes as a way to form new futures in which they negotiate against prevailing structures of discrimination alongside new ideals of equality. Notwithstanding the apparently positive outcomes of radio broadcasting, the study also presents critical perspectives on the predominant 'media optimism', as radio broadcasting to some extent reproduces the structures of dominance and, by the same token, ensures that PAMP in their experience of multiple transitions (from war to peace, autocracy to democracy, from subjects to citizens - which all intersect in the institution of radio broadcasting), enhance the connections between these transitions. Radio broadcasting aids in this process by forming, encouraging and enabling PAMP to negotiate notions of citizenship that may take various directions and forms, some of which can be described as hybrid 'third places'.

To comprehend these transitions, I developed an analytical framework that links PAMP with local radio as an important institution for the facilitation of negotiations and citizenship and as the analytical notion connecting PAMP to the processes of political transition. Along with the justification of the theoretical, analytical and methodological framework used in this thesis, in the following I proceed to discuss the main contributions of the study as they have unfolded around the three themes of my research, namely historical traits, everyday practices and experiences of citizenship and PAMP's future aspirations.

12.1 Historical Legacy of Citizenship Ideals and Practices

In the evolution of citizenship ideals in Nepal, three ideals have been especially prominent throughout history. To begin with, hegemonic ideals subjugated citizens to honour sovereign rule, patriotism, Hinduism and high-caste norms and standards of living. Later, ideals promoted by donors of Bikaas and modernisation classified the population through binary antagonisms into backward-developed, rural-urban and traditional-modern. Since the establishment of democracy in 1990, donor-infused ideals of equality and inclusion have entered into the main discourses of citizenship. As a third ideal, counter-hegemonic notions of people's power, extreme equality and the

promotion of marginalised groups (e.g. Dalits, women, the poor) have been advanced by the Maoists, celebrating rural peasants as ideal citizens.

Against this background, local radio emerged in Rolpa in the aftermath of the conflict: Radio Jaljala, with roots in Maoism and their counter-hegemonic notion of people's power, and Radio Rolpa, influenced by donor-infused ideals of Bikaas. Despite their different backgrounds, the two stations have many similarities, and the overall ideals of citizenship conveyed by the two radio stations focus on the formation of democratic, independent, sovereign and equal citizens. I have demonstrated that such national ideals are revealed differently in practices and interpretations on a local level. In the two radio stations, several influences alter the ideals before they reach the audience. By and large, the news programmes have a balanced approach, but the programme hosts' of the magazine programmes analysed in this study tend to evoke images of PAMP as backward and in need of behavioural and attitudinal change by means of persuasive communication, However, they also introduce new and alternative discourses from the second Jana Andolan: 'changing community' and 'the new message for the republic of Nepal', as for instance in the programme Bichar Manch. Despite the influential power of local radio, ideals are not historically determined; they are appropriated by PAMP, who infuse their own histories and meanings into the processes of reproducing, reinterpreting or rejecting the dominant ideals.

12.2 Concurrent Reproductive and Reforming Citizenship Ideals

In the processes of appropriation of ideals of citizenship conveyed by the two radio stations, PAMP concurrently reproduce hegemonic ideals, reinterpret them and produce new ideals that break substantially with their social context and their habitus. The process of radio listening and appropriation does not unilaterally shape new citizens as assumed by the 'media optimists', nor does the audience adopt the sometimes overt political and persuasive messages being broadcast. Nor are hegemony and social inequalities reproduced and hierarchies upheld, as Bourdieu asserts. This becomes clear upon analysing everyday practices alongside the ideals voiced by PAMP, as these ideals feature a hybrid of directions and hegemonic and counter-hegemonic facets.

The main ideals of citizenship appropriated by PAMP concern especially equality and being educated as vital practices with which to pursue both a future and an important identity. The importance of being educated and attaining equality is also evident

through another ideal, namely that of Bikaas, of being developed, abandoning backwardness, ruralism and the 'traditional way of life'. Whilst these ideals are generally shared, they are not appropriated in the same ways. I have argued that everyday practices of the appropriation of radio broadcasting by PAMP reveal several ambiguities. One ambiguity is the submissive and yet liberating appropriation of persuasive communication methods that promote a biased categorisation of PAMP as backward and underdeveloped. This apparently oppressive categorisation was appropriated by PAMP in their negotiation of notions of citizenship: it gave them possible new identities as civilised while paradoxically, in the same vein, confirming their status as backward and rural. PAMP thus appropriated submissive ideals in order to become progressive and abandon their backward identity.

There are several deviations from the general picture and examples of contradictory experiences unfolded in the analysis that remind us how important it is to question general assumptions. Arjun is a point in case. Despite the fact that many of his friends and people in his village have migrated, pursuing opportunities elsewhere, he has decided to stay home and engage locally to improve the situation in the community. Other examples of PAMP deviating from this general picture are the young Dalit and Magar women. Kumudtai, cited in the beginning of this chapter being, is a case in point. These women emerge as noteworthy examples of outspoken, confident, politically aware and socially engaged PAMP. In opposition to Bourdieu's contention, they have integrated new ideals and pursued practices that break substantially with the conditions and experiences that shaped their habitus. Like other PAMP, their future aspirations partly explain such alterations.

12.3 Political Transition and Aspirations for Change

In the introductory chapter I accounted for how Sharma and Donini (2010) in their studies of rural people have argued that the current political transition in Nepal is not so much about fundamental structural changes; rather, it is about symbolic changes, i.e. changes in people's understanding of their rights and perception of themselves. My findings on PAMP's perceptions of the political transition somehow ratify this general finding, but by analysing how PAMP perceive their situation after the second people's movement and their future aspirations, I also found a strong commitment to fundamental structural changes, especially amongst young PAMP. Primarily, the older generation of PAMP tend to acknowledge that the future rests with the younger generation. Many young PAMP are engaged in positioning themselves as new modern

citizens endorsing equality and people's rights, and they are collectively aware and self-confident about their responsibilities for helping their community and country, which for many includes working to eradicate inequalities and discrimination through youth clubs and NGOs.

PAMP know that the king has abdicated and 'the people' are now sovereign, but the various approaches to democracy are contested. PAMP have heard about various notions of citizen's rights, that caste and gender discrimination are wrong, and they sense that democracy requires engaged citizens. However, the vast majority finds involvement in political parties less appealing. Aside from the media, PAMP have few alternative sources of information from which to learn about the new political environment, which is why they rely on local history and their own experiences of corrupt and conflict-riven politics when performing their role as democratic citizens. To many, the ruptures initiated by the transition verify that apparent fundamentals like caste and gender hierarchies can be changed through the citizens' engaged but non-party political participation. This unveils a paradox essential to the formation of citizen ideals: PAMP position themselves in the political transition, they have genuine political aspirations to social change, yet they disregard party politics. For most PAMP, doing politics, in the narrow understanding of party politics, is incompatible with their ideals of democracy. The party political spaces have been dominated by neopatrimonialism alongside elements of gender and caste discrimination and the cultural practices of Aaphno Manchhe (own people) and Chakari ('to serve'). Therefore, many PAMP from ethnic communities, the rural areas in particular, identify democracy with their ethnic identity in their quest to eradicate inequalities. This paradox supports the analytical point with regards to citizenship: we need to go beyond the *de jure* notion of the political and analyse people's own understandings to comprehend their perceptions of society and politics.

I argue that, principally, the political transition offers a space wherein it is possible to negotiate the ideals of PAMP and to appropriate new ideals that are now legitimised according to people's individual expectations to the New Nepal. Their political interest may be vague and inconsistent, yet they know that, to a larger extent than previous generations, they can form their own future. This applies especially to the youths who form part of the New Nepal. This understanding, I suggest, is crucial for their appropriation of citizenship ideals transmitted by local radio and their aspirations towards the future. The political transition thus guides PAMP's aspirations, as it shapes a 'moving' environment and contextualised notion of political citizenship as a non-party political, collective social responsibility in which they, accompanied by local

radio, negotiate contemporary issues against historical influences. 'Now we can all speak our own voice,' Kumudtai said in the opening quote of this chapter. The radio stations accompany and give people 'a voice' and assure transparency.

My study underscores the significance of a situated account when researching contexts of political transition and I assert it is the combination of the early stage of the post 2006 political movement combined with PAMP that discover how their discriminatory bonds are loosened, that generate the findings of PAMP's optimistic outlooks for the future and shared sense of responsibility for development. PAMP, although experiencing multiple constraints to pursue their aspirations, were generally more focused on opportunities than barriers. They aspire for equality and more education and knowledge for themselves or their kin and wish to attain various forms of capital that can enhance the fulfilment of their aspirations to become decent citizens who 'do something good for their community.'

The general optimism notwithstanding, Chapter 10 revealed that PAMP clearly calibrate their aspirations based on their family situation and habitus. Dalits were concerned with rising in status as well as with working for their own community. Girls from relatively privileged backgrounds wish to improve their communicative skills, and underprivileged PAMP (i.e. those without employment and poor education) who live in an underprivileged context primarily focus on their basic needs and immediate kin. In this way, they still aspire within the limits of caste and gender hierarchies and habitus. Even though only few have embraced radical change in their future aspirations, my study unveils that PAMP have engaged in a new social contract, as they now see their lives as integral to new social relations, they perceive of themselves as bearers of new values and they participate in unfolding societal changes. Moreover, my findings show that aspirations are collectively shared but often individually unfolded based on the context and situation. In other words, individual aspirations contain shared elements, which help us explain the different manifestations of ideals with regards to communal aspirations.

12.4 Rethinking PAMP, Local Radio in Political Transition Through Citizenship

This study adds to our empirical understanding of Nepal by providing an in-depth case study from an under-researched region in a period of political transition. PAMP has been used as a social category throughout the thesis, and a question springs to mind

about whether 'PAMP', in the first place, has been useful as a social category in this study of the role that local radio plays in facilitating citizenship negotiations amongst poor and marginalised people in Nepal's political transition. I have previously justified the use of the social category of PAMP as a means to emically and etically capture both how PAMP themselves talk about caste and gender relations and to describe how everyday practices take place within a context of status and inequality. Whereas the recent armed conflict was a counter hegemonic struggle in opposition to deep-rooted social, political and economic inequalities and caste stigmas, the current political transition is very much about the renegotiation of the inclusion of the excluded and marginalised groups. I thus conclude that this categorisation has served well as a point of departure for studying how PAMP's future aspirations, in a context of social structural constraints, are influenced by mediated and non-mediated citizenship ideals - but that the political transition has also provided 'fissures' in understandings of PAMP, when we talk about this group of people as a social category. As the study focuses both on how the social and historical conditions and personal experiences are embodied, giving individuals 'subjective expectations of objective probabilities' (Jenkins 1992: 84), and, moreover, on PAMP's experiences, appropriated ideals and formed aspirations, the study only partly confirms that hegemony and social hierarchies are reproduced and upheld, as Bourdieu asserts. The study also reveals PAMP's optimistic assumptions and how PAMP perceive themselves as equal citizens with great hope and aspirations for the future.

PAMP in this study take part in the reproduction and reformation of social hierarchies, while these are also implied in their negotiations towards an immediate and imagined future. In this process, local radio is influential as this institution both reproduces and challenges some of the fundamental inequalities that fuelled the armed conflict while PAMP, being embedded in a local context, still reproduce social hierarchies in their everyday lives. Local radio is an important source of influence, providing the audience with 'alternative ideas and assumptions' (Meadows et al 2005: 183), and the study reveals that radio succeeded in conveying idioms and incentives and motivating the people to form those aspirations that will enable their future strategies for combating difficult situations and inequalities. One of the study's primary analytical contributions is the support for and yet challenge to those arguing that radio broadcasting is making PAMP into change agents during times of political transition. My study reveals that radio broadcasting is a contradictory asset, and we therefore have to qualify and contextualise our conclusions and assumptions.

The aforementioned also relates to my study's second contribution, which is providing a case study of rural PAMP from a marginal area of Nepal that contrast with literature and reports in which PAMP are often perceived as living impossible lives with no future (e.g. Bhattarai 2003, Pokharel & Carter 2004). Unlike most of this literature, my study has revealed that many PAMP have their sight directed at the future, and they expect and aspire to get something out of life. For many PAMP, day-to-day life is a matter of survival, which is why economic capital is paramount. It was striking that a large majority of those interviewed has at least one close relative, who has migrated in the pursuit of employment and economic capital for the family. My study shows that economic capital is aspired to on a personal level, while social and cultural capital are aspired to collectively, directing collective actions and belonging to specific communities of people (NGOs, political activists, ethnic groups, the educated). As the economy is vital for the improvement of PAMP's lives (e.g. Sharma 2006), my study reveals the need for a more nuanced outlook to understand PAMP's access and strategies for obtaining different forms of capital, pursuing their aspirations.

Finally, my study contributes with new insights into how historical circumstances influence the establishment of local radio and wider scope for citizenship negotiations. The founding of Radio Jaljala and Radio Rolpa is the outcome of the political transformation that Nepal has undergone in recent years where Maoist and development-infused ideals respectively influence the underlying values of the two local radio stations. As the two radio stations have not been on-air for long, it is too early to categorise them with fixed labels (e.g. community radio, commercial radio, local radio, citizen radio, alternative radio, etc.), as they are still in the process of forming their respective identities. However, it is apparent that equal gender and caste representation amongst radio management and staffs is necessary in order for PAMP to 'find their own voice and become the tellers of stories that reach the ears of those who exercise influence over their lives' (Rodríguez 2001: 34). From this study we learn how PAMP within 'structures of constraint' are limited in their abilities to voice their opinions and concerns. Context is crucial for giving access to spaces where expression can unfold and historical shifts in societal and cultural norms and practices can take place. Changes in institutions of politics and the economy, current and previous political events, donor engagement and the nature of the state, the broader landscape of organisations, social movements and the media all influence the possibilities of PAMP's room for expression, as these spaces facilitate and enable but also block and restrict their possibilities.

Despite the fact that the second people's movement did address many of the structural constraints leading to the armed conflict and did open up numerous spaces for citizenship negotiations, many spaces where these negotiations take place are still constrained in their open access to PAMP. This might help us explain why the armed conflict was not addressed explicitly in the interviews (Chapter 7.2). PAMP's ways of assessing and articulating spatial constraints are not aligned with the discourses related to the armed conflict, but more so with the fundamental structural levels and root causes the trajectory of which goes back in time to before the war. Kumudtai, in the opening quote of this chapter, also hints to this as she refers to dignities from the Panchayat era that restricted the open discussion in her community, despite the fact that the Panchayat era supposedly ended in 1990. We thus need to look beyond the recent institutional changes and emergence of local radio broadcasting that came about with end of the armed conflict and the removal of the monarchy, into the 'hidden' pathways of PAMP's room for expression, as these become crucial if we are to understand changes in PAMP's lives. My study reveals that what appears to be a choice in people's lives is very context specific. Choices depend not only on the broader social, cultural, economic and political environments but also on PAMP's individual circumstances. What may be at disposal to one person may be out of reach for others, and it may be a matter of context whether or not certain kinds of choices can unfold at all. Looking into what choice may actually mean in PAMPs' everyday lives, we see the impact of broader societal change and radio conveyed messages on the ways in which especially young PAMP are beginning to see themselves and engage critically with things they may have taken for granted before. Access to new technologies, such as radio, gives exposure to a broad range of information, some of which is persuasive and full of development idioms and predefined political positions. And yet this information can also forge new pathways of communication, enabling PAMP to learn and exercise tactics for negotiating power in their lives, either as an individual or as a collective struggle. This includes access to information on issues such as misconduct by the state; for instance, while listening to the radio Kumud heard about on-going development projects and figured out that Dalits had not been paid compensation for the expropriation of land, when the bus park in Libang was made. She was able to triangulate the information broadcast on the radio with actual incidents played out in her community. It is not only radio's 'bold' exposure to wrongdoings that enables PAMP to exercise power over their lives. Quite often the communicative pathways created by radio broadcasting unfolds in subtle ways, like in the example of Sangini, who felt happy listening to a radio programme about her friend's experiences from the war. The programme's ability to instil feelings created a strong sense of presence and emotional connection, conjuring the illusion of presence and empathy, which made

Sangini contemplate her own experiences and the concerns and worries she felt herself during the war.

As a highly exclusionary, patriarchal culture is still prominent in Nepal, the opening of spaces for PAMP to find and use their voice is a shift in the current political transition and an extension of political opportunities beyond the usual privileged citizens. This study reveals that we have to look more carefully at the different arenas wherein PAMP's voices are voiced and subsequently heard, and to think more critically about the extent to which opportunities to participate and influence in one arena convert into a greater determination on the part of powerful institutions to pay attention to PAMP. The focus in this study on citizenship and being a citizen as a produced and negotiated notion that goes beyond the commonly used *de jure* understanding applied by conventional state-centred approaches (Kabeer 2005) has broadened the scope and allowed us to regard the myriad of spaces for decision-making and influence that exist. High-caste male domination of spaces of decision-making has received greater scrutiny during the political transition, and this study contributes with insights on how local radio has shed light on the spaces of decision-making and influence.

The study has contemplated the processes of how notions of citizenship are communicated, negotiated and mediated, as being composed of subtle acts that enhance PAMP's scope to improve their lives and attain incremental equality. Youth as, for instance, Durga, Sangini and Tej expressed how poetry and personal testimonies broadcast on radio evoked motivational feelings and personal insights that made them perceive of their fellow citizens in a different light; Arjun, who, by the use of concientisation, dismantled discrimination and saved the face of the offender, revealed a variant of indirect communication; Puja who expressed how the combination of male and female voices broadcast on radio could help balance gender inequalities; and Priya, who would only speak freely if she felt comfortable with the people she is with, especially when discussing taboos and issues of a more sensitive nature that had been broadcast on the radio, such as HIV/AIDS. These are all examples of the 'empowering' aspects of conduct that might at first glance strike one as 'insignificant'. Conduct, that are often provisional and to a smaller extent about well-defined choices that are turned into actions and results. This conduct might be a crucial part of PAMP living their lives and accomplishing the most beneficial outcomes they can, given their conditions, since there might be circumstances that are outside their scope of influence. This can be the difference between changes taking place, albeit at a slow and random pace, compared to changes maybe not happening at all. The kinds of changes that we find in PAMP's everyday lives are typically more subtle and more arbitrary compared

to those portrayed by the development agencies and political organisations supporting Radio Jaljala and Radio Rolpa and the radio programmes on issues related to development and social change. To PAMP, it is often necessary to negotiate inside prevailing structures on inequality to reach some positive outcome with the expectation that these structures may eventually dilute and eventually cause wider changes in society. The daily lives of the PAMP examined in this study paint a rich picture of their various forms of civic engagement and reveal important complexities that are reoccurring in transitional contexts. Such complexities display how PAMP integrate, negotiate and adjust their strategies for performing citizenship, inspired at times by local radio. It is a contribution that provides nuances to the at times very bold representations of civic engagement, which are integral to processes of social change.

12.5 Implications

The broad underlying objective of this thesis was to explore how notions of citizenship, in a context of major political changes in rural Nepal, are negotiated by means of local radio. Approaching the end of this thesis and reflecting upon the overall insights gained from this study has opened my eyes to future avenues of research. One area of interest is further exploring PAMP's future aspirations and how these are influenced by mediated and non-mediated citizenship ideals. In a future study it could be stimulating to do a longitudinal study with extended textual analysis of other radio magazines and news programmes to further explore how these programmes are appropriated by society in general and PAMP in particular. Such a study could, moreover, be extended with comparative studies to encompass PAMP encounters with other types of media to explore other civic-media nexuses of citizenship negotiations. While undertaking this research, another area of interest emerged as I noticed how the massive use of mobile phones, satellite television and the internet has spread throughout Nepal. As we learned from this study, with the introduction of new ICTs, youths navigate differently in the way they acquire information on local issues compared to other age groups, and urban youths, in particular, have replaced much of their face-to-face means of communication with 'other media' (television, newspaper, and the internet) (Chapter 9.13). It would thus be relevant to do research with a focus on youths, examining the relationships between emerging everyday media cultures and the formation, articulation and alteration of socio-cultural and political aspirations and identities in Nepal. In particular, research could examine generational patterns in mediated identity constructions and articulations and the relationship between everyday media cultures and youths' aspirations and socio-cultural imaginations.

Appendixes

Appendix 1: Fieldwork Overview

Names (PAMP names are anonymised)	**Interview/program transcription file name**
LOCAL LEADERS	
2009	
Mohan	L01
Dilip	L02
Goma	L03
Rashmi	R12
Bishwa	R04
2010	
Goma	T01, T02
RELATIVELY PRIVILEDGED PAMP	
2009	
Shyam	L04
Padmalal	L05
Durga	L06
Rashmi	R01
Sangini	R02
Hemata	R07
Khagendra	R10
Shambhu	R11
Narayan	R13
Kumud	L15
Durga	L16
2010	
Durga	T03, T04
Khagendra	T05
Suvash	T07
UNPRIVILEDGED PAMP	
2009	
Ramani	L07
Deepak	L08
Priya	L09
Binod	L10
Shantidevi	L11
Meena	L12
Anjana	L13
Padmalal	L14
Raj	R03
Arjun	R08
Puja	R04
Aasha	R05

Kumudtai	R06
Urmila	R09
2010	
Arjun	T06
LOCAL OFFICIALS	
2009	
Hari Prasad Gharti Margar (UML)	E04
Chintamani Archya (Red Cross)	E05
Sherbahadur Dudhamagar (ex-Maoist soldier)	E03
Krishna Bahadur Gharti Magar (Nepali Congres)	E07
Nar Bahadur Mahara (Maoist)	E08
Gokarna Prasad Pun (Childrens Welfare, Government agency)	E13
Gyaneshyam Archya (HURAC)	E06
2010	
Gopal KC, VDC secretary	T10
Sherbahadur Dudhamagar (ex-Maoist soldier)	T11
Head of Libang post office	
LOCAL RADIO STATIONS IN ROLPA	
2009	
Rishikesh Dangi (Programme Staff Radio Rolpa)	E09
Gyaneshyam Archya (Station Manager Radio Rolpa)	E10
Manisha Shrestha (News Chief Radio Jaljala)	E11
Mausam Rokamagar (Station Manager Radio Jaljala)	E12
Khem Bahadur Budha (FNJ Rolpa)	E14
Bhola Nath Archaya (Staff Radio Rolpa)	
Various informal conversations with radio staffs and volunteers.	
2010	
Gyaneshyam Archya (Station manager Radio Rolpa)	T08
Mausham Rokamagar (Station manager Radio Jaljala)	T09
Various informal conversations with radio staffs and volunteers.	

KATHMANDU INTERVIEWS	
2009	
Chaitanya Mishra (prof. sociology Tribhuvan University)	
Raghu Mainali (Community Radio Support Centre, CRSC)	
Bikram Subba (co-author 'Ten Years On: The State of Community Radio in Nepal.')	
Upendra Aryal (Equal Access)	
Devraj Humaj (Martin Chautari)	
Pramod Tandukar (ACORAB)	
Pratyoush Onta (Martin Chautari)	
Sten Andreasen (Danish Association of International Cooperation, MS Nepal)	
P. Kharel (Nepal Press Institute, NPI)	
Binay Dhital (Danida, HUGOU)	
Mohan Chapagain (board member ACORAB)	
2010	
Chuda Basnet (social scientist)	
Chaitanya Mishra (TU)	
Pramod Tandukar (ACORAB)	
Pratyoush Onta (Martin Chautari)	
Bikram Subba (co-author 'Ten Years On: The State of Community Radio in Nepal.')	
Mohan Chapagain (board member ACORAB)	
Raghu Mainali (Community Radio Support Centre, CRSC)	
RADIO PROGRAMME RECORDINGS 2010	
Radio Rolpa news x 7	T12-T17 and T28
Radio Jaljala news x 7	T18-T24
Radio Jaljala Bichar Manch x 3	T25-T27
Radio Rolpa Samaya Sambad x 3	T29-T31
Radio Jaljala jingle	T33
VARIOUS	
Public political meeting of Nepali Congress November 2010 in Libang	
Guest lecture at Tri-Chandra College	
Dashain and Tihar celebrations 2009/2010	
Four-day visit to *Thabang* and *Jaljala* (historical sites for the Maoist uprising prior 1996)	

Appendix 2: Questionnaire for Survey

For internal notes: selection of respondent

V1: Ethnicity: Magar ☐, Brahman/Chhetry ☐, Dalit ☐
V2: Gender: Female ☐, Male ☐
V3: Location: Libang ☐, Rural area outside Libang ☐
V4: Age: 15-19 ☐, 20-29 ☐, 30-39 ☐, 40-49 ☐, 50-59 ☐, 60+ ☐
V5: Language: Nepali ☐, Magar ☐

Media questions

Radio

1. Is there a radio in your home?
Yes ☐ No ☐
(If the answer is "No" then go to question 6)

2. What kind of power do you use for the radio?
(Read all questions one at a time and mark only one)
Battery ☐
Electricity ☐
Solar energy ☐

3. When did you get your radio?
(Read all questions one at a time and mark only one)
Less than a year ago ☐
One to three years ago ☐
More than three years ago ☐

4. What radio channel is the radio tuned into right now?
_____, _____ MHz
I don't know ☐
Radio is turned off ☐

5. Which radio stations can the radio receive?
(Read all options one at a time and mark only one relevant statement per radio station)

Radio Station	Can receive	Can't receive	Don't know
Radio Nepal	☐	☐	☐
Radio Rolpa	☐	☐	☐
Radio Jaljala	☐	☐	☐
Other, please specify: _____	☐	☐	☐
Other, please specify: _____	☐	☐	☐

6. For how many hours do you listen to the radio each day?
(Read all questions one at a time and mark only one)
I never listen to radio ☐
Less than one hour ☐
Between one and three hours ☐
More than three hours ☐
(If answer is "I never listen to radio" then go to question 14)

7. How often do you listen to Radio Rolpa?
(Read all questions one at a time and mark only one)
Never ☐
Rarely ☐
Weekly ☐
Daily ☐

8. Where do you mostly listen to the radio?
(Read all questions one at a time and mark only one)
At home ☐
At work (e.g. in the field, herding) ☐
At my friends/relatives homes ☐
In a public space (market, restaurant, shop) ☐
Other ☐ Please specify: _____

9. At what time do you mostly listen to the radio?
(Read all questions one at a time and mark only one)
Morning between 5 AM and 8 AM ☐
Before midday between 8 AM and 11 AM ☐
Midday between 11 AM and 2 PM ☐
Afternoon between 2 PM and 5 PM ☐
Evening between 5 PM and 8 PM ☐
Night 8 PM and 11 PM ☐

10. Which radio channel do you listen to most often?
(Do not read the options, mark only one)
Radio Nepal ☐
Radio Rolpa ☐
Radio Jaljala ☐
Other ☐ Please specify: _____

11. How often do you listen to the following programmes?
(Read all options one at a time and mark only one relevant statement per type of programme)

Programme type	Daily	Weekly	Rarely	Never
Local news	☐	☐	☐	☐
National news	☐	☐	☐	☐
International news	☐	☐	☐	☐
Programmes on agriculture	☐	☐	☐	☐
Programmes on health	☐	☐	☐	☐
Programmes on business	☐	☐	☐	☐
Programmes on gender	☐	☐	☐	☐
Programmes on development and peace	☐	☐	☐	☐
Programmes in Magar language	☐	☐	☐	☐
Educational programmes	☐	☐	☐	☐
Radio drama	☐	☐	☐	☐
Folk music	☐	☐	☐	☐
Modern music	☐	☐	☐	☐
Entertainment (e.g. quiz)	☐	☐	☐	☐
Sports	☐	☐	☐	☐
Children programmes	☐	☐	☐	☐

12. Have you ever contacted a radio station (e.g. written letter, phone call, interview, visited a radio station)?
Yes ☐ No ☐
(If the answer is "no" the continue to question 14.

13. What was the purpose of your contact?
(Do not read the options, mark only one)

Song request	☐
Personal announcement (e.g. birthday greeting)	☐
Community announcement (e.g. community work)	☐
Comment in news programme	☐
Appraisal of programme	☐
Disapproving programme	☐
Other	☐ Please specify: _____

Television

14. Is there a television set in your home?
Yes ☐ No ☐
(If answer is "No" then go to question 18)

15. What kind of power does the TV need?
(Read all questions one at a time and mark only one)
Battery ☐
Electricity ☐
Solar energy ☐

16. Do you have cable television?
Yes ☐ No ☐

17. When did you get your television?
(Read all questions one at a time and mark only one)
Less than a year ago ☐
One to three years ago ☐
More than three years ago ☐

18. For how many hours do you usually watch television every day?
(Read all the options and mark only one)
I never watch television ☐
Less than one hour ☐
Between one and three hours ☐
More than three hours ☐
(If the answer is "I never watch television" then go to question 22)

19. Where do you mostly watch television?
(Read all questions one at a time and mark only one)
At home ☐
At work ☐
At my friends/relatives homes ☐
In a public space (market, restaurant, shop) ☐
Other ☐ Please specify: _____

20. At what time do you usually watch television?
(Read all questions one at a time and mark only one)
Morning between 5 AM and 8 AM ☐
Before midday between 8 AM and 11 AM ☐
Midday between 11 AM and 2 PM ☐
Afternoon between 2 PM and 5 PM ☐
Evening between 5 PM and 8 PM ☐
Night 8 PM and 11 PM ☐

21. How often do you watch the following programmes?
(Read all options, one at a time, and mark only one relevant statement pr. type of programme)

Programme type	Daily	Weekly	Rarely	Never
National news	☐	☐	☐	☐
International news	☐	☐	☐	☐
Programmes on agriculture	☐	☐	☐	☐
Programmes on health	☐	☐	☐	☐
Programmes on business	☐	☐	☐	☐
Programmes on gender	☐	☐	☐	☐
Programmes on development and peace	☐	☐	☐	☐
Programmes in Magar language	☐	☐	☐	☐
Educational programmes	☐	☐	☐	☐
Television drama and movies	☐	☐	☐	☐
Folk music	☐	☐	☐	☐
Modern music	☐	☐	☐	☐
Entertainment (e.g. quiz)	☐	☐	☐	☐
Sports	☐	☐	☐	☐
Children programmes	☐	☐	☐	☐

Newspaper/Internet

22. How often do you read a newspaper?
(Read all options and mark only one)

Every day ☐
Almost every day ☐
Once a week ☐
Once a month ☐
Never ☐

Internet

23. Have you ever used the Internet?
Yes ☐ No ☐
(If answer is "No" then go to question 27)

24. Where do you mostly use the Internet?
(Read all options and mark only one)
At home ☐
At school ☐
In a cyber café in Libang ☐
In Kathmandu ☐
Abroad ☐

25. How often do you use the Internet?
(Read all options and mark only one)
Every day ☐
Almost every day ☐
Once a week ☐
Once a month ☐
Less than once a month ☐

26. What do you use the Internet mostly for?
(Read all options and mark only one)
E-mail ☐
Internet phone ☐
News ☐
Seeking information ☐
Chat ☐
Just for fun ☐
Other ☐ Please specify: _____

Phone

27. Do you have a fixed phone line/CDMA line your household?
Yes ☐ No ☐

28. Do you have access to a fixed phone line/CDMA in your village/town?
Yes ☐ No ☐

29. Do you have a mobile phone in your household?
Yes ☐ No ☐

30. How often do you talk on phone?
(Read all options and mark only one)
I never talk on phone ☐
Very rare ☐
Once or twice a month ☐
Every week ☐
Several times a week ☐
Daily ☐
(If answer is "I never talk on phone" then go to question 34)

31. Do you sometimes SMS using the mobile phone?
(Read all options and mark only one)
Never ☐
Very rare ☐
Once or twice a month ☐
Every week ☐
Several times a week ☐
Daily ☐

32. Do you sometimes browse the Internet using the mobile phone?
(Read all options and mark only one)
Never ☐
Very rare ☐
Once or twice a month ☐
Every week ☐
Several times a week ☐
Daily ☐

33. Who do you mostly talk to on the phone?
(Read all options and mark only one)
In relation to my job (employer/employees) ☐
Family abroad ☐
Friends abroad ☐
Family in Kathmandu ☐
Friends in Kathmandu ☐
Family locally ☐
Friends locally ☐
Authorities ☐
Other ☐ Please specify: _____

General media questions

34. From where do you get most important information on family issues (e.g. health, education, food prices and security)?

(Read all options and mark only one)

Local radio (e.g. Radio Rolpa) ☐
National radio ☐
Television ☐
Newspaper ☐
Internet ☐
Friends, family, colleagues ☐
From school or health post ☐
Meetings in village ☐
Gossip in village ☐
I'm not interested in family issues ☐
Other ☐ Please specify: _____

35. From where do you get most important information on local issues (e.g., school, health post, politics, electricity, etc.)?

(Read all options and mark only one)

Local radio (e.g. Radio Rolpa) ☐
National radio ☐
Television ☐
Newspaper ☐
Internet ☐
Friends, family, colleagues ☐
From school or health post ☐
Meetings in village ☐
Gossip in village ☐
I'm not interested in local issues ☐
Other ☐ Please specify: _____

36. From where do you get most important information on national issues (e.g. business, politics, social issues, disasters like flooding and earthquakes)?
(Read all options and mark only one)

Local radio (e.g. Radio Rolpa) ☐
National radio ☐
Television ☐
Newspaper ☐
Internet ☐
Friends, family, colleagues ☐
From school or health post ☐
Meetings in village ☐
Gossip in village ☐
I'm not interested in national issues ☐
Other ☐ Please specify: _____

37. Do you trust the information you get from the media?
Yes ☐ No ☐
(If the answer is "Yes" then go to question 39)

38. Why don't you trust the information from the media?
(Do not read the options, mark only one)

I don't trust media in general ☐
I think the media are lying ☐
I think the media are biased ☐
I prefer to trust information I get from family and friends ☐
Other ☐ Please specify: _____

39. Do you sometimes discuss the information you get from the media with your family and friends?
Yes ☐ No ☐

Mobility

40. How often do you leave your ward?
(Read all options and mark only one)

Every day ☐
Several times a week ☐
Once a week ☐
One to three times a month ☐
Less than once a month ☐

41. How often do you go to Libang?
(Read all options and mark only one. If the respondent lives in Libang then move to question 42)

Every day ☐
Several times a week ☐
Once a week ☐
One to three times a month ☐
Less than once a month ☐

42. Have you ever been to Kathmandu?
Yes ☐ No ☐

43. How many times have you been to Kathmandu?
(Read all options and mark only one)

Once ☐
2-4 times ☐
5-10 times ☐
More than 10 times ☐

44. Have you ever stayed in Kathmandu for longer that half a year?
Yes ☐ No ☐

45. Have you ever been abroad?
Yes ☐ No ☐
(If the answer is "No" then go to question 50)

46. How many times have you been abroad?
(Read all options and mark only one)

Once ☐
2-4 times ☐
More than four times ☐

47. Which country have you visited most times?
(Read all options and mark only one)

India ☐
China ☐
Middle East (e.g. Dubai, Qatar) ☐
USA ☐
Europe ☐
Malaysia ☐
Other ☐ Please specify: _____

48. In which country have you stayed for the longest period of time?
(Read all options and mark only one)
India ☐
China ☐
Middle East (e.g. Dubai, Qatar) ☐
USA ☐
Europe ☐
Malaysia ☐
Other ☐ Please specify: _____

49. For how long has your longest stay abroad been?
(Read all options and mark only one)
Less than a month ☐
Less than half a year ☐
Between half a year and a year ☐
Longer than a year ☐

50. Do you have future plans to stay abroad for a longer period than half a year?
Yes ☐ No ☐
Demographic questions
51. How old are you? _____

52. Can you read?
Yes ☐ No ☐

53. Can you write?
Yes ☐ No ☐

54. Which education is the highest you have completed?
(Do not read options, mark only one)
Primary school (grade 1-5) ☐
Lower secondary (grade 6-8) ☐
Secondary school (grade 9-10) ☐
SLC ☐
Intermediate or above ☐
No formal education ☐
(If the answer is "No formal education" then continue with the following question. Otherwise, proceed to question 57)

55. Have you completed any literacy education?
Yes ☐ No ☐

56. Do you participate in literacy education right now?
Yes ☐ No ☐

57. What is your mother tongue?
(Do not read options, mark only one)
Nepali ☐
Tharu ☐
Magar ☐
Gurung ☐
Newar ☐
Other ☐ Please specify: _____

58. Which occupation do you have right now?
(Do not read options, mark only one)
Student ☐
Farmer ☐
Government employee ☐
Merchant /shop keeper ☐
Teacher ☐
Housewife ☐
Labour ☐
Unemployed ☐
Other ☐ Please specify: _____

59. Which of the following qualities is most important for a democracy?
(Read all options and mark only one)
There are several political parties ☐
All have food and housing ☐
Men, women, rich and poor, no matter caste, all are treated equally ☐
People can participate in unions and associations ☐
People can criticize and protest ☐

60. Do you think the Janaa Andolan movement in April 2006 has improved your social situation?
(Read all options and mark only one)
Yes, I think my situation has improved ☐
I think the situation is unchanged ☐
I think the situation has worsened ☐

61. To what extent do you agree with the following notions on citizenship?

	Yes, very much	Yes	More or less	No	No, not at all
A sense of membership to a caste/ethnic group	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
A sense of membership to the nation Nepal	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
The right to have rights (e.g. human rights, right to vote)	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
The right to participate (e.g. in civil society, politics)	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
To receive free health care and education from the state	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
With rights comes duties to actively participate in public activities and pay taxes	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

THANK YOU VERY MUCH FOR YOUR TIME AND COLLABORATION

Background information and comments

62. Date (day/month/year): _____

63. Interviewer name: _____

64. VDC: _____

65. Ward: _____

66. Village: _____

67. Comments on interview situation (e.g. did someone intervene during the interview, was the interview done in hast, was there a good atmosphere during the interview):

_____

68. Own reflexions (e.g. did respondent understand all the questions, do you think you got honest responses, any answers that surprised you):

_____

69. Localising the respondent (any difficulties in localising the respondent):

_____

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