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The Power of Empowerment: Recognising Power Relations within 'Development' for Communities in Zambia

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THE POWER OF EMPOWERMENT:

RECOGNISING POWER RELATIONS
WITHIN 'DEVELOPMENT'
FOR COMMUNITIES IN ZAMBIA

KAREN TREASURE

PhD 2010
The Power of Empowerment:

Recognising Power Relations within 'Development' for Communities in Zambia

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Funded by a University of Plymouth Studentship

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Cover Photograph:

Women for Change Area Association members receiving their share of seeds from the community seed bank in Sinalulongwe village, Sinazongwe district, Southern Province, Zambia

November 2007

Taken by Karen Treasure
The Power of Empowerment: Recognising Power Relations within 'Development' for Communities in Zambia

by
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Abstract

Empowerment has emerged as a key focus of development policy and practices in the contemporary era, where simultaneously a need for 'development' is ascribed due to historically determined power relations imposed through discourse and intervention. This research enquires into the contradiction inherent in assuming an international agenda to empower those who are continually disempowered. Through analysis of a series of case studies of development projects in Zambia, this research argues that the potential of the empowerment agenda is inherently limited by the ongoing structural conditions of development. In the cases studied, community members successfully achieve a form of 'subjective empowerment' which enables them to assume a more powerful role within the boundaries of action determined by their possible frameworks of opportunity. But these forms of power do not hold the potential to create communities which are relatively more powerful on the global stage. Progression to a form of 'objective empowerment' is constrained by the boundaries to power which are imposed through historically set and continually recreated power relations within the global political economy.
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Acknowledgements

During the course of this project, numerous people have given me essential help and support and my sincerest thanks is extended to all of them. Clearly not all can be named here, particularly as the most important are arguably the research participants whose knowledge forms the basis of this thesis and the institutional representatives who facilitated the empirical research. I would however particularly like to thank my supervisory team, Prof. Richard Gibb and Dr. Rebecca Davies, for their thought provoking critical comments which have developed this work in a way that would have been impossible without them. They also deserve thanks for their infinite patience with my erratic working style, their friendship and their endless good humour, which have been invaluable in this process! A big thank you is extended to Department of Geography at the University of Plymouth both for the scholarship which funded this work, and to all staff and post-graduates there who have at various times provided interesting and useful observations. The staff at the International Relations Department, past and present, have also provided much of the intellectual stimulation for this project.

A number of others deserve special thanks for supporting me and enabling me to stay focussed (and to relax!) during this time, particularly Leighton Jones, Alana Hunter and my parents, amongst many others too numerous to mention. Special appreciation goes to Dr. Jennie Winter and Joe McParlin for their inspiration and emotional encouragement. My heartfelt thanks is extended also to Dr. René Richard for his calm and logical comments in helping me prepare the final stages of this draft.
Authors Declaration

I declare that this thesis is the work of the candidate, Karen Treasure, and that none of this work has been submitted in fulfilment of any other award or academic qualification

Signed: [Signature]

Date: October 2009

Word Count

The final word count of the main body (not including appendices and bibliography) of the thesis is 86,000, with approximately 4,000 words being comprised of direct quotations from interviews.
This thesis is devoted to my dear friend and colleague Noah Muntali. Noah worked as my interpreter during the fieldwork stages of this research and became a close friend and ally, making practicalities easy by his flexibility and educating me about Zambian culture and attitudes in a way that no amount of studying could. His patience in teaching me some of the Nyanga language was beyond the call of duty. Since his participation in this project, Noah tragically passed away in December 2008, having contracted Tuberculosis. He is sorely missed. His fate is sadly typical being from the marginalised background of the vast majority of Zambians and makes the arguments presented here more important to publicise than ever.

I know he would be proud of the finished article and his memory lives on through his personal and professional contribution here.
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<th>Abbreviation</th>
<th>Full Form</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>AA</td>
<td>Area Association (Women for Change)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AfDB</td>
<td>African Development Bank</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BELONG</td>
<td>Better Education and Life Opportunities for vulnerable children through Networking and organisational Growth</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CWAC</td>
<td>Community Welfare Assistance Committee (Social Cash Transfers)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DfID</td>
<td>Department for International Development (UK)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DSWO</td>
<td>District Social Welfare Officer (Social Cash Transfers)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FAO</td>
<td>Food and Agriculture Organisation (UN)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FDI</td>
<td>Foreign Direct Investment</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GDP</td>
<td>Gross Domestic Product</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GRZ</td>
<td>Government of the Republic of Zambia</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>HDI</td>
<td>Human Development Index</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>HIPC</td>
<td>Heavily Indebted Poor Countries initiative</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IBRD</td>
<td>International Bank for Reconstruction and Development</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IFI</td>
<td>International Financial Institution</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IMF</td>
<td>International Monetary Fund</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MCDSS</td>
<td>Ministry for Community Development and Social Services (Zambia)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MoE</td>
<td>Ministry of Education (Zambia)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MMD</td>
<td>Movement for Multiparty Democracy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NGO</td>
<td>Non-Governmental Organisation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NIC</td>
<td>Newly Industrialised Country</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>OECD</td>
<td>Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>OVC</td>
<td>Orphans and Vulnerable Children</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PAM</td>
<td>Programme Against Malnutrition</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PCI</td>
<td>Project Concern International</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PCSC</td>
<td>Parents Community School Committee (BELONG)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PEPFAR</td>
<td>President's Emergency Plan For AIDS Relief</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PRSP</td>
<td>Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SADC</td>
<td>Southern African Development Community</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SAP</td>
<td>Structural Adjustment Policy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>UN</td>
<td>United Nations</td>
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<tr>
<td>UNDP</td>
<td>United Nations Development Programme</td>
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<tr>
<td>UNIP</td>
<td>United National Independence Party</td>
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<tr>
<td>USAID</td>
<td>United States Aid</td>
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<tr>
<td>WfC</td>
<td>Women for Change</td>
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<tr>
<td>WFP</td>
<td>World Food Programme</td>
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<tr>
<td>ZCCM</td>
<td>Zambian Consolidated Copper Mines</td>
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<tr>
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<td>Zambia National Commercial Bank</td>
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PART I:

FOUNDATIONS AND EXPLORATIONS
Chapter One

Introduction

Empowerment has become a familiar term in contemporary discourse. It has been utilised across a wide variety of disciplines and fields of study, as well as having been adopted by a plethora of different institutions and actors in an international context. Much academic study has been devoted to conceptualising accurate definitions of the term, though little agreement has been reached (Friedmann 1992; Kesby 2005; Novak 1996), and many reports and studies have been conducted by practitioners and policy makers to find methods for recognising and measuring empowerment (see for example Alsop et al. 2006; Essama-Nssah 2004; International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD) 2001:ch6; Narayan 2002, 2005; UNDP 2000:ch7; World Bank 2000:ch6&7).

Yet despite the depth and range of this previous research, many questions about a paradigm of empowerment remain unanswered, primarily, it is argued here, because the scope of these research agendas is too narrow. More accurately, research conducted about empowerment tends to occupy a single scale of analysis (for example: national, community or minority groups) or be concerned with a particular category or aim of development (for example: economic, political or gender roles). But the danger is that such analysis may be failing to embrace the possible full scale effects and impacts empowerment may have. Empowerment initiatives inevitably have both direct and indirect effects on a range of actors (not simply those at whom they are targeted or those implementing them), as well as influencing discourses and power relationships at structural level. Even critiques of the concept tend to be concerned with the extent of rhetorical value (Cornwall and Brock 2005) or accuracy (Moore 2001) rather than engaging in any meaningful way with any changes that may have occurred as a result of this shift in discourse.

The notion of empowerment lies at the very heart of the development debate. References to the essential nature of a process of ‘empowerment’ (though the terminology was never used) to accompany economic growth if it is to stimulate human
development are found as far back as the original development theorists, whose ideas have been reduced over time to simplistic linear economics in popular debate (Keynes 1936; W W Rostow 1971a; 1971b; 1980). Development, first conceived of as a method for spreading industrialised and modernised prosperity, either to further the course of wealthy nations or to aid the inhabitants of poorer nations themselves, had become severely discredited by the 1980s due to the widespread failure of development policies in both economic and humanitarian terms for impoverished states and communities. The reaction to these effects of failure in the application of development policies has continued to shape development for the past two decades.

The rhetorical message of international development policy has thus undergone a wholesale change since the early 1990s. From the dogmatic focus on economic growth and maximisation that underpinned huge infrastructural development projects and Structural Adjustment Policies (SAPs), the discourse of development now appears to be far more inclusive and people-centred. Poverty Reduction Strategy Papers (PRSPs), which refer to bottom-up, participatory and localised development initiatives aimed at empowerment, have replaced the imposition of top-down models of governance and the exclusive delivery of financial aid through state governments and elites. Conditionalities on the spending of donor finance today refer less obviously to fiscal economic management and market liberalisation, and more to the need for good governance and accountability. The quantifiable object of development has changed, at least in theoretical and rhetorical terms, from GDP, to basic needs, rights and finally to empowerment for marginalised communities. Empowerment has since emerged as an explicit focus of contemporary development agendas (see Alsop et al. 2006:1).

These changes in the broad themes of development policy have been accompanied, perhaps even underpinned, by an explosion of theory reflecting the rise of post-modernism and critical theory in wider International Relations scholarship. Post-development theorists have emphasised the lack of appropriateness of any global development paradigm, due to social, ethnic and cultural differences (Rahnema and Bawtree 1997), as well as the significance and power of the discursive framework of development through discourse analysis (Escobar 1995; Sachs 1992). These important contributions have been followed more recently with a barrage of literature recognising
the apparent ineffectiveness of the foreign aid regime in general. As far back as 1999, a report in The Economist pointed out that: “over the past 50 years rich nations have given US$1 trillion in aid to poor ones. This stupendous sum has spectacularly failed to improve the lot of its intended beneficiaries.....poor countries that receive lots of aid do no better, on average, than those that receive very little.” (Usaka and Gabarone 1999). Many reasons have been forwarded to explain the lack of effectiveness of aid. At their simplest, these focus mostly on the propensity of the aid system to facilitate and reward corruption (Moyo 2009; I. Taylor 2006), building on the principle of revelations about relief aid in the 1990s that aid might actually prolong conflict and thus work against its humanitarian objectives (Anderson 1999).

Such critiques have been noted by policy makers, inducing more poverty or human focussed discourses as outlined above, and they have also been embraced in a meaningful way by practitioners of development. This reaction demonstrates some genuine commitment to developmental goals on the ground, though the changes are not unequivocal. There have been many subsequent critiques to changes in development practice, particularly in terms of the utility of participation (Cooke and Kothari 2001; Gould 2005b; Rahman 1995) and localisation (Mohan and Stokke 2000), and the quantification of basic needs or rights in evaluation. Empowerment, in principle, answers many of the criticisms levelled at previous forms of development. Firstly, it recognises the inherent, vernacular powers of all nationalities and peoples, including the poor and the oppressed, in terms of innovation and creativity in directing their own development (Narayan et al. 2000). According to the logic of the paradigm of empowerment, the prioritisation of respect for a plurality of ideas and knowledges can bring about development interventions which do not produce the dominating force of power relations that have resulted in the past. Secondly, a focus on empowerment recognises that generalised quantitative measures of development are not wholly representative of levels of freedom from poverty. This is true both because such measures are universal where communities are heterogeneous, and because indicators reduced to statistics at state level often say little about changes to the developmental status of the most marginalised communities. Third, empowerment recognises that people are not always able to take advantage of opportunities that are technically available to them due to local, family or
household hierarchies which can constitute systems of oppression or obstacles to development.

Empowerment therefore appears to hold greater potential to move towards equalising power relations than previous paradigms of development, thereby appearing to move towards a more central focus on human development priorities. The breadth and scope of the concept allows for diversity in every sense and states as its aim increased ‘power’, the ability to achieve goals, for marginalised communities. Thus, an agenda of empowerment immediately appears to hold potential for change in the framework of power which shapes (or dominates) international relations. This reveals an apparent contradiction in the underlying philosophy of international development: how can development discourses be underwritten by a paradigm of empowerment, while being dominated at the same time by a framework of power relations which in practice produces strength for some actors alongside the marginalisation of others?

The ensuing research agenda is an enquiry into the nature and extent of this contradiction or tension between the agenda of empowerment and the powerful framework of development. It is an attempt to consider how the agenda of empowerment being promoted by agencies of international development is related to the overall framework of global power relations between peoples, states and communities. It is concerned with questioning how, on the one hand, development can be framed by powerful constraints emanating from strong international actors while, on the other hand, these same rich actors apparently promote an agenda of empowering communities most marginalised in/by the present system. Crucially, the research agenda here is informed by the need to expose how the agenda of empowerment is driven through global policy discourses and development institutions, and subsequently through to the implementation of development projects in communities. This empirical research is used to inform the theoretical discussion which is the central focus of this project, exploring the integration of conceptual ideas about empowerment with practical effects of the promotion of the concept in developmental terms. It is concerned less, therefore, with abstract conceptualisations of what the delivery of ‘empowerment’ focussed development interventions could or should look like, or how a practical process of ‘empowerment’ should be recognised or measured, and rather with the holistic effects of the
empowerment agenda in terms of its impact on development as a whole. This research is thus following in the footsteps of Ferguson by accepting the nature of development as it is and analysing the observable aspects (1990). This approach means taking all actors and discourses as powerful agents in the process by virtue merely of their contribution, rather than with reference to their assumed intention or ascribed interest (M Foucault 1977). The process of exposing the dynamics of the empowerment agenda is necessarily two-fold, being at once an agenda documented in policy rhetoric and driven by generally good intentions and at the same time an agenda with observable practical impacts in communities. These two pictures of empowerment are not necessarily the same. For example, through a study of the World Bank Poverty Assessments in Sub-Saharan Africa pre-1996, it was found that a 'money-metric approach' was taken although the rhetoric emphasised the multidimensionality of poverty (Hammer et al. 1999). Therefore, recognition of the extent to which the rhetoric of policy is co-ordinated within practical objectives and subsequently achieved is an important feature of analysing empowerment. As a result of these threads of analysis, the precise nature of the apparent contradiction between the power of development and the empowering potential of development may be fully elucidated.

The remainder of this introduction begins with a comprehensive annotation of the linkages between the three key concepts under scrutiny in the forthcoming analysis, namely development, power and empowerment. Key research objectives and questions are then made explicit in some detail to provide an accurate framework for the research, and there is an accompanying note on the underlying theoretical framework adopted for the project. The introduction proceeds to explain some of the key methodological demands of the epistemology of this kind of enquiry, before briefly outlining the methodologies used in this project and the selection of the state of Zambia as the site for the empirical fieldwork component of the research. The final section details the structure of the thesis, emphasising key linkages between chapters as well as the various kinds of analysis being undertaken in each section.
1.1 Linking three key concepts: Development, Power and Empowerment

Commentaries on power and development in human geography and international relations scholarship have always been inextricably linked. Extensive writings on development theory stand as testimony to such an observation (Kothari and Minogue 2002; Leys 1996; Jan Nederveen Pieterse 2001, Rist 1997), and often include references to the influence and effects of power, both as a direct quantifiable force and as a more abstract, less well-defined structural one. Since the early 1990s, the agenda of development has become increasingly dominated by the need to ‘empower’ people through development, a concept simplistically defined in the English Dictionary (Collins 1991) as ‘to give power to’ or ‘to enable’. Discussions regarding empowerment are thus concerned with changes to power relations within the framework of development, and are therefore firmly located at the centre of wider debates about power and development.

Linkages between these three concepts form both the foundation of this research agenda and the framework for its aims. From the outset, the concepts can be loosely linked, with greater clarity being brought to the precise nature of these linkages through the findings of the research. Both development and empowerment, as used in the context of international development aid interventions, can be loosely defined as a product of global power relations. The very basis of the development regime is that some states are far more powerful than others. The extreme nature of the differentials in levels of power/wealth between various states induces the idea of a moral imperative to assist those in oft-termed ‘less fortunate’ positions. The use of the ‘state’ as the unit to describe these relationships is deliberate, though of course highly inaccurate. The complex relationship between the levels of wealth recorded for a particular state is not directly correlated to even the average wealth of the population residing there, let alone the extreme inequalities of wealth/capacity between various groups of inhabitants. However, it is out of such complexity that the notion of empowerment is born. The inability to identify precisely which features define objectionable impoverishment has led to the notion that the purpose of development aid is to make marginalised communities more powerful in a broad sense, so that development can be appropriate to all communities and all forms of poverty, though a process of empowerment.
In a different sense to the previous, flawed indicators and paradigms of development, analysis of empowerment is conceptually problematic. Whilst quantitative measures of development tend to be highly inaccurate, qualitative studies to assess increased power levels hold the risk of being manipulated and misrepresented. Furthermore, power is a common denominator throughout all development relations and between all development actors. Power operates at a variety of scales: individual, household, community, sub-national, national, regional and international, none of which is either comparable or consistent with another. Transfers of power may be variable- or zero-sum, and may have relative or absolute outcomes. Sociological conceptions of power focus on the dualism of structural and agency based conceptions of power according to a variety of logics, and emphasising many different types of relationships between the two (Bachrach and Baratz 1962; Stewart R Clegg 1989; Michel Foucault 1980; Giddens 1984, 1993; Lukes 1974). While material (economic, military, etc, sometimes referred to as 'hard') power can be compared, contrasted and defined with relative accuracy within isolated categories, forms of 'soft' (social/political) power are often far more abstract and difficult to quantify or even identify. Thus, while inequalities at global scale are frequently exposed in terms of income, gender/racial/ethnic minority discrimination, levels of primary education, sanitation, etc, they are rarely espoused in terms of power more generally.

The problem of analysing development from within isolated categories is compounded by the extreme heterogeneity of actors involved in development and the relationships between them. The proliferation of actors involved in development processes has been instrumental in making development the conceptual and operational apparatus that it is today. States, multilateral institutions, non-governmental organisations (NGOs) - locally based and those with international scope - have all multiplied to form a vast plethora of actors, each with differing priorities, modes of accountability and needs. Relationships between development actors are also growing increasingly blurred, and the scales at which they operate more complicated to define. NGOs are often funded through state or institutional sources which can affect/constrain their ideal, apolitical or philanthropic agendas and bring complexity to their very definition of 'non' governmental organisations. Even boundaries between state and non-
state actors have been disputed to the point that, for example, Harrison (2001) argues donors may be more appropriately considered as part of the state apparatus. Simultaneously, some donors finance selected civil society groups within other sovereign states, leading to the accusation of 'social engineering a new type of civil society' (Hearn 1999) Furthermore, the role of NGOs themselves as benign agents of power has been questioned. Recent research has suggested that the chief power beneficiaries of increased localisation of development initiatives have been NGOs, and some scholars have considered the implications of the necessity for NGOs as employment providers to maintain a need for their services (Duffield 2007) The growth of indigenous NGO groups funded from international donors has led some to argue for an analysis based on 'comprador theory' (Hearn 2007), to promote recognition that indigenous NGOs are becoming embedded in the powerful system of exploitation recognised through earlier objections to development imposition.

Thus the relationship(s) between power, development and empowerment can be argued to be closely and clearly linked, but in a very complex, even illusory, manner. All aspects of these relationships are constantly changing, such that there is effectively a multiplicity of forms of power, development and empowerment. The theoretical framework presented in this thesis emphasises the centrality of this diversity, but given the lack of comparability between development interventions at very different scales, the empirical focus is only on the promotion of community empowerment initiatives, or empowerment initiatives that are promoted at community scale. This specification means that national level empowerment programmes will not be considered in detail in this research, although they are considered in the overall establishment of the use of the term empowerment.

A component of the present research agenda concerns whether power at community scale is sufficient for empowerment through development to take place. Local level empowerment is necessary to ensure that people can take advantage of opportunities available to them, but structuralist theories of power direct that such opportunities are constrained by global systems of power (Jurgen Habermas 1979, 1984, 1987) Indeed, though much of the literature on empowerment emphasises the need for political empowerment at national level to ensure a lack of prejudice in the provision of
local opportunities, many nations suffer from a lack of political empowerment to ensure fair provisions at global level (Falk and Strauss 2001:220; Nye 2001; Stiglitz 2002:229). While scholars argue that the concept of global citizenship is irrelevant to many people throughout the majority world (Cheru 2000:125), many also argue that empowerment at global level is necessary to validate local level power, because long-term change requires changes to macro-level structures (Mayo and Craig 1995:10). Thus, it may be suggested that the existing literature on empowerment does not take account of the realities of scale. Personal empowerment at local, national or global scales are constituted by entirely different features. Few studies have been made about the impact of local level empowerment projects on the structural inequalities being reproduced by more general power relations in the regime of development, and indeed more widely in the international system itself. The study made by Morton in Darfur exemplifies such an epistemology concerning the aid system more generally and he states: “It is only by following the aid network all the way down to its ultimate recipient that...much of what is done can be appreciated and the reasons for that...made clear” (1996:3). The present research agenda is intended to make a similar contribution and to redress the balance of literature concerning the notion and implementation of empowerment specifically.

1.2 Key Research Objectives, Questions and a Note on Theory

This thesis has a specific orientation and research agenda located in the field of global development studies, international relations and human geography more widely. The overall purpose here is to question the possibilities for an agenda of community empowerment against the backdrop of a powerful framework of global relations which dictates relative power of communities according to the logic of structuralism. The purpose is to fundamentally question the power relations reproduced through the development regime, their channels or routes and the implications and explanations thereof. The research agenda places specific emphasis on the direct, ‘subjective’ interpretation of such projects by members of affected communities, given that such interpretations arguably represent the relative success/failure of development at human scale. This research epistemology is underpinned by a critical development theoretical
standpoint, and the conclusions are produced according to the logic of constructivist grounded theory. These theories are briefly discussed in a final section here.

1.2.1 Key Research Objectives
The research has two main objectives:

1. Mapping the history of the concept of empowerment in development studies
   The first objective is to investigate the foundations and position of the concept of empowerment within development literature and policy, and to question the differentiation of empowerment in theory from previous paradigms of development. A fundamental purpose here is to establish the means by which empowerment is supposedly promoted. Clearly, development is not a uniform process, and it involves many different actors, with a variety of motivations and ethical foundations. Thus, the variations in methods of empowerment must be noted and analysed as an essential strand of this project. Particular attention will be paid to issues of localisation and participation within the process of development, as these methods of involvement and ownership of development initiatives are often cited as key instigators of empowerment.

2. To study specific community empowerment development projects at all levels, from donors to targeted individuals/communities
   The second key objective of the research is to trace the specific intentions of donors willing to support empowerment and to examine the interpretation of such intentions in implementation of projects, before finally considering the extent to which these aims are achieved as judged by those affected by their operation. This discussion is firmly based on empirically observable effects of intentions and actions, rather than through analysis of rhetorical or value judged representations (Ferguson 1990). The focus here is to utilise qualitative research conclusions to analyse global level power dynamics. This analysis will include a consideration of the coordination of development attitudes, through from global discourses produced by policy documents to methods and results of implementation in practice. This objective is underpinned by the recognition that analysis in existing literature tends to take place at either macro- or micro-scales,
while policy continues to be created at macro-scale and effects for communities continue to be felt at micro-scales of influence. Connecting these scales of analysis is a fundamental aim of this research agenda.

1.2.2 Key Research Questions

In addition to the above objectives, three key research questions have been formulated as follows:

1. What is the relationship between ‘power’ dictating development processes and ‘power’ apparently being promoted through the community empowerment agenda?

   This core research question concerns the relationship between the agenda of empowerment promoted by strong and rich international actors and the powerful elements of the development regime which act as sources of ongoing marginalisation for the poorest in global society. In this context it is necessary to ask: What/who are the primary drivers and limitations/constraints to empowerment of impoverished or marginalised communities? With specific reference to the centrality of empowerment on development policy agendas, the discussion will consider the levels of coherence between the development and foreign policy choices made by donor governments and institutions. This enquiry is fundamentally about the need for coordination in international agendas, given that interventions in practice are generally underpinned by well-meaning individuals.

2. How does the power of individuals and communities relate to and feature as a component of development as a world project?

   A further key area of interest here is to examine the conceptual basis for the power of individuals and communities as a function of global power relations. It is meant to question the linkages between individuals and communities (as agents) and the global power relations (as structure) that create and dominate their frameworks of opportunity to exercise personal power. Here, the relationship between local and global power conceptualisations is explored and critically assessed, particularly in relative terms for the poorest in society. In terms of the structure and agents being studied in this project, the
following questions will be addressed What kinds of changes have the capacity to increase the power of agents within a structure? Do changes to agents have any effect on structures of power? How is structure related to various agents? This area of the research draws on the extensive literature of conceptualisations of power drawn primarily from sociology and political economy.

3. *Is the agenda of empowerment being promoted in global development discourse acting as an effective force to bring greater equity for marginalised, powerless individuals and communities?*

The final and central research question asks if the current push towards empowerment in development agendas shows any signs of changing wider power balances in the international system for the purposes of marginalised individuals and communities. This section requires analysis of the communities affected as a whole, in order to make a judgement about whether or not these objectives actually do promote meaningful empowerment or changes to dominating power relations. The overriding aim here is to identify the manner in which community empowerment programmes are linked to the notion and promotion of community power. What effects do the changes brought about by empowerment projects really make to individuals and communities, precisely how do practical changes relate to the notion of empowerment and do such changes affect global power relations beyond communities for the benefit of communities themselves?

1.2.3 A Note on Theory

The theoretical framework of this project is informed by critical development. Critical development signifies that the aim of development is neither quantifiable nor fixed in any meaningful sense, although there is a fundamental assumption that development is about the emancipation of human beings. In this sense, critical development may be seen as allied to the wider premise of critical theory, which rejects the imposition of meta-narratives and over-arching theories as they implicitly serve the interests of the most powerful (Cox 1996, 2002; Murphy 2005). The basic perspective of critical development utilises many of the ideas which constitute the post-development school (Escobar 1995; Rahnema and Bawtree 1997; Sachs 1992), including recognition
of: the significance of discourse and the analysis thereof; the politics and power of structure and agency at a variety of scales; the vernacular abilities and resources of societies which are externally defined as impoverished and needy. However, post-development is open to a number of common critiques, primarily as theorists claim to differing degrees that development is to be feared and requires total structural overhaul. This is problematic as it is seen to be self-defeating and offers little in the way of alternatives to the development apparatus (Parfitt 2002; Jan Nederveen Pieterse 2000). Thus the majority of recommendations made by post-development scholars are rendered irrelevant pending the dissolution of development practices.

This research, however, is not concerned with prescribing how to make ‘development’ ‘better per se. Any attempt to frame a ‘better’ approach is an attempt to create a new (powerful) discourse which will also be inherently oppressive. This point is made explicitly and simply by Easterly, who states “All the hoopla about having the right plan is itself a symptom of the misdirected approach to foreign aid...The right plan is to have no plan.” (2006:5). Similarly, to focus on making ‘development’ the object of change is to assume that ‘development’ is the best way to forward the goal of human emancipation, which is not a notion adhered to here. The concern here is rather to explore interventions made in the name of empowerment for the effect they have on power relations. The only assumption made here is that empowerment should progress towards greater equality in power relations between communities if it is to fulfil the rhetorical aim of allowing communities to claim ownership of their development trajectories. Post-development crucially fails to take account of the fact that discourses produce power relations whether or not there is a process called ‘development’ going on (M Foucault 1974). Any prescription for further action falls foul of this theoretical dilemma. Unequally distributed power to ‘own’, ‘create’ or ‘label’ knowledge generation will continue to some extent no matter how small the scale. Thus, the ensuing agenda is primarily concerned with analysing the aims of development and empowerment on their own terms, using a post-structuralist and decentred notion of power. However, this does not mean accepting that all knowledge is equal in terms of power. In this analysis, it is accepted that discourses are produced through the interaction of human and non-human networks as implicitly directed by actor-network theory (Callon 1986; Latour 1986,
Effectively, this perspective anticipates the often intangible though influential power of 'power bases' (D. Wrong 1979) and 'frameworks of power' (Stewart R Clegg 1989). Accordingly, it will be unnecessary to attempt to attribute particular forms of power to particular actors while simultaneously anticipating that some actors are involved in networks from which they deduce greater effective power than others. Such a perspective allows for consideration that, for example, international institutions are more powerful than particular communities, while not denying that communities are active participants in the structure of power relations. It also underlines the necessity for judging empowerment in the context of equalising power relations on a relative basis.

These angles to critical development theory render the subject immune to analysis through traditional techniques of social science, as the lack of definition surrounding the interpretation of emancipation as the over-riding aim of this theory is deliberate and means all research must by definition be subjective in form. This is particularly relevant to this project, as it should be recognised that the empowerment of vulnerable groups is not about their ability to cope (as judged by those with different value judgements) but rather about whether people feel empowered in any sense and crucially the extent to which they are more free to exercise power. This perspective also facilitates analysis which can be non-deterministic about the roles and effects of other actors involved in development processes. This theoretical framework gives clear scope for comprehensive analysis of the research questions in this project.

1.3 Methodology and Case Study Selection

Most social research operates at a particular level of analysis, that is to say it is focussed at one level of human organisation or another. For example, anthropologists study human interactions at exclusively individual and household levels, while development theorists tend to consider either policy applications at institutional level or implementation of practice at community level. Though multi-disciplinary research is gaining in popularity, there remain few examples of studies which consider the relationship between the creation, and theoretical underpinnings, of global development policy discourses and the effect of implementation of development projects in communities and households.
To advance a theorisation of power it is necessary that such studies are undertaken, given that common conceptualisations are concerned with the dualism of structure and agency. Focussing discussions of power at the level of one particular agency or function of structure (however conceived) is problematic, as ignorance of the wider impact on power relations at other levels of structure or for other agents in the process can produce misleading conclusions. Given that policies are drawn up at global or international level, which concurrently do impact at the level of individuals, a lack of attention on harmonising the two spheres of analysis means that the crucial need for balance is subordinated to a concern for academic disciplinary boundaries. Analysis which draws together the implementation and human level effect of development projects, as well as scrutinising the underlying logic of the process as posited by global level discourses creates the possibility of exposing the capacity for communities to recognise their function as part of the whole.

The result of such observations is to recognise some important methodological demands on the ensuing research agenda. Methods chosen need to display a balance of enquiry into documentary and textual information, to take account of policy discourses, as well as qualitative evidence from those experiencing the effects of such policies in their daily environments. Thus the research agenda is intentionally broad To avoid the perpetuation of subjectivism per se, analysis needs also to take account of the extent to which people's perception of their own powers can be translated into powers of action. Such judgements may have negotiable scientific value, that is, they may not be informed by a fixed notion of rationalism or logic which can be measured and expected to represent 'truth'. This should not be seen as a failing of the research to provide for methodological validity however. It is rather to embrace the fact that to deal in only condensable, reducible social measurements is to constrain social research to particular levels of analysis, and thus to be unable to take account of the linkages between such scales or the structural effects thereof. Furthermore, research underwritten by such a perception of (or active disassociation with) scientific method emphasises the importance of human agency as the focus of social research, and values human perception whether or not it is subsequently substantiated by others.
The remainder of this section outlines the core methods used in the ensuing research and relates them to this underlying epistemology. The first section briefly expands on the parameters of textual and documentary analysis. The following parts outline the use of semi-structured interviews and the participatory approach which informs the empirical fieldwork to further this data set. A fourth section outlines the reasons for the selection of the state of Zambia as a single country case study and outlines the selected projects, while a fifth section briefly considers some of the ethics and limitations of this research.

1 3.1 Core Methods I: Textual and Documentary Analysis

A core component of this project is the analysis of policy documentation and academic texts which inform and underwrite the move towards a paradigm of empowerment for development. Textual and documentary analysis is necessary in respect of all three key concepts with which this research is concerned, in order to first lay accurate foundations for the empirical work. Textual analysis informing perceptions and conceptualisations of power is drawn from a wide range of disciplines, from sociological to political perspectives. Evidence of paradigmatic shifts in development policy is demonstrated by reference to extensive policy documentation, while theoretical frameworks are discussed with reference to the burgeoning literature of development studies and human geographies more widely. This search was extensive, considering the origins of development (colonial legacy, aid intervention, independence), development theories (modernisation thesis, dependency theory, anti- and post-development schools), development policies (institutional reports [World Bank, UN, DfID, USAID]), and development practices (participation, localisation, power relations at community level). Documentary evidence of empowerment comes primarily from the 1990s onwards, whilst conceptual foundations can be traced to more historical academic works.

In the empirical section of this work, documentary analysis also forms an important component of the study. The examination of documentation (for example: reports, reviews of practice, constitutions/frameworks/guidelines for action/practice) produced by the various agencies and organisations focussed on during fieldwork is a core part of the empirical dataset, enabling reflection on the extent to which organisations
fulfil the principles of empowerment according to their own interpretation. In addition, institutional policy is intended to directly underwrite modes of practical implementation of development, so it is significant in the current research agenda to consider the extent to which these codes relate to observable practice.

1.3.2 Core Methods II: Semi-Structured Interviews

Semi-structured interviews form the core of the empirical data set for this research. Two phases of the research are conducted primarily with interviews. The first is interviews held with workers and representatives of the implementing agencies for the selected development projects under study. This includes representatives from all levels of the project structure: development workers, co-ordinators, organisational staff, as well as representatives from funding bodies supporting the projects. These interviews will be used to analyse the operational co-ordination of empowerment, to consider whether it is valued for the same purposes and outcomes throughout the institutional structure. Furthermore, this information is crucial to link the empowerment aims of the projects to the greater international funding structure from whence it originates. This phase of interviews is conducted with professional people, and the semi-structured format is important here to extract more than standardised institutional responses. In addition, the issue of ethics is less significant in these exchanges, given that the imbalance in power relations between researcher and interviewee is likely to be less extreme than with community members.

The second phase of semi-structured interviews is conducted with people in communities where selected projects are operational. Most interviews are held with members of communities who are involved in activities promoted by the projects, either as direct ‘beneficiaries’ or as members of community groups or committees. The structure and style of this phase of interviews is informed largely by the early phases of participant observation outlined in the next sub-section (see Section 1.3.3 below). Flexibility in this regard is essential, given the desire to discover new perspectives and ideas in this research rather than simply to confirm or deny the presence of a certain imagined knowledge. Flexibility in styles of interviewing is necessary too to put
participants at ease, particularly given the acute (perceived) differentiation in power relations between researcher and interviewees.

Moreover, the need for flexibility is reinforced by a desire to give participants in the research the rightful influence over the interview, which should become the position of the most knowledgeable participant in the interview process. In this way, appropriate respect is given to the words and notions of the interviewee, though there are some complications with the validity of this idea due to the use of translators to facilitate interviews. In addition, the words of participants appearing on their interview transcripts were translated into English from more than one local language, making the dynamics of discourse analysis complex to handle. However, in every sense interview transcripts are used as evidence in the most genuine way possible, attributing all the value of that knowledge to interview participants themselves.

1.3.3 Core Methods III. Participant Observation

The use of a participatory approach is essential given the underlying epistemology of this project. Inviting people to be 'participants' rather than objects of research, at least in theory, prioritises their knowledge and promotes them to being colleagues in the ownership of research. However, the notion of organising activities for participation in communities is challenging given that people may need to travel far to centres for meetings and that people are busy with their own lives. Indeed, the power relationship between researcher and researched is nowhere more obvious than in the insistence for people to attend workshops for the benefits of research. This requires recognition of a sinister paradox since this is precisely the power framework due to be avoided in participatory methodologies.

This is not to reject the notion of participation entirely, but rather to reformulate it so that members of communities do feel that they participate in the research process (rather than being used by it) and so that they do feel some ownership over the aims of the research (by flexibility and listening). Indeed, by making people feel proud of their knowledge, a participatory approach can be highly beneficial to the individuals involved in the research process. In this project, a concern to maintain the benefits of a participatory approach was central throughout both the design of and the process of semi-
structured interviews with community members outlined above. A final strand of the primary research utilised a flexible form of participant observation during the time spent in communities. This was conducted through observing interactions in communities, particularly between development project workers and community members, but also between community members themselves, as well as more general observations about community life and the effects of projects (for a full explanation of the justification for this methodology, see Chapter 5).

1.3.4 Case Study Selection: Zambia

For methodological validity, chosen sites of research need to be located within a state marginalised in the framework of global power relations. A single state is preferable as a case study site, given that there is no comparative element to the research questions. The point here is not to compare different methods of pursuing empowerment in different cases but rather to consider the potential for empowerment in a representative case. Zambia was selected as the case study site, as it fulfilled the necessary criteria in a number of ways.

Firstly, Zambia is a very poor country, with GDP per capita currently standing at $1,273ppp (150th out of 179 countries ranked) and an HDI of 0.453 (163rd out of 179 countries ranked) (UN 2008, figures from 2006). Secondly, the history of colonial exploitation of the state's natural resources marks the beginning of marginalisation in systems of global power relations, both in political and economic terms. Third, Zambia's potential as a state following independence was hopeful, but within ten years of independence it had shrunk significantly — primarily due to fluctuations in the price of copper on the international markets. While the precise causes of such fluctuations are difficult to discern, it is fair to say that they are not the fault of the Zambian people, their ability to govern or to participate in an effective state. This argument is not meant to suggest that economic and governance activities within the country were not at all responsible for the state's poor performance as well. However, though other causes are discernible, external economic influences played a major role in defining the opportunities for the Zambian population.
Clearly, practical requirements also dictate that the site of research is relatively economically and politically stable, which Zambia is, and this stipulation is also necessary to make accurate judgements of projects on people and communities without additional variables being added due to political or economic instability at national level. Furthermore, Zambia was established as a multi-party democracy at independence and has experienced only internationally ratified free and fair since the culmination of Kaunda’s leadership of a defacto one party state in 1991. Democratic power for the citizens of Zambia can therefore be expected to have had sufficient time to be established, providing a theoretical linkage with the power relations affecting that state.

From within Zambia, three development projects were selected as the main focus of the research that named ‘empowerment of communities’ as a key aim. Selected projects were drawn from within Southern Province, in order to maintain context across the projects. Selection criteria included the need to have projects funded through a variety of types of institutions or funding channels and for them to be concerned with a variety of different activities and methods to pursue empowerment. The three selected projects are introduced briefly below:

- **Women for Change** – A project which encourages the formation of community groups in remote areas where there is no other NGO representation. The project supports groups in beginning income generating activities by supplying scant resources (which need to be returned), in addition to giving skills training both to broaden economic opportunities and improve community communication. Funding is obtained largely from the international NGO donor DanChurch Aid.

- **Social Cash Transfers** – Run by the Zambian Ministry for Community Development and Social services through budgetary support from DfID. This project gives small cash payments to ‘highly incapacitated households’ (that is, those with no earning potential at all) and is implemented in communities largely by volunteers in community committees, who receive some skills training under the project structure.

- **BELONG Project** - This project provides assistance to orphans and vulnerable children through community schools. It provides some learning resources for
schools, materials for school buildings, skills training for teachers as well as support and training for school committee members, amongst other activities. It is funded through PEPFAR, a stream of USAID directed solely at assisting those disadvantaged through the HIV/AIDS epidemic.

Though it may not be clear from these basic practical details, the projects all cite empowerment of communities as a key-priority in their project planning and literature. Thus while the projects are highly varied, they have the crucial similarity of being promoted in the name of community empowerment and are thus fitting to the present research agenda.

It should be emphasised from the outset that although the empirical work for this project is based in Zambia, the research is not about Zambia per se. To provide a valid context for the research, details about Zambia and Zambian communities are provided, but the aim here is not to draw any conclusion about the state of Zambia nor about communities residing there. Rather, this agenda is concerning the effect to power relations resulting from the agenda of empowerment promoted through development discourses, and the case study site has merely been selected to enable empirical research to be undertaken.

1.3.5 Ethics and Limitations

Ethical concerns about this work centre primarily on the focus of research being conducted in communities that are acutely economically disadvantaged and where the culture is markedly different to that familiar to the researcher. Many ethical dilemmas in this sense are addressed by the adoption of a participatory approach to the primary research (outlined in Section 1.3.3 above). By accepting the knowledge of those questioned as valid, without exception, the outcomes of this research will be attributed directly to those whose knowledge created it. However, the fact remains that this work will be published in the name of the researcher, with no direct benefit being derived by those who made the crucial contributions. Counteracting this most basic of ethical dilemmas is not easy, but some effort is made to make the contribution of participants worthwhile in itself by emphasising the value of their knowledge during the interaction.
Basic human sensitivity can negate the most objectionable effects of ethical problematics arriving from this kind of research. Being conscious not to flaunt wealth beyond necessary limits and attempting to participate in communities ‘normally’ (for example, using the same transport as community members, eating the same food, etc) are the most significant ways to circumvent bad feeling amongst research participants. Indeed, where attention must be drawn to the divisions between levels of wealth, for example in using a camera to record aspects of communities, extra photos of people can be taken on request and sent to the community afterwards. Failing to keep such promises of course only extenuates the potential for an ethical dearth. However, fulfilment of such commitments can effectively swing the balance and create both lasting friendships and connections with the products of the research.

There are some significant limitations to the scope of this research agenda. At their core is the possible argument that this work does not give conclusions that can be carried throughout fields of study, or that are unreliable representative of the workings and effects of other development projects which have goals of community empowerment. Such an observation need not be critical according to the philosophies underlying the design of this project however. The need to trace the operation of projects from funding body to community participant in order to fill the methodological demands of the research questions constrains the possibilities to look at enough projects to gain a scientific validity to the conclusions. For the forthcoming project, such a focus on apparent ‘objectivity’ is sacrificed willingly in exchange for research that produces knowledge by virtue of a study being a particular case, thanks to particular people. Nonetheless, the argument that this can constitute a limitation is also accurate.

Further limitations include the use of translators (complicated further by the presence of multiple local languages) and the practical scope and structure of the research itself. Clearly, an enquiry into greater numbers of projects, in a greater number of contexts, with a greater number of participants would have produced greater validity and reach for the conclusions presented here. In addition, though participating communities should be selected entirely at random, in reality access to them was controlled by those organisations implementing projects. However, access was not controlled in the sense of
particular 'showcase' communities being selected in advance, so this is a limitation to the research rather than representing an invalidating factor.

1.4 Structure of Thesis

The first part of this thesis presents the foundations of the project through an exploration of the comprehensive literature of the three main bodies of scholarly work and policy documentation used to inform this research agenda: namely development, power and empowerment. They are discussed separately, each being extensive topics in their own right. Chapter Two explores the various paradigms and theoretical underpinnings of development since its inception as an international 'project' post World War Two. Chapter Three examines scholarly and popular notions of power in an attempt to create a basis for empirical analysis from this highly complex concept, subject as it is to powerful discursive connotations in practice. The final chapter of this primary section considers the concept of empowerment, exploring how the term has been used in both policy and practice. The history of empowerment in development is tracked here, and the conceptual foundations of empowerment are also considered as a function of the overall coordination of the development regime. Particular emphasis is placed on the extensive documentation produced by the World Bank which, especially since the Comprehensive Development Framework and the 2000-1 WDR: Attacking Poverty, has frequently referred to and discussed the concept of empowerment as well as the concept being the subject of a multitude of sourcebooks and studies produced by the World Bank (for example Narayan et al. 2000; Narayan 2002, 2005).

The next section of the thesis contextualises and presents the empirical findings of the research. The first of these chapters is concerned with developing a suitable methodology for the empirical fieldwork of the research project. This section is crucial, considering the many and varied methodological dilemmas of conducting research in a very different culture, using interpreters for interviewing and for noting the issues of positionality between a travelling academic researcher and participants from remote, economically disadvantaged communities. The following chapter in this section explains the selection of the state of Zambia as the site for the empirical research, and then
introduces that country with particular attention being paid to the power relations of
development history.

Chapter seven details the selection of projects for research, which have a stated
objective of achieving community empowerment, and investigates the view of how
empowerment is purported to be pursued according to the institutions implementing and
funding projects. This chapter underlines why various types of development actors view
empowerment as important, why they value the pursuit of empowerment over other
objectives in development, how they view the achievement of empowerment and the
methods by which they aim to pursue that goal. The next chapter presenting empirical
findings explores the views of people affected by the implementation of projects,
allowing them to make observations about the kind of changes the operation of projects
have made to them and how they have been affected at both individual and household
levels. This chapter makes the case for recognition of subjective empowerment being
promoted and imparted at the level of individuals in the communities studied. Chapter
nine concludes the section by exploring the dynamics of communities which are not
affected by the operation of development projects, and formulates the argument that the
sum of individual subjective empowerment does not automatically lead to objective
empowerment due to factors at the community level. It argues that empowerment
projects such as those studied in this research do not have the potential to effect
meaningful empowerment in the communities in which they are operational, as they are
constrained by the same power relations that cause the condition of impoverishment and
powerlessness in Zambian communities in the first place. Finally, the thesis has a general
conclusion, which posits and expands on the notion that the structure of global power
relations needs to change drastically if people and communities are to be meaningfully
empowered.
Chapter Two

Power and Politics in Development

The contemporary system of development is underpinned by economic, political and social power relations, whose forms are implicitly complex and multiple 'hierarchies of power' (Mittelman 2000:5). Massively increasing levels of inequality across the international system, for example, in wealth or living standards (see UNDP 1999:3; World Bank 2000:3), have been given ample attention in recent academic literature (Grieg et al. 2007; Murphy 2005) and are indicative of the polarisation (or inequality) of power relations involved in development. An agenda of empowerment, simplistically at least, speaks the same language as these pervasive forms of power inequalities, allowing 'power' to be used as the critical unit of analysis in the ensuing project. Structures governing the process of development, or perhaps more accurately the relationships and relative power of actors involved in the processes of development, give the global system of development a distinct set of power relations which are highly influential at every level of the development process. Powerful actors, and the global institutions which bind and extend them, are essential actors in development, while the other essential component is found in the polar opposite: the powerless, the marginalised, the disconnected communities and states that have little or no institutional power with which to effectively represent their needs, intentions or objections within the system. Such power relations are deterministic, often with brutal consequences. Successful development is not only about the eradication of income-defined poverty, but rather about the eradication of powerlessness in a wide variety of capacities (Sen 1999).

The stark nature of these implicit power relationships has a number of important consequences for the current research agenda, requiring exploration and investigation. Firstly, a number of issues about conceptualising and analysing development must be explored. These include emphasising the diverse nature of development as a field of

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1 It is noted that the nature of these inequalities are disputed from a number of angles. This issue will be dealt with fully in Chapter Four.
study, the general ineffectiveness of aid and (partially) of development policies more generally, the dangers of making development studies a purely moral platform and clarifying definitions and uses of essential terminologies. The changing theoretical frameworks underpinning development practices must then be reflected upon to determine the changing contexts of power and power relations therein. Tracing the context of power, and the variety of forms in which it is recognised and prioritised throughout the history of development theory provides an introduction to thinking about empowerment through development, and inversely to thinking about development as a process of empowerment. Development policy, as the political arm of development, also requires scrutiny. Here, broad changes in policy frameworks are identified since the inception of development assistance. Historical context is essential in this exercise, given that dominant global frameworks or norms encompass power that is arguably not derived from direct political or economic power in the same spatial or temporal context. Changes in the forms of development practice are also important to trace the processes of learning 'on-the-ground'. The ensuing chapter will address these issues in turn.

2.1 Issues in Conceptualising and Analysing Development

2.1.1 Emphasising Diversity in Development Studies

Characterised overwhelmingly by diversity, discussions of development variously refer to an apparatus (Escobar 1995), an enterprise (Uvin 1998), an industry (Ferguson 1990, Moss 2007) or a shifting paradigm (see Jan Nederveen Pieterse 2001:93). Each terminology is descriptive of development in a slightly different form; they are not universally interchangeable. Development is at once a plan, a concept, a 'discourse(s), a global system and an exchange between individuals. Justification for development practices has encompassed a huge variety of intentions and assumptions. From the modernisation theorists of the 1950s and 1960s; to the basic-needs approach favoured in the 1970s; the macro-level monetarist economic policies introduced in the 1980s to promote trickle-down economic growth; and finally to the more human-focused policies of rights and empowerment championed widely throughout the 1990s and since.

Thus, setting the scene to provide a coherent framework for research in development studies is a complex task. Indeed, the implication of a single area of
development studies is in itself misleading, as the process of development is in no sense monolithic or homogenous. This is clear simply by the lack of any widely (let alone universally) accepted definition of the term. ‘Development’ is commonly used to refer to processes as diverse as industrialisation and providing increased access to education. It is used to refer to macro-level policies dictated by the state, as well as local level attempts at innovation to increase standards of life or community cohesion. Similarly, direct actors involved in development are constituted by a rich mix of individuals: representatives of global financial institutions, highly paid independent development consultants, international volunteers (with diverse levels of training, knowledge and motivation), as well as national officials, local community leaders and participating individuals. There is no requirement here to narrow the field of study by attempting to provide tentative definitions for the highly fluid concept of development, as numerous other scholars have done competently enough (for example see Morris 1998; Potter et al. 2004; Rist 1997; Todaro and Smith 2006; Watts 2000). Here the area of study is more accurately defined by all possible understandings and constructions of development; critical analysis demands a broad and inclusive field of enquiry.

Such levels of diversity prompt recognition that development occurs in many forms and that valid conclusions drawn from researching a specific relationship or exchange in development may not be applicable to all others. However, to isolate these areas and study them without a comprehensive historical and political context of development is to relegate the importance of both discourse and structure. Recognition has become more widespread recently that development is occurring in all societies at all times (Jan Nederveen Pieterse 1996; Sen 1999), and Payne has argued for an end to the exclusivity with which development is treated in scholarly literature, seeking rather to recast development as a ‘transnational problematic’ (2005:40). While the accuracy of this point may be incontrovertible, the shape and issues surrounding the present research agenda demand a focus on specific policies and localised projects, aimed at empowerment and promoted through powerful, global or dominant institutions and organisations. Thus, the depiction of development is far more specific according to this purpose, although this should not be seen as renouncement of the principle that development is not something that only affects targeted populations or communities.
2.1.2 Development = Development or Not

A key problem for analysts and scholars of development is the simple issue that development interventions are referred to as such whether or not they are subsequently judged to have promoted development. Thus, development is supposedly progressing as long as there are actors undertaking development. Such a proposition is arguably more problematic today than it has ever been. Over recent decades, many reports on the ineffectiveness of development aid to promote equitable social development have been published (see Holman and Mills 2006), indeed in some cases it has been strongly argued that aid serves the interests of donors despite the apparent focus on target populations (Hayter 1971; Kothari and Minogue 2002 38-9). A recent argument comes from Taylor, who suggests that capital flows out of Africa dwarf aid budgets and cumulative foreign debts (2006:371-2). He further cites that Africa has received around one trillion US dollars over the last 50 years, but is continuing to get poorer not richer (2006.367). Other recent theses emphasise the lack of success in the aid model too (Easterly 2006, Moyo 2009). Thus, the notion that undertaking development practices necessarily promotes development is by no means a foregone conclusion. The terminological difficulties created through ‘doing development’ not immediately meaning ‘achieving development’ cannot be overstated.

2.1.3 Ethics and Morality about Development

That it is insufficient to analyse development in terms of the intended outcomes of development aid or projects is clear from the observations made above. Furthermore, the inherent injustice of claiming to be undertaking development aimed at improving the quality of life of some of the world’s most impoverished communities while rarely achieving that aim, has become the main object of much scholarly research on development. Edwards notes that “Ethics are ever-present in debates about development, because development is about things which ought to take place” (1993:80). Such a statement, however, fails to embrace the division between intended outcomes of development practice and the empirical result of the practice itself. While the Kantian notion of a ‘categorical imperative’ motivating the concept of development may be an
accurate manner of looking at the achievement of development, it is surely not appropriate to argue that development ought to be undertaken whether or not it achieves stated aims. Such ‘ever-present ethics’ dictate that the extent to which development interventions fulfil their stated aims has almost surpassed in importance the actual effects of development policies. As Ferguson notes:

“when one reads much of the literature on the ‘development’ industry, one finds oneself doubly dissatisfied – with the liberals, whose concern seems only to be with directing or reforming an institution whose fundamental beneficence they take as a given – and with the neo-Marxists, who seem satisfied to establish that the institutions of ‘development’ are part of a fundamentally imperialistic relation…and take the matter to be thus settled.” (1990:13)

Ferguson therefore emphasises a need to be “looking at the interventions of ‘development’ agencies not for what they don’t do or might do, but for what they do” (1990:13). Crucially, he argues that whether or not development interventions are fulfilling their stated aims, they will almost certainly be having an effect of some sort on the communities targeted. Furthermore, he emphasises that labels like ‘interests’ and ‘rhetoric’ are value-laden and take on a life of their own, without imparting any real knowledge or even masking the actual impacts of any particular development interaction (1990:15-19). The analyst too caught up in making moral/ethical judgements on the intended outcomes of development may miss the effects of the process itself, or the extent to which another actor may have been affected from an unintended or undeclared outcome. The present research agenda is informed by this belief that the correct focus of researchers and theorists should be to maintain a critical standpoint to judge the holistic effects of the operation of development.

2.1.4 Clarifying Definitions and Terminologies

A brief note is required to clarify the uses of some essential terminologies and concepts. The empirical research is to be conducted in sub-Saharan Africa, an area comprised of some of the economically poorest states in the world, which have thus been a particular focus of development applications. Where the text refers to Africa, this is
due to misuse and inaccuracies of the discourse in historical context, which often presents a basis for critique. In all other cases, the region will be named specifically, so as not to reduce the richly diverse continent of Africa to this specific context. Some areas of development analysis will demand a more broad-based discussion, and are thus faced with the dilemma of categorising states for the purpose of textual simplicity or practicality. Various titles and dichotomies have been used throughout development studies: ‘third world’, ‘underdeveloped’, ‘the west’, north/south, developed/developing, less-developed/industrialised and so on, and few are entirely absent from contemporary scholarship. Most are unsatisfactory: derogatory in the first place and highly inaccurate in the second, while the categorisation process itself has been shown to be arbitrary and highly politicised (Payne 2005:49-72). For the majority of the present project, this issue is easily remedied however. Generally, the polarised positions being referred to here share commonalities to such a degree as to make their groupings far more coherent. One group is constituted by the states of sub-Saharan Africa, which though highly diverse internally have similar experiences of external development interventions, while the other group is made up of the prosperous donor nations of the OECD. Where this division is irrelevant, accuracy will be strived for, but may in some cases be sacrificed in the interests of brevity.

Finally, brief mention is needed of this use of the term ‘marginalised’. In this project, the notion of marginalisation is used extensively to explain a condition of relative powerlessness for certain actors involved in a system. This terminology requires clarification from the outset given the claims of some that, when referring to Africa, the notion of marginalisation is irrelevant as Africa is inherently involved in global politics rather than somehow removed from it (Bayart 2000, I. Taylor and Williams 2004). While not refuting this claim, the relevance of the concept of marginalisation will continue to be invoked here, on the basis that Africa is removed from global systems but that despite involvement in those systems, the condition of relative powerlessness remains. This is an important distinction, though it should not be read as endorsing the idea of Africans as passive actors in these processes. Indeed, powerlessness in systems within which Africa was irrelevant or excluded would not be so problematic. Thus, marginalisation will here be used to describe a position of powerlessness which is
remarkable only in so far as Africa has a role within or feels the impact of global systems of power.

2.2 Changing Faces of Development Theory

2.2.1 Linear Modernisation for Economic Development

The notion of power has been constantly emphasised in different theoretical perspectives on development. International and systemic structures and key actors are analysed in terms of their corresponding hierarchies of power, whilst the effect of development processes on populations targeted by development is also reducible to their resulting power relationships and assets. The constitution of 'success' in development has been a constantly moving goalpost, and one on which the diverse set of development actors and scholars has always been, and remains, deeply divided. At its inception, theorists of development favoured linear and universal conceptions forwarded by classical economy and modernisation schools of thought (Lewis 1955; W. W. Rostow 1960). The notion that the destiny of others would clearly lead all diverse societies to the same form of modernity and thus development was a common theoretical position at the time, most famously illustrated in the inaugural address of President Truman in 1949:

"...we must embark on a bold new program for making the benefits of our scientific advances and industrial progress available for the improvement and growth of underdeveloped areas." (Truman 1949)

The identification of 'underdeveloped areas' being in need of the benefits of 'our scientific advances and industrial progress' is arguably a form of powerful domination on two levels. Firstly, the imposition of a particular form of modernity as the sole course for development leaves little or no space for cultural specificity and innovation, and secondly the necessary involvement of global market mechanisms/players in the spread of industrial and scientific advancement makes it likely that those coming last to the playing field will be comparatively disadvantaged. Arguably, power in this context operates as a dominant discourse linked to the legacy of colonialism and thus to the condition of post-colonial statehood. As Edward Said has pointed out: "Westerners may have physically
left their old colonies in Africa and Asia, but they retained them not only as markets but also as locales on the ideological map over which they continued to rule morally and intellectually" (1993:25). So ingrained is the sense of leadership and authority from powerful nations towards those who had been so recently subordinated that the result of a theoretical framework underlining such power relations is difficult to reject.

2.2.2 Global Structural Analysis

The limitations of classical economy to provide a comprehensive theory of development were realised early (Myrdal 1957, 1968), with reliance on primary goods being a feature of ‘developing’ economies that dictated their bargaining power in the global market. The inevitable and continuous power advantage of the financially prosperous over the financially poor in such transactions prompted the advancement of neo-Marxist and dependency theories of development (Amin 1976, Baran 1968; Cardoso 1979; Frank 1967). Frank asserted that “underdevelopment...is the necessary product of capitalist development and of the internal contradictions of capitalism itself” (1967:3). Thus, successful capitalist development in some states would inevitably lead to underdevelopment in others. Marxist theorising clearly emphasises the role of structural power in a narrow economic sense. Frank also refined Lenin’s models of core and periphery at global scale, emphasising that core and periphery were present in all states at all times. The core (elite) constitutes only a tiny fraction of any population, but benefit from communication with one another and common interests, while the mass periphery rarely has opportunities to communicate between states and has many divisions, being impoverished or exploited to hugely varying degrees. Colin Leys noted in his landmark study on Underdevelopment in Kenya that

“whereas industrial capitalism in the European metropolitan countries embarked on its most rapid period of expansion and became the dominant mode of production under conditions of relatively free competition among capitalists, this did not occur at the periphery” (1975:10)

Conditions surrounding the development of capitalism at the periphery determined the fate of capitalist newcomers, and led to the long-term vigour of the structural
determinism evoked by a dependency theoretical perspective. Power relations are complex in this equation. Dependency theory underlined the incapacity of peripheral states to achieve economic power and development but, particularly within sub-Saharan Africa, state elites privileged their own interests above those of the wider population, resulting in an intensification of the externally imposed incapacity for development.

Increased durability and sophistication of models of development forwarded by neo-Marxist scholars have sought to demonstrate and explain some of the other structural forces exerting themselves through the global system of international development. Here, the characterisation of development as an exertion of the powerful (commonly the rich) towards the powerless (commonly the poor) begins to be exposed as being far too simplistic. Wallerstein's world systems theory first introduced the notion of a semi-periphery:

"The existence of the third category means precisely that the upper stratum is not faced with the unified opposition of all the others because the middle stratum is both exploited and exploiter" (1979)

The importance of this change is greater than may at first be imagined. Structuralist theories tend to distance the pervasive structure from the agents and individuals constituting that structure too much to be useful. Here, in the conceptualisation of a semi-category, in which states are both benefiting and being constrained/oppressed by the structure at the same time, Wallerstein, unintentionally as his is a state-centric analysis, instates a solid human element in an otherwise arbitrary or stagnant structure. This may present a useful general model for the forthcoming analysis, as it anticipates the likelihood of development to be at once a force of constraint and of opportunity.

2.2.3 Rejecting Structural Simplicity

The insufficiencies of analysis based purely on the structural characteristics of economic power in global development have long since been noted. Gramsci first identified that the relationship between class and capital was not as simple as Marx had considered (1971). The focus here was on society and culture as the foundation for a superstructure. In his theorisation of the concept of hegemony, Gramsci argued that the
bourgeoisie had potential to convince the masses that they had an interest in maintaining a system which in fact exploited them. Gramsci was followed by theorists from the Frankfurt school, notably Habermas (1979; 1984, 1987) and Marcuse (1972). These critical theorists advocated the loosely defined notion of 'emancipation' to guide politics, and to inhibit the dangers of an imperial mindset. Habermas insisted that communicative action was essential to counteract the dominant/dominated dichotomy (1979; 1984, 1987). Marcuse forwarded the notion of a 'one dimensional society' (1972), arguing that 'the masses' were so absorbed into the capitalist mindset that they were unable to even identify, or therefore conceive of change to, the overarching structure of capitalist culture, thereby underlining the power encompassed in that form of structure.

2.4 Critical Theory and the Post-Development School

There has been an increasing centralisation of the concept of power at the heart of ongoing theoretical evolutions. Emancipation from the constraints of both theoretical frameworks and oppressive practices became a chief purpose of critical theorists. Robert Cox notably determined that 'theory is always for somebody and for some purpose' (1996), highlighting the overwhelming and distorting nature of power relations within grand narratives. In the context of development, this evolution of theory has been highly influential, and has been hugely expanded on by post-development theorists, informed by post-modernism or post-structuralism. Here the focus is on a far broader structural framework, embracing the Foucauldian notion of discourse as power (Escobar 1995) and the ideas of social constructivism (Wendt 1999). According to this theoretical perspective, terminologies used throughout development literature and policy are accepted as being implicitly meaningful and accurate. Thus, prominent concepts such as 'progress', 'development' and 'poverty' are recognised to have constructed/imposed meaning, the representation of which remains unquestioned and therefore holds considerable discursive power (Rahnema and Bawtree 1997; Sachs 1992). Post-development theorists have radicalised the recognition of this implicit power of discourse by arguing that the inaccuracies of popularised development terminologies have invalidated the discourse of development to a point where it is beyond repair. Sachs has
argued that ‘development is dead’ (1992), while Rahnema spoke of a ‘myth of development’ (1997).

A particularly interesting perspective is provided by Nanda Shrestha (1995), who describes personal reflections of growing up in Nepal and ‘Becoming a Development Category’. He explains how formal development categories, standards and terminologies become normalised into local practices, systems of orientation and beliefs. He describes how the products of development (bikas) became revered and desired as symbols of success and progress, as well as how such objects were explained through, and integrated with, local cultural perspectives. Before development was introduced to Nepal in the 1950s, white people were regarded as mrankha, the polluted, the untouchable, firmly at the bottom of the caste system employed by Hindu cultures. On the arrival of development, however, white people were suddenly elevated to the position of sahib, which translates to master, teacher, sir/madam, with clear connotations (as in English) of dominance and authority.

“It was hard to fathom why whites had been elevated so quickly to the top of the social hierarchy. The oppressive and archaic caste system had simply been rearranged to accommodate the emerging sahib culture and nascent bikas enterprise; caste relations had been transformed into power relations in our dealings with whites, the latter occupying the position of power and prestige” (1995:271)

Furthermore,

“Bikas looked glistening and sumptuous, at least on the outside and at school... Bikas could bring things instantly, and we did not have to work hard to acquire what we wanted...Foreign aid had become our sole medium of material nirvana. Pride in self-achievement and self-reliance was conspicuously absent”(1995:274)

Only reflection years afterwards has brought about these conclusions, and the author further notes that poverty:

Thus, while the difficulties associated with being ‘poor and hungry’ were known and albeit in many cases acute, they were by no means comparable with ‘underdevelopment’ however that concept was understood or locally defined. An Alaskan Yupik also states:

“Poverty has only recently been introduced to Native communities...for thousands of years people subsisted from the land and ocean. It was a hard life, but it had none of the frustrations and stigmas of poverty, for the people were not poor...The new economic system began to replace food and furs with cash, cooperation with competition, sharing with accumulating”

(cited in Rahnema and Bawtree 1997:45)

Relations of power are in this way laid bare and structural power through development is seen as inviolable, being contained in the very discourses of communication used to enshrine it.

Similar to common criticisms of post-modernism, however, it is noted that post-development theory is open “to accusations that it provides destructive rather than constructive criticism” (Matthews 2004:373). The lack of potential alternatives to development that are identified in post-development literature is often a starting point for the critique thereof. However, the very notion of ‘alternatives to development’ is highly problematic in a conceptually accurate reading of the post-development paradigm. A global alternative to development would demand the assets of (at least somewhat) universal applicability and would need to embrace global power structures in their current form: merely another meta-narrative. As Arturo Escobar notes in a brief reply to post-development critics:

“And if we refused to theorize about ‘how things must be instead’, it was not because of a relativizing conceit..., but precisely because, in the spirit of post-structuralist genealogies, we see all too well how this normative stance has
always been present in all development discourses, even if naturalized and normalized. For the post-development advocates, this naturalized morality domesticates our ethical sensibilities, our thinking and our actions in ways that can only serve the interests of those in power" (2000:11)

Thus, it is not that post-development theorists are unable to identify alternatives to mainstream development discourses, but rather that they are unwilling to do so on the understanding that any such replacement of paradigm would be unsatisfactory on largely the same basis as before.

In an interesting survey and rejection of post-development literature, Parfitt notes that "It is clear that for Escobar, power is central to the operation of development as a discourse" (2002:29), while Escobar also acknowledges a reality independent of discourse and thus undermines his own theoretical commitments. What Parfitt fails to go on to recognise is that power is also central to the practice of development. Thus, power denotes the impact both of discourse and in turn of practice. He advocates a 'principle of least violence' to guide developmental interventions, arguing that

"...in those instances where the oppressed have not been able to organise themselves there is an ethical justification for an aid intervention to assist them in achieving the self-reliance to mobilise in pursuit of their own self-defined objectives. Indeed, it could be argued that the omission of such an intervention would be ethically unacceptable in that it would entail tolerance of the current situation of poverty and oppression" (2002:32)

A major flaw in the thesis is that power is involved in the choice of who/where/which project to aid through intervention, and the power of discourse is inherently involved in building expectations of likely outcomes of intervention. This is not to reject the intellectual argument presented, but rather to highlight that the acceptance of an 'aid intervention to assist' is often rejected outright in post-development circles due to the structure and discourse of development.
2.3 Broad Themes of Development Policy

A review of the evolution of development policies and the historical and changing power contexts accompanying them is essential to make an educated judgement on the interaction of frameworks of power in processes of development. The following sections are devoted to that task. They begin with an exploration of the relationship between development and foreign policy, and the manner in which it can be judged to have been interlinked during the changing periods of development history. The next section examines some seminal revelations about development assistance, formerly that the position of poor states on the global stage left them in a disadvantaged position which prevented development in itself, but secondly that the exemplary development progress being made by some poor states (primarily the so-called 'Asian tigers') meant all others must be disadvantaged by internal factors (like corruption and inefficiency) rather than external ones. The impact of these works to the opening of space for neo-liberalism, with its inherent rejection of the state in favour of open market practices, is explored in the penultimate section. The inclusion of poverty reduction as an explicit aim of development on moral grounds forms the final topic for discussion.

2.3.1 Development Policy as Foreign Policy

Whilst development theory constitutes a bounded area of study and analysis, development policies are implicitly intertwined with the broader field of world order and motivations of foreign policy. Indeed, development lies at the very heart of the neo-liberal project promoted by the 'Washington Consensus' in the so-called 'developing world' under the guise of development policy, while state governments preach the same mantra of neo-liberal common sense to their citizens in the 'developed world' (Cammack 2006:345). Even more directly, analysis has highlighted the merging of security and development objectives, or at least the policies that represent them (Duffield 2001). Since the terrorist attacks in the United States (US) in September 2001, this trend has increased dramatically for the world's largest donor of aid, with development having been adopted as one of the three pillars of US international engagement (Bush 2001). However, a DAC report highlighted the lack of emphasis on poverty reduction (OECD December 2006).
These issues are important to emphasise the extent to which contemporary development is intertwined with broader themes of international relations and international political economy. Furthermore, this emphasises the interaction, influence and significance of every global citizen (particularly those of rich democratic states) at an individual level in both processes and outcomes of development. But the history of development shows that while the significance of development may remain unchanged, the publicised rhetorical intentions of development policies pursued have altered dramatically. During the early years of development, aid was dispensed almost exclusively in the form of tied aid and loans. The former required the purchase of products or services from the donor state with aid, thus creating markets for donor states. The latter were issued by the Bretton Woods institutions, at concessional rates, and primarily financed large-scale basic productive infrastructure projects, designed to attract inward private investment in line with the modernisation thesis.

Power relations in this period follow a similar pattern to those revealed by the above analysis of modernisation from a theoretical perspective. The political climate of this era, provided by the superpower rivalry and antagonism of the Cold War, was the defining feature. Minor states were lured to one super-power or the other by the promise of aid, so that the aid system was effectively hijacked as a weapon of ideological warfare. Accepting development aid from a superpower meant a state was instantly allied to development according to that ideological agenda, providing constraints to the ability to command alternative or indigenous paths to development. Thus, it has been noted that "The Cold War was more than a military stand-off—it was a struggle over different paths to development" (Grieg et al. 2007:70). This period of development, embedded as it is in the key ideological and security objectives of a polarised international system, reveals little more of note for the exploration of power relations. It is of fundamental importance in identifying the roots of the dominance of neo-liberalism as a powerful global agenda in subsequent years though. At the conclusion of the Cold War, with communism globally discredited and the presence of the US hegemon undisputed, the neo-liberal agenda dictated a powerful discourse of global relations.
Policy oriented calls for a significant change in development application and practice were not entirely absent during this period. Charged by the rising debt crisis which was subsuming many poorer states in the late 1970s, new ideas were being initiated for development. A key report was published as far back as 1980 by the Independent Commission on International Development Issues, headed by Willy Brandt, entitled *North-South. A Program for Survival*. The report advocated a fundamental change in the structure of world trading in order that developing economies be fully represented and included on equal terms in the international financial system. The commission rejected the notion that development obligations extended only through the medium of aid, and insisted rather that a broader restructuring would be required to facilitate holistic development in the global South (Brandt 1980). The recommendation was accompanied by a call that levels of aid should be simultaneously increased to promote a large scale transfer of resources from North to South, and thus constrict the increasing economic disparity between the two groupings. Such advice came from reputable international leaders and statesmen/women, but arguably suffered from the stifling political climate of the Cold War, which inhibited political will to act upon the recommendations. This said, it is notable that such recommendations have not been implemented since the demise of the Cold War either.

During this period, the economic failure of African states, and thus the requirement for aid, was justified by reference to the nature of Africa’s incorporation into the capitalist global economy (Adedeji 1993), and less openly by reference to colonial history. However, an important shift in this perspective was initiated by Bates (1981), who argued that Africa’s economic failure was not due to conditions external to the continent, but rather to internal mismanagement by national governments. This academic contribution was followed by a World Bank report published the same year, entitled: *Accelerated Development in Sub-Saharan Africa*, often referred to as the ‘Berg Report’ (World Bank African Strategy Review Group 1981). This document emphasised key differences between developmental states in the African context, and those emerging economies which were being successfully cultivated in the Asian context: the so-called Asian tigers. The report emphasised the effect of corruption and inefficient government
throughout the African continent. These two publications informed a seminal change in the thinking about development in Africa.

2.3.3 *The Onset of Neo-Liberalism*

If the state was inefficient and corrupt, then development policies should be focussed on moving power away from governments and onto markets. This onset of globalised neo-liberalism and *laissez-faire* economics in development was an idea which fitted well with the domestic politics of the most powerful nations of the time. Thatcher had recently gained power in the United Kingdom (UK) in 1979, whilst the US had elected Reagan as President in 1981. For African states deemed to require development, these conditions heralded the beginning of the period of ‘structural adjustment’. Such states were more reliant then ever on international aid given the stifling nature of the debt crisis, and were thus forced into accepting the fiscal and austerity measures required by structural adjustment policies. As Clapham has noted: “In political terms, the debt crisis removed any need for argument over whether the basic causes of African underdevelopment lay in the structure of the global economy or in domestic mismanagement: those who had the money were in a position to impose their explanation on those who needed it” (1996:812). The demands of structural adjustment policies have been well-documented throughout the literature (see Bello 2001:128; D. Simon et al. 1995), but they basically required free, open markets and for governments to balance budget sheets.

Results of SAPs were catastrophic across much of Africa and the ‘developing’ world, giving rise to the so-called ‘lost decades’ (see for example Bello 2001; Chossudovsky 1997; George and Sabelli 1994; D. Simon et al. 1995), further exasperated by the amassing of personal fortunes through aid by some elites, for example Mobutu in Zaire or Moi in Kenya. Fiscal measures demanded reductions in already scarce government spending, resulting in a retreat of the state from the provision of services to its citizens (Bayart et al. 1999). The liberalisation of markets to the fluctuations of global commodity prices tended to adversely affect domestic traders, particularly smaller, agricultural producers. The primarily resource based nature of many African economies meant that they were particularly susceptible to fluctuations in global pricing indexes.
Competition with industrialised producers that dominated the world market in other sectors was inevitably unsuccessful, though coupled with this was the lack of Foreign Direct Investment (FDI) brought by opening borders given ongoing shortcomings in basic infrastructure. But the harsh effects of the application of structural adjustment for the populations of sub-Saharan African states were also contributed to by the disruption which a transfer of power to markets entailed for the dense patrimonial systems already entrenched there (Bayart et al. 1999). Neo-patrimonial elites were reluctant to relinquish their control over resources, so in the process of privatization and liberalisation many bought national assets and resources at a fraction of the true market price (for the case of Zambia see Larmer 2005a).

To expand our analysis of power relations slightly at this point, it is worth noting that debate around whether economic poverty had originated from contact with global forces of production and exploitation (as for Marxist and dependency theorists), or whether it had originated from African elites was indeed merely academic for the vast majority of Africans worst affected by the measures imposed through structural adjustment. Arguably, this was not an era of development policy at all, merely of total reliance on markets (Leys 1996:42). Thus, for the marginalised majority in African societies, the root causes of African poverty were structural to some extent. Whether these marginalising structures had originated from the power of national or international elites mattered little, the fact remained that as individuals they were effectively powerless over their opportunities and impoverished both as entrepreneurs and as active political citizens.

By the end of the 1980s, there was growing consensus that structural adjustment was working for no-one. In 1989, the World Bank released a report entitled: *Sub-Saharan Africa From Crisis to Sustainable Growth*, which acknowledged that the roles of the state and the market required balancing. Ultimately, the report directed that the successful adoption of global neo-liberal capitalist practices required some capacity in a state or leadership to make the measures work. It is worth noting that widespread criticism of structural adjustment swung the balance back towards an emphasis on external factors being the determinants of poverty in African states. This thesis is supported by the fact that the both ‘developed’ and Newly Industrialised Countries.
NICs), esteemed as examples of successful global economic integration and investment, employed protectionist measures in their transition to high economic growth (Chang 2002). In constructing the 'structural context of development', Payne notes that "Certainly, the 'level playing-field' much discussed and lauded within liberal political ideology is nowhere to be seen" (2005:240). Thus, the macro-economic conditions applied to Africa never gave a reasonable chance to the promotion of successful economic development.

This was an era of universality in development policy orientation, 'mono-economics' accompanied by 'mono-politics' (Clapham 1996:814), managed by the authority of the 'Washington Consensus' (Williamson 1990), namely the World Bank, the IMF, the US Treasury and the Chicago School of economists. The convergence of these ideas vastly increased their discursive and structural power, illustrated by Thatcher’s slogan TINA (there is no alternative) or by Marcuse’s notion of a one-dimensional universe (1972), to become an agenda based on an undisputed form of neo-liberal 'common sense'. From this grew an increasing use of moral pronouncements in the name of development, now openly a policy aimed at poverty reduction. By the end of the decade, eliminating poverty had been clarified as a 'moral duty' (DFID 1997:5) and a 'moral challenge' (DFID 2000a). UN agencies pushed the alternative human development paradigm, which had originated in the 1970s with the formation of the Human Development Index, a ranking system for levels of development based on access to basic services and the ability to fulfil basic needs. This amounted to "an honourable effort to questionable real effect" (Saith 2006:1169) in the face of the powerful dominant discourse that was established. Indeed, the pervasiveness of neo-liberalism has been linked to the common promotion of hegemony at global and national levels to the advantage of core elites at both levels. Payne has argued that in the contemporary era, neo-liberalism has itself supplanted development policy, negating the need for specific bands of policy through its all encompassing logic (2005).

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2 Notable that poverty reduction was first identified as key objective of ODA as early as 1975 in a British White Paper (Slater and Bell 2002:341)
2.3 4 Prioritising Poverty Reduction in Development Policy

From a focus on economic meta-narratives as drivers of development, the World Bank began to consider the negative social effects of forced liberalisation and privatisation measures from the early 1990s onwards. James Wolfensohn's commitment to the Comprehensive Development Framework (CDF) in January 1999 demonstrated an evolving emphasis on human development. Endorsement of the Millennium Development Goals by the UN assembly in 2000 reinforced this shift within the broader international community. Furthermore, PRSPs were introduced by the World Bank in 2000 and underlined the importance of national ownership of development policies. The combination of these priorities led to a number of African initiatives endorsing a notion of regional responsibility for development on the continent. 'African solutions to African problems', for example, was the slogan of the New Partnership for African Development (NEPAD) which was launched in October 2001. Tony Blair founded the Commission for Africa in 2004, and published a report, Our Common Interest (2005), around the time of the G8 summit at Gleneagles when the British government continued to emphasise Africa and debt relief as priorities.

The seeming movement towards a more human-centred paradigm of development appears to demonstrate a new concern with greater equality in the human condition, with levels of opportunity and power for individuals. However, a narrowing of interests between the most powerful actors was evident too. In 2002, the US "established the 'Monterrey Consensus' which effectively and firmly embedded the MDG implementation process within the mainstream neo-liberal strategic and policy framework" (Saith 2006:1170). The MDG agenda has contributed to a convergence of all major development institutions around promotion of country-owned, private sector-led development strategy (Cammack 2006:337), indeed the UN was brought into partnership with a wide range of private sector organisations under pressure from the US (Saith 2006.1170-1). A study of World Bank Poverty Assessments in Sub-Saharan Africa pre-1996 found that a 'money-metric approach' was taken although the rhetoric emphasised the multidimensionality of poverty (Hammer et al. 1999). Continuities between NEPAD and the World Bank's CDF are noted (Owusu 2003:1663-4), alongside recognition of NEPAD as essentially elitist and top-down, embracing policies and political leaders who
have shown little commitment to development in Africa (I. Taylor 2005a). Cammack has pointed out the similarities between *Our Common Interest* and earlier material from the World Bank and the European Bank for Reconstruction and Development (EBRD), both former employers of the main author of the report (2006:335), and paraphrases the title as 'a capitalist manifesto for Africa' (Cammack 2006:341). Slater and Bell have further noted some key correlations between DFID's White Papers of 1997 and 2000 and World Bank reports and strategies (Slater and Bell 2002:343 and 345). The consolidation of these powerful agents of development into an even more coherent mainstream paradigm and discourse, including state, institutional, private and non-state levels to some extent, is significant for the structure of power relations underlying development policy frameworks.

Twenty-first century development policy has been argued to have grown increasingly divergent under, what is loosely termed, the 'post-Washington consensus.' Indeed, Payne notes on three separate occasions that "there manifestly exists no central agreed terrain of debate within development studies" (Payne 2005:39). But this narrative, though more decentralised in some ways is no less universalising than its predecessor (Higgott 2000). The interconnections between powerful actors and their policy inputs, while remaining somewhat distinctive epistemologically, continue to be so great as to provide a powerful discourse for the global politics of development. The central focus on poverty reduction and human development in rhetoric has raised no significant challenge to this underlying power structure. The centralisation of these relations around a framework of global capitalism, exemplified by the collapse of the Doha round of WTO talks, makes the parallel aims of human-centred, by definition more egalitarian, development seem overwhelmed and subordinated from the outset.

The most notable feature of this apparently evolving agenda is arguably the similarities of effects that it has brought about in practice, that is an ongoing lack of real progress in terms of bettering the life standards or opportunities for those it affects. It is important to notice in the context of the current research agenda, that it is therefore the underlying powerful structure of these relationships that dominates the effects of the system, or at least to a much greater extent than the rhetorical content of the policies.
themselves. The following section considers how these apparent changes in policy have been pursued through direct implementation in communities.

2.4 Changing Faces of Development Practice

The increasing focus on local level ownership of development projects and on human development as a broad development aim has resulted in some fundamental changes in how development is presented 'on-the-ground'. It is thus necessary to distinguish development practice from policy frameworks which dictate globalised development priorities, as these frameworks are often far removed from and unknown to the individuals directly affected by development. These lower level changes in culture amongst development workers and how they operate, affect people as directly as macro-scale policy changes, although of course they remain related in a complex way. An increasing focus on participation is the most significant change to practice, although there is growing body of critique on the utility of participation as it is currently being used in development practice. The following section considers a relatively new approach of 'asset-based development' practices as a reaction to the established negative focus of development to identify inferiorities and deficiencies in other communities. Finally, an exploration of the plethora of interests representing development within communities is given, which is essential to keep in context the nature of changes to practice overall.

2.4.1 Increasing Focus on Participation

The most significant change to development practice is centred around a move to increasing the use of participatory methods in development. Chambers began using participation as a means of involving previously marginalised groups (1983). Participation was adopted as a research methodology to inform distant development designs, and then moved to mobilising local capacity for the self-management of projects (1994), before evolving to a more contemporary poverty driven focus in his plea of Putting the Last First (1997). Popular participation of the poor and the marginalised in local development settings was deemed a necessary move to combat state-level corruption, as well as the oft-found inapplicability and lack of sustainability of the achievements of development projects. Participation was seen by some as a possible path.
to sustainable political participation and empowerment, if it could "be conceptualised in terms of an expanded and radicalised understanding of citizenship" (Hickey and Mohan 2005), making the concept of participation seem to have the potential to create more empowering forms of development (see Singh and Titi 1995:22ff).

However, participatory methods were soon being criticised as new forms of subjugation and control (see Cooke and Kothari 2001). Local ownership is constrained by decisions made from outside communities, for example, which areas are chosen for projects, what kind of project is funded and the availability or provision of resources (Mosse 2001:23). Furthermore, participation makes "naïve expectations of the transformative power of development professionals as individuals" and often universalises the notion of a community to an extent that is 'potentially debilitating' (Williams 2004:559 and 561). Demanding participation in order to make development successful has also been criticised on the basis of shifting the burden of resource provision to needy communities themselves (Rahnema 1992:117), and research into the 'consultative imperative' built into modern conditionalities shows that consulted voices are often ignored or divided through the mechanism (Gould 2005a:142). These critiques have been widespread, but some have argued that even if participation is a form of subjugation, its consequences are not entirely pre-determined and its subjects are never completely controlled (Williams 2004).

In many ways, issues arising with the implementation of participation are mirrored throughout all facets of development. Development workers 'on-the-ground' can institute changes that have the potential to affect people in a direct, meaningful way. But their internal classifications (or discourses) of development limit their own agendas and capacity for critical or lateral thinking and action, while broader structural forces limit the magnitude of the change (Mayo and Craig 1995:10). Thus, while decisions surrounding development practices and choices will ultimately never be truly 'locally-owned', due to the global structure of the development industry, the inherently political discourse of development will continue to mould the manner in which participation is integrated into development projects, even allowing for the best possible intentions of individual development workers (see Escobar 1995). Indeed, it is noted that as participation became more popular, “more radical thinking and action toward
‘empowerment’ and ‘liberation’ of the people is becoming marginalised” (Rahman 1995:26).

2.4.2 An Asset Based Approach

Practical embodiments of the post-development commitments can be identified in the contemporary application of asset rather than needs based approaches (Gibson-Graham 2005, Mathie and Cunningham 2002). Research undertaken in urban regions of the US has emphasised that this approach encourages targets of development policy to act ‘more as citizens than as clients’ (Kretzmann and McKnight 1993). The implications of being a citizen are arguably more complex in states where there is not such an entrenched democratic system, but the connotation of citizen rather than client retains importance and relevance to signify empowered participant, rather than at best, interested consumer.

The production of ‘asset-maps’ to identify the strengths of communities that can be built on and reinforced for locally-led development, changes the power relations of development significantly. Rather than development actors identifying externally defined weaknesses, needs and sources of poverty, ‘asset-mapping’ reinforces existing strengths and attributes of communities, locating them in the ‘diverse economy’ as alternative sources of value (Gibson-Graham 2005). Such practice occurs in isolated pockets of the development apparatus at present, and the long-term effects are not available to judge yet. However, given the kind of ethnographic research required to devise asset maps and to appropriate development strategies from the complex webs of social relations in communities, it seems unlikely that under the present global structure of development these kinds of practices could become a new mainstream model of development.

2.4.3 A Plethora of Interests ‘on the Ground’

At this lower level of practical decision-making, ‘on the ground’, there is far more diversity than is possible at the top of the power pyramid. Accompanying post-development literature has been a revolt of those who emphasise the diversity of development and thus the lack of theoretical coherency in arguing against the process of development on grounds of typical features. In this perspective, power is fundamentally situated in and divided between the various actors involved in development practices.
Grillo and Stirrat (1997) have turned around the phrase ‘myth of development’, which they point out might also be known as the ‘Development Dictionary’ perspective. The myth is of “development as a monolithic enterprise, heavily controlled from the top, convinced of the superiority of its own wisdom and impervious to local knowledge” and grounded in a victim culture (1997:20-21). The analogy of any single definitive discourse of development is itself highly problematic, they argue, emphasising the diversity found at all levels of the development spectrum. Indeed,

“The challenge of post-development is not to give up on development, nor to see all development practice...as tainted, failed, retrograde; as though there were something necessarily problematic and destructive about deliberate attempts to increases social well-being through economic intervention; as though there were a space of purity beyond or outside development that we could access through renunciation” (Gibson-Graham 2005:6)

Thus, again the argument is underlined that the purpose of discussions of development is to improve the conditions and opportunities of life for impoverished and marginalised people and communities. While theoretical consistency may be achieved by a rejection of development itself, this is of little value to those who deserve an opportunity to live a life of increased social well-being.

The myth of development may signify the lack of progress towards the pre-determined aims of ‘development’, but it is not a myth of action. Many actors are involved in so-called development processes on the ground whether or not they promote something which is subsequently defined as ‘development’. The contemporary constitution of development being a nexus of states, international institutions, NGOs and communities fed through development and or foreign policy is becoming increasingly complex. The promotion of grassroots and/or indigenous NGOs in Africa has traditionally been considered a boost to self-advocacy of community interests, but this view is being eroded by the revelation that community organisations are often representative of individual community members embracing vocational opportunities rather than collective associational interests (Dill 2009). Such an analysis is backed up by the theorisation of indigenous NGOs as constitutive of a ‘comprador class’ linking
bourgeois interests in the development industry with the generation of a community
based bourgeois class in Africa (Hearn 2007).

In addition to the complexity of boundaries between different development actors,
the motivations for implementation of 'development' can often be highly complex.
Wrong (2009) has recently demonstrated that dispersal of international funding to the
Kenyan government continued despite burgeoning evidence that false deals were being
profited from by members of the government, and thus in direct contravention of
development policy initiatives of zero-tolerance towards high-level corruption. Duffield
(2007) has pointed out how the development industry has an inbuilt interest to maintain a
need for their services, given that each actor is made up of staff who want to be
employed. Thus, despite the rhetoric of focussed poverty reduction, development actors
are constantly reflexive and reacting to pragmatic interests.

Analysis of development practices needs to maintain a critical view of this array
of actors and the interlinked power interests that they represent. Recognition of
conflicting interests in the pursuit of development 'on the ground' means that types of
development actors cannot usefully be categorised for the purposes of critically analysing
power relations or processes of empowerment.

2.5 Chapter Summary

This chapter serves to analyse the concept of development for the purposes of the
current research agenda, as well as to contextualise power in terms of development
theory, policy and practice, and the various constituent actors. Notable is the dislocation
between mainstream practices, and thus what may be referred to as the structural
dimensions of development, and the evolution of theoretical frameworks attempting to
divulge this structure and its merits. Notions of power, structure, agency have been taken
at face value in this analysis, used as terms of development rather than disputed concepts
in their own right. A few key actors dominate power relationships, and are expanded by
the dominant structure they constitute. Some efforts have been made to counteract the
oppressive nature of dominant meta-narrative discourses, but it is so far unclear what the
power relationships between individuals or communities and these frameworks are. The
next chapter will begin to address some of these issues, adding breadth and quality to conceptualisations of power in its diverse and complex forms.
Chapter Three

Deconstructing Assumptions:

Power as a Critical Unit of Analysis

The implication an increase in power for marginalised actors in the international system is central to the agenda of empowerment, and is similarly central to the outline of this research. It is the identification of a common aspect (‘power’) in both the framework of global relations and the agenda of empowerment which provides the basis for the current research questions. As power is to be used as the critical unit of analysis in this project, clarity is needed from the outset about what power is, how it can be defined and recognised. The term ‘power’ has so far been used simplistically and unproblematically in the introduction to this research, yet the conceptual basis of the term could hardly be less simple or unproblematic. Analyses of power are found across a broad swathe of sociological literatures and are equally central to the analysis of human geography, international relations and international political economy. The breadth of areas of research which contain references to power shows the versatility of the concept, which also represents the difficulties with accurately recognising features and functions of power. The notion of power is used at once to explain both the dynamics of global discourses and the relations between individuals, institutions and states.

In the current research agenda, there is a need to build a conceptualisation of power which is broad enough to be applied across the many diverse types of actors that are involved in the global development regime and which maintains currency in discussions of community empowerment. The claim that ‘power’ is the unit of focus in the agenda of empowerment is central to the theoretical articulation that empowerment differs significantly in implication to previous paradigms or indicators of development. Referring to power as both a concept and a unit immediately draws attention to the difficulties of defining this pervasive idea and force. No absolute definition of power exists, a feature which is applauded in terms of the empowerment agenda because it allows for cultural and contextual specificity. At the same time, the notion of power is
significant on the global stage, but the myriad of ways to understand it make all debates about power simply that – debates. Thus rather than providing absolute clarity or definition, this chapter explores the various debates about power, creating a framework for analysing human interaction which can be attributed in some form to the workings of power.

This chapter will first broadly examine direct power relationships between actors and the academic perception of power as some form of ‘structure’ and ‘agency’. The discussion will go on to consider the application of prominent theoretical perspectives in the context of the current research agenda, namely the post-structuralist notion of de-centred power and actor network theory which provides a framework for understanding the interaction between human and non-human forms of power. Various conceptualisations of power are identified in this way, but all are somewhat problematic for analysis of processes operating at both global and local levels, and more specifically for movement between these levels. Thus, the issue of scale is investigated in order that power relationships can be analysed comprehensively. To provide linkage with the context of development, identification of the contemporary development apparatus and assessment of general power relations between its various component actors, with emphasis on the variety of scales at which they operate, is essential. The final section of the chapter will consider the notion of equality as a fundamental (if idealised) aim of any redistribution or reorientation of power through development. Inequalities are often referred to as central to the development debate, and are ultimately both reducible to and consequences of power relations.

3.1 Conceptualising Power

The complexities involved in conceptualising power are such that Lukes (1974) famously declared it to be an ‘essentially contested’ concept. The particular intellectual site of contest is even disputed, as Goldmann adds “The concept of power is not only complex but value-loaded” (1979:2), heightening awareness that power is present in both local context and universal/global paradigms. Representations of power can be interpreted and felt very differently at these different levels. Recognition of such duality is essential given the parallel strands of this project. Firstly, empowerment is promoted at
the local level to reduce prejudice and inequalities of power relations in communities and households. Secondly, development is analysed in terms of being a ‘world project,’ being both subject to and determined by power relations at global level (Payne 2005, Jan Nederveen Pieterse 1996). Programmes of empowerment are promoted to individuals by other individuals (development workers), but the power relations between the two types of actor are complicated by the accompanying institutional power represented by development workers. At global and international levels, questions of power are determined by the manner in which the power is known: numerous explanations abound in this respect, capital for Marxists, military and economic maximisation for realists, influence for co-operation in liberalist conceptions, decentralised and discursive powers for post-structuralists, and so on. This list cannot be exhaustive, but does serve to show the plurality of ways in which power is analysed in the global system.

This section explores several modes of conceptualising, interpreting and analysing power relations Behavioural conceptions of power are first explored, where power is firstly a relatively simplistic one-dimensional force which coerces or provokes action. These views of power are drawn from a long sociological tradition which tries to define why power is ‘powerful’ by building on the simple view of power as a force promoted intentionally by one actor towards another and refining and nuancing this framework of understanding. The second section considers another extended tradition of conceptualising power as a force which has dual origins found in notions of structure and agency. The implicit relationship between these two dimensions of power is discussed, being of prime importance in the ensuing debate about power which affects a multitude of actors operating at a multitude of overlapping scales. The final part of this section brings together various conceptualisations of how power may be transferred within specific sets of power relations It highlights the significance of this discussion to the idea of ‘empowering’ which is essentially transferring power through the concept of empowerment.

3.1.1 Behavioural Conceptualisations of Power

Dahl provides a formal causal definition in a tradition of behaviourism, which states “The power of A over B is the capacity of A to make B do something he would
not have done without the intervention of A" (1957:202-3). The manner in which power is exercised by agents (actors/individuals/agencies) can be recognised through this simple equation, but the limitations of the model are equally as obvious. Much criticism has focussed on the lack of any specification of intention in the exercising of power (Wrong, 1979), or rather the ignorance of responsibility for action (Lukes 1974). Are actions which are intended to force another actor to act differently different from those which were not intended to have that effect but which continue to have that outcome? The notion of intention is most influential where direct forces of power operate over different scales of operation. Intentionality is also important in terms of anticipating that there can both direct and indirect impacts of power. This issue is particularly significant when considering individual development workers who deliver empowerment projects in communities, and who are generally well-intentioned. Clearly such good intentions to empower do not necessarily lead to empowerment, so a division between intention and action is clear. Another form of this division was anticipated by Bachrach and Baratz (1962) in their assertion of ‘non-decision making’ power, derived from ensuring that certain decisions are not made, and from their concept ‘mobilisation of bias’, the idea that behind all exchanges of power lay prefigured frameworks which dictate power relations.

Such explanations of power can add only a backdrop to the discussions of power being explored in this analysis, but they are significant for a number of reasons. Firstly, recognition that power can be a source of oppression, coercion or domination is clear from this preliminary exploration of power is important because clearly these concepts are not linked to empowerment of the marginalised in any way. The second point of note here is that power lies behind the figuration of relations between actors independent of the intention to invoke power as a force of action. In terms of the debate about empowerment, this factor serves to provide a framework which emphasises the inherent power of all actors to partake in networks of power relations.

3.1.2 Power as Structure and Agency

The definition of power as a direct act between agents and the subsequent linkage of that action to ‘prefigured frameworks which dictate power relations’, provides the classic opening to debate between relative power contained in agency as opposed to
structure. The definition and identification of structural power is highly complex and arguably open to question, being objectively unobservable and unrecognizable in positivist epistemologies (Wolfinger 1971). The notion of structural power, remaining in broad sociological terms, represents a reference to conditions under which any direct exchange is taking place or is affected. Indeed, structural power may be reducible to all sources of power which are not encompassed by agents, but rather located within external system(s) of cause and effect. It is a complex phenomenon to define, but several observations can help to build a clearer view.

Norms of practice and knowledge constitute an important part of the essence of structural power. Popularly referred to within categories like tradition, identity, culture and socialisation, such norms constitute an accepted structure, which defines types of acceptable action and reaction, effectively constraining certain actions and promoting others. Westergaard and Resler have stressed the importance of daily routines as “certain social mechanisms, principles, assumptions...which are taken for granted” (1975:142). These act as a source of power as they “favour the interests of this or that group vis-à-vis the rest of the population. The favoured group enjoys effective power, even when its members take no active steps to exercise power...simply because things work their way in any case” (1975:142-3). A similar point is made from a grounding of organisation theory, concerned with power relations in organisational settings: “individual power relations are only the visible tip of a structure of control, hegemony, rule and domination which maintains its effectiveness not so much through overt action, as through its ability to appear to be the natural convention” (Stewart R Clegg 1979:147). Structures of control emanating from this kind of conceptualisation can be perceived as social or cultural norms.

Issues of intentionality remain in question through this analysis, particularly in the consideration of macro-level structures. Powerful international systems of control originate from decisions made by individuals or groups of individuals, whose decision making responsibilities extend to only a minor category of the whole. Such intentions as they may apply to their decisions can easily become distorted when they are accompanied by

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3 Gramsci (1971) reserved use of the term domination to describe direct physical coercion. This meaning may be applicable in strict terms of organisation theory, though perhaps less so in reference to the exertion of structural power at global scale.
by the intentions of other sections, and are only at best dependent on the accuracy and validity of the often distant, secondary information that forms the basis of their choices. However, as Goldmann notes, “the controversy about whether ‘power’ is inherently coercive or not is trivial. Whether a political actor exercises power when succeeding to convince others by rational argument to do what he wants is a terminological question” (1979:8). Thus, the argument between the power of the structure or the power of the agency in an institutional context is complex, given that the extent to which the agent represents the power of the structure or vice-versa is not clear cut.

Dualism of structure and agency is rejected by Giddens (1984, 1993), who suggests a theory of ‘structuration’, asserting that social structures are produced and reproduced by the actions of knowledgeable subjects, who ‘instantiate’ the structure through their comprising it. He focuses upon reproduced practices as the starting point for theoretical reflection, arguing that there exists a ‘duality of structure’, at once a structure that is existing and a structure that is being reproduced (or that is evolving) through the actions of the individuals contained therein. Such a proposition supposedly moves away from the widespread interpretive weakness of prioritising action over structure, while failing to succumb to the inverse methodological dilemma of emphasising structure over action and portraying agents as ‘inert and inept’ (Giddens 1993:4). However, Giddens fails to incorporate into his theory an appreciation for the distance between some structures which dictate/mould routine practices, and the individuals caught up in reproducing such practices. In a reply to his critics contained in the second edition of his seminal work, he defends against this critique by arguing:

“...as a result of current globalising trends, there are actually very important respects in which everyday activities connect to global outcomes and vice versa. In the global economy, for example, local purchasing decisions affect, and serve to constitute, economic orders which in turn act back upon subsequent decisions”

(1993:8)

This explanation remains devoid of any recognition for the differences between those individuals constituting structure and the range of individuals affected by the power of that structure. The structure and power of the global economy may be constituted by the
purchasing power of individuals, but the individuals who have effective power in that context do not include all of those affected by the resultant structural power. Not all subjects within a social system are ‘knowledgeable’ in the manner Giddens suggests. Indeed, it may be more accurate to argue that those most affected by the power of the global economy (and of international institutions more generally following a similar logic) are those with the least opportunity to constitute an effective, or ‘knowledgeable’, part of the structure and its reproduction.

However, as referred to above, all such theorising fails to recognise that institutions which constitute powerful forms of structure can also exercise coercive power over individuals/communities, and thus can at the same time constitute a force of both structure and of agency. This is of key relevance to the present research agenda. The transfer of structural power to individuals is highly problematic in an epistemological sense. The notion of empowerment implying a transfer of structural power (derived from reproduced practices and discourses) is impossible to conceive, given that agents cannot own this kind of structural or discursive power. Empowerment is not concerned with bestowing the organisation of routine practices or the knowledge base of discursive techniques onto individuals, nor could they utilise such power to any potential benefit. Agents deriving power from an institutional power base (defined in terms of resources and capabilities, Goldmann 1979, D. Wrong 1979) apparently draw on a ‘multitude of indirect as well as direct sources of power, which can ultimately be used in both direct and indirect forms to affect other actors.

The theorisation of subjective and objective forms of empowerment which occurs as a result of the analysis of the empirical data presented in this project requires introduction in the context of this core debate regarding structure and agency. Direct or absolute power of actors to determine outcomes directly is related to the notion of subjective empowerment, embracing the concept that actors have power to directly affect outcomes in the context of structures within which they operate. Objective empowerment relates directly to this notion of context, thus signifying the limitations of the absolute power contained in subjective forms of empowerment. In order to gain objective empowerment, actors need to have influence over the limitations and constraints provided by the structures which define their possible sphere of power and empowerment.

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3.1.3 Power Transfers: Variable- and Zero-sum Analysis

Sociological research is generally concerned with evaluating existing power relations, and identifying their modes of operation. By contrast, the focus here is upon approximating power relations between global institutions and individuals/communities, and attempting to identify the potential for power transfer between the two parties. Given this difference in focus, the explanation so far has remained conspicuously silent on the issue of zero- or variable-sum conceptions of power transfer. The notion of zero-sum analysis is the assumption that the level of power in any given social system/relationship will remain stable. Marx propounded this notion, that power in society is finite. Thus, increases/decreases in the power of one actor will have an immediate inverse effect on the power of the other actor. Dahl (1961), by contrast, developed an argument based on pluralism and advanced the idea that power in society is not only divided between different centres of power but also that increases in power for one actor do not necessarily impact on the relative power of another. Variable-sum analysis thus assumes a more fluid nature of power relations, allowing for a conception of power in society which can fluctuate rather than remaining stagnant.

This line of thought has obvious implications for the ensuing research, and is a complex matter. An individual gaining power through empowerment programmes would hardly affect the power of international institutions and would thus constitute a variable-sum transaction. But arguably a million individuals being empowered to the same extent may have an impact on the power of global level development actors, in turn representing a zero-sum framework. Resolution of this issue is highly abstract, and will not be achieved here. However, the implications for the evaluation of empirical research according to the current research agenda are clear. In terms of the notions of subjective and objective empowerment, the centralisation of the concept of equality to guide meaningful empowerment requires introduction here. Where people gain subjective empowerment, they acquire increased absolute power to determine outcomes which they are able to directly affect within the boundaries of the structures of power which provide

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4 The basis for this focus is the explicit agenda of empowerment forwarded by global institutions involved in development. Empirical evidence of this agenda will be given in a forthcoming section.
frameworks for their possibilities for action. This constitutes a variable-sum equation on the basis that the increased capacity for action is unlikely to impede on other power relations surrounding the actions of any other agents. By contrast, for objective empowerment to be achieved, agents need to gain a greater influence in the more extensive networks of power which provide the structure to their possible modes of action. In this case, there is a need to equalise power relations between agents so that all agents have equal capacity to affect structures. The notion of equalising power relations means that this constitutes (effectively) a zero-sum power equation, as equality is inherently a relative concept. If one actor increases levels of equality vis-à-vis others, the nature of the power that can be utilised by others is changed. It is critical to this thesis that a pluralist conception of power is embraced and simultaneously that there is a conception of that power being existent only in so far as it can be utilised in the context of the limitations of the structural constraints in which it is exercised. This point will be explored in greater detail below, but for the moment it is suffice to note the manner in which this conclusion metamorphoses when we turn to examine post-structural theories of power, which negotiate the formation of power and power relations at local level, and identify sources in actors other than merely abstract structure and human agency.

3.2 Selected Theories of Power

The following two selected theories of power build a picture of how power can be understood as permeating all spaces of interactions and in a highly complex manner. They have been selected to contribute to the current analysis by relating both to notions of structure and agency and to frameworks of power which are dispersed through representatives of powerful frameworks for action. Post-structural analyses give space to understanding power as de-centred, conveyed by discourses and knowledges rather than as identified through specific cause and effect. Actor-network theory provides an understanding of power which signifies the relevance of both human and non-human (resource) components which enables a more accurate reflection of the manner in which power is perceived and thus acted upon.
3.2.1 Post-Structuralism on Power

In the mainstream social sciences, approaches to power are generally derived from a Hobbesian tradition, in which power has a distinct source or centre, traditionally the state but equally as applicable to the Marxist view of capital. Opposing this, post-structuralists and post-modernists follow in Machiavelli’s footsteps, concerned not to fix or serve power but rather to interpret power relations and strategies. Bauman famously noted this division between Legislators and Interpreters (1987). Further interpretive contributions have been forwarded notably by Foucault (1980) and Gramsci (1971). In these works, there is no originating source of power, it is entirely de-centralised (post-structural), and focussed on local and practical implications (see also Laclau and Moﬀe 1985). Foucault insists that discursive representations of knowledge can hold power in and of themselves whilst maintaining historical specificity (M Foucault 1977), to the extent that there exists a “synaptic regime of power, a regime of its exercise from within the social body, rather than from above it” (1980:39). The idea here is that power is constituted by society itself, not as Giddens suggests that actors substantiate structure, but rather that actors actually constitute locally contextualised ‘structures’, and mould their discursive practices to maintain notions such as ‘rationality’ or ‘logic’ or indeed ‘empowerment’.

Such a perspective has been heavily criticised as being relativist, having no fixed point of reference (see for example Stewart R Clegg 1989:151). But as Clegg and Wilson have noted, “this is too extreme a reaction. What are dissolved are notions of any transcendent position which can be constituted outside of discursive practices...some representations will achieve a power far greater than others, a power which is neither the effect of a human subject and its volitions, nor of a structure which works its will behind the back of such subjects” (1991:235). To argue that discursive labels can both represent the power of a particular position and constitute that power itself however is problematic. Such contextualised structures do not exist with clearly defined boundaries. They overlap and coexist in complex forms, so that communities can be empowered for example within particular structures while being disempowered in other senses in a parallel process. Furthermore, the issue of awareness is of paramount importance here. The intentional promotion and imposition of a particular set of values is clearly a form of
powerful domination, whereas the introduction of perceived benefits at the request of a community could have a similar effect.

An explanation of power that is devoid of attention to sources of power that are generally and simplistically disconnected from their human agents is unsuitable for the global analysis of development. Key actors in development policy and practice are, for example, economically or militarily powerful, and this power has significant effects on the interactions of these players within development planning and resource allocation, while at the same time being represented by agents who replicate discourses. A more contemporary perspective known as actor-network theory can help to provide connections between the power relations of human and non-humans entities.

3.2.2 Actor Network Theory

A very different way of identifying and connecting with power that links not only actors, but also what has been referred to until now as ‘structure’ is known as actor/actant network theory (ANT). This perspective was developed most prominently by Latour (1986, 1987) and Callon (1986), as a systemic means of readdressing the dichotomous relationship between technology and society in social science research. These theorists wished to reject both the technological determinism and the social constructivism which had shaped previous social science perspectives. They argued that humans are portrayed either as over-determining agents in the technology/society relationship in the case of technological determinism, or as the inert recipients of a technological destiny in the case of social constructivism. ANT provides a framework in which the reflexive nature of the relationship between society and technology, human and non-human can be expressed as a socio-technical factor: through the notion of networks.

"From the actor network perspective the explanation of the development of socio-technical ensembles involves neither technical nor social reductionism, rather a principal of generalised symmetry must be adhered to, that is, the human and the non human will be analysed with the same conceptual framework"

(Bijker 1995)
Since its conception, the application of ANT has broadened to be used to describe phenomena throughout various disciplines; politics, art, economics, science and organisation. In recognising the reflexive aspect of actors (for example, the ability of a text to be created by an actor but also to influence other actors in a network), it provides the social scientist with a structure that has the potential to capture the heterogeneous components of everyday events.

“You do not go about doing your business in a total vacuum but rather under the influence of a wide range of surrounding factors. The act you are carrying out and all of these influencing factors should be considered together. This is exactly what the term actor-network accomplishes. An actor-network, then, is the act linked together with all of its influencing factors (which are again linked), producing a network” (Monteiro 2000)

This branch of sociology appears to be an attempt to circumnavigate the structure-agency debate, by delineating the relationships of ‘actors’ within ‘networks’. However, ANT should be rather understood as identifying the social as a ‘circulating entity’, which is “the summing up of interactions through various kinds of devices, inscriptions, forms and formulae, into a very local, very practical and very tiny locus” (Latour 1999:17). Thus, ANT does not partake in the debate about the dichotomy of structure and agency, macro- and micro-, human and society. Instead, this perspective invites “the slow realisation that the social is a certain type of circulation that can travel endlessly without ever encountering either the micro-level – there is never an interaction that is not framed – or the macro-level – there is only local summing up that produces either local-totalities (‘oligoptica’) or total-localities (agencies)” (Latour 1999:19). Attention is drawn towards the entire infrastructure that accompanies any interaction of actants.

Actor networks may be useful for giving a more nuanced, holistic and reflexive theory of the interactions of human and non-human entities. But how does the notion of power fit into or affect the flow of action through networks? This question is problematic, not least because Latour has argued forcefully that the term power needs to be abandoned altogether (1986). He argues that there is a need for “social scientists to understand power as a consequence not as a cause of collective action” (Latour
In this perspective, power is 'translated' through actors and mobilised by their energy, rather than existing as an *a priori* force, which 'diffuses' through society propelled by its own inertia. Furthermore, he insists that if power is based on these actions, then sociology can no longer be based on prior assumptions of what society is and must rather be based on constantly evolving definitions of networks (which are never static but literally *constantly* changing). Factors constituting networks do not only constitute an 'open-ended' list which is 'locally composed', but also may be more accurately described as 'associations' than merely those ties commonly associated with the 'social' (Latour 1986:276-7). The implications that follow are that there must be a move from an 'ostensive' to a 'performative' definition of society, that is from a position where society is knowable in principle with actors that may change but cannot fundamentally disrupt the whole, to one where society is impossible to know in principle as actors define society through their practices (Latour 1986:272-3).

While this argument adds a fresh and welcome alteration to the fundamental flexibility of sociological discourses on society, it leaves some key questions to be answered. If power is the consequence or product of collective action, then a necessary question for the current project concerns the relative potential power of various collectives or forms of collective action. If networks revoke the notion of power by rather possessing power in their kinetic energy, then the idea of disempowered or marginalised populations and collectives loses its merit. However, the accessibility of resources to collectives must impinge on the ability of any network to expand and be inclusive. As some theorists have pointed out: ANT is a "ruthless application of semiotics – entities take their form and acquire their attributes as a result of their relations with other entities" (Law and Hassard 1999:3). Power through collective action seems an enticing one for the potential of empowerment policies, but it is important to recognise the disconnections between networks. Indeed, as has already been made clear, the relative necessity of actants in determining the outcome of any network must be recognised ultimately as a form of power: not 'power over' but certainly 'power to'. Recognition of the extreme variations of scale at which actor networks operate for development might explain this dilemma. Scales of operation are only as relevant as the scales of technologies they comprise: while, for example, an apple is relatively powerless
whether or not it is in a network of actants, the same cannot be said for a gun or a bomb. Scales of resources more generally follow the same logic: while a few dollars has little potential to affect the activity of any network in which it may be enmeshed, a few thousand or million has the potential to massively alter, even to effectively independently determine the outcome.

Power relations between different actors can in these ways be understood as relative and connected to all kinds of factors, from discourse and knowledge to resources and networks. Networks can be understood as resources or discourses, histories, cultures or social norms. Although these two theoretical frameworks only open space for debate about power to range further, we are beginning to have a working conceptualisation of power which can be applied effectively in the context of the current research questions. What is underplayed in these theoretical frameworks is the issue of scale, given the diversity of scales of agents in development. It is to this question that we briefly turn next.

3.3 Issues of Scale

The variety of scales at which the development industry operates was anticipated in the previous chapter on development, but it is worth making the extent of these interconnections and extremities clear, before emphasising the qualitative effects of scale. Actors include global institutions, state departments, NGOs and development beneficiaries/participants/target populations. Relations between each of these groups of actors can be hugely varied: different state departments operate with very different cultures, some have enormous influence in the workings of global institutions; others very little. Some NGOs have international scope and funding from rich governments and private individuals, others are grassroots, localised movements representing their own communities.

A complex web of power relations exists between agents, actor-networks or and in the structure of global development policy and practice. A broad trend has been identified of a politicisation of humanitarian actors, as numerous NGOs and private enterprises have been increasingly incorporated into the workings of the mainstream system of global development. Global institutions have evolved over time too, but a
common feature of much of the development age is that domination has been maintained by a small number of key institutions and states. Indeed, the G7/G8 formation of rich states increasingly appears to occupy “the role of an organising political directorate of the global order” (Payne 2005:239), making this powerful block a highly centralised one.

The international system of sovereign states continues to provide the mainstream framework of analysis for international relations. But the extent to which development may continue to be analysed at the traditional levels of international relations: inter-state, state and intra-state is highly questionable. Global institutions have assumed an identity of their own, though their power/agenda is directly derived from the positioning of member states. However, boundaries between state and non-state actors have been disputed to the point that, for example, Harrison (2001) argues donors may be more appropriately considered as part of the state apparatus, a phenomenon he calls ‘post-conditionality’. Simultaneously, some donors finance selected civil society groups within other sovereign states, leading to the accusation of ‘social engineering a new type of civil society’ (Hearn 1999). The nexus identified by Gramsci (1971) between forms of coercion enacted by the state and civil society as very separate actors is highly controversial in this case. Although the state is commonly analysed as having a monopoly on the legitimate use of violence while civil society has no such power (Weber 1948-78), this does not incorporate Galtung’s identification of the pervasiveness and oppressiveness of forms of structural violence (1971). Perhaps such traits may be more accurately linked to the power of coercion through civil society, or even through development practices more widely (Uvin 1998).

This blurring of boundaries between state and non-state actors brings some difficult questions about the power relationships in development. What kind of actor is the sub-Saharan African state? At what level in the development power typology does it operate? These questions are important, yet predictably highly complex. The neopatrimonial systems which dominate many of the states of sub-Saharan Africa mean that the ‘state’ level of analysis is represented by an elite core which often works against the interests of the wider state, particularly its population. This trend has been analysed in terms of the retreat of the state and the position of the state as an actor in opposition to ‘civil society’ (Ferguson 2006). It is indicative of the complexity of categorising actors.
that “Zambia...continues to be mied in significant part by transnational organisations that are not in themselves governments but work together with powerful first world states within a global system of nation-states” (Ferguson 2006:100). The key focus of this project is a regard for localised empowerment regimes, and their effect on individual power levels vis-à-vis their environment of resources and discursive representations, and thus opportunities or capabilities. Recognition that scales are not always hierarchical in a simplistic sense is important. In some areas, states work with populations and against the agendas of global institutions but in others, states are arguably more powerful (in terms of inhibiting empowerment) than global institutions are in promoting global scale agendas. This reasoning leads to a need to express more succinctly the levels of power that can rightfully be expected by empowered individuals, which has already here been argued to be represented by progress towards more equal power relations.

Tensions between privileging local, national or global scales, and the relationships between those spheres, are common in discussions of human geography and international relations more widely (O’Riordan 2001). While localisation tends to be the more popular conception in development studies, heralded as a means to increase the power of local scale networks, some scholars have identified a purpose in ‘delocalisation’ (Giddens 1990:64; J. Gray 1998:57) or the possibility of uprooting local activities into global scale networks. But the difference between the possibilities for empowerment in these two processes is significant. Moving local activities to operate in global spheres either requires an increase in power, or will result in a decrease of relative power, due to operation in a more distant network with greater resources. By contrast moving global activities into local spheres means the relative loss of power for local actors who cannot be heard within such discourses or networks of power.

3.4 Locating (In)Equality as a Function of Power

This research is not concerned with the origins of power in the international system, nor is it concerned with the broad sociological analysis of power modalities in society or across societies. The focus here is on the possibilities of power and empowerment as a vehicle or catalyst for ‘development’, or perhaps more accurately a reduction in marginalisation for some communities. Therefore, it is argued here that
changes in power levels which result in greater equality in power relations constitute empowerment. The first section below makes this case in greater detail. The following section exemplifies the difficulties in locating equality as the goal of development by showing that conceptualising an accurate working definition is highly problematic. Various methods of considering and analysing equality are thus explored to give a fuller context to the ongoing prioritisation of greater equality as the rightful aim of both development and empowerment objectives.

3.4.1 Relating Equality to Development and Empowerment

Given the holistic view of 'development' that this project is concerned with, there is a necessity for some definition of what would constitute a positive power shift for communities and individuals targeted by 'empowerment' programmes. In part, this definition is the final aim of the project, and the premature categorisation of likely routes of empowerment would necessarily inhibit the conclusions of the research by precluding or prioritising certain explanations. However, from the outset, empowerment strategies may be linked with an ideal outcome of moving towards greater 'equality'. Such an explanation is derived from recognition that power relations are implicitly relative, and thus balance is required to reverse trends of marginalisation over and above a simple increase in absolute power.

Substantive inequality of outcomes (for example, wealth, access to basic services, levels of vulnerability to processes beyond local control) for different communities in the contemporary global system invites the current study of the mechanisms underpinned by the empowerment agenda and underlines their importance and urgency. The extreme nature of this situation is exposed effectively with the revelation that the world's ten richest individuals have a net worth equivalent to roughly sixty percent of the annual income of the whole of sub-Saharan Africa (Monbiot 2005). Equality must thus constitute a guiding factor in the quest for identifying and defining empowering strategies: successful development is not constituted by the reduction of people living below an arbitrary poverty line, nor can it dismiss the raised expectations of citizens living in an era of heightened globalisation and being intensely aware of marked differences in living standards. It has been observed that the contemporary era is
characterised by conflicting agendas of globalisation and democratisation, given that democracy requires an equal right to representation while globalisation in its current form fosters social inequality (Dallmayr 2002). An international analysis of inequality demands recognition that dichotomous representations are made at global level by groups of states, representing on the one hand the rich and powerful who benefit from the present system and on the other the majority world whose agenda is full of demands for equal treatment, for example the G77, and the NIEO (see Foot 2003). The ongoing inequality of power to dictate the conditions of global trade is one of the most publicised areas of inequality (Buckman 2005). The post-structuralist analysis of power highlights the importance of equality in relationships, rather than in quantifiable factors. This does not assume that there will be equality of outcomes as a result. If development and empowerment are about equalising power relationships, then they are about equalising participation in knowledge and discourse formation from this view.

3.4.2 Problems with Defining Equality

If equality is taken to be part of a working conceptualisation of what empowerment is meant to achieve, then clearly equality itself requires definition. It is widely acknowledged that the notion of equality is complex and abstract in its general form and for its application to social theory (Baker et al. 2004:21ff). However, for the purposes of this conceptualisation, the task is not so unapproachable. Indeed, the stipulation of equality need not be an exact science, rather a model with succinct margins of error. The connotations of equality in political discussion often conjure up political strategies based on organised wealth redistribution on a strictly egalitarian basis. Such a strategy is in direct contravention of the free market economy, which is linked in theory to open competition, comparative advantage and meritocracy. However, the income orientated character of poverty is widely accepted to be insufficient to portray levels of impoverishment which are multi-dimensional in nature and impact. Thus, it is clear that a redistribution of economic power would be insufficient to guarantee a lack of poverty in terms of the empowerment paradigm. Equality as a necessary component of mass empowerment for global citizens infers equality of social and political power and opportunity. Greater equality than is present today without any specific theorisation of
the concept is not difficult to imagine (Callinicos 2000). The ratio of income of the richest fifth of the world's population to the poorest fifth has risen from 30.1 in 1960, to 60:1 in 1990 (UNDP 1999:3). More recently, it has been noted that the richest 500 individuals in the world have a greater combined income than the poorest 416 million (UNDP 2006). Without endorsing the notion that income distribution is a fair indicator of either equality or poverty, it can be confidently argued that extreme inequality of this nature does play a significant role in determining levels of equality of the distribution of political/social power.

Specification of equality as a key factor in the attainment of successful development in the interests of individuals, however, continues to beg almost as many questions as it answers. The most serious and influential one concerns the difference between equality of outcome and the equality of opportunity. Aristotle highlighted the need for inequalities in outcome, through his identification that 'as much injustice arises from treating unequals equally as treating equals unequally', and it is widely accepted that by this logic equality of outcome is not to be strived for given natural differences in ability of individuals. However, equality of opportunity is far more difficult to measure and assess, so while preferred in principle, social scientists starting from mostly positivist ontologies have by default publicised lack of equality in terms of unequal outcomes.

In a comprehensive study of Inequality Reexamined (Sen 1992), two inter-related questions are posed: (1) Why equality? and (2) What equality? Sen argues that the nature of 'what equality' is dependent on the theoretical perspective of the researcher, or context, and that the more substantive question of 'why equality' is dependent on that answer. Working towards a political theory of equality, Mohanty argues that "Inequality among human beings is not the identification of qualitative or quantitative differences between them. A condition of equality exists when such differences actually or potentially cause one to dominate over others" (1983:243). This notion of domination is of key importance to the present research agenda, and establishes one mode for identifying power in terms of equality.

Equality is here taken to be fundamental in the search to define the process of empowerment. An implied goal of reducing inequality in power relations is present in the notion of empowerment, being a process which denotes the necessity to have total
flexibility in development trajectories but with equal rights (or power) to make each thrive. However, creating a working conceptualisation of equality is so problematic that use of the concept itself often requires so much discussion that its value is negated. As a working conceptualisation of power is also problematic, the notion of equality can help in maintaining clarity of judgement about empowerment though. Underlying the attempt to theorise the effects of the empowerment agenda, judgements about the progress of empowerment should be linked to the extent to which the agenda increases equality rather than abstract or arbitrary notions of how it affects broad power relations.

3.5 Chapter Summary

Analysis centred on the notion of power hits a striking paradox: "when you simply have power – *in potentia* – nothing happens and you are powerless; when you exert power – *in actu* – others are performing the action and not you" (Latour 1986). The fluidity of the concept renders it both useful and essential in the analysis of diverse contexts and scales, and problematic in terms of assessment and critical application. By adopting a notion of power which is recognisable through action rather than ‘resources that hold potential power’, a notion of development can be built which anticipates Sen’s ideas of *Development as Freedom* (1999), and which constitutes a standard of living defined by opportunity, capability and a lack of ‘un-freedoms’. Arguably, this position amounts to recognition that capabilities are about the freedom to partake in expansive (even global) networks on equal terms. By re-evaluating power in development as being contained in collective action, the potential for alternative paradigms of development is endless and legitimate, and barriers to development are reduced to unequal power relations and scales of networks. An agenda of empowerment of marginalised communities and individuals promoted by all scales of actor in the development process (though of course, not *all* actors), would appear to have the potential to overcome such barriers by its sheer nature. Examination of the details of such an agenda is of course necessary to determine empirical aims of empowerment, and the underlying ideas of what these agendas are aiming to achieve in the equalisation of power relations and thus the potential for collective action as the power of development. These issues form the focus of the next chapter.
Chapter Four

The Empowerment Agenda

This chapter sets out the evolution of an agenda of empowerment within the development regime. Mapping the history of the inclusion of empowerment in the priorities of development is a key objective of this project, so this chapter explores the breadth of applications and uses of empowerment before confining it to the community focus which is studied in the empirical sections of the present research. The identification of a notion of empowerment as a core rationale for the development project itself is justification for the assertion that empowerment is at the heart of any analysis of development and the objectives thereof. The centrality of a notion of empowerment can be traced to the earliest ideas about development, linking development to a fundamental concern for human beings to live in just societies with opportunities to maximise their own potential as intelligent beings. This rationale underscores the idea that developmental aims need to be constantly and critically reassessed to confirm that they remain in line with achieving outcomes that benefit human beings in an objective sense. It will be argued here that developmental aims have been reduced to particular categories, the most obvious being economic growth, and that these goals have been blindly pursued while losing focus on the reasons underlying development. Thus, while the pursuit of economic growth as a developmental strategy was arguably devised as a realistic and rational means to an end goal of just development for all of humanity, it has been reduced to an end in itself. Such a revelation is a stark reminder of the importance of critical commentary and of the need to deconstruct actions rather than categorising them.

Establishing that empowerment is a fundamental and implicit concern of development means succumbing to some highly debated normative assumptions. It assumes that development agendas are genuinely conceived to assist people who are disadvantaged or marginalised in the world. The extent to which this is true is debateable on many levels, with objections generally being focussed around the extent to which foreign aid tends to support foreign policy objectives or the extent to which the aid system ties states and peoples to a continuation of imposed 'neo-colonial' control.
However, most analyses accept that those involved with development processes and aims have good intentions that are subsequently hindered by political and economic demands or by structural and bureaucratic norms. Indeed, the reflexivity of the development apparatus at all levels to respond to criticism, at least at the level of policy rhetoric, supports such an assertion. Philosophical bases for empowerment also depend on the notion that policies are applied genuinely and in the interests of the people at whom they are aimed.

This chapter proceeds in four main sections. The first section examines in detail the notion of empowerment as the fundamental rationale of development and locates this claim in the history of the development regime itself, demonstrating that this recognition constitutes a return to past priorities rather than a new idea. Conceptualisations of empowerment that have arisen through scholarly discussion are considered to posit the philosophical justifications for valuing empowerment are the subject of the second section. This includes the theorisation of two distinct categories of empowerment (subjective and objective) as it can affect people in practice and finally explores the relationship between empowerment and theories of equality. The third section is devoted to detailed empowerment policy documentation analysis. It first considers the breadth of applications and uses of empowerment terminology in policy, before identifying the more focussed notion of community empowerment as the limited scope of this research agenda. The origins of the explicit focus on empowerment in development policies are then examined, before attention is given to the extensive institutional materials that have been published on the subject for use in development today. Some examples are then given of instances where empowerment has been related to the notion of equity in policy publications. The final section of the chapter considers an already emerging body of critique on the notion of an empowerment agenda.

4.1 A Rationale for Development?

The concept of development is based in the history of colonialism, conceptualised in the notion of *la mission civilisatrice* (see Paris 2002). The desire to acquire colonies

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5 The notion that good intentions are not enough to drive just development interventions is recognised most strongly by Ivan Illich in his commentary entitled *To Hell with Good Intentions* though his declaration of the inevitability of this outcome is not widely shared.

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was based on a two-fold logic. Clearly, the wish to gain power and resources through increased territory was a key motivator for governments and elites of the time. However, the representation of colonisation as a humanitarian cause, to bring civilisation to the barbaric natives of backward populations was also promoted and embraced. This position was not significantly challenged until the proclamation of Woodrow Wilson’s fourteen points at the end of World War I, advocating the necessity for self-determination of all nations and peoples, and highlighting the inherent injustice of colonial and culturally distant domination (Wilson 1918). Opinion is divided on the extent to which this moral or ethical objection to colonialism was responsible for the abandonment of empire and foreign subjugation. Alternative explanations include the notion that colonies had begun to cost more to control than they produced in terms of profit or that inhabitants of colonies were becoming increasingly demanding for rights and national justice. Arguably though, moral objections are likely to have played some part at least in the transition of policy formulations, and may be linked in conceptual terms with the very beginnings of a notion of empowerment: the rights of so-called uncivilised/underdeveloped/less-developed peoples to be in control of their own destiny and fate, and to have power in the organisation of their own societies, languages, beliefs and cultures.

4.1 Development = Empowerment

A careful reading of early development economists illuminates some surprising traits, given that these key theorists were highly influential in development policy and planning informed by the logic of the modernisation thesis. These apparently fiscal and to some extent de-humanised development strategies provide evidence of an underlying rationale for development de-linked from purely economic objectives. Rarely quoted and oft-overlooked areas of the work of, for example Rostow (1971a; 1971b; 1980), show that such theories were never so disconnected from the needs and aspirations of the human beings forecasted to be affected. Within the final pages of the second edition of *The Stages of Growth*, Rostow states,
"Billions of human beings must live in the world... They have a right to live their
time in civilized settings, marked by a degree of respect for their uniqueness and
their dignity, marked by policies of balance in their societies, not merely a
compulsive obsession with statistics of production, and with conformity to public
goals defined by a co-optive elite. Man is a pluralistic being – a complex
household, not a maximising unit – and he has the right to live in a pluralistic
society" (1971b:167)

Such a statement emphasises that economic policy is insufficient to guarantee human
‘respect’ or ‘dignity’, or to fulfil basic and fundamental human rights. Furthermore, he
quotes Keynes, to whom the bulk of fiscal monetarism is attributed, from his General
Theory:

“If human nature felt no temptation to take a chance, no satisfaction (profit apart)
in constructing a factory, a railway, a mine or a farm, there might not be much
investment merely as a result of cold calculation” (1936:150)

Thus a more careful reading of this body of work insists that human ambition and
aspiration runs far deeper than bare economic incentive or action, emphasising a more
humanised aspect and foundational aim for the purposes of development. Indeed, in his
later writing, Rostow highlights the need for the representation of a variety of human
interests within development:

“Economists have a proud role to play in economic development. But I would
say about economics and development what Clemenceau said about generals. He
said that war was too serious a matter for generals; just so, economic
development is too serious a matter for economists – at least, for economists
alone” (1980:332)

Such comments, at least in appearance, illustrate a compassion for the necessity of human
aspiration to carry good economic policy into the realm of development. The following
statement however, shows an inherent understanding of the necessary function of
empowerment within development.
“That inner confidence — the confidence that, to a significant degree, the nations and peoples of the developing world have the capacity to shape their own destiny in a modern environment — is the most important single component for successful economic and social development” (W W Rostow 1971a:317)

This work provides an interesting and different historical context against which to analyse the underlying rationale of development. Whilst this final quote places clear importance on an end goal of ‘successful economic and social development’, it undoubtedly prioritises ‘inner confidence’ by calling it ‘the most important single component’. The conceptualisation of successful development essentially requiring an inner confidence of the capacity to shape destiny represents an underlying appreciation of a far broader vision of development than is often associated with classical economists. Discourse analysis of course divulges the highly problematic specification of ‘their own destiny’ limited by pre-conceived ideas regarding the constitution of ‘a modern environment’. However, the identification of a humanistic concern through even this most dehumanised of theoretical bases for development retains significance through this critique, in that the rationale for development may be argued not to have altered at all. From an implicit belief that development mechanisms or pathways would lead to empowerment of individuals through development, the theoretical literature has done a full turn to critiquing the manner in which development does not serve the interests of those it purports to benefit most. From both, in many senses, polarised positions, the underlying assumption is that the purpose of development is to espouse dignity for human beings, accompanied by a free choice of opportunity, unconstrained by economic/social disadvantage.

Endorsement of empowerment as the implicit rationale of development needs always to be treated critically however. As Payne has warned “Although the precise normative content of the term [development] has always been hotly debated, development has traditionally and unquestioningly been seen as a ‘good’ — something better than mere economic growth, embracing the empowerment of people. In effect, development was always defined in moral terms” (2005:235).
This exploration of early development literatures shows that the implicit rationale of development is a holistic notion of empowerment. The power of discourse is here made evident as having established the label 'development', the label has come to be understood as something it was never intended to signify, that is an absolute concern with modernisation, industrialisation and economic growth as end goals in themselves. Acknowledgement of this central concern to empower through development locates empowerment as the fundamental rationale for development, and in doing so acknowledges that the empowerment agenda ought to be analysed in the context of a broad concern for justice in development rather than focussed on particular sectors of development bureaucracy.

4.2 Conceptualising Empowerment

The notion of empowerment within development theory and practice is abstract and weakly defined in the literature. It resembles the equally abstract and unquantifiable concept of 'emancipation' in critical theory, and many of the strengths and weaknesses of such a concept being awarded significance are also comparable. The concept of empowerment through various facets of development has taken very different forms, and has been based on entirely different theoretical conceptualisations. The following section explores the conceptual basis of empowerment by looking first at the underlying philosophical basis for valuing empowerment, secondly at the division of the concept into two distinct forms (theorised here as subjective and objective empowerment) and thirdly at the inherent relationship between empowerment and notions of equality when empowerment is analysed in the broader framework of global power relations.

4.2.1 Philosophical Justifications for Empowerment

Empowerment is broadly concerned with raising the power available to individuals to control and manage their own opportunities, relative to power constraints and relations by which they are affected. Such an aim should remain in context and not be seen as idealistic. Social or societal organisation of human beings in many senses constrains their freedom, though opportunities are arguably also increased through societal regulation. It must be recognised that in even the most 'developed' and 'free'
societies, individual citizens and communities command only limited power over constraints and opportunities which determine their live chances, and that even in these ostensibly 'equal' societies some are marginalised and disadvantaged. Levels of inequality in 'developed' countries continue to constitute injustice and a foundation for social unrest. It is neither difficult, nor for the most part controversial, to claim that development in any form is not about the creation of perfect societies. However, the aims of development are superfluous and irrelevant unless they are connected with the fulfilment of human beings, an observation which demands a relocation of humanity as the centre of developmental concerns by definition rather than policy choice.

A popular early academic conceptualisation of empowerment is derived from the Nobel prize winning works of Amartya Sen. Sen rarely mentions the term empowerment in his writings, but describes poverty as 'unfreedoms' which require 'capabilities' to be overcome (1999). Such extensions of the meaning of poverty to being more complex than simply income or consumption deficiencies have been instrumental in the paradigmatic shift to empowerment in development, and have resulted in a healthy literature surrounding the debate (Friedmann 1992,5ff, Novak 1996). Thus, commonly put in historical perspective, 'the poor' have been regarded as the scourge of society, defined by their apparent superiors, stigmatised and divided by policy and public opinion. Poverty indicators and definitions have rarely been sought from poor people themselves, but rather labelled by, often distant, bureaucratic officials. Arbitrary standardised indicators of poverty have a universalising tendency which is entirely inappropriate and relate very little (if anything) about what is required to reduce marginalisation and degrading impoverishment. A rural peasant farmer may be financially poor in the same way as an unemployed urban slum dweller, but their condition of impoverishment is likely to be almost incomparable. Recent recognition of such factors has fundamentally altered the consideration of poverty within development. The poor are not only disadvantaged by having less consumption power, they are also likely to live in less secure homes, to be more vulnerable to health hazards, to have less opportunity to devote themselves to education, which in turn is likely to be of inferior quality.

The link to empowerment is aptly noted by Friedman, who states: "If poverty is a condition of relative disempowerment with respect to a household's access to specified
bases of social power, then a key to the overcoming of mass poverty is the social and political empowerment of the poor" (Friedmann 1992:viii). Local level political empowerment can “...seek to transform social and political power and to engage the struggle for emancipation on a larger – national and international – terrain” (Friedmann 1992:viii). Such transformations are a necessary step in overcoming the effects and impacts of scale that were discussed in Chapter Three, and ultimately are essential for transcribing a common agenda of power across the development spectrum.

4.2.2 Theorising Subjective and Objective Empowerment

Empowerment thus appears to be constituted by two broad functions, which are identified here as subjective and objective. Subjective empowerment refers to the bolstering of inner confidence of individuals, in order that they are less constrained to embrace opportunity. This category of empowerment relates to the definition of an individual or group’s power according to his/her/itsel". Subjective empowerment incorporates “psychological empowerment” which is defined as “people’s belief that they have the resources, energy, and competence to accomplish one’s goals” (Deiner and Biswas-Deiner 2005:125). These authors go on to posit “Thus, empowerment consists of both the actual ability to control one’s environment (external empowerment) and the feeling that one can do so (internal empowerment)” (Deiner and Biswas-Deiner 2005:125-6). However, internal and external empowerment, as conceived here, do not accurately correlate to the theorisation of subjective and objective empowerment being proposed in this thesis. For analysis at the level of the community, it is argued here that subjective empowerment is not wholly represented by the sum of individual’s psychological empowerment. The notion also needs to acknowledge that local power hierarchies can prevent individuals from accessing opportunities which are present in their community. Thus subjective empowerment combines the feeling of being able to do something with the opportunity to carry out that choice within one’s own community. This conception partly strays into ‘external empowerment’, as conceived above, but it is encapsulated this way for an important reason in the design of this research project. For analysis which incorporates global and local power relations, it is important to differentiate between opportunities which are constrained for some people by other
members of the same communities and those frameworks of opportunity which are constrained for the whole community by external power relations. These intra-community constraints are included here in the idea of subjective empowerment as it will be argued that there is a close correlation between individual psychological empowerment and actual power within one's own community. This idea will be enlarged upon throughout the remainder of this chapter and in analysis of the empirical data later in the project.

Subjective empowerment therefore forms a vital part of the empowerment agenda, to overturn established injustice in accepted local frameworks of power. But this kind of empowerment cannot be meaningful in the overall aims of the global empowerment agenda, as it is equally insufficient to subjectively empower people and communities to feel that they have both the capacity and the right to participate if structures of opportunity are not available in their communities. The second category of objective empowerment therefore refers to the increasing of capabilities/decreasing of barriers to practically extend practical opportunities for action and participation. Objective empowerment thus refers to decreasing exclusion of certain people or communities from the opportunity to participate in networks where they, by virtue of their humanity and according to the rationale for development laid out above, should have agency or power.

This framework of analysis is significant. It forces recognition that subjective and objective empowerments are parallel processes. There is no implicit or direct correlation between the two, although it seems likely that mass subjective empowerment for a particular group or community would lead to petitions for greater objective empowerment, through advocacy and so on. However, this is by no means an inevitable conclusion, and there is no guarantee that such demands would be fulfilled either. It is also possible that increased subjective empowerment would lead to increased expectations which, if met by failure to change the structure of objective empowerment, could be detrimental to the new confidence of those convinced of their own abilities.

It is common to find commentaries about empowerment focussed on one 'type' of empowerment or the other, but rarely is the parallel nature of these two 'types' discussed. It is argued here that this oversight in the literature on empowerment has restricted
comprehensive thinking about the impact of empowerment policies on the people they affect. When the conception of empowerment is divided (and further examples follow in the analysis below) into two constituent parts, the focus of research to be limited to community level induces the divide to be between 'internal' and 'external' empowerments, where external empowerment refers to equal participation only in intra-community frameworks of power.

A possible mitigating factor to this argument is that at the level of global or national policy, empowerment is rarely posited as 'the' aim of development, but rather constitutes one of several strands of objectives. Thus, it is often the case that while either subjective or objective aims of empowerment are the key focus of the empowerment strand, the other type may be incorporated into another category by a different name or into a different project in the same area. However, it is a key contention of this thesis that such separation of objectives (and scales) is detrimental to the overall aim to effectively empower marginalised communities and peoples. It will be argued that it is precisely this kind of categorisation that divides responsibility for the eventual outcome of aims of development between different institutions and development actors creating a severe impediment to achieving holistic progress towards empowerment.

Furthermore, within a particular group or community, processes of objective empowerment are likely to represent zero-sum transfers of power, or at least to be viewed that way, while processes of subjective empowerment are more likely to constitute variable-sum impacts on power relations. Recognition of a significant difference between the relative impacts on other actors resulting from an agenda forwarding subjective rather than objective empowerment is of crucial importance in the forthcoming analysis.

This section has shown that the underlying justification for empowerment is not to create perfect societies but to liberate people from 'unfreedoms' and reacquaint them with their own 'capabilities' in order that they may effectively exercise their own agency. It is important to keep in context that the infringement of 'unfreedoms' has inhibited people's knowledge of their own abilities, rather than to imply that capabilities need to be

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6 The projects studied in the empirical section of this research did not have other projects aimed at empowerment operating in the same areas.
7 For a full explanation, see Section 3.1.3.
transferred to people. Thus, the theorisation of objective and subjective empowerments denote the difference between frameworks of opportunity available within communities and the ability to access these frameworks and have the confidence to do so respectively. Such a theorisation places supreme confidence in the natural ability of peoples to live to their full potential if they are only given the freedom to do so. Any conception of empowerment which does not hold this principle in high regard falls foul of ‘Orientalism’ (Said 1993), by effectively endorsing the notion that some people need assistance to do what others can achieve simply by virtue of their area of origin. Speaking of development aid interventions, Morton points out “it will never be possible for outsiders to know enough and...it should not, in any case, be necessary to do so. Africans already know enough. What they are not getting is opportunities to use their knowledge” (Morton 1996:1). This perspective makes empowerment less about ‘teaching’ people and more about liberating them so that they can exercise their own inherent and inevitable skills and powers (see Clapham 1996).

4.3 Broad Empowerment Analysis

Empowerment has been used in a variety of ways and in a variety of areas of development policies. This section lays out a detailed policy documentation analysis to consider how empowerment is used as a key part of development policy and the thinking behind it. Some narrowing of scope is first necessary here, as the present research agenda is concerned only with a specific form of empowerment—the promotion of community empowerment which is implemented at local level. However, a brief exploration of other forms of application is important to recognise the manner in which empowerment may be perceived. The process of centralising empowerment as a key objective of development policy is next examined, culminating in an analysis of the position empowerment holds in contemporary development strategies. A further subsection explores the plethora of institutional materials that have been published about how empowerment should be implemented, measured and recognised. The final section here explores the development of a link between equity and empowerment in development policy documentation. The link is only loosely formulated, but it is
important given the context of power relationships implicit in any discussion of either equity or empowerment and is thus central to the analysis within this project.

4.3.1 Surveying Applications of Empowerment

Without confining the present research within disciplinary or categorical boundaries, the suggestion of a single empowerment agenda is misleading as there are many parallel agendas themselves focussed in different ways and at different levels or scales. Broadly speaking, they can be defined in terms of the development agenda as three main types. One is promoted through domestic policy by state governments, in an effort to promote empowerment of their own population. Examples of these domestic programmes include the Black Economic Empowerment (BEE) programme in South Africa or the 'Empowerment Law' initiated by the Ministry for Indigenisation and Empowerment in Zimbabwe. These programmes are focussed exclusively on economic empowerment, or increasing inclusion with the formal economy. At the level of Zambian national policy directives, economic empowerment features as a key strategy. The Citizens Economic Empowerment Commission (CEEC) is the most powerful embodiment of this, providing financial support and business expertise to entrepreneurs within Zambia. Based at 'Empowerment House' in Lusaka, the CEEC was launched as part of the Citizens Economic Empowerment Act (2006), and is highly publicised as a key political strategy for development. A recent statement by the Chairman reported in the Zambian Daily Mail declared that:

"the Citizens Economic Empowerment [Act] is a broad based multifaceted programme aimed at ensuring the participation of targeted citizens in Zambia's economic development. Economic empowerment is based on nine pillars namely equity, ownership, management and control, preferential procurement, skills development, access to finance, transformation of society, corporate and social responsibility, good political and corporate governance, Greenfield investments and Foreign Direct Investment."

(Reported by Sikazwe 2008)

Economic empowerment also formed the central theme for the 2007 Trade and Agriculture Fair in Lusaka, which is a highly prestigious commercial platform for
Zambian traders. Economic empowerment in these contexts is being used to promote and inspire a very traditional and mainstream notion of development, providing an ‘enabling’ neo-liberal environment for trade and industry and relying on ‘trickle down growth’ to make the results so-called ‘pro-poor’. The use of the terminology in this context is, in itself, notable for thinking about the diversity of uses of empowerment in the development trajectory of Zambia, and Southern Africa. Such phrases have not been used in the past for initiatives which simply extend national lines of credit and make national trading schemes more accessible to a greater proportion of the population. While the use of the terminology is new, the idea does not extend to the embodiment of the phrase empowerment, which here is being understood to link development projects and aid to empowering whole communities to be in greater control of their own futures. For this reason, such schemes are unsuitable for the main focus of this research, though it is important to recognise that, for the Zambian public, contact with the term empowerment has chiefly been in conjunction with such a narrow economic focus.

Another type of empowerment agenda is advanced by international actors, involving national scale programmes to empower marginalised states to effectively represent their interests at international level. This agenda is professional and skills based. It concerns only the expanding of an actor’s capacity to participate in institutional settings. A final agenda, and the one with which this research is concerned, is promoted at community level directly to community members. The roots of this agenda are quite different to the explicit focus on the empowerment of communities that is so common in contemporary application. Early conceptualisations of empowerment were concerned primarily with reforming traditional prejudices towards marginalised groups within communities, particularly women (see for example Blumberg et al. 1995). A DfID publication on women’s empowerment, defined the concept as follows: “Empowerment means individuals acquiring the power to think and act freely, exercise choice, and to fulfil their potential as full and equal members of society.” (DfID 2000b:11). Empowerment of specific groups has been used in many other cases, for example with reference to ethnic minorities, children, the elderly or homosexuals to name a few. Such groups are, in different situations, seen as marginalised from exercising power in society as freely as others, and this basis for the application of empowerment is the direct root of
the notion of empowering communities that are seen as excluded from power in the same way.

However, empowerment of specific groups differs significantly from the wider empowerment of the poor through development, as the target of empowerment is to renounce, rather than embrace, being poor (Novak 1996:92). In previous examples of group empowerment, the emphasis is on being proud of diversity and deconstructing the influence that differences should have on relations with other groups. Furthermore, power gained by members of such groups through processes of empowerment is seen to be beneficial on an individual basis first and foremost, rather than being designed to promote power for that group vis-à-vis the rest of society. Of course, an eventual and implicit aim of empowering individuals who are unfairly discriminated against is to reveal the injustice of such labelled discrimination to the rest of society.

In the case of empowerment promoted to enhance the power of communities, a number of differential factors exist which need to be taken into account in analysis. Communities are not like individuals because they have their own internal power relations. Thus, increasing the power of a community may not increase the power of the poorest or most significantly marginalised within that community. Indeed, it is likely that the most powerful community members amass greater power, which paradoxically may make the most powerless relatively even less powerful at community level. A similar point to be made is that communities are not closed entities. They are neither distinctly defined nor homogenous in geographical, political or social terms. Thus, even the most stringent analysis of intra-community power relations cannot be assumed to be accurate given the multitude of forms that a community can take according to different research criteria.

4.3.2 Centralisation of Community Empowerment in Policy Terminology

Coinciding with Nelson Mandela’s release from prison in 1990, the *African Charter* was being discussed and created to formalise the idea that people should be integrally involved in their own development (Long 2001:1). The Human Development Report of 1993, defines empowerment in three sections:
economic empowerment as being able to engage freely in any economic activity

social empowerment as being able to join fully in all forms of community life, without regard to religion, colour, sex or race

political empowerment as freedom to choose and change governance at every level, from the Presidential palace to the village council

The three sections incorporate a broad spectrum of powers, although they are notable in their limitations. Social empowerment denotes freedom at community rather than global or national level, while political empowerment refers only to democracy within a state, ignoring the lack of democratic voices within powerful and influential global institutions that form effective global governance (Falk and Strauss 2001:220; Nye 2001; Stiglitz 2002:229).


“Making state institutions more accountable and responsive to poor people, strengthening the participation of poor people in political processes and local decision-making, and removing the social barriers that result from distinctions of gender, ethnicity, race, religion and social status” (World Bank 2000.vi)

PRSPs and the CDF reflect three major changes in development thinking from the 1990s: realisation of the need to frame development in human-centred terms, the importance of participatory methods at all levels, and that unless owned by the societies affected processes of economic change were not successful in the long run (Page 2005:37)
multi-dimensional nature of poverty was reinforced through these documents, adding weight to the case for broad empowerment over economic growth alone. However, it is noted that this conception of poverty does not allow for a hierarchy amongst components (Ravallion 1996), the easiest criterion for comparison at macro-level continues to be income, and the plurality of meanings of poverty allows for a plurality of policies (Sindzingre 2004:176-7). Such categorisation of sectors can lead to neglect of the overall issues, although this will be addressed later in terms of the application to empowerment.

4.3.3 Institutional Materials for Contemporary Empowerment

The World Bank has been particularly instrumental in advocating and publicising empowerment, releasing edited texts entitled Empowerment and Poverty Reduction: A Sourcebook in 2002 and Measuring Empowerment: Cross-Disciplinary Perspectives in 2005. The former publication links empowerment to development strategies and outlines a framework for the application of the empowerment approach, noting that “There cannot be a single model for empowerment, given the very different sociocultural, political and institutional contexts” (Narayan 2002:1). The breadth of empowerment is therefore scaled down, and given an institutional focus, being defined as “the expansion of assets and capabilities of poor people to participate in, negotiate with, influence, control and hold accountable institutions that affect their lives” (Narayan 2002:14). Four key elements of this approach are outlined as: access to information, inclusion and participation, accountability and local organisational capacity (Narayan 2002:18ff). Five ‘empowerment approaches’ are named as: provision of basic services; improved local governance; improved national governance; pro-poor market development and access by poor people to justice (Narayan 2002:31ff).

A further World Bank sourcebook relates to Empowerment in Practice: From Analysis to Implementation (Alsop et al. 2006). These authors define empowerment as “the process of enhancing an individual’s or group’s capacity to make purposive choices and to transform those choices into desired actions and outcomes” (2006:1). This contribution goes on to declare: “Using the concepts of asset-based agency and institution-based opportunity structure, the framework presented suggests that
investments and interventions can empower people by focusing on the dynamic and iterative relationship between agency and structure" (2006:1).

A common aspect of these definitions is the emphasis they place on institutions as a fundamental component of empowerment. Alsop, Bertelsen et al (2006) quote a country study conducted by Bennett and Gajural (2005), who have formulated an ‘Empowerment Index’ (EMI) which is used together with a ‘Social Inclusion Index’ (SII) to form a ‘Composite Empowerment and Inclusion index’ (CEI). These two elements represent acknowledgement of the necessity for a dual nature of empowerment (similar to that theorised in this thesis by the notions of subjective and objective empowerment). The EMI is defined as “a range of variables that sought to capture the respondent’s sense of agency” (Alsop et al. 2006:198). The SII is a reflection of “the degree to which the respondent was able to exercise his or her agency effectively to achieve desired outcomes” (Alsop et al 2006 199). The variables used in these indexes are laid out in Boxes 1 and 2.

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Box 1 Indicators used for Bennett and Gajural’s Empowerment Index (EMI)

1. Knowledge and Awareness of Rights and Procedures
   - Understanding of police procedures
   - Understanding of court procedures
   - Knowledge of National Code and rights of Dalits
   - Knowledge of local services

2. Participation in Local Development Services
   - Seeking local services
   - Participation in programs of child’s school

3. Confidence and Comfort Level in Accessing Services and Exercising Rights
   - Approaching the police
   - Approaching the courts
   - Approaching children’s school

4. Social Networks (Economic and Political)
   - Connections for getting a job for oneself
   - Ability to help others get a job
   - Connections at ward level
   - Connections to local service agencies
   - Connections at Village Development Council (VDC) level
   - Connections at District Development Council (DDC) level

5. Efforts to Influence Local Government
   - Suggestions or complaints at ward level
   - Suggestions or complaints at VDC level
   - Suggestions or complaints at DDC level
   - Advice to school officials

*Source. Bennett and Gajural 2005*
Some of these indicators are linked specifically to the context of rural Nepal, but the example is given here to illustrate two factors common in the analysis of empowerment. Firstly, broadly speaking, these two indexes reflect a concern for objective and subjective empowerment respectively. But they more accurately correlate with the notions of ‘internal’ and ‘external’ empowerment (Deiner and Biswas-Deiner 2005), as they remain focussed exclusively on impediments to power that are sustained at local or national levels. Secondly, the extent to which it is assumed there is a direct relationship between people gaining and utilising fair access to institutions and empowerment is notable and used unproblematically. It is argued here that there is little reason to assume that these two actions are causally linked.

The problematic nature of placing institutions at the centre of conceptions of empowerment is two-fold. Firstly, it places a bureaucratic state at the heart of the notion of ‘enabling’ people, when on the contrary, evidence suggests that such a state apparatus is often at the centre of conceptions of disempowerment. Secondly, the design or conception of these institutions is universal and global allowing for little in the way of cultural specificity with which the agenda of empowerment is deemed to be concerned.
For example, the assumption that a police force is the most effective way to ensure justice is far from reliable: Foucault’s work on the prison is instructive in this regard (M Foucault 1977). While these indicators do at least acknowledge that the police force (for example) may or may not be equally accessible to all citizens, the clear focus is on making it accessible, and then assuming that it will thereafter look after people’s interests.

A narrowing of scope from empowerment as the rationale for emancipation through development is further evident in these sources. Alsop, Bertelsen et al (2006) argue from early in their development of empowerment as an analytical framework that “before it can become powerful in development discourse, the hypothesis that empowerment is a means toward progressive governance and poverty reduction has to be proved empirically” (2006:22). This supplants the prioritisation of a wide conception of empowerment as an end goal in itself with the more mainstream and well-established route to ‘development’ focussing on externally or universally defined ‘good governance’ and ‘poverty reduction’. A similar trend is evident on another of the sourcebooks, where the synopsis on the back cover states openly, “if empowerment cannot be measured, it will not be taken seriously in development policy making and planning” (Narayan 2005). The issue here is not with the accuracy of these statements, but rather with their inhibition of a broader conception of empowerment from the outset. Such statements tailor the empowerment agenda to the demands of the existing structure of the development regime and thus, it is argued here, limit the potential of the application of the concept to bring about meaningful change in the sphere of global power relations.

4.3.4 Equity and Empowerment in Policy

The WDR 2006 is entitled Equity and Development and refers directly to empowerment infrequently. However, it has much influence in this discussion, as the specification of ‘equity’ is referred to in terms of power. It is openly noted that:

“Poor countries lack the financial and human capital resources that would allow them to be equal participants in the international bodies in which decisions are taken that affect them and, beyond that, in setting the rules under which the international system operates” (Deaton, cited in World Bank 2006 66)
Control of decisions through the World Bank is proportional to the percentage of IBRD shares held, so that the whole of Sub-Saharan Africa holds only 5.2 percent of the vote compared to 4.41 percent for the UK (World Bank 2009). Furthermore, even in institutions where formal shares of power are equal, for example the WTO and to a lesser extent the UN, “In practice, the ability of countries to influence the agenda and decisions depends crucially on their capacity to be present, to follow negotiations, and to understand fully the impact of the complex issues at hand” (World Bank 2006:67). Such explicit acknowledgement of the lack of operational (ie. formal and informal) power held by poorer nations in powerful multinational institutions is by no means new within development literature (see Woods 1999:9), although its inclusion in official policy documentation is highly original. However, “there is a definite discrepancy between the report’s innovative nature in terms of its approach centred on the concept of equity and the weakness of policy recommendations proposed to implement this principle” (Cling et al. 2006:463). Thus, changes in policy documentation must be analysed with reference to implementation, rather than taken at rhetorical value.

This research focuses on the single application of the concept to empowering marginalised communities to exercise their rightful agency as a function of global power relations, a right to which they are implicitly entitled by virtue of their humanity. While institutional materials for the analysis of empowerment appear extensive, they are not diverse, being focussed on intra-community factors and the role of institutions as unproblematic arenas for people to access power. Furthermore, a significant critique to the inclusion of empowerment in policy is launched by Cornwall and Brock, who argue:

“ Barely any development actor could take serious issue with the way the objectives of development are currently framed. This new consensus is captured in a seductive mix of buzzwords...that are...falsomely positive...they speak to an agenda for transformation that combines no-nonsense pragmatism with almost unimpeachable moral authority” (2005:1)

Of course, the discourse of development has always been ‘seductive’ and ‘falsomely positive’, making full use of terms like progress, and even development itself. This said,
the similarities in discourses of contemporary development between very different actors are striking, although the underlying agendas in practice remain far removed from one another (Corbridge 1998). Thus while empowerment has emerged as a central theme, the application of the concept is far from meaningful in and of itself.

4.4 Chapter Summary

This chapter provides a comprehensive review of the literature surrounding the notion of empowerment to date. It emphasises that the philosophical justifications for empowerment, and indeed development itself, relate to a broad project for emancipation of human beings at local and global scales. This conceptualisation of empowerment necessarily incorporates two parallel strands of empowerment, theorised here according to the categories of subjective and objective empowerment. They represent respectively the inner abilities of human beings to be aware of their own power and rights to power within their own communities and the necessity for frameworks of opportunity within communities to be unconstrained by external forces of power in which communities have little or no agency. A plethora of policy applications of empowerment are reviewed, and the scope of this research is narrowed to a focus on empowerment projects aimed at the level of communities given the practical limitations to the scope of this research project. The review of institutional resources for the analysis of empowerment initiatives shows that an uncritical emphasis is placed on the role of institutions as effective measures to provide for a broad conception of empowerment as emancipation, and further shows that current research has been narrowed to community level factors to the exclusion of the broader dynamic and influence of global power relations on the frameworks of opportunity available to individuals in marginalised communities. Evidence of a link between equity and development is showed to have a grounding in policy documentation, and this link is shown to be concerned with broader networks of power than those analysed in empowerment literatures.

This chapter notes the implicit content of empowerment in the rationale of development from its very inception, but acknowledges the narrowing of scope of the concept in application in respect of practice, research agendas and discourses. It further acknowledges that an explicit and open focus on empowerment as a key aim of the
development project has done little to release marginalised communities from their conditions of impoverishment and powerlessness. This chapter is about the rhetorical value of empowerment which heralds power as discourse. The remainder of the thesis attempts to put this into perspective, exploring the effects of such a discourse of power on the relations between marginalised communities and those dominant in the construction of global development discourse.

4.5 Summary of Part I

The foundations of this research project have been laid out in these explorations of development, power and empowerment. The exposition of development has shown that the contemporary development regime is made of a complex network of actors, operating according to multiple representations of rhetoric and interests. The power relations of these actors are underpinned by reference to varying conceptions of what development is, what it should be and to whose advantage the resulting environment should be built. With reference to the case of marginalised states like Zambia, this review has demonstrated that disempowerment at state and community level has resulted from the institution of development to date. Theories of power have subsequently been explored to demonstrate the dynamics of power as both a source of oppression or disempowerment and as the potential to propel global society towards a more equal state. Reference to equality is justified by the recognition that meaningful empowerment requires relative progress towards equality as a zero-sum game to utilise subjective empowerment as a source of accompanying objective empowerment. The history of empowerment as included in the agenda of international development has been discussed to provide context to the ensuing debate about the potential of empowerment to negate the criticisms of development practices, and the resulting power relations, of the past. The forthcoming chapters constitute Part II of this thesis, in which the methodology and case studies of this research project are presented to bridge the gap in research which has been identified in this research agenda.
PART II:

EMPIRICAL RESEARCH
Chapter Five

Methodology and Ethical Considerations

Researching the context of power for individuals vis-à-vis powerful actors in the global project of neo-liberal development requires a prioritisation of the knowledges and understandings of individuals in disadvantaged or marginalised development settings. Thus, the current research agenda demands a participatory approach, but also a multi-method epistemology to embrace the knowledge of development workers and planners, and to note the geographies of their involvement in the reproduction of power relations through development projects aimed at empowerment. The epistemology underpinning the research, and the consequent methodologies selected, must be suitably sensitive to the positionality and reflexivity of both the researcher and the implications of research design, methodology and practice. Differential power relations between researcher and researched (whether informants, subjects or ‘deep’ participants) remain a key issue of concern to human geographers, and researchers across the social ‘sciences’ (Denscombe 2003; Pain 2004). However, in the context of the present research agenda, some of these issues are magnified given the open focus on power relations as the topic of research. Creating space for participants at all levels to express their notions of power, and crucially the effect which various forms of power have over their lives at a micro-scale, is a chief aim of this project. This idea of creating space for direct communication of the knowledge of research participants is mirrored by the need to create space for new theoretical ideas to be conceived in the course of this project. The lack of clarity around conceptualisations of power means that there should be no constraints placed on possible interpretations and understandings of power at the stage of research design. These requirements of the project demonstrate the need for information to be analysed in accordance with the principles of constructivist grounded theory (Charmaz 2006) which allow for multiple realities, and for the interpretation of the researcher to be equal in terms of the power it is afforded in the research data with that of participants. Through
the following discussions, the notion of 'political learning' through the process of fieldwork research itself will be revealed as problematic in a number of ways. Indeed, the extent to which such an aim is desirable at all, let alone a legitimate and viable aim of travelling academics, is hotly disputed.

The ensuing chapter establishes the methodology to be employed in the course of this research through discussion of the many, varied and complex methodological and epistemological challenges which confront research into social perceptions or actions. The first section outlines the specific research contribution of this thesis in the context of existing literatures. It goes on to explore the ethics and limitations of this project as well as the complex issue of positionality. There is a need to define the ethical concerns of the fieldwork and the manner in which knowledges produced by both the research process and its subsequent analysis and evaluation may be ethically used. This section includes a discussion of the implications of conducting research through the use of an interpreter. This discussion is particularly important where more than one local language is used in interviews, given that local languages have different understandings of particular phrases and terminologies, making strict discourse analysis of interview responses inappropriate.

Positionality is highly problematic in the current research agenda, given the context of a relatively rich and privileged researcher directing research amongst marginalised populations. The southern African context of the research exposes power relations dictated by a colonial history as well as the ongoing crisis of economic development and opportunity.

Methodological choices form the remainder of the chapter, accompanied by details of empirical data collection during the fieldwork. Selected methodologies are discussed with reference to their link to the underlying epistemological orientations of the project, and their relative benefits of and above other approaches to social research. Core methods selected include textual and documentary analysis, semi-structured interviewing and participant observation. These methods will be outlined with crucial attention paid to the holistic effects of methods on anyone participating in or being affected by the process of research. They are also tailored according to the principles of constructivist grounded

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8 'Political learning' refers to the concept that participants of social research learn through the process of research itself, see Pam (2004)

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theory (Charmaz 2006) which prioritises reflectiveness at every stage of the research process to maintain flexibility about the kind of theoretical implications the research analysis may have. The final section outlines the methods used for analysing the empirical data set.

5.1 Research Contribution, Ethics, Limitations and a Note on Positionality

The 'knowledge gap' inciting this research cuts across several disciplinary boundaries, being at once insightful and significant for scholars of human geography, international relations, international political economy and development studies. The core research questions focus on power as a critical unit of analysis, which is attributable to all levels of actors in the international system from global scale institutions and powerful states to NGOs and communities. The research questions consider the relationship between power held at these various scales to enquire into the nature of the contemporary empowerment agenda and it's potential to promote greater equity in the international system. The justification for this as the rightful and legitimate aim of the empowerment agenda is directly based in the rhetoric surrounding the concept in development policy. The methodology to pursue this research agenda needs to be informed by placing an equal value on knowledges represented throughout these very different actors if their powers are to be truly discussed as similar units. Such an epistemology requires a mixed methods approach as outlined in the forthcoming sections.

Alongside extolling the value of this enquiry as social research, an acknowledgement of ethical concerns, limitations to scope and the positional role of the researcher is also important. Awareness of ethical concerns heightens awareness of the value of this research to make a meaningful contribution to the participants involved in the research process, but should not be taken lightly. Furthermore, accepting and foreseeing limitations to the scope of the research agenda facilitates focussed conclusions which may be easily attributed their rightful place in literature; as well as enabling forecasts for further research which may be warranted as a result of the conclusions produced here. The positionality of the researcher is also a key area of concern, given the context of carrying out empirical fieldwork in communities displaying severe levels of socio-economic marginalisation.
5.1.1 Research Contribution

This research builds on the important ideas of the anthropologist Ferguson (1990) who asserts the need to avoid purely moral debate of development and to focus on the actual effects of development policies and projects on the ground. Such a method encourages the critical recognition of 'unintended consequences', and allows those effects to be analysed as part of the effect of development projects on wider global power relations. Thus, it moves away from the conceptualisation of ideal empowerment (Friedmann 1992; Novak 1996, Sen 1999) and towards an analysis which considers the notions of compliance and resistance in the international system as part of the structuring of global power relations themselves. Research which is limited to the role or level of the state or the development community (NGOs and policymakers) has been undertaken in the past to this effect (Duffield 2007; Essama-Nssah 2004, Hearn 2007; Scott 1987), but the originality of this contribution is to place the agenda (both rhetoric and practice) of empowerment in the context of global power relations. Ultimately the aim here is to explore the link between the aim to empower communities identified in policy documentation, and the implementation and effect of empowerment projects in communities.

In contemporary context, this research makes an important contribution to the current debates about the provision of development assistance and the extent to which it contributes to poverty reduction as a purported aim of the international community of wealthy states (Easterly 2006, Moyo 2009; I. Taylor 2006, M. Wrong 2009). The aim is to divulge a typology of power which includes communities as inherently legitimate actors in the process of development, by exposing their linkages to global power relations and by analysing development according to specific interactions of power rather than by reference to abstract notions reflected in rhetoric and ascribed by uncritical theoretisations and categorisations of intentions or interests.

5.1.2 Ethical Concerns

Ethical concerns are of utmost importance in the structuring of social research. The present research is into the dynamics of power between human geographic spaces
and places, and thus has the potential to alter structures and power relations in communities where research is conducted. Such a context gives great potential both to the effects the research process itself and its outcomes, which may be embraced by researchers to bring positive benefits to the communities and people under scrutiny. However, a realisation of this power of research comes with grave responsibility, and must be treated with serious caution and thought. As will be discussed with reference to participatory methodologies below, embracing this political status of research is a relatively new practice for academics. Political content, in any arena has the potential to be both used to positive effect and abused to negative effect. Indeed, as in all forms of political action, there will always be a fine line between allowing for change and dominating a process to induce change. Whether or not it is legitimate for researchers to be claiming to have the power (through their research) to bring change to communities is arguably an eternal question, and one which will not be answered here. Suffice to say that, similar to the conclusions I draw about participatory methodologies below, maintaining legitimacy in this regard is about embracing an attitude of respect and genuine goodwill towards communities where research is being conducted. Such a power clearly remains open to abuse and exploitation, but as a means to regulate personal ethical action in the present case, these guidelines are sufficient.

5.1.3 Limitations of Scope and Practice

The limitations of this research agenda may be categorised into distinct areas. Firstly, the research makes an original contribution to knowledge by attempting to map the power relations involved in development from the perspective of individuals and by allowing for micro-scale interpretations of what actually amounts to greater ‘power’. For example, an international institution may declare as unproblematic that increased economic prosperity in a given community amounts to increased empowerment, even though individuals in the community may feel disempowered by the lack of available services. While countless scholarly works may be cited as ‘development studies’, few place individuals at the centre of their analysis in this way. An emphasis on individuals which values their personal accounts of life and opinions is by definition subjective, and thus rejected by the traditional scientific community as lacking in sufficient basis to claim
representation and validity From the perspective of traditional social science, such subjectivity constitutes a severe limitation of the quality of the research. But from a more contemporary viewpoint, which values participation and local knowledge, the charge of subjectivity is not a serious one. Social scientists have argued against the validity of the concept of objectivity, given that any researcher brings bias by virtue of socialisation and humanity, and the recognition that variables in social research are so many and varied that a ‘controlled’ experiment is impossible in all but the most limited of circumstances.

Secondly, the research is limited by the practical structure of research projects and fieldwork demands. Thus, the research is a case study of a perception of development from a single state, Zambia, with a specific historical, political and cultural perspective and experience of specific development designs and interventions. The focus on a single state is a feature of practical limitations, that is, the inability to cover any more contexts in sufficient detail within the time frame of the project. It is not a choice based on methodological or epistemological ideals. The research findings are in this way limited to being conclusions about this limited frame of reference, arguably representative across similar contexts and development patterns, but unable to make convincing judgements except about the Zambian condition. Given the scope and time frame of the current project, however, this design for the research was most suitable. Variety in development priorities underpinning selected projects, and their funding/support institutions, is an important feature of the structure of the research, so that a representative perspective of empowerment may be built up without the need to introduce different and broadly incompatible national contexts.

Interviewees were selected as randomly as possible, though access to participants was unavoidably directed by project staff (see May 2003). Particularly in remote rural areas, as for the majority of this research, independent access was impractical and impossible. Interviews were conducted usually without the presence of project workers, though in some cases interviews of beneficiaries in the Social Cash Transfers project were held in the presence of CWAC members. Almost all interviews were through the medium of an interpreter, making strict discourse analysis impossible as a methodology. In addition, local languages did not have a specific term for the concept of empowerment, so terminology in many of these interviews became obsolete. Interviewees used more
than one local language as their preferred medium too, making it impossible for the researcher to direct that certain key words be referred to by the interpreter. Local languages can have micro-scale dialects in Zambia too, meaning that interviews conducted in one village may require different explanations of key terms, even when being conducted in largely the same language, as those conducted in a nearby village. Thus, while quotes cited in this chapter are as faithful a representation of the accurate views of interviewees as possible, some margins for error are unsurprising. An important further constraint is that few interviewees were members of the community not directly involved in the operation and subsequent effects of the projects. Whilst some brief and relatively informal interviews were conducted with members of some communities who were not directly involved, insufficient numbers were able to be accessed to overcome this as a limitation to the analysis.

5.1.4 Some Reflections on Positionality

Rejecting the traditional notion of objectivity has further implications for researchers than simply limiting the validity of results and conclusions. If research conditions are accepted to be subjective, then the political views of the researcher must be revealed and taken into consideration as being instrumental in the research process. Similarly, for social scientists, the political views of those being researched towards the researcher and the research process are pivotal in the collection of accurate data. For example, women are unlikely to talk openly to a male researcher about issues of domestic violence or gender inequalities.

Thus, any project of social research requires the researcher to reflect upon his/her own position, effect or influence on people taking part in the research process. Known within methodological literatures as reflexivity, this is described as “self-critical sympathetic introspection and the self-conscious analytical scrutiny of the self as a researcher” (England 1994:82 emphasis in original). For the current research agenda, the importance of being reflexive cannot be overstated. The notion of participation in the community of a distant culture, being introduced temporarily as a white, western, rich female is problematic to an extent. The issue of power relations between researcher and
community, and their effect on the research data, is difficult in any research project, but the research questions being addressed in this project magnify the difficulty.

Positionality of first-world researchers in ‘disadvantaged’ communities has been hailed both as a mechanism to blur boundaries between the two communities (Sidaway 1992) and as a divisive mechanism to exaggerate notions of ‘us’ and ‘them’ (Madge 1993). However, participant observation offers a unique opportunity to observe existing power relations between various groups and institutions. More structured research methods necessarily rely on the knowledge of community members to understand the context of power, and would be constrained by the form of such understandings. Indeed, by occupying the role of ‘stranger’ to a certain extent, the researcher arguably gains a level of objectivity impossible to those truly immersed and participating permanently in any given community (Simmel, cited in Evans 1988).

All forms of social research are confronted with ethical concerns, limitations in scope and provoke reflections on the positionality of the researcher. These issues are often more poignant where research is conducted within a distant culture, and where research participants are socio-economically disadvantaged in comparison with the visiting researcher. By acknowledging and remaining aware of these concerns and limitations within the structure of the research however, reflections on these issues can only add currency to the rightful impact and value of both the process of research and of the conclusions produced through analysis. This section has demonstrated that far from these issues representing a necessarily negative side to the operation of social research in such environments, they may be deconstructed and used to the advantage of the process or forms of political learning that may be achieved through this research project.

5.2 Selected Methodologies and Grounded Theory Analysis

In terms of thematic structure, the research questions demand a focus on three key areas of literature and knowledge, reflected in the division of the first three chapters following the introduction: namely development, power and empowerment. Inter-linkages between these key areas are extensive and complex, demanding scrutiny at a variety of levels. By using case studies to investigate the impact of empowerment strategies promoted by various development actors, the research opens up space for the
analysis of patterns of power relations resulting from empowerment strategies against the context of previous power relations resulting from other models or approaches to development. The broad context of sub-Saharan Africa has been chosen for the site of empirical research given the prominence of power as a generally accepted determinant of the characteristics and progress of development in that region. Though the importance of methods are to maintain common validity in social research, it is worth noting that all the present research makes no attempt to be scientific, to provide for universal truth or conclusion, neither does it claim to have overcome methodological challenges to the extent that it is absolutely 'objective'. Thus, although the attitude being presented here is not quite so drastic, it is in a similar vein to pointing out that while "It is customary...to say something about what is pretentiously called 'methodology'...My field method could be summed up as meeting people" (Willis cited in Brockington and Sullivan 2003:57). Such an extreme position serves as a reminder that while methods are important, so is the holistic experience of research itself. Indeed, the researcher who is too intent on formalising methodological validity can forget the inherent value in social exchange.

As outlined in the introduction to this chapter, this research agenda demands a multi-method approach, derived mainly from the identification of two main strands to the research. Multi-method approaches are often used even where this is not the case though, deriving benefit from complimentary research techniques used to broaden or deepen research findings after an initial phase of data collection (Professional Geographer 1999). For example, basic participatory techniques may be used to gain a basic knowledge of perspectives in any given research arena in order to inform the design and subject matter to be addressed in more in-depth interviews. As such, the methodology here is informed by the emergence of concepts as outlined in grounded theory (Glaser and Strauss 1967), rather than looking to test any pre-existing hypotheses. Thus, the initial phase of textual and documentary analysis was constituted by a comprehensive review of available literatures rather than the explanation of any particular theoretical framework. For the empirical fieldwork, a participatory approach, employing participant observation and informal semi-structured interviews, was selected for research with community members, while development workers and key actors were deemed suitable candidates for more formal interviews.
The fieldwork for this project was conducted in two phases, between September and December 2007, and June and September 2008. In preparation for the fieldwork, three development projects were selected as main case study sites for the empirical research of the project. The projects were selected according to the following criteria:

- All sites in Zambia – single state (historical, political, geographical) context (see Chapter Six for details)
- 'Empowerment' for the community cited as a key aim
- Selected projects should be underpinned by a range of development priorities/objects/paradigms in order to survey the impact of a spectrum of the activities of the development regime
- Projects were selected to represent a range of implementing/sponsoring/funding institutions (from global level to local/grassroots level)

Fieldwork and analysis was carried out in four phases, which were used to inform each other constantly and reflexively. The stages of fieldwork ran concurrently, though the bulk of the textual analysis was carried out prior to the fieldwork operations and the bulk of the analysis was carried out following the fieldwork periods. In line with the principles of constructivist grounded theory (Charmaz 2006) however, primary analysis took place in a reflexive manner in the field to inform the nature and focus of fieldwork observations and interviews.

5.2.1 Stage I. Textual and Documentary Analysis

With a focus on the central research questions, the foundations for this project demanded rigorous examination of the academic literatures surrounding the three key themes: development, power and empowerment. This literature was drawn from a range of academic disciplines. The topic of development has been discussed at length within human geography, international relations, development studies, international political economy as well as sociology and anthropology. Structural analysis of the global development regime was particularly important in this body of work, considering theoretical frameworks and modes of practice which create relationships between various
actors. Similarly, the notion of power has been the focus of extensive scholarship across the entire range of social sciences. Of particular interest in this project were conceptualisations of power which span various types of actors or the inherent structural relations between actors in global context. Examination of literatures associated with empowerment at both the level of academic conceptualisations and representations through policy documentation were equally important.

Documentary analysis requires a more sensitive form of engagement than is often the case with generally independent academic texts. Documents are produced to convey a particular message, and are often aimed at a particular section of the populace. Organisations involved with development have a diverse range of interests to promote or to protect. The contemporary pattern of international NGOs being applicable for government funding as development assistance means that even the most genuine of development actors may find funding priorities difficult to reconcile alongside broadly humanitarian principles (Lavergne and Weissman 2004; Leader 1998; Smillie and Henny 1999). As such, agencies become politicised, acting tactically and strategically to balance principles of action with accepted norms and the likelihood of receiving funding (Middleton and O'Keefe 1998:156). Donor state development departments (for example, USAID, CIDA, DFID) are often enmeshed in the political agendas of their home state, a phenomenon which has been noted increasingly clearly since the advent of the 'war on terror' as a central focus of foreign policymakers. Some development documentation is for this reason more promotional or rhetorical than an accurate account of events or applied practice. Much documentation announces intentions, plans, schedules for action, while reviews of projects or their outcomes are less prevalent. What little post-hoc documentation can be found, is often in the form of 'showcase' model examples, which are unlikely to give a true or comprehensive reflection of developmental patterns or achievements.

This said, documentation represents the practical basis of policy choices and implementation in addition to being a powerful source of discourse and therefore remains an important empirical focus for this research. Key research skills for this kind of analysis include noting the political positionality of the author(s) or institution, and ensuring validity and reliability of sources. This final point has become more salient in
the modern context, where much research documentation is accessed via the internet. The convenience of this method of storing, sharing and locating information cannot be overestimated. However, the internet is not without its drawbacks as a research tool (Illingworth 2001). The main difficulties which needed to be overcome during this research were that web pages do not necessarily display valid information, they may have been created years ago, and may be supplying contact details which are no longer in use.

5.2.2 Stage II- A Participatory Approach: Participant Observation

A participatory approach to social research is theoretically coherent with the aims of introducing participation into the formulation and operation of development more widely (see Chapter Two). Namely, participation is deemed to give a sense of ownership of research findings to all those involved in the research. The title of ‘participants’ to describe those who inform the body of research is significant, used in place of more traditional notions of respondents or informants (Kesby 2000:424). This shift in priorities denotes a move away from the extractive nature of past research practices, and negates the ‘expert’ status of the research by theoretically equalising the inputs of researcher and researched. Participants, to varying extents, are deemed both capable and valuable in the design and direction of the research, being sometimes involved in subsequent evaluation and analysis too. Participatory methodological approaches are hugely diverse, being employed to varying degrees according to the specific context of the research and the nature of the research questions (see Chambers 2002).

The diversity of participatory techniques and the move from ideal type theoretical planning to the far more challenging practical research environment has led to recognition of various levels of participation as methodology. An example taken from the field of agriculture identifies four modes of participation: contractual (researcher contract people); consultative (people consulted by researchers); collaborative (people and researcher work together, but researcher designs and manages project); collegiate (work together as colleagues, mutual process, shared outcomes) (Biggs, cited in Cornwell and Jewkes 1995:1669). Another example is the ‘ladder of participation’ taken from
children's research, which notes seven levels of participation (first three are 'non-participation'): manipulation or deception; decoration; tokenism; assigned but informed; consulted and informed; adult initiated-shared decisions; child initiated and directed (Hart 1997:41). Of course participatory methodologies aim at the highest levels of participation, but it is noted that this is rarely achieved (Cornwell and Jewkes 1995:1669; Pain and Francis 2003:47). In practice, there are many constraints to achieving a mutual process of learning. Demands of funding bodies and academia for outcomes or data for evaluation often do not rest easily with a wholly participatory methodology, due to the necessary involvement of all from the inception of the project.

Cornwell and Jewkes point out that even conventional methodologies can “achieve a high level of in-depth participation, at certain stages, without being considered participatory”; and argue rather that a participatory approach is more constituted by “being reflexive, flexible and iterative, in contrast with the rigid linear designs of most conventional science” (Cornwell and Jewkes 1995:1668). It is crucial to understand that participatory methodologies are representative of, and arguably reducible to, an important epistemological statement:

“Ultimately, participatory research is about respecting and understanding the people with and for whom researchers work. It is about developing a realisation that local people are knowledgeable and that they, together with researchers, can work towards analyses and solutions” (Cornwell and Jewkes 1995:1674)

Indeed, some significant critiques have been mounted against the notion of participation as a power equaliser in research, and have rather painted participation as an alternative and localised form of oppression (Cooke and Kothari 2001). However, as Kesby points out: “it is important to recognise that some things are more dangerous than others...participation cannot be viewed as the most oppressive form of governance shaping people’s lives” (Kesby 2005:2044). Practical constraints to the current research agenda mean that the highest level of participation cannot be achieved. The need to have

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9 The 'ladder of participation' actually refers to an eighth level of participation, which is specific to research methodologies for working with children, and is of no relevance here. It refers to 'child initiated, shared decisions with adults'. He goes on to justify why this represents a higher level of participation.
several project orientations, alongside a limited timeframe, excludes the possibility of deep ethnographic research.

Taking into account the need to operate at a high level of participation if the approach is to hold the virtues expressed here theoretically, and the practical constraints to the structure and timeframe of this research, a more simplistic participatory approach has been selected to be used in conjunction with semi-structured interviews. This balance means that oral testimonies form an important part of the dataset, allowing people to speak for themselves, to be triangulated using interpretations of observations and participation in life of a community. Participant observation is concerned with understanding power relations in the context of everyday, lived experiences. The methodological implications of this technique are two-fold:

“it involves researchers moving between participating in a community - by deliberately immersing themselves in its everyday rhythms and routines... and observing a community – by sitting back and watching activities which unfold in front of their eyes.”

(Cook 1997:127)

Spradley (1980) identifies five levels of participation with particular reference to the context of participant observation: non-participation, passive participation, moderate participation, active participation and complete participation. Although participant observation often remains a ‘shallow’ form of participation, it has advantages over attempting to reach ‘deep’ participation. In the current framework, participant observation will allow for research involving a number of communities, development projects and actors. In order to make judgements about the impact of global relations in communities, the ‘observation’ aspect to this methodology is as central to the methodology as the ‘participation’ element. Given the lack of any existing theoretical framework with which to consider the process of empowerment in terms of power transfers between marginalised communities and the global development regime, the central focus here is on identifying concepts that may contribute to such a theory. Constant attention was therefore paid to reflexivity during the course of participant observation. Observations were recorded, sometimes in brief notes in the field, but always soon after field visits in order to ensure accuracy. These techniques were in line
with the recommendations made by Lofland and Lofland (1995), as writing lengthy notes in communities tended to draw a lot of attention and extenuated the barriers to modest participation in everyday life. There was no attempt to push the data collection phase to a 'saturation' point, given the timeframe of the research, though every attempt was made to verify emerging themes during interviews. Simultaneously, issues raised during interviews were used to inform the observation process as these methods were used concurrently in the communities studied.

During participant observation, records of observations in various situations within communities were made as a detailed, holistic account, using the format suggested by Robson (cited in Kitchin and Tate 2000:222) which advocates a two-fold record: a descriptive account and a narrative account. Thus, notes were made of observations of situations and exchanges between community members, and of the environment and workings of the communities. These interpretations were often discussed in informal conversations with community members to provide a culture specific account. Photographs were also used to record observations in some cases.

Avoiding a stifled and formal research environment served two very important purposes. Firstly, the provision of a comfortable, relaxed atmosphere draws in volunteers for the research; and secondly, making the research light hearted for participants means that the process can be positive regardless of the presence or absence of any final political gains. Robert Chambers, an original stalwart for participation, refers often to the need to make participatory research fun (2002), though the specification by a researcher that a research process is 'fun' for participants can easily be patronising or paternalistic. The taking of photographs, for example, was used to provide an innovative edge to the research techniques and encouraged people to participate by making the research process interesting. Every effort was made during fieldwork to act as a 'normal' member of the community in any way possible. Arriving in the community by public transport, helping to cook and sweep, sharing in communal activities like carrying goods from bus stops and generally avoiding visitor privileges as far as was polite all helped to put research participants at ease before research began. This is not to claim that these activities actually normalised power relations in any meaningful sense, but rather to argue that this
may have helped research participants to be more open and comfortable during observation and formal research processes.

5.2.3 Stage III: Fieldwork Interviews

Both foci of the fieldwork, that is both the research concerning community members and development institution representatives, will utilise interviewing as a selected methodology. The requirements of interview techniques are different in the two categories for a number of reasons, including: the different nature of power differentials between researcher and professionals compared with community members; the fact that professional interviews are generally conducted in paid (formally allocated) time; community members are being asked about their personal lives and communities whereas professionals are commenting only on aspects of their job; and so on. However, in both cases semi-structured interviews were selected as the most suitable format so this methodological choice is explained as one, although the final part of this section outlines in more detail the different content of the two stages in turn.

Interview techniques can be categorised according to the level of structure attributed to the interview process and the level of depth of material under discussion (Kvale 1996). They may be tightly structured, with specific questions and possibly ideas for pre-conceived answers forming part of the question. At the other extreme, the format may be entirely unstructured, consisting of open-ended questions with no fixed timeframe, with at most a list of topics for the researcher to be sure to cover (see Denscombe 2003 166ff; D. E. Gray 2004 215ff). The latter technique gives a greater opportunity for flexibility and diversity in discussion. Such a structure has been noted to give the opportunity for interviewees to raise issues not anticipated by the researcher (Silverman 1993). There is huge diversity in the implications of claiming a 'semi' structure, which is the selected methodology here given the importance of allowing freedom for the interviewee to express themselves in the formulation of grounded theory.

As stated above, the nature of both grounded theory and participatory methodologies means that it is impossible to devise accurate research timetables or plans, given the need to be reflexive and flexible at all times. Community members may not be immediately open to discussing issues such as those considered in research, so it is
important to build a ‘rapport’ (D. E. Gray 2004:223), which means paying proper respect to the feelings and comfort of the interviewee. In addition, simple ‘warm up’ questions were used to start interviews and diffuse any possible tension or anxiety on the part of the interviewee, for example:

- What is your name?
- How far from here (the site of the research) do you live?
- How many people live at your home?
- Do you enjoy your involvement with this project?

Once community members were comfortable, semi-structured interviews proceeded using a broad list of ideas to guide the lines of questioning. This kind of outline structure of interviews is essential to ensure the effective use of time as soon as participants are willing to talk. The following list was compiled for that purpose, but was treated with the utmost flexibility once the fieldwork began.

- Why did you get involved in this project?
- How has the operation of the project affected your life?
- What are the biggest problems in your community?
- Is this project addressing these problems?
- Do you feel more powerful in your community as a result of this project?
- Do you think your community will have more control over opportunities here in the future?
- Do you have ‘hope’\(^\text{10}\) that your children’s future will be better?

This list of questions is clearly far from exhaustive, but it gives some idea as to the breadth and definition of topic areas aimed to be covered during the interview process. The structure and focus of these interviews were constantly informed by observations in fieldwork research, being consistent with the complementary nature of methods involved.

\(^{10}\) The term will be defined as an analytical category in Section 5.4.3 below
in a multi-methods approach and the need to be open to any new ideas coming out of the research to develop grounded theory. It was envisaged that interviews would be recorded so that they could be transcribed precisely at a later date. However, in practice it was found that even some professionals seemed very aware of the presence of the voice recorder, and talked more freely following the formal interview and after the recorded had been switched off. In addition to this, many interviews were conducted outside where background noise made recordings useless. These two factors meant that after recording only a couple of interviews, the research design changed and data was recorded through taking notes during the interview and was written up comprehensively as soon as possible afterwards (Kvale 1996).

Interviews of representatives of the projects and organisations studied were also conducted using a semi-structured format, although clearly a more formal interviewing style was generally appropriate. Again ‘warm up’ questions were used until the interview felt comfortable. In this stage, these questions included

- What is your role in this organisation?
- How long have you filled this role?
- How long has this project been in operation?
- Have you worked with this kind of development project before?

Using only simplistic questions would be likely to provoke standardised and simplistic responses from workers representative of institutional policy. Therefore situated knowledge was required to devise less straight forward lines of questioning which can delve deeper into different understandings of empowerment and its potential to promote a different kind of development practice. These questions were adapted through the course of each interview and for each organisation. However, broadly speaking, topics broached with development representatives concerned issues like:

- Do you think empowerment should be a goal of development and why?
- What do you mean by empowerment?
- Do you think the focus on empowerment has changed development practice?
• How do you prioritise empowerment in your project operations?
• What key strategies do you use to promote empowerment?
• How do you recognise empowerment in the results of your projects?

It should be noted that while all institutional interviews were conducted in English, interviews with community members were facilitated with the assistance of a translator. The communities interviewed were all located in the Southern Province of Zambia, but even in this small region a variety of languages were spoken by community members who contributed to the research process. Some reflexivity was necessary to agree with the interpreter which words in which languages would be used to describe the central notions of power and empowerment (amongst other analytical categories) given the slightly different understandings of these terminologies using direct translations into different languages. Differences in understandings of various key discursive terms made strict discourse analysis inappropriate as a method for analysing the data collected. The tables below show the quantity and location of interviews held during fieldwork.

Figure 1: Interviews with Community Members

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Interviews Conducted</th>
<th>Name and Area of Project</th>
<th>Number of Interviewees</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>October - November 2007</td>
<td>Women for Change – Mazabuka</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>November 2007</td>
<td>Women for Change – Sinazongwe</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sept/Oct 2007 &amp; June 2008</td>
<td>BELONG (Livingstone) – Kalomo</td>
<td>7(^\text{12})</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>October 2007</td>
<td>Social Cash Transfers – Kazungula</td>
<td>2(^\text{13})</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>October 2007</td>
<td>Social Cash Transfers – Kalomo</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>October 2007</td>
<td>Social Cash Transfers – Dimbwe</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

\(^{11}\) The main languages spoken in communities where research was conducted were Nyanga and Tonga, but micro-regional dialects were encountered even within these categories

\(^{12}\) These interviews were conducted in groups made up of teachers and head teachers as well as PCSC members including chairpersons, secretaries, treasurers, etc. So the number of interviews given here indicates the number of schools visited where group interviews were held rather than individual interviews

\(^{13}\) These interviews were also conducted in a group scenario at pay-points which were schools. The interviews were conducted primarily with the pay-point managers, but some beneficiaries were there for informal group style interview purposes
5.2.4 Methods for Analysing Fieldwork Data

The design and epistemology of this research rejects the validity of statistical analysis on the basis that reduction of knowledge into statistical data sets can inhibit comprehensive appreciation of the knowledge being imparted. The analysis of interview transcripts and accounts taken during participant observation was therefore conducted according to a more reflexive mode according to the perspective of constructivist grounded theory (Charmaz 2006), one which fits the epistemology of the participatory approach outlined above. Rather than the technical coding methods recommended by Strauss and Corbin (1990, 1998), constructivist grounded theory emphasises and allows for multiple realities, hidden networks and opportunities by using an interpretive approach. According to Charmaz (2006), systematic approaches or diagrammatic schema can be an attempt to gain power in their use, in line with the assumptions of critical theorists that grand narratives occupy a similarly powerful position regardless of their content.

Interviews and field notes taken during observations in communities produced a dense set of data. To analyse the range of data effectively, whilst maintaining the implicit knowledge contained in social experience, this research has used themes identified in the data to generate key areas of interest, similar to the notion of 'active codes' (Charmaz 2006). These provide a sound evidential basis on which qualitative judgements may be drawn, thus subjecting the simple data to a 'statistical test of significance' (Silverman 1985 17), that is, placing the data in contexts of validity and relevance. Thus, consistency in ideas expressed in interview data was prioritised in the
identification of emerging themes like a simplistic form of cluster analysis (Tryon 1939), but crucially without any effort being made to reduce the data simply to the representative labels of the ‘clusters’ or to attempt to create hierarchical trees.

The data set was analysed through this kind of identification of key themes of consistent ideas, allowing the emergence of a non-bounded framework for theoretical conclusions according to the principles of constructivist grounded theory. The flexible style of interviewing meant a broad range of data was collected, which served to enrich the understanding of modes of power in communities. Any data pertaining or relating to external frameworks of power is counted as significant in this analysis. The failure to characterise data according to certain categories of analysis is justified by the bounds of grounded theory analysis, and by the intention to minimise the power differential between the knowledge of the researcher and that of interviewees. The data is presented for analysis by prioritising a balance of real experience of both participants and, through interpretation, the researcher. In this way, power differentials between researcher and researched have been minimised in the design of the research and the analysis thereof, allowing the study of power relations in the focus of the research questions to be as accurate as possible.

Some points established during interviews were highly significant, and merited more than simple inclusion as a factor in analysis, particularly in the case of institutional representatives. Such points have been expanded to form the information in ‘Boxes’ (particularly in Chapter Seven). This information is based directly on the interview source as quoted, but is explained in the words of the researcher. This method was necessary as often this information was gleaned through several different stages of the interview, or in some cases during more than one interview, making direct quotes unsuitable to portray the full picture adequately.

Some ideas came up regularly in the interviews which require definition to maintain methodological validity in the process of analysis, where they have been reproduced through necessity. It should be emphasised that these ideas do not represent ‘categories’ as defined according to the more positivist view of grounded theory (Strauss and Corbin 1990). Rather these are explanations of phenomena noted in the course of field research which may be misunderstood if presented without explanation of the
manner of their use. A large emphasis was placed by participants on the notion of ‘hope’ for the future. Although using ‘hope’ as an expression of the outcome of the projects smacks of paternalism, there was no other way to accurately describe this sentiment and it could not be ignored. The notion was clarified during interviews with community members, as they expressed a general sense that their communities would ‘improve’, in an undefined way, in the future. Many efforts were made to deconstruct this category and to delve deeper into the nature of these expected improvements but to no avail. The sense of ‘hope’ did not seem to be linked to any specific improvements in the community to date, nor to any specifically expected improvements beyond those specified separately in the analysis. Thus, while ‘hope’ is in many respects unsatisfactory as an analytical category, it represents a feeling which is significant according to interviewees and which therefore needs to be recorded and taken account of in analysis.

Similarly, the phenomenon observed in communities which promoted a feeling of increased ability to rely on the capabilities existent amongst community members is here called ‘community efficacy’ to denote increased collective self-efficacy amongst community members. Self-efficacy is a concept identified in the field of psychology and is defined as “people’s beliefs about their capabilities to produce designated levels of performance that exercise influence over events that affect their lives” (Bandura 1994). Psychological phenomena are normally reserved for individuals, being factors ‘of the mind’ or ‘in the mind’. But the collective consciousness of a community has a similar capacity, and this psychological phenomenon is here being used to signify a collective feeling that the community had an increased ability to achieve certain targets or modes of action. The need to specify this phenomenon arises because this form of self-reliance is not tangible in any sense apart from in the collective mindset of the community, but it can be used as a source of motivation within the community to have ambitions to achieve goals that they would not otherwise have considered themselves capable of attempting. This ability is limited by other factors attributed to predictions of behaviour, namely the attitude to behaviour and the subjective norms of accepted behaviour (Ajzen 1991). While these concepts cannot be translated accurately to explain behaviour in groups, the impact of community efficacy can be seen to be limited by the attitude of the community.
to the norms (or parameters) of possible goals. These factors are in turn linked to the frame set by limits to objective empowerment, as it is theorised in this thesis.

5.3 Chapter Summary

This chapter has discussed certain methodological and epistemological demands associated with this project, as well as ethical concerns and limitations of the scope of this research. Placing marginalised communities at the centre of the research agenda creates a framework of significant responsibility for the researcher, whilst enabling research to have a positive effect for disadvantaged individuals and communities is both problematic and ambitious by equal measure. Methodological choices and the process of selecting case studies as suitable sites for the collection of empirical data have been justified with reference to central research questions and objectives, ensuring theoretical coherence throughout the body of research. The nature and context of development interventions which may form the basis for suitable case study sites is, to a large extent, dictated by national context in its many and varied forms. The choice to focus on a single state in the research has been explained at length above. The suitability of Zambia as the focus of the research is implicit in some of the methodological choices above, and particularly in some of the discussions of ethical considerations. However, the precise developmental context in Zambia has been neglected in the commentary. It is the justification of this important choice which provides the focus of the next chapter.
Chapter Six
Zambia: Context and Experience

Zambia is a land-locked state located in sub-Saharan Africa, which gained independence from the British Empire in 1964 anticipating a bright future. The newly independent state of Zambia was regarded with considerable optimism both by its people and by external commentators (TIME 1964) given its extensive copper resources, although it was always clear that the state would face difficulties in terms of being dependent on other states for trade and communication links (Roberts 1976). Today, 63.8% of Zambia's roughly twelve million inhabitants live on less than a dollar-a-day\(^{14}\) (World Bank 2008), with a very low HDI of 0.453 (163\(^{nd}\) out of 179 countries ranked) and a life expectancy of 41.2 years (UNDP 2007-8)

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\(^{14}\) Internationally accepted level of extreme poverty
Several factors contribute to the identification of Zambia as an ideal focus for this research, and are explored comprehensively in this chapter. Firstly, Zambia has had a relatively stable political history. Officially a multiparty democracy since independence, political liberties in Zambia have been restricted during some periods, but the precedent of democratic rights has remained. Enabling citizens to feel that they have some political rights to choose their government has empowered civil society actors in Zambia, which remain relatively strong, in the context of sub-Saharan Africa, to the present day. Thus, a tradition of some forms of political engagement, unionism and civil society representation is present in Zambia to a level found in few other states that have experienced the same levels of institutionalised corruption and political repression.

Secondly, the tragic economic downturn which has occurred in Zambia is, for the most part, a direct consequence of external actors and systems over which Zambia has little or no control (see Larmer 2005a:32). Fluctuations in copper prices on global markets during the 1970s had a significant economic impact on Zambian exports at a time of increasing oil prices, and structural adjustment programmes applied under the direction of IFIs during the 1980s sealed the fate of a recessive Zambian economy. Combined, these experiences have left Zambia with enormous debts, which have hung over domestic citizens and politicians ever since, only to be remedied (at least to some extent) by the HIPC initiative. Such analysis, it should be noted from the outset, is not meant to absolve national politicians from blame for the transformation of the Zambian experience and outlook from bright to bleak. From early in Zambia’s independent history, corruption in the country has been rife and has at times caused international condemnation which continues to the present day (Africa Press International 2009). Kleptocratic and autocratic political systems are rarely linked to positive economic performance. However, this does not detract from the fact that major disruptions in Zambia’s economic potential have been caused by externally governed events and institutions, which is a function and reflection of Zambian powerlessness on the global stage.

Finally, external involvement in the affairs of the Zambian state, in the form of aid, international NGO operations, debt and IFI prescriptions has been marked since the 1970s. International aid has poured into Zambia, both through macro-level multi-lateral
channels with the accompanying conditionalities on economic policy and through local level, independently co-ordinated NGO operations and projects (see Saasa and Carlsson 2002). The full impact of this regime of powerful external actors influencing many aspects of life for all Zambians is to introduce inequalities of power between actors which are extreme and highly significant. While Zambians have retained a formal system of multi-party democracy, representation in domestic government is not hugely empowering for citizens given the overwhelming influence of external actors to whom they can hope to have no representation whatsoever. This situation is similar for many citizens of many states across the world but is most extreme where, as in many communities in Zambia, basic services and development opportunities are provided only according to the international logic of aid.

This chapter illustrates the above issues by considering the historical political and economic context within Zambia. Levels of aid and external intervention in the workings and operation of the Zambian state mean that an exploration of the domestic context of the state is insufficient to provide a comprehensive context for the ensuing research. Recognition of the role and power of external actors will be a focus throughout this chapter. The first section contains a review of the historical political context of Zambia, from independence to the present day, outlining the links between the power of the Zambia population and their government. The next section is concerned with the economic context of the state, focussing on the early problems of the collapse of copper prices in the 1970s, structural adjustment and mounting international debt in the 1980s, market liberalisation and privatisation in the 1990s and the increasing role of neoliberalism and globalisation until the present day. Here the case is made that ongoing external economic intervention has prevented any possibility for the kind of unique development trajectory asserted to be part of the thinking behind the empowerment agenda. A final section draws out some explicit features of democracy and representation for Zambian citizens which frame modes of political power, and then considers the operation of civil society actors and their link to genuine political empowerment.
6.1 Historical Political Context: From Independence to the Third Republic

6.1.1 State Formation and Colonial Legacy

The territories forming the modern state of Zambia were first encountered by external actors in 1888. The region was entered by Cecil Rhodes, representative of the British South Africa Company, who hoped and found that the area was rich in natural mineral resources, primarily copper. The territory now known as Zambia was administered by the British South Africa Company until 1911 in two sections: Northeast and Northwest Rhodesia. These areas were not colonised as such, they were governed by the British South Africa Company, which was a private company, as profit making units. In order to exploit the rich resources, Rhodes directed the construction of rail links to South Africa in order that mined copper could be easily exported. In 1911, the territories were joined up to become Northern Rhodesia, and in 1924 this area came under the direct administration of the British Empire mainly for economic reasons (Tordoff and Molteno 1974a).

Northern Rhodesia remained a colony of the British Empire until 24th October 1964, when it became the independent Republic of Zambia. The transition from colonial rule was peaceful, and those colonial settlers who did choose to stay were generally content to fit in with the new state structures and cultures (Pettman 1974). It is significant to note the stark contrast between this situation and the transition to independence in neighbouring states: notably Zimbabwe, where racial tensions continue to be evident to this day in an endless cycle of retribution, or the Democratic Republic of Congo, Angola or Mozambique, where decades of civil war were sparked by the withdrawal of colonial control. Ethnic diversity across the geographically bounded territory of Zambia runs deep and dense, due to the tribal origins of the peoples now bounded into a newly emerging nation. This diversity remains evident in terms of linguistics: although English is the official language of Zambia, over seventy other languages are also spoken.

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15 Territory to the south (modern day Zimbabwe) was known as Southern Rhodesia
The first leader of the newly formed Republic of Zambia was President Kenneth Kaunda, who responded to a fervent nationalism developed in the years immediately preceding independence. Kaunda and his United National Independence Party (UNIP) won fifty-five of the sixty-five seats in parliament, and were thus given a popular mandate to rule from 1964 onwards. Kaunda was confidently supported by a majority of the electorate primarily because he was integrally involved in trade unionism and demands for representation of mineworkers in the pre-independence years. Mineworkers were central to the fortunes of the new Republic of Zambia, as they made up the largest contingent of those formally employed in the country.

The reliance of the Zambian economy on copper export revenues gave mineworkers significant political leverage. In the first few years of Kaunda’s regime, the UNIP was deemed to represent miners’ interests and to share their high expectations of improved living and working standards in the post-colonial era. Many prominent trade union leaders worked actively within the UNIP, ostensibly sharing the common goal of national development (see Larmer 2005b:320). However, mineworkers as early as 1966 were discovering that workers’ rewards would continue to be accessed only as a result of industrial action, as had been the case in the colonial era (Larmer 2005b:321). Furthermore, the adoption of workers union representatives into the establishment and government represented a fundamental challenge to the independent political leadership sought by workers to represent their interests through trade unions to government.

Thus, strong political opposition to the UNIP developed during the first republic as a result primarily of the government’s relationship with miners and their unions. During the late 1960s, a number of factions broke away from the UNIP to form political parties of their own, causing extreme, and in some cases violent, interparty tensions (Bauer and Taylor 2005:50). Demands for trade union leaders to be autonomous from the UNIP culminated in a leadership challenge in 1971, which was ended only by state repression. While Zambia had begun as a multi-party democracy, political space was perpetually squeezed by Kaunda, ostensibly as a response to violent clashes between political groups, until in 1972, Kaunda declared Zambia to be a one-party state.
"one-party participatory democracy" was created through a constitutional amendment, which marked the end of the First Zambian Republic (Tordoff and Molteno 1974a).

6.1.3 Formal Government: The Second Republic 1972-91

Kaunda ran Zambia according to a systemic philosophy which he had personally devised, known as 'Humanism'. Kaunda’s Humanism was a socialist ideology, which became sufficiently developed to be taught as part of political curriculums throughout Africa and the wider world. The effect for Zambia was the nationalisation of major industry (most importantly mining) and banking, significant forms of regulation and high public spending. Agricultural subsidies constituted a significant cost, due to a high proportion of farmers in the country – a large proportion of them smallholders. The centralisation of national agricultural policy meant that national reliance on maize as the staple crop increased, thwarting diversity in Zambia’s agricultural outputs.

Declining formal support of miners unions for the UNIP and President Kaunda, alongside falling living standards throughout Zambia after the early 1970s, meant that Kaunda ruled the state only as a result of outlawing all forms of political engagement except within the UNIP. Slowly through the 1980s, international attention became focussed on Zambia and pressure finally mounted on Kaunda to hold multi-party elections in 1991, after twenty seven years in power.


Frederick Chiluba, another former trade union leader, won the elections in 1991 and became President of Zambia as leader of the Movement for Multiparty Democracy (MMD). At this time, hopes for democracy in Africa generally were high (Van Donge 1995b). The MMD had been formed in reaction to the hostilities and inefficiencies of the one-party state, beginning as a pressure group to induce a return to multi-party politics. Having won the formal battle for multi-party political competition, the MMD transformed into a formal political party. Chiluba came to office full of promise to identify with the interests of Zambian workers, and to build the Third Republic by

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16 Not to be confused with the more general notion of humanism, Kaunda’s philosophy was specific and thus has the status of a proper noun, and is denoted as such: Humanism
valuing the contribution of workers (particularly miners) to the path of Zambian national development.

However, the optimism of Chiluba and the MMD coming to power was short-lived, and many commentators now consider that Chiluba’s presidency turned out to be far worse than his predecessor (Michael Bratton and Posner 1999; Chabal and Daloz 2005, Rakner 2001) or at least as authoritarian (Joseph 1998) While Zambia formally remained a multi-party democracy through these years, “Chiluba can be (dis)credited with overseeing Zambia’s descent into anti-democratic kleptocracy in the 1990s. In many respects the country was in a much worse position at the end of Chiluba’s rule than it had been a decade earlier” (Bauer and Taylor 2005:47). At the 1996 elections, Chiluba emerged victorious, but only “having excluded Kaunda’s candidacy through dubious constitutional manipulation; [while] widespread vote buying and the intimidation of opposition candidates marked the poll” (Larmer 2005a:33) Chiluba led Zambia through a period of political and economic liberalisation, overturning the earlier trend of nationalisation and political monopolisation While Chiluba’s philosophy was largely in line with the internationally preferred neo-liberal logic, in practice his actions fell far short of complete liberalisation in a number of ways.

Firstly, while Chiluba’s philosophy advocated complete neo-liberal freedoms, he failed to privatise some key institutions in order to rely on them for patronage and personal and political financing Flying in the face of a serious liberalisation reform attempt, this issue had an accompanying trend. The continuing need (and greed) for patronage at the highest levels encouraged a culture of corruption and theft, a culture which became entrenched at many levels of Zambian society. In a state where much of the government budget is supplied via foreign aid mechanisms, corruption over the use of government funds acts as a serious form of disempowerment to the citizens of Zambia Not only do citizens not benefit from aid in the first place, they also have to suffer for it later in the form of a mounting national debt burden.

Secondly, a phenomenon that Rakner (2001) has called ‘the pluralist paradox’ reduced the impact of formal political liberalisation measures in Zambia Under Kaunda’s authoritarian regime, popular interest groups were awarded some influence in order to reduce the likelihood of political opposition. Furthermore, such groups
maintained loyalty between themselves in order to guarantee themselves sufficient leverage with government. Under Chiluba and a formal promotion of pluralism, there has been considerable proliferation of civic associations and a weakening of links between economic and corporate interest groups and government. Thus, Rakner argues that “paradoxically, interest groups [that] had some real influence under the former one-party structures and that this influence has reduced as a result of the combined processes of political and economic liberalization” (2001:540). While the freedom to represent different political and economic views to government may be an apparently positive move, in fact it reduced the power of civil groups to influence government.

Formal politics in Zambia had, until the turn of the millennium, followed the pattern of many other African states (see Villalón and VonDoepp 2005). Incumbent repressive leaders who clung onto power, as Kaunda had done, were by now the norm for many African nations. Kaunda had presided over a one party state for the majority of his protracted years as President, and Chiluba had effectively followed suit. Approaching 2001 and the end of his second constitutionally allowed term in office, Chiluba now began following another familiar pattern. Chiluba proposed a constitutional amendment to allow him to serve a third term in office. However, in a novel and unprecedented turn of events, this presidential request was denied. As a result of popular pressure, from the electorate generally and from civil society actors, Chiluba accepted the existing constitutional arrangement and instead stood down from leadership.

6.1.5 Present Day Formal Government in Zambia

Chiluba’s successor, chosen to all intents and purposes by Chiluba personally, was Levy Mwanawasa who won the elections of 2001 as leader of the MMD. Mwanawasa was re-elected as President for a second term in 2006, but this second term in office was cut short by his unexpected death in 2008. Public attempts to wipe out corruption in Zambia stand as his most significant legacy. He served as vice-President in the previous administration, resigning in 1994 in protest against corruption. Notably Mwanawasa, removed the immunity of ex-President Chiluba and brought corruption charges against him. This is an unprecedented action in African context, given that they were both members of the MMD and Chiluba had personally chosen Mwanawasa to
succeed him. Furthermore, Mwanawasa was one of the few African leaders, and used his position as leader of the Southern African Development Community (SADC), to speak out about the human rights abuses taking place under the regime of Robert Mugabe in neighbouring Zimbabwe. Such actions have led some to proclaim that Mwanawasa was attempting finally to “attack corruption...[and] provide some basis for cautious optimism regarding Zambia’s democratic future” (Bauer and Taylor 2005:47) However, the necessity for ‘cautious’ optimism is clear. Mwanawasa came to power with less than thirty percent of the vote, and amid claims of vote rigging by international observers (D. J. Simon 2005:199). Furthermore, it is alleged that Mwanawasa’s 2006 election campaign benefited from the MMD’s illegal use of state resources, and there are allegations that funds were ‘borrowed’ from the Zambia National Commercial Bank (ZNCB) to support the election campaign under unknown circumstances (Larmer 2005a:39). The MMD also lost a considerable amount of urban support in 2006, primarily to the Patriotic Front party under Michael Sata who campaigns against increasing foreign involvement in the domestic affairs of Zambia, particularly that of the Chinese in recent years (Larmer and Fraser 2007)

While bringing a case against Chiluba shows some promise about Mwanawasa’s commitment and vision to wipe out corruption in Zambian politics, the scale of the problem is far from being addressed by this case alone. Chiluba was initially charged with the theft of over US$40 million across ninety-six counts, but the complexity of the case meant that such charges were unlikely ever to result in prosecution. Charges against Chiluba were subsequently reduced to include only six cases, involving the theft of around US$500,000 of public funds. Such changes to the case, though arguably reasonable and realistic in nature, terminate any hope that the case will expose the wider nature of corruption under the Chiluba regime. Countless alleged cases of more nuanced corruption, such as the disappearance of relief aid funds, the sale of cobalt at uncompetitive low prices, the questionable sale of ZCCM houses during privatisation, amongst many others, are being investigated, but with little promise of full justice being served (Larmer 2005a:39). Though such weaknesses in procedure dampened the promise of Mwanawasa to transform the political culture in Zambia, high profile cases may induce a new system of justice to the mindsets of people across Zambia, even if the hope
of seeing justice done to incompetent and ruthless government ministers and executives of past-favoured firms or factions is an idle one.

Following his death, Mwanawasa was succeeded by his vice-president, Rupiah Banda, who won a general election held on 30th October 2008. The elections were won by the MMD, confirming the ruling party with Rupiah Banda as its leader to be a legitimate democratically elected government for the people of Zambia. According to observers from the Zambian Electoral Commission and the African Union, these elections were free and fair. There has been some controversy however, in the immediate aftermath from supporters of the Patriotic Front, the main opposition party, and surrounding more recent allegations that Ministry of Health monies were corruptly withdrawn to finance Banda’s election campaign (Africa Press International 2009). However, since the primary research for this project was completed by the end of August 2008, it is unnecessary to go into further detail here.

6.2 Historical Economic Context: Vulnerability and Deterioration

In general, post-colonial Africa has lost the economic momentum that it had at independence (Morton 1996). At independence in 1964, Zambia had one of the highest per capita incomes in Africa (World Bank 1990-1). In the intervening decades since however, economic performance has fallen dramatically, leaving the state in a dire economic situation as one of the poorest countries on earth. Social indicators have also fallen at a dramatic rate. Zambia is the only country with an lower HDI in 1995 than that recorded in 1975 (UNDP 2007). The following section explores this fall from grace, a journey from: high copper revenues through to a collapse in the world market price of this key export and the oil crisis during the 1970s; a period of structural adjustment and mounting external debt in the 1980s; rampant but uneven privatisation in the 1990s and finally to the age of neo-liberal market dominance and globalisation in the contemporary decade.

6.2.1 Copper and Collapse: 1960s-70s

During the first years of independence and African rule, Zambia was asserted to be a promising asset to the continent, leading an economic revolution through
exploitation of rich copper resources. The dominance of the copper industry in Zambia cannot be overstated, being responsible for sixty-seventy per cent of GDP during the 1960s and 1970s, and ninety-nine-five per cent of government revenue during the same period (Larmer 2005a:32). From independence until the early 1970s, the country registered gains in both economic growth and social welfare, primarily due to the high price of copper on the world market (Saasa and Carlsson 2002:24). However, post-1974 the country's external receipts declined dramatically and by 1985 the World Bank had reclassified Zambia from a low-middle income country to a low-income status.

This deteriorating economic situation was due to falling export earnings as a result of the collapse in world copper prices, accompanied by the simultaneous rise in oil prices after the oil crisis of 1973-4. Zambia's geographical situation as a landlocked state meant that the hike in oil prices had an immediate and devastating effect on all kinds of domestic and international trade: imported goods were more expensive and exported goods cost more to purchasers. Kaunda was presiding over an increasingly centralised state economy, in line with the philosophy of 'Humanism', which increased dependence on maize as the staple foodstuff and consequently depleted the diversity of agricultural outputs. Bilateral aid to Zambia began in the form of concessional loans during the 1970s, and the IMF extended two stand-by agreements in 1973 and 1976 which were accompanied by few conditions. The government believed that the economic crisis was temporary during this period, so aid was expected to tide the economy over rather than to change it. The few conditions attached to these amounts, and the expectation that it was temporary 'relief' aid rather than permanent 'development' aid meant that these prescriptions changed little for the power relations of Zambia.

6.2.2 Structural Adjustment and the Origins of Debt 1980s

The first experience of high conditionality measures came in the form of a stand-by agreement for a US$250 million Special Drawing Right from the IMF, the largest ever extended to an African country. Severe conditions were imposed, including reduced internal borrowing, reduced government food subsidies, a 10 percent devaluation and a more realistic price and income policy (Hawkins 1991:844). From this point on, Zambia continued to increase borrowing with the IMF, and continued to attract increasingly...
stringent conditions. Inside Zambia, there was universal condemnation for the economic situation which was seen as being externally created, by the low price of copper and the problems of protracted independence struggles in neighbouring states. This said, most analysts attribute the limited responses to the deepening economic crisis in these years to emphasis being placed by the Zambian government on securing domestic control through the one party system (Hawkins 1991) and the willingness of powerful domestic interest groups to uphold the status quo (Rakner 2003:56).

In 1983, a more comprehensive structural adjustment package agreed, which was to be intensified in 1985 (Loxley and Young 1990). The reform package was jointly applied through IMF stabilisation measures and a World Bank structural adjustment Programme and cut to the heart of the developmentalist model being applied through Kaunda’s humanism. By 1985, Zambia was facing an increasingly unsustainable position with regard to external payments, which encouraged the IFIs to impose still more radical reforms (Loxley and Young 1990). These required a complete elimination of maize and fertilizer subsidies, reduction of government price controls, reduced budgetary deficits and therefore social spending, and a reduction of the civil service by 25 percent amongst other formal fiscal economic measures. Such effects of structural adjustment programmes were widespread across many countries, and their effects are well documented elsewhere (D. Simon et al. 1995). In the Zambian example, effects of economic reforms were at their most extreme given the centralised socialist system that had preceded them. Moreover, while the UNIP party had squeezed political space to the point of public oppression, Kaunda’s economic policies were not given sufficient space to be fully tested. Widespread opposition grew to the effects of the reform package, though the government initially outlawed strikes and suppressed pressure from trade unions (Hawkins 1991). There was increasing emphasis on the role played by external actors in creating this situation, though this position gave political leverage in the state and so was subject to manipulation for political gain (Rakner 2003).

In 1987, Kaunda announced the withdrawal of Zambia from participation in structural adjustment reforms. In their place, he would enact the New Economic Recovery Programme (NERP). In some ways, withdrawal from the reform package of the IFIs demonstrates some strength on the international stage. However, by this time
some donor institutions were beginning to publicly criticise the social effects of SAPs (Cormia et al 1987), so it is likely there was less conviction with which to enforce structural adjustment. In addition to the NERP, Kaunda committed Zambia to servicing debt obligations only up to a maximum of ten per cent of export earnings (from which there were to be deductions for foreign exchange requirements), although the debt servicing burden at the time was equivalent to 150 per cent of export earnings including arrears (Loxley and Young 1990). Again, this kind of strength against the insistence of powerful global institutions demonstrates the extent to which small and weak states can exert their own courses for action. Though Kaunda’s policies are often linked to his concern to cling on to domestic political power, a deep reading of power relations resulting from these changes shows that the chances of a domestic economic package to succeed was already greatly reduced by the deterioration of socio-economic conditions in the country during the period of imposed adjustment. This said, modest economic growth was recorded during 1987 (3.1%) and 1988 (5.6%). Abandonment of conditions imposed by IFIs poisoned Zambia’s relations with the Paris Club of donors in general with serious consequences, meaning the government was soon returning to talks with IFIs (Loxley and Young 1990). The suspension of external financing meant that external debt rose to over $2 billion and the debt to GDP ratio rose to over 200 per cent.

In 1989, a new policy framework was agreed with the IMF with the result that maize prices increased threefold. This return to external policy prescriptions was the result of the inability to service external debt arrears and the reliance on external donors for a multitude of state functions in Zambia. This analysis shows the inability of the Zambian government to find a development trajectory suitable for the Zambian condition. Arguably, these dependencies on external funds are a feature of the Zambian state since independence and the power relationships they dictate are stifling. There is no defence of the role played by the Zambian government in this continually deteriorating situation, indeed a more comprehensive analysis would be required to draw conclusions on that (see Loxley and Young 1990; Rakner 2003) However, it is to make explicit that the notions espoused by empowerment policies in the contemporary arena have deeply rooted historical constraints. The blame for some of these constraints lies firmly with the application of externally prescribed economic reforms, which remain as constraints
primarily in the form of external debt obligations being central to government economic strategy choices. External debt spiralled in these years from 61 percent of GDP in 1980 to 180 percent in 1990, making the amount totally unmanageable.

6.2.3 Liberalisation and Privatisation: 1990s

Following political transition in 1991, the Zambian electorate appeared ready for a change to the socialist ‘humanist’ economic project attempted under the UNIP (M Bratton 1992). Agricultural cooperatives were out of favour with the new regime, having been linked to rural patronage under UNIP, so liberalisation was widely accepted even though in practice the process marginalised non-commercial growers (World Bank 1994). Liberalisation of financial sectors meant that by mid 1994 Zambia claimed “one of the most liberal foreign exchange regimes in Africa, and an impressive record in terms of inflation and fiscal probity” (Rakner 2003:70).

Privatisation took place in Zambia on a huge scale during the liberalisation process led by Chiluba in the 1990s, though it was a regulated approach starting with small companies. Informed originally by Chiluba’s political outlook, privatisation was also insisted upon by the World Bank and IMF as a condition to continued access to assistance. Privatisation was expected to halt the corrupt manipulation of state-owned and managed resources, but the reform and privatisation process itself made this outcome unlikely as the process was misinformed, with little investigation or thought as to the final social and environmental impact of wholesale changes (Rakner 2003). Zambia’s largest industrial complex is represented by a single company, Zambia Consolidated Copper Mines (ZCCM) which began undergoing privatisation in 1997. After a haphazard and badly managed process, constituting bids and extended negotiations between government and various buyers, talks broke down in 1998, leaving the company still in government hands in 1999 by which time it was estimated to be costing the government US$1 million per month in maintenance costs alone (Rakner 2003). ZCCM losses by this time were estimated at US$200-300 million. In late 1998, the government had little choice but to accept a lower bid from the Anglo-American Corporation (AAC), a South African based company which had partially owned the Zambian copper mines until their incomplete nationalisation in 1969 (Larmer 2005a). This put a stop to the
accumulation of debt for the GRZ, but they took on existing debts of the company, totalling some US$590 million (Financial Times 2000). In addition, the final deal included concessions on taxes and tariffs by the Zambian negotiators (Kunda 1999). Though this process can be seen to have been mismanaged without external force, the significance of this example is that one of the most important sources of natural resource revenue and national employment was turned into yet another economic burden for the Zambian population to wear in future generations.

The privatisation process was hailed as the most successful in Sub-Saharan Africa by the World Bank, though this was a measure of quantity rather than quality. Notable features of privatisation are that few Zambians could buy nationalised industries or services, resulting in foreign ownership of the main productive assets of the Zambian state. In terms of the debate about power and empowerment in Zambia, this point is salient because lack of Zambian ownership of key industries has resulted in a disjunction between Zambian resources and Zambian income. It is indicative that, despite the apparent success of privatisation, during the 1990s poverty levels increased for the population as Zambia fell from 130th to 163rd in global HDI rankings.

6.2.4 Neo-liberalism and Globalisation 2000s

The Zambian HDI value still has yet to attain its 1990 level: between 1990 and 2006 the HDI dropped from 0.481 - 0.453 (UNDP 2007-8). The problems of the new decade are primarily continuations of those created during the imposition of structural adjustment and the liberalisation processes of the 1990s, and processes of historical marginalisation. They centre on the lack of productive national assets except those commandeered for political patronage (thus of no benefit to the Zambian people), the heavy burden of external debt, the lack of tax revenue for state services (a result of cheap imports quashing production and FDI attraction measures) and the primacy of aid to provide basic goods to Zambians. Tax exemptions in the mining sector, have resulted in lost revenue to the tune of US$15 million in 2005 alone according to a non-public IMF report (UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs 2006). The South African supermarket chain, Shoprite Checkers, which bought the physical infrastructure of the state-owned National Import and Export Corporation under the Zambian
Privatization Agency in 1996, was attributed an exemption from import duties on capital goods and an exemption from corporate tax for the first five years of operations in Zambia (Muneku 2003:96). In this case, the loss in revenue is extended to local producers, who find their markets constrained and themselves in competition with imported produce. While Shoprite maintains formal commitment to local procurement, small producers find it difficult to reach the standards required in terms of packaging and constant quality (Miller n.d.). These factors combine to create a situation that is mutually reinforcing: economic destitution for many Zambians means that aid is essential and the drive for economic growth means that an attractive environment for FDI is difficult to argue against; but at the same time, these measures leave average Zambians with no markets for their small-scale enterprise production.

It is acknowledged by global institutions that countries like Zambia are disadvantaged in terms of operation on the global stage. The 2007 Zambia Human Development Report states: “The unfavourable trade environment continues to disadvantage developing countries. Heavy agriculture subsidies in the developed countries undermine the ability of developing countries to compete favourably in agriculture trade. Subsidies are hurting development prospects of the developing countries” (UNDP 2007:30). However, the report goes on to argue that more favourable trade conditions would not be sufficient to create development prospects in Zambia. The authors relate this to Zambia’s geographical position as a land-locked state, the higher costs of production in Zambia, lack of access to finance and the stringent agricultural standards placed on agricultural exports destined for the developed world. Several aspects to this analysis are noteworthy in the context of broadening the debate about power. Firstly it is significant that the UN (as the institution underlying the publication of the HDR) is composed of member states, including both those enforcing and those suffering from the allocation of agricultural subsidies in the developed world. Secondly, when subsidies were applied in Zambia in the 1970 and early 1980s, the country was recording increasing socio-economic indicators and economic growth. Third, while it is unnecessary to discuss the principle of ‘stringent agricultural standards’ here, the fact that such standards exist in some parts of the world, ostensibly to safeguard public health, while in other parts of the world producers are locked out of markets due to the inability
to ensure such standards is indicative of a deep-rooted inequality. It should be recognised, that at the level of individuals as global citizens, there is an implied devaluing of some people’s health over others. Standards demanded for some are unattainable for others who have to accept much lower standards. Moreover, the implicit suggestion here is that Zambia cannot develop without an export market, an idea central to the neo-liberal project but not to ‘development’ as it could be more broadly conceived. Domestic trade between small-scale farmers could grow considerably without the impediments placed on domestic markets by the competition of internationally subsidised and imported foodstuffs. The universal type view of development as necessarily linked to globalised exports is central to the neo-liberal mindset, but can be seen in this way to perpetuate the inequality of power relations on the global stage.

Some initiatives must be acknowledged a turn in the tide of discriminatory and unfair international treatment of Zambia and other marginalised states. In April 2005, Zambia reached the completion point of the HIPC, meaning that the value of external debt stock fell from $7.2 billion to $3.5 billion. Since that date, the debt write off under the G8 Gleneagles initiative and the Multi-lateral Debt Relief initiative have reduced external debt stock to $600 million (UNDP 2007). Figures in the World Development Report 2008 continue to show external debt in 2005 at $5,668 million however, bringing attention to the oft found wide discrepancy between debt relief in policy commitments and debt relief in real economic terms. The actual amount is likely to lie somewhere between these two figures, but the magnitude of the range means few conclusions can be drawn about the extent to which the initiative will release the present population of Zambia from the irresponsible lending of foreign aid in the past.

This section has outlined the key features of economic decline of the Zambian state since independence. Dependence on systems of external financing was established within only a few years of independence, and this framework has dictated to a large extent the capacity of either the Zambian state or the Zambian people to achieve greater prosperity or power – however defined. This is by no means to excuse the GRZ from its undoubtedly damaging role in the economic management of the state. However, it is fair to argue that it is far more difficult to balance books that cannot balance due to historical legacies and obligations than to create a balanced system in the first place. This narrative
explains one of the key reasons why Zambia is suitable as the site for the empirical research of this project, though the situation described here is clearly not unique to Zambia alone. There is an ongoing disempowerment of the state, and to an even greater extent the population, from the ever expanding cycles of power, in terms of resources and discourses, that control their condition and fate.

6.3 Power and Empowerment in Zambia

Patterns of formal government represent only one strand of the relationships between power and empowerment in Zambia. The nature of Zambian democracy and the inherent power of citizens through political representation is not the same as in a consolidated democracy and thus needs further exploration to establish the extent to which it is related to the notion of empowerment. The whole structure of governance in Zambia requires consideration too, to provide a holistic context to the ensuing debate about the potential of governance actors (such as NGOs) to provide routes to empowerment. The following section considers the modes by which people in Zambia hold political and social power as citizens of their state.

6.3.1 Democracy and Representation

The above analysis of the history of formal government in Zambia is significant for the context of this research in a number of specific ways. Firstly, it can be argued from this evaluation that formal domestic political representation is not always empowering for citizens. In many ways this is axiomatic given the lack of an established democratic tradition in Zambia. People had been ruling themselves for centuries in rural situations through systems of traditional leadership (chiefs and village headmen) prior to the arrival of Rhodes in 1888, since which time they had experienced only the hierarchical absolute authority of colonial ‘masters’. Thus, on independence, the population of Zambia had effectively been under (effectively) authoritarian rule for seventy-six years, and had no experience or education about the expectations that ought to accompany a functioning democratic system underwritten by a social contract between the governing and the governed. Accountability of politicians, checks and balances in the judiciary, transparency in matters of public spending, and so on are absent from this
conception of democracy, though they form the cornerstone of the value of democracy. For these reasons, it is unwise to assume that political representation gives any particular form of power or freedom to those who participate. This situation is replicated across many African states, prompting an extensive literature on the limitations of the so-called wave of democratisation (Michael Bratton and van de Walle 1997, Villalón and VonDoepp 2005).

Thus, it is suggested that while formal representation may be granted to the citizens of Zambia, empowerment does not necessarily follow. According to Dahl (1971) one of the core requisites for representational democracy is participation, which has arguably been eroded in Zambia particularly since 1991, with only half of those eligible to vote claiming their right in 2001 (D. J. Simon 2005:201). The lack of any democratic tradition or debate to inform the operation of democracy in Zambia means that formal maintenance of democracy is not sufficient to assume representational power for the Zambian people. The simultaneous nature of limited political empowerment at national level with a complete lack of power to overcome structural barriers and prescriptions for action originating at global level provides the basis for the current research agenda.

Furthermore, the extent to which the government of Zambia is empowered to control domestic issues within the state has been reduced considerably in an era where external actors and donors have extensive powers to dictate domestic affairs. This situation has been described with reference to ‘disciplined democracy’ (Abrahamsen 2000), the notion that through conditionalities the IFIs have been able to press compliance with donor prescriptions so that economic liberalisation must ensue, notwithstanding the political ‘democratic’ choices made by the Zambian people.

6.3.2 Civil Society, Local and Informal Governance

Centralisation of services and governmental operations under Kaunda’s socialist philosophy brought many civil actors under the bracket of government, apparently sharing the goal of national development. But the diversity which is easily apparent in Zambian society contradicts such a highly centralised system, and naturally rather encourages a more organic, decentralised system of authority and local decision-making. The importance of the trade union movement in Zambia has solidified this pattern,
workers' demands being at once both a significant national and local, that is mine by mine oriented, debate.

A social fund initiative promoted and financed by the World Bank has demonstrated the suitability and advantage of local level distribution and decision-making in Zambia. The Zambian Social Investment Fund (ZAMSIF) provided finance for social infrastructure, most prominently for classroom construction, with a final goal of poverty alleviation. ZAMSIF (under the name Micro Projects Unit: MPU) began at the end of the 1980s as a response to the lack of social sector funding following structural adjustment programmes, and was run by the central government who were instrumental in approving the funding of projects to local committees. By 1998, however, the central offices were staffed only by engineers and accountants, while thirteen regional officers and their assistants dealt with 668 applications and launched 174 projects at district level (Van Donge 2004:351). Analysis of the workings of this fund has shown how decentralised practices and implementation procedures are more effective in Zambia, reducing the effects of corruption and encouraging community participation. There remains an element of centralised control over this fund, but it effectively functions through decisions made at district level. Decentralising decision making procedures simply where this gives rise to a more efficient system, rather than legislating to make decentralisation take place according to planned time frames, has been very effective in the case of ZAMSIF (Van Donge 2004), and demonstrates the ability of communities to manage such decisions competently.

The concept of civil society in Africa has been broadly defined as a fluid force which may be structurally unrecognisable to outsiders (Bayart 1986). Civil society is also often deterministically linked to processes of democratisation (Michael Bratton 1994b). State regulation of non-state actors in Zambia is, however, an ongoing reality in Zambia, undermining the notion that civil society actors provide a check on government policy or that they are necessarily representative of an inherent regard for freedom of expression. The newly instituted Zambia's NGO Act 2009 gives GRZ extensive powers to monitor and direct the activities of NGOs in the country, using the threat of deregistration as the penalty for non-compliance to Ministers requests (Banda 2009; Komer 2009). Civil society actors tend to gain popularity, in terms at least of the extent
to which they engage with political agendas at times of economic hardship (Michael Bratton 1994a) which has been a constant state in Zambia for many years. There are a number of relatively high profile institutions in Zambia which contribute regularly to social commentary within the state such as the Jesuit Centre for Theological Reflection (JCTR) and the Civil Society for Poverty Reduction (CSPR). But Rakner’s ‘pluralist paradox’ (2001) is arguably as relevant here as it is in the discussion of formal political actors above, and external support of certain civil society actors over others (Hearn 1999) means that the spread of civil society is not necessarily representative of the amount of popular support an organisation enjoys. Moreover, as Dill has identified in Tanzania (2009), modern forms of civil society can bear little resemblance to the collective associations that built the reputation of civil society as grassroots, non-governmental representation for the people as increasingly there is status and wealth involved in being part of a successful civil society actor.

Given these restraints on the potential of certain civil society actors, the sector is not linked inherently to the concept of empowerment in the forthcoming analysis. Indeed, categorising certain actors as ‘civil society’ and then imbuing them with particular characteristics and roles thereafter would not fit with the epistemology of this work given the accepted need for critical judgement and the presence of unintended consequences to action. The political and social engagement of Zambians within their state and community requires scrutiny in each case to determine relations between particular actors. Under conditions of neo-liberalism, sites of collective association are narrowing in general (Ferguson 2003).

6.4 The Role of the Zambian State in the Context Global Power Relations

The Zambian state is clearly an important feature of power networks that determine the opportunities and relative power of communities and individuals in Zambia. The relative power of states in sub-Saharan Africa has popularly been analysed either as a direct product of their post-colonial nature (Young 1994)\(^{17}\) or in terms of their predominantly neopatrimonial political systems (Michael Bratton and van de Walle 1997;

\(^{17}\) In later work, Young (2004) proposes an ‘end to the post-colonial state’ around 1990 due to the erosion of the post-colonial characteristics of African states by this time.
Chabal and Daloz 2005). The former explanation emphasises the powerlessness of post-colonial states to determine their own development trajectory while the latter emphasises the agency of these states, noting that rather than there being an absence of power, state power tends to be operationalised in a deliberate strategy to work to the advantage of elites who govern regardless if that works against the interests of the majority of the population. Clearly, both the historical context of statehood in sub-Saharan Africa and the contemporary exercise of political power are instrumental to some extent in determining the development outcomes and opportunities for populations there.

While the existence of a neopatrimonial system in Zambia is generally agreed to be apparent\(^\text{18}\), it is important to note that such a system does not exist in a vacuum: either of external actions/actors or of external power networks. The former part of this chapter has argued that the legacy of colonialism had an impact on creating socio-economic conditions within Zambia and on determining Zambia’s relative power relations on the global stage. The forthcoming section will develop this argument to show that the present and constantly reproduced underpinnings of neopatrimonial power in Zambia are intricately connected to networks of global power relations to such an extent that they should not be analysed as separate entities. Here, the relationship between the Zambian state and external actors is shown to be highly complex but mutually dependent. Global structural power relations are recognised not to overpower elites in Zambia, though modes of opportunity arguably remain framed by these relations\(^\text{19}\).

Through the following examination, the case will be made that due to the historical and present roles of external actors, and the resulting (and constantly evolving) interlinkages of Zambian elites with global power networks, the Zambian state ought to be analysed as a function and product of global power relations rather than as a separate actor. In this view, the state is considered to be shaped and maintained by a complex relationship with other actors in which no party entirely overrides the influence of the other(s). This is not to underplay the influence of state power, nor to deny its importance. However, it is to suggest that the complex nature of the role and power of the Zambian state ought to...

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\(^{18}\) See Posner and Simon (2001) for a forceful case and Simon (2005) for analysis of the neo-patrimonial nature of Chiluba’s leadership of Zambia during the Third Republic.

\(^{19}\) Elites may thus be likened to the category of a ‘semi-periphery’ conceptualized by Wallerstein (1979) in his Worlds Systems theory.
state in global power networks undermines the simplistic logic of analysing the state as either a post-colonial entity or as an actor with absolute power over the domestic population.

The ensuing section proceeds in three parts. Characteristics of neopatrimonialism in Zambia are first explored briefly, before an analysis is undertaken to determine the relative power influence of the state in the lives, and relative empowerment levels, of the Zambian population. This analysis focuses on the nature of complex patterns of power between the Zambian state and external actors, namely considering a historical background of marginalisation and contemporary conditions of trade and aid. This exploration will also consider the relatively different position/power of Zambian communities to interact with global networks of power. The third and final section explains why the relative power of Zambian communities is determined by reference to layers of global power relations of which the state constitutes only a proportion.

6.4.1 Neopatrimonialism in Zambia

The label 'neopatrimonialism' signifies a political system in which state elites rely on extensive patronage or cliental networks to maintain power over the majority of the population (see Erdmann and Engel 2006 for a comprehensive discussion of the concept). The notion of neopatrimonialism has important implications. It tends to direct that political decisions are made in the interests of maintaining patronage networks despite any impact on the rest of the population. This phenomenon is popularly expressed as a lack of separation between public and private spheres, where politics is used as a system to produce personal gain.

Characteristics of a neopatrimonial system are often related to three factors, namely 'systematic concentration of political power'\(^{20}\), 'award of personal favours' and 'use of state resources for political legitimation' (Michael Bratton and van de Walle 1997:63-68). Zambia can be recognised as having displayed all of these characteristics since independence. The concentration of political power, frequently referred to as 'big

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\(^{20}\) Terminology taken from Soest (2007) to refute the same problems he identifies with Bratton and van de Walle’s (1997) expression of ‘presidentialism’, namely that in traditional political science the term presidentialism refers to presidents who hold complete executive power having been elected directly by the electorate. Legitimacy in this case is very different to parliamentary systems whereby the leader amasses personal power having been elected only as a leader of a political party.
man politics', was most obvious during Kaunda’s rule of the Second Republic as a one-party state and in the length of his time in office. Contributing to the maintenance of 'big man' rule has been an ongoing pattern of 'elite circulation' (Burnell 2001:241), or regularly revolving ministerial positions to prevent a build up of power for personnel who could challenge the president. Secondly, the award of personal favours can be seen to play a central role in Zambian politics. This trend can be observed through the ever expanding number of ministerial positions, a pattern replicated in many African countries (van de Walle 2001), as well as in the implementation of Kaunda’s policy of ‘tribal balancing’. This policy resulted in the formation of many additional public offices, producing direct benefit to those awarded positions, to placate extreme ethnic divisions in Zambia (Carey 2002:60). Thirdly, the misuse of public resources has been rampant in Zambia – whether linked directly or not to political ends. Corruption and bribery have been endemic, with measures to bring them under control largely powerless and ignored (Tordoff and Molteno 1974b:278; van Donge 1995a:198). Famous cases of corruption occurred under Chiluba, both for personal gain and to the advantage of the MMD, and have been comprehensively reviewed in earlier sections of this chapter. Thus, all three components of neopatrimonialism are recognisable in Zambia and have persevered with remarkable continuity despite changes in political actors since independence.

A number of drivers towards, or motivations for, the capture and exercise of power in a neopatrimonial system in Zambia can be relatively easily identified, and are solidified in the arguments forthcoming in the remainder of this chapter. For example, while Kaunda’s policy of tribal balancing can be viewed as a systematic concentration of neopatrimonial power, it has also been analysed in terms of ‘inclusive elite bargains’ (Lindemann 2010) which may have precluded civil conflict in ethnically divided Zambia. This analysis is based on the fact that neighbouring states – specifically Uganda (Lindemann 2008) – have rather pursued policies of tribal exclusion and, in turn, have suffered brutal civil wars. Such speculation seems plausible given the backdrop of economic decline in Zambia since independence. Work on motivations for civil conflict also seems congruent with this argument, with fulfilment of a limited level of ‘greed’ being a necessary choice to placate ‘grievance’ for elites (using the terminology of
Collier and Hoeffler (2004) Thus, the concentration of political power in Zambia may be linked to peace and stability in the state, leading to the ‘dilemma of unproductive peace’ (Lindemann 2010) given that political activity is directed towards elite appeasement and inclusion rather than inclusive developmentism. Such a line of enquiry shows that a neopatrimonial consolidation of power can be attributed to the historically imposed nature of the state and is thus itself a product of global power dynamics.

Furthermore, despite the continuity of a political system with neopatrimonial characteristics in Zambia, recent research suggests that this is not a sufficient explanation for the functioning of the Zambian state. Soest (2007) shows how state revenue has increased since the formation of the semi-autonomous Zambian Revenue Authority, despite the persistence of the neopatrimonial regime, and argues that donor pressure is the chief cause of this trend. S. Taylor (2005b) suggests that Mwanawasa’s removal of impunity from corruption charges brought against Chiluba is evidence of a challenge to neopatrimonialism and signs of an entrenchment of democracy. Both of these factors are significantly linked to the influence and relative resource levels of external actors. The following sections consider the impact of both external actors and the state on the relative power of Zambian communities to act with or create developmental potential.

6.4 2 Complex Patterns of Power with External Actors

The very nature of statehood in sub-Saharan Africa is at the crux of the logic to analyse the state as a function of global power relations rather than as a force of power in its own right. It was noted earlier in this chapter that the very existence of the Zambian state is an externally imposed construct, and the operationalisation of the state has continued to be dependent on external forces to various degrees. The following section shows the degree to which external decision-makers have an impact on the framework of opportunities accessible to Zambian communities, and simultaneously the extent to which

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21 Lindemann (2010) argues that his work refutes the claims of Collier and Hoeffler (2004) as inclusion is not about greed as a maximiser of political/economic gain. However, it could be argued that existing elites (which Zambia had) would not accept a fall to a position where they suffered economic grievances but some power balancing was sufficient to remove a will for greed which would have resulted in conflict.

22 Activity in Zambia since Mwanawasa’s death (since the completion of fieldwork for this project) and the advent of the MMD government under Rupiah Banda – specifically the acquittal of Chiluba in 2010, though this is subject to ongoing pressures at the time of writing – would suggest that this is not the case.
the actions of the state are motivated and enacted with reference to external networks of power. The argument proceeds in three parts. The first part refers to the marginalisation of the Zambian state (and people) in terms of global institutional power and the creation of global discourses, leading to a sidelining of Zambian opportunity to have equal power to act on the international stage. As a result of this inequality, the second and third sections note the dynamics of trade and aid respectively, arguing that Zambian elites can only remain in power through a neopatrimonial system since they have little opportunity (given the framework of external actions within which they and the population operate) to conduct politics in such a way as to command popular support.

6.4.2.1 Marginalisation on the International Stage

This issue is explored in other areas of this project, but is also a necessary part of the context to assess the potential of politics in Zambia to overcome the historical framework of dominance by external actors. Modes of marginalisation demand an analysis informed by comprehensive political economy, that is, looking to diverse sources of economic, social, political and ideological imbalances. Marginalisation is highly influential in three core areas: pre-existing and ongoing inequalities of wealth and power through an era of unprecedented globalisation, power in global institutions and power over universal discourses. Extreme inequalities of power and material wealth have been established since the colonial era, with the outcome that Zambians have been constantly disadvantaged while conditions of trade and opportunity have become increasingly framed by processes known as globalisation. Globalisation, as well arguably as the emphasis on modernisation in much of the world, has increased the scale of inequality through the advent of central global marketplaces and a high demand (by rich, powerful actors) for primary goods at low prices (largely from impoverished actors). Conditions of international interaction have induced a lack of negotiating capital for Zambia, particularly due to extreme debt and balance of payment problems during the 1980s. Arguably, the ‘Era of Development’ (Rist 1997) has constituted a continuation and perpetuation of these pre-existing inequalities of power and material wealth.

Marginalised participation in global institutions is a historical condition for Zambia, which is reproduced in contemporary times by an ongoing lack of
representation While global institutions face increasing pressure from an increasingly assertive group of states from the developing world, as can be seen in the ongoing lack of agreement in the Doha rounds of trade talks, states with a negligible budget remain disadvantaged in terms of the kind of representation they are able to send to negotiations which may affect them. In an analysis of African ‘representation and voice’ with IFIs, it has been concluded “IFIs claims of a change in the form of their engagement with SSA...are unsupported by the evidence” (Thomas 2004:189). In terms of the harmonisation of aid and donor/IFI relations with SSA, it is further noted that SSA is “massively under-represented within this global governance network, which suffers from an acute democratic deficit. Developing countries are losing what little leverage they had previously to move between donors, and they are facing an increasingly united front” (Thomas 2004:190). Thus while global institutions have an ever increasing role in the regulation of global activity, conditions of marginalisation in international institutions remain for Zambia.

Relative power over the determination of universal discourses is a direct result of the above two themes. Extreme inequality of wealth and power on the global stage, with Zambia positioned very close to the bottom of the scale, coupled with a marginal position in international institutions makes a lack of power in discourse generation inevitable. Post-development literatures emphasise the extent to which discourses have an inherent and significant power (Escobar 1995; Rahnema and Bawtree 1997, Sachs 1992). In the current context, this point is worth expanding on slightly to illustrate the divide between the Zambian state elite and the population. While the elite hold expectations set by international discourses, in terms of development and modernisation, discussion at community level is about providing for subsistence and basic needs. This is in fact a crucial point in making the argument that the Zambian state operates as a reflexive part of global power networks when considered relatively to the vast majority of the population. State power is derived from a legitimacy bestowed by the international community, and state elites share similar patterns of expectation in this sphere while development strategies are focussed at the level of communities and tend to concern ‘traditional’ or existing knowledge and lifestyles23.

23 See Andreasson (2010, 83ff) for an excellent discussion of spaces for transformation in Southern Africa.
6.4.2.2 Structural Deterrents to Trade for Development?

In the contemporary era, a number of factors contribute to the maintenance of a system of international trading which exploits and oppresses small producers/economic players (which make up the majority of Zambians), while consolidating power and wealth for external actors and elites. One factor is marginalisation in global institutions as outlined above, but a more significant factor is, at its simplest, the extreme inequality that exists at global scale which frames the globalised trade arena. Inequalities result in ridiculous outcomes – for example, second-hand clothes donated to ‘charity’ in the West are shipped to Zambia and sold to raise funds to support ‘charity’ there, and in doing so are stifling the employment climate by having an adverse effect on local textile producers (Matheson 2000). This arguably forces more people to rely on ‘charity’. Indeed, there are a myriad of ways in which the intensifying of ‘globalisation’ has created deterrences to trade for many people in sub-Saharan Africa. For example, credit extended to small scale farmers for green revolution technologies did not live up to expectations of significantly increasing yields in the long term, often leading to intractable debt problems and the loss of an ability even to farm for subsistence (Lipton and Longhurst 1989; Shiva 1991). Moyo (2009) has shown how small producers become uncompetitive when aid supplies flood markets, often at the convenience of foreign traders. These are some of the observable examples of how Zambia’s majority of small producers are inherently disadvantaged by the structure of power and fortune in the international system. In all these areas the state apparatus is largely absent, though in other scales of production, business and corporatism the case is clearly different.

Scholars have noted the complex nature of state-market relations, considering their integrative rather than relational logic and leading to the conceptualisation of a ‘state-market condominium’: “The central claim is that the state-market condominium is greater than its state-market/public-private parts and that the outcomes in terms of governance are significantly different from the preferences of either as identifiable agents” (Underhill and Zhang 2005:1-2, cited in Andreasson 2010:54). The notion of a state-market condominium is fully endorsed here, and denotes a futility in attempting to examine the effects of particular trade relations in the present context. Indeed, the
‘integrative’ logic upon which the concept is based demonstrates succinctly the impossibility of assigning particular roles or outcomes to particular actors. Suffice here to note that the notion of a theoretical site of state-market relations does emphasise that both sets of actors have vested interests in the patterns of behaviour of the other, again demonstrating that the state needs to be counted as part of a ‘condominium’ integrated with the global market - favouring ‘friendly’ market/industrial regulations and exchanges.

6.4.2.3 Foreign Aid. A Political Problematic

Supplies of foreign aid have a number of effects on the separation between state (and elite) apparatus and the majority disadvantaged Zambian population. This theme was discussed in detail in earlier chapters, so the following section focuses on how analysis of aid distribution supports the notion that the state apparatus ought to be considered a part of global power relations rather than a separate actor, namely considering the power of donors to influence state policy and the distortion of political accountability, both in terms of a guaranteed state income and through the provision of social services by non-state actors.

Pre-existing inequalities outlined above, coupled with core motivations of the state to achieve only narrow economic gain for elites through the logic of neopatrimonialism, have meant that donor-recipient state relations have been marked by dictation of development policies and discourses. Despite increasing emphasis on ‘country ownership’, ‘partnership’, ‘participation’ and ‘consultation’ the basic nature of underlying inequalities precludes meaningful change in practice or outcome. Recent research suggests that Zambia is one of a number of states in Africa which commands weak negotiating capital with donors (Whitfield 2008). While donor rhetoric prescribes to the notion that recipient states should have increased power to determine their own development trajectory, in practice there is often little trust ascribed to recipient governments to use donor funds responsibly so micro-management of implementation continues. The importance of country ownership of development strategies is emphasised in donor rhetoric as an essential precursor to combating dependence on external actors.

24 Indeed it could be argued, considering (as stated earlier) the lack of separation between public and private spheres is commonly deemed a key characteristic of neopatrimonialism, foreign aid provides a unique kind of bridge between the two.
and promoting domestic capability. However, "The Zambian case suggests that...the ideological coherence and political equality between donor and recipient that would be needed to breathe life into the principle of ownership has been eroded by the pattern of donor-recipient relations over the past twenty years" (Fraser 2007:4). Thus, the Zambian state is shown not to have absolute power over the dictation of domestic policy in areas where donors provide input. Accountability for opportunities, or lack thereof, for Zambian communities therefore falls on both the state and donors with a blurred boundary between the two, making clear that analysis of the relative power of communities should take both sets of actors as parts of a single set of global power relations.

Domestic political accountability is also severely negated by the provision of foreign aid, given that policy decisions taken by government have only a limited effect on conditions of life in most Zambian communities. Public perceptions of government performance are distorted through this dynamic. In addition, government budgets that depend largely on provisions from donors are provided with reference to a set of criteria that are often unrelated to government performance. Although aid is often deemed to facilitate leverage for donors to insist on 'good governance' and a lack of corruption, Wrong (2009) has shown that these decisions are often decided by reference to donor, as opposed to democratic or domestic, priorities. This said, examples do exist of cases where donor funding is withheld where corrupt practices are discovered. Swedish and Dutch aid was suspended to Zambia's health sector during 2009 when the Anti-Corruption Commission (ACC) discovered the theft of K27 billion from the donor dependent Ministry of Health (Chakwe 2009). Aid flows were later resumed after comprehensive audits and the start of processes of prosecution for those civil servants who were allegedly responsible.

Where basic services and opportunities are provided by external actors more often than by government, communities address demands for improved services to NGOs or

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25 In this line of argument, referring to an increase in power for the state to influence development outcomes

26 Thirty-two civil servants were suspended without pay at the beginning of the investigations and nine were taken to court soon afterwards. However, little information has been released about whether or not any person(s) were held to account for this misappropriation of funds (Chakwe 2010)
donors rather than to government. This discourages the forging or strengthening of a ‘social contract’ between electorate and government, opening space for Ministers and public offices to act on issues as they see fit rather than as a response to publicly initiated demands. Not only does this effect diminish political accountability of elected representatives, it arguably also contributes to the creation of a political system where resources are allocated according to personal preferences and is thus arguably tantamount to encouraging neopatrimonial tendencies.

6.4.3 Relative Power

Assessing Communities vis-à-vis the Zambian State and Global Power Networks

Given these conditions of statehood and political engagement for Zambia, it must be recognised that the state is not the most significant actor in determining frameworks of opportunity for Zambian communities, at least not independently from its external ‘partners’ and fellow traders. The preceding arguments in this section have demonstrated the tenacity and pervasiveness of neopatrimonialism in Zambia, assessed its nuances, and shown the duality as well as the complexity of interlinkages between the political leadership, elites and other powerful global actors. This final section elucidates fully the argument that the state apparatus is an integral product and constituent of global power relations and therefore that it should be analysed as a function of global power relations rather than a separate actor.

Such a conceptualisation builds on the notion of a ‘developmental nexus’ (Andreasson 2010) which is suggested as an ‘ideational’ as well as spatial site for all factors that interact to frame developmental opportunities. Using a political economy perspective, it is not difficult to recognise that the factors/actors which affect the relative power of Zambian communities are many and varied. The Zambian state represents one of these powerful actors, but one whose agency is defined on the one hand by external conditions of marginalisation, deterrence to trade on competitive terms and the complex effects of foreign aid, and on the other by a neopatrimonial political system which encourages elites to manipulate global power relationships only in so far as they can favour elite advantage. The revelation that the nature of the state and its relationship to

\[27\] This point is verified by the fieldwork undertaken in this research project – see Chapter Nine.
other actors in the international system may actually set fertile conditions for a political system displaying characteristics of neopatrimonialism, primarily by limiting the potential for political accountability and ‘disciplining democracy’ (Abrahamsen 2000), concludes the argument that the Zambian state ought to be counted and analysed as a function of global power relations. Complementing the case is the acknowledgement that other states in SSA display many of the same characteristics as noted here, despite the specificity of varying contexts. For example, neighbouring Botswana has been held up as a model of developmentalism, using abundant natural resources to fund development programmes and arguably to distribute wealth. While development indicators generally show that the population of Botswana are likely to have a higher standard of living than their Zambian counterparts, relative to citizens of other states around the world the vast majority of Batswana remain severely disadvantaged in terms of ‘freedoms to’ (Sen 1999). Thus, despite differences in the extent of (what is recognised as) ‘developmentalism’, resulting differences for most citizens are remarkably insignificant.

Thus, the argument is made that the neopatrimonial system in Zambia is a direct product of global power relations, which have been historically developed but continue to be reproduced in an empirically observable sense in the contemporary era. The conclusion of this analysis is markedly different from either of the preceding dominant views of power in sub-Saharan African states, finding a middle ground between an absence of power and an abuse of power. The ensuing research, which is focussed on the relative power of communities, has no need to draw any conclusions on the accuracy of either of these views. As a result of these discussions however, it analyses the state of Zambia as a function of global power relations when considering relative power levels of communities, given that the state is integrated with external actors through a complex power relationship.

6.5 Chapter Summary

Bringing context to the empirical field of research is essential to provide adequate grounding for analysis and evaluation. This chapter has motivated the choice of Zambia as the site for the case study. Both the extent of international involvement in the workings and political priorities of the Zambian state and the effectively disenfranchised
status of Zambia as a powerful force on the global stage combine to make Zambia a suitable focus. Relative political and economic stability over recent years mean that Zambia is not in a state of transition, while also contributing to making Zambia a relatively secure and peaceful country.

All of these factors show that Zambia is, at state level, relatively powerless to influence international events and institutions which do have huge influence in and for Zambia. Changing prices on global markets, debt agreements and policy choices of IFIs are just some examples of the significance of this powerlessness. Mapping the political history of both formal government and civil society actors has shown that while Zambian citizens have gained little from their corrupt, greedy leaders in the past, they have been for the most part well represented by strong civic associations. That formal government structures are encouraging notions of 'good governance' in the present climate is hopeful, but should not be overstated. The 'pluralist paradox' (Rakner 2001) has been demonstrated to neutralise the achievements of greater political liberties in an earlier era, and may have unidentified effects today. Thus, the power of Zambian citizens to influence the structural constraints over their lives must be viewed through formal political mechanisms as well as the strength of decentralised civil society actors.

Ultimately, the power of these combined forces is dwarfed by the power of international actors and decisions, thus effectively disenfranchising Zambian residents even if they maintain strong domestic political rights to representation. The empowerment strategies which will form the main focus of the empirical research are meant to remedy this balance, through the mediation of international development agencies. The following chapters will investigate the linkages between these local level empowerment strategies and the structural impediments to meaningful power experienced by the state.
Empowerment has been cited as a key objective of the development regime, through policy level applications and projects at all scales. The diversity of these applications has been noted earlier in this work (primarily in Chapter Four), and this diversity demands further explanation and scrutiny of the precise institutional motivations to make empowerment a key objective of development strategies. Institutional motivations are often themselves highly complex, being established from a donor source to implementation and practice through layers of development personnel, all with different roles, responsibilities and remits to fulfil. Building a picture of both why and how institutions pursue the goal of empowerment in the process of promoting development therefore requires an examination of all levels of motivation for empowerment, through personnel who make funding decisions and strategies, to those working with communities on the ground implementing such projects.

In Zambia, three development projects were selected to form the main focus of this research. The projects are supported by a diverse variety of donor sources and are aimed at achieving very different development goals. This diversity of project funding, structure, scope and design is essential to make the conclusions of this research more widely applicable. Further projects were examined during the fieldwork and may provide anecdotal evidence or comments alongside the main body of analysis. They were unsuitable to present as a basis for comprehensive analysis for a variety of reasons, which are briefly explored below.

The first section of this chapter briefly introduces the projects studied in order to expose their linkages to the international development regime and the manner of their implementation. The remainder of the chapter is built around three key themes that came out of semi-structured interviews with institutional representatives to build a comprehensive picture of the institutional view of empowerment. The first of these
themes centres on the rejection of community dependency on external assistance. While external inputs and resources were essential in all cases to make the projects operate, a clear focus was placed on negating the need for such support on an ongoing basis. Rejecting dependency was written in to the empowering design of projects by three key mechanisms: demanding commitment to project goals before assistance was given, using timeframes which reduced forming a structure of dependency; and finally in exceptional cases by reframing the notion of dependency as a condition which, in some cases, may be legitimate and thus formalised in society.

These discussions set the stage for the second theme, of empowerment meaning sustainability for project outcomes. The most common answer to the question ‘What does empowerment mean?’ was simply ‘sustainability’. Such a response begs two immediate further questions: What does sustainability mean? Can a project give a sustainable outcome without being empowering? These more analytical questions are far more difficult to gain clear answers to, but will feature in the forthcoming chapters. At institutional level, prioritisation was placed on making the goals of projects the result of self-analysis or self-realisation at community level, training in knowledge and skills which can spread organically through communities; and promoting self-reliance on existing local natural resources.

The third key theme that was brought out in interviews with institutional representatives concerns empowerment encouraging or facilitating a level of self-help in communities. This was seen primarily as being achieved through the promotion of local citizenship obligations and demands; the escalation of self-confidence in the abilities of local people to contribute to the effective functioning of community life (this partly overlaps with the priorities mentioned in the two previous sections); and increased advocacy of the needs of communities by increasing communication both within and between communities based in a particular geographical area.

7.1 Key Project Details, Structures and Donor Sources

Given the critical significance of diversity in the selected projects, the extent to which they are similar in the manner of implementation in communities is highly notable. All three operate through community committee structures, made up of volunteer
community members. Institutional representatives of projects on the ground shared a common sense of the importance of a focus on empowerment, though many felt the terminology had been overused to a point where it was largely irrelevant in documentation, particularly within higher-level development institutions. While diverse sources of funding were identified, they are also similar in some respects, all being from international or external sources, and none being funded by multilateral institutions. The projects all employed Zambian staff on the ground, though higher level personnel representing funding sources were exclusively from the donor state.

Time spans of the projects studied differed in both length and nature. One was based on a traditionally short time frame, though with a novel planning attribute which was argued to contribute to its efforts to pursue empowerment as a key objective of the project: One began as a social protection pilot scheme, and on monitoring its perceived success, matured into a building block of a planned new culture of social protection in Zambia. Another project has been long running, having received ongoing support from a core international donor, though its funding is not guaranteed. The following section explores the key aspects of all three projects, with particular attention paid to their similarities and differences.

7.1.1 Social Cash Transfers

Social Cash Transfers are small cash payments made to 'highly incapacitated households', that is those with no earning potential at all, and is implemented by the Zambian Ministry for Community Development and Social Services (MCDSS). Funding for the scheme remains external, from DfID under the principles of budgetary support agreed through the Paris Declaration on Aid Effectiveness in 2005. The scheme is therefore interesting to study in the context of development projects, harking to the notions of 'post-conditionality' (Harrison 2001) and 'disciplined democracy' (Abrahamsen 2000), noting the influence of donors in the state provision of services in Zambia. Power relations are thus particularly interesting here, given the claim of the project to empower the communities where it is in operation. A need for social cash transfers was conceived in 2001, following a minor food crisis which exposed high levels of food insecurity for many people who required emergency food relief aid, though the
shortage of food was not particularly extreme. Greater efficiency was deemed to be possible by providing long-term assistance rather than short term relief only in times of emergency.

Pilot schemes for the project were funded and implemented by the INGO, CARE International in the Kalomo District of Southern Province in Zambia, beginning in 2003. In addition, in October 2004 the African Development Bank (AfDB) and the Government of the Republic of Zambia (GRZ) agreed jointly to finance the Zambia Child Welfare Project, aimed at improving the welfare of children in critically poor households. The project strategy was not to target children directly, but to “economically empower the households in which children live” (Schubert 2004:1). Initial targeting of project recipients was undertaken by the German technical assistance organisation GTZ, which continues to provide technical capacity to support the operation, including a provincial officer based in Livingstone in the heart of Southern Province. This targeting research determined that the poorest ten percent of the population should receive support.

The structure of distributing payments differs in some important ways from the distribution of welfare assistance as social security in rich nation-states. Each district is staffed by a District Co-ordinator, who is employed by the MCDSS. Payments are distributed through ‘pay points’ which may be schools, health centres, or other community facilities, each of which has a ‘pay point’ manager who is always a civil servant employed at that government facility. The pay point managers receive a flat fee as travel reimbursement when they are required to travel to the district centre to collect the cash for distribution to the community.

The allocation and monitoring of transfer payments is done by Community Welfare Assistance Committees (CWACs), supported by Area Co-ordinating Committees (AACs). Members of these committees are volunteers, they receive no payment (either in cash or in kind) for their time and services contributed to the project. The CWACs are composed of around ten people, including a chairperson and a secretary. CWAC members are drawn from the local community where transfers are to be distributed, and receive training on how to assess households for eligibility to receive cash transfers. Allocation of recipients is done through open community meetings, which are publicised and free for all to attend. At the first meeting the community is familiarised with the
project in order to prepare them for the household investigations that will take place. A second meeting is held when the information has been collected, and rankings of those most deserving are displayed for all to see and to agree upon. Following the allocation of recipients, CWAC members are able to observe any changes in household wealth and to support those who may need help in receiving or in using their cash payments.

Payments made through the project are to the effect of US$6 per month to households without children, and US$8 per month to households with children. These amounts are argued to be linked with the cost of ‘mealie meal’, the ground maize which constitutes the staple diet of the vast majority of Zambians. Children become counted as productive adults when they turn 18 years old, or when they complete full-time education, whichever is soonest. Adults become counted as unproductive when they reach age 65.

7.1.2 BELONG Project

The BELONG (Better Education and Life Opportunities for vulnerable children through Networking and organisational Growth) Project is funded by the President’s Emergency Plan For AIDS Relief (PEPFAR). Funds are channelled by USAID to Project Concern International (PCI) Zambia, which acts as an umbrella organisation for many small development projects. The project operates in five districts spread through the city of Lusaka, and Southern and Western Provinces of Zambia. The Project Co-ordinator is based in the PCI offices in Lusaka, and the project is further staffed by District Co-ordinators, who liaise directly with the communities being supported.

The remit of this project is to provide support for orphans and vulnerable children (OVC), technically those affected by the AIDS epidemic which affects up to 35% of households in Zambia. One platform of the project is to provide home-based care for families afflicted by the debilitating effects of HIV/AIDS, while another has been established to address the needs of community schools as the most efficient way to gain access to these marginalised children. This latter platform is linked with the notion of empowerment, as where home-based care is needed, the service is more a relief or emergency aid mechanism. Supporting the schools is identified as an efficient way to create a network of services available to OVC, for example by running immunisation
programmes there or providing information about basic health care. Community schools are common throughout Zambia. They are schools set up by the community where there is no adequate provision of government education for children. Free access to primary education was guaranteed by the GRZ in 2002 as an essential part of their PRSP. In practice though, 'indirect' costs remain prohibitive to the poorest and standards at state schools are often unsatisfactory (Petrauskis and Nkunika 2006). In rural areas, accessibility to schools remains a significant boundary to attendance (Transport Research Laboratory 2000). Partly as a result of these issues, community schools have recently become recognised by the government, and formalised in the Operational Guidelines for Community Schools (published in November 2007).

Teachers in community schools are volunteers, though a very small contribution is usually requested from parents for their children to attend, simply so that the teacher can afford to give their time and survive. Children are not turned away if their family is unable to pay however. The government has previously given no resources to the running of community schools, however, with the formulation of the Constitution, they have agreed to provide some financial support to community schools who can meet with certain conditions, like the provision of toilets or teachers houses. Many community schools have few teachers, unsuitable or non-existent buildings to hold classes in and very few other resources.

The BELONG Project provides some resources to help selected community schools across a number of districts. These may include books or sports equipment, basic teacher training courses, or building materials to give a weatherproof environment in which teaching may take place. In each case a demonstration of commitment is required from the community in order to approve resources being given. Building resources were in great demand, so for example in this case, the community would be required to dig the foundations for the new buildings and make the bricks through voluntary labour before a supply of cement and roofing materials would be approved. The project insists on a Parents Community School Committee (PCSC) to manage and run the school, though this is common practice even where the BELONG project is not involved in a school. The PCSC includes a chairperson and a secretary, and many of the members are offered
training in various disciplines by the BELONG Project in order that the school may be run efficiently. PCSC members give their time on a voluntary basis.

The BELONG Project has a fixed time frame of five years, running from 2005 – 2010. The time frame is deliberately structured. For the first three years, the project supplies resources in order to increase the performance of the schools. In the final two years, the Project provides no resources, only ongoing support to the schools in the form of continuing visits from district co-ordinators who can provide expertise and guidance about the best way to overcome problems or tensions, and ongoing linkage with other services that may be available to OVC.

7.1.3 Women for Change

Women for Change is a Zambian NGO, which is staffed exclusively by Zambians. It was founded in 1992 by a group of women who had been working with a CIDA-supported project to promote income generation for women in Zambia. When that project finished, they saw a need for ongoing work and were able to secure funding to support their ideas. Crucially, these women realised that improved income generation for women was not really improving women’s lives, as traditionally wealth and income were owned and managed exclusively by men. The aim of Women for Change (WfC) is to promote gender equality as the most efficient way to promote development and cohesion in communities. Men and women are treated as ‘equal partners in development’ in the activities of the organisation. The organisation is supported primarily by DanChurch Aid, a Norwegian faith-based international donor, which has provided funds since 1999.

WfC works only in remote rural communities where there is little or (usually) no other action by external agencies, and little evidence of state agencies either. Their core objective is ‘Working with and empowering remote rural communities’. Each district is staffed by a ‘Field Animator’, who commonly alternates between spending three weeks in the field, and three weeks in the headquarters office in Lusaka. The project operates across selected districts in Southern Province, Western Province and Central Province and is due to be expanded into Eastern Province in 2008.

Field Animators promote the formation of community groups across a particular area, with a target of 30-40 people in a group. At least ten groups need to be formed in
an area in order to make visits by the field animator cost-effective. Each group is headed by a chairperson and also has a secretary and a treasurer amongst the members. Representatives from the groups in a particular area join to form an Area Association (AA), which also has a structure of roles to be fulfilled, including a chairperson, secretary and treasurer. If a sufficient number of AAs exist in a specific district, then they can also join to form a District Level Committee. All group members give their time on a voluntary basis. All chairpersons at all levels of WfC are women, a stipulation to balance the otherwise stifling number of male leaders in Zambian organisations – even women’s groups.

Inputs given by WfC to aid in the operation and potential of community groups are diverse. They include running workshops to promote knowledge of issues such as gender rights, child abuse, HIV/AIDS, early pregnancies/marriages, urban migration and so on. Various types of training for group management and activity skills are offered to group members periodically. Also groups are encouraged to generate an income to facilitate group activities and to help support the vulnerable in their community. In this case, WfC contributes some resources which usually need to be passed on to other groups as they multiply. For example, WfC may supply twenty goats to one group who will then be required to pass on twenty goats to the next group as they breed, before they can gain any benefit from the goats for their own community. The next group is also assigned a group to whom they must pass a surplus. This process is repeated with a variety of resources, such as chickens, bees, pigs, etc. Other activities are also encouraged for which limited resources may be supplied in order to start the operation. These include, for example, gardening, seed-bank creation, clay-pot making, basket-weaving. WfC may also give some building materials if AAs want to build a centre to facilitate cross area communication; somewhere for people to gather for celebrations, somewhere to hold workshops or store resources.

7.1.4 Other Projects

The above three projects form the bulk of the research, but other projects which were encountered in the course of the fieldwork constitute useful additions for the purposes of analysis of empowerment. They were rejected to form major focuses for
various reasons which are outlined, along with a very brief rendition of their nature and structure, below.

The Joy Human Development Centre is an organic project, set in the Garden compound of Lusaka and run exclusively by voluntary members of the local community there. This group aims to maintain and staff a development centre for the production of handicrafts by disadvantaged youths in the area. Originally supported by relationships to fair-trade marketing companies, and with some training in both handicrafts and business management in the past from the same source, this small group prides itself on the reliance of the community on itself: empowering the young to generate their own income, and distributing profits to vulnerable and incapacitated members of the same community. This is an interesting project to consider the role and definition of ‘volunteers’ in project structures.

Leading staff members are equal to those they are attempting to empower, and some financial earnings from the project are required to support them if they are to continue to spend their working hours and energies facilitating the continuation of the project. Past trade outlets provided by international fair-trade companies have now disappeared, given that the range of handicrafts which can be produced is small, and these catalogues need to vary the products they are offering to their limited customer base. Many applications have been submitted for much needed funds, but the organisation is very small, the language of the applications is not the first language of anyone trying to apply, and none have been professionally trained in the specific art of fundraising. At present, no funding sources have been identified and the project runs only through the good will of those involved, surviving on the income from selling their produce at irregular craft markets in Lusaka, making it impossible to study as a key focus here.

The Programme Against Malnutrition (PAM), is a Zambian NGO registered in 1993. This organisation implements a variety of projects, but the one observed was called ‘The Targeted Food Security Pack for Vulnerable but Viable Farmers’ project, and has been exclusively funded since 2000 by the Zambian Government (thus more accurately a ‘qango’ or quasi autonomous non-governmental organisation). ‘The overall objective of the Programme is to empower the targeted vulnerable but viable farming
households to be self sustaining through improved productivity and household security and thereby contribute to poverty reduction (PAM, 2006a). A variety of agricultural packs, sufficient for half an acre of ground, are distributed to farmers according to what is most appropriate for their area and climate. Other support is given to farmers to encourage them to work as groups to increase production, or to utilise irrigation methods to improve productivity. This operation is nationwide, being active in all 72 districts of Zambia, and is implemented at district level by local NGOs or government agencies.

Allocations of resources are made at local level by district committees which include local residents and elements of local civil society, usually including some representation from the church. PAM directly employs Provincial Co-ordinators to oversee higher level administration of the scheme, as well as centralised seed purchasing. Some field work was undertaken with a PAM garden project, but ongoing research revealed that in many areas the district level committees and local implementers of the project were almost exactly the same people who were involved with the Social Cash Transfers scheme. This rendered the project unsuitable as a separate focus to consider in detail, though some interesting analytical points are arguably raised by this overlap in and of itself.

7.2 Empowerment = Rejection of Dependency

According to many of the institutions and their representatives supporting and implementing ‘empowerment’ projects, a key component of such projects needed to be complete avoidance of building dependency on project inputs or on any aspect of the resources supplied. In the cases studied in this research, the aim of eliminating dependency was explicitly tied to the desired objective of empowerment. The focus was built into project designs and strategies in several different ways, centred primarily around demonstrating commitment to the project before resources are given, and designing the timeframe of the project to specifically maintain community independence from project structures without negating ongoing community commitment to any achievements. Considering whether some forms of dependency could, or should, in fact be legitimate for the empowering potential of some projects was also a key area for
analysis, arguably changing the notion of rejecting dependency outright to merely formalising the notion in a conceptual sense.

According to the organisations studied, a core feature of a strategy of empowerment is to avoid the establishment of dependency on unreliable project processes and inputs. This is deemed to be achieved through prioritising the notion of ‘community’ ownership’ by insisting on community commitment to aims and designs of projects operations and by planning the time frames of project support to ensure community independence from reliance on inputs provided by projects. Recognition that legitimate forms of dependency are possible releases project planners and communities alike from the burden of expectation that all dependencies are inherently ‘wrong’. This shift in thinking is deemed to empower communities to consider that they should allocate resources for the most needy and vulnerable, and further that resources for those who are legitimately dependent on the rest of society for their well being is a role of the state. The specification of the state as the legitimate source of provision of resources to provide such support is a point which will be discussed in further detail later.

7.2.1 Demonstrating Commitment

Firstly, communities are often expected to demonstrate a commitment to project objectives before any resources at all are given. This aspect of the BELONG Project demands that schools to be helped by the project are already established as volunteer-led institutions, with a local management committee in place. In many cases, such establishments are already in existence, given a widespread belief in the need for education of children even in the most remote communities and areas. Where no such establishment is set up, BELONG will help to start the process, if the community shows enthusiasm towards the idea, by providing advice and guidance about a desirable structure (that is, management structure, commitment needed, etc, not physical structure) for a community school. Only once a reasonable demonstration of commitment to the school, and therein the project, has been shown will committees be offered any training, or supplementation of resources for educational purposes. Any building resources that are to be supplied are not approved before all jobs requiring labour alone are completed.
Similarly, Women for Change begin their activities in a community simply by encouraging and helping to facilitate the creation of community groups. They openly state, on entering any community unfamiliar to their work, that any resources given will be tied to the demonstration of a long-term commitment by the community. In some instances, they have pulled out of areas where communities are unwilling to work with them if they were not forthcoming with resources from the outset. A senior manager states:

"Many [people] are tied to the idea that projects just give handouts and are not happy if we refuse to give them resources for free."

(Interview, Women for Change, October 2007)

The rejection of dependency creating regimes in the work of NGOs here is seen as requiring a change in culture, not only of how NGOs operate, but also in how they are received (see Box 3). A change in a culture of behaviour is always a long-term goal, and one which in the theory of this case was to be achieved through communities recognising that their counterparts in other areas were achieving through a project so structured, and would thus realise without external pressure the fruitlessness of their position.

**Box 3 Changing Cultures of Dependency**

While many communities in theory want to reject ‘handouts’, they have been built into a culture of expectation that the giving of such ‘charity’ (without any input or return from the community) is the role of NGOs. In many cases, communities have grown to anticipate the short term commitment of NGO actors, and therefore are perhaps unwilling to demonstrate a commitment to working with them unless they perceive specific material benefits in return. As a critical component of the strategy of empowerment, changing this culture of the relationship between NGO actors and the communities in which they work can bring some difficult decisions to the fore. Refusing to work in communities where commitment is not shown to the project without advance benefits can mean leaving needy communities before the project has really been given a chance to change the lot of people there. However, compromising on this issue can change the nature of the project and inhibit achievement of the goal of empowerment as opposed to the more traditional notion of simply giving short-term assistance to the needy.

Source: Interview, Women for Change, October 2007
Other projects require initial commitment to their goals to qualify for participation too, and argue that this is in the name of empowerment rather than simply achieving isolated goals. At the Joy Human Development Centre, participants were enrolled on a course to be trained in handicraft production, and were required to attend an agreed number of sessions a week in order to maintain a place in the Centre. Any personal problems that made this difficult were to be discussed with the staff, so that a solution could be found while maintaining full attendance. The organisers of this project argued that:

"The structure of the project is designed to equip participants with many key skills rather than simply training them to produce specific lines of handicrafts"

(Interview, Joy Human Development Centre, October 2007)

For the PAM project, the need for a commitment to the end goal is evident in the definition of participation. The project is applicable only to 'viable but vulnerable' farmers, meaning in practice that the farmer must have made a half acre of land ready to be planted in order to qualify for assistance from the scheme. Farmers must also be able to demonstrate a viable, and preferably collective, option for irrigation of crops once planted.

7.2.2 Project Time-Frames for Community Independence

The ideal timeframe for a development project has been long discussed, though ultimately it is probably a rhetorical discussion for good reason. The multiplicity of motivations for and levels of commitment to development projects is so extensive that of course a vast multiplicity of ideal timeframes are possible depending on the interests being addressed in analysis, that is whether it should be ideal for donors or beneficiaries or field workers. The projects studied in this research, where empowerment for communities is an essential and guiding aim, had tied this objective to their timeframes or styles of project planning according to different methodologies.

Women for Change groups rely on the organic formation of community groups, and on the self-identification of the need for community groups to ensure there is little
dependency on the project inputs themselves to maintain the kinetic energy of community action. Indeed, for these groups very little is ‘given’. All inputs appear earned in one sense or another, as any inputs need to be passed on to other groups before they can be used to the advantage of the community (as outlined above). This strategy is argued to empower the community

“by encouraging them to recognise that they can capitalise on any opportunities that become available, rather than those fixed within a specific project time-frame” (Interview, WfC District Co-ordinator, November 2007)

This kind of planning is essential for an organisation like Women for Change, whose outlook for development planning is long-term by choice and design, but whose funding is never guaranteed beyond short-term donor funding patterns. Commonly where ongoing funding is not guaranteed to a particular project, an exit strategy is developed which takes up part of the operational life of the project. The structure used by WfC, according to a senior manager, negates any need for such components and thus takes maximum advantage of funding given (Interview, October 2007).

By contrast, the BELONG Project is funded through PEPFAR, which is by definition a short-term initiative. The five year plan of this project is highly unlikely to be extended in its current form, and the nature of the project demands that some resources are given to strengthen the capacity of community schools. Their needs could not be met by the provision of knowledge alone. Here an innovative planning programme has been put in place to enhance community independence from resources supplied by the project. For the first three of the five years for which the project is funded, resources are given to those schools judged to be committed. Resources can include building materials to make school venues permanent and weatherproof, sports equipment, textbooks, exercise books, pencils, toilets, and so on.

For the final two years of the project however, no resources are given to the schools at all. District co-ordinators continue to liaise with schools in order to give them advice and guidance about how to solve any problems and to facilitate linkages with other projects or organisations to whom they may be able to appeal for support. These sources of support are not just for the schools as a whole, though they crucially include
passing on knowledge of changing government policy regarding the community school network, but also for making sure that OVC, particularly those in need of home-based care, continue to be a focus of concern for the community. Through this planning attribute, BELONG claims to divert any dependency on the resources they supply. This innovative timeline is to be commended in theory, though in practice problems with the administration and management of the project have drawn some staff to the conclusion that any potential for empowerment through this structure has been lost (see Box 4).

Box 4 Undoing an Empowering Project Plan through Implementation

The plan of a project directly fits its ostensible objectives, but the achievement of stated objectives is dependent on a sincere implementation of the plan. For the operation of the BELONG Project in the Southern Province of Zambia, the excellent planning had been denied potential to fulfil its objectives by avoidable problems in implementation. During the first three years of the project, only 20 schools in a single district were given attention, despite the plan for the project to operate in three districts and in many more schools in each one. This change of plan was not confirmed to the co-ordinator, who was based in the Provincial capital, a two hour drive from the outskirts of his one operational district. From this point, the remote schools that are the focus of the project could be as much as 50km on sand roads. In addition, the co-ordinator was not allocated a vehicle for his role, and was limited to hiring vehicles at great expense and without reliability. The mid-term review of the project highlighted these difficulties to PCI directly, though reports of the limitations had been communicated to the head office of the project previously. Following the mid-term review (after three years of the project’s operation), a vehicle was provided and the abandonment of any attempt to branch into the final two districts was finally confirmed. At this point more schools were added to the target number in the single district of operation. However, by this time no further resources were to be supplied so schools starting at this entry point were severely disadvantaged in terms of the original project structure – arguably to the point where the directives for empowerment were no longer valid.

Source: Interviews, BELONG, October 2007 and June 2008

7.2.3 Legitimate Dependencies?

Analysis of the Social Cash Transfers project requires a rather different framework to consider the generation of dependency, and presents an exceptional case here. Being a social protection net, the structure of this project explicitly channels
dependency that already exists in society, in contrast to creating it. While those receiving cash transfers are clearly dependent on them, in a far more essential sense than most dependencies created from development project outcomes, they are crucially already dependent on society, and this project merely formalises the nature of the dependency being acted out. That said, the amounts currently distributed through the Cash Transfers project are minimal, barely enough for stark survival, so they do not represent something for people to aspire to receiving. The Vulnerability and Food Security Advisor at DfID in Lusaka was confident that the amount was enough to feed beneficiaries and that it was therefore ‘sufficient’ (Interview, July 2008). Indeed, here the notion of dependency itself was taken to be problematic (see Box 5), though practical problems of dependency were couched in terms of the consistency and reliability of distributing the cash transfers more than the concept of dependency itself.

Box 5 Dependency – Value-Laden and Stigmatised?

The notion of being dependent on aid or resources provided by actors external to a community is commonly accepted to have negative connotations, linked to the insecurity and lack of control surrounding such relationships. However, certain kinds of dependency are accepted in many societies as entirely legitimate, and free from the negative connotations of the term ‘dependency’. For example, old age pensions given (most often) in richer societies are seen as a deserved form of support to those who can no longer gain a living from active participation in society. Within DfID, it was expressed that it would be insulting to call someone receiving a pension ‘dependent’, though undoubtedly such a person is dependent on society to receive this assistance. This is a notable conceptual divide, linked probably to whether or not such a person is thought of as being deserving, and also linked to a stigmatised notion of dependency itself. Thus a discussion of ‘legitimate dependencies’ is essential, in order to expose these contradictions and free an uncritical use of the term dependency from its negative connotations. In considering community level empowerment, such a discussion is significant as it demands consideration that power in a particular community must be linked to its ability to provide for its rightful dependents, without such relationships constituting negation of the power of the community to achieve its own goals.

Source: Interview, Senior Level Zambia Country Advisor, DfID, July 2008

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For empowerment, this formalisation of the dependencies already existing in society is important. For those 'highly incapacitated' and significantly marginalised, the move from being dependent on those also struggling around them to being given the right to receive a small amount, by virtue of their situation is empowering according to the DfID and the MCDSS. In this project, it is truly the most marginalised (and this group is crucially identified by the whole community in a transparent and open process) who are being assisted. Whether this assistance represents empowerment for the 'beneficiaries' involved is a difficult question, though one which will be considered in greater detail later. Indeed, this fact was disputed to the highest levels of personnel at the project. However, the empowerment factor, as affects the whole community through the operation of this project, is not encompassed by this assistance alone. The wider community is arguably 'empowered' by releasing them from the burden of supporting the most vulnerable. Studies in Zambia have previously shown that people are deterred from visiting relatives in rural villages if they have become successful urban migrants, as the burden of having to share their wealth is so great that they end up with little to show for their success (Cliggett 2005). Such opinions are replicated amongst the more successful in rural settings too. There is little motivation to be financially successful, as this in effect only means to be able to share more rather than to have more for oneself. Recognition that legitimate forms of dependency are possible releases project planners and communities alike from the burden of thinking that all dependencies are inherently 'wrong'. This shift in thinking is deemed to empower communities to consider that they should allocate resources for the most needy and vulnerable who are legitimately dependent on society in one form or another.

7.3 Empowerment = Sustainability

Throughout discussions with institutional representatives, the notion of empowerment was consistently linked with sustainability of project outcomes. A clear definition of sustainability in this context is difficult to find, though much literature has been devoted to discussion of the rightful meaning of the concept (Blewitt 2008; Dresner 2008; O'Riordan 2001). Suffice here to say that sustainability means longevity of project outcomes, which can be supported by the community without ongoing external
assistance  At first glance, this condition is similar to the avoidance of dependency considered above. However, there are a number of critical differences. Sustainability does not simply mean a lack of dependence on external material inputs. A sustainable achievement by a development project means that the community is both able and willing to continue with the achievements of the project. One District Co-ordinator for the Social Cash Transfers Project felt that:

"Empowerment means giving people a sustainable ability to look after themselves and their families"  (Interview, October 2007)

Establishing community ownership of projects was deemed to be a key feature in this regard. Ownership of the direction of the project was most consistently argued to be essential, crucially that participating communities were progressing towards self-prescribed goals. Secondly, it was argued that giving knowledge and skills to a community, as opposed to resources, would develop opportunities for people in the community and that such opportunities could be spread through communities without the need for further inputs, as people are able to share knowledge and skills in a way that is impossible with resources. Finally, self-reliance upon local natural resources was deemed to be important if community empowerment were to be achieved by a project which needed physical materials for success or achievement.

7.3.1 Self Identification of Goals. Self-Realisation

Externally prioritised goals for development have long been criticised, as Clapham notes in his discussion about imparting development “Can development be taught?...No. It can only be learnt” (Clapham 1996.823). So rather than externally identifying deficiencies in a community, WfC advocates a programme of “self-realisation” as essential for empowerment. They provide means for self-analysis of community problems or needs, and encourage this process. Some examples of methods for self-analysis are given in Box 6. Only when a particular group has identified issues that require knowledge or resources to be resolved will any kind of resources be deployed.
Box 6 Suggested Methods of Community Self-Analysis

A common format used by Women for Change to encourage self-analysis of communities is the ‘Development Tree’. Groups are asked to consider at what stage of development they are, and to relate it to a particular stage of the natural development/growing process of a tree. They can feel safe in the knowledge that they have roots, a culture of growing to follow or eventually proud that they are blossoming. The conceptual basis of this pattern is appropriate for all in the community to understand regardless of education or literacy.

Discussing hopes and visions for the future of the community is also a useful method to inspire people to think about practical changes that could be made to happen. Opening up space for people to consider what they could change themselves is a powerful process, and one which permeates into other areas of life. Struggling to meet the daily demands of life means that unless the routine is broken, even simple improvements are not made due to lack of time for reflection. Envisaging expectations for the community in five/ten years time is useful in this regard, and records kept of those discussions can be used for reflection later, particularly if some of those expectations/hopes/dreams have been met.

In the planning of activities to improve the community, all stages of planning, that is, the conceptual validity, practical viability and resulting progress, are evaluated through the same format, that is, the ‘5 frames of planning method’:
- Why do you want to do this?
- How are you going to do this?
- What resources will you need?
- When?
- Where?

Using the same format for planning and evaluation keeps the method simple to use and thereby accessible to all. Illustrations are commonly used to facilitate inclusion of the illiterate in this process.

Goal is self-realisation = empowerment.

Source: Interview, Women for Change, October 2007

to address these deficiencies or to bolster potential in a given area of activity. In this case, the chosen title of the field workers is a case in point, as field personnel are deliberately called ‘Field Animators’. The intentional implication is that they animate communities, facilitating open communication within communities, and giving them
ideas about how they can best fulfil their self-identified ambitions or solve their self-identified problems. This is in contrast to the well known role of the field worker, who is responsible for organising, cajoling and ‘working’ for the communities in which they are placed.

In most spheres of its operation, self-identification of goals is a prior condition for schools involved in the BELONG project. Most of these communities have already engaged with the ownership of their motivation to create a community school, they have identified the need for a school and committed themselves to the goal of achieving such an outcome to the best of their ability. Targeting a project to aid them in their self-identified task builds on their ability while not undermining their intentions. The importance of this organic identification of a community need is formally recognised in the attempt by the GRZ to codify basic guidelines for community schools (MOE, 2007). While the need for schools for formal education is often well understood by the community, BELONG workers place an emphasis on making the school a centre for the provision and distribution of resources to OVC.

"Co-ordination of care for OVC in the community can be achieved easily through the school management structure and school-led community discussions. We encourage the management committee to consider who else is responsible for these OVC, and thereby encourage them to consider this more general provision of care as an essential part of the schools service. We start discussions by asking what the purpose of a school is. The answer from the community often centres on the need to give children a better chance in life, and from there discussion often identifies that such a goal ought to include OVC on equal terms."

(Interview, Senior Manager, BELONG, September 2007)

At the Joy Human Development Centre, the three criteria they use to identify participants are used in strictly respective order. They are ‘most vulnerable’, ‘most dependent’ and ‘most willing’ OVC to participate in the project. The organisers of the project argue that
“no matter how vulnerable and dependent a person is, they need to want to learn
and to be able to link the objectives of the project to real goals in their own life”
(Interview, Joy Human Development Centre, October 2007)

Crucially, they need to be willing to join in with the aspirations of the project in order to
have any hope of succeeding. This is borne of ‘self-realisation’ on behalf of eligible
OVC that they could benefit from participation in such a scheme, according to the
organisers.

7.3.2 Empowerment as Knowledge and Skills

The concept of sustainability was also consistently linked to expanding
knowledge and skills in a community. The projects studied offered a range of training
opportunities for those participating. Mostly this training was given directly to members
of the various community committees developed for the projects. Women for Change ran
workshops on topics like child abuse, gender equality, child rights, authority structures in
the community, as well as given more specific training for skills such as farming, seed
bank management, gardening, animal husbandry, bee-keeping, and other basic income
generating activities. All three projects offered skills training to enhance the potential of
participants to run and record their committee affairs effectively, such as record keeping,
business management, financial management and secretarial and managerial skills. In
addition, the BELONG project offered basic skills in teacher training, first aid and
emotional counselling.

It was a firmly held belief across all layers of personnel that the spreading of such
skills was empowering by definition, contributing both to the effectiveness of the project
and to the long-term outlook for vocational and transferable skills within a community.
Organically, it was claimed:

“The skills that people learn in the groups can help them in many ways in the
community – to organise better and communicate better. But they are even
learning to do jobs with these skills and most people in the community here have
no education” (Interview, WfC District Co-ordinator, October 2007)
These bodies of knowledge and skills would remain in communities for generations to come, without the need for them to be reiterated and would thus contribute to ‘development’. On finding the skills useful, community members would pass them throughout their peers, and particularly to their children, creating a sustainable and valuable legacy to the projects.

“People here – they like to learn. So when they learn they like to pass it on to their friends and especially their children. That means the community does not need to learn again – the community members will teach each other in the future.”

(Interview, WfC District Co-ordinator, October 2007)

In the PAM project, specific training was given about how to organise a particular piece of land and the potential to improve irrigation there. Skills about how to farm were argued to be implicit in the selection of resources supplied, a variety of kinds of seeds, including both grains and vegetables, with different harvesting times and nutritional values, in addition to the specification that a single farmer should operate on half an acre of land. Farmers were also encouraged to group together so that irrigation could be organised more effectively, though motivation for this arrangement was also drawn from increasing the ease and cost-efficiency of monitoring effects of the inputs.

7.3.3 Self-Reliance on Local Natural Resources

All of the projects encouraged communities to take advantage of local physical resources, an essential attribute to ‘progress’ in a country with poor infrastructure and transport systems. One of the most important features of this for WfC was to promote the use of seed-banks so that communities could produce their own seeds rather than having to travel the long-distance to regional trading centres to access them, and without needing access to scarce finances to provide for this most basic rural need. The production of seeds is a patented process under world trading rules, so local production of seeds relies on some farmers to be certified to produce certain kinds of seeds under the Plant Variety and Seed Regulations 1997. For illiterate farmers, certification is a process impossible to
undertake without assistance, and the cost of certification makes it prohibitive as an undertaking for individual farmers (Muliokela 1997). Collective action through the community groups can result in some farmers in an area producing seed and storing it, before distributing seed amongst group members at planting time. Thus through cooperative action, communities can prevent themselves from being excluded from growing ‘improved’ seed varieties, in spite of the global trading rules which leave small-scale farmers highly disadvantaged.

At the Joy Human Development Centre, handicraft production is based around accessible recycled materials. Even these may need to be purchased in some cases, or may require some investment in transport to collect them, but they remain materials of production requiring the minimal economic outlay. The need to remain operational in times of very limited funding makes this strategy essential for the organisers, but they maintain that according to this methodology, participants are using materials which they could continue to source outside of a project structure. They also argue that:

"participants are taught to think creatively about materials usually wasted, and this is also good because waste management is unregulated and an increasing problem for urban communities"

(Interview, Joy Human Development Centre, October 2007)

BELONG co-ordinators encourage schools to use natural, available materials to their advantage simply because they accept that the project will not be able to provide sufficient external resources to bridge all the gaps in resources at the schools. For example, children’s play areas can be constructed outside school buildings to help the school to be a place where children can enjoy physical activities as well as academic ones. Sports areas are particularly encouraged, and similarly can often be constructed of easily available local materials. Creative ideas could be passed from school to school by way of the BELONG co-ordinator, as communities rarely have the opportunity or the means to visit other schools in their area.

According to the underlying motivation for social cash transfers, the need to rely more heavily on local resources is important, though it is taken as both a positive and negative factor by DFID in the empowering impacts of the programme. Transporting
food is often difficult if there is surplus in some areas and shortages in others so local reliance is an ideal condition. However, in this situation, local reliance is possible only in the areas with surplus and impossible in those experiencing shortages. The cost of food can vary enormously given these disparities, making the universal level of the cash payment problematic at times. However, the transfers have promoted an innovative community-wide effect, contributing arguably to community empowerment vis-à-vis the global development regime. By supplying cash directly to beneficiaries, they are free to, and highly likely to, spend their cash within their immediate locality and community. This effect is known as the ‘multiplier effect’ (Hegeland 1954). In the case of cash transfers, small local traders and farmers have been demonstrated to benefit in studies conducted in Malawi (Davies and Davey 2007). In rural communities particularly, cash may be used to pay for labour or crops where few people have cash to exchange for such services. This represents a move away from the supply of globally sourced food and goods for in-kind payments to a greater inclusion of locally produced goods and services, employing local people and creating income generating opportunities. With a long-term outlook, this factor is ultimately fostering community self-reliance in a comprehensive manner according to the Zambian Ministry responsible for Social Cash Transfers:

“By spending money in their communities, beneficiaries of cash transfers become a more valuable member of the community, increasing self-esteem and self-worth and spreading the benefits of the project throughout the community”

(Interview, MCDSS, October 2007)

The basic concept of self-reliance has long been a key part of discussions of empowerment. Where external trading relations are, for poor and marginalised communities, often inherently discriminatory and disempowering, the issue of negating the need for such relations at all has been expressed in many ways. For all the advantages which self-reliance may be espoused to have, it has been noted that such reliance is promoted only as a factor in achieving ‘development’ in such marginalised societies (Duffield 2007). Where ‘developed’ societies are ever more reliant on distant production, those who are ostensibly trying to reach that point are being encouraged to turn ever more inward. Whether or not this is more discriminatory, or disempowering,
than the external relationships they are leaving behind (or abandoning hope of) will be explored further in the forthcoming chapters.

7.4 Empowerment = Promotion of Self-help and Community Confidence

The final aspects of the projects that were argued to be empowering by design were those that enabled the community to realise the potential of their existing human resources. The notion of, what has been referred to in earlier chapters as 'subjective empowerment' is highly significant here. People need to recognise that they are capable of achieving change in their own communities. Of course, this is dependent on having knowledge and skills to effect such change, as it is on feeling that they can determine the direction of the change, as has been considered earlier. But it is also crucially down to people feeling that they command the internal/community/personal power to speak up for what they see as important.

This attribute was deemed to be driven through empowerment initiatives in three key ways. An explicit focus on facilitating linkages between various layers of communities, from the most powerful to the most marginalised, was being established through the projects as a valuable way to allow for a community-wide identification of priorities and cultural reflection. The most powerful are often respected as leaders, whether or not they really act in the interests of the majority of the population, and require familiarisation with the realities of life for those living under their sphere of influence. By contrast, inclusion of the marginalised makes less outwardly powerful individuals aware of their own value and ability to participate in community life and decision making.

"The culture here in Zambia is to accept things as they are and not to challenge authority – especially in these remote areas. We have to assist people to understand that if they want change in their communities, they can change it themselves! When they believe that, it is when change comes for them"

(Interview, HfC District Co-ordinator, October 2007)

This leads to 'subjective empowerment', a promotion of feeling able to influence the implementation of measures which affect local society. Discourses of rights were highly
influential in summoning up the courage to defend matters which people believe to be important at local level, and opening space for discussion of topics previously stigmatised or silenced by cultural tradition. Finally, some attention was being given to expanding the power of the community to advocate their own views/needs/situations directly to external actors. These innovative strategies are in their infancy, but high hopes are held for their potential by project organisers.

7.4.1 Inclusion and Equality

Including as much of the community on as equal a footing as possible in project discussions and implementation was viewed as very important. It is important to recognise that in practice this means attributing as much value to the most powerful members of the community as to the most marginalised. There are many forms of hierarchies in any community, and in the Zambian context, this situation is exacerbated by traditional leadership structures (male and female chiefs, and village headmen), the cultural importance of elders and clearly defined gender roles. All the projects operated a structure which valued the inclusion of members of all groups, through linkages with community committees.

Explicit attention was given to including traditional leaderships, a group which has often been left out of project structures in the past. These leaders are custodians of both good and bad cultural practices, but in remote communities they wield influential power as people are often disconnected from democratic leadership and also from formal law and order mechanisms. Furthermore, rightly or wrongly, this group continues to hold real influence in the direction of national policies. WfC ran a national programme to train chiefs and village headmen about the long-term implications of local cultural practices, for example, early marriages, gender rights, child abuse. This training was generally positively received. In an interview with a management level representative of WfC, it was observed:

"We have had requests for more training from other traditional leaders who can see that communities benefit from this knowledge. When they feel the training makes life better then of course they want to know!"  
(Interview, October 2007)
The BELONG project also values the inclusion of traditional leaders in making priorities of service provision for OVC, recognising that their support makes a real difference in the capacity of the whole community to provide services without external assistance. Chiefs are introduced to the project, and in theory they have real power to aid the implementation of project goals through the village headmen in their own communities. The example given in Box 7 shows the simplistic strength of this mechanism.

Box 7 The Importance of the Chief/Headman relationship to the BELONG project at Bowwood Community School

A struggling community school, teachers and committee members at Bowwood community school in Kalomo District are trying to operate on the advice of the BELONG district co-ordinator to improve the standards of education at the school. They are unsupported by any other project assistance as the school facilities are of a poor standard. However, they are also unsupported by their village headman, who may be able to improve the scope of the school by organising borehole improvements for a clean water supply near to the school and by encouraging people throughout the community to give assistance to households struggling due to the high dependency ratio of OVC to able bodied adults. The kinds of assistance encouraged in this case include helping to make home structures secure before the wet season and going to visit on regular occasions to check on the health of the vulnerable people there, who may be unable to communicate their condition without assistance. This is particularly worrying in cases where the household is composed entirely of children, or where the only adult is very elderly. Without support from the headman such practices are very difficult to normalise.

However, the chief in this district is highly supportive of the project intentions, and is insistent that his headmen should be encouraging new practices in the interests of OVC. On hearing that there has been an ongoing lack of support from the headman, the BELONG co-ordinator was able to tell the PCSC that the chief would be unhappy to hear about his lack of action, and that informing the chief would be necessary if the situation was not to change. By operating according to the patterns of traditional leadership, the project ambitions may yet be aided by the whole community through the headman.

Source: Visit to Bowwood Community School, June 2008
Thus rather than rejecting hierarchies, some projects incorporated them by accepting established patterns of power relations. This methodology reflects a departure from the favoured past emphasis on making the most marginalised be heard through development (for example, 'Putting the Last First' Chambers 1997). It is based on a fundamental belief that chiefs and headmen should be given the chance to show if they are committed to making improvements for the lives of people in their areas. Attempts to make a moral judgement about whether or not such incumbent holders of powerful roles ought to be able to direct the priorities of the most marginalised in their communities are inappropriate here, and ultimately probably worthless. It is important to recognise that, for the most part, the priorities of the marginalised are often set by such influential people, through the manner of the resolution of disputes and the parameters of cultural practices. In terms of community empowerment, this may not be so destructive. Aligning community priorities is arguably a big step towards increasing cumulative power within the community, and its manner of operation. Familiarising a chief with the issues challenging citizens in his/her area is often enough to encourage him/her that practices could be better handled to the overall benefit of the community (see Mangwato 2008).

Distribution of benefits from both the Social Cash Transfers scheme and the PAM project are decided upon by the community itself. While these projects are ultimately defined by government and external donor decisions, the local decisions are made by a wide cross section of the communities in which they operate. The Social Cash Transfers project insists that two open community meetings are held when the scheme begins in a community. The first meeting announces the principles of the project, and introduces people to the assessment process. Through this meeting, the DSWO intends to make it clear to people that assessment does not mean certain inclusion on the scheme, while advising them that decisions about who should receive help would be based on community consultation, as well as the formal results of inspections to verify household incomes and coping strategies. The second meeting displays rankings of the results of assessments, before inviting open consultation about rightful beneficiaries. These meetings were well attended in all areas studied, and resulting decisions were generally
seen as fair and rightful by the whole community, although some resentment and confusion remained about the scale of assistance being offered given the level of need.

Interestingly, the only objections evident to this ‘open’ process for the social cash transfers, came from within DfID, at the highest levels of project management. Here it was felt that the process of consultation did not lead to assistance for the poorest, though it was argued that the structure was necessary given levels of project funding.

"Volunteer committees are a necessity given the resources available to fund this project. The structure is fully supported by both government and the community. But this structure almost certainly leads to favouritism in the distribution of the cash transfers and prevents them from reaching the poorest in the community"

(Interview, Senior Level Country Advisor DfID, July 2008)

No precise grounds for such an objection were found in active research however.

7.4.2 Rights and Subjective Empowerment

Self-esteem and self-confidence are likely to be lowest in the most marginalised members of society, who are equally likely to be the least educated, making them the least likely to voice their opinions. Creating a rights-based perspective of societal obligations and demands was seen as important in making space for the marginalised to feel able to assert their needs as members of the community. Rights were a key aspect to the promotion of subjective empowerment amongst project participants, but another important aspect was deemed to be the creation of the community committees. While committee membership usually does not affect the poorest, or the most marginalised, it does usually attract people who do not hold local positions of power.

DfID argued that social cash transfers, and social protection more widely, needed to be seen a right, as a social contract between citizen and government, in order to reach its full potential. Only if it was a secure right in this unquestionable way, they argued, could social protection by relied upon by all members of the community to the extent that it would be empowering, by freeing them from desperate fears of destitution. Though the project is operated through budgetary support mechanisms, personnel at DfID felt that a huge change in ministerial culture was needed before ‘rights’ could become widespread.
in Zambia. At present, considerable objections to such a permanent structure of governmental obligations were thought to remain.

All of the other projects used the language of rights to encourage subjective empowerment as well as an advantageous manner of organisation. Educating communities about the importance of women’s or children’s rights often has obvious benefits to the whole household and community (see Box 8 for a specific example). This is an essential condition, as in remote areas there are rarely formal measures or personnel to enforce rights or to punish deviation. The community itself is the only judge and jury of activities and cultural practices, thus demanding that any rights introduced must be seen and understood as beneficial.

Box 8 Changing Rights to the Advantage of All

Traditional male superiority in Zambia means that men control household wealth, and that their activities are prioritised over those deemed to be the woman’s responsibility. Wealth in farming is traditionally understood to come from maize so this is the man’s crop, while the women are responsible for growing vegetables and groundnuts which are perceived to be less important. As men have ultimate power in traditional settings, they command that women help them to weed and harvest the maize before dealing with their own crops. However, research has shown that groundnut harvests are severely diminished if weeding is not completed early in the growing season, and in the modern day maize is not worth much more than groundnuts. Thus, if women weed and harvest their groundnuts before men need help to tend the maize, then a bigger harvest ensues to the benefit of all. Rather than simply trying to educate men about giving women rights on moral terms, such education allows communities to identify for themselves that such structured roles are detrimental in objective terms. This leads them to the recognition that each decision should be made according to merit, rather than simply by following received wisdom. Respecting women for the part they play in this process, and appreciating their equal importance in such processes leads to an applied rather than an abstract education of rights.

Source. Interview, District Co-ordinator, Women for Change, October 2007

Commitment to a ‘work ethic’ was claimed to increase the internal belief of students at the Joy Human Development Centre that they were able to achieve goals in life. Disaffected and largely uneducated youths often perceive themselves to have
nothing to offer to their family or society, and no hope of making a living in formal employment or legal trading. Bolstering their ability to realise that they can be committed to a project, that they can come every day (or as the timetable directs), that they can have ideas that are respected and important is seen by the project staff to be an important step in freeing youths from turning to crime and thus in empowering them to lead a different kind of life.

The establishment of voluntary community committees was a key focus in the strategy to empower communities in general according to most of the project organisers, encouraging communities to consider their own role in their own future and their own ability and right to direct the process. At WFC, the community committees were hailed as creating a new form of civil society, tied only to the community at large rather than to any particular interest group.

"The committees mean better communication across areas and they are not just for one part of the community but for all of the people. Now they can see that things are better if they work together"

(Interview, WFC District Co-ordinator, November 2007)

For BELONG schools, the committees were a means of showing the community what could be achieved in pursuit of a target if the effort was community wide and well structured.

"When they make a good school for their children, they can feel proud of that. When the committee get together like that they know they can do other things in the community too"

(Interview, BELONG Field Staff, October 2007)

A school that was being efficiently run by a demonstrable and clear structure of control, through a community committee inviting community wide inputs, was also more likely to attract the attention of NGOs or state funding projects in the area and to benefit in this way from additional resources. For the cash transfers project, the committees provided a level of monitoring and accountability to the distribution and use of the transfers that
could not have been achieved in any other way. This promoted respect in the community for the distribution process, and kept the information constantly updated should changes occur in household structure or situation.

The committees were argued to hold basically common attributes across all the projects surveyed. Being drawn from those able and willing to give up their time on a voluntary basis, the committees attract specific kinds of people. Firstly they are people who hold the needs of the community in high enough regard to want to participate and secondly they are people with time to contribute. In areas where there are few opportunities for formal employment (operation focuses of all projects), this latter condition is not difficult to fulfil, though arguably the most marginalised are engaged in constant activity to alleviate their position. Community committee members are rarely well educated themselves, so the skills and responsibilities acquired through the projects allow them to feel strong in their own convictions and abilities.

The notion of voluntary committees was espoused as an advantage by most of the institutional representatives interviewed, and was viewed as heightening the community level empowerment potential of the projects. However, project coordination level staff at the MCDSS were concerned that

"social protection nets and services should not be based on principles of goodwill alone – this is dangerous. Reliability and consistency are essential if these services are to create long term benefits to communities"

(Interview, MCDSS, October 2007)

They acknowledged that with present levels of funding there is no possibility for distributing the payments any other way, but argued that sustainability of the project outcomes were put in doubt by the reliance on volunteers.

743 Community Advocacy

The facilitation of advocacy for community complaints is seen as an important way to get communities more involved in advocating their rights to external powers who can effect change to their position. Some novel ideas were in evidence to promote this process. Women for Change encouraged District Level Associations (made up of
representatives from AAs) to seek independent registration as NGOs. Once registered as independent organisations, such institutions would be able to apply for funding from independent sources, on issues and platforms that they deemed to be most important. Once a District had a sufficiently developed network of community groups and AAs to form a District Level Association, it was argued that they would also have the necessary skills to recognise their own areas of concern and to articulate their needs to outside bodies without further external assistance.

"When Area Associations have the skills to manage themselves there is no reason why they cannot apply for funding. That way they can identify their worst problems and put a proposal to get funding for that project. So they can be registered as their own organisation"

(Interview, WfC District Co-ordinator, November 2007)

At the other end of the scale, WfC have tried to combat the familiar criticism that agencies who try to speak for 'the poor' operate on an arrogance which assumes that 'the poor' are incapable of speaking for themselves. In response, they have provided the technology for community groups to record radio programmes about development issues in their area, so that they can effectively speak directly to the public.

The facilitation of advocacy within the BELONG project is a specific connection between the project co-ordinators and the Ministry of Education. Increasing codification of guidelines for the establishment and operation of community schools (MoE November 2007) has resulted also in mechanisms to convert community schools into government supported schools where particular conditions are met by the school. Representations can be made by field staff direct to the MoE in cases where a community school has fulfilled the criteria or where a school is becoming close to fulfilment. This line of communication means that MoE staff have access to details about community schools which it would be unlikely to collect otherwise, thus making sure that schools receive rewards for their provision of extra services. However, it was acknowledged that this dynamic would be unlikely to be better developed after the project timeframe despite an effort to encourage community members to represent their own interests to the MoE and promote direct, local-scale political empowerment.
7.5 Chapter Summary

Each of the three projects studied (and the others mentioned) demonstrates that empowerment is deemed to be promoted through three related streams of interacting project priorities. Firstly, the elimination of dependency creation is ensured through the initial demonstration of commitment from communities, planning project time-frames with community independence in mind and legitimising dependencies for the incapacitated. Secondly, the provision of sustainable outcomes is promoted through the self-identification of community goals, the spread of knowledge and skills and by emphasising self-reliance on local resources. Finally, emphasising self-help and community confidence means that inclusion and equality are prioritised, as are rights and community advocacy with the wider world.

Implicit in the factors outlined, according to the institutions concerned, is a result of empowerment for the communities which they affect. If a project manages to avoid creating dependencies on the inputs it provides to a community, is sustainable in its outcomes, that is the results remain as positive forces in the community even after the timeframe of the project is complete, and if communities have increased in self-confidence in their own abilities and thus the potential of their advocacy for their future needs, then, according to this institutional view, communities affected by such projects will have been empowered.

Such aims are written into project plans in a diverse variety of ways, and of course not all organisers or field staff would agree that all methods promote unproblematic empowerment. This chapter has examined the theoretical priorities of the institutions and field workers involved. Whether or not their intentions reach communities on the ground depends in part on a true and sincere implementation of project guidelines in practice, and also on the reception of the projects in the communities in which they operate. Furthermore, the success of these strategies is based on whether they actually have the potential to increase the relative power of marginalised communities in the globalised political economy of the development regime. These topics form the basis of the forthcoming two chapters respectively.
Chapter Eight
Impacts of Empowerment Projects at
Individual and Household Level

Community empowerment policies and projects operate with direct effects at the level of individuals and households. People affected by their impact each have a unique experience of a particular project or organisation in their community, and the effect of empowerment that may or may not result. This chapter explores the personal testimonies of people involved with the selected projects as participants, using as a primary framework for analysis the aims towards empowerment underlying projects (as outlined in the previous chapter). The views of individuals on the broad targets espoused by the institutions promoting empowerment (a lack of dependency on external assistance, sustainability of outcomes, and the promotion of community self-help) are investigated, alongside the impacts of the goals of the projects on the personal lives of community members, their households and the power relations therein.

Overwhelmingly, individual and household-level opinion of and reaction to the structure, operation and effect of the projects studied was a heightened sense of ‘empowerment’ amongst interviewees. In the vast majority of cases, their feelings about the impacts of the projects on their lives showed direct correlation with the intended outcomes attributed to empowerment strategies by project planners and organisers. Community committee members were invariably grateful for the chance to obtain new skills, and felt that these skills would enable them to contribute to a positive change in their own lives, and those of their households and communities. Greater equality in the power relations between different groups within the community (men/women/children/vulnerable/elderly) was creating greater co-operation to mutual benefit. Increased community self-reliance on local physical resources was a source of pride, which further bolstered the inner belief of community members regarding their ability to direct and manage community action. The structure of projects demands increased communication both for intra- and inter-community networks, which in turn
provoked 'hope' for the future. The sustainability of project outcomes was a goal shared and seen as empowering by communities and project staff alike, preferring to turn their back on external interventions as their permanency is unreliable and there is not complete community control over their existence. Thus, sustainability has been interpreted, for the purposes of the forthcoming analysis, as economic sufficiency and established rights against abuse for community members to the extent that these allow for a secure basis on which to plan for the future.

In the analysis of empowerment, both components of this conceptualisation of sustainability are essential, being those most often referred to directly in the proclamation of interviewees about why life will be better for future generations in their communities. That said, it is important to recognise the highly complex and interlinked nature of the social processes being recognised here. Income generating schemes facilitate communication and learning which are transferable skills if they are made secure through a perception of rights. Future 'hope' is created as much by security in income generation as it is in the knowledge that the community can co-operate and respect rights to mutual benefit, just as reliance on local resources (both physical and 'psychological') creates a dynamism in society through which empowerment of community members can contribute to the potential of the community to pursue their own goals.

The notion of subjective empowerment features as a particular focus throughout this chapter. Empowering people requires an increase in active power over the direction of their own lives (objective empowerment), and that they are able to take advantage of opportunities that may be open to them through having the inner strength and belief in their own ability to utilise that power (subjective empowerment). At individual level, this promotion of confidence and self-belief as a direct result of the operation of projects was clearly evident. People often did feel more powerful, proclaiming greater control over the direction of their own lives and greater confidence about the scope of their own ability to make a positive contribution to the community, both at present and in the future. Indeed, it is the curtailing of personal power at this local level which hinders the

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28 See Chapter 5 for an explanation of how 'hope' is being used as an analytical category here. Qualification is necessary to avoid the apparent paternalism of classing others as having 'hope' while not overlooking this important impact of projects.

29 See Chapter 5 for a definition of 'community self-efficacy' as psychological community self-reliance.
development freedom of community members, so promotion of subjective empowerment may induce or open space for processes of objective empowerment at an individual level. However, the extent to which subjective empowerment for community members, and the changes to the operation of the community which have facilitated it, can contribute to the wider project of gaining objective empowerment at the scale of the community is not within the scope of this chapter and will form the basis of Chapter Eight.

This chapter will focus on a number of key issues in turn. Firstly, the impact of the dissemination of knowledge through the diverse natures and structures of the various projects studied will be analysed through the use of quotes from interviews with those directly affected. There were two distinct forms of learning promoted through the projects, for which accompanying claims about the potential of knowledge were made. Training people in specific sets of skills, usually to aid in their role in community groups/committees, was a source of individual empowerment for those it affected. In addition, the emphasis on workshops and other activities to teach community members about the importance of greater equality in rights and power relations within the community grew to a process of mutual benefit, satisfaction and ultimately empowerment, at least for sections of the community.

The second and third sections contain a detailed analysis of whether (and how and why) community members consider the projects to be achieving the goals of community self-reliance and sustainability respectively, and the extent to which they feel empowered by these targets. ‘Psychological’ community self-reliance is derived largely from a sense of community ownership of projects and their management, while physical self-reliance is constituted by an increasing focus on the utilisation of local natural resources, often using reinvigorated traditional knowledge to inform this process. Sustainability of project outcomes is valued as a sense of ‘hope’ and increased security for future generations, and is commonly derived by moving away from a reliance on ‘handouts.’ This should not be equated with increased reliance on local physical resources, but rather with the formation of holistic systems of security in terms of income and sustenance generation, education provision, and so on. Furthermore, sustainability was often related to the vast potential of hugely improved networks of communication, as a ‘good’ in
themselves for the day-to-day reflexes of the community and in terms of the potential for advocacy of social and political demands.

The final section begins to unpick some of the community power relationships that directly arise from the operation of the projects in the broader community. These relations must be viewed through the lens of personal testimonies, and are inherently subjective and individual. They will feature more prominently in the analysis of the scope of resultant community empowerment in the next chapter, but must also be taken into account in the analysis of personal level impacts as these resultant power relations are the primary impact of projects for some members of the communities studied.

8.1 Knowledge as Power?

The meanings attached to the notion of 'knowledge as power' by the interviewees were diverse and extensive. Firstly, the skills training directly given to members of voluntary community committees, which was a key feature of all the projects studied, was highly valued. Secondly, broader community education initiatives relating to more equal rights and power relations in the community were widely appreciated and acknowledged as mutually beneficial to all members of the community.

8.1.1 Skills Training

Institutions pursue the objective of empowerment partially through increasing the capacity of individuals in the community by offering training in a variety of skills, as outlined in the last chapter. Community committee members were generally those targeted for training, though in the rather different style of the WfC project, group members more generally were included. Indeed, in this case the line between 'skills training' and improving income generation projects is rather blurred, but the latter component will be discussed below (see Section 8.3.1).

In community schools where the BELONG project is in operation, Parents Community School Committee (PCSC) members are offered a variety of training courses to enable them to manage and run their schools more competently. Training is commonly offered in basic teacher training, record keeping (for service provision records) and community management, leadership and organisational skills. Community
members spoke highly of the courses offered and the practical value of these skills in running schools.

"The training is good. It means we can organise the school better and the community really owns the school - now we can be accountable for running the school. I don't know if we could have done without the BELONG training, without the committee learning about organisation and record keeping"

(Chairperson, Mutala Community School, June 2008)

People who had been trained by BELONG were also invariably confident of their ability to pass on these skills to other community members so that more local people would have these skills in the future.

"We are learning a lot from the trainings, and when people see that we can organise then they want to learn too. So now, this community will not need training for these skills - we have the skills here now"

(PCSC Member, Namabondo Community School, October 2007)

In the Social Cash transfers project, skills training was also offered to voluntary committee members. For this project, training was focussed on skills such as book keeping, community liaison and committee management skills. Here the training was focussed more at the beginning of the life of the committee and was specifically directed at the efficient operation of the project. However, the reaction of interviewees to this kind of training was as enthusiastic as to any other. Many people pointed out how interesting it was to be trained and seemed to refer to their pride in being given both the responsibility of working on the committee and the skills to fulfil their position efficiently.

"The training is good, we can be better at running the committee and we can learn from other committee members. But it is not enough. Many here want to be trained in these skills so they can work"

(Chairperson, Mawaya 1, October 2007)
At the Joy Human Development Project, skills training was fundamental to both the structure of the project, and the development of the organisation. Here, the project directors have ultimate faith in the transferability and immutability of skills as a means of empowerment, arguing that they have been empowered to offer training to others through precisely these channels. The organisers were all trained to varying degrees by international organisations looking for ‘fair-trade’ partners towards the end of the 1990s. They attended courses on handicrafts (purely for income generation, see Section 8.3.1) as well as IT skills, account keeping, business management and marketing. It is these skills that are the basis of the knowledge that is being used to drive their own attempt to empower their community today.

WiC offered training in a wide variety of skill sets to group members. Generic organisational skills were offered to all groups, while new income generation practices were targeted into specifically appropriate geographical areas (for more detail on income generation as empowerment, see Section 8.3.1 below). Generic skills were focussed around record keeping, business management, and so on as for the other organisations, though WiC was also beginning to teach about project development and fund raising, to equip any District Associations with the skills they need to become registered NGOs in their own right.

In some cases, skills that bolster confidence and ability are passed on in the most subtle manner. During a visit to Samakakata Community School, with the District Coordinator, the Headmaster remarked:

“I learn every time he (the co-ordinator) comes here. I learn about the services we give for each other in the community, how to see them and how to say them. We don’t know that this is a service, but if we tell someone then maybe we can get some help for that” (Interview, June 2008)

Such forms of learning can be discerned within the workings of all the projects researched. Discussions with field staff are often focussed on keeping appropriate records, or how practical a particular idea is, or whether or not there may be resources to support a particular activity. In the example above, BELONG supported schools were required to record the many categories and occurrences of ‘services’ offered to OVC. If
an adult goes to check on a child-headed household, this is a service which should be recorded. If OVC come to the school, that is a service which should be recorded and so on. However, it was clear that such ‘services’ were being given to OVC by their community without any external or institutional motivation, and pleas to record such duties were met with blank nods by all (with the exception of some school committee members focussed on the input of BELONG). There was a clear lack of understanding about any connection between longstanding/traditional community duties and the categories of ‘services’ being offered to ‘OVC’ which were so important to record for the co-ordinator.

It cannot be immediately clear to an observer whether or not all OVC in a community would receive adequate care and attention through the community action observed here without external input, this would require further research. But the point is nevertheless an important one. The headmaster quoted above is excited by his new knowledge, and the ability to record ‘service provision’ in this way is certainly a vocational skill, not least because the number of OVC assisted determines the amount of funding the project can direct to particular schools. This knowledge certainly constitutes power at a personal level. It is certainly also a form of subjective empowerment for the headmaster, growing his self-confidence, and arguably contributing to objective empowerment at a personal level too. However, the community level implications of this process require a more contextual analysis which will take place in Chapter Nine.

8.1.2 Power Relations: The Importance of Increased Equality

Knowledge building in the area of transferable skills was matched in all projects by promoting awareness of community issues and aiming to bring about more equal power relations in the community to mutual advantage. Interviewees from the WfC projects particularly emphasised the manner in which improved community awareness of rights had affected their lives. According to field animators and group members alike, the topics covered by these awareness workshops were derived from discussions in the groups about issues that they felt were problematic in their communities. A primary focus for most groups seemed to be the issues performed through drama during a celebration of fifteen years of operation by WfC in Mazabuka District (see Box 9).
Indeed, an overt wish to build knowledge in areas of rights and openness in the community was oft cited as a reason to become involved in project operations in the first place.

"I joined the WfC group because I wanted to learn. Life used to be very hard for women here. Life is easier now because we know we have rights, we know what they are and we have others we can talk to."

(Chizwamundu, B AA Chairperson, November 2007)

Facilitation of open discussion about prevalent inequalities that lead to tensions, particularly those that exist within households where traditional roles are virtually unquestionable in practice, was consistently prioritised as a reason why these workshops were so useful. Women in particular rarely have occasion in the normal activities of life to discuss their problems or feelings with others in their community. Thus, workshops served as an ideal opportunity to become more open with neighbours and friends about difficult subjects. Interviewees claimed that they felt much stronger when they realised that others were being subjected to the same kinds of abuse as themselves, rather than feeling personally inadequate.

"People, they are scared to tell the community, because you don’t know what can happen. Here in Zambia, we think things that happen at home, they stay at home. You can be ashamed if you talk about that outside. . . . Now we know some things are wrong. It is better now we talk."

(Chairperson, Tuzumanne Group, November 2007)
In Mazabuka District, a celebration of 15 years of WfC operations in the area brought together members of groups from seven AAs, and was a whole day of celebrations held at Konkola Area Association Centre. Some people travelled significant distances to attend the event, many arriving the night before as their journey was too long to allow them to arrive on the day. Each AA had prepared a contribution to the event based on the knowledge they had gained through WfC generated workshops, and local reflections thereon. The structure of the event had, according to group members been planned through agreement between all AAs involved. The drama based contributions were watched respectfully and attentively by the audience, and demonstrated a deep understanding of some of the issues beset most oft by ignorance in this enormous and remote community.

Here are some examples of the contributions of the various AAs:

Chizwamundi A: This group performed a play about the issue of child abuse, a prevalent problem in rural communities in this area. The play depicted a family made up of a man who had remarried and taken a new wife, and the children of the man. The story told how the children were overworked by the wife, who justified this state of affairs to her husband by deceiving him and turning him against the children. The lack of any involvement in the work of the household for the husband meant that he could not see the treatment of the children, though when he found out the truth he was very upset. Many men in the audience were visibly moved to considering that such abuse would be unseen by them too if it were taking place in their own household.

Chizwamundi B: For this AA, the selected topic was HIV/AIDS, an issue of high significance due to high rates of infection and continuing ignorance of proper causes and treatments. This play followed a teenager who wanted to go and stay in Lusaka as it was too boring in the rural village. She went with a cousin who took her out and she went home with a man and then got very sick. The parents came and took her to a traditional healer, who charged ZMK1million (approximately £125-150), for treating the girl and the wife with tattoos. The wife then also gets very sick and the father goes after the healer who has just charged ZMK1million to infect them all with HIV and has not helped to cure them at all.

Hanzala: Gender and leadership roles were exemplified in this group’s production, depicting a man who forces his wife and children to work progressively harder and harder, while the fruit of their increased labour is only that the man consumes more alcohol, and is in turn angrier and more and more unreasonable towards them. Several men in the audience informally volunteered that exposure to this kind of imbalance in gendered roles had been very helpful to them. They cited that openness in the community about the discussion of such issues has helped families to reach a better working relationship.

Konkola: This group had a volunteer to read a poem they had written which was called 'Tuyake'. It told how women are disadvantaged but also blamed for everything. Schooling was not prioritised for girls, though they would like to attend, and then abuse in marriage was their own fault for being stupid. It told that women’s lives are the way they are because women make them that way, but then also inferred in the end that if women can make their lives this way then they also could make them different. It turned this attitude of being repressed into one of being powerful over their own destiny. The women in the audience nodded and exclaimed in agreement throughout this poem.

* Source: Participant observation at Mazabuka District WfC 15 Year Celebrations

* During participant observation, it was noted that this problem of child abuse in families where the female is not the natural mother is so entrenched that some men refuse to remarry if their wife passes away, due to fear of the likely treatment of their children by a second wife. Running a household with children single-handedly is a tough task, and means that the children often fail to go to school and the quality of household provisions is also affected.
Again here it is hard to tell where knowledge is the driver of empowerment and where it is simply communication that makes the difference to people's confidence, and the focus on communication will be discussed later (see Section 8.3.2). Paying equal respect to one another was deemed important as 'Men and Women as Equal Partners in Development' (an oft quoted WfC slogan) and with the formation of youth groups to embed knowledge at a young age. The rights of children were viewed as very important by group members, and there was great hope that through the youth groups, the culture of future generations would hold greater equality in terms of rights and roles in the community.

"The lives of the children will be different – they will have the knowledge when they are young. It is hard to change for the old people, but for the young it is good. They will treat each other better and co-operate"

(Member of Kaksense Group, November 2007)

Participants in the operation of the BELONG programme also received workshop-style awareness training on issues deemed important in caring for HIV/AIDS affected orphans and vulnerable children in their communities. Interviewees spoke of training they had received for basic counselling skills, HIV/AIDS information and starting women's clubs. One community health worker pointed to the fact that once issues are opened up for the community to talk about, they can check on one another.

"Workshops really help to get the community talking. Some are able to go and visit people at home if they see there are issues, like if the children are not coming to school or if they are being abused"

(Mutala Community School, June 2008)

Such action in the community is clearly empowering, both subjectively and objectively, to those it assists away from positions of repression and abuse. At this personal level of analysis, the empowering results can be irrefutable in a society where rights, at least in the recent past, have been so heavily weighted in favour of male, elder dominance.
Within households, the equalising of rights is a two way process, but one which was generally viewed as mutually beneficial.

“We are very happy with the women's rights now, we all make more money now that we work together” (Konkola Group Secretary, October 2007)

“Girls have started to go back to school after they have a baby – that never used to happen here” (Hanzala AA Secretary, October 2007)

Thus the process of exposing participants of projects to knowledge about equalising power relations between household members is held to have a very positive effect. It is empowering for those who have been discriminated against to have confirmed that their treatment is unjust, that it is not their fault, and that the community does care about preventing abuses. It is further empowering to these groups of people if the household is more successful with their co-operation and input than without it.

The notion of 'knowledge as power' can thus be seen to be an influential force in enabling people to feel empowered according to the research conducted here. Indeed, while skills and rights have been important strands of different kinds of development programmes, this research shows a positive correlation between skills development, knowledge of rights and a process of empowerment, given that people do consider their new skills and knowledge to provide for a different future. Within communities there is an awareness that improved knowledge of equality in rights does have a positive effect on the ability of the community to communicate and co-operate for mutual benefit. Simultaneously, skills are seen as inevitably beneficial and are a source of pride to those who learn them. This kind of power is at once felt at individual and community scale. It improves the opportunities for individuals to operate within their community, but further analysis is necessary to consider whether the structure of opportunities for the communities is affected by these processes. What is discerned here is thus subjective empowerment, inner qualifications of power which have an effect within the community.
8.2 Community Self-Reliance and Community Efficacy

Community self-reliance was noted as central to perceptions of empowerment for respondents in this research primarily for two reasons. Firstly, the use of local physical resources meant that communities could be encouraged to operate outside the boundaries of opportunities set by external organisations. This was noted both in terms of the kinds of activities apparently supported by project frameworks and in terms of community action for which funding could not be found. Secondly, community ownership over the direction of project resources was cited as a meaningful cause of satisfaction and empowerment within project operations. Recognition of the ability of members of the community to manage project activities meant that, in the majority of cases, participants felt that project effects were a product of the community and were not wholly reliant on external organisations. This drove an increased sense of the ability for the community to rely on existing skills and knowledges, referred to here as the notion of community efficacy (see Section 5.3.4). Furthermore, the goals of the projects studied were openly acknowledged in all cases to be in accordance with self-generated aims of the community. Clearly, in none of the cases studied did the community hold supreme control over resources. However, in all cases people felt that they held meaningful power over the distribution and focus of localised resource spending, and this was noted as a key origin of subjective empowerment across communities with few (though some notable) exceptions.

8.2.1 Reliance on Local Physical Resources

Community use of local naturally available materials is encouraged by projects, but is also a natural course of action for communities. Traditional skills are based around the utilisation of local materials as the only resources available in the past. But some skills have become localised to minute areas, presumably due to factors like a desire for modern and manufactured goods, a focus on mass, organised education and urban migration given 'development' and an increasingly youthful population. Over emphasis on the push for self-reliance on local resources has been criticised as being a principle only applied in designated communities being assisted with 'development', while in the so-called ‘developed’ world there is no such rationale (Duffield 2007). Indeed, the push
is rather towards ever expanding industrialised, globalised consumerism and international trade. Thus, the crucial question about forms of self reliance induced by projects is whether or not they are promoting empowerment for a given community. The following section will address this question at the level of individual and households, while the broader analysis of impacts on the empowerment of the community as a whole will follow in Chapter Nine.

In some cases, encouraging reliance on physical resources was simplistic. The BELONG co-ordinator encouraged the head teacher of Mutala community school to find natural materials to make some sporting facilities for the pupils of her school as he was unable to bring any. Her success resulted in a basic obstacle course, some swings, seesaws and a badminton and handball net made from many tiny bits of string and fibre.

"He (BELONG Co-ordinator) said that we could have no sports equipment, but school should be for children to have fun -- and that will mean they want to come here to learn. He said we should try to plan some sports areas on our own, using things we can find here. The children are very happy with what we made!"

(Headteacher, Mutala Community School, June 2008)
For projects aimed at income generation, reliance on local natural resources is often a crucial design feature, as it reduces the need for financial input to maintain production. At the Joy Human Development Centre, the foundations of the project were laid by a fair-trade marketing branded company teaching a group of disadvantaged youth in Garden compound how to utilise local natural and discarded materials in handicraft production: for example, making paper from leaves, or decorating notebooks and photo frames with wire or coffee beans. This was a small project by the marketing group originally, giving local people a chance to learn how to make the products and providing a ready market for their goods. The company agreed only to work with them for a couple of years and since it was difficult to extend the range of goods able to be produced, the company had to withdraw its market access due to low demand. However, since the withdrawal of the company, the group have continued to produce handicrafts with available materials, which are only now accessible if they are free of charge, and have continued to hunt new markets.

“We can find the materials we need for making handicrafts. All of the things we use, you can find them here. When we have no money then we can still find. But you need transport for outside town if you want the big leaves — they are not here in Garden”

(Interview, Joy Human Development Centre, November 2007)
The lack of any further funding for the project has meant that no materials are accessible except those which can be sourced locally and freely, so in this case self-reliance has been essential for the survival of the project. Arguably since the project continues to build the inner strength of those involved and provides an income, if a meagre and insecure one, to people suffering enormous financial hardship, this self reliance is providing a source of power to those involved. Were inputs for this project to have required direct funding it would have ceased to operate before this research was conducted.

Income generation activities – managed and requested by the community – were encouraged by WfC. Reliable and sufficient income generation at household (or perhaps more accurately group) level is primarily secured through the use of local naturally available materials, given the lack of available capital to purchase inputs and the expense involved in accessing transport for other inputs in remote areas. Knowledge of how to grow the rushes that make traditional grass mats was requested by Musutola group in Mazabuka District as an income generation scheme to increase the output of their gardening project. After the request had been made, the Field Animator talked through the idea with the group and found that there were people in the community who would have this knowledge and that probably the rushes could be found and brought to their garden for planting. By the end of the conversation it was clear that the group could facilitate this idea with no input from WfC at all, possibly with the exception of the conviction the Field Animator added to the likely success of the project. The power this confidence brings to a course of action is indicative of the power inherent in subjective empowerment. Only with reliance on naturally occurring materials could such an exchange take place between impoverished group members and a resource controlling member of field staff.

Interactions like this, and their logical results, feed through to a broader kind of community self reliance and ultimately empowerment. The Chairperson of the Hanzala AA proclaimed:

"Income made by the groups is used for group activities and for supporting vulnerable and old people. We are very.......proud to help these people."
Before WfC came here, we didn't have enough for our families but now we can share with the vulnerable who used to have to suffer and be hungry because we didn't have enough for them" (October 2007)

Pride in the ability to assist the hardships of the vulnerable is an important function of self-reliant communities, and can also be cited as an important source of subjective empowerment. Creating systems which reduce the need for support of the community in any sense by external forces is a significant contribution to subjective empowerment for community members. Feelings of inadequacy and the lack of opportunity to be generous, or to stand by accepted moral frameworks of obligation to assist the disadvantaged within communities, are fundamental components to powerlessness which permeates all action. Being self-contained exerts a sense of greater control implicitly, and in this case it extends to actual control over the distribution of resources.

8.2.2 Community Ownership and Management

People interviewed in the course of this research asserted that the projects were helping them to achieve objectives which they thought were important for their lives. Participation in the reception of Social Cash Transfers clearly has nothing to do with community decisions, neither can the community make any meaningful decisions to impact the structure of the project. The goal of the project is to unequivocally assist the most incapacitated, a goal shared by many people in the community as much as (if not far more than) by external organisations and government. In this case, pride was derived from the community allocation and distribution structure which is wholly managed by committee members. Though they have no formal responsibility, under the structure of the project, committee members often referred to going to check on beneficiaries who were sick or they heard had particular complaints.

“We need to visit beneficiaries every two months to tell them when the transfer will come – but we usually go more or especially if someone is sick. We can help people not just with the transfer”(CWAC member, Mawaya Village, October 2007)
The formal role is to check that the application of the cash transfer continues to be fair (or according to the original selection criteria), but committee members were not really obliged to check this thoroughly. It was clear that the general goal of the project was shared meaningfully by the committee members.

Higher, or very different, levels of community ownership were evident during research conducted at BELONG and WfC projects. Partly the sense of ownership is linked to the demonstration of commitment required for participation with the projects:

"It is good that the government and NGOs ask the community to do work for the school before resources come. Working together binds the community and reminds us that we can do things"

(PCSC member, Bowwood Community School, October 2007)

Community ownership is subsequently reinforced by the sense that communities themselves drive the agenda within the limited focus of the projects, on schools, education, support of OVC in the case of BELONG, and on income generation, fulfilling basic needs and promoting equal rights in respect of WfC. Requests are addressed to the organisation for assistance with resources for various plans of action within the framework of broader project goals. At Bowwood Community School, representative members of the PCSC volunteered that they all agreed BELONG resources were focussed through discussion between PCSCs and field co-ordinators, either to buy books or desks, pencils or basic sports equipment, building materials or blackboards. The community prioritised their goals and the co-ordinator prioritised demands on the budget across their district. The sense of community ownership was demonstrated during a number of interviews.

"The community has power for how the school is run – they can make demands and be heard. If something is wrong we can make it better"

(PCSC Chairperson, Bowwood Community School, October 2007)

Increased accountability surrounding the running of the school was a valued effect of the community management of the school, particularly given the notoriously poor standards
in many government schools. During informal observations in the communities, it was openly discussed that teachers were often drunk or absent from government schools, regularly remain unpaid for long periods of time and that was on top of the requirements to supply shoes, a uniform and books.

"At our school more children pass than at the government schools. The Committee works very closely with the teachers to co-ordinate effort for the children, and having the school means that the PCSC can get skills to pass around the community."

(PCSC member, Namabondo Community School, October 2007)

Within the community it is felt that the school is community owned and it provides a positive focus for the community as a whole.

Similarly, WfC goals at group level are set by groups themselves. Group members establish a common direction in their groups, before consulting the field animator about the possibility and practicality of their plans. They negotiate the best way to bring extra income to the group, and discuss ways in which there are problems managing the group or services for the community. It is arguably the structure and development of this reflex for community management and problem solving which was most consistently identified as empowering. All interviewees viewed the group/committee structure as "very effective" (Chairperson, Tubone Group, November 2007). Furthermore, interviewees asserted consistently, for example, that:

"If Women for Change didn’t come here our group would stay the same because we can organise now and it is good for the community."

(Chizwamundi B AA Chairperson, November 2007)

Many people spoke at length about the nature of the advantages of working in groups or committees for the benefit of the community at large.

Despite the substantial sense of community ownership that was evident, it is notable that when questioned about the ‘biggest problem’ in their communities, interviewees invariably answered by naming a problem that was not being directly
addressed by any of the projects. At Namabondo Community School, members of the PCSC referred to the very poor provision of medical services in the area,

"The nearest health centre is in Kalomo and it is too far for people to travel. We have some community health volunteers, but there are not enough for the community — it is too big! We need more training for mid-wives most"

(PCSC member, October 2007)

This group, and others stated that there were many people in the local community who would be willing to train and to volunteer their time, if only training was available to them. Similarly, for the vast majority of respondents involved in WfC groups in Sinazongwe District, the highest priority problem that should be addressed in their community was “Mende” (water). Boreholes provide the only sources of reliable, clean water, but are few and far between. Even where boreholes have been installed, they tend to dry up by early afternoon. Other sources of water are scarce, and the commonly used shallow wells are breeding grounds for water-borne diseases and are often shared by animals. Thus, people have to walk long distances (up to 10km in some cases) to fetch water, even then from unreliable and often dirty sources.

Potential for the community, or even the group interacting directly with projects, to direct activities is realistically governed by what could be agreed upon with the field animator, and what kind of activities would be supported by inputs from the external organisation. For example, participants in groups operating a seed-bank in Sinalulongwe village argued consistently that they could grow more food if only they had more seed. The seed-bank was split between members, but the quantities were far short of what people required to have even the possibility of feeding their families.

"We need more seed here. We can farm if the rains come, but if we don’t have seed then when the rains come we must be hungry. WfC would be better if they brought more seed here"

(Chairperson, Tubone Group, November 2007)
Thus, while the majority of people involved with the projects arguably feel a sense of empowerment regarding the self-generation and ownership of projects, people simultaneously (and inevitably!) are constrained by the ethos and focus of projects.

Prioritising self-reliance on local natural resources has some subjectively empowering effects, bolstering feelings of community efficacy and the ability to achieve goals without reliance on funding. The expansion of the skills base in communities also contributed to the psychological drive of community efficacy with positive effects in terms of subjective empowerment for community members. Community ownership and management of project operations was another source of escalating self-efficacy, although it was a source of discontent that organisations did not eliminate the greatest problems in the community. Equally, it is significant that there was no mention made that community groups would like to be able to resolve those bigger issues for themselves, but rather that they wished the organisation would do that. This should serve as a reminder that while the capacity of the community is undoubtedly being enhanced by these themes of self-reliance, they do not yet feel powerful.

8.3 Sustainability as Future Security and ‘Hope’

The notion of sustainability was linked to ideas of ‘hope’, which rests on increased security, for the future. Of course, the former two sections of this chapter contribute immeasurably to the notion of sustainability, through knowledge as embedded and transferable power and through community self-reliance in both physical and psychological senses. Indeed, all these components are inexorably and inherently interlinked, requiring separation only for the purposes of format and analysis. Increased future security and hope was linked by interviewees most closely to economic independence and stability, while the real driving force of enthusiasm for projects was dependent on ‘hope’ – an enormous source of subjective empowerment for those who enjoyed it. Valuing freedom from ‘handouts’ was a common feature of interviewees responses about the general impact of projects, and this was openly a focus to improve the chances of children in the community to have the chance at a more secure future. The subjectively empowering value of sustainability will be examined according to the observed and proclaimed value firstly of a more independent economically secure future.

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(at least in subsistence terms), and secondly of a general sense of improved hope, derived most specifically through increased networks of communication, for the future of the community and its members. Clearly, these two phenomena are inherently linked, one again being substantially dependent on the other in mutual respects.

### 8.3.1 Subsistence and Economic Sufficiency as Security

Security to provide sufficient resources to maintain health and some degree of comfort is an essential link between sufficiency for subsistence and sufficiency for empowerment. In this analysis, empowerment has been described as impossible without some kind of security as a foundation, however, it is clear that the two are mutually dependent. Security cannot exist without some degree of empowerment and empowerment cannot exist without some degree of security. Thus, the foundation of empowering hope is security of a basic level of subsistence, rather than this being a constant concern and worry. In Mazabuka District, WfC groups had helped group members to become far more secure in terms of their income or subsistence levels.

"Incomes are better now, there is just enough food with the group...But not all the children can go to school — this is still too much money for us"

(Chairperson, Kabanda Group, November 2007)

Of course, while the focus of people is bare survival in terms of feeding themselves, there can be little progress elsewhere, and separating survival from empowerment is, in this sense, a difficult task. Schools involved with the BELONG programme reported that it was difficult if they could not offer food during school hours, as many children would have to walk long distances to school, and simply did not have the energy to travel to school and back again if they were not given sustenance at school and if there was tragically insufficient food to be offered by the time they reached home. Thus, the project could not instil empowerment through the schools effectively unless there was greater security around the provision of sustenance to support it.

The focus of Social Cash Transfers meant that, for beneficiaries of the project, income generation was the sole focus and was automatic, due to the lack of income
potential in households to whom the transfer was given. In a remote area outside of Kalomo, beneficiaries in the Dimbwe area demonstrated how much difference security made to them and why.

"Before I was healthy and could work so things were ok. But now without the transfer, I could not work and it would mean death. But with the money we are hungry sometimes but the children can go to school!"

(Beneficiary, Dimbwe, October 2007)

The structure of this project was deemed to be empowering by its distribution of money rather than food or goods, and it was confirmed by the majority of beneficiaries that this structure was effective. The security of basic sustenance meant that children could go to school – a course of action believed in more than any other to be empowering by people interviewed.

"Without the CWAC, life would be impossible for us – certainly the orphans would have no chance to go to school!"

(Beneficiary, Dimbwe, October 2007)

This theme that the secure income brought by the transfer creates opportunities that could not exist without the project is indicative of the power given by this meagre security.

"Money can turn things around, food is limited, though without the transfer we would suffer terrible hunger like we used to"

(Beneficiary, Dimbwe, October 2007)

However, as one lady who sheltered orphans at her home pointed out:

"The transfer is nothing. It is not enough to buy food and safe water for us to drink – so what choice do I have? I would rather they gave me enough food and water for the children than this"

(Beneficiary, Mawaya village, October 2007)
Indeed, many interviewees referred indirectly to this problem of the insufficiency of the cash transfer to give them economic security or choice. Such asides were couched in the language of “we are very grateful for the transfer but.....” or “beggars cannot be choosers but....”. Such exclamations were visibly humiliating to those who uttered them, demonstrating powerlessness in the most succinct fashion.

8.3.2 Improved Networks of Communication as ‘Hope’ and Inspiration

The improvement in community social support networks arising from greater knowledge and discussion of abuse and rights was discussed in section 8.1.2. The following section explores the empowering potentials, through the eyes of interviewees, unlocked by formal networks of communication facilitated through the selected projects. A variety of forms of communication were espoused as beneficial and empowering by those interviewed across the projects.

Community meetings, regardless of topic to be discussed, were revered as a good in themselves by many interviewees.

“Meetings are important to discuss how life can be better for the whole community. We don’t even know what kind of problems people are having if we don’t talk about them. Problems stay in the home and no-one knows there is anything wrong”

(Chizwamundi B AA Chairperson, November 2007)

Others in the community also learn through the WfC activities by watching group members and talking to them.

“We were working together in the community before WfC came here. But now everyone is learning new things – not just those who are in the groups but everyone because we are talking in the community”

(Member of Tuchite group, November 2007)
Some observed that without attending the workshops it was more difficult for other members of the community to understand new ideas at first, but that in time things were changing through a constant cycle of communication.

"Friends in the community were scared of changing attitudes, but they are changing too. When we keep talking to them, and they see how we are doing so well then they will listen." (Chairperson, Tubone Group, November 2007)

Group work was cited as an important function of the projects operations, for increasing communication with a number of results. Members of a clay pot making group observed:

"We didn't need training from WfC as our ancestors taught us how to make the pots. But now we work a group it is much better – we can learn from each other and get clay together. It can be more fun to work together." (Member of Hanzala AA, October 2007)

Similar observations were made about gardening projects in particular, that communication between group members through co-operating in the project maximised results, constituting important and powerful contributions to people's lives.

The strengthening of community schools facilitated important modes of communication in some of the areas in which BELONG operated in and of itself. The head teacher at Simakakata Community School said that this was one of the primary benefits of having their own community run school:

"Workshops help to bring people together and start discussion. But then we all come together at the school and we talk again and again. It is good to share the information at the school." (Interview, June 2008)

Operations of projects frequently facilitate communication across areas at a scale which is almost impossible for people with no modes of transport other than push bikes at best. BELONG facilitated exchanges between community schools in order that they could
learn from one another, and teachers and parents committees alike found this communication very helpful. BELONG District Co-ordinators sometimes facilitated visits to a particular school to see an innovative way of teaching or building. Sharing a skill like this, and realising that you have similar goals, that you identify with others can create powerful emotions, as expressed by one respondent:

"Visiting other schools says to me that we are getting better, that together we can make progress. Making a better education for the children. It is very quiet when you just live at this school here, so it is good when you see other schools. You can learn" (Headteacher, Kalundu Community School, October 2007)

Communication across greater scale was clearly embraced by members of WfC AAs where there was the possibility of creating district level, independently registered NGOs for direct advocacy of community issues. No District NGOs were operational at the time of the field research, but the goal was an overt one in Sinazongwe District in particular. Here the secretary of Tuyake AA observed:

"We want our own organisation. Where does all the money from WfC go? We only work here and they teach us skills, but we need resources – it is not fair how the money is shared between communities" (Interview, November 2007)

The inspiration to build the group and take on greater responsibility is made explicit here, although the general drive the want to control resources should not be underestimated in any analysis of power relations. What is notable is that communication across communities needs to be transparent and to appear fair to those involved. Far from being a source of unity, communication with external partners can breed resentment amongst neighbouring communities if not underpinned by these principles, and can be a source of discrimination and inhibition rather than empowerment.

The sustainability of project outcomes was thus very important to community members. The increasing of security in terms of providing subsistence or economic well-being within a household and a community gave space for community members to be inspired and hopeful about the future. Such emotions are difficult to define with any
precision, but the manner and passion of references to these impacts was undeniable. Increased communication across communities was deemed to inspire a greater platform for community action, and the basis for such action was a strength and security at household, community and often district type scales.

8.4 Projects as a Powerful Function within Communities

The effects of the selected development projects on those they directly target and focus on have been reviewed in this chapter until this point. Assessment of the empowerment resulting from the operation of the projects for those individuals directly involved, however, is insufficient as a basis for the analysis required to address the key research questions posed in this thesis, namely that of the effect of programmes of community empowerment, or how such programmes affect communities, vis-à-vis their power relations with global structural power dynamics. While this research question will be considered more fully in the remainder of the thesis, it is necessary to interrogate at this human scale the effects of the projects on members of the same community but who are not targeted or directly involved for any reason. The power relations emanating from the operation of projects are crucial in generating greater clarity about the more general type of community scale empowerment created through the subjective empowerment of individuals within communities. Notably, the length of involvement with a certain project seemed (though the research was not extensive enough to clarify this conclusively) to have at least a loose correlation to the attitude of those involved to the objectively empowering nature of its effects. Though recognition of subjective empowerment in all cases remained, arguably the fluid relationship between the conceptualisation of these two categories of empowerment means that the lack of objective success begins to erode the subjective hope and in time, arguably too, its achievement.

Consideration of three final areas is essential to build a more comprehensive picture of the power (or effect) of selected projects on the communities in which they operate. Firstly, some observed reactions to the projects will be viewed through the eyes of community members, those not directly involved in the projects or in whose area such projects are not in operation. Secondly, the analysis will turn to an assessment of
the community power relations resulting from the operation of a particular project in a particular area. Third, the effect of projects not living up to the expectations of their potential achievement needs to be considered, particularly given that it acts as a direct counter to any subjective empowerment resulting from ‘increased hope’, analysed above.

8.4.1 Not Directly Targeted? Sufficiency or Exclusion

The very nature of development projects mean that they cannot target all impoverished peoples in all places at once, due to the difficulty of defining impoverishment more even than the limits of resources devoted to poverty reduction or development aid. However, the fact that some people in any given community are not directly targeted by projects means that resultant community power relations are not merely a sum of the views of those involved in project operations. Rather they are also arrived at by the manner in which any particular project affects, at an individual or household level, those who live in the community but who are not targeted. Targeting for some organisations and their projects is informed by strict guidelines about eligibility, while for others may be about reaching a maximum capacity for operation due to finite resources or practicalities. This section gives some personal testimonies resulting often from relatively informal interviews with the general public around research areas.

Social Cash Transfers were distributed according to need, judged by the community itself through open community meetings. The collation of information about the levels of resources available to various households requires a thorough enquiry into household incomes, costs, modes of support, etc. The information was made public at the meetings and on the basis of these profiles, beneficiaries would be selected. But this framework requires axiomatically that many households are profiled that subsequently do not receive assistance. Such were the levels of poverty in some areas that the 10% target group was far from sufficient to benefit all those in need, consequently excluding some who are also in a desperate situation. Some of these excluded community members expressed confusion and disgruntlement at the lack of assistance with their own plight. Particularly in light of the means testing that they had undergone, they could not work out why they were not being helped if the true nature of their situation had been investigated and publicised. These people were difficult to find to interview formally, though some
were interviewed relatively informally as they often approached the CWAC members during the research trips. Many CWAC members also referred to the depth of feeling about the inadequacy of the targeting scale.

“Many people here are very poor and hungry, they need money from the scheme too. Ten percent is not enough here, and the transfer is not enough to support most households”

(CWAC member, Mawaya 1, October 2007)

The effect of exclusion of some is not limited to the excluded. Beneficiaries reported, in some cases, fear of telling neighbours when they were going to collect their cash transfer

“If people here know you have money then you can be in danger”

(Beneficiary, Mawaya 1, October 2007)

In one semi-urban area in the town of Kalomo, the CWAC decided not to publish a list of beneficiaries beyond the community meeting where allocations were made as they felt there was a threat to beneficiaries should the information be public

“People can be scared about going to the paypoint to collect their money if others can know where they are going. There has not been any trouble but we tell beneficiaries personally when and where payment will come to be sure”

(CWAC Chairperson, Mawaya 1, October 2007)

People in this area also referred to the insufficient value of the transfer to cover basic household needs. Though overwhelmingly the response was that people preferred to receive cash that in-kind payments, for a variety of reasons, a few noted that they would rather have sufficient food and clean water than being given cash which is insufficient to cover these most basic of needs.

In Smalulongwe village, Sinazongwe District, some people who were not involved in WfC groups expressed discontent that they were not allowed to be involved

“They do not allow us to join - want to be in Women for Change group, it is good but they say no”

(Woman in Smalulongwe village, November 2007)
WFIC policy directs that there should not be more than 30-40 people in each group, and there were several groups already in the extensive village network of the area. According to the local AA Chairperson,

"WFIC say we can only have so many groups in one District and it is full now"

(Tuyake AA Chairperson, November 2007)

This story was never entirely clarified with the Field Animator for the District. However, regardless of whether or not the reason for excluding some is justifiable according to WFIC criteria, it is important to recognise that those who were being excluded neither understood why they were being left out nor why others should want them to be left out.

This section has demonstrated a variety of forms of exclusion resulting from the projects. Such discussion should be analysed in the context of acknowledging forms of exclusion in any society, and should not be handled in an abstract or non-pragmatic manner. That said, the types of exclusion experienced by the above groups can be directly related to the selected projects and the effects of these experiences cannot be ignored in the current analysis of resultant power relations.

8.4.2 Investigating Resultant Intra-Community Power Relations

Discordant community relations are bound to result from such feelings as those outlined above, the excluded, building up. Though there were no obvious signs of tension, this was a difficult line of questioning to be incorporated into the semi-structured interview format and fieldwork over a far longer period than this project permitted would be necessary to analyse this fully. In the context of resultant community power relations at the household scale however, these particular ladies were almost bitter about any advances being made by the project for their community as they felt that the only real benefits went to group members. In the context of the ongoing analysis of individual level empowerment resulting from the project, the picture painted here is one of feeling increasing less powerful in their circumstances.
"It is not for the community, it is just for them in the groups. WfC should help us all if they help them, some of them here have enough but we are hungry"

(Woman in Sinalulongwe village, November 2007)

Induced divisions and animosity in communities are arguably ‘unintended consequences’ (Ferguson 1990) of many development projects. Other women in the area complained that WfC said that there could be help with supporting orphans from the group work and subsequent income, though none had come to them and the orphans were very hungry and could not go to school.

Another set of ‘unintended’, though now heavily scrutinised, consequences of the social cash transfers project is the impact of the voluntary status of CWAC members. This comes in two forms. Firstly there is the impact for the community of CWAC members being paid a travel allowance to attend meetings and workshops, which is problematic as it has to be carefully explained what the money is for or doubts grow in the minds of many, particularly as these people are sent on training courses for which many have great enthusiasm. A second set of ‘unintended consequences’ are that the CWAC members become somewhat disgruntled at the lack of financial reward for their efforts. They argued consistently that they put a lot of time into the duties accompanying the Cash Transfers programme, and further that there were often hidden costs involved in their duties. CWAC members were generally not earning reliably themselves and would have appreciated even just a small financial contribution.

"There is some work in being on the committee, it takes time, and we need to eat too"  
(CWAC member, Ng'andu village, October 2007)

Again, animosity is evident between general public, beneficiaries and CWAC members. Tensions are not obvious in this case either, though several references were made throughout the interviewing period to these impacts as objects of annoyance.

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30 By the project funders (DFID) and GTZ who, until recently, had continued to provide technical support for the project. See reports for further information. B Schubert, 'Scaling up - Extending Social Cash Transfers Beyond the Pilot Area', (GTZ, 2004), 1-48
8.4.3 Eternal ‘Hope’?

Much of the analysis in this chapter reflects the value of ‘hope’. The positive effects of instilling a hope for more positive ambitions for the future can be inspiring, uplifting and motivational. But by its very nature, hope requires achievement to drive it, or a reason for it to be renewed. The excitement aroused by being hopeful of achieving a goal is only equalled by the disappointment induced by failing to achieve a goal. During interviews, some respondents volunteered that their hope about the impact of a particular project had not been met with corresponding achievement. They argued invariably that this was deeply dissatisfying at a personal level. No common thread to this section exists as the reasons for lack of satisfaction with the outcomes were diverse. The analysis here will reflect strongly on the forthcoming discussion considering the impact of individual subjective empowerment on the long term outcomes for communities in general.

At Namabondo Community School, the PCSC expressed disappointment that resources promised to them by BELONG, which had been approved by and budgeted for by the organisation in 2005, had still not been delivered at the time of interviewing (end of 2007)\textsuperscript{31}. Since the BELONG project insists on a demonstration of commitment to developing the school, the community had laid foundations and made sufficient bricks to build a new school building. The existing structures were made from traditional reed matting, but of poor quality and well worn with loose grass roofs, giving insufficient protection from the rain during the wet season. Having waited through the preceding rains for the promised materials to arrive, the community had finally taken matters into its own hands and raised the money for the required cement and roofing materials. Their already scarce and stretched income had been shared in desperation to get the school building ready so that the children would not have another rainy season with no education due to the lack of any suitable building.

“BELONG promised the cement and the roof but it never came. The children had to miss school in the rains. BELONG has been good to bring books and

\textsuperscript{31} According to BELONG headquarters and project staff, the building materials had been both budgeted for (in 2005) and purchased (during 2006). The delivery had subsequently been assigned to a distribution company where it had apparently been delayed.
sports things here, but we need the new school…..Some of the people don’t come to help now because it has taken too long”

(PCSC member, Namabondo Community School, November 2007)

Figure 6: The newly completed Namabondo Community School

At Bowwood Community School, the community is much smaller and it has taken the villagers much longer to progress along the path of making bricks and foundations for a new school building, which BELONG agreed in principle should lead to assistance with any remaining building materials which could not be locally sourced. They succeeded in completing the foundations, and had made roughly half the bricks by the first research visit in October 2007. But the lack of any further progress with the building reduced the excitement and inspiration with which the project had originally been approached, and the brick making had stalled. All community members had other important demands on their time, and though committed to the idea of education for children, they wanted to see achievement from their efforts and had lost motivation as the project appeared to producing no meaningful result for the children at the school. During a subsequent research visit in June 2008, the community had recently been convinced to restart brick making in an effort to receive materials from the BELONG project.
Figure 7: The existing Bowwood Community School building – 105 pupils, ages 7-12

Figure 8: Bricks and foundations for planned Bowwood Community School building

Figure 9: Volunteers digging clay mud for bricks at Bowwood Community School
The BELONG Co-ordinator continued to encourage this strategy, though in reality it was almost beyond the timeframe of the project to supply the outstanding materials. The psychological effects for the community of constant encouragement towards promises which are broken by project organisers should not be underestimated, nor should the likelihood of such a cycle eroding community self-help mechanisms be misunderstood.

8.5 Chapter Summary

This chapter has detailed the personal thoughts and feelings of the people affected by the operation of the selected projects which are targeted at achieving empowerment for the communities in which they operate. It is an analysis of the individual and household level direct effects of empowerment programmes and strategies, which is the active level of the project, and which is ostensibly the strategy leading to empowerment for the community as a whole. This analysis has exposed some of the meaningful ways identified by interviewees of being 'empowered' through the operation of the projects, learning new skills and being more confident of the community to be self-reliant and more confident about greater hope and security in the future. The achievement of this limited aim is, at least in the short-term, to be commended. It demonstrates a relatively high level of cohesion between the way in which institutions intend to 'empower' people and the way in which, at an individual and household scale, people gain power or 'empowerment'.

A deeper analysis, including the views of those not directly targeted to receive the benefits of the project, however, shows a rather different picture. Those who are excluded through the structure of the project, or the availability of its resource base, feel subjectively disempowered by the process, feeling at once left out and inadequate. They feel both that it is unfair that they are unable to share in the immediate (often material) benefits of the programme, but also as though someone has picked the lucky few and informed them they did not make the grade. Arguably this does not constitute active objective disempowerment, as such people are not objectively any worse off than they were before and do stand to gain as members of the community if the projects can be
judged eventually to have succeeded in their more substantial aim of empowering, through development, the community at large.

The limited aim of this thesis is not, however, to make an accurate judgement of the local level impact of specific projects. The structure of the field research would have been very different had that been the original aim. The individual and household level impacts have here been examined to see direct effects of projects, since it is at this level that projects actually operate. Whilst policy documentation at all levels (including newsletters, reviews, frameworks, directives, etc) refers to the unit of ‘community’, community effects are implied to be a sum of individual effects. Individuals and households are often referred to by way of case study foci, implying that these are common examples of people in the geographical areas of project operation, that this is the effect the project is having on that community as a whole. But as this chapter has shown, the effect and experience of projects on all members of the community is not similar.

Thus, while the personal testimonies of those directly involved with the operation of selected projects demonstrate subjective empowerment, more is required than simply the multiplication of these various advances in levels of individual subjective empowerment to realise levels of community empowerment resulting from the projects.

In order to analyse the comprehensive effects of the projects on the communities in which they operate, the context of communities and the power relations within which they operate needs to be exposed and investigated. This further analysis will form the focus of the forthcoming chapter.
Chapter Nine

Empowerment for Communities?

Assessing Objective Power Relations

Establishing that personal power is genuinely promoted through the implementation of empowerment projects is a notable finding, but one which is insufficient to fully answer the research questions of this thesis. What is of more importance here is to ask: Where individual, subjective power is accepted to have been gained by members of communities as a result of policies of empowerment, how does this affect the power of communities as a whole? Community empowerment is cited as the key aim for projects studied in this research, and while methods to achieve this are targeted at the level of individuals by necessity, it is significant that justification for project planning remains at the level of communities. Conceptualisations of power commonly use the dualism of ‘agency’ as opposed to ‘structure’ to analyse the manner in which power is both held and exerted within societies, as has been previously explained. Individual members of communities are but one source of agency within a community, who crucially operate within a set of structural conditions. It is the purpose of this research to examine how the observed promotion of power at the level of individual agency is related to the structure within which that agency operates, and thus to draw conclusions about how effective the current agenda of empowerment is within the existing power relations of development.

Structural power is a problematic concept in empirical analysis, being intangible though influential, not readily measurable and with no dominant agreement on its constitution. Scholars forward diverse interpretations of how structure is constituted, the weighting of relative power of structure as opposed to agency and the relationship between structure and agency, though they largely agree that structure both exists and provides powerful frameworks for action. While analysis of the concept of structural power may be argued to be grandiose, abstract and reserved for meta-level theorisations, empirical validity can be maintained through examining the representations and relative
power of structures as they exist within the communities studied. Structural power is a complex phenomenon, and one which is not neatly divided into component parts for the purposes of academic analysis. However, for the purposes of the following chapter, the concept will be analysed according to three, broad and indistinct, categories:

- **Historical power relations** – Marginalisation of sub-Saharan Africa is a historical concept, borne from the definite power imbalance demonstrated during colonialism and since. While the shape of marginalisation in global power networks may be constantly changing, real effects of this historical power imbalance are recognisable in even very remote communities today in a myriad of ways: for example, in trade rules (relative ongoing disempowerment in global institutions), development donors and organisations (continuing economic disadvantage), and so on (see Chapters Two and Six for full details of this process).

- **Discourse** – A primary form of structural power is contained within knowledge and discourse (see Michel Foucault 1980). There are a number of ways in which the power of discourse was readily observable during participant observations and some more nuanced ways in which the planning, organisation or aims of projects made the power of discourse a source of discrimination to those participating.

- **Citizenship** – This category of analysis is very different from the preceding two, being recognition that the possibility to become an effective part of a powerful structural system is arguably being eroded by the operation of projects. Particularly if the mantra of ‘democracy’ is adopted, the opportunity for citizens to be powerful in a state is by virtue of political representation and accountability. The dominance of NGOs as service providers and protectors of rights in project operation areas showed signs that their very presence was eroding the possibility of the state becoming responsive or held to account by its citizens. This process can ultimately be
judged to be disempowering or at least not empowering, as the result is to
make the people affected more powerful in a global structure (of which they
are minute and implicitly ineffective parts), but less powerful in the structure
of the state where they ought to be effective component agents.

What is under scrutiny in this analysis is the relative potential of those individuals
who are deemed to have, and who feel that they have, gained power through the
empowerment aims of projects to be also living in communities which exhibit positive
empowerment Communities are collectives of people who have an implicit right to be
counted as a function and component of global power relations Communities are not
somehow separate from these structures but constitute part of them: if a minuscule part in
many senses Thus, a discussion of global power relations should not be devoid of
recognition of the role played by communities, with levels of power and levels of ability
to utilise such power made explicit Recognition that structural power is present in the
condition of impoverishment means that analysis can centre on the holistic effect of
project operations on individuals, communities and structures of power more widely.

Furthermore, it is important to reiterate that the basis for the agenda of
empowerment originates with donor priorities and global level development policy
documents, composed by global institutions and state governments The Social Cash
Transfers project is funded by DFID - a branch of the British government and the
BELONG project is funded by the PEPFAR - which has legislative authorisation under
the US government Women for Change is funded largely by DanChurch AID, which is
"financed by private donations and funds from the Danish government (Danida), the UN,
the EU and other bilateral donors" (DanChurch Aid). Half of total funding comes from
the Danish Department of Foreign Affairs (Interview, DanChurch Aid, October 2007).
The significance of pointing out these funding patterns is to note that while they are very
different, at least a large part in each case is derived from nation states, or the global
institutions which represent these same states multi-laterally Perhaps even more
significantly, these funding states are democratic and are therefore in principle a voice for
their people This analysis will crucially question the co-ordination of the theme of
empowerment from these international actors with their position in and perpetuation of

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overarching structures of global power alongside community level empowerment project implementation.

Further from questioning the sincerity of claims to empower against the back drop of simultaneous agendas of international actors, it is also necessary to consider the actual effects of these empowerment projects on communities, given that they do inescapably operate within objective structures of power. As Ferguson has directed, there is a need to be “looking at the interventions of ‘development’ agencies not for what they don’t do or might do, but for what they do” (1990:13). This idea promotes several lines of questioning. Has the operation of projects eroded the power of communities in any way, even while it promotes individual subjective empowerment? Have projects created divisions in communities to make communities, as a collective whole, less subjectively empowered? Do the projects perpetuate powerful structures that in fact draw more people/communities into positions of relative disempowerment? An additional and essential line of questioning centres around asking what role is being played by NGOs themselves in this process? Are they simplistically constitutive of the structures of power created by their funding states or are they a different type of actor, drawing on the ‘power base’ (D. Wrong 1979) of those states but creating a check on the power of local citizens through the manner of their operations? For example, Mark Duffield (2007) has recently argued that NGOs have created a new level of international governance replacing colonialism with a system of control which is every bit as crippling and hampering of ‘capabilities’ (as defined by Sen 1999) as the openly discriminatory system which preceded it.

The overall focus of this chapter is to demonstrate that while individuals are being subjectively empowered in line with the aims of the projects studied, these projects do not have the potential to create empowered communities, nor therefore objectively empowered individuals. The frameworks that constrain freedom of action and opportunity are historical and powerful, though that is not to imply that they are either static or immovable. Even more than this, the case is made here that, notwithstanding good intentions, the implementation of projects reduces the abhorrence of the effects of marginalisation by creating a buffer between exploitation and suffering, but crucially
does nothing to change the underlying structure of power relations which governs the imposition of impoverishment for large swaths of humanity.

Before pursuing the analysis further, brief attention needs to be paid to the lack of clarification for the term ‘community’ in this chapter. Defining the notion of ‘community’ is an enormous task, and one to which many scholars have contributed extensively (Bernard 1973; Sanders 1975; Selznik 1996). Though this work is drawing conclusions about the power of communities, the task of definition is largely unnecessary here as the communities being studied have been defined by the institutions implementing development programmes. They tend to define their area of operation as a community. The area is generally focussed around a geographical centre, though it is often without clear outer boundaries or theoretical basis in order to allow for essential flexibility in project implementation. It has been argued that there is a useful role for this notion of the generalised ‘community’ in policy arenas (Li 1996), but this is accompanied by warnings that the notion of a simplified community can be capable of damage in specific policy implementation. Adopting such a definition is somewhat problematic when conclusions are drawn about the relative power of communities emanating from project operations, as some scholars have warned that powerless groups may be ignored (for example women, see Gujit and Shah 1998) and that the notion of community can be critical to the development of authority over local resources (for example with regard to land tenure, see Kepe 1999). However, social research must accept such problematics, being constantly changing and with limited basis for truly objective findings. In an effort however to at least partially mitigate this methodological difficulty, a final section of the chapter will consider the distribution of power and the changing power dynamics within the community as a direct result of project implementation. Changes to intra-community relationships and power balances are important effects of projects in their own right, but consideration of these direct effects took place in Chapter Eight. Here, the emphasis is rather on the extent to which divisions in the community affect the ability of the community to harness rightful power in the context of global power relations.

This analysis is therefore concerned with forms/structures of power which are exerted in the same communities where individuals are being subjectively empowered according to the ‘empowering’ aims of the projects studied. While this may appear to be
an abstract and highly interpretive process, actually such structures can be recognised in the events of everyday life and challenges of individuals targeted by empowerment projects. It is these objective and tangible effects of structural power which will be examined in terms of their influence vis-à-vis the promotion of empowerment amongst individuals in communities. For example, though the structure of global trade relations per se is unknown by most Zambians, the effect of the dominance of Western industrialised nations in intellectual property rights or agricultural subsidies has meaningful and observable effects in Zambian communities in the case of seed purchasing.

Thus, the forthcoming chapter will proceed according to the three lines of analysis outlined above, and will be firmly set in a discussion of empirical and objective realities in communities targeted by the projects. The first section will consider the marginalisation of Zambians in setting global rules and regulations, and their relative disempowerment in access to trade. Secondly, the effect of projects on promoting advocacy and accountability will be examined in terms of its effect for communities as a whole, rather than for individuals. It will consider how/whether a route to ‘active citizenship’ (Green 2008) is being promoted through the projects studied. This section will highlight the structure and inter-linkages of global power networks and their various levels to demonstrate the futility of making people global citizens before they are local citizens in a genuine sense of comprehensive citizenship. Thirdly, the chapter will highlight the role of discourse to tighten and solidify networks of power. Clearly discourse is ever present and ever instructive, so this section begins by expanding on the role of discourse in the previous lines of analysis before continuing to demonstrate how discourses used in development projects like those studied in this research are manipulated (both intentionally and unintentionally) to serve the interests of the most powerful. This process is inevitable, though it can be shown that decreased inequality between various actors in the process would create a far less dominating framework of knowledge, indeed one where the structure may be reproduced and instantiated through the agents in the manner Giddens (1993) has suggested.
9.1 Historical Marginalisation in Global Structures of Power

Since the so-called 'scramble for Africa' began in the mid to late nineteenth century, nations of sub-Saharan Africa and an overwhelming majority of the population have become severely disadvantaged and marginalised in terms of power on the global stage. The process and effect of marginalisation are difficult to accurately define, but there are some ways in which communities and individuals experience the effect of these power relations on the ground, in their everyday lives. This process of marginalisation has been documented extensively, tracing colonisation through to the creation of global institutions without universal suffrage or input. The manner of this marginalisation is constantly shifting too, both in shape and effect. For details of the process of historical marginalisation which has affected the power relations of Zambia, refer to Chapter Six.

This story has been well-documented elsewhere and many aspects of its foundation and effect are disputable. The following section illustrates the practical effects of such meta-level marginalisation for members of the communities studied. It serves to illustrate that the notion of marginalisation is not merely academic, nor is it only present in analysis of large scale effects of development processes. In the first case outlined here, trade related intellectual property rights (TRIPs) enforced by the World Trade Organisation (WTO) mean that access to subsistence is severely hindered for small-scale rural farmers while the companies that manufacture agricultural seeds are guaranteed significant profits from global markets. The second case refers to the inability of entrepreneurs to access markets for their goods, given the competition brought about by liberalised trade conditions alongside the commercial and industrial production advantages of foreign companies. The emphasis here is specific. Marginalisation leads to powerlessness, which in turn is 'treated' with empowerment programmes. But the structure of marginalisation is far more powerful than the empowerment 'medicine', and so the best that can be hoped for is to cope with marginalisation better, rather than to overhaul its processes. The production of subjective empowerment is evident in the improved chances to cope with powerlessness, but objective empowerment is not apparent in the continuation of marginalisation.
9.1.1 The Case of Seed: Patents on Life, Poverty for Life

In the rural areas of Zambia, the vast majority of people are small-scale farmers who farm primarily for subsistence (Encyclopedia of the Nations 2009). They depend on rains and agricultural seeds and inputs for their survival. For all human beings, access to seed has, since the very beginning of humanity, been dependent on skill and knowledge. Essential for survival was the capacity to save seed and replant it the following season. Since the green revolution and the introduction of seed technologies, hybrid seed varieties have been developed by companies, purportedly in an effort to increase agricultural yields (Djurfeldt et al. 2005). These hybrid seeds are patented and their design effectively owned by the multi-national corporations who develop them, according to the logic of TRIPs (WTO 1995). Thus, seeds are in effect manufactured and sold on the global market, ensuring a reward for their manufacturers (Shiva 2001).

The effect of this arrangement is multi-fold for small-scale farmers in Zambia. Hybrid seeds do not grow plants which produce fertile seed, that is, seed which can be replanted for another season, so every year new seed must be purchased. Alternatively, certification is required to grow crops which are harvested for their seed, and the cost involved reflects a royalty paid to the corporation owning the patent for that particular type of seed. Both the charge and the process of seed certification are prohibitive to individual subsistence farmers wishing to avoid the annual purchase of seed, given that they are economically poor and often illiterate (Muliokela 1997). Furthermore, hybrid seeds require accompanying fertilizer inputs to achieve their full potential, which of course must also be purchased at global market prices. These purchases are prohibitive for impoverished farmers, who must also incur the, often not insignificant, cost of transport to a town where seeds and fertilizers can be bought.

This situation is undoubtedly human-made, created and controlled. While the logic of intellectual property rights may be incontrovertible in principle, their effect is to make profit from people who cannot even afford to feed their families in this case. In other areas of the world, these seeds do not work as a disadvantage to farmers, that is, areas where financial credit and agricultural subsidies mean that farmers can afford to purchase seed, nurture it and treat it with accurately balanced fertilizer compounds according to the precise chemical make-up of their soil. It is no coincidence that the
farmers who benefit and profit from hybrid seed farming are based in the same countries as the companies that make the seeds and profit from their sale. It is rather the result of historical power imbalances, which have meant mass industrialisation and technological progress for some people while others continue to struggle even to produce enough to eat. Indeed, the very concept of subsistence farming is distorted by this global trading regime, as subsistence means to produce only enough to eat – an impossible system to maintain as without an income additional seed cannot be purchased for future harvests.

The notion that farming technologies have produced unequal benefits to different kinds of farmers is well known (Lipton and Longhurst 1989), with disproportionate benefits being assumed by bigger scale farmers (Beck 1995). Much attention has also been given to revoking the notion that green revolution technologies are inherently discriminatory towards poorer farmers in favour of a perspective that emphasises the institutional and organisational boundaries for small-scale farmers to take advantage of the benefits of the technologies (Rigg 1989). But these barriers do influence the experience of poorer farmers in the context of the green revolution. Although there remains considerable debate about the impact of green revolution farming in Africa, from those who herald it as with potential to solve the crisis of African hunger to some extent at least (Djurfeldt et al. 2005) to those who lament a permanent loss of biodiversity (Shiva 1998), this analysis will be based on the observable effects of this regime on the communities studied.

Throughout the research conducted with WfC groups, particularly in the Smaizongwe district, many complaints and comments were made that the organisation failed to supply agricultural seed in order to improve access to subsistence for rural small scale farmers, who made up the vast majority of group members. Clearly, hunger is amongst the most threatening and debilitating of conditions, but under the livelihoods approach employed by WfC, not one which ought to be solved through relief. Many people who were hungry were visibly angered by the constant mantra of WfC to encourage ‘doing things for yourself’ when they felt the ability for them to grow food was hampered only by lack of access to seed, rather than any other requirements, with the exception perhaps of access to fertilizer. Rains are another differential in the process of food production, though clearly the lack of reliability in this case is viewed more as a natural and uncontrollable factor.
“Why can’t they give more seed? We are farmers if the rains come, but we can be nothing without seed and it is too expensive”

(Chairperson Tubone Group, November 2007)

“Women for Change help us here, but the biggest problem is we don’t have enough seed – if we had more seeds we could feed our families. Now we have nothing left when the rains are finished”

(Member of Tuzumanne Group, November 2007)

Under the principles of community management and decision-making, WfC responded to this identification of the key problem in the community and was trying to bolster the ability of the community to deal with the issue. Thus, the community groups, led by WfC, were in the process of creating a series of community seed banks that would provide seed for the community without the need for unobtainable economic inputs. The logic behind the seed banks was to assist a small number of farmers in a particular community group with the registration process so that they could legitimately produce seed for the entire group. Such farmers would receive a share of the harvest from all the others in the group, while the seed they produced would be stored and shared amongst group members prior to the next planting season. All members of the group contributed to the cost of registration, though in reality this cost was covered by income created at group level. In this way, costs were kept to a minimum and no economic commitment was required to produce access to seed.

This system was certainly adding to the power of people within the community to produce food without the need for external assistance, and was arguably subjectively empowering to the individuals involved. However, the system was by no means without problems, as it still required some farmers to travel very long distances to collect their seed allocation from the seed bank – which was usually insufficient for their needs.

“The best thing about WfC is that we can get seed. But how can I feed my family with only five bags of seed? I have seven children and we can farm, but five bags is nothing”

(Member, Kamucheba Group, November 2007)
Crucially, this solution was not producing sufficient amounts even for subsistence levels of production in the areas visited. It effectively increased hardship during a very bad harvest year, as both crops and seeds are decimated and increases the correlation between one year's bad harvest and the next. In addition, the seed produced in this way still requires fertilizer to reach the maximum yield, and this continues to need to be purchased at a prohibitive expense to the farmers concerned. The solution suggested by the organisation to the communities' identification that they have insufficient seed has been to bolster access to seed, but not to meaningfully enhance power over the holistic farming process. On the one hand then, the structure of global trading is set by the most powerful players on the international economic stage and to the detriment of the most powerless, while on the other hand organisations funded by the same powerful players ostensibly pursue empowerment by helping communities to cope with this highly discriminatory and unfair situation.

9.1.2 Access to Markets for Small Producers: Undermining the 'Multiplier Effect'?

The disbursal of cash to impoverished individuals or households is espoused as a method to empower people by giving them a choice in the manner in which they spend their resources. Those interviewed in the course of this research, who were in receipt of cash transfers, agreed that this was indeed an advantage for them over past assistance paid in materials or in kind resources. A simultaneous claim of programme implementers was that in addition to this benefit of issuing cash, there was a further benefit for the community as the cash would be spent in the locality, enhancing income generation for those who were not eligible for cash transfers. This so-called 'multiplier effect' has been documented as a function of cash payments elsewhere, for example in Malawi (Davies and Davey 2007).

The presence of small, local producers and suppliers is of course essential for the multiplier effect to be conceivable. However, most goods are produced and sold to the
profit of big international corporations rather than small producers in these areas. The case is well made by Moyo (2009) that small producers fail to stay in business where the aid industry floods markets. But even without the effect of the aid industry, costs of production for multinational companies are artificially low, enabling them to reach remote areas and compete with locally produced goods – often to the extent that small producers are pushed out of the market. It is indicative that in Sinalulongwe village market, Coca-Cola sells for the same price as the locally produced traditional maize drink if the maize producers are to make even a scant profit (Informal communication, Market Seller, November 2007).

In addition, this phenomenon was also observed during field visits with the BELONG project. Community schools supported by the project invariably tried to offer food to pupils at lunch time, given the often vast distances that children had to walk to attend school. Without exception, schools that offered food to their pupils were supplied by the World Food Programme (WFP). This line of supply is noteworthy in a couple of ways. Firstly, significantly though not terribly poignantly in the current line of argument, WFP are liable to withdraw support for any particular school at very short notice, turning successful functioning community schools into badly attended ones in a trice. This point is of course highly relevant and significant in the context of the overall power relations being promoted through this structure of support, although WFP does not pretend to be pursuing a programme of empowerment. Secondly, the supply of food from WFP is not procured from local producers although farmers commonly complain that surplus production is pointless given the lack of local markets or purchasers. The WFP is in principle committed to purchasing from within the national market place, but in reality they have to justify the cost of supplies according to cost benefit analyses (see Box 10).
The government [of Zambia] has asked WFP to purchase Zambian grown commodities as much as possible, to support the poverty reduction strategy aimed at boosting private agriculture production. Efforts are made to buy from small-scale farmers as well.

Local purchases provide a market incentive for local agriculture and the development of post-marketing systems and infrastructure. They also provide a cost-effective source of food aid commodities for WFP activities in the region. Between 2002 and 2008, WFP purchased over 360,000 tons of food commodities in Zambia at a cost of US$83 million.

WFP will continue to purchase food commodities in Zambia provided cash donations are forthcoming and adequate food commodities are available in surplus regions of the country within a stable and comparatively cost effective price range. Local purchase provides a cost-effective source of food for WFP to distribute in food deficit areas; it also provides market incentives for local agricultural production and post-harvest marketing systems and infrastructure.

Source http://www.wfp.org/countries/zambia

Thus, even where a formal commitment to buy Zambian food stuffs for their Zambian supplies is observed, the obligation is to buy in bulk from big commercial farmers or from maize dealers who generally use unscrupulous buying tactics to drive down prices for small-scale farmers. However, this drive for local procurement is certainly a positive development, and the new ‘Purchase for Progress’ initiative to connect small-scale farmers to markets launched in 2008. At the time this research was conducted, however, the only WFP supplies encountered during field visits were ‘corn soya blend’ (see Box 10). The revelation that no soya, or insignificantly small amounts, is grown in Zambia alone is enough to adequately refute the notion that local procurement is comprehensively applied (FAO/WFP 2002).
This section has shown that empowerment projects are acting merely (or at best) as insufficient coping strategies within the systemic trade marginalisation of the inhabitants of Zambia. The achievement of subjective empowerment for individuals, as documented in the previous chapter, is hereby demonstrated to have little potential to subvert the processes of historical marginalisation which are commonly analysed to have brought about the generally impoverished condition of the population of Zambia. Moreover, this section demonstrates that what is subverted is the very ability of people in such communities to cater for their own subsistence. Thus, the term 'impoverishment' is, in this context, being used to define this inability, and needs not engage with the valid nuances of the concept introduced by a multi-dimensional view of poverty. What has been shown to be at stake here is the possibility for people to grow crops on a small scale to feed themselves, even using methods of collective innovation, and further that there is little possibility of making a small income to provide for subsistence due to the overarching nature of historical global power relations. Clearly, such an ability in itself, while valuable in every way is insufficient for empowerment to be claimed. The next two sections focus on the limitations of project achievements to significantly forward an agenda of objective political and social empowerment at the community level.
9.2 Creating Communities of Powerful Citizens?

It is necessary to scrutinise the effects of this agenda of empowering individuals through development projects run by NGOs against the backdrop of conventionally understood rights of individuals to power in their own communities and societies. Citizens of nation states are commonly understood to have a form of social contract with their government, which provides benefits of being a citizen in exchange for a citizen's social duties and obligations. Thus, it is relevant to consider the effect of the extra layer of agency provided by NGOs in terms of any influence on the ability of communities/individuals to hold power over their own futures. The Human Development Report of 1993, conceptualised political empowerment as: 'freedom to choose and change governance at every level, from the Presidential palace to the village council' (UNDP). How do NGOs confront or represent this structure of governance? Does the empowerment that is taking place constitute greater freedom to 'choose and change'?

The following section outlines two observed processes taking place in the communities studied which would suggest that, far from making political power more accessible to communities, the effect of projects is actually to stifle their voices at the levels of political processes where they have legitimate claims to constitute a significant part. The first example is based directly on the testimonies of those interviewed during fieldwork with WfC. It demonstrates that communities are not building greater representation in their political processes but are rather turning their back on formal political representation altogether in favour of presenting their needs to NGOs that are present in their communities – them being the primary service providers in the areas studied. In the second case outlined here, it is shown that projects are encouraging communities to represent themselves as NGOs with an equal footing to all other international NGO actors. A valiant cause in principle though this may be, the following analysis demonstrates that there is inherent discrimination in the system of NGO funding, following the broad pattern of the historical marginalisation set out above.

9.2.1 The State vs. NGO Representation for Political Empowerment

During the course of fieldwork in the communities studied in this research, it was notable that demands and hopes for changes in communities were addressed to NGO
actors that were present. This was particularly the case in the WfC project areas and for those where the BELONG project was in operation, being less significant in the case of the cash transfers project which is formally implemented by, though arguably complexly linked to, formal government ministries in Zambia. This phenomenon was immediately noted as significant given the agenda of this research, and was incorporated into future interviews (see Chapter Five on methodology for full details of the methodological validity of this process). Many questions about problems in communities were followed by the immediate call for assistance from the NGO present, and no mention was ever made that the government ought to be responsible for providing a basic level of service provision.

"Government cannot look after people here – they are not here on the ground and they do not understand the issues people are facing – only NGOs are there to do that. Area politician did visit once to check on the maize marketing in the area but has not come again. Politicians do not represent communities – only NGOs are present on the ground, and they are the only ones making a difference"

(Chairperson, Chizwamundi B AA, November 2007)

This interviewee did go on to note that:

"Some government programs do help like money given to buy fertilizers but you have to put money in first and most don't have that money, but they do not help as much as NGO programmes"

(Chairperson, Chizwamundi B AA, November 2007)

Indeed, upon further questioning, there was no engagement with the notion that government had any obligation towards the welfare of people or their communities at all. When asked 'Do you think you should be asking the government to do more?' she responded:

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32 This politician took office in September 2006, so he had spent just over a year in office at the time of this interview
"No, we just hope that WfC will help us because they are the ones who are here" (Chairperson, Chizwamundi B AA, November 2007)

Thus, the very role of government has been distorted in the attitudes of people in the communities studied. Since the singular impact of government in such communities is a visit by party representatives prior to elections, and occasionally via the presence of the Food Reserve Agency (FRA) during maize purchasing season, people held little or more commonly no hope at all that such representatives had anything to do with their day to day life or the condition thereof. Any hope of change in communities was brought by NGOs, who were on the ground, active, known to inhabitants of communities and were seen to have resources, to enact change or to give assistance. Thus, in response to the observation that there are insufficient boreholes in an area, or that there was no provision for school buildings, members of communities turned to these NGOs and asked them for assistance as their only channel of hope.

"Mende [water] is the problem here and we hope WfC will give us boreholes - many are just drinking from the shallow wells government say they will but they never do" (Member, Tusangane Group, November 2007)

Some people did acknowledge that government could have a role alongside NGOs:

[Biggest problem in the community is that] "There are too many people at the borehole. We have to wait a long time there and sometimes there is not enough water and there are fights. WfC and government should sort out problems" (Member, Tuyume Group, November 2007)

In the case of the BELONG project, many community committee members said that they were very happy to have a community school supported by the BELONG project, and that they had no wish for the school to be converted to a government school as these were less efficient and less pupils passed to go on to secondary school. Under

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33 This organisation itself is commonly mired in allegations of, at best high levels of inefficiency, at worst, corrupt purchasing practices. See Anonymous, 'Mpongwe Farmers Bemoan FRA's Slow Pace of Payment', The Post (Zambia), 7th September 2007 for details
new government legislation, there was a drive for established community schools with basic facilities provided and attracting over a certain number of pupils to become supported by the state (Zambia Community Schools Secretariat 2004). From the outside, this appears to be a good idea, but committee members were generally unwilling to convert their schools to government control, even though this would mean that teacher’s salaries were paid and resources were, in theory at least, provided.

Such observations open a number of significant themes in the current analysis of empowerment prospects at community level. If demands for basic service provision are made to NGOs and not to government, then the hope of creating accountable governance structures in Zambia or to build the notion of a social contract between government and citizens is surely reduced if not eliminated (Dicklitch 2002). In this way, projects can be viewed as undermining efforts to create a fully functioning multi-party democratic political system in Zambia by diverting demands for governments to be both accountable and efficient service providers for their citizens. Furthermore, the reliability of NGOs is circumspect at best as service providers, given that their resources come from short term funding channels. This point is salient even in light of the fact that organisations like WfC have, in principle, long term commitments for funding from well established international donors like DanChurch Aid, who are not entirely reliant on government funding schemes (which by definition cannot be guaranteed beyond the term of the democratically elected government supplying them).

Thus, communities gaining representation through NGOs will continue to be vulnerable and subject to the very marginalisation that has been argued here to cause the condition of their impoverishment. This conclusion stands alone, given that NGOs themselves (or at least those purportedly focussed on poverty reduction) are a product of the vast inequality in levels of power that exist between communities and sovereign states at global scale. Such NGOs are supported by rich populations and rich governments precisely because some people and some governments are so much wealthier than others. Linkages to these international inequalities mean that, in a simplistic sense, the greater the demands made on NGOs, the more necessary it is for the rich world to be richer in

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34 This ‘good idea’ is notwithstanding the fact that GRZ are only willing to take over successful community schools once they have become established (including certain standards of basic facilities) by community volunteers possibly with the help of NGOs.
order to better serve the needs of the poorer world. It may therefore be asserted that the
drive to create better and better services for communities through NGOs in the interests
of empowerment and poverty reduction is synonymous with the system of
marginalisation that maintains the condition of their impoverishment in the first place.
This point is further emphasised given that some have argued the NGO sector has
become lucrative for African elites where options for patronage linked to the state are
disappearing (Fowler 1991).

In terms of the discussion of power, and its relative weighting amongst functions
of structure and agency with which this thesis is concerned, some more technical
observations can be made. The potential level at which agents can operate as powerful
constituents in the structures that have power to control their activity must be linked to
the relative proportion of those structures occupied by any particular agent. By
representing their needs to NGOs, communities are exposing themselves to a global
system, one which is dominated by powerful global actors and where community views
function as, at best, an extremely minute and relatively powerless part. By contrast,
democratic states are in theory representative of their citizens needs by a direct chain of
representations, and one in which each citizen holds an inherent, if minor, power.

By encouraging citizens and communities to represent their demands to NGOs,
who are more efficient service providers than the state, these projects are discouraging
communities from functioning as a relatively powerful agent in the state and
simultaneously encouraging them to function as relatively powerless agents in the global
structure of power relations. This conclusion is admittedly rather abstracted from the
empirical findings of this particular observed phenomenon, but such is the nature of
research incorporating both global and local level practices and policies. This conclusion
will however be further iterated and given added credence in the forthcoming sections,
which begin to investigate the role of discourse in the inherent discrimination of
involvement in global level structures without adequate involvement in state level
structures.
9.2.2 Empowering Communities through Indigenous NGO Formation?

As set out in detail in Chapter Eight, community groups formed with WfC guidance and assistance were encouraged to form Area Associations (AAs) when there were ten or so groups in a particular geographic area. If a number of AAs were formed across a geographic district, they were in turn encouraged to form District Associations and to apply for registration as an independent NGO. Registration of operational NGOs is required by the government of Zambia. The logic behind this pattern is, at first glance at least, both inspiring and innovative. By existing as independent organisations, District Associations would have the possibility of applying for funding in their own right, making them in complete control of the kinds of activities undertaken in their communities. Furthermore, this structure was deemed to be participatory and inclusive to those who are poor and/or powerless in communities, given that it is these people at whom group formation is aimed from the outset. At the time the fieldwork for this research took place, only one such District Association had applied for registration, which itself is a lengthy process weighed down under the usual bureaucracy of government ministries. However, several representatives of other AAs interviewed in the course of the research expressed excitement and hope that they also would be able to form independent NGOs and they had extensive hopes for the potential this would open up to their communities.

As the process was not complete, there is no empirical information about the achievements of such organisations to present here. But having observed this drive to form indigenous NGO groups, and the possibilities which were being attributed to them in advance – not to mention the significant process of subjective empowerment derived from this possibility, the case of a functioning indigenous NGO, the Joy Human Development Centre, was investigated to provide some clues about the real potential of this route to empowerment. Having been established by inputs from international donors, it is comparable to the position of District Associations supported by WfC. Following the withdrawal of support from their international sponsors, the organisers of the group were encouraged to apply elsewhere for funding to support the project objectives, given that they were training disadvantaged youths who would otherwise have little or no hope to make a living legitimately. In the years since, this group has applied to many different
organisations for funding to continue their well-established and well-respected community initiative, but with little success.

In retrospect, failure to compete successfully seems all too axiomatic. On discussing the manner of their funding applications, and the kinds of organisations to whom they were applying it was immediately, and tragically, obvious that their level of literacy in English, their lack of skill at composing a budget for activities, their incompetence at managing computerised application guidelines would be a barrier to them making successful funding applications. On discussion with other larger organisations, it was immediately notable that they employed specifically trained ‘fundraisers’, or contracted a specialised company to create well tailored applications using the jargon of the day. Even the phraseology of questions on funding applications is prohibitive, being addressed to the experts employed by most organisations to maximise their chances of gaining the all important funding without which none of their activities could occur.

The significance of this experience is far-reaching in respect of the potential for objective empowerment for communities to result from the formation of even the most genuine community level organisations. Again, the admirable notion of a ‘level-playing field’ is distorted due to the entrenchment of historical marginalisation in terms of power. Indeed, the failure is implicit; grass roots organisations are by definition made up of ‘ordinary’ people, and those people in Zambia are unlikely to have received much in the way of education. To encourage competition at international level against people who may have gone to University to study ‘fund-raising’ as a revered art, who have English as a first language and who are very unlikely to have not attended a full quota of primary and secondary education of a reasonable quality is almost tantamount to encouraging failure.

In consideration of the level of objective political empowerment being attained by the work of projects studied, again objective forms of empowerment can be seen to be subverted in favour of the more achievable aim of subjective empowerment for individuals. Acceptance of both the fact that state governments are not effective forces for action in communities, and that they will not be representative of peoples’ interests, has led to encouragement of individuals to represent their interests through NGOs, rather
than attempting to rectify the problems of governance which leads to this unjust and
disempowering state of affairs. Acceptance that NGOs are necessary in communities
means an acceptance that poverty and powerlessness are prevalent in those communities,
and rather than trying to alter this injustice, projects are merely trying to make the
condition of impoverishment more manageable. The discourse underpinning this system
of ongoing objective powerlessness has many facets, and a thorough examination of its
comprehensive effect is undertaken in the forthcoming analysis.

9.3 The Role of Discourse: Is Knowledge Empowering or Disempowering?

The concept of knowledge as power has been extensively discussed in relation to
development (see particularly Crush 1995; Escobar 1995; Sachs 1992). The notion
forwarded by such post-development theorists is that the terminologies used in
development practices hold an inherent power, given that they structure conceptions of
‘progress’ independent of any value-judgement of the kinds of changes made to
communities by the alterations induced. Conversely, the claim that empowerment for
communities can be advanced by spreading skills and knowledge in the form of
education is used to justify the idea that skills and education are ‘public goods’ in and of
themselves. The following section explores these counter claims in light of the empirical
realities encountered during the fieldwork undertaken in the course of this research.

The first section considers how skills and education contribute to the objective
empowerment of communities. The effect of skills training on individuals gaining skills
was comprehensively analysed in Chapter Eight, and showed that skills attainment, and
the opportunity for skills training and education, was an important source of subjective
empowerment. The focus in the ensuing section is to consider whether this important
source of subjective empowerment for individuals has the potential to also provide a
source of objective empowerment for the communities in which they reside. This
question is being analysed as a form of discourse given that the presentation of skills and
education is that they are empowering. This section scrutinises this claim against the
objective changes induced in the lives of individuals given the capacity of their
communities. Further than this, it continues the analysis started in Section 9.1 above,
which notes that the inclusion on a ‘level-playing field’ with other components of global
society is inherently discriminatory in nature, given the historical marginalisation and disadvantaged position of these communities from the outset. The second part of this analysis of discourse considers the manner in which the structure of project guidelines, their monitoring and evaluation methods, affect the way in which people view changes in their communities. It will consider particularly the effect of recording service provision in communities by the community members who are encouraged to report achievements to the project organisers. The terminologies used to value the services offered by some community members to others will be argued here to be inherently damaging to community relations. Furthermore, it will be argued that the nature of this interaction solidifies involvement in expanded networks of global power which serves only to increase the perpetuation of discrimination and ultimately disempowerment.

9.3.1 The Value of Skills and Education

Each project promotes skills training agendas as if such skills are achievements in themselves, and indeed these skills do contribute heavily to the process of subjective empowerment which was identified for individuals. But are these skills objectively a form of additional power for communities as a whole? Most skills were valued by individuals for their perceived value in terms of accessing more diverse forms of employment. But neither access to employment nor employment itself is created not by skills alone. It is dictated by the provision of jobs or other forms of economic opportunity, which as outlined above in Section 9.1.2 above are not forthcoming in a marginalised society like the Zambian one.

The value of skills and education may not, therefore, be as it seems to those community members celebrating their achievement as an end in itself. This line of thinking makes some further observations significant. The first is connected to the notion of community efficacy which has been defined elsewhere. The potential resulting from the increased belief in the ability of the community to organise and achieve their own development trajectory cannot be even roughly estimated and is thus difficult to consider in analysis, though this should not mean the potential is ignored altogether. The second is regarding the notion of 'hope' which may contribute to community efficacy but may also work against it if communities recognise that their efforts to gain skills and promote
education have made little impact on improving their life chances. But it is also significant to identify the framework by which community members assume that jobs will come from education or skills. This dynamic may be linked to the universal applicability model of development itself, the core assumptions are that all societies in which people are educated will also display good opportunities for employment. Although linkage between good education and better employment opportunities may be irrefutable at some levels, there is a critical mass that needs to be reached in order to create opportunities in societies in the first place and this is not wholly dependent on education or community effort. Moreover, in the universal model, Zambians remain marginalised in their opportunities for employment in a similar manner to the nature of their generalised marginalisation in networks of power. A good education in Zambia would not necessarily be better than a poor one in another country, leaving even well-educated Zambians marginalised by comparison (Esteva 2008).

9.3.2 Monitoring and Evaluation: Changing Community Perceptions of Service

During fieldwork excursions undertaken with the BELONG project, it was observed that many of the services which were being guaranteed under the project for OVC were already being undertaken by communities. In the process of explaining to the staff of community schools that child-headed households, for example, should be visited regularly to check the safety standard of their living accommodation, the field co-ordinator was met with the response that such practices were already being undertaken by various members of the community. The co-ordinator instructed that such visits, in this example, were in fact services being undertaken by the community school and emphasised the importance of recording their occurrence. A number of observations can be made about this example. Firstly, there is an argument to suggest that something as important as checking the safety standards of living conditions in child-headed households ought to be recorded to ensure that the action is carried out frequently enough to preclude the possible tragedy of not ensuring such standards. Secondly, emphasis on this process may indeed mean that some vulnerable households in some areas who may otherwise have been overlooked become included in such a practice. Thirdly, of course it is important that project administrators and funding bodies can justify the use of
resources by gaining an accurate picture of the services provided through the work of projects in order to accurately judge the levels of resources required to undertake further actions to bolster the capacity of such projects. Fourthly, the skills involved in creating and keeping such records were valued by the members of communities (teachers or headmasters/mistresses at the schools) charged with being responsible for them, and as such constituted a source of subjective empowerment for those individuals. It is on the basis of these four objectives that the organisation Justifies the encouragement of record keeping in this instance.

However, a countervailing view of the effect of this example is also possible. Communities become conscious providers of services which attract resources, so they are actively rewarded for their role. Will they continue to provide such ‘services’, which are inherently defined according to this discourse of ‘input equals rewards’, if the rewards stop because the project finishes? There is a danger, it is argued here, that if the framework of rewards ceases then the services may also cease to be provided due to this newly imposed conceptualisation of community service provision.

Analysis of the role of discourse as utilised in the projects studied in the research has shown that notions of ‘skills’ and ‘education’ must be critically deconstructed in order to assuage their true potential in terms of objective empowerment for the communities studied here. The representations made by the discourses of these terms imply ‘goods’ in and of themselves through the power of discourse. But a critical reading of the extent to which these factors can be used to increase equality in power relations between individuals at global scale provides evidence of severe limitations to these important sources of subjective empowerment.

9.4 Chapter Summary

This chapter demonstrates that while individual subjective empowerment is forwarded by the implementation of the projects studied, there are limitations to the potential for objective empowerment at the community level. Historical processes of structural marginalisation in the international system effectively constrain economic opportunity, to the point where no amount of skills or education can be empowering in an objective manner. These same processes create the need for aid, which further decimates...
the possibilities for entrepreneurship to flourish, and the NGOs studied in this research are an inherent part of that system. Encouraging interaction on a 'level-playing field' of NGO representation is inherently flawed, reducing rather than expanding the chances of accountable and meaningful political representation within the democratic sovereign state and exposing communities to networks of global power in which they are severely disadvantaged. The inherent discrimination observed in this instance can also be observed in the inclusion in universal, global standards of education, skills and monitoring and evaluation, underpinned by the power inherent in powerfully imposed discourses, according to global hierarchies.

The argument forwarded here asserts that notwithstanding the important and forceful individual effects of empowerment programmes, their potential for forwarding an agenda of objective community empowerment is severely limited by the global structures in which they both operate and form a part. While skills and education are felt to be empowering, they are not actually empowering unless there is a potential to use them to create a better quality of life, or to move towards greater equality in terms of power relations. While the agenda of empowerment, coupled with the discourse underpinning that idea, asserts that such achievements are important, their value must be critically questioned if it is to hold the real potential to change the structural conditions which govern the powerlessness of the vast majority of Zambians.

9.5 Summary of Part II

The empirical part of this research project began with the navigation of ethical dilemmas and methodological demands specific to an enquiry into power relations, where power relations so obviously confront the positionality of a researcher in a marginalised community. Methodological choices were asserted which have given scope to make the pronouncement rather than the confirmation of theoretical perspectives be the aim of the research, through the principles of constructivist grounded theory analysis (Charmaz 2006). The historical conditions of relative marginalisation for the Zambian state, and even more poignantly for most Zambian citizens, on the global stage were examined to give context to a study of the notion of empowerment for communities in that country. The broader context of the distribution and linkages of power and powerlessness in
Zambia further made the case that the power of the Zambian state ought to be analysed as a function of the overall structure of global power relations which frame the empowerment opportunities of the Zambian population, with the exception of the most privileged elites.

The empirical chapters of this thesis have considered the case of specific development projects dedicated to the aim of community empowerment. Through analysis of interviews with institutional representatives, it has been shown that projects promote the aim of empowerment through three inter-related streams of priorities, namely, rejecting dependency creation; making project outcomes sustainable, and promoting attitudes of self-help and community confidence. Analysis of interviews with community members affected by the projects studied showed a range of themes resulting from projects, which community members viewed as ‘empowering’. These focussed largely around the notion of knowledge as power, improved community self-reliance and self-efficacy; and sustainable outcomes as future security and ‘hope’. These apparently empowering outcomes showed a strong correlation with the aims of projects, suggesting that the nature of the institutional implementation of empowerment was indeed bringing about a perception of empowerment for community members.

However, analysis of material recorded during participant observation and informal interviews conducted with community members who were not directly involved with project operations showed a somewhat different picture, with resentment within communities being evident amongst at least some of those who were excluded from project targeting. Community power relations were thus shown to be affected in different ways to individual perceptions of the empowering outcomes of project operations. Furthermore, the possibility for the subjective empowerment of individuals resulting from projects to create objective empowerment for communities was noted to be severely limited by features and conditions of communities themselves. These features were recorded during participant observation, and through analysis could be linked up to form a number of key themes. The power of global rule-setting (TRIPs) and the monopoly of agricultural markets was demonstrated to be linked to historical processes of marginalisation; the disruption of political demands for representation given the presence of NGOs and the lack of likelihood of superior advocacy through local NGO formation.
were shown to work against the principle of creating powerful citizens in communities; and the value of spreading skills, education and universal monitoring and evaluation norms was shown to negate rather than emphasise the empowering potential of knowledge in the context of global discourses. These features constitute objective constraints to power in communities, and show the dislocation between subjective and objective forms of empowerment at both individual and community levels.

The empirical research and analysis provides a broad platform on which to assess power relations resulting from development interventions made in the name of empowerment. In the context of the research questions being addressed in this project, the factors demonstrated in each stage of the empirical research contribute to an understanding of the relationship between 'power' dictating development processes and 'power' apparently being promoted through the community empowerment agenda. They begin to deconstruct how the power of individuals and communities relates to and features as a component of development as a world project, and whether or not the agenda of empowerment being promoted in global development discourse is acting as an effective force to bring greater equity for marginalised, powerless individuals and communities. A comprehensive discussion of the theoretical perspectives that can be discerned from this research forms the concluding section of the thesis.
PART III:

CONCLUSIONS
Chapter Ten

Conclusions

Exploring notions of development, power and empowerment has provided an opportunity to take a critical look at the concept of community empowerment as pursued through development interventions. The exercise of mapping the empowerment agenda showed that the notion of empowerment was present in the very rationale of development in conceptual terms. Development theorists of all schools of thought have understood and considered that development is about more than the promotion of economic growth, no matter how central in their analysis the link is between economic and holistic development for societies. Inclusion of the concept of empowerment was found to have been built on in the realm of development policy primarily to address critiques of development practices. These included the universal nature of development and its discourses being opposed to the cultural and social heterogeneity of the global range of communities, the top-down imposition of development projects without community choice or ownership and the lack of sustainability of project outcomes, as broad categories. Critiques of previous reactions to these major criticisms of development practice also centred on power relations, for example on increasing participation (Cooke and Kothari 2001) or increasing consultation (Gould 2005b). But empowerment was championed precisely because it confronted the notion of power relations directly. According to the paradigm of empowerment, adverse power advantages could be anticipated and attempts to diffuse such shifts could be part of project design from the outset.

The mapping process further showed that the notion of empowerment had been used as an increasingly generalised concept, being first applied to marginal groups (for example: women, elderly, children, ethnic minorities) before being applied to whole communities. This factor was significant from the outset of this project, being crucial in the formulation of the research questions, particularly in terms of empowerment being
defined as a movement towards equality. This linkage has become increasingly explicit throughout the project, and is perhaps as/more pertinent as a conclusion than as a foundation of the research. The research questions resulted from the recognition that development is fundamentally determined by a hierarchy of power relations. Thus, it has been accepted as axiomatic in this work that there is a clear link between ‘development’, ‘community empowerment’ and increased equality at global scale. While more specific equations of social power are variable-sum because they are linked to absolute changes in power, the notion of general community empowerment and of progress towards greater equality, it is argued here, is effectively subject to zero-sum analysis because it is a question of relative power relations. Equality, in terms of general power relations, is inherently a relative state. The ‘amount of’ power a community has matters only as much as the amount of power external parties have within the community. This conceptualisation of empowerment is underpinned by the fact that power does not exist as an a priori force. It is recognised only when operational. Thus, there can be no meaningful empowerment of a community unless the community are able to use the power that they have gained.

This point is important and signals a differentiation from discussions of the empowerment of marginal groups, where there is less difference between the notions of subjective and objective empowerment which have been theorised in this project. For specific groups of people, there is a possibility to gain power (or to be empowered) without this process affecting in any significant way the power of other groups in a community. The empowerment of women does not necessarily mean the disempowerment of men, though in specific cases this clearly could be an outcome in the context of the specific power relations between a male and a female. By contrast, if it is accepted that development is denoted by a hierarchy of power relations, where general community empowerment is being pursued, it is in the context of global power relations.

This logic of empowerment policies in practice underpins the conviction that empowerment is conceptually about a movement towards greater equality of power relations at all levels of the development regime. While it is arguable whether the purported aim of the development regime is to achieve greater equality between states and communities, the fact that the implication of empowerment at ground level is to
induce a concern with equalising power relations between development actors and target communities leads directly to such a conclusion. This is a crucial connection, as this conclusion will show that according to the empirical data studied in the course of this research, the empowerment agenda is succeeding in limiting the impact of powerful impositions (for example seed costs, unequal education opportunities) on communities and is successfully therefore promoting a sense of subjective empowerment for individuals in targeted communities. But it will subsequently show that this power is constrained from being used to objectively empower people and communities as there is a lack of attention on equalising power relations except for at the local level of development interaction.

An understanding of power which provides explanations for relations between individuals, between individuals and the communities of which they form a part, and for community relations vis-à-vis the wider world at national and global scales, invites a framework for analysis of empowerment based on a nuanced version of the classic perception of structure and agency. Structures and forms of agency across these various scales are too proliferated, complex and inter-related for the simple division of structure and agency to form an adequate framework for analysis. The de-centred nature of power classically forwarded by Foucault and emphasising the role of discourse, both as imposed and as reproduced through usage, builds on the picture, but fails to explain how some knowledges can be more powerfully supplanted into modes of global value-laden discourses than others. Actor-network theory, with its inherent appreciation for the role of resources to exaggerate the power of networks, rather than simplistic actors, enables a perception of power that is at once divided by the notions of structure and agency, and, through the terminology of more or less powerful networks, which is also operationalised by both human and non-human components. Such a notion of power can be used to effectively analyse the kinds of conflicting scales of power which have been under scrutiny here.

This analysis is therefore about the extent to which the networks of power from which communities gain their 'power base' (D. Wrong 1979) can function with greater equality, and thus be free to utilise their power. However, it is important to recognise that a deterministic theory of equal or correct power bases or networks for communities
would be subject to all the same criticisms in practice that development practice has attracted before. The emphasis therefore must be placed on the 'freedom' to use power rather than the power itself, in line with the critical theorists who invoke the notion of emancipation to guide international interactions. Thus this conclusion argues that empowerment can only be properly served by promoting equal freedoms rather than power per se. This is in line with the analysis of Sen (1999), though here the emphasis is intentionally placed on 'freedoms' as opposed to the notion of 'unfreedoms' which is favoured by Sen. By considering unfreedoms as something from which people need to be released, Sen's analysis continues to run into the theoretical dilemma that unfreedoms need to be categorised and defined. This process itself is highly political and determined by power relations, although of course Sen's own conclusions are conceptually largely in line with those being presented here, his ultimate statement being Development is Freedom (Sen 1999). To avoid this powerfully deterministic process, it is necessary to embrace the perspective of critical theory and make nothing better defined than 'emancipation' the goal of development interventions made in the name of empowerment. Ultimately, subjective empowerment could be likened to enhancing particular 'powers' in communities, while objective empowerment could be linked to the freedom to utilise that relative power gain.

Another key aim of this research agenda was to note the extent of correlation between donor priorities and development project objectives and outcomes in communities. The specific publicised aims of donors and organisations alike were, in most cases, being achieved by the development projects studied in this research. Community schools were indeed being made more secure and effective through the BELONG project, with the effect that people in affected communities did feel more powerful. By facilitating education, they felt that their children would have better life chances and opportunities. Social cash transfers gave most beneficiaries a sense of dignity and some freedom of choice, resulting in them feeling they had greater power in decision-making that affects their lives. Women for Change groups were building skills and modes of communication which 'empowered' people through greater economic security and decreased vulnerability.
There is a core assumption made here, that the direct outcomes of projects (improvement of community schools, dignity of being responsible with money, having improved skills and communication) will lead to the more general aims of improved life chances, greater power over decisions that affect people’s lives and improved economic security or decreased vulnerability. The analysis presented here refutes this relationship for many reasons, which are presented in more detail in the forthcoming sections. It is important, however, to reflect for a moment on the dynamics of the process behind the delivery of development policy and practice which allows this to be the case. Development policy is written and focussed on generalised outcomes and principles for action. Development implementation, by its very nature, requires greater structure and greater focus on specific outcomes, which must crucially be linked to the generalised priorities. Those working directly in communities are saddled with the task of finding innovative ways to work towards these final outcomes, which by necessity become smaller and more achievable goals in themselves. It is indicative of the difficulties to find achievable goals which will contribute meaningfully to the overall aims and principles of development rhetoric that those who are least optimistic about the achievements of projects to promote ‘empowerment’ are those at the bottom of the chain setting generalised priorities and simultaneously at the top of the chain directing objectives of practical action. For example, the DFID officer in charge of the Social Cash Transfers project argued that: “Cash transfers are an effective way to provide support to the vulnerable. They give some choice, but the amounts are small so I am not sure that they are really empowering” (Interview, July 2008). While she was enthusiastic about the raison d’être of the project, she did not link the objective to more generalised strategies of empowerment as the literature explicitly does (Schubert and Goldberg 2004).

These meta-conclusions are based on an analysis of the three specific lines of enquiry that underpinned the aims of this research agenda. The first question concerned the relationship between ‘power’ dictating development processes and ‘power’ apparently being promoted through the community empowerment agenda. It calls for the recognition of any power in the process of empowerment, and the subsequent consideration of that power with regard to how it can be used. Secondly, the research
aimed to examine the manner in which the power of individual human beings relates to and features as a component of development as a world project. If development is accepted as a process occurring at all times, in all places (Payne 2005-40; Jan Nederveen Pieterse 1996; Sen 1999), then it is necessary to consider the place and relative power of individuals in determining the outcome and direction of the macro-level project. Third, the logical intellectual continuation of these lines of questioning was (as emphasised above) the attempt to judge the potential of the contemporary agenda of empowerment to bring about greater equity between marginalised and powerful communities/societies.

It will be argued here that just as attempts to empower people are inevitably limited by the global frameworks in which they operate, so are these attempts to empower paradoxically part of the system which allows this unfair and discriminatory situation to continue and to be largely hidden behind liberal good intentions. According to the distinctions made between relative power gain and freedom to use power asserted above, this dynamic notes the ability of power (and thus an agenda of empowerment) to be at once a force for both emancipation and exploitation. The conclusion is three fold to reflect the three lines of questioning. Firstly, the empirical evidence presented here has shown that the agenda of empowerment is, at least partially, successful according to its own terms. This first section of the conclusion is focussed on recognising the kinds of power that the empowerment agenda was found to promote in the projects studied. The limited aims of empowerment set by development programmes and their funding supporters are often achieved, and make some people in some communities feel empowered by their outcomes. There is meaningful subjective empowerment resulting from this process. The second part of the conclusion shows that it is the relationship between structure and agency which prevents this subjective empowerment from having meaningful currency at the level of objective global empowerment. The relationship between global power networks and community power networks is so complex and atomised that communities cannot be effective agents within global structures until and unless they have been conditioned to speak in the same discourses of constraint as the existing structure bears. While this is true of all communities, the difference is that for

\[^{35} \text{Not entirely masked as there is already a growing literature exposing the detrimental impacts of good intentions to assist. See for example Anderson (1999), Easterly (2006), Moyo (2009).}\]
some communities the dominant discourse is not one of constraint but of opportunity. Thirdly, it is shown that given these conditions of power relations and power transfers in the present agenda of empowerment through development, empowerment does not have the potential to move targeted communities closer to any kind of equality. Indeed, on the contrary, it is argued that the agenda of empowerment actually enmeshes disadvantaged communities more and more deeply in the system which subjugates them, while simultaneously providing them with means of ‘coping’ with their condition of impoverishment. These three strands are presented in greater detail below. In two brief final sections, some thoughts on how this research can be used to move thinking about development and empowerment forward are presented before some recommendations and reflections about future research and action are made.

10.1 Recognising the Power of Empowerment

Firstly, this research project was concerned with establishing what forms of power (if any) are being promoted through the agenda of empowerment, and subsequently how they can be compared to the dominant forms of power commonly perceived to be associated with the global development regime. The empirical research carried out during the course of this project showed that power is being bestowed on individuals in targeted communities through the agenda of empowerment, but that this power ought to be classed as ‘subjective empowerment’ because it is limited in a number of ways. The term subjective empowerment is meant to draw attention to the fact that the process of empowerment being successfully achieved is one which enhances community members feeling that they have greater control over their existence and future. Subjective empowerment has a dual impact: it enhances the belief that individuals in communities have of their own abilities to be powerful and signifies the notion that intra-community relations can be made to work more effectively and to the benefit of all who reside there.

This is no mean feat, and should not be ignored as an achievement of empowerment initiatives in and of itself. People have gained ‘skills’ through the projects studied, which they felt would lead them to have greater chances at employment. They have gained ‘knowledge’ about their rights as women or as children, and about ways to make their communities function more effectively for everyone involved, which was
causing them to feel more powerful and optimistic about their futures. Communities were becoming increasingly self-reliant on natural physical resources, reducing the humiliation and lack of reliability of relying on handouts from external organisations. Communities were also building community-efficacy, an awareness and pride of their ability to be 'psychologically' self-sufficient, becoming increasingly aware of the skills and knowledges that were held in their own domain and of their abilities to convert these virtues into positive community action. Simultaneously, projects were helping people to gain economic security in terms of a subsistence living at least. The effects of projects in communities were giving community members a greater sense of 'hope' for the future and many were convinced that there would be better opportunities for their children to experience lesser levels of poverty in the future.

There is a tangible power for individuals inherent in these changes brought about by empowerment programmes. The success of development organisations to impart meaningful and valuable forms of subjective empowerment is significant, not least, because it revokes the commonly expressed idea that development fails because development actors are 'doing it wrong'. That is not to revoke the notion that the structure of development assistance as a global system—the development project—is not problematic, but rather to point out that at the level of practice, the development organisations studied here are well respected and liked in the communities in which they operate, and they are fulfilling the aims and goals of empowerment that they set themselves.

Thus, the power of empowerment can be expressed as subjective empowerment in the current contemporary agenda of empowerment being pursued through the global

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36 This point is limited of course to the organisations studied directly in this project. Evidence of the lack of forethought in some development interventions was also observed during this fieldwork: One organisation brought computers, a printer and a megaphone to a village where there is no electricity, a problem they felt they had circumvented by placing the equipment at a community centre around 15km from the village. The largely illiterate community group members were invited to go to this centre to receive a day's training on how to use the computers, a trip which required them to leave at 4am on bicycles and on foot. The training was facilitated by a computer teacher who had been flown in from Washington for the purpose. Not to mention the wasted resources involved in this operation, or the fact that there are many people in Zambia who are capable of teaching a day's course on the most basic aspects of computer use, it is argued here that while the community members were very excited about this gift from the organisation they will in time feel cheated by it. Computers, especially at 15km away and with no internet connection, cannot conceivably have a very positive impact on their lives. And they will still be hungry.
development regime. The empowering processes being achieved are in line with the aims of empowerment projects in communities but, as will be shown in the forthcoming analysis, do not have the potential to achieve the wider goal of empowerment as it is expressed in global development discourses and policies.

10.2 Relating Structure to Agency: Global and Community Power Relations

What kind of analytical framework can be constructed for critical scrutiny of the relative power of individuals and communities vis-à-vis global power relations? This research has shown that the power of discourse is instructive in the relationship between structure and agency. Giddens (1984, 1993) argues that the theory of structuration means that agents comprising a structure are ‘knowledgeable’, and that they ‘instantiate’ and constantly remake the structure. However, in the case of marginalised communities, this theory fails to recognise the extent to which disadvantaged communities will continue to be disadvantaged in the already established structures in which they become included. This point is demonstrated most vividly in the empirical data presented here through the examples of education and advocacy.

In the case of education, the adoption of the formal and universal style of education used in the West has brought about subjective empowerment in communities. Many interviewees associated the promotion of better education for their children with the idea that their children’s lives would be less impoverished than their own. In the terms of wider power relations however, inclusion in this universal system can be seen to be inherently discriminatory for disadvantaged communities where standards of education are very different to those experienced in the West (Esteva 2008). Such communities are neither ‘knowledgeable’ in this system, nor do they ‘instantiate’ it to any real effect. But they become judged by the same universal standards as those who constitute more effective instantiation of the structure. Actor network theory can lend itself to an explanation of this model of power, by directing that it is not simply the actions of actors which drive the power of a structure, or the power resulting from being included in it, but also the power of networks within which those actors are included. Inclusion in the system of education is insufficient to constitute objective power, given
that networks of resources are so unequal between different sets of agents within the structure of global education.

Thus, while many Zambian children have to walk a long distance to a school where there are often few desks, pencils, books or teachers, they are judged on the results of their primary and secondary education in the same way as a child from the rich world who attends a school which is likely to be filled with equipment, up-to-date textbooks and formally trained staff. The value of education is espoused by the discourse, which promotes education on the basis that it heightens abilities to find well numerated employment, and is thus believed to actually be power. Subjective empowerment is derived from this belief that, in gaining ‘education’ the individual or community has actually gained power. But as Esteva has pointed out, undergoing a process called ‘education’ is insufficient to open the doors implied by the discourse. An average Zambian education does not automatically lead to better chances of formal employment, both because there are very few opportunities for formal employment and because competition for that employment is with people who may have been educated under a different system. The few opportunities that exist are awarded (in theory at least) according to principles of mentocracy, on the basis that all have equal access to education. The point here is that while it is a source of subjective empowerment for Zambian children to have access to ‘education’, not all have access to the kind of education that is likely to meaningfully enhance their future life opportunities, and it is on this basis that education is valued.

Using another example from the empirical studies undertaken in this project, modes of community advocacy can also be seen to provide for subjective empowerment but arguably not the opportunity to convert this into objective power in the structure of global power relations. The notion that people could represent their views ‘outside of their own communities instilled great ‘hope’ and inspiration, epitomising the ideas behind the importance of community ownership which were shared by organisations and community members alike. Particularly exciting was the idea to community groups that they could apply for funding for particular courses of action to aid the development of their own communities. They argued that they would manage resources more effectively than external organisations and that they could target inputs to the precise social and...
cultural requirements of the community. Again, these assumed attributes of facilitating direct advocacy of routes to community development contributed meaningfully to the process of subjective empowerment outlined above.

These assumptions are, however, again broken down when the operation of wider mechanisms of global power relations are considered. Incorporation into the system of global NGO funding opportunities does not mean success in that field. Speaking the language, discourse or 'jargon' of fund raising is a carefully honed and expert led science, rather than an art based on the greatest need of communities. This discourse is powerful in terms of its definition of 'service' provision, as this research has shown in the case of the BELONG project, as well as by procedures of monitoring and evaluation. The case of the Joy Human Development Centre exemplifies other practical barriers. Even the most basic requirements of funding applications are difficult for communities to fulfil, namely their level of written English skills and their access to formal financial arrangements, such as bank accounts which require an initial cost in Zambia.

These two examples show that the relationship between the structure of global power relations and the effective agency of subjectively empowered communities is exclusionary due to the narratives of power underwriting global discourses and networks. According to the logic of actor network theory, it is here argued that the relationship between structure and agency in debates of power which span such different kinds of actors (with such different kinds of networks of resources) as marginalised communities and global development institutions (and the discourses emanating from them) is highly complex. Inclusion in these networks of power is not achieved by simply allowing communities to participate, which can result in subjective but crucially not objective empowerment. As long as the terms on which communities compete within these networks are set by a specific set of other actors (with more extensive networks of resources), inclusion can bring at best heightened expectations.

10.3 Empowerment as a Drive for Equality?

The implication of the terminology and discourse of empowerment is to increase the power of marginalised so that they can have a voice in deciding and controlling their own development trajectory. The previous two sections of this conclusion have shown
that subjective power is promoted successfully through the empowerment programmes studied in the course of this research, and have proposed an understanding of how and why this kind of power is ineffective at objectively empowering people within the structure of global power relations. This section makes the case that, far from advancing towards a more equal balance of power relations between various communities in the international system, the result of the current agenda of empowerment is a means by which the worst effects of the gross inequality in power relations between various communities are mitigated. It is argued here that this aspect of the effects of the empowerment agenda prevent meaningful change in the operation of the development regime by facilitating coping mechanisms for communities so grossly discriminated against by the general structure of global power relations.

The creation of systems, such as community seed banks or community schools, which act as ‘coping strategies’ to mitigate the worst effects of oppression is in this case analysed as a buffer to increase compliance within a global framework of power. This is very different from the view presented by Scott (1987), who has previously argued that coping strategies represent a ‘weapon of the weak’, embracing the will of marginalised communities to find a means of survival even where they cannot be organised in forms of social protest. This view is important as a comparison to the analysis presented here. Whereas for Scott, the oppressor is the authoritative state and marginalised communities are atomised individuals with a will to live that pushes them beyond adhering to that which the state will allow, in the current analysis, coping strategies are legitimised by NGOs and become forms of ultimate compliance within the global system. Thus, where for Scott, such strategies represent the only available ‘weapon of the weak’, in the current conclusion such strategies, where provided as measures of empowerment by the global development regime, rather represent further interment in the system of global marginalisation. Where for Scott coping strategies are forms of silent non-compliance or protest, here they ought more properly to be viewed as creating a disincentive to protest or revolution by making survival within the current system of subjugation more possible. This conclusion is further entrenched by the sense within such communities that they are being assisted in their plight by external actors who have their best interests at heart.
Such an analysis shows that the drive for empowerment is really increasing or standardising inequality in a complex manner. Further, it shows the benefits of analysis which is conducted at all levels of global power relations. By encompassing the role of all power relations of communities, this research has enabled conclusions to be based on a holistic view of the effects of empowerment projects. While coping strategies of this kind are in fact measures which marginally increase progress towards equality in terms of basic needs being fulfilled for impoverished individuals and communities, in terms of power relations which encompass the power of discourse, these strategies can be seen to further entrench inequality. They are provided by unreliable (here defined as impermanent or insecure) and largely unaccountable actors (NGOs) through the global development regime and reduce the likelihood that communities will demand equal rights at global scale. In the most obvious case, this mechanism is demonstrated by this research through the manner in which NGOs in Zambian communities have decreased demands by members of marginalised communities for a political voice as active citizens (Green 2008) within their state and increased demands to be heard at global scale where they function as incredibly tiny and unavoidably powerless actors. Analysis of African NGOs as part of a 'comprador class' (Hearn 2007) reinforces this aspect of the conclusion, as does the argument forwarded by Duffield (2007) that NGOs function as governance actors taking part in oppressive systems rather than representatives of a move towards emancipation.

10.4 Moving Development and Empowerment Forward?

These conclusions are significant in attempting to move Beyond the Impasse (Schuurman 1993) in which so much discussion about development continues to be mired. Through the theorisation of subjective and objective empowerment as two distinct forms, this research makes an important contribution to the attempt to identify methods to make development and empowerment more effective according to their published aims. The empirical findings presented here make the case that the promotion of subjective empowerment in communities is both effective and fulfilling its aims to release people from local hierarchies, in enhancing knowledge of rights and in promoting increased communication across communities. Furthermore, the projects studied have been
successful in providing new skills and a meagre income for survival to small sections of the poorest communities. But these limited successes will not promote ‘development’ according to any criteria, and these conclusions add significantly to recognising why these kinds of successes are inherently limited within the present system.

Far from being just another source of criticism however, recognition that the limitations to the potential of subjective empowerment are due to a lack of objective empowerment is also exciting and inspiring, allowing some space for optimism in this debate. Skilled professionals are required to be empathetic, understanding and innovative in order to find the myriad of methods currently used to pursue subjective empowerment in communities. They need to be reactive and reflexive to a variety of demands, as well as being thoughtful about their positionality and level of imposition if the strategy is to work as effectively as it has been shown to do. By contrast, objective empowerment could be characterised by a freedom from constraint. The removal of constraints to community action or power is conceived of here as the neutralisation of the many deliberate international strategies which serve to prevent disadvantaged communities from exercising their rightful and inherent powers. This is not meant to imply that there are many international strategies which deliberately disadvantage certain communities, but this research has highlighted certain rules of international engagement which in practice limit the possibilities for impoverished communities to convert subjective to objective empowerment.

The kinds of changes to international action which could be envisaged to promote freedom from constraint for marginalised communities are diverse, but are probably centred on accepting that rules for action need to be tailored to communities concerned rather than attempting to make rules with global applicability. The disadvantaged status of communities targeted by development interventions has a historical context, it is not a ‘natural’ order. This pattern was shown conclusively in this project in the case of Zambia, where the development trajectory of communities has been set by its colonial past, turbulence in world commodity prices and past development interventions. The advantage of some communities over others has thus become fixed through history, and the concept of freedom from constraint is identical to the concept of reversing the injustices of this historical background.
Such a notion may seem idealistic and utopian, but it is important to recognise that this function is already espoused in theory by the development industry and regime. Development policies concerned with empowerment currently speak of the importance of allowing communities to find their own development trajectory and of a concern with balancing power relations between development practitioners and targeted communities so that development is not being externally imposed. Indeed, such changes have been anticipated and embraced at the highest level of global institutional rhetoric. For example, the 2008 WDR is entitled *Agriculture and Development* and Robert Zoelick, President of the World Bank, asserts openly that: “We need to give agriculture more prominence across the board. At the global level, countries must deliver on vital reforms such as cutting distorting subsidies and opening markets” (World Bank 2008). It is important to recognise that these changes are associated with freedom from constraint rather than increased power to act.

Changes that will bring about freedom from constraint for marginalised communities however, will be likely to constitute decreased opportunities for those who are prioritised and favoured by the current structure of power relations. If Robert Zoelick speaks of ‘cutting distorting subsidies’, it must be recognised that farmers who currently benefit from such subsidies would be adversely affected. However, they would not be disadvantaged, they would in fact be equal, in a new system where no-one is in receipt of subsidisation, and this is important. While their objections to such a change may be justified and in many senses reasonable, this research shows that responding to these demands lays the groundwork for the system of underdevelopment, powerlessness and impoverishment in the first place. To accept such structures as static is to accept that the system of development will never be objectively empowering to disadvantaged communities. Indeed, to put it another way, these conclusions expose the reality that the only way to effectively empower marginalised communities is to relatively disempower others by moving closer to equality. The system of historical marginalisation should be recognised for having had relative effects. The disadvantages that have resulted for some communities have been mirrored by the advantages that this system has brought to others. It is not really a fault of the (for the most part) well-intentioned and constantly reflexive practice of development, though that is not to say there is no space for justified criticism.
here too, that communities are not empowered by community empowerment initiatives. It is rather an inevitable outcome of the current structure of global power relations.

It should be underscored that these conclusions are not suggesting that objective empowerment would be a sufficient condition to achieve 'development' for all impoverished peoples. It is not being argued that by removing the constraining features of the international system just and human focussed development would blossom. This is a prescription only for the theoretical construct of how the process of empowerment might best be pursued through the development regime. While these recommendations do not pretend to have found a miraculous answer to the development question, they do conceive of an achievable route to creating a more level-playing field, untying communities from the unjust chains of historical marginalisation and the subsequent development framework which has resulted. From the outset, this project was not an attempt to theorise how to pursue 'development' better, given that the underlying theoretical positions here observe that any prescription to create such a grand narrative would merely be substituting one oppressive discourse for another.

10.5 Future Perspectives and Personal Reflections

The penultimate section of this conclusion, above, shows that there are some distinct lessons to be learned from the arguments presented here. It presents a compelling case for broad changes to policy, which would open space for the development industry to be more successful in achieving its purported and rhetorical aims. Such conclusions should of course not be taken at face value, but should be engaged with and examined against the wealth of other evidence that exists about the realities of power relationships contained in the nexus of power, development and empowerment. This final section outlines ideas surrounding further research and considers how the recommendations being made here differ substantially from current institutional responses to the ongoing failure of development.

Arguably the most important thing to emphasise in looking towards the future is that this kind of knowledge is only useful if it provokes action and not merely further research. Indeed, in this case, the message that research should not merely be a vehicle to perpetuate future research agendas is central to the epistemological basis for the
arguments presented here. It has been argued that blindness to the structural realities and impacts of action has led to the unconscious pervasiveness of a system of exploitation and powerful oppression, in which all involved are implicit, though few are complicit or willing participants. Research that leads only to a new research agenda risks being implicated in the same manner. In the final paragraph of her article discussing the notion of African NGOs as a new comprador class, Hearn notes that: "Rather than dismiss the idea *prima facie* that such a process could be taking place, the challenge is to find and construct analytical frameworks that allow detailed research to be undertaken into the mechanisms of the process" (2007). It could be argued, however, that recognition of the process should provoke change, which of course in turn would require critical scrutiny of an altered set of impacts. While 'analytical frameworks' are central to this process of examination, they should not be valued for their own sake. In addition to this call for long overdue action, further research recommendations could include conceptualising a theory of equality which could be used to judge the objective empowerment resulting from empowerment strategies, or further scrutinising the extent to which political accountability is displaced by the operation of development organisations in communities.

Thus, this conclusion should be read as recommending and opening space to view changes rhetorically aspired to by so many policymakers, development practitioners and community members alike as both possible and realistic simply through different choices being made at all levels of the development pyramid. In one sense this is a big ask, if one remains shackled by the accepted ways of doing things. This is arguably the case with the OECD's Policy Coherence Agenda, which was devised as a means to co-ordinate development assistance across OECD donor streams. In mid-2009, the OECD held a policy coherence meeting to 'explore opportunities to enhance coherence to achieve sustainable results' in development, which featured a presentation by Dambisa Moyo, a Zambian born World Bank economist and author of *Dead Aid* (2009). The debate included representatives from all major development sectors. In her closing remarks, Moyo forcefully made the case that Western governments were responsible for the lack of poverty reduction, and thereby development, in Africa due to their handling of aid and trade. She did not absolve African governments of their role, but argued that they would
inevitably be corrupt and elitist given the structures that aid provided for them, namely a reliable income de-linked from performance outcomes and domestic accountability (OECD 2009). Moyo’s book goes to great length to show that there are better economic solutions to Africa’s economic problems than those which can be shown to result from the aid system. Speakers at the debate pitched the position of their ‘sector’, basically arguing for space to achieve their own limited (if entirely reasonable, respectable and well-intentioned) ends, with their objectives loosely tied to the overall objective of achieving economic growth.

In principle, this research has been concerned with what the OECD considers to be policy coherence, as it has been considering the coherence of empowerment policy proclamations and the outcomes of empowerment programmes on the ground. But even the title ‘policy coherence’ betrays the downfall of the concept as it is used by the OECD, and for that reason it has not been embraced in the formulation of this thesis. Admireable in concept though the notion of ‘policy coherence’ is, in practice it makes it seem like policies emanating from the core of powerful actors are notoriously difficult to coordinate. In fact, it is argued here, the reason that policy coherence is apparently difficult is that there is no underlying agreement on the philosophy of development assistance by all actors who influence development outcomes. On the one hand, all participants of OECD meetings agree that poverty reduction is their top priority while on the other hand, politicians from OECD countries and corporations (even simply through lobbying) lay the constraints for development according to an entirely different framework, one which prioritises interests according to the profit seeking logic of capitalism.

This is not to invoke a conspiracy theory type scenario, with controversial decisions being made in secret or hidden from public view – far from it! Nor is it even to invoke the notion of a ‘consortium’ who ‘embrace and maintain’ structures of power (George 1988). The point here is rather to expose the fact that these processes run parallel to one another entirely openly and are generally accepted as reasonable, sensible and just according to the profound logic of neo-liberalism. It is to acknowledge that the priorities of these two sets of actors are both apparently liberal and in the interests of

37 Her recommendations include modes for facilitating greater FDI, accelerating privatisation in all sectors and extending credit based on complex credit ratings derived from predicted capital valuations.
global free trade. In their separate categories they make sense to all who read them. They are acceptable in the same way as Marcuse identifies the 'one dimensional society' (1972).

The inherent and fundamental problem with this framework is the categorisation of these activities into different spheres. This is not news — indeed it has been both anticipated and responded to. It has resulted in the OECD having a ‘Policy Coherence for Development’ agenda in the first place. The deadlock of impoverishment for the majority world which has resulted is not, and has never been, a product of difficulties in coherence between development policies or development sectors. It is rather a product of a lack of coherence between two parallel threads of mutually exclusive logic in the philosophy underlying contemporary development. These threads have been exemplified in this research by the policy agenda of empowerment accompanied by projects aimed at empowerment which in practice have been shown to result in a solidification of marginalisation for some communities. It is necessary to recognise that the global system identified here is working in the way it does because, and crucially only because, so many actors are complicit in its embedded structural demands and thus unaware of their part in the perpetuation of extreme power inequity. It is of course the basic conception underlying critical theory and post-development that actions driven by the logic of grand scale narratives become invisible to those participating within them.
Appendix A:

Example of Interview Transcript  
with a Development Worker

Interview with District Co-ordinator,  
for Social Cash Transfers Programme

4th October 2007

Q: What is your role with this project?  
A: I am the District Co-ordinator for Kalomo District

Q: How long have you been employed in this role?  
A: I have been working here since GTZ started funding the project in this area in 2003

Q: Did you previously hold similar roles?  
A: Well, I have worked in social welfare since 1997. I worked with ZAMSIF and CRATES and other donor funded projects but they always had conditions attached and time limits – they were short term programmes. They provided an alternative kind of social service

Q: Is this project different?  
A: Well, I think it is better to reach the poor with cash. Look at our slogan: ‘The poor are not irresponsible’. They are wise with money and save where they can. Also, there has been DFID funding and government involvement since 2007, so that makes this project different – now I work for MCDSS

Q: How big is Kalomo District – how many CWACS do you have?  
A: 127 CWACs in this district. We have 2664 households, with 164 additional households on the waiting list

Q: If you have additional households on the list, do you think the 10% target group is an accurate reflection of need in this district?  
A: 10% target group is accurate here – pilot study was conducted in Western Province and Southern Province, including here in Kalomo. The 10% is not so rigid a figure anyway, they can be a bit flexible

Q: Are the targeted beneficiaries checked in any way once they start receiving transfers?  
A: Changes in household make-up do not affect payments until retargeting occurs, every 2yrs. During the pilot study was every year
Q: Do people have to travel far to collect payments — is this a problem?
A: Max distance of 15 km for people to travel to paypoints — this is not usually too far, but it is long way if there is no payment for them to receive and they have to return another time! There is often more than one CWAC collecting from a particular paypoint manager, but there are enough to keep the distances under this maximum.

Q: Do you think this project is helping to empower people and communities?
A: Responsibilities are given to people in the community through this scheme, and responsibilities for the whole community through community ownership and decision making — this is another way of saying the poor are not irresponsible.

Q: What kind of power is this scheme really promoting to households?
A: Sense of responsibility is also evident through enabling people to look after their households.

Q: Do you think there should be conditionalities attached to the transfers?
A: No. Health or educational conditionalities are not appropriate in this kind of programme — they are the responsibility of other departments with other funding provisions. If these departments are doing their jobs properly they should be getting people to go the be immunised/educated — conditionalities from this project is like saying that the other departments are not doing their jobs properly that they cannot be trusted to achieve their aims. Also conditionalities are like saying that the poor cannot be trusted to make sensible choices — of course people will send their children to school and take them to be immunised if they have the resources to do so.

Q: Does the structure of having voluntary CWACs work well?
A: Turn over of CWAC members is not high so I think so. CWACs are retrained after 2 years, new members can be trained in this too.

Q: Do you think any changes should be made to this structure?
A: At the moment, some CWACs are joining to form Area Committees and this is popular. Around 9 CWACs join to form an Area Committee. This idea was launched in 2005, and scaling up has started — Now 39 CWACs are involved in ACs. Full scale decision due in Nov 2006 but still waiting — due to have the decision in a month.
Q: Are there any changes that you think would be beneficial for the project in its aim to empower households?

A: Well, at district level the ministry knows a lot about cash transfers and the need for consistency in payment provision. BUT there is currently a lack of resources/provision — last two weeks have seen no payments even for existing beneficiaries.

Q: Is this project likely to have success in bringing empowerment to beneficiary households across Zambia?

A: I have helped to organise workshops for officers from other districts to educate them about cash transfers in preparation for scaling up the project to national scale. I think that the parliamentarian’s tour was very important, as politicians will only learn of the need to help the poor by actual contact with households.

Q: What do you hope to achieve through this programme?

A: Biggest incentive for this project to succeed is to have positive effect.
Appendix B:

Example of Interview Transcript
with Community Member

Interview with Group Chairperson,
Mazabuka District, Women for Change

1st November 2007

Q. How long have you been involved with Women for Change?
A: I have been the chairperson for Chizwamundu B area association since 2003.

Q. How many groups and people are involved in your area association?
A: There are 10 groups. Almost 600 people—350 women and 250 men. Most people in the community are involved.

Q. How often do you have meetings?
A: We meet twice a month.

Q. Why did you join WfC?
A: I joined the WfC group because I wanted to learn. Life used to be very hard for women here.

Q. What do you think has changed in your community since WfC started here?
A: Life is easier now because we know we have rights, we know what they are, and we have others we can talk to.

Q. What is the best thing about having WfC in this area?
A: Meetings are important to discuss how life can be better for the whole community. Income is better now, we have more knowledge for business and more different ways to make income.

Q. Do you think these changes would remain if WfC left the area now?
A: If WfC left the area the groups would continue, because we know how to organise ourselves now and we see benefits in working as a group. We would continue into the future and with future generations because they also have youth groups where boys and girls are treated as equals with same rights—that is very different to before.
Q: What changes has having community groups made?
A: Before women were seen as slaves with no power, but WfC has exposed women to the powers they have, and shown them how to be more assertive. Also, people in the area can now afford to send their children to school and buy materials needed for school.

Q: What kind of activities does your WfC group run?
A: We are keeping goats. WfC gave us 20 goats in 2005, and we have passed on 10 so far. We are doing bee keeping. We have 10 hives - this project makes money for district. Now we are raising money for district development centre.

Q: Where will the district development centre be?
A: It is about 20km from this group.

Q: That is a long way! Did you all agree on putting it there?
A: Yes. That place was agreed on as central for all groups, but as more groups are being added it may not be so accurate.

Q: Do you do any other activities with the group?
A: We do gardening too.

Q: What do you do with the things you grow?
A: Some of the vegetables we eat, some we sell and then we buy materials for sewing, which we can sell for money.

Q: What do you use the income you make for?
A: Group profits are used for group activities, like we hired a truck to take us to the WfC Celebration.

Q: What else do you hope to achieve in this area?
A: Ambitions for the area include teaching about empowerment and gender in community schools, which also need to improve in quality. Education in community schools is not serious enough because teachers are often not trained and cannot be paid enough by the community.

Q: Should there be more training for teachers, do you think?
A: Training for teachers is alone not enough to run good community schools – teachers need to be paid to make the system serious.

Q: What other changes has WfC brought to this area?
A: There are already good things happening - young mothers now often go to school after they have had their babies which never happened before. Income generation in the group is very effective and works very well.
Q: What is the biggest problem in your community?
A: Biggest problem is the distance to clean, reliable water supplies — many walk up to 5km for water

Q: Who do you think should help to solve this problem about water?
A: We hope that WfC might help to make more boreholes

Q: Do you think the government should help?
A: Government cannot look after people here - they are not here on the ground and they do not understand the issues people are facing — only NGOs are there to do that. The area politician did visit once to check on the maize marketing in the area but has not come again. Politicians do not represent communities — only NGOs are present on the ground, and they are the only ones making a difference. Some government programs do help like money given to buy fertilizers but you have to put money in first and most don’t have that money, but they do not help as much as NGO programmes

Q: Do you think you should be asking the government to do more?
A: No. We just hope that WfC will help us because they are the ones who are here

Q: If WfC left this area, would you keep working in the groups and would the knowledge stay in the community?
A: Yes. If WfC didn’t come here our group would stay the same because we can organise now and it is good for the community

38 This politician took office in September 2006, so he had spent just over a year in office at the time of this interview
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