Inhalt

Caught in the Funding Game:
The Challenges of NGO Research within Development Aid
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1. Introduction

This article reflects upon the methodological challenges I encountered during my ethnographic case study on the cooperation between two particular NGOs. As many scholars of aid practice have testified (Edelman 2009; Hilhorst 2003; Mosse 2005), actors within development aid tend to influence data collection and analyses in certain ways. My fieldwork experiences shed more light on the kind of environment that development aid creates for NGOs. On the basis of my data, I suggest that increased NGO funding has had several impacts on Indian civil society, a major one being that it ties the NGOs to a fierce funding game. According to my understanding, this phenomenon consists of elements such as (1) competition for aid funds; (2) increasing opportunism; (3) fragmentation of social movements into NGOs, i.e. a NGOisation of civil society; (4) change in the accountability relations; and (5) the need to produce success stories. In what follows, I will focus on the elements of increased competition and the need to produce success stories, especially in the implications of both of these for the practice of research on development aid. The funding game is a structural feature of development aid, which has important consequences for research, as it draws the researcher's assessment of the success of the cooperation he/she is studying into the game and often turns studies on development aid into a battleground for divergent interests and logics.

Practitioners of development aid, as well as researchers, have different interests and 'logics' (as analysed by Olivier de Sardan 2005: 31-32, 137-138, 149-151, 198-201) concerning the production of knowledge on aid projects, as suggested by Edelman (2009), Hilhorst (2003) and Mosse (2005, 2011,

2013). Furthermore, Olivier de Sardan (2005: 199) crystallises these differences in the following phrase: "knowledge doubts while action needs to believe". Some scholars argue (Gould 2014[1]; Li 2013) that the logics of the production of knowledge in the frames of development aid and academic research are incompatible. In this article, I reflect on the manifestations of such incompatibility and on the practical solutions for resolving the epistemic, ideological and practical contradictions that I, like many others, have encountered.

Many scholars have encountered tensions during their research, tensions which relate to the different logics of research and practice within the sphere of development aid. These different logics often create long and painful (Mosse 2005; Hilhorst 2003) tensions and struggles for representation, which have mostly been dealt with as individual methodological problems. I argue that individual scholars have encountered these kinds of problems so many times that it is time to start analysing these experiences at a structural level.

In my PhD thesis (in progress) I explore, from an actor-centred perspective, the dynamics between what I call the developmentalist configuration and Indian civil society, asking how development aid has shaped Indian civil society. The theoretical aim of my study is to explore the social, political and discursive structures built around development aid. Scholars have conceptualised development aid in various ways that reflect the multidisciplinary character of development studies. From the various conceptualisations of development aid, I have abandoned the systemic and deterministic conceptualisations (Tvedt 2002; Escobar 1995). Instead, I have chosen to use Olivier de Sardan's (2005: 1) more actor-oriented concept of developmentalist configuration, namely a "complex set of institutions, flows and actors, for whom development constitutes a resource, a profession, a market, a stake or a strategy", in order to scrutinise the structures of development aid and how they influence and play out within the sphere of civil society in India.

I argue that we need to develop this conceptualisation concerning development aid further. One step in that direction would be to start gathering insights from various ethnographic studies on development aid in order to enrich the theoretical understanding of aid practices. Anthropologists are often inclined to stay within the limits of their case projects

in their analyses, and have gathered brilliant insights on the dynamics of development aid in specific locations. In this article, I analyse my fieldwork experiences, and scrutinise how they can contribute to the theoretical and practical understanding of development aid.

2. Aid practice as the object of research: critical events and methodological adjustments

My approach is vested in the tradition of the ethnographies of aid (Crewe/Harrison 1998) and development ethnographies (Arce/Long 2000; Escobar 1995; Gould/Marcussen 2004; Hilhorst 2003; Mosse 2004, 2005; Olivier de Sardan 2005, 2008), or 'aidnographies' (Mosse 2011). In my PhD thesis I explore some specific cooperation processes between NGOs, how development aid works, and what social relations and subjectivities the interventions of development aid bring into existence, aiming through this to analyse development interventions in all their complexity. In this article I concentrate on my research process and on the dynamics of the production of success in development aid, and what consequences it might have for research on development aid.

Development aid projects are complicated interfaces where different actors with heterogeneous resources, interests and strategies come together (Ebrahim 2003; Eriksson Baaz 2005; Hilhorst 2003; Mageli 2007; Mosse 2005; Olivier de Sardan 2005, 2008; Staples 2007). Anthropologists have demonstrated, through their analyses of various aid projects and NGOs, that an anthropological approach is important for gaining a better understanding of how aid projects operate. Whether or not such an understanding is desirable for the NGO actors is a question that also warrants some attention (Staples 2007).

I started my research with a detailed case study on the cooperation between a Finnish NGO foundation Juuri, and a North Indian political advocacy network, Janatan (the names have been changed). With this case study I aimed to examine how partnership between the organisations is constructed and negotiated, and to reflect on how the global structures of development aid play out in this cooperation. In the case study I combined ethnographic observation with a discursive approach; thus, my

data consists of records of the cooperation between the actors, along with taped interviews and discussions.

After I had followed and at times participated in the cooperation for many years, several internal power struggles started to unfold within Janatan. After becoming more and more entangled in the power struggles, I started to distance myself from the case study both positionally and methodologically. This was a demand from a Janatan leader as he was protesting against me participating in the Juuri decision-making. Although my case study has provided me with endless puzzles, problems and complicated and unexpected twists in the plot, I am grateful for the data it has provided me. During the research process I have shifted my focus from an in-depth case study to a multi-sited perspective, and simultaneously from an insider to an outsider position in relation to my case NGOs. My fieldwork experiences have illuminated some central structural traits of development aid, especially of the challenges related to academic research on aid practices.

The evaluation (in 2006) of the cooperation between Janatan and Juuri provided an interesting opportunity to become more familiar with the work of Janatan, and I participated in both the evaluation field visits and the writing process of the evaluation report. As Janatan was engaged in activities in different states in India, it was decided that I would concentrate, in the final report, on the NGO's work in the state of Uttarakhand. The activist group in Uttarakhand was called Andolan, and it was introduced and described as a thematic working group within Janatan. As most of the time during the evaluation field visit was spent in Uttarakhand familiarising myself with the work of Andolan, I decided to also focus on the activities in Uttarakhand in my PhD thesis. After the evaluation field visit I wanted to travel to Uttarakhand again to interview activists for my research, and the Janatan leader Akhil appointed a Janatan activist, Siddhart from Uttarakhand, to guide me. His father had been one of the leading figures of the Gandhian movement in Uttarakhand, and he had profound knowledge of the social movements and NGOs of the area, and therefore became an important informant and assistant for my research.

After the evaluation, I attended a meeting of the Juuri India group, where the Janatan report was on the agenda. I sent the project report to Andolan activists for their additions or comments, and this simple gesture caused an unexpected and complicated chain of events, which had

dramatic consequences for the course of my research. The report antagonised the fieldworkers and they started accusing Janatan of exploitation and criticised Janatan's decision-making processes, internal communication, and the relationships of the grassroots activists to the project structures. It turned out that Andolan activists had not received any funding from the Janatan coffers, nor were they aware that Janatan received funding for their activities. After discovering in the Janatan report how their voluntary work was reported to the donors, they started negotiating for a better position within the project.

Siddhart sent several emails to Juuri on behalf of the Andolan team, criticising Janatan for false reporting and for showcasing Andolan and other voluntary work in Janatan reports. There was not much discussion of Siddhart's critiques in the Juuri India group. They were mostly conceived as opportunism, although many of Siddhart's points were relevant and many of them were confirmed to me by some other Janatan activists. Thus, Siddhart had an instrumental role in the opposition camp within Janatan. He was therefore later expelled from Janatan. Akhil argued that his criticisms of Janatan were about gaining a position as leader in the Andolan team. These power struggles unfolding in front of my eyes were interpreted by some of the Finnish activists as struggles for resources or position, but I see them also as struggles linked to the reading of the situations and relations, and as struggles for representation or 'Truth'. "Representations of development NGOs have everything to do with power, and competing understandings often lead to conflicts" (Hilhorst 2003: 222).

In April 2008 a partners' meeting was planned with Juuri and its Indian partners. It was time to negotiate the new Janatan budget, for which the Andolan activists were anxiously waiting, since they had not received any funding since the beginning of the year. After their critical emails they received very little support from Janatan for four months at the end of the previous year. When the week long partners' meeting ended, they finally saw the budget for the first time, a budget which Janatan had sent to Juuri, and in which very limited support was projected for their work. After trying to negotiate better terms for the cooperation with Janatan (and waiting for five to seven days in vain in the office for a chance to talk with the Janatan leadership), Andolan finally decided to break away from the Janatan network and to continue independently. Although younger

Dalit activists told me that it was a unanimous decision, shortly after the meeting three higher caste activists announced that they would continue working with Janatan. Thus, there was a split within the Andolan team along caste lines.

This process had significant repercussions for my relationship with Janatan. The convenor of Janatan, Akhil, blamed me on several occasions for the split and for Andolan's withdrawal from the Janatan network, although on other occasions he argued that it had been a natural development within the team, in which Dalit activists were assuming control and leadership. Working exclusively with the case study turned problematic when these internal power struggles started playing out within Janatan. The whole process was personally difficult but academically enlightening. It was an interesting moment in my research when two logics collided; my logic for sending the report to the fieldworkers originated from Finnish organisational culture, where reports are shared within organisations and are public information. This clashed with the Janatan culture, where reports and applications are not shared within an organisation. It was an illuminating marker of how information was supposed (or not) to be circulated within Janatan.

Victor Turner (1957: 91-94) has used the notion of social drama as a "device for looking beneath the surface of social regularities into the hidden contradictions and eruptions of conflict." Mosse (2005: 235) points out that "in the competitive market for success it is difficult for dependent agencies not to portray their actions as achievements in terms of currently favoured models. The cost of breaking ranks is high and public disputes over meaning and interpretation are rare", but, as Mosse (ibid.) notes, "when they do occur, they are very informative".

There were many crucial moments when I had to make quick decisions, which at times had profound consequences. One was how to react to the accusations towards Janatan coming from the fieldworkers who had travelled with me and whose work was showcased to me. The options left for me were either to communicate exclusively with the leadership (which Janatan leaders expected from me, and which option most of the Finnish activists had chosen) or to listen to both sides of the conflict. I decided to listen to both sides. This is one instance where the academic practices and Janatan's interests collided, and my dual position as a researcher and

member of Juuri started to turn problematic. I had decided to travel to the partners' meeting with Juuri representatives. Andolan activists had sent several long complaints about Janatan practices to the Juuri India group, which had to take a decision on how to react to the accusations. In the India group's meeting it was decided to organise a discussion on the conflict during the partners' meeting, and the Juuri board named one board member to facilitate the discussion.

The whole process was marred by tensions and disagreements. Janatan adamantly refused to discuss the matter with Juuri, and argued that they would resolve the conflict on their own. Finally, after several rounds of heated emails and negotiations, it was agreed that a meeting could be organised, but Janatan leaders insisted that the conflict should not be discussed. The Janatan coordinator used the first three hours of the meeting to protest fiercely against the meeting itself.

At this stage, various versions of the conflict circulated. I therefore wanted to meet Andolan fieldworkers separately to hear their points of view. The Janatan leaders considered this to be a severe breach of trust. The coordinator of Janatan argued thus: "The way, interfering, I see that you are bypassing the Janatan in discussing with the local team. The process should be like this: there should be a discussion with Janatan and then it should come to the local team through the Janatan person" (Interview 2008)[2]. Meeting the fieldworkers separately was not considered appropriate. This comment also highlights Janatan's hopes for the communication process; relationships should remain mainly with the leaders, and fieldworkers should be met only in the presence of the leaders. This incident clearly illuminates the hierarchical practices of NGO partnerships. I was heavily criticised, and Janatan leaders started arguing that my research had negative impacts on their work. They tried to persuade me to focus more on their achievements. Anil, the coordinator of the Uttarakhand programme, criticised me for 'always going in the wrong direction' when I was asking questions about the internal conflict. Akhil tried to convince me that Janatan had succeeded in experimenting in novel and unique kinds of political advocacy work, and that my research should focus on documenting that.

After the partners' meeting, the support by Janatan was uncertain, although Akhil had given his explicit consent for my research. When David Mosse asked him about Janatan as my case study, Akhil replied

that he "had heard rumours about that". This happened at a conference in Finland, in which Akhil happened to participate. When I enquired whether they were still comfortable with me conducting research, I did not receive any clear answer. Akhil blamed me for the Andolan split and for not communicating enough. He asked me to promise in writing to keep them informed about my research, send drafts of my thesis for their comments and to write about them anonymously. This accusation during the conference happened in the middle of the night, as did the previous one during the partners' meeting. My arguments that I had only sent the report to them, and listened to their points of view, fell on deaf ears. This difficulty was familiar from several other occasions; some of the Juuri activists that Akhil had previously been accusing gave up at some point. They felt that it was impossible or useless to discuss the matter with Akhil.

Due to the uncertainty, I started shifting from the micro-level case study to a broader and more multi-sited perspective, gathering more data on other activists and CSOs about their experiences of development aid. As a result of this shift, part of my data was gathered from inside a project, and other parts from an outsider's position. This process shed much light on the data collection processes within aid projects, and on the specific role of the production of knowledge in aid projects and NGOs.

During this process I had to reflect thoroughly on my dual position as a researcher and as a member of the Finnish case organisation. It has been enlightening and relieving to read about other researchers' experiences with their case NGOs or projects. All of these different but somewhat similar experiences illuminate how the production of knowledge has a central role in helping to secure survival in the game of insecure and short-term development aid funding. Mosse's (2005: xi-xii) descriptions of how his ethnographic account "opened a rift between different epistemologies, meanings and views of responsibility, between the domains of managerial optimism and critical reflection", are frightening but illuminating. His former colleagues protested fiercely at his analyses and findings, made complaints about him to his university's ethical board, and tried their very best to prevent the publication of his research.

Dorothea Hilhorst (2003: 227-229) notes that, in a politicised environment, research becomes part of the political struggle. "Research and politics are both about representation, and lines of analysis are bound

to find their way into political arenas as statements of controversy, challenge, or support", she (ibid.) states. Hilhorst's (ibid.) case NGO "questioned the politics and ethics of her research, denounced her use of theory and ethnography, and charged her of having manipulated and abused her research subjects".

Both Mosse's (2005) and Hilhorst's (2003) research participants emphasised, in their critiques, the negative consequences of research on their organisations, as did Janatan activists in my research. Because the production of knowledge plays an essential role in legitimising funded projects, it very easily becomes a battleground for different interests. In applied research such as evaluations or commissioned studies the question about the consequences is mutually understood; it is painfully clear to everyone that the outcomes might influence future funding. Mosse (2005: 157-166) describes in graphic detail how controlled the evaluation visits are, and how time and expression is ordered during them. "This makes constructing a project story highly contentious, making it a matter of debate who is qualified to construct knowledge about a project and how it is to be done" (Phillips/Edwards 2000, quoted in Mosse 2005: 158). "In the end there is usually a shared need for an 'acceptable story' that mediates differences and buries contradictions in order to sustain relationships and the flow of resources".

3. Different logics of knowledge production in academic research and aid practice

During my research process I was constantly confronted by the fact that academic research and development aid practice have their own distinct logics concerning the production of knowledge on aid practices. That is one of the main reasons why the issues of cooperation and dialogue between academic research and development aid practice continue to pose a challenge. Many scholars (see Koponen 2008: 2; Olivier de Sardan 2005: 198-199; Tvedt 2002: 363) have criticised NGO research for being embedded in development aid's normative and rhetorical agendas, and have insisted on an academic and non-normative approach to development actions. "The more serious, empirically grounded and vigilant towards seductions

of ideologies that academic studies are, the more useful they can be to practices", Olivier de Sardan (2008: 327) argues.

Scholars are often driven by the search for detail, complexity and comprehensiveness, and "academic research involves probing beneath the surface, questioning appearances and asking uncomfortable questions", which may generate friction, as activists often present "overly coherent official narratives about their movements which may not have a solid basis" (Edelman 2009: 248-249). Sometimes researchers reproduce and propagate those narratives and "photo-shop out dimensions of practice that conflict with the official picture or line", but Edelman (ibid.) poses the question of whether this really serves the needs of social movements.

The time frames of academic and movement-based researchers are different; activist researchers want quick results to serve political needs (Edelman 2009: 251-253). The differences of pace, style, perceptions, and audience between activists and academics can cause tensions. "Another problem that arises from the academic-activist relations is the activists' fear that the academic might be gathering intelligence or functioning as an agent provocateur, or that the data gathered or the reports published might find their way into the wrong hands or strengthen the analytical capabilities of their antagonists" (ibid.). Due to these different orientations behind academic research and aid practice, researchers often face competing duties, obligations and conflicts of interest, and they need to make implicit or explicit choices between the values and interests of different individuals and groups.

These different logics were manifested during my research in the constant pressure from Janatan leaders on me to focus on success and ignore difficult issues and internal power struggles, and in the pressure to communicate through the leaders.

3.1 The role of knowledge production in development aid

"Aid chains deliver and gather information and transmit it back up the chain. Resources down, information up: that is the essence of the circuit" (Sogge 2002: 87). Ebrahim (2003: 1), who analysed relationships between two big Indian NGOs and their international network of funders, describes how NGOs leverage funds by providing information on 'successful' projects, thereby enhancing the reputation of their funders. As

Mosse (2005) has elegantly explored, the production of success is a central structural feature in aid projects. The production and dissemination of information is closely related to the production of success and to securing organisational survival in the funding game in which the NGOs find themselves deeply entangled. Consequently, struggles over the shaping and use of information are central not only to the relationships between NGOs and their funders, but also between NGOs and scholars.

Development aid funding to NGOs is short term, and, in institutionalising themselves, NGOs soon find themselves caught in the funding game. Especially in countries such as India where aid funding has been decreasing dramatically and donors have been withdrawing, the competition for the aid funds has escalated to an intense level, making it even more vital for NGOs to demonstrate success in order to survive.

3.2 Production of success

Because information plays such a central role in demonstrating success and securing funds, the production of knowledge (applications, reports and evaluation documents, but also academic research) often becomes a battleground, reflecting different interests related to the research results. Research easily becomes part of the social system it aims to study (Mosse 2005: 165), as "development success is not objectively verifiable but socially produced" (ibid. 172). Therefore, "effective mechanisms for filtering and regulating the flow of information and stabilising representations are necessary for survival; staff withhold or reveal information strategically in order to secure reputations, conceal poor performance or to negotiate position in the organisation or with outsiders", Mosse (2005: 11-12) argues further: "Interventions in development are importantly about establishing, promoting and defending significant interpretations (of actions and events)" (ibid.: xi-xii).

My complications with Janatan were related to its need to demonstrate success, and Janatan staff tried to prevent me from getting information which could have been harmful to them, and instead tried to steer me constantly in the 'right direction'. This resulted sometimes in hilarious episodes, like when once a former (critical) coordinator of Janatan wanted to meet me, and one Janatan worker drove with me for hours round the ring road of Delhi in order to prevent me from meeting him.

Aid practitioners tend to have strong opinions about the purposes and outcomes of research. Commissioned studies and evaluations often include a negotiation process regarding what is said in the final report, and how. These negotiations often lead to downplaying the criticism and emphasising the positive outcomes. This was confirmed by various colleagues, who had been conducting evaluations. Evaluations are, much more than academic studies, subject to a tug-of-war of diverse interests when it comes to the research results. Both Mosse (2005, 2011) and Hilhorst (2003) have analysed how NGO actors strive to incorporate researchers socially and discursively in their group of 'believers'. Moreover, Hilhorst (2003: 219) describes "how contractual obligations are entangled with moral obligations, emotional rewards, friendly favours and ideological statements".

As Urban (1996) argues, communities are interested in things that help them to reproduce themselves, or, as Sogge (2002: 87) puts it, "aid's hardcore political constituency wants to keep things rolling, keep things quiet (if not secret), keep a united front in the face of criticism". Many at the receiving end also hold stakes in the status quo. "Those whose livelihoods and careers depend on continued funding defend themselves by filtering and colouring information going up the chain: dissembling games to keep the bosses and visiting delegations happy, the empty project facades for the English to see" (ibid.). Furthermore, "recipients dependent on aid will tend to prettify or conceal information about its effects, supplying only that information that matches outlooks and prejudices of those with powers to cut off flows of resources" (ibid: 98).

4. Reflection on my positions

Researchers' positions may vary from neutral to militant, and anywhere in between (Edelman 2009: 246), and the choice of positioning has several effects on the fieldwork and data collection. Many ethnographically inclined scholars have decided to situate themselves inside projects or NGOs, working or volunteering in the projects or NGOs they aim to study. This is an understandable choice, as the social processes of organisations are better understood from within. This internal positioning is thus often conceived as necessary in order to ensure access to information and

for the collection of data, but it often seems to lead to conflicting ideas about the nature of the knowledge produced. The production of knowledge (also academic research) becomes entangled with the organisational politics. Scholars working inside projects have encountered tensions between the loyalty to the organisation and the institutional need for positive image production on the one hand, and the aim to fulfil the academic criteria on the other. Edelman (2009: 247) notes that tensions between activists and academics tend to revolve around the research process and the purpose and methods of knowledge production and dissemination. He argues that, in the relations between researchers and activists, "tensions may always be present, in greater or lesser degrees and sometimes in subterranean forms" (2009: 246). Activists often expect that academic research will be immediately applicable to their struggles (ibid.).

Based on my own and other scholars' experiences, referred to above, it is clear that the position of researcher in relation to aid projects is very tricky in many ways, and that all one's diplomatic skills are needed to balance the goals of solid academic research on the one hand and the need (related to organisational survival) of positive image production on the other. NGOs and other actors in development aid often have their own agendas concerning the knowledge that will be produced about them, and activists often aim to influence the research outcomes for the sake of their organisational survival. Therefore, an important choice made by researchers when moving into the 'field' of development aid is that of how to position oneself: inside, sharing the normative claims and beliefs of the NGO/aid world, or outside, taking a critical distance and analysing aid practices from the academic perspective. This choice has important implications for the relationships with the objects/subjects of the research.

My experiences illustrate how easily researchers can become entangled in the organisational politics and in the savage competition for funds and organisational survival. Comparing my experiences as both an insider and an outsider I see that both positions have their benefits and shortcomings. Although interviews are criticised within anthropology for not being authentic communication situations, most of the interviews that I conducted with other CSOs were enlightening. The activists shared with me their analyses of Indian civil society and development aid in an open, thorough and analytical manner, although it might have been difficult

to get information about the organisational dynamics from the leading persons. My research journey has provided me with insights into how differing the data gathered from different positions can be, and how the position of respondents or informants strongly influences the kind of data it is possible to collect. Positioning inside projects gives access to rich data, but increases the risk of the researcher becoming part of the social system he/she aims to study (Mosse 2005: 165), and getting entangled in the organisational politics.

5. Conclusions

I have applied the idea of aid projects as arenas where different logics collide as an analytical tool in reflecting on my fieldwork. As my experiences reveal, the structural need within the developmentalist configuration to produce success stories may have multiple effects on the research process. The different logics of academic research and development practice (Olivier de Sardan 2005: 198-199; Edelman 2009) collided during my research, resulting in the constant appearance of ideological traps (cf. Olivier de Sardan 2008: 327). Most of the incidents during my fieldwork related to the question of how knowledge is produced and disseminated within NGOs, both internally and in relation to partner NGOs and scholars. They reveal differences in the organisational cultures, and show how different organisational and cultural contexts or logics (Olivier de Sardan 2005: 137-152) may create conflicts in NGO partnerships, and in research on NGOs.

Research can become a battleground reflecting divergent interests and logics, and the structural pressures within development aid to produce success stories have important implications for NGO researchers, sometimes making it difficult to position oneself purely academically. It is common for students and scholars to enter the field of development aid through NGOs or projects, often resulting in complications in the reconciliation of the different interests and logics related to the production of knowledge. I argue that it should be better acknowledged on a methodological level that actors in development aid aim to influence the data collection and analyses in specific ways – whether we are using participatory

methods or not. What this means for the practice of research on development aid has to be tackled by each scholar individually in the course of the research process, but should be acknowledged also in teaching and supervision before the fieldwork commences. These kinds of struggles for representation also provide important data on what kind of structures the developmentalist configuration creates for NGOs and other actors who access aid funding, in the process tying Southern NGOs and activists to a fierce funding game which includes competition for funding and the need to demonstrate success.

1 Jeremy Gould, personal communication, Helsinki 2014.
2 Interview with Janatan coordinator in Kausani, India, 2008.

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Abstracts

This article describes the methodological challenges I encountered during my ethnographic case study on the cooperation between two NGOs. My experiences show how the NGO actors strove to influence my data collection and analyses. This struggle for representation provides important insights into what kind of environment development aid creates

for Southern NGOs, tying them to a fierce funding game which includes competition for funding and the need to demonstrate success. My research became subject to the structural pressure within development aid to demonstrate success, and my study became a battleground for divergent interests and logics. It is common for students and scholars to enter the field of development aid through NGOs or projects, and this often results in complications in the reconciliation of different interests and logics related to the production of knowledge. This should also be acknowledged in teaching and supervision.

Der Artikel schildert die methodologischen Herausforderungen, mit denen ich während meiner ethnographischen Forschung über die Zusammenarbeit zweier NROs konfrontiert wurde. Die Erfahrungen dabei zeigen, wie die Akteure darum bemüht waren, meine Datenerhebung und -analyse zu beeinflussen. Dieser Wettbewerb um Repräsentation verdeutlicht, dass Entwicklungshilfe für NROs im globalen Süden ein Umfeld schafft, in dem sie einem heftigen Konkurrenzkampf um Fördergelder ausgesetzt sind und Erfolg vorweisen müssen. Meine Forschung wurde von diesen strukturellen Zwängen beeinflusst und zum Schauplatz für divergierende Interessen. Entwicklungshilfe wird von Studierenden und Wissenschaftlern häufig durch die Auseinandersetzung mit NROs oder Projekten untersucht. Dies führt immer wieder zu Schwierigkeiten, die unterschiedlichen Interessen und Formen der Wissensproduktion zusammenzubringen. Diese Einsicht sollte auch in der Lehre und Supervision berücksichtigt werden.

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