

eCapacity Development.
Rethinking the Linkages
between Capacity Development
and ICT Promotion
in Ethiopia and Egypt.

by
Márton Kocsev

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Department of Geography
Royal Holloway, University of London

Declaration of Authorship

I, Márton Kocsev, confirm that the work presented in this thesis is my own. Where information has been derived from other sources, I confirm this has been indicated in the thesis.

Date, 18.07.2016

Signed:

In memory of Omar Dawud.

Abstract

Written from within a donor organisation, this thesis questions the professional myth of eCapacity Development. It uses the unique geographical and political access of a practitioner to dissect the notion of capacity development as well as question agendas of ICT promotion in Ethiopia and Egypt. Over the past decades, the notion of capacity development has gained the imagination of many researchers and practitioners alike. Both circles pursued an intuition that this notion could provide a practical lynchpin for reinventing development practice. However, there is a dearth of critical research with regard to the normative role capacity development has achieved within the field of development. Through careful examination of the evolution and contemporary practice of this concept, this thesis uncovers the persistent ambiguity and the latent power-claiming encased within capacity development. It also questions the ongoing attempt to re-legitimise the idea of development through the appropriation and subsequent depletion of concepts such as capacity development. On the other hand, it analyses state-owned and participatory agendas of ICT promotion in Ethiopia and Egypt. While states often follow populist accounts that celebrate ICTs as the harbinger of a new age, this thesis shows the delicate ways in which the notion of ICTs is carefully domesticated to the agendas of the Ethiopian developmental state. It illustrates the inner workings of hegemonic state power in Ethiopia, but also shows the boundaries it is capable of setting against the influence of transnational capitalism. This is then held against the rise of surrogate communities enabled by ICTs in Ethiopia and Egypt. The brief genealogy of these communities seeks to verify the *raison d'être* for dissent in the age of transnational capitalism. Nevertheless, it also cautions about their liability to the appropriative practices of transnational capitalism.

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List of Abbreviations and Acronyms

| | | |
|-----------|---|--|
| AAU | – | Addis Ababa University |
| ADLI | – | Agricultural Development Led Industrialisation |
| AI | – | Appreciative inquiry |
| AU | – | African Union |
| BMZ | – | Bundesministerium für Wirtschaftliche Zusammenarbeit und Entwicklung (German Federal Ministry for Economic Co-operation and Development) |
| BPR | – | Business Process Reengineering |
| BRIC | – | Brazil, Russia, India and China |
| BSC | – | Balanced Scorecard |
| C.C. | – | Coptic Calendar |
| CIDA | – | Canadian International Development Agency |
| CGDEV | – | Centre for Global Development |
| CVA | – | Capacity Vulnerability Assessment |
| DED | – | Deutsche Entwicklungsdienst (German Development Service) |
| DNS | – | Domain Name Server |
| DFID | – | Department for International Development |
| DIEF | – | Digital Identities Ethiopia Forum |
| ECBP | – | Engineering Capacity Building Programme |
| ECDPM | – | European Centre for Development Policy Management |
| ECX | – | Ethiopian Commodity Exchange |
| EICTDA | – | Ethiopian Information and Communication Development Agency |
| EPRDF | – | Ethiopian People’s Revolutionary Democratic Front |
| ERP | – | Enterprise Resource Planning |
| ETC | – | Ethiopian Telecommunication Company |
| ETV | – | Ethiopian Television |
| EuropeAid | – | International Co–operation and Development Programme of the European Commission |
| FoT | – | Faculty of Technology |

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| GIZ | – | Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit (German Federal Agency for International Co-operation) |
| GTP | – | Growth and Transformation Plan |
| GTZ | – | Deutsche Gesellschaft für Technische Zusammenarbeit (German Federal Agency for Technical Co-operation; the predecessor of GIZ) |
| HRM | – | Human Resource Management |
| IT | – | information technology |
| ICTs | – | information and communication technologies |
| ICE | – | innovation, collaboration, entrepreneurship |
| ICT4D | – | information and communication technologies for development |
| IDS | – | Institute of Development Studies |
| INGO | – | International non-governmental organisation |
| InWEnt | – | Internationale Weiterbildung and Entwicklung (Capacity Building International) |
| JICA | – | Japan International Co-operation Agency |
| KfW | – | Kreditanstalt für Wiederaufbau (KfW Development Bank) |
| LenCD | – | Learning Network on Capacity Development |
| MIT | – | Mekelle Institute of Technology |
| MB | – | Muslim Brotherhood |
| MCIT–EG | – | Ministry of Communication and Information Technology of the Arab Republic of Egypt |
| MCIT–ET | – | Ethiopian Federal Ministry of Communication and Information Technology |
| MOCB | – | Ethiopian Federal Ministry of Capacity Building |
| MOCS–ET | – | Ethiopian Federal Ministry of Civil Service |
| MOE–EG | – | Ministry of Education of the Arab Republic of Egypt |
| MOE–ET | – | Ethiopian Federal Ministry of Education |
| NEPAD | – | The New Partnership for Africa’s Development |
| NIE | – | New Institutional Economics |
| NPM | – | New Public Management |
| OECD | – | Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development |

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| OECD-DAC | – | Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development, Development Assistance Committee |
| OLPC | – | One Laptop Per Child |
| PASDEP | – | Plan for Accelerated and Sustained Development to End Poverty |
| PRA | – | Participatory Rural Appraisal |
| PRS | – | Poverty Reduction Strategy |
| PRSP | – | Poverty Reduction Strategy Papers |
| SCAF | – | Supreme Council of the Armed Forces of the Arab Republic of Egypt |
| SCORM | – | Sharable Content Object Reference Model |
| SEO | – | Search Engine Optimisation |
| SMS | – | Short Message Service |
| TIEC | – | Technology Innovation and Entrepreneurship Center |
| TPLF | – | Tigray Peoples Liberation Front |
| UNDP | – | United Nations Development Programme |
| USAID | – | United States Agency for International Development |
| WTO | – | World Trade Organization |

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Chapter 1 – Introduction

This is a practice-led thesis written from the perspective of an insider action researcher. It is concerned with the nature of development practice, as exemplified by the notions of capacity development and the promotion of ICTs. Its primary focus is to advance knowledge about these practices, as well as advance knowledge within them. As such it primarily targets practitioners, besides an academic audience. It provides a fundamental critique of the contemporary capacity development discourse by establishing an archaeological account (on my use of the term archaeology see Section 2.1). Through this it illustrates the process of theory-building that escorted capacity development into mainstream development over the last two and a half decades. The theory of capacity development is then conflated with empirical accounts from the field that demonstrate the gradual hollowing-out of a once participatory notion. In the second part it draws up a contrast between the normative and autocratic intentions of state actors with regard to promoting Information and Communication Technologies (ICTs) and the creative technological constructionism of new, renegade urban elites (technologists) in Ethiopia and Egypt. By doing so it adds new facets to the understanding of the neo-patrimonial technological determinism of the Ethiopian state, as well as points out some limitations to the influence of transnational informational capitalism. It also illustrates the ways in which online surrogate communities empower individual and group agencies in distinct ways, but gradually become exposed to appropriation by transnational corporates.

1.1 Research origins

1.1.1 Being a practitioner – the confines of the workplace

The research underpinning this thesis was born in the Ethiopian Ministry of Capacity Building (MOCB). As a junior professional at the Deutsche Gesellschaft für Technische Zusammenarbeit (GTZ) in 2008, I was assigned to the eCapacity Development Department of one of the ministry's major programmes, the

Engineering Capacity Building Programme (ECBP). Upon my arrival, I was presented with a powerful narrative about an approach that my German and Ethiopian colleagues called eCapacity Development.

However, the notion of eCapacity Development was only a “way of doing things” and had no theoretical or conceptual pillars at the time of my arrival. In hindsight, one could say that it was loosely defined along the parameters of what was considered as the developmental *en vogue* in the MOCB and GTZ in the mid- to late 2000s. Two major policy frameworks dominated both the Ethiopian and German development discourse: the notion of capacity development and the Paris Declaration on Aid Effectiveness (2005). In the earliest stage of my research, I agreed with and readily followed this pre-set logic within GTZ. Central to this framework were three key aspects that were generally accepted and cultivated in my professional environment:

1. Capacity development signifies a new era in development co-operation.
2. Capacity development is a systemic approach to development that alleviates previous uncertainties and didactical ailments of earlier development work.
3. The pillars of capacity development are laid out in the Paris Declaration on Aid Effectiveness (2005).

The very labelling of this department – eCapacity Development – unequivocally demonstrated the credulous endorsement of capacity development by the Ethiopian as well as German governments. The use of the term capacity development *pro forma* mandated the activities of the department. Even though the concept of eCapacity Development was a solely practice-based notion, it intelligently tapped into this mandate and amplified certain aspects of it. There was a particular insistence among my colleagues that eCapacity Development constitutes a radical departure from other information and communication technology for development (ICT4D) measures. In the eyes of my colleagues, the following key characteristics set the practice of eCapacity Development apart from other ICT4D actions:

1. Faith in ICTs: Anything we “touch” should be faster, better, smarter or cheaper through ICTs.
2. Bias to action: Implement first, contemplate later.
3. No ideology: Under no circumstances are we to engage in ideological debate with Ethiopian or German counterparts.
4. People over technology: ICTs are only a small part of the solution that we provide and are not the key focus of our work.

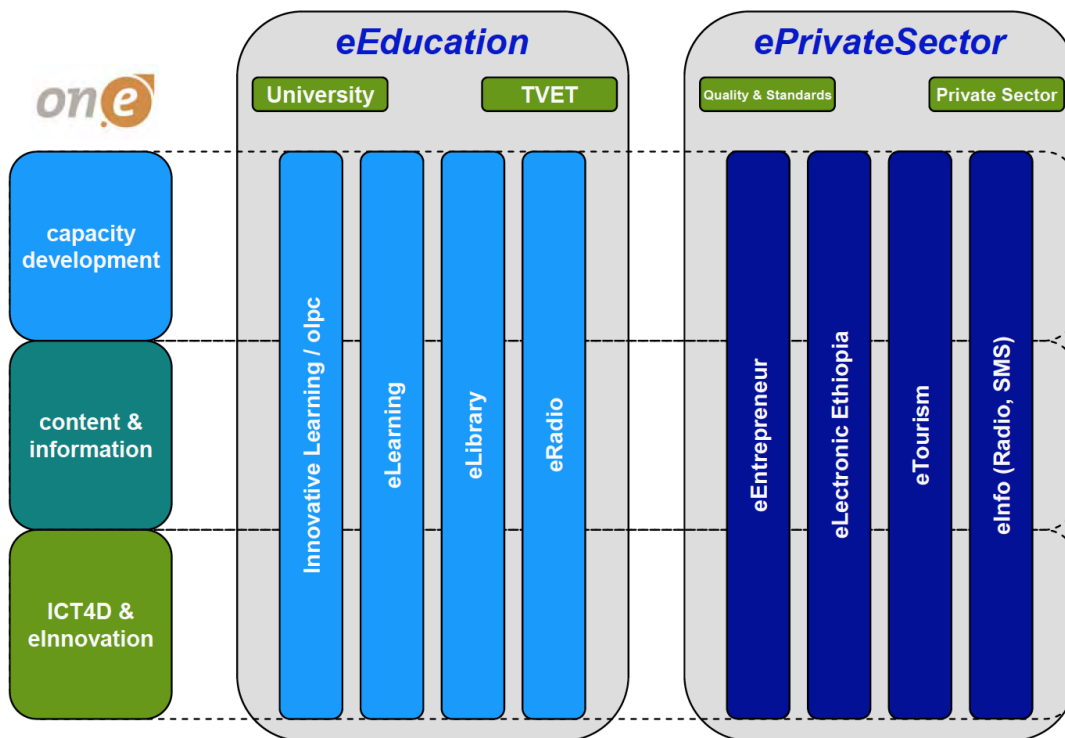


Figure 1.1 – The eCapacity Development portfolio at ECBP (Source: Thomas Rolf, GIZ)

Figure 1.1 further illustrates the thoroughly constructionist and participatory claim of eCapacity Development as articulated in formal ECBP documents. Its three signature elements (an ICT solution – cf. ICT4D & e-Innovation –, content & information, and capacity development) celebrated a constructionist take on ICT promotion by emphasising the adaptability of ICTs as well as the mixture of human (capacity building, content & information) and technological elements. eCapacity Development was, however, an essentially pragmatic management notion defined

predominantly by its agility. Its ability to respond quickly and implement was what secured the necessary buy-in from the Ethiopian political class, which was preoccupied with the implementation of its 5-year plan, the Plan for Accelerated and Sustained Development to End Poverty (PASDEP 2005-10). eCapacity Development, however, intentionally existed on the peripheries of the political and economic discourse invested in the ECBP programme in order to prevent friction with the joint Ethiopian-German leadership.

Implementing these new, eCapacity Development projects was an overwhelming and intoxicating experience. Encouraged by my colleagues, I set out to do this research with the original intention to create a conceptual underpinning for eCapacity Development in order to make it replicable and scalable in other development environments. During the intellectual journey of producing this thesis, however, my research evolved into a firm critique of the notion of eCapacity Development. The apparent chasm between the field realities of capacity development and its theoretical frameworks initiated a radical rethinking of what is at stake.

1.1.2 What is at stake?

This thesis is rooted in a participatory, practitioner's perspective and is therefore concerned with issues that arose from encounters with people in the field – various types of elites – who embodied alternative versions of ideas and institutions with regard to capacity development and the promotion of ICTs. As a practice-led research this thesis provides an empirically informed reading of the emergence, trajectories and interpretations of the notion of capacity development and rejects its developmental orthodoxies. Besides presenting a critical genealogy of capacity development, it also questions the inherent intentionalities within the promotion of ICTs. Being a practice-led research it is primarily concerned with the inner-lives of these practices and those forces – primarily transnational elites – that shape and occasionally co-opt them.

However, of course I am also aware of the limitations of this practitioner perspective that colour the texture of my critique. First, the thesis is tied to two particular field scenarios: that of the late 2000s in Ethiopia, and the post-revolutionary Egypt. Particularly, the first one formed and informed my understanding of development work. In the late 2000s, the socialist revolutionary legacy of the Ethiopian party state was questioned by an emerging renegade, urban elite and the state was consequently transformed into a transnational developmental state (Abbink 2009; Hagmann and Abbink 2011; De Waal 2013; Hess-Nielsen 2013; Aalen 2014 – on my use of the term renegade see Subsection 3.1.2) Through my work at ECBP I was privileged – but psychologically and professionally not sufficiently prepared – to observe and participate in many of the ideological absurdities and bureaucratic obscurities of an authoritarian state apparatus. As I moved up in the ranks within GTZ, I worked with high-level decision makers in various Ethiopian ministries (Ministry of Capacity Building, Ministry of Education, Ministry of Science and Technology), which made me increasingly aware of the intricacies and the harsh, often oppressive reality of the neopatrimonial party state. This unparalleled access allowed me to observe the internal mechanisms of power within a contemporary autocratic state. The constant negotiation of conflictive environments fundamentally shaped my opinion and elicited a certain distaste for the misappropriation of developmental constructs – for example capacity development – to suppress or tame large portions of the population. This further instigated my scepticism towards capacity development. Section 1.5 will introduce issues of positionality and the associated ethics that my work raised, which will then be explored more fully in my methodological outline (Chapter 3).

While being stationed in Ethiopia ensured that the thesis was grounded and of practical use, the location also had negative impacts. Due to the technical limitations in Ethiopia (e.g. the inability to access academic journals because of deliberately blocked DNS ports), I had limited access to academic literature and was unable to explore detailed, empirical accounts of capacity development or ICTs in other contexts. However, through Google Books and local libraries in Addis Ababa, I had

access to more critical accounts that dealt with the histories and ethnographies of development as a discourse.

1.1.3 Theoretical influences

There are two main theoretical sources that influenced my conceptual critique. First, the historical as well as socio-economic understanding that the contemporary development discourse is an artefact of and embedded within the European project of Enlightenment (Arndt 1989; Leys 1996; McMichael 2004; Unwin 2009; Rist 2009) helped me develop new perspectives that transcended and questioned some – if not most – of the integral truisms of my immediate professional environment. Particularly Rist (2009) fundamental critique of the development discourse influenced my thinking. His thorough analysis and historical dissection of contemporary notions development, as well as his assertion of a perpetually repetitive discourse that seeks continuous re-legitimation, influenced my critique. Even though some of Rist's predicaments are certainly examples of simplistic post-developmental scholarship (Nederveen Pieterse 1998, 2001, 2009; Brigg 2002; Ziai 2007, 2015), they decisively shaped my awareness of how grassroots development practices with originally positive connotations are often (mis-)appropriated and hollowed out.

Second, Bauman's theses (Bauman 2000a, 2000b, 2005) on contemporary globalisation and the ensuing liquid stage of modernity further forced me to engage with and critique experiences of elite re-appropriations, the globalisation and cosmopolitanism of social hierarchies, as well as nationalist politics within my immediate environment (Bach 2011; Hagmann and Abbink 2011). Even though in the course of my research – for clarity's sake – I abandoned the notion of liquid modernity, Bauman's influence made me disaffiliate my thinking from transnational and celebratory accounts of globalisation (Scholte 2008). Most importantly, it created a sensitivity in me for a *Zeitgeist* in which insecurity and inability – the very antonyms of capacity – are powerful rhetorical mints through which global elites exert and secure control over the locally bound.

This thesis was thus formed and grounded by the constant presence in the field. In my work, I aimed to bridge the sometimes absurd paradoxes of the authoritarian Ethiopian and Egyptian states, the corporate rigidities of GTZ/GIZ, and the continuous immersion among renegade urban elites (technologists).

1.2 Theoretical grounding for a practice-led research

The original intention of this thesis was – as explained above – to conceptually analyse and endorse the notion of eCapacity Development. My original strategy was twofold: On the one hand, I wanted to distil and structure the apparently disjointed discourse of capacity development by meticulously cataloguing its instruments. On the other hand, I intended to advocate for the agile technological constructionism embodied in the practice of eCapacity Development.

However, the experiences in the field during the early days of my research led to the conceptual demolition of my originally benign and gullible of capacity development. My encounters with the powerful elites of the Ethiopian state punctured the original intention of this thesis, which was to underwrite and endorse eCapacity Development. As an action researcher-to-be – rather by circumstance than by choice – I abandoned this track in favour of an attempt to fill two apparent gaps in the literature: the lack of critical accounts of capacity development, and the absence of theoretical models that encompass both top-down and participatory perspectives with regard to the promotion of ICTs. These are briefly introduced in the following paragraphs.

1.2.1 Capacity development

The notion of capacity development was squeezed through the narrowest filters of developmental essentialism for years. It was presented as a remedy for the previous failures of aid (Berg 1993; World Bank 2005, 2006) and as an increasingly

sophisticated method of 'doing development' (Eade 1997; Lusthaus *et al.* 1999). The excessive overuse and inflationary practice of capacity development in Ethiopian development politics directed me to a clear hiatus in the academic literature: the complete lack of critical accounts of capacity development.

Neither development practitioners nor academic researchers question or critique the notion of capacity development. Attempts to confront its amorphousness (Lusthaus *et al.* 1999) mostly resulted in admittedly more sophisticated, but also increasingly unintelligible and quixotic models (Morgan and Baser 1993; Baser 1994; Baser and Bolger 1996). Conceptual frameworks within both academic (Berg 1993; Blagescu and Young 2006; Faye 2006; Boesen 2007; Boyd 2009) and grey literatures (CIDA 1996; World Bank 2005; 2006; Brinkerhoff 2005; DFID 2006; De Grauwe 2009) continue to depict capacity development as a concise methodology. Moreover, it is also framed as a remedy to previous development failures, in particular that of technical assistance (Berg 1993; Morgan and Baser 1993; Cohen 1994; Baser and Bolger 1996; Bulloch *et al.* 2011), and conveys the promise of more impactful and sustainable development co-operation in the future (World Bank 1991). In the logic of Gilbert Rist (Rist 2009), this very pre-occupation with issues of legitimacy is symptomatic for the appropriation and the slow hollowing out of developmental notions.

1.2.2 Promotion of ICTs in development

My experience in Ethiopia and later in Egypt constantly exposed the paradoxes between the state's and its citizens' interests with regard to promoting ICTs. The technological determinism of the former and the existing or fledgling constructionist agendas among the latter were hard to reconcile within one theoretical model. The original notion and practice of eCapacity Development endorsed constructionist approaches, which were, however, theoretically incompatible with the technological determinism of ICT promotion agendas. The paradoxical situation between the state's ICT capacity development policies and participatory-constructionist community agendas also revealed the inherent inequalities of power. When talking

about capacity development, most of the literature indulges in technocratic explorations of how to best use ICTs for training. However, these do not question issues of power between the state and its citizens or the appropriation of discourse. To address this gap, I followed a more discourse-led exploration (cf. research questions 2 and 3).

My analysis of the top-down and bottom-up perspectives relies on two bodies of literature: transnational informationalism (Castells 2000, 2007, 2011a, 2011b, 2013) and social constructionism (Feenberg 1995, 2002; 2011; Bijker 1997; Bijker *et al.* 2012; Fuchs 2011; Fuchs and Sandoval 2013; Fuchs and Trottier 2013). The former is used to interrogate deterministic notions of ICTs within normative national discourses. The latter helps question these normative discourses and allows to explore counter-narratives among Ethiopian and Egyptian technology communities; narratives that discount and/or circumvent the normative discourses.

This thesis thus aims to create a critical account of the notion of capacity development. By providing an archaeological account of capacity development, it develops a critique of the inherent power mechanisms embodied by this notion. This critique enables the disentanglement and interrogation of ICT capacity development agendas promoted by the Ethiopian and Egyptian establishments. Moreover, it attempts to locate and analyse participatory narratives of ICTs that exist beyond state-led agendas of ICT capacity development and might be able to restore individual agency.

1.3 Research questions

As usual for a practice-led research the research questions evolved in two phases. In the first phase (2009-10), I constructed a first set of questions that originated from the literature review done with field observations in parallel. The former helped me to break through the parochialism of my direct environment. Critical accounts, such as (Schuurman 1993; Kothari and Minogue 2001; Kothari 2005; Rist 2009) questioned

the self-evident nature of GTZ/GIZ's own assumptions about the role and character of development aid. This led to the rejection of a single ICT capacity development portfolio, as represented in eCapacity Development, and to rethink my original intention, which was to provide new methodological inputs for GTZ/GIZ's capacity development and ICT promotion portfolio. Critical accounts of development aid paired with my observations in the field prompted the following ideas that guided the first phase of my research (2009-10):

- 1) Capacity development is a hollow practice that is used for different ends by donors depending on their own political interest.
- 2) Recipient countries are enchanted by the symbolic powers of ICTs, however, are prone to misappropriate ICTs in order to increase their control over their citizens.
- 3) I observed the empowering impact that participatory ICTs, such as social media had on young users in Ethiopia. Their agility and agency considerably influenced my research.

I used these assumptions to develop a set of meta-questions to further guide and focus my observations as well as to develop my other research instruments:

- 1) Why did donors adapt capacity development? Can donors and recipients use capacity development as a method of suppression? Why do they do so?
- 2) Why do recipient countries promote ICTs and can ICTs become a tool of suppression? There is considerably little research on these issues.
- 3) Why do new participatory ICT practices, such as social media, perform better at restoring or increasing the agency of people?

In the second phase (2011-2013), I developed further questions that drew upon the rationale above and guided my data collection. The empirical work of this thesis aims to answer three key research questions:

- 1) Why does capacity development play such a central role in the agendas of donors and recipient countries?
- 2) Why are ICTs a critical item for the Ethiopian and Egyptian development agendas?
- 3) Do ICTs enable individual agency in Ethiopia and Egypt, and if yes, how do they accomplish this?

The essential contribution of this thesis is, on the one hand, the establishment of a conceptual and empirical archaeology of capacity development. On the other hand, it interrogates critically the embedded technological determinism of ICT capacity development within the structures of the Ethiopian and Egyptian establishment. Moreover, by tracing boundaries of agency it empirically deconstructs claims of locality and indigeneness in the age of transnational capitalism. By doing so, it exposes the ambiguities as well as the inherent inaccuracies of the traditional divide between technological determinism and constructionism. It shows how ideology-driven mechanisms appropriate both deterministic as well as constructionist practices of ICT capacity development.

1.4 Participatory ethics – between convoluted positionality and evolving ethics

Similar to the conceptual interplay and mutual influence between practice and theory that dominated my research from its very beginning, ethical considerations evolved along the same fault-line. Here I only provide a brief outline of the key challenges that formed my practice as a researcher and development professional. Section 3.5 explores these issues in more detail.

The convoluted reality of constantly having to negotiate practice (development professional) and theory (researcher), as well as several layers of intertwined positionality, forced me into the ethical dilemma of continuous role switching. De Laine (2000) explains that “an ethical dilemma arises when the researcher

experiences conflict, especially conflict that cannot clearly be addressed by one's own moral principles, or the establishment of ethical codes". According to Hill *et al.* (1998, p. 102), ethical dilemmas are "situations in which there is no 'right' decision, only a decision that is thoughtfully made and perhaps 'more right' than the alternatives".

From early on in my research, I struggled with the vast amount of access I gained into otherwise hidden territories – the inner realms of political power – through loyalty to GTZ/GIZ as well as to the Ethiopian establishment. Without the use of intelligent role-switching techniques and proxy-identities, the elusive attempt to protect my ethical and moral integrity would have been only an illusion. In order to be able to make thoughtful decisions in the field, I developed an ethical code that enabled the continuous weighing of two axes against each other: the vertical axis of loyalty towards the establishment and the horizontal axis of friendship with locals in opposition to, or at least critical of, the establishment.

While simultaneous access to the two territories was theoretically impossible my role-switching technique and the constant risk-awareness allowed me to work with both. However, with time I realised the limitations and potential dangers of the constant back-and-forth between mutually exclusive and antagonistic territories. The more loyalty I showed towards the Ethiopian or Egyptian establishments, the more my friendships with the technology communities became at risk and *vice-versa*. This constant negotiation jeopardised and slowly eroded the trust I enjoyed with the Ethiopian establishment. This has become apparent by late 2010 when two high-ranking MOCB officials questioned me about my loyalty towards the Ethiopian establishment.

While the Kafkaesque nature of the Ethiopian bureaucracy was evident from the moment I set foot in Ethiopia, I was largely unaware of GTZ/GIZ's own obscure bureaucratic practices. As a Hungarian, I admittedly felt privileged to be part of and work for a presumably influential organisation. Without the present research I would probably have never questioned the importance of this machinery and engaged with

its power struggles, the precarious work conditions it creates or the continuation of morally racialised hierarchies. Therefore, in this thesis, I also attempt to recast this vast development bureaucracy through the ethnographic tracing of politically and ethically loaded words such as capacity development and ICTs. Laura Baer points out that in doing anthropological research within a bureaucracy – in my case within multiple, overlapping bureaucracies – “it becomes particularly important to pay attention to the common language that is being deployed in public discourse and the new words that are gaining prominence” (Baer 2015, no pagination). This idea played a key role in building my archaeological practice (cf. Section 2.2) that excavates the roots of terminologies that were en vogue within GTZ/GIZ during my stays in Ethiopia and Egypt.

Girgis’ (2007) concept of friendship-work was of tremendous importance for my early dealings with such rigidities and bureaucratic boundaries and helped me build authentic relationships beyond them. Her work is also deeply rooted in the original, participatory notion of capacity development. I consciously used friendship-work as a conceptual crutch to develop trust and engage in collaborative activities with various informants. Even though hardly anyone among my informants asked me to keep his/her identity anonymous, it was apparent that some of the information I gained was sensitive and I was able to access it only because of my status as “a (foreign) friend”. I uniformly made all accounts in this thesis anonymous in order to protect such links of friendship (or acquaintances).

A further tool to engage with renegade urban elites was the development of proxy-identities (cf. Section 3.5). My two roles as a PhD student and as a GTZ/GIZ employee were confusing for informants. The former suggested a rigid survey set-up, while the latter – in my experience – automatically raised expectations in terms of future co-operation with GTZ/GIZ, or occasionally of direct financial benefits (e.g. *per diems*). Therefore, I opted for a strategy that had already proved successful in my professional activities with GTZ/GIZ before: In order to keep expectations low and to

create exchanges on an equal footing with local NGOs, I often used my identity as the co-founder of the *ice* (innovation, collaboration, entrepreneurship) network.

1.5 Thesis structure

The structure of the thesis directly follows the objectives outlined above. Chapter 2, Chapter 3 and Chapter 4 respectively outline the conceptual background, the proposed methodology to interrogate the notion of capacity development in general, and ICT capacity development, in particular.

The conceptual framework (Chapter 2) provides space for the two essential conceptual and theoretical considerations of the thesis. On the one hand, it outlines a critique of the notion of capacity development by historically grounding it within the contemporary aid discourse. By highlighting signs of appropriation as well as demonstrating the elasticity and amorphousness of the term, this critical account attempts to dismantle the mechanism of power that surrounds the use of capacity development.

The proposed dissection of the notion of capacity development will have radical implications with regard to the understanding of ICT capacity development. Chapter 2 therefore also sets the background for a critical understanding of the promotion of ICT capacity development. It outlines a framework based on transnational informational capitalism and its critique to analyse questions of power-claiming that occur through the promotion of ICTs. The determinism of contemporary informationalist scholarship is contrasted with constructionist-participatory as well as anti-capitalist notions of ICTs.

Chapter 3 situates the research within a participatory action research framework and outlines its tools for the empirical work. This implies that my methodology follows an interpretative and participatory way of doing things (when possible) in order to unearth aspects of the inherent power dynamics. Besides the

methodological outline, it provides insights into questions of positionality as well as the ethical considerations of participatory action research that result from my often pro-active border-crossing between establishment and participatory politics. It also draws the attention to the nuances of role switching and proxy-identities.

The conceptual and methodological questions raised in the previous two chapters are deeply interwoven with and situated within contemporary political and economic discourses of power in Ethiopia and Egypt. Besides the key socio-economic factors, Chapter 4 will describe some of the more minute intricacies of the Ethiopian party-state. It will also provide insights into the course of the revolutionary events in Egypt (2011-13). Moreover, it will describe the two programmes of the Deutsche Gesellschaft für Technische Zusammenarbeit (GTZ) and its successor organisation from 2011, the Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit (GIZ) with which I worked during my research.

The following four empirical chapters proceed to answer the research questions posed above. Chapter 5 continues to demonstrate the distinctness of the aid effectiveness discourse exemplified in the Paris Declaration from the evolution of the notion of capacity development. Even though I pointed out that the amalgamation of the Paris Declaration and capacity development – as suggested by the professional belief system in my immediate work environment – is an analytical *-desac*, this chapter briefly presents empirical accounts from the field about the Paris Declaration. In particular, the analysis will interrogate accounts with regard to ownership and alignment from the field. Chapter 6 then sets out to continue the archaeology of capacity development through the analysis of capacity development literature as well as by presenting accounts from the field. The former will deconstruct capacity development and explore how power claims from both donors and recipient countries are continuously moulded into the notion of capacity development. The latter will trace the ideological genealogies of how representatives of donor agencies as well as recipient countries perceive capacity development.

Chapter 7 and Chapter 8 are antipodes that will illustrate the dichotomies as well as the ambiguities of state-driven, deterministic ICT capacity development and constructionist-participatory agendas of ICTs. Chapter 7 will explore the ways in which both the Ethiopian and the Egyptian establishments enforce their own discourses of transnational capitalism through the promotion of ICTs. By engaging informational bodies of literature, Chapter 7 will furthermore demonstrate the inherent technological determinism within these dominant and normative ICT capacity development agendas. Due to the Arab Spring, my empirical material is considerably smaller with regard to state-driven ICT capacity development agendas.

Chapter 8 will then question these normative discourses by following a thoroughly critical track with regard to both informational capitalism and its constructionist-participatory alternatives. It will explore grassroots notions of ICTs among Ethiopian and Egyptian technologists by interrogating the genealogy of grassroots technology communities (technologists). These critical insights will then be used to understand whether grassroots notions of ICTs can support individual agency to resist the dominant and hegemonic socioeconomic discourses. This chapter will also trace the boundaries between dissent and loyalty within online communities of technologists. Eventually, Chapter 9 summarises the main findings by showing how this research has responded to the research questions and has added to knowledge. It concludes by pointing to future research areas.

Chapter 2 – Conceptual framework

2.1 Introduction – the paradox of neutrality

This thesis engages critically with the notions of capacity development and information and communication technologies (ICTs) within the context of development. Both discourses are influential in their own right and embody many promises and aspirations with regard to socio-economic development in the South. This chapter explains the conceptual framework for the thesis, and especially focuses on the construction of the distinctive features that constitute the developmental contributions of these notions. Chapter 1 explained the origins, the unique situatedness, as well as the main aim of this thesis. By acknowledging the ambiguities and inherent biases encased within the original, rather technocratic objective for this thesis, this chapter sets out to engage critically with theories of capacity development and ICTs.

This conceptual framework is written from the perspective of practice-led research (see Section 1.4) which makes certain aspects of the thesis different from those that develop a relatively balanced assessment of the existing literature in order to weigh the empirical evidence against various theoretical perspectives. As practice-led research, this thesis is concerned primarily with the nature of practice and leads to new knowledge that has significance for both theory and practice. The key aim is to advance knowledge about practice, as well as to advance knowledge within this particular practice (development work). Evidently, such research includes practice as an integral part of its method and often falls within the general area of action research (cf. Chapter 3.1).

Some of the narratives, particularly with regard to the review of the literature, are therefore somewhat less balanced or neutral than would have been the case had this thesis originated on a university campus as a purely academic study. This chapter combines earlier approaches to empirical analysis, which oscillated between academic objectivity and personal reflexivity, by providing a contextual framework for the practice, and

commentary on the practice concerned respectively (Hamilton and Jaaniste 2010). This model allows me both to situate my practice within a trajectory of research and various conceptual framings, and also to do justice to critical self-reflection as a way of generating new knowledge (Hamilton and Jaaniste 2010). A practice-led approach also permits the research to be built partially on exploration and accident rather than solely on hypotheses and pre-negotiated approaches (Webb and Brien 2008). Accordingly, conceptual frameworks in practice-led research act as a tool that helps gradually sharpen and rephrase research questions, instead of these questions deriving from a balanced literature review. It links the issues I address into a conceptual framing and gives me the vocabulary and a voice to discuss them and engage in an argument.

As briefly illustrated in Chapter 1, this research grew out of the field reality that exposed me to the everyday controversies of capacity development and ICT promotion. These various obscurities and antagonisms unfolded right in front of my eyes and required a theoretical and methodological approach that permitted accelerated learning and changing of theoretical perspectives at the interplay of theory and practice. The number of rapidly emerging issues and ideas in the field cannot be situated, let alone be derived, from a balanced literature review. Moreover, such balanced reviews – that perform according to the orthodoxies of both academia as well as development practice – have been produced previously (Lusthaus *et al.* 1999; Blagescu and Young 2006; Faye 2006; Boyd 2009). However, these failed to challenge and criticise the status quo. Therefore, I slowly sharpened my focus on how to question the neutrality and positive intentionality of these notions by using my privileged access to the field in order to create a critical narrative.

There is a degree of agnosticism in such an approach, but it is necessary to keep up with the velocity and fluidity of continuously being based in the field. The constant exposure to and deep emersion into the field did not allow me to develop abstract theoretical claims and then test them empirically. It necessitates an interpretive process that permits informal problem-solving, intuitive leaps, rules of thumb and educated guesses (Webb and Brien 2008).

Hence the goal of this conceptual framework is to provide a theoretical framing which links the issues of this thesis to an operational vocabulary in which to discuss and engage in argument with the emerging issues. Therefore it uses an archaeological approach for interrogating the notion of capacity development, while gradually developing an understanding of what is actually at stake with regard to ICT promotion in Ethiopia and Egypt. This allows me to question the otherwise indistinguishable assumptions of power, the omniscient practice of narrative creation and institutional intentionalities quintessentially characteristic for the discourse of development. The charting of archaeological layers supports the challenging of complex individual and institutional functionalities embodied by the promotion of capacity development and ICTs.

I use the term archaeology in its Foucauldian sense, that “is about examining the discursive traces and orders left by the past in order to write a ‘history of the present’” (O’Farrell 2005, p. 64). This archaeology is thus about looking at particular histories of artefacts or terminologies as a way of understanding the processes that have led to what they are today. By this I aim to develop new views on received wisdoms that are otherwise treated largely uncritically in primary or secondary literatures. In choosing the right terminology, I admittedly struggled between the Foucauldian terms of genealogy and archaeology. The distinction between archaeology and genealogy is not clear in Foucault’s work; both are political projects that – to various extents – engage with issues of power and power struggle. I consequently use archaeology, since I intend to uncover layers of meaning that are not necessarily connected in a stricter, genealogical sense. My analysis thus does not trace the institutional interrelations of the term capacity development, but dissects layers of ideas that influenced its evolution within donor agencies.

This conceptual framework outlines questions that arise from the juxtaposition of political and economic discourse within the archaeology of capacity development. It also assesses potential ways of understanding technology, and ICTs in particular, within the framework of development. This

is done in two steps: first, it offers a brief archaeology of capacity and capacity development (Section 2.2), narrating the genesis of capacity and capacity development, and consecutively positioning it within the contemporary discourse of aid effectiveness; second, it discusses different representations of technology and its role in constituting ideas of progress (Section 2.3). This allows the reader better to understand and question theories that extol and celebrate the revolutionary role of ICTs in achieving socio-economic development.

2.2 The re-legitimisation of aid and the discourse of capacity development

In Chapter 1, I hinted at the enormous influence that my professional environment and its belief system in Ethiopia had on my research journey. The role of the Paris Declaration, the importance of capacity development and the use of technology has been often told and retold to all employees, and I have to admit my liability for failing to question it early enough. It took me considerable time and analytical effort to shed this professional belief system and acknowledge that it was rooted in the institutional history of ECBP as interpreted by GTZ/GIZ, but not in academic rigour. This institutional history constituted three main elements in the informal ECBP parlance, which I keep here for originality's sake:

1. Capacity development is the right thing to do, because local capacities need to be built up in Ethiopia. The importance of capacity development for ECBP's work is also made clear by the name of the programme.
2. The Paris Declaration endorses capacity development and ECBP is built on the very foundation of the Paris Declaration
3. The ECBP is an extremely important, if not the most important, programme of GTZ/GIZ, since Prime Minister Meles Zenawi (Ethiopia) and Chancellor Gerhard Schröder (Germany) agreed about its launch in 2005.

That these assumptions were only beliefs instead of facts is also illustrated by the entire lack to these issues in ECBP documents. Despite the informality of this knowledge, the entire idea of eCapacity Development (cf. Chapter 1) was built on these pillars. The influence of this belief system was apparent in my early accounts on capacity development and the Paris Declaration:

Capacity development and the aid effectiveness discourse are tightly interconnected, and both played a central role in the re-legitimisation of aid. Even though capacity development attained a central position within the neoliberal aid narrative of the early 1990s, it lacked a concise theory that would align it with the policies of international aid organisations. It also had to be integrated into the legal fabric that governs international aid (cf. codification). The Paris Declaration cast capacity development into the neoliberal institutionalist framework provided by OECD and was included into the fabric of neoliberal institutional international relations.

(Conceptual framework, status April 2010)

The goal of this section is to challenge this premise and separate the discourse of capacity development from aid effectiveness. Moreover it also provides a critical account of the evolution of capacity development in order to surpass its hitherto formalistic and essentialist analysis (Faye 2006; Boyd 2009). Through analysing its historical embeddedness in the project of modernity, this section tracks its conceptual evolution as well as political constitution within contemporary development. It situates the history and theory of capacity development within the aid effectiveness discourse of the last three decades (1980s to late 2000s). Moreover, it identifies key points of interaction between the issue of aid effectiveness and capacity development.

This archaeology not only plots a history of capacity development but also suggests a complex interrelatedness with issues of modernity, globalisation and the ongoing legitimisation of development. First, it locates

early notions of capacity development and their theoretical and practical situatedness (2.2.2). Subsequently, it suggests a history of capacity development and plots its early notions before the crisis of development in the late 1980s and early 1990s (2.2.3). Then I follow the OECD-led political process on aid effectiveness to demonstrate its distinctness from notions of capacity development (2.2.4 and 2.2.5).

An important note on terminology is also necessary here. Capacity development and capacity building are often used interchangeably. Throughout my research, I did not locate a body of literature or theoretical framework that clearly elaborated the difference between these two terms, and this thesis therefore handles the two terms as equals and synonyms. This section does not concern itself with assumed connotational differences between the two terms (OECD 2006; FAO 2008), but argues that capacity building and capacity development are used interchangeably and are synonymous (Teskey 2005). As this chapter demonstrates, in spite of the fact that “there has been globally a shift in terminology towards capacity development,” (FAO 2008, p. 15) capacity building and capacity development are built by using the same conceptual frameworks.

Besides academic accounts, this section mainly draws on sources from the following bilateral donors with large capacity development portfolios: DFID, CIDA, JICA, USAID and BMZ (Taylor and Clarke 2007). Multilateral donors such as the World Bank, the UNDP and OECD are also included in this scope.

2.2.1 A brief archaeology of capacity development

The contemporary notion of capacity is a product of modernity itself. It carries various layers of sedimented meaning from industrialised modernity into the contemporary post-industrial society. I argue that the notion of capacity is inextricably linked to the modernist development project from an ontological and epistemological point of view. The succinct philosophical outlook established and cultivated during the conception of industrial modernity produced a catalogue of skills that define our current understanding of

capacity (Bauman 2000b; Thomas 2004). Thomas' (2004) seminal work on the archaeology of modernity suggest that historically, three key elements constitute the contemporary notion of capacity (further reading and additional references in brackets):

1. The notion of human agency that was liberated from the omnipotence of Church and religion during the Renaissance and Reformation (Boff 1998; Bleiker 2000; Alexander 2005).
2. The coming of age of positive science as a driver for economic progress as well as the establishment of the cornerstones of the modern, democratic state and its institutions through the codification of individual liberties during the period of classical liberalism (Withers 1995; Adorno and Horkheimer 1997; Burns and Rayment-Pickard 2000).
3. The notion of productivity in the wake of capitalist industrial modernity (Goldstone 2002; Crafts 2004).

The elasticity of the term capacity is illustrated by the paradox that the same term that released human agency from religious co-dependencies over two centuries also helped to subvert it to the urge of productivity and efficiency inherent to industrial capitalism. As Thomas (2004) suggests, at every major turn in modern history, the term 'capacity' received new meaning that was indicative of the evolving socio-economic frameworks. Therefore I suggest that the contemporary capacity development discourse in development is symptomatic of tectonic changes that have taken place in the global political and economic framework since the late 1980s. In order better to understand the correlation between the term and what it represents, this subsection briefly traces the emergence of capacity development within the field of development.

Some histories of development trace the emergence of capacity development as far back as the 1960s (Lusthaus *et al.* 1999), but as a separate term it can only be recognised clearly in the donor literature since the 1980s (Eade and Ireland 1997; Lavergne and Saxby 2001; Morgan and

Carlan 1994). Its significance during the 1980s is also unclear because of its diversified use and the lack of a single coherent ideological or theoretical foundation (Smillie 2001). Girgis (2007) as well as Eade and Ireland (1997) locate the ideological origins of capacity development within progressive and participatory ideologies, while (Lusthaus *et al.* 1999) relate its development to institutional and management traditions within technical assistance. This section argues that both approaches are valid; however, Moore's and Lusthaus *et al.*'s accounts lack historical rigour and are influenced by notions of capacity development of the late 1990s and early 2000s. Both accounts also overlooked the highly participatory nature of the institutional uses of capacity development (see, for example G. Honadle 1979, 1982; B. W. Honadle 1981).

Progressive scholars of development produced various conceptual frameworks for capacity development in the 1980s (Chambers 1980, 1986; G. Honadle 1982). The notion was, however, particularly important within participatory and human-centred narratives of development. As (Eade and Ireland 1997) suggest, the ideological roots of capacity development can be traced back to the South American Liberation Theology movement (1950-80s), particularly to Paolo Freire's pedagogy of the poor (cf. Shor and Freire 1987; Freire 1998; Freire 2000) and the South American Catholic feminist movements. (Girgis 2007) further situates capacity development within new, participatory rural development approaches that arose in the 1980s. However, there is an apparent lack of primary sources from the 1980s – from bi- or multilateral donors or international non-governmental organizations (INGOs) – that discuss capacity development.

(Eade and Ireland 1997) explain that it was in “the post-modern intellectual climate that stresses diversity, difference, and ‘freedom of choice’, and rejects notions of universality” (p. 16.), where a multitude of new methods that challenged mainstream notions of development, were tested and deployed. Many of these methods incorporated participatory “capacity assessment” tools – such as the capacities and vulnerabilities assessment (CVA) (Cannon *et al.* 2003), rapid reconnaissance (G. Honadle 1979, 1982),

or participatory rural appraisal (PRA) (Chambers 1980, 1986). During this “decade of participation” (Botes and Van Rensburg 2000), organised community involvement emerged in aid recipient countries. Particularly CVA and PRA offered methods to look at development benefits in a systemic way and, moreover, to address its unintended, negative effects. Even though in the wake of anti-development scholarship during the early 1990s these methods have earned criticism for their lack of contextualisation (Bebbington 1993) or awareness of power relations within communities (Waring 2004), they constituted a counter-narrative to hegemonic measures of development such as structural adjustment or the basic needs approach.

Even though capacity and capacity development became integral parts of various scholars’ and practitioners’ work, it was not cast into a single and coherent approach. Capacity development was neither a methodology nor a set of principles (e.g. structural adjustment), but was used loosely and represented a variety of participatory and human-centred methods (Girgis 2007; Eade 2007). The common denominator of these approaches was their inclination to community participation, attention to complexity and resilience building, as well as their preference for agility. Furthermore they also advocated using “complex skills or methods that adapt to changing local environments, and invite the incorporation of local knowledge” (Girgis 2007, p. 364.).

During the 1980s, neither a concise capacity development approach nor a unified definition can be observed. It was an amorphous term that collected various approaches that highlighted

1. the utilisation of local knowledge (Chambers 1980, 1986; G. Honadle 1979; Belshaw 1981; Richards 1981; Eade and Ireland 1997; Girgis 2007),
2. the creation of local competences to solve local problems and (Chambers 1980, 1986; Girgis 2007),
3. generally a lean and agile approach to achieving development goals (G. Honadle 1982).

It was a critique against the ubiquitous practice of hegemonic top-down development narratives such the extensive use of outsider knowledge, the gap-filling function of expatriate experts (G. Honadle and Cooper 1989) and institutional reform practices .

Despite the widespread use of the term by both progressive and neoliberal scholars and practitioners alike by the early 1990s, no unified conceptual framework for capacity development emerged. It is important to emphasise, however, that academic theory and field practice mutually influenced and stimulated each other during the 1980s despite Edwards' claim that development geography and ethnography remained distant from influencing practices in the field (Edwards 1993; Edwards 1994).

2.2.2 The legitimacy crisis of development

The evolution of the notion of capacity development beyond the 1980s is deeply interwoven with the crisis of development (Schuurman 1993; Nederveen Pieterse 1998) and the subsequent discourse of aid effectiveness that arose in the early 1990s (Boone 1996; Radelet 2006; Bourguignon and Sundberg 2007; Eyben 2010). In order to demonstrate how the notion of capacity development was then gradually woven into the discourse of aid effectiveness, this section first identifies the causes that led to the crisis of hegemonic agendas of development, and subsequently follows the process that re-legitimised neoliberal notions of development (Rist 2009).

Two main bodies of thought engage with the crisis of development in the second half of the 1980s. The first one builds a case against technical assistance as the main culprit for the lack of development impact and is mainly informed by the internal discourses of donor organisations or affiliated consultants (Jaycox 1993; Morgan 1993, 1998; CIDA 1996; OECD 1996; JICA 2003, 2004; Otoo *et al.* 2009). The second situates the crisis of development within the changing global political and economic framework of the late 1980s and early 1990s (Schuurman 1993; Nederveen Pieterse 1998; Easterly 2002b). The crisis of technical assistance that culminated in the early 1990s

was, however, only a symptom of a larger disillusionment with development. While donors and also certain of academics such as Arndt (1989), and Pieterse (1998) emphasised the failure of technical assistance, other scholars focused on the effects of this failure, which led to a growing disillusionment with donors (Schuurman 1993; Easterly 2002b). In these narratives, the failure of technical assistance became a technocratic effigy of an ideological as well as political impasse (Schuurman 1993; Ziai 2007, 2015).

Birdsall (2004, p. 3) suggests that “the donor community may look back on the 1990s as a watershed” where its legitimacy was questioned due to the fact that countries with limited exposure to aid and relative independence from structural adjustment policies took off (Gereffi 1989; Stiglitz and Squire 1998), while others “seemed stuck” (Birdsall 2004, p. 3). Scholars particularly emphasised the problem with overgrown aid bureaucracies (Easterly 2002b; Pronk 2009; Edgren 2002), the extensive lending policies of the IMF and the World Bank and, accordingly, the rapid growth of debt in recipient countries (Gereffi 1989; Nederveen Pieterse 2005; Moyo 2009, 2011). The changing global political and economic landscape made recipient countries realise that state- level policies have little substantial effect on economic growth and social welfare (Portes and Kincaid 1989; Schuurman 1993; Morgan and Carlan 1994; Närman 1997; Hart 2001; Comaroff and Comaroff 2001). Due to these factors, “liberal political and economic ideals lost support in the poor countries” (Easterly 2002b, p. 247). However, the collapse of the Eastern Block also showed that socialism was no longer a viable alternative, and suggested the triumph of neoliberal democracy (Guha and Spivak 1988; Latour 1993; Fukuyama 2006; Derrida 2006).

The growing criticism of the development industry in the late 1980s and early 1990s, due to the lack of impact, the high inefficiency of donor bureaucracies, the growing gap between rich and poor countries became known as the *impasse* in development theory (Schuurman 1993). The ensuing crisis of the entire development industry (Simon 2006b; Ziai 2007, 2015) necessitated the re-legitimation of the idea of development. In this thesis I focus on re-legitimation attempts that were born out of the new,

seemingly unipolar and neoliberal governance structures of the 1990s and 2000s (Comaroff and Comaroff 2001; Craig and Porter 2006). The following paragraphs in particular follow the recurring attempts to find a scapegoat for the apparent failings of development. Evidently this thesis cannot, and does not attempt to, provide a holistic description of the manifold re-legitimisation processes that ensued after the *impasse*. Instead it tracks one particular attempt that identified technical assistance as the main reason for the failure of development and then consequently tried to install a new paradigm, namely capacity development.

Even though the rapidly changing world of international co-operation, technical assistance or technical co-operation is still the second main form of delivering aid to developing countries next to financial assistance (Tisch and Wallace 1994). It consists of various tools, including the secondment of expatriate personnel, advisory services, training and infrastructure building (Kaul *et al.* 1999). Since the late 1970s and especially from the early 1980s, the pressure on donor organisations to deliver the promised development outcomes was increasingly mounting (Bauer 1986; Boone 1996; Easterly 2002b; Shleifer 2009). The lack of economic and social impact was often attributed to donors' inefficiency in managing development contributions and transparently accounting for their impact (Bauer 1986, 1991; G. Honadle and Cooper 1989).

Analysts such as Boone (1994) also established that there was a negative correlation between aid and opportunities for sustainable development in a country. Donor policies, particularly the structural adjustment programmes, were scrutinised by recipient countries as well as by many development scholars (G. Honadle and Cooper 1989). The focus of attention was especially on South America and Africa, where adjustment programmes stalled (Commander 1989; Herbst 1990; Widner 1994; Smith *et al.* 1994; Simon *et al.* 1995; Morley *et al.* 1995). A concise overview of the technicalities of this criticism is provided by UNDP (1989, pp.11-12):

“A major part of technical co-operation expertise is allocated to filling operating positions [...] and not giving adequate attention to the longer

term tasks of building African institutional and individual capacities. Counterpart development is not working. Training activities are slighted. The demands on expatriate operating personnel [...] to get the work done divert attention from the longer term tasks of developing individual and institutional capabilities.

A second concern is one of quality in technical cooperation personnel. Technical cooperation technicians are used for a variety of tasks for which they may not be equipped [...] mixing policy, institution building, and technical and operating responsibilities. [...] Often specific work objectives are not spelled out. Problems of quality (of technical assistance personnel) are also evident in [... their] lack of knowledge of local conditions and insensitivity to local cultures. [...]

Technical cooperation project objectives are not well defined, too diffuse, overambitious and not linked to government programming and budget processes.

The definition of technical cooperation projects and technical services is supply driven and determined by donors rather than guided by well defined priority demands. The volume of technical cooperation, the number and diversity of projects and donor procedures, is overwhelming African government abilities to coordinate and manage. Efforts to coordinate aid in general are sporadic and of uneven efficacy”.

Whereas early donor reports admitted some failures, they often remained favourable to technical assistance (Cassen 1986). However, the tone of reports grew more critical (Forss *et al.* 1988; World Bank 1991) and their authors started to blame technical assistance for past failures in aid delivery. The main critique of technical assistance was that:

1. Developing countries were not able to address their own development priorities, but were made to follow donor instructions (Lethem *et al.* 1983; Buyck and Mundial 1991; Berg 1993; Baser 1994; Brinkerhoff 2005);

2. The tendency to place foreign experts in order to expedite change processes (gap-filling) depleted the local skills base and resulted in parallel institutional structures (G. Honadle *et al.* 1983; Berg 1993; Brinkerhoff 1996);
3. Insufficient institution building or its entire failure in the recipient countries (Jaycox 1993; Grindle and Hilderbrand 1995);
4. The overheads of large donor bureaucracies responsible for the inefficient use of development resources (Friedman 1995; Easterly 2002b; Radelet 2006).

By the early 1990s, mainstream development discourse was in need of a concept that could re-establish its legitimacy (Rist 2009; Escobar 2011). During the 1990s, donor organisations wrapped capacity development into a rhetoric of self-criticism and presented it as a remedy to the shortcomings of technical assistance (Baser 1994; Baser and Bolger 1996; Morgan 1998). Indicative of this rhetoric are the titles of donor publications such as *Capacity development: the missing link* (Jaycox 1993) or *From Technical Cooperation to Capacity Development* (Baser and Bolger 1996) both of which presented capacity development as an alternative to technical assistance.

By the end of the 1990s, capacity development was understood as an element of technical assistance (Easterly 2002b), which suggests that the initially novel narrative had by then been co-opted by donors providing technical assistance. An intense theory-building process ensued within the donor community beyond the 1990s for further developing the notion of capacity development (Lopes 2002; JICA 2006; Lavergne and Wood 2006). A review of donor literature on capacity development, however also shows the revival of criticism against technical assistance in the early 2000s (UNDP 2002a; JICA 2003; 2004a; Teskey 2005). However, this time it was directed against the shortcomings of the flourishing project of capacity development. Chapter 6 will offer a detailed account of these various processes that continuously reshaped the theory of capacity development. The next subsection, however, briefly follows the discourse of aid effectiveness that among others led to the endorsement of the Paris Declaration. This is

instrumental for my analysis since the professional belief system at GTZ suggested that the notion of capacity development and the Paris Declaration are closely interrelated.

2.2.3 The OECD-led agenda on aid effectiveness

The aid effectiveness discourse is hardly a substantialist, let alone a monolithic, narrative (Eyben 2010), but is rather a diverse discourse that in its current form evolved from the early 1990s. There are also multiple ways to approach it, which is one of the reasons for its imperviousness. One can look at it from the point of view what Lee (2013) describes as the agency problem. His account suggests that “as with a principal and agent contract, a donor and recipient relationship produces conflicting views on the objective of aid (desirability of poverty reduction)” that result in “divergent interests, and asymmetric information” (ibid, p. 6). On the contrary Alesina and Dollar (2000) attribute aid ineffectiveness to the prevalence of donor’s constraints that result from donors’ need to pursue economic or commercial interests in the recipient countries. Other studies attribute aid ineffectiveness to the failure of aid bureaucracy (Easterly 2002b, 2008). In this thesis I mainly follow Rist's (2009) approach that suggests that aid effectiveness agendas are donors’ reflexes of self-defence. These aim to maintain the legitimacy of the instruments and institutions installed along Northern notions of development. In this thesis, I mainly follow this Ristian approach due to its methodical usefulness in embedding the discourse of aid effectiveness into the wider context of the *impasse* of development (Schuurman 1993).

As a reaction to the apparent crisis of development, the 1990s saw the rise of different discourse of aid effectiveness that set out to reform development practices (Boone 1996; Bourguignon and Sundberg 2007; Angeles and Neanidis 2009). Whereas the induction of capacity development was part of the reformist rhetoric of the donors, which juxtaposed it with the apparently troubled practice of technical assistance, its diverse notions cannot be attributed to the aid effectiveness agenda of one particular donor.

Historically, two phases of the aid effectiveness discourse can be distinguished. The first phase lasted from the mid-1990s to the early 2000s, and the second phase from the early 2000s up to today. The crisis of development in the early 1990s made donors act on the concerns of effectiveness and national ownership. By the late 1990s, it evolved into a discourse that increasingly addressed the issue of emerging donors (Woods 2005, 2008; Six 2009; Dreher, Nunnenkamp, and Thiele 2011; Tierney *et al.* 2011). The goal of the political process was to demonstrate donors' commitment to the effective delivery of nationally owned aid and was accompanied by a high-level political process championed by the OECD:

The formulation of these principles [of aid effectiveness] grew out of a need to understand why aid was not producing the development results everyone wanted to see as well as to step up efforts to meet the ambitious targets set by the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) (OECD 2015).

Four high-level fora (Rome, Paris, Accra and Busan) from 2003 to 2015 outlined the principles for aid effectiveness. The first forum in Rome (2003) laid out the basic principles for ownership. Country-led development was to be aligned with the following principles:

1. Donors ought to follow the development priorities set by recipient countries. Both actors should orient their efforts on a common development vision outlined in their national development strategies (that could include Poverty Reduction Papers [PRSPs]);
2. Recipient countries should exercise leadership in the delivery of donors' programmes.

In the interpretation of the Rome Declaration, ownership was limited to the harmonisation between recipients and donors. However, it also suggested that country leadership should be strengthened through ceding executive powers within development programmes to the recipients.

The “2nd High Level Forum on Joint Progress toward Enhanced Aid Effectiveness (Harmonisation, Alignment, and Results)” took place in Paris (2005). 138 countries and 28 international aid organisations signed the Paris Declaration on Aid Effectiveness. It codified the use of aid modalities that were to enhance aid effectiveness. Capacity development as a crosscutting measure was also codified and became a recommended practice (Ohno and Niiya 2004; Hyden 2008).

The Accra Agenda for Action signed at 3rd High Level Forum on Aid Effectiveness in Accra (2008) “takes stock of progress and sets the agenda for accelerated advancement towards the Paris targets” (OECD 2015, p. 9). The Accra Agenda marks a shift in the discourse of aid effectiveness and continues the gradual shift in responsibilities between donors and recipients. The 4th High Level Forum on Aid Effectiveness (2011, in Busan) consolidated the influence of bi- and multilateral donors over emerging donors. The three years between the High Level Fora in Accra and Busan gave additional focus to capacity development. The Bonn and Cairo workshops produced a consensus between international civil society actors and donors on the modalities of capacity development. Both the Bonn Consensus and the Cairo Consensus complied with the notion of ownership as put forward by the Paris Declaration (harmonisation + alignment = ownership).

The final regulatory framework for aid effectiveness also includes the Bogota Statement (principles of effective aid in South-South co-operation, 2010), the Istanbul Principles (guidelines for the role of civil society actors within the global aid effectiveness framework, 2010) and the Dili Declaration (approaches to aid effectiveness in fragile contexts, 2010). These agreements have led to the introduction of a number of new aid modalities (e.g. Program Based Approaches, Sector-Wide Approaches, Technical Assistance Pooling), that are meant to ensure the effective delivery of aid (Ohno and Niiya 2004; Lavergne and Wood 2006; Boesen and Dietvorst 2007). Even though Hulme (2007), Booth (2008) and Glennie (2011) argue that OECD’s aid effectiveness agenda initiated the development agenda that was later consolidated in the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), this claim cannot be validated

empirically. Therefore I suggest that both processes should be regarded as each other's organisational counterpart (Hulme 2007; Vandemoortele 2011) that were both geared towards re-legitimising development aid as an influential discourse of international relations (Edgren 2002; Vandemoortele 2011).

2.2.4 The Paris Declaration on Aid Effectiveness

As explained above the professional belief system that I encountered at GTZ suggested that the Paris Declaration represents a turning point in the history of aid. Some scholars endorse this view and consider the Paris Declaration on Aid Effectiveness as the culmination of OECD's aid effectiveness agenda (Hyden 2008; Dabelstein 2012). Its prominence is based on two factors. On the one hand, it gathered broad support from donors and recipients alike for a unified aid effectiveness agenda (Wood *et al.* 2008; Wood *et al.* 2011; Nunnenkamp *et al.* 2013). On the other hand, it incorporated a new set of aid modalities into the international legal fabric of development aid. It created a set of internationally binding criteria for the deployment of aid resources. However, even though donors and recipients alike celebrated this codification, scarce attention has been dedicated to the fact that the Paris Declaration *de facto* re-legitimised development aid and its institutions. Moreover, it created a legal basis for donors to negotiate aid modalities and regain influence in country affairs (Easterly 2002b; Edgren 2002).

The Paris Declaration was the outcome of the Second High Level Forum on Aid Effectiveness held in 2005. It conceptualised this complex matter by implying

- 1) Recipient governments own their development agenda, which is followed by the donors;
- 2) Donors align their effort and support to the recipient's national development strategy without imposing their procedures;
- 3) Donors avoid overloading the recipient country system with competing or overlapping requests;
- 4) Aid relies on sound monitoring and evaluation frameworks to assess

progress;

- 5) Recipients and donors hold each other accountable for the results of the process.

The re-legitimisation imposed a neoliberal institutionalist framework and re-installed a top-down power structure. The five principles of the Paris Declaration (see Table 2.1) codified aid modalities that were to increase aid effectiveness and consolidate the notion of ownership (alignment + harmonisation).

However, the Paris Declaration remains controversial. Here, I highlight only two major areas relevant to my thesis. First, it continues to reproduce some of the paradoxes it intended to solve, such as recipient country ownership. Even though the Paris Declaration intended to restore and safeguard the sovereignty of recipient states, it imposed a new set of aid conditionalities and reinforced the primacy of Northern donors. Whereas it obliges donors to follow and align with the national development strategies of the recipient states, it also imposes formal conditionalities for the latter party. National development strategies need to have clear strategic priorities linked to a medium-term expenditure framework and reflected in annual budgets. Moreover, these development strategies have to “adhere to broadly accepted good practices” (see Indicator 2, 5a and 5b of the Paris Declaration, Annex 9). These demands are indicative of the paradox idiosyncratic to the entire aid effectiveness debate, since it demands recipient states:

1. To adhere to appropriate macroeconomic policies as well as
2. To generally abide by the modus operandi suggested by the donors.

| | Principle | What |
|----|-----------------------|--|
| 1. | Ownership | Developing countries set their own strategies for poverty reduction, improve their institutions and tackle corruption. |
| 2. | Alignment | Donor countries align behind these objectives and use local systems. |
| 3. | Harmonisation | Donor countries co-ordinate, simplify procedures and share information to avoid duplication. |
| 4. | Results | Developing countries and donors shift focus to development results and results get measured. |
| 5. | Mutual accountability | Donors and partners are accountable for development results. |

Table 2.1 – Key principles of the Paris Declaration on Aid Effectiveness (Source: Paris Declaration on Aid Effectiveness, 2005)

The issue of tied aid is a central element within the discourse of aid effectiveness (Schraeder, Hook, and Taylor 1998; Tingley 2010). Even though one of the main intentions of this OECD-led political process was to untie aid from its political and economic conditionalities (Alesina and Dollar 2000; Berthélemy 2006; Hoeffler and Outram 2011), the Paris Declaration focused on aid effectiveness, from a “markedly DAC bureaucratic perspective” (Brunello 2015, p. 51). It put aid conditionalities into place, which demand the replication of institutions of Northern democracies; notably their governance structure, as well as ideals of accountability and transparency. However, enforcing such conditionalities further enhance the already convoluted accounting processes and adds new layers of formal procedures that may overburden administrative staff and infrastructure in the recipient country

(Booth 2012). The convoluted nature of OECD's "ventriloquism" (Easterly 2007, p. 146) is well expressed by Robert Chambers' ironic construct which he made up of the most recurrent words in the Paris Declaration: "To monitor indicators for effective performance for Aid Donors and Partners need the capacity to manage the mutual harmonisation of programmes to assess, measure and report on results" (cited by Brunello 2015, p. 51).

Second, even though the Paris Declaration promotes the idea that "all [states] depend on the same mechanism of functional institutional efficiency in order to account for social change" (Sterling-Folker 2000, p. 1), this approach sidelines other forms of development that do not involve state actors; for example international non-governmental organisations (INGOs). In the tradition of neoliberal institutionalism it suggests that states are the main actors in international relations, which co-operate in rational self-interest, or are faced with anarchy as an obstacle to their co-operation (Schmitz 2008). In the absence of the Cold War dualism and amidst the rise of new donors (Marcussen 2001) the Paris Declaration testifies to OECD's shrinking influence in the international community. Therefore, the intelligibility of forms of governance were of key importance to maintain OECD's influence in the international community. The emergence of new bilateral donors also endangered OECD's mandate, and countries such as China, India and Iran do not adhere to OECD criteria that define good development practice (Woods 2005, 2008). The conditionalities they impose on recipient countries are not rooted in Northern premises, but mainly serve the enlargement of spheres of influence (Rowlands 2008; Sato *et al.* 2010; Kondoh *et al.* 2010). By codifying "good" development practice, the Paris Declaration also attempted to cement OECD's fading influence.

These two paradoxes heavily influenced the implementation of the aid effectiveness agenda. Chapter 5 will provide empirical evidence of the manifestation of these issues. I argue that the primary goal of the aid effectiveness debate was to re-legitimise aid and retain its role as an influential discourse within international relations. The aid effectiveness discourse addressed the lack of ownership and harmonisation, as well as the

lack of use of local capacities in development aid. From the early 2000s, the aid effectiveness discourse was increasingly framed by the emergence of new donors.

There is an important distinction to be made between the notion of capacity development and the discourse of aid effectiveness. Even though the professional belief system at GTZ/GIZ in Ethiopia suggested the close interrelatedness of capacity development and the OECD-led aid effectiveness agenda, they are historically as well as institutionally disconnected. As demonstrated above, notions of capacity development originated from a participatory and bottom-up tradition of development. I suggest, however, that the impasse in the discourse of aid (Schuurman 1993), amplified the disintegration of progressive development narratives and the ensuing hubris of post-development (Simon 2006b; Ziai 2007), allowed for the co-optation of capacity development. Chapter 6 is going to demonstrate the subsequent co-optation of capacity development by the emerging neoliberal institutionalist aid discourse. Whereas issues of aid effectiveness are also closely related to the impasse of aid, the OECD-led agenda emerged in the early 2000s and did not bear any particular reference to or bring any preference for capacity development. Accordingly, this thesis regards these issues as separate and will discuss the relevant empirical evidence separately (respectively in Chapter 5 and Chapter 6). The next section, however, outlines the theoretical underpinnings for this thesis with regard to issues of technology.

2.3 Technology, ICTs and the idea of progress

The first half of this chapter provided a short archaeology of the term capacity within the context of modernity and traced the similarities and differences between the notion of capacity development and discourses of aid effectiveness. It highlighted the tensions between early notions of capacity development and its gradual co-option by the neoliberal development discourse. Capacity development became a neoliberal and institutionalist political discourse that promotes transnational capitalism and governance. It

recreates and embeds the developmental tradition of progress and its ideal of productivity. I have defined capacity development above as the development of capacities that are deemed necessary to navigate the contemporary *Zeitgeist*. The notion of capacity development played an important role in re-legitimising the modernist and neoliberal discourse of development. Eventually, it became a mould into which developmental goals could be cast, transmitted and amplified.

This section situates the interrelatedness between the idea of progress and notions of technology. It explores the situatedness of technology within the contemporary political and economic discourse through three steps:

1. First, it reviews the philosophical and historical embeddedness of technology within industrial modernity and its relation to the notion of progress (2.3.1);
2. Second, it draws out a few of the limitations that arise from the binarity of technological determinism and constructionism from a practitioner's point of view (2.3.2); and
3. Third, subsection 2.3.3 relates issues of power inherent to technology and political discourse making (techno-politics).

2.3.1 Technology, the idea of progress and development

The idea that technology will bring about a better world for everyone can be traced back to the Enlightenment. The notion that technology or industrial modernisation as well as scientific positivism are the premises of progress were reconfirmed by the first and second industrial revolutions in the North (Deane 1979; Adas 1990; Goldstone 2002; Crafts 2004). The direct causality between technological progress and economic growth is one of the key principles that inform theories of industrial modernity. It infers that technological progress leads to the rationalisation of production, creates efficiency and increases levels of productivity (Smith *et al.* 1994; Beck 1997). Modern accounts on technology's role originate from the classical figures of sociology (Karl Marx, Max Weber, Émile Durkheim). However, they never used the term 'technology', simply because sociology as a discipline was

constituted at around the same time when "mechanic arts" diffused into a broader concept of technology (Smith and Marx 1994). Karl Marx's role in conceptualising technology within the socio-economic texture of industrial modernity is central to understanding industrial modernity. According to Feenberg (2003), "the writings of Karl Marx are surely the single most influential source of theories of modernity" (p. 75) that perpetuate a strong belief in progress.

Marx's and later Weber's analysis of industrial rationalisation laid the conceptual foundations for deterministic philosophies of technology. Early pragmatist technological determinism (Feenberg 1992, 1995; Dusek 2009; Olsen *et al.* 2009; Kaplan 2009) is deeply rooted in the modernist belief of progress and suggests that technology operates as a "key governing force in society" (Smith and Marx 1994, p. 2). Paradoxically, even though pragmatist determinism attributes a liberating force to technology (Smith and Marx 1994), it also perceives it "as being outside of society" (Green 2001, p. 3.). The euphoria that characterised two consecutive industrial revolutions in the North elevated technology to a semi-transcendental, autonomous force that shapes society. The independent character of technology further solidifies axiomatic claims that technology equals progress (Misa *et al.* 2004; Vermaas *et al.* 2011). Furthermore, it neutralises questions of power with regard to efficiency and productivity. Technology's transcendence, which lends it political neutrality, however, short-circuits moral or ethical reflections on its social consequences (Gianella 2015). Technological determinism interprets the social effects of technology within a one-directional causality dictated by the meta-narrative of progress (Feenberg 1992; Murphie and Potts 2003). The declared eminence of science and technology in bringing about socio-economic growth extolled the notion that technology itself tends to be a force for good (Adas 1990; Gianella 2015).

However, the subsequent unfolding of economic rationalisation, the quest for productivity and efficiency, only served the interest of capital (Foucault 1982). The technological determinism that has pervaded the social and economic theory of industrial modernity subverts social institutions to the

'imperatives' of modern industrial organisation (Turner 1992; Gane 2002; Misa *et al.* 2004).

The notion of technology is inherently connected to the idea of development (Escobar 1995; Kothari and Minogue 2001; Kothari 2005). The evident triumph of technology and positive science during the 19th and early 20th century was moulded into the foundation of development theory (Arndt 1989; Kothari 2005; Rist 2009). The complex ideology of development “exalts the Western model of production and consumption as the destiny of all humanity” (Benoist 2008, p. 10). These implicit and explicit narratives of progress wired into development theory uncritically suggest that technological change equals human betterment (Adas 1990; Gianella 2015) and provide a *raison d'être* for global capitalism.

Deterministic analysis and practice of development perpetuates models and ideologies of global capitalist agendas. The conservative and depoliticising accounts of technology lack the critical engagement with issues of power within complex social and economic structures. Technological progress appears to follow a unilinear course, a fixed track, from less to more advanced configurations. Although this conclusion seems obvious from a backward glance at the development of any familiar technical object, it is in fact based on two claims of unequal plausibility: “First, that technical progress proceeds from lower to higher levels of development; and second, that development follows a single sequence of necessary stages” (Feenberg 1992, p. 304).

The radical essentialism of accounts of contemporary technological determinism preserves the rigid cubicle of technology and leaves global capitalism unquestioned. Moreover, by ignoring the power embodied in technology, deterministic accounts neutralise and depoliticise agendas of development. The rigid autonomy ascribed to technology assumes that progress is inevitably good for human betterment.

2.3.2 Participatory philosophies of technology

As the facades of the omnipotent narrative of industrial modernisation began to crack in the 1970s and 1980s, social and economic theory challenged this isolated, autonomous and politically neutralised notion of technology (Beck *et al.* 1994; Beck 1997; Benoist 2008). The evident social and environmental pathologies inflicted by industrial modernisation questioned the rigid and eschatological techno-social hegemony established within modern social and economic theory. This period saw the emergence of the sociological study of science and technology that applied analytical tools from Foucauldian constructionism and critical theory (Kellner 1989; Feenberg 1992, 1995; Munck and O'Hearn 1999). These progressive accounts of social and economic theory surpassed the essentialism and linear notions of technological determinism and rejected the pre-eminent role of technology within socio-economic progress. Non-deterministic approaches to technology claim that linear and hegemonic representations of socio-technical realities exclude and alienate individual or group agency (Sismondo 1993; Bijker 1997). Instead, non-deterministic scholarship emphasises the situatedness of socio-economic actors in the definition, production and policing of socio-technical realities (Feenberg 2002; Dusek 2009; Olsen *et al.* 2009). Two major types of non-deterministic critique emerged in the 1980s: social constructionism and post-humanism.

Constructionist approaches to science and technology regard both fields as socially constructed, with properties which are neither intrinsic nor autonomous from social agency (Bijker *et al.* 2012). Social constructionism highlights the malleability and negotiability of technology by suggesting that technology is not a fixed entity but the outcome of phases of negotiations in the social and political spheres (Pinch and Bijker 1987; Bijker *et al.* 2012; Bijker and Law 1994; Williams and Edge 1996; MacKenzie and Wajcman 1999). Constructivist accounts of “technology show that different configurations of resources can yield alternative versions of the same basic device capable of efficiently fulfilling its function” (Feenberg *et al.* 2010, p. 67).

The notion that different social groups produce different meanings for the same technological artefacts (Bijker *et al.* 2009) comes in forms of mild and radical social constructionism (Sismondo 1993). The former only points out the importance of the social context in the analysis of technological artefacts, while the latter attributes the entire content of science and technology to social construction. Radical technological constructionism situates technology within sociotechnical genealogies that are exclusively responsible for the definition of technologies. Constructionist scholarship deploys a wide variety of terminologies (negotiate, mutually constitute, interpenetrate, entangle) that restore individual and group agency within the fabric of society. Even though social constructionist accounts criticise the hegemonic and deterministic nature of previous phenomenologies of technology, they are optimistic about the outcomes of technological progress (Schech 2002).

The idealisation of social agency within the early constructionist tradition, however, denied that the number of choices that society has in influencing the construction of technologies is limited due to inherent power inequalities and politics (Winner 1983; Kallinikos 2002, 2011). A merely genealogical approach to technology also disregards social groups that do not appear relevant in the creation of a certain technology. This exacerbates inbuilt inequalities in social and political representation (Winner 1983). More contemporary accounts of constructionist scholarship recognise that the production of technologies is a politicised act that can be appropriated by political entities. In particular, the research by Winner (1993), Woolgar and Cooper (1999) and Joerges (1999) revolves around questions of political power. These scholars attribute an important role to the sphere of politics that authorises the production and implementation of technologies (Joerges 1999). These scholars broke with the early naiveté of the participatory and egalitarian understanding of social constructionism and acknowledged that political discourse appropriates and re-legitimises the construction of technologies.

The positive influence of social constructionism within contemporary technology studies as well as development is undeniable. However, “social

constructivism has now achieved a state of dominance that betrays those unmistakable characteristics of paradigm consolidation, i.e., indifference to other ideas, arrogance, and a certain inability to accommodate alternative viewpoints” (Kallinikos 2002, p. 287). Scholarship that ignores the malleability and negotiability of technology or denies its local reshaping frequently becomes an outcast. Moreover, social constructionist scholarship refuses to reflect on its inability to grapple with power structures that transcend locality. Its overwhelming preoccupation with single artefacts amplifies its inability to provide an overarching synthesis of technology’s embeddedness in contemporary global capitalism. The overemphasis of the local negotiation of technology in social constructionist accounts often omits the influence of global narratives (Bijker and Law 1994; Bijker *et al.* 2012).

This relative ignorance of politics that would extend its scope beyond narrowly defined localities as well as its lack of systemic criticism of contemporary global capitalism disqualifies social constructionist claims to challenge determinist social theory. Social constructionism falls considerably short of providing a progressive and emancipatory exegesis that would challenge predominant social grand theories that extol technological determinism and celebrate global capitalism.

Constructionist approaches had marginal influence on contemporary social, political and economic grand theories in the 1980s. Post-humanism, however, offers a radical alternative and challenges the optimism with regard to technological progress held by both deterministic and constructionist scholars. Post-humanism exposes the unprecedented degradation caused by industrial modernisation and raises ethical as well as existential concerns with regard to the impact of technology on human nature (Haraway 1987, 1991; Escobar *et al.* 1994; Turkle 2005). Post-humanist scholars argue that, due to technological progress, the boundaries between man and machine become imprecise and gradually dissolve (Selinger 2009). Morphologies between humans and machines are considered a historically coherent output of technological development, but notions of technological progress are ambiguous and ambivalent. Posthumanist understandings of technology are

inherently pessimistic about the nature of technological progress but supplement constructionism by weaving notions of negotiability and malleability into social theory (Haraway 1987; Turkle 2005).

2.3.3 Theoretical limitations – binarity of ICT4D from a practitioner perspective

The theoretical frameworks that I have explored in the previous subsection and which accompanied the first phase of my research, however, has several shortcomings. It was essential to understand the spectrum of philosophies of technology in order to refine my research questions, but it did not allow me to explore the entire spectrum of data to which I had access.

First, even though constructionism would have given me the necessary vocabulary and analytical depth to engage with the practicalities – the actual implementation – of ICT4D projects, it would entirely blend out the political sphere. Social constructionism would have been a useful theoretical basis on which to build a theory for eCapacity Development, since the original notion and practice of eCapacity Development as practiced at GIZ endorsed constructionist approaches. However, these were theoretically incompatible with or even outright contradictory to the technological determinism of state-owned ICT promotion agendas in Ethiopia. I abandoned this project for the lack of a coherent social theory in constructions, which would also account for political agendas in promoting technology. My observations in the field gradually but also distinctly exposed the paradoxes between the interest of the state and its citizens with regard to promoting ICTs. The technological determinism of the former and the existing or fledgling constructionist agendas among the latter were hard to reconcile within a single theoretical model. Neither technological determinism nor constructionism provided a framework in which to analyse and compare the two perspectives.

Second, both deterministic and constructionist philosophies of technology operate within the modernist tradition by perpetuating the notion of

technological progress and by doing so, to varying degrees, endorse capitalism. Section 2.3.1 demonstrated that the notion of technology is inherently entwined with the idea of progress. Deterministic accounts of industrial modernity emphasize the decisive influence of technological artefacts on economic progress. In donors' agendas, ICTs are considered vital for fighting poverty, improving healthcare, providing better education, fostering gender equality and extend global partnerships for development in developing countries (Thapa and Saebø 2014). However, this very quest to reduce the 'digital divide' (West 2007; Bwalya 2004; Kelly 2005) uncritically accepts the premise that the diffusion of ICT is necessarily good and promotes socio-economic development. The symbolic and pervasive power of ICTs has significant influence on the design of development programmes (Unwin 2009; Hayes and Westrup 2012). ICT4D research continues to deploy ICTs as a contemporary global economic narrative and create the promise of global competitiveness and compatibility. As Fuchs (2009, p. 399) suggests, recipient countries "construct the changes connected to new media as radical novelties and ignore the continuing dominance of capitalist structures".

Third, the predilection in deterministic scholarship that denotes episodes of industrial progress by means of their dominant piece of technology (Adas 1990), negates the quintessentially pervasive and disruptive character of ICTs that surpasses industrial ontologies (Castells 2000, 2011a, 2011b, 2013; Jenkins 2006; Jenkins and Deuze 2008). Both deterministic and constructionist scholars herald ICTs as the latest quantum leap in technology's ongoing progress. This very lack of critical perspectives regarding the underlying rationale for spreading technology ignores the core characteristics of the digitalisation of the global economy (Silva and Westrup 2009).

Overcoming these theoretical difficulties meant that I had to introduce a set of concepts that could satisfactorily help me interrogate the paradoxical relationships between state-driven and participatory ICT promotion agendas, as well as surpass industrial ontologies of technological development. The latter, in particular, meant the necessity of a finding a comprehensive social

theory that can frame and adequately account for top-down and bottom-up agendas of ICT promotion. The introduction of two key concepts – techno-politics and informationalism – and their critiques provide me with a set of conceptual vessels that allow me to overcome the binarity of deterministic and social constructionist thinking. In the next sections I briefly introduce these concepts as well as use them to further refine my research questions.

2.3.4 Techno-politics

Twentieth century political economy is defined by a certain rhetorical subservience to technology. Economic development and politics relate to technology in multiple forms, as the organizational basis of society, as a production system, as a mode of temporisation or more recently as a vehicle for communication. Historically, and in very broad terms, techno-politics describes the influence of social, governmental, economic and cultural factors on a form of industrial development, and vice-versa. However, it entered the complex political terrain of the 21st century as a polemic device on the intersection of politics and technology.

There is, however, a certain uneasiness in the use of the term, since scholars often carelessly inject it in the hope of overcoming the binarity and paradigm consolidation of determinism and social constructionism (Kurban *et al.* 2016). However, this attempt reproduces a disguise of neutrality for technological artefacts, which automatically defeats its purpose. Evidently, technology and the political have long been intertwined and their relationship can never produce a singular meaning. Mutual constitution or co-production of politics and material forms such as technology are truisms in current technology studies (Jasanoff 2004). In his critique on the lack of historical contextualisation in ICT4D research, Gagliardone (2014, p. 3) suggests that techno-politics “emerged in the history of technology tradition to account for the ability of competing actors to envision and enact political goals through the support of technical artefacts”. Techno-politics is not, though, a monolithic term, and its interpretations range over the entire political spectrum from progressive to autocratic. It presumes the use of a technology for political

purposes, which evidently involves a multiplicity of positions.

Winner's (1980) critique of social constructionism suggested that artefacts possess inherent politics. However, given the multiplicity of positions, techno-politics as a term is both used to describe technology as an actor that can empower political actors in various degrees, and that can empower a single political actor against others. Accordingly, the body of literature that deploys techno-politics carries a wide range of interpretations and contesting claims as to its meaning.

Thomas Hughes' (1983) work on electrification in the UK and Germany illustrated how, through political pressure systems and agendas, the same technology can take on different shapes in different locations. He described this phenomenon by building on social constructionism and expanding it into the realm of the political economy. Hughes' interpretation of techno-politics emphasises the design process involved in the innovation and implementation of new technologies.

Gabrielle Hecht's research on the relationship between nuclear power and national identity in France (Hecht 1998; 2001) further developed Hughes' notion. Hecht (Edwards and Hecht 2010, p. 15) defines techno-politics as "hybrids of technical systems and political practices that produce new forms of power and agency". Hecht also emphasised the co-constitutive process between technology and politics by suggesting that "technologies are not in and of themselves techno-political. Rather, the practice of using them in political processes and/or toward political aims constitutes techno-politics" (Edwards and Hecht 2010, p. 256-7). Hecht treats technology as an independent agent that can be strategically appropriated for different political purposes by conflicting actors. Inherent in her writing is a normative and strategic stance towards the appropriation of ICTs.

Other, more progressive and participatory interpretations also exist (Kellner 2001; Rasmussen 2007). However, these often preclude subversive action against an autocratic political power. Since it is these very mechanisms

of subversion that I investigate in my thesis, the parallel use of two antagonistic versions of techno-politics would cloud the lucidity of my analysis. Techno-politics provides an important vocabulary for my research, since it moves beyond the binarity of the local vs global as well as acknowledging the relation between politics and technological artefacts. Scrutinising ICTs as components of techno-political regimes, involves taking into consideration how technology can become an instrument of authoritarian and developmental politics. It forces my analysis to question technological determinism while moving beyond the study of a particular technical artefact and avoiding the excesses of social constructivism.

The next section further tightens the conceptual focus on the role that ICTs play in the reproduction of agendas of progress. In particular, it engages with notions of informationalism and transnational informational capitalism, to which notions developing countries often latch on.

2.4 Informationalism and a brief critique of informational capitalism

The goal of this section is to embed the notion of ICTs into contemporary social and economic grand narratives in order to allow my research to engage with issues of power that is vested in ICTs. Of particular interest for my research is the way in which the ideology of progress is recreated for countries in the global South. This section thus provides a brief introduction into various conceptual interpretations about the role of ICTs in the contemporary socio-economic order (2.4.1), then deals with one of these frameworks in detail, namely informationalism (2.4.2), and eventually proceeds to provide a brief critique of informationalism.

2.4.1 Informationalism – ICTs as the steam engine of our epoch

Numerous theories engage with the visible transition from socio-economic structures defined along the mechanics of machinery to an age construed by

digitisation. The significance of ICTs within the contemporary socio-economic structures is debated through a wide spectrum of narratives. Fuchs (2009) argues that the only common denominator of these notions is rather nebulous, namely “that networked forms of organization, digital networked information, communication technologies, and knowledge labour have become more important” (p. 388). There are also various ways to categorise these theories (Fuchs 2009; Duff 2012; Webster 2014). In a historical – but not chronological – classification, two main categories exist:

1. New era narratives – these accounts consider modernity as a closed epoch that preceded the current era, as well as highlight that ICTs are the central organising power of the contemporary era;
2. Continuity narratives – these narratives assume that there is no discontinuity between modernity and the current era and thus we still live in modernity. While these acknowledge the role of ICTs as a central organisational element for the contemporary economy and society, they are analysed within the narrative of modernity.

A concise overview of the main theories is adopted from Webster’s (2014) taxonomy (Table 2.2). In this overview, I omit the Habermasian and Hayekian theories that concern themselves with contemporary socio-political change from a political-institutional perspective (information and the evolution of democracy).

| | New era narratives | Continuity narratives |
|----|--|--|
| 1. | post-industrialism (Daniel Bell) | neo-Marxism (e.g. Herbert Schiller) |
| 2. | postmodernism (e.g. Jean Baudrillard, Mark Poster, Paul Virilio) | Regulation School theory (e.g. Michel Aglietta, Alain Lipietz) |
| 3. | flexible specialization (e.g. Michael Piore and Charles Sabel, Larry Hirschhorn) | flexible accumulation (David Harvey) |
| 4. | the informational mode of development (Manuel Castells) | reflexive modernisation (Anthony Giddens) |
| 5. | | liquid modernity (Zygmunt Bauman) |

Table 2.2 – An overview of social theories that attribute a central role to ICTs (adopted from Webster 2014)

ICTs possess great symbolic powers as the representatives of a new economic era (Souter 2004; Waldburger 2004; Beardon 2004; Sciadas 2005; Rye 2009). The disruption caused by ICTs revamps previously held linear assumptions of progress and development. ICTs become the main constituting element within contemporary narratives of economic development. The phenomenon of ICTs, however, is not limited to the physical boundaries of industrial production and transgresses traditional limits of geography and time.

Even though they have an image of being the harbinger of post-industrial society, ICTs are also part of a powerful global capitalist narrative. That narrative restores capitalist notions of productivity and profitability and amplifies these promises by suggesting that the digital economy allows for fast scaling and comparatively high returns on investment. The emergence of ICTs as the superordinate technology that conducts global economic development creates an illusion of high-technology industrialisation (Said *et al.* 1995; Lefort 2012) and reinstates a modernist socio-technical hegemony (Van Dijk 1999; Jessop 2003; Stalder 2006).

2.4.2 The informational mode of development

Informationalist philosophies of technology build on earlier notions of Bell (1976; 1979) and Touraine (Touraine and Mayhew 1974; Touraine 1995), and deduces a “new social and technical division of labour” (Fuchs 2009, p. 100) that originates from the singularity and pervasiveness of ICTs. This ontology, however, continues to legitimise claims reminiscent of industrial modernity. The most important theorist of informationalism, Manuel Castells, suggests that “technology is the only driving force of society” (Castells 2000, p. 392) and derives liberating and empowering characteristics from ICTs (Madsen 2002; Stalder 2006; Webster 2014). The misrepresentation of ICTs as value-neutral and self-regulating amplifies hopes of economic progress (Van Dijk 1999). Informationalist literature alludes to a plethora of new opportunities, which result from the disaggregation of industrial modernity. The idea that “information generation, processing, and transmission become the fundamental sources of productivity and power” (Castells 2000, p. 21) suggests the reconfiguration of rules of productivity and competition.

Castells constructs his narrative of a network society out of three independent processes as they appeared from the end of the 1960s: “the information technology revolution; the economic crisis of capitalism and statism (communism); and the blooming of new social movements like environmentalism and feminism” (van Dijk 1999, p. 129). While acknowledging that “the networking form of social organisation has existed in

other times and spaces” (Castells 2000a., p. 469), he stresses that, through the ICT revolution, networks become the main form of organisation in each social and economic sphere and build the framework of a) new social structure (network society), b) new economy (global informational economy), and c) new culture (real virtuality).

Networks thus become the form of organisation and define the morphology of society. The central notion of networks reflects Castells’ intention to exchange his analytical focus from conflicts, as defined by Marxism, for forms. His awareness of the limitations of grand theories gives the impetus to establish a narrative, which allows a holistic and multicultural understanding of the emerging global world (Stalder 2006). The search for a holistic social theory which would encompass an increasingly fractured world, makes Castells engage with communication theory; hence the network architecture for social and economic action. His account of networks assumes a value neutral and self-regulating character, which is powered by the energy of the masses liberated by ICTs.

Castells’ theory raises two core issues relevant to the notion of ICTs: the permanence and pervasiveness of the network logic and the establishment of technology as a neutral force. The network logic is based on the self-expanding nature of the networks. Informational networks “can expand indefinitely incorporating any new node by simply reconfiguring themselves on the condition that these new nodes do not represent an obstacle to fulfilling key instructions in their program” (Castells 2000a, p. 695). Castells’ euphoria about the network logic and the “pre-eminence of social morphology over social action” (Castells 2000a, p. 469), though, takes little account of the genesis of the informational networks. As Madsen (2002) points out, Castells attempts to create and define a new age in human history (the information age), but fails to acknowledge that this too is capitalist in nature. Castells suggests empirically that ICTs have led to the diffusion of power and to the rise of grassroots movements, which dismantle the statist-bureaucratic powers of the modern nation state.

While assuming that technology is neutral, Castells points out that networks are essentially binary (Madsen 2002). "By definition, a network has no centre. It works on a binary logic: inclusion/exclusion. All there is in the network is useful and necessary for the existence of the network. What is not in the network does not exist from the network's perspective [...]" (Castells 2000b, 15-16). This binarity influences Castells' thinking about empowerment through ICTs. While acknowledging that "networks based on alternative values also exist and their social morphology is similar to that of dominant networks," (Castells 2000a, p. 695) suggests that the remnants of the old society will be sooner or later terminated and included in the dominant networks

Castells' deployment of these notions eliminates the sense of any meaningful dissent or conflict as well. Madsen (2002) and Webster (2006) argue that Castells, while invoking a Marxist tradition, is not concerned by those left out of the benefits of a globalised world. He notes that Castells actually remains within the realm of the discourse he intends to study and implies that among the numerous discourses which intend to understand globalisation network society is "very powerful and backed by equally powerful interests, having an interest in a value-neutral appearance backed by science" (Madsen 2002, p. 15). The next subsection engages with critical accounts of Castells' informational paradigm-building. This is informative in order to understand Castells' inclination to justify the contemporary form of capitalism as a mode of development that has no alternatives.

2.4.3 A brief critique of informational capitalism

The new frontier of progress proposed by informational accounts tends to dissect physical space and creates the illusion of a level playing field (Friedman 2007; Kobayashi-Hillary and Sykes 2007; Trimi 2008). However, the outsourced back-office accounting, telemarketing or programming only increases the competitiveness of individual transnational companies. The notion of a level playing field neglects key issues of power and economic emancipation (Diefenbach and By 2012). Concepts of outsourcing and the

geographic disintegration of corporate value chains only allow power elites to sustain centralised strategic control and justify rationalisation.

The attempts of informationalism to establish the existence of a new age in human history, however, often fail to acknowledge or ignore outright the capitalist nature of this new era. Madsen (2002) and Webster (2014) also argue that informationalist notions overlook those marginalised and rejected by informational capitalism. While invoking a promise of a new era and celebrating technology's emancipatory effects, informationalist accounts remain within the discourse of modernity (Schech 2002; Fuchs 2009, 2011). In essence, they present "a value-neutral appearance backed by science" (Madsen 2002, p. 15) and continue to extol and legitimise global capitalism.

The notion of informational capitalism is permeated by the promise of higher productivity and economic growth (Steinmueller 2001; Indjikian and Siegel 2005; Chinn and Fairlie 2006; Basant *et al.* 2006; Heeks 2010). Moreover, the promise of profitability as the main driver of economic development is re-animated (Pilat 2005; Draca *et al.* 2006). There is little academic critique concerned with questioning notions of productivity that permeate ICT narratives. Competitive advantages are redistributed along new, digital geographies of ICT literacy and infrastructure density (Zook *et al.* 2004). Economic development becomes dependent on the availability of skills and infrastructural factors.

In essence, the mechanisms of transnational informational capitalism enforce an even more radical pace of global competitiveness (Steinmueller 2001). Moreover, the new vulgarity of competition coerces states and individuals alike to submit themselves to the compliance dictates of informational capitalism. These newly imposed structures of power that prescribe compatibility also enforce the subsequent rationalisation and standardisation of the labour force (Holtgrewe and Scholten 2005; Wagenaar and Boersma 2008; Comor 2010). Maintaining compatibility becomes an elusive image that leads to the covert disintegration of national economic sovereignty (Harris 1999, 2008; Mann 1997; Overbeek 2002). State structures

consecutively cede their power to influence the socio-economic development of their citizens to a transnational corporate elite (Sklair 2001; Carroll and Fennema 2002; Carroll *et al.* 2010). Critical accounts of informational capitalism emphasise the transnational character of this new economic era (Fuchs 2011a; Fuchs 2012b; Fuchs 2012c).

The economic exploitation and exclusion that take place in the name of informational capitalism on the global peripheries are unaccounted for in informational scholarship (Fuchs 2009). Parayil's (2005) empirical criticism suggests that the "distribution of income and wealth both between countries and individuals has sharply skewed" and that "knowledge production [...] tends to disproportionately reward some and exclude others" (p. 41). Productivity hikes resulting from the advance of ICTs only benefit the central nodes (Souter 2004) and grind down the resources in the old and new economic peripheries. The assumed equalising effects of ICTs create an empirically unsound new mirage of economic progress. This new rigour of globally imposed rationalisation enhances the volatility and vulnerability of global labour markets and further erodes structures of financial and social security (Bauman 2000b, 2005; Fraser 2010; Standing 2012). The consequential global diffusion of precarious work conditions in fact eliminates hopes for emancipation and socio-economic development.

In essence the informational body of thought eliminates the sense of meaningful dissent (Castells 2000, 2007, 2013; Redden 2001; Hands 2004). The networks of informational capitalism that control the flows of "capital, information, technology, organizational interaction, images, sounds and symbols" dictate a new binary hegemony. The logic of inclusion vs exclusion empowers only those who have a "sense of the game" (Madsen 2002, p. 13). "All there is in the network is useful and necessary for the existence of the network. What is not in the network does not exist from the network's perspective" (Castells 2000, p. 15-16).

The proclamation of the dominant flows of ICTs as a force of good (Madsen 2002) and the conscious neglect of the power vested in transnational corporate elites create a semblance of decentralisation and

participation. The claims of diffusion of power, transparency, the rise of grassroots movements, and the dismantling of the statist-bureaucratic structures of the modern nation state are deceptive (Mann 1997; Derrida 2006). They exclusively serve the interests of a transnational capitalist elite. The intoxicating ideology of progress and economic developments deceives states to favour corporate interests above the socio-economic welfare of their citizens (Schmidt 1995; Bohle and Greskovits 2007).

The magnetism of ICTs for achieving fast economic development is further amplified by the aspirational models of South Korea, Taiwan and Singapore (Low 1996; Castells 2011). The reassurance of rapid economic development (Wee 2007; Lee and Ku 2007), however, also expands new forms of non-democratic, anti-participatory and hegemonic power. They promote standardisation and a one-dimensional society (Van Dijk 1999). The economic pressure created by transnational informational capitalism allows the emergence of a new form of developmentalism in the South.

ICTs can exert a constituting role for dissent as well as lead to network-based struggles (Komito 1998; Haythornthwaite and Kendall 2010; Castells 2011). Castells (2000) acknowledges that “networks based on alternative values also exist” and that “their social morphology is similar to that of dominant networks” (p. 695). The use of ICTs constitutes new communities that are characterised by a participatory culture (Jenkins 2006; Jenkins and Deuze 2008) and occupy online spaces (Castells 2007, 2013). They are organized around specific sets of values, the meaning and sharing of which are marked by specific codes of self-identification (Castells 2000, 2007, 2011). These communities appear as reactions to prevailing social trends, which are resisted on behalf of autonomous sources of meaning. However, at the outset, these communities cultivate defensive identities that function as refuge and solidarity, to protect against a hostile, outside world.

The informational body of thought remains within the long tradition of modernity and perpetuates technological determinism (Jessop 2003; Garnham 2004; Stalder 2006). It extols capitalist structures and neutralises voices of dissent by expanding the boundaries of transnational capitalism.

Spaces of agency are subverted to the larger logic of global compatibility, the standardisation of skills and the anti-emancipatory effects of digital production (Mansell 2001; Gapski 2007; Karakas 2009). The acceptance of these productivity and compliance narratives drives the creation of new, hegemonic agendas of economic development and enforce novel mechanisms of control. There is an apparent lack of attempts in the literature to explore ways to restore the agency of the individual and the society as a whole within transnational informational capitalism.

The pressures created by transnational informational capitalism on emerging or developing countries and their economies raises a host of further questions. The most important from the perspective of this thesis is the forms of interaction between transnational informational capitalism and developing economies. The type of pressures as well as opportunities that informationalist economic regimes create in developmental settings is a central issue of my analytical goals. However, a further discussion on questions of neoliberal and transnational political economy, globalisation, developmentalism and neo-patrimonialism, which I did explore excessively during the creation of this thesis, would only burden this conceptual framework. Moreover, from a conceptual point of view, embedding informationalism or technology into a wider framework of political economy carries the inherent risk, as Verbeek (2005) suggests, of reducing technological artifacts to non-technological elements such as social organisation, trade, the will to power, or policing. This would automatically defeat the purpose of this thesis. In order to answer these questions as well as produce a more nuanced and systematic account on these issues, I will contextualise them in Chapter 4. Here, I will undertake a systematic analysis of the relationship between technology policies of the Ethiopian and Egyptian governments and their embeddedness in transnational informational capitalism – and its developmental, neoliberal or neo-patrimonial idiosyncrasies – power structures, which continually shape everyday life.

2.5 Conclusion and research questions

This chapter has provided a theoretical framing for the thesis that establishes a set of conceptual categories and introduces an operational vocabulary through which my research can engage with the emerging issues I encountered in the field. Its main aim was to deploy conceptual frameworks for tightening the focus of my research questions. To this end, it has explored the discourse of capacity development as well as the linkages between the idea of progress and technology, in particular ICTs. Section 2.2 embedded capacity development within the discourse of aid effectiveness, and demonstrated that capacity development is deeply interwoven with this discourse and was exploited for the re-legitimation of aid beyond the development *impasse*. The codification of capacity development into the legal fabric of development created an entry for bi- and multilateral donors into the entire society of the recipient countries. Moreover, the codification created a set of mechanisms to control emerging donors, particularly from civil society.

This chapter has also interrogated the embedded technological determinism of ICT promotion within the context of development, and has argued that the promotion of ICTs is deeply entwined with global capitalism. Informationalist notions replicate the inherent technological determinism of modernity and suggest that the introduction of ICTs is necessarily beneficial. Furthermore, ICTs promise accelerated economic development and a level playing field. These illusions of technological progress negate the subsequent emergence of new regimes of enforced global competition and compatibility.

The ICT4D literature has a difficulty to engage critically and question the expansion of transnational informational capitalism. Analytical models rooted in the technological constructionism of industrial modernity lack the tools to analyse issues of dissent amidst the erosion of the binaries of global vs local. Therefore, boundaries of agency need to be traced in order to empirically deconstruct claims of locality and indigenosity in the age of transnational capitalism.

My archaeological approach towards the emergence of capacity development within the discourse of development produces a host of questions. Critical accounts of development aid paired with my observations in the field prompted the following ideas that guided the first phase of my research (2009-10):

1. Capacity development is a hollow practice that is used for different ends by donors depending on their own political interest.
2. Recipient countries are enchanted by the symbolic powers of ICTs, but are prone to misappropriate ICTs in order to increase their control over their citizens.
3. I observed the empowering impact that participatory ICTs, such as social media, had on young users in Ethiopia. Their agility and agency considerably influenced my research.

I used these assumptions to develop a set of meta-questions to further guide and focus my observations as well as to develop my other research instruments:

1. Why did donors adopt capacity development? Can donors and recipients use capacity development as a method of suppression? If yes, why do they do so?
2. Why do recipient countries promote ICTs, and can ICTs become a tool of suppression? There is little research yet on these issues.
3. Why do new participatory ICT practices, such as social media, perform better at restoring or increasing the agency of people?

In the second phase (2011-2013), I developed further questions that drew upon the rationale above and guided my data collection. The empirical work of this thesis thus aims to answer three key research questions:

1. Why does capacity development play such a central role in the agendas of both donors and recipient countries?

2. Why are ICTs of such importance for the Ethiopian and Egyptian development agendas?
3. How do ICTs enable technologists' individual agency in Ethiopia and Egypt, and how do they accomplish this?

This thesis sets out to verify empirically as well as to add further detail to the archaeology of capacity development. This builds on the historical deconstruction of capacity development and allows the exploration of power claims that donors moulded into the notion of capacity development. In particular, the field reality with regard to the core issues of ownership and alignment needs to be interrogated. Moreover, the tracing of ideological genealogies and the theory-building of capacity development among donor agencies will present new empirical insights.

Furthermore this thesis also aims to illustrate the inherent dichotomies as well as ambiguities of state-driven, deterministic ICT capacity development and constructionist-participatory agendas of ICTs. Questions of state-driven and enforced ICT capacity development agendas need to be empirically interrogated to demonstrate the new hierarchies of power installed along with the promotion of ICTs. The extrusion and crowding out of participative alternatives by top-down, normative discourses of ICTs further eliminate individual agency. By interrogating the mechanisms of participatory ICTs, this thesis aims to trace alternative narratives that resist the dominant socio-economic agendas can be identified. Before doing so the following chapter outlines the methodological approach as well as the different data collection methods used in this research.

Chapter 3 – Methodology

3.1 Introduction – the research design

Two main factors influenced the research design of this thesis: first, its theoretical focus on capacity development, which is historically inclined towards participatory and bottom-up methodologies; and second, my initial work environment at GTZ/GIZ in Ethiopia that expected agility and flexibility (cf. Section 1.1). Chapter 2 has provided an account of some of these notions as well as their inherent paradoxes. My research questions revolve around issues of power as well as their representation in and through the discourse of ICT4D. As this was practice-led research, I did not go into the field with a clear theoretical framework. Rather, I used the conceptual framework discussed in the previous chapter to assist in tightening the focus of my research questions and instigate the critical questioning of what I observed in the field. In Chapter 2 I have alluded to this specific genesis of my thesis and how the conceptual frameworks has evolved. This chapter outlines the methodological considerations as well as providing an account of the gradual evolution of the methodology of this thesis. However, before attempting to answer my research questions, it was crucial to decide how to steer my expectations concerning the output of the research. In particular, I needed to take care of the implications that my dual roles as a practitioner and researcher had on conducting this research (Section 3.5).

3.1.1 Survey outline

As mentioned in Chapter 2, my original goal was to provide an elaborate description of the unique methodology that eCapacity Development supposedly represented. My assumption was that the two terms – capacity development and ICTs – have neither been researched together sufficiently in the academic literature, nor have they been used together in a cogent and coherent manner in development practice. Initially, I reasoned that by

identifying practices at the intersection of these two terms I would produce a conceptual underpinning as well as a concise methodology for eCapacity Development. To extract these aspects, my research instruments aimed at gathering narrated accounts – mainly based on interviews and focus group discussions – which would be assisted by a research diary to record the flow and occasional interferences during the research. However, these original aspirations became less easy to maintain as I grew to realise that both terms carry heavy ideological and practical burdens. Accordingly, a positivist and technocratic approach would only disguise their ambiguity and endorse these concepts. For a critical inquiry, that is rooted in field practice and adjustable to the velocity and fluidity of this practice, I had to replace such a rigid methodological approach.

Chapter 2 described the implications of the practice-led research approach for the conceptual framing of this thesis, and how the interplay between the observational knowledge generated in the field and the conceptual helped me to deduce and sharpen my research questions. My deep emersion in the field did not allow the development of abstract theoretical claims, which could than be tested with a set of methods in the field.

The gradual transition of this thesis into a practice-led research project necessitated the rethinking and the weighing-up of the methodological choices I was making. In order to deal with, as well as optimally use my convoluted positionality, I attempted to develop a set of tools that could mediate the interplay between theory and practice. This also greatly increased personal fulfilment since it allowed me to improve and not only to observe practice (Whitehead and McNiff 2006; Greenwood and Levin 2006; Koshy 2005).

In the development of a coherent research methodology, I focused on three major objectives:

1. to be able to make the best out of my privileged access in the field;

2. to deploy methods that answer to my desire to provoke change in the structures I was working in (instead of just generating knowledge); and
3. to implement both qualitative and quantitative methods in order to bridge the traditional disciplinary divides between the seemingly different worlds of theory and practice (Desai and Potter 2006).

Delivering on these three objectives was not a linear process, but a rather long-winded road. In this process of assembly, I borrowed from a set of methodological approaches that provided a type of contextual framework for my research practice as well as allowing for personal reflexivity (Hamilton and Jaaniste 2010). As a conceptual underpinning I chose practice-led research, which originated from the art, design and media studies in the 1990s (Hamilton and Jaaniste 2010). Practice-led research is primarily concerned with the nature of practice and leads to new knowledge that has significance for theory and practice alike. The key aim is to advance knowledge about practice, which corresponds well to one of the key audiences of this thesis: practitioners in development work. The most important aspect of practice-led research was that it permitted the research to be built on exploration and accident rather than on hypotheses and pre-negotiated approaches (Webb and Brien 2008).

There is, though, a degree of agnosticism to practice-led research, which practitioners tend to sometimes (over-)emphasise. Nevertheless, agnosticism is not to be misinterpreted as mysticism or subversiveness. The type of agnosticism at play here derives its meaning from artificial intelligence research (Webb and Brien 2010), which is dominated by the notions of emergence and agnostic systems. The latter is based on the assumption that it is not possible to anticipate all the permutations likely to emerge in the course of machine learning. Therefore machines should not depend on a single model, but should be interoperable with a number of places and ways. The main benefit of establishing agnostic designs systems is the ability consistently to collect and produce data across locations and roles. The term is used similarly in economics, architecture and design, history and social

theory (Webb and Brien 2010). Idiosyncratic to agnostic designs is the pre-eminence of tolerance for complexity and confusion, and also a willingness and a capacity to be led by the data rather than by a predetermined point of view. Agnostic research heavily relies on systems design and design thinking.

During the development of my survey instruments, design thinking (Rowe 1991; R. Buchanan 1992; Cross 2001) as well as rapid prototyping (Long et al. 1996) provided valuable inputs. These frameworks allowed me to translate the somewhat abstract framing of practice-led research into practical tools and co-operative action with the target groups. Both approaches are rooted in the engineering sciences and their use has been rather common in the field of ICTs since the early 1990s. Seery *et al.* (2011) and Wells (2012), for example, argue that participatory and inclusive methods are essential if technologies are to be used for complex challenges. Instruments such as peer-review and inquiry are used to co-design socio-technological solutions.

My goal was to establish a methodology that enables “the co-generation of solutions that take account of uncertainty and multiple forms of knowledge” (Blackstock *et al.* 2007, p. 1). Design thinking explicitly challenges the positivist doctrine and offers instead a constructivist paradigm, which was important given my conceptual interests in constructivism (Chapter 2). Design thinking proposes an epistemology of practice that is implicit in intuitive processes that practitioners can bring to situations of uncertainty, instability and uniqueness, as well as value conflict (Schön 1983). The reflective practice and preparedness of design thinking to put trust in the abilities of practitioners (i.e. informants) in order to try to explicate their competences rather than to supplant them, made design thinking-based approaches suitable for reaching my objective of enacting change in the lives of my respondents. More specifically, I have adapted one of my main research tools, appreciative inquiry, from design thinking (Section 3.3), and this replaced the interviews that I had been planning as the primary form of data collection.

However, while appreciative inquiry certainly enabled the co-creation of solutions together with my informants and helped build a more creative data

generation process, it was somewhat cumbersome. Also it was not possible to bridge the enormous social and power distances between informants such as high-level officials and technologists. Moreover, appreciative inquiry has great self-reflection capabilities for the informants, but can leave researchers to their own devices. The reflection on this challenge with other doctoral students led me to upgrade my research diary as another of my primary data collection tools (Section 3.2). This allowed me to document and reflect my own research journey as a participatory action researcher in high resolution. The distinction between participatory action research and participatory research is important. Taylor *et al.* (2004) emphasise that the output of participatory action research is concrete social action or systemic and social change, while participatory research can result merely in learning. This implies that with my research diary, and later with media and social media analysis, I followed an interpretative and participatory track in order to unearth aspects of the inherent power dynamics of ICT promotion. The following subsection deals with some of the inherent biases of this methodology.

| No. | Research method | Goal | Notes |
|-----|---------------------------------|---|---|
| 1) | Observations and research diary | To gather non-formalised accounts on capacity development and ICT promotion | Ongoing for 5 consecutive years (September 2009 – February 2014) |
| 2) | Appreciative inquiry session | To collect accounts on grassroots technology activism in Ethiopia and Egypt | 4 sessions |
| 3) | Interview | To collect accounts of capacity development and ICT promotion from donor and recipient representatives, as well as from ICT4D practitioners | 50 interviews |
| 4) | Media monitoring | To collect accounts of capacity development and ICT promotion in the public discourse | <p>In Ethiopia: <i>Ethiopian News Agency, Walta Information Center, Addis Zemen, Ethiopian Herald, Daily Monitor, Capital, Fortune</i></p> <p>In Egypt: <i>Daily News Egypt, Ahram Online, Madamasr</i></p> <p>Additionally international sources such as: <i>Guardian, Trouw (Dutch), NRC (Dutch),</i></p> |

| | | | |
|----|------------------------------------|---|--|
| | | | <i>Die Zeit</i> (German), <i>Süddeutsche Zeitung</i> (German) |
| 5) | Social media analysis | To analyse and understand the structure, internal-language and motivation in the local technology communities in Ethiopia and Egypt | See Table 3.2 to 3.5 |
| 6) | Internal documents (GTZ/GIZ, ECBP) | To collect written evidence about the changes in understanding capacity development as well as to reflect on the internal power struggles related to the term | 2587 e-mails, 61 Minutes of Meetings from ECBP Management Team Meetings, 421 further documents and presentations from ECBP Evidence from this group will be only cited with great care in this thesis, due to the high sensibility of the information |

Table 3.3.1 – Overview of methodologies used during the research

3.1.2 Participants and sampling

Semi-structured interviews with 50 ICT4D practitioners still formed an important part of my research methodology. This group was divided into four subgroups: 1) representatives of donor agencies, 2) representatives of recipient governments, 3) independent ICT4D practitioners and 4) technologists. With some of them, two interviews within an interval of 6 months were also possible. For a complete overview of the interviewees'

profile see Annexes 1, 2 and 3. I categorised the interview participants into four main groups:

1) Donor representatives

Donor representatives are crucial to understand donors' perspectives on capacity development as well as on how ICTs contribute to their overall capacity development plans. I interviewed high level representatives at each fieldwork location, supposing that their narratives reflect the goals as well as policies of their organisations with regard to capacity development and ICTs. It is not the technical implementation of ICT4D that I am concerned about, but the settings and motivations, which frame these. The aim is to interrogate donors' motivation and goals to promote capacity development and ICTs.

The best way to achieve this goal is to create sampling criteria, which assure that the interview participants have enough experience and organisational track record in the investigated field. This makes the construction of more solid narratives possible. It means that the answers are more likely to express organisational opinions and interests and are less influenced by unknown or uncontrollable human factors. To do so, I set the following criteria: donor representatives were chosen from organisations which have at least a 10-year track record of ICT4D activity in the respective countries. Furthermore, only organisations were considered which show current engagement in the ICT policy dialogues of the respective partner countries. Participants were selected from higher ranks (e.g. department heads, project directors), who yield executive power over the ICT4D activities of their organisation.

Conducting interviews with donor agency representatives posed a set of methodological challenges, such as logistical factors, political sensibilities, the boundaries of political correctness as well as diplomacy, internal communication guidelines and political struggles. The intention to save face also influenced the interviews, an issue which was further exacerbated in some cases due to my status as a GIZ employee. I wasn't able to have more than one interview with all my interviewees.

2) Recipient governments' representatives

The sample for this group was selected from meso- or macro-level organisations, which are either ICT4D implementers on behalf of their governments or ICT policy makers. No regional bodies or outlets were considered; participants were selected only from the middle and higher management ranks at main offices of the respective institutions. The reason for this decision is similar to the one with the donor representatives.

Interviewing this group of participants in many respects posed a similar methodological challenge to that with the donors. Their tight time schedules, as well as political sensitivities, had to be taken into account. Issues related to the latter have been widely explored by Temple and Young (2004) and Bujra (2006). On the other hand, their organisational language sometimes differed from that of the donors, with which I was more familiar. Wording and certain dimensions of the interviews needed to be adapted in order to match the organisational lingo.

From an ethical perspective, it was important to also be aware of some additional aspects during the sampling and the interviews themselves. Particularly, political/internal struggles within the establishment might have been less dampened than within donor organisations, especially since here party affiliations or ethnic backgrounds might have been more in the foreground. Such political struggles were, for example, visible in the current public service in Egypt, due to the change from a secular, NDP-led establishment to an increasingly Islamising and radicalising political system. In Ethiopia, the death of Meles Zenawi in late August 2012 could have led to more open political struggles within the ruling party (EPRDF). In Ethiopia the long domination of one political party, as well as prospective changes in leadership, initiated a range of political struggles, which I explore in more detail in Chapters 4, 6 and 7.

3) Independent ICT4D practitioners

This group is composed of ICT4D practitioners who are neither affiliated with donor agencies nor with recipient governments. It was a mixed group, which consisted of academic practitioners as well as ICT4D practitioners. Key to the

selection of the participants was their experience with the selected survey locations. Participants were both local (indigenous) and international practitioners who had sufficient experience with the fieldwork locations, understood their internal logics and were able to critically assess and locate statements within their own contexts. In total, I interviewed five ICT4D practitioners in total.

The function of this group was to act as a control group, and as such to provide a politically independent outsider view on the capacity development discourse as well as on the role of ICTs in international development.

4) Technologists – renegade young elites in Ethiopia and Egypt

A particular challenge with regard to technologists was finding an appropriate name for them. Over the course of my research, I experimented with various titles, such as technology enthusiasts, technologists, geeks and techies. I wanted to avoid the name ‘techies’ for the reason that it sounded too informal. Eventually, I settled on the term technologists since it is the most widely used self-description within these communities. Sometimes it is used as a synonym with ‘techies’, however, during the course of my research, the latter gradually faded from everyday use. Especially, as these communities matured in both Egypt and Ethiopia they sought identification with their Silicon Valley counterparts and adopted their term (technologist). Despite the engineered sound of the term it still denotes a young, informal and certainly elite niche in both societies.

Moreover, I consciously chose to describe this particular group of informants as a renegade elite. However, I do not deploy the term renegade in its most widely used meaning as “a person who deserts and betrays an organization, country, or set of principles” (New Oxford American Dictionary 2010). I struggled considerably with the question how to describe the anti-establishment character of this otherwise evidently elite group. I am aware of the ambiguity of the adjective itself. However, other potential alternative descriptions, such as rebellious elite or mutinous elite, would have blown out of proportion the readiness of these groups to rebel. Although most of my

informants in Egypt participated in the events of 21st January, 2011, they were not among its initiators. Those in Ethiopia might have dreamt of a revolution, but either lacked the means or the motivation. None of my informants would qualify to be regarded either as treasonous or untrustworthy, even though two of my informants were charged in absentia by the Ethiopian and Egyptian judicial systems respectively during the time of my research.

A technically more appropriate term would have been the subversive elite; however, this term has already been deployed by Adler (1987) and describes a type of elite that is loyal to the establishment: “their ideology about the nature of politics and economics differs from that of the established elite, nevertheless, because they have some access to the decision-making channels and structures, they succeed in getting their ideas through to the decision makers. This ability to influence policy and action, either overtly or indirectly, is what makes them an ‘elite’” (p. 90.). This term, however, falls short in portraying the vivid anti-establishment logic among my informants, as well as their informal, subcultural and non-conventional character. The second, less often used meaning of the term “renegade” describes these latter characteristics quite precisely as persons who behave “in a rebelliously unconventional manner” (New Oxford American Dictionary 2010).

The main challenge in creating a sample of technologists for my survey was that people from this group could not be affiliated with any given institutional form or type of work. Therefore, I interpreted them as a subculture whose identity is framed around the use of up-to-date and state-of-the-art technologies. In the creation of the identifiers for this group, I therefore relied on my field notes as well as conversations with ICT4D specialists. I was targeting the ‘digital natives’ who – despite the differences in the level of exposure and access – have grown up with digital technologies. The most important common denominator for this group is, however, their age. They all come from a segment that has been lately denoted as Generation Y or Millenials, and are aged between 20 and 35 years. Their technology use patterns are very similar to mainstream Northern models and they also often mimic Northern consumerism, behaviour and cultural norms. They are

globally oriented and hold various, often cosmopolitan identities (Singerman and Amar 2006). The technologists I worked with fit the conventional description of their Northern counterparts as a rebellious, somewhat entitled and career-minded youngster, whose pragmatic idealism (Burstein 2014) despises corporate ladder climbing, values flexibility over anything else and seeks self-employed lifestyles (Draves and Coates 2007). Nevertheless, only some of my informants were in fact self-employed. Most of them earned a living in the non-governmental sector.

The participatory and egalitarian logic of these technology communities prompted me to label them grassroots. Even though the term 'grassroots' is reserved for the marginalised, rural or urban poor, in development literature, it is important to note that my informants consequently labelled themselves as grassroots. In clear contrast to their apparent urban and upper middle class background, technologists in both Ethiopia and Egypt claimed to represent grassroots agendas of change. I will explore some of these issues of identity and representation in Chapter 8.

3.1.3 Potential methodological biases

I have already touched upon the biases caused by my dual roles and positionality that influenced my research work. Here I reflect on some of the more general and not identity-related biases. Chambers (1980, 1986, 2008) has usefully identified a number of factors that bias the outcome of fieldwork, particularly with regard to researching poor or disadvantaged communities (Chambers 1980, 1986, 2008). Relying on his work, I have identified four main sets of biases that are relevant for my research.

1) The spatial bias

In the empirical practice of Participatory Rural Appraisal, this bias shows to what extent fieldwork has unintentionally become attached to infrastructure - in other words, to the availability of good roads and facilities, which can accommodate Northern researchers. Well-built roads, however, also attract investment: "Factories, offices shops and official markets all tend to be at the

sides of main roads. Even agricultural development has a roadside bias" (Chambers 2008, p. 31). My experience as a technical co-operation advisor in Ethiopia and Egypt confirms this assumption. Most of the non-urban projects I have been working on followed a similar logic and have been based at major roads, allowing for back and forth transport to urban areas within a day. Through such "elite roadside ecologies" (cited from Ssenyonga 1976 in Chambers 2008, p. 32; original work not found), the rural becomes falsely represented and bans access to the poorest and most disadvantaged. Chambers (2008) also argues that such spatial bias is often not just road-bound, but locked to the fast availability of airports (airport bias).

The awareness of spatial biases instigated a careful delimitation of my claims. The claims developed in this thesis are not representative in any way of the experiences and perceptions of the rural poor, for example. The decision to exclusively focus on strictly urban areas and restrict my fieldwork to the capitals, however, was not just a choice of convenience, but more of feasibility and relevance. My previous experience in managing ICT4D projects in rural Ethiopia (2008-10) made me realise that significant change in the agency of users does not happen within top-down hierarchies of pocketed ICT4D measures that are airdropped into rural settings. Hansen *et al.* (2012) show that the change in factors, which contribute to effective agency, is statistically not significant. While I do not contest the possibility for successful ICT4D actions in rural settings, analysing such cases is not the intention of this thesis.

2) The project bias

Through the nature of management in development co-operation, everything revolves around projects, which than easily become self-referential equally for in- and outsiders. Chambers' criticism of project-based research is that knowledge is generated at "tiny atypical islands of activity, which attract repeated and mutually reinforcing attention" (2008, p. 34). Many projects are also appropriated by the political interests of donors and/or local governments. Accordingly activities, but also meaning and knowledge, become misrepresented. Messages about the project are often fine-tuned to

the expectations of the visitor, be it a political representative or a researcher. Socially or politically expected statements are repeated and become, step by step, perceived as reality.

3) The diplomatic bias

Limited time budgets as well as cultural barriers and hierarchies construct a set of practices and language which is determined by respect towards the outsider. Real or assumed hierarchies and cultural norms of respect produce a eulogy among the less advantaged or lower down in a hierarchy. Its effect is further accentuated by those roadside ecologies and the project-orientation of development aid as well as research. In my research, I didn't expect this bias to be particularly strong, since I was planning to address stakeholder groups which either have a sufficiently high hierarchical status (high-level stakeholders) or possess globalised cultural identities, which can counterbalance cultural norms to embellish reality. In the case of the former, however, biases of elite status or political role can be at play.

This type of bias produces narratives which fit the political agendas of their governments – be it on the recipient's or donor's side - or their elite status. Still, the purpose of my research was exactly to extract these narratives. Through the deployment of a set of interviews and more regular interaction (workshop, visits of events) with local technologists, my goal was to diminish this bias. I was not aiming for an insider role, since that would have been idealistic, given my roles as a researcher as well as donor representative. Additionally, the interviews and a regular exchange with key informants (anthropologists, international consultants) helped to counteract this bias.

4) The security bias

It is rather telling that Chambers only added this bias to his list in the 2008 edition of *Revolutions in Development Inquiry*. It resonates well with the neoliberal discourse on capacity development, which is, among others, rooted in the concern that the world is becoming less secure and more risk prone. This is not to de-emphasise insecurity as a risk, but rather to show that risks attached to personal security and health have become perceived separately

by both aid agency staff and researchers. Important to note is, besides the possibility of actual risk, the validity of data extracted from locals under such circumstances. While Chambers argues that officials might use security threats to keep visitors away from certain areas, they might also want to play down the actual security risk. For example, during the student protests at the Arba Minch University in Southern Ethiopia (June 2011), officials, including the vice-president of the university, repeatedly assured me that there was no security risk on the campus and that there was absolutely no reason to cancel the visit of the German ambassador planned for the early afternoon. I was told this while the riot police sealed off the campus and students were shot at just a few hundred metres away. This shows that, to save face, a pretence of normality is often kept up even in severe situations. Admittedly, I developed certain emotional immunity to similar events during my stay in Egypt. Tear gas attacks or burning cars in the close vicinity of my fieldwork or the repeated evacuation of my office eventually became side notes to everyday life (Figure 3.1). In 2013 tensions also rose in Maadi, the Cairo suburb where I lived. One of the most serious attacks by Islamist radicals appeared here during late October 2013 when rocket propelled grenades were fired at a satellite uplink station (Figure 3.2).

Even though the likelihood of extreme security problems was rather limited during my research, it needs to be mentioned that I had to face the possibility that some of my participants were under security surveillance. Despite the fact that I gradually acquired skills to avoid the presence of security personnel or their ability to follow and/or record conversations I had with my informants, surveillance could not be eliminated completely. This was particularly true for the more elaborate mechanisms of the Egyptian security forces. The very lack of security guarantees – for my personal safety or that of my informants – had a tremendous effect on this research and also led me to anonymise all accounts in this thesis that included personal information. Section 3.4 will explore some of these difficulties in more detail.



Figure 3.1 – Navigating crisis: security information sent to GIZ employees via SMS in Cairo (Source: author 2013)

Conspiracy theories about foreign influence and particularly about the presence of foreign agents in Egypt flourished during the 25th of January uprising that represented a further personal security problem I had to deal with. The probability of being considered a spy added difficulty to explain my double roles in the field as a GIZ employee and researcher. The accusations against and the subsequent arrest of 21 employees of USAID and two of the Konrad Adenauer Stiftung in November 2011 illustrated the fine line between legal and illegal in Egypt. Eventually the growing maze of political and religious conspiracy theories in which foreign individuals played a role reached a level of absurdity by late 2012. A big number of new conspiracy theories entered the public ranging from “spy storks” to accusing the Egyptian Muppet Show of relaying coded messages (Figure 3.3). Nevertheless, being arrested on assumptions of spying remained a real threat to foreigners. Subsection 5.2.1 will return to the questions of foreign influence and conspiracy theories in more detail.



Figure 3.2 – Navigating crisis: just-in-time security information via Twitter (Source: author 2013)



Figure 3.3. – Reactions to the arrest of the cast of the Egyptian Muppet Show (Source: author 2013)

3.2 Observations, media and social media analysis

The gradual evolution of a better understanding about my positionality as well as how to employ it for the benefit of my research led to the upgrading of three other methods that in the beginning of my research had only been intended to play an auxiliary role. My research diary has been of crucial value for contextualising as well as reflecting critically on my work and private environment in Ethiopia and Egypt. Media and from 2010 social media analysis increasingly helped me to weigh my own observations about both capacity development and ICTs against that of the public.



Figure 3.4 – The schedule of a Barcamp event in Addis Ababa, July 2011, co-created by the participants (Source: author, 2011)

3.2.1 Research diary

I used a research diary from as early as October 2009. In the beginning I thought about using Brunello's (2015) application of *ethnosnapshots* from his research work in order to monitor my changing perception of capacity development and ICTs. However, it soon turned out that while *ethnosnapshots* are a great reflexive practice and brilliantly captures change in the researcher's perspective, it does not track the evolution of these changes. Most importantly, the triggers that lead to a change in the researcher's perception remain in the background or are left unmentioned

entirely. A simple research diary was much better suited track the evolving story of my research and record the interlinkages between theoretical and empirical work.



Figure 3.5 – Observing a Barcamp event in Cairo, February 2013 (Source: author 2013)

From 2010, when I took over the management of the eCapacity Development Department at ECBP, the research diary has grown in importance. Since in this new position I had much better access to decision-making levels in both ECBP and in the ministries, such as the MOCB or MOE, I gradually transformed the research diary into a central tool of my research. I used the research diary also for observing events of the local technology communities (Figure 3.4 and 3.5), which, however, raised questions about safety.

My goal was to record and expose issues that out of fear for repercussions would hardly be reflected in my other data sets. Therefore, I made detailed accounts of many of the political processes and decision-making that flanked projects in ECBP. The diary thus includes sensitive observations as well as statements I have picked up during the day while navigating between the German and Ethiopian managements of the programme. Up until September 2010 I made my records in notebooks, which I carried with me all the time. This was less for the reason that I could record information during the day, but rather to avoid it being stolen or copied.

I neither considered my office nor my home as safe, since small burglaries happened in both places. Moreover, due to my housemate's status within ECBP, our apartment and cars were searched a couple of times as well. Between January and July 2010, I wrote my notes in Hungarian as a form of encryption. Starting from September 2010, however, I transferred the entire research diary to Evernote, a note taking software that offered both encryption and password protection for my notes.

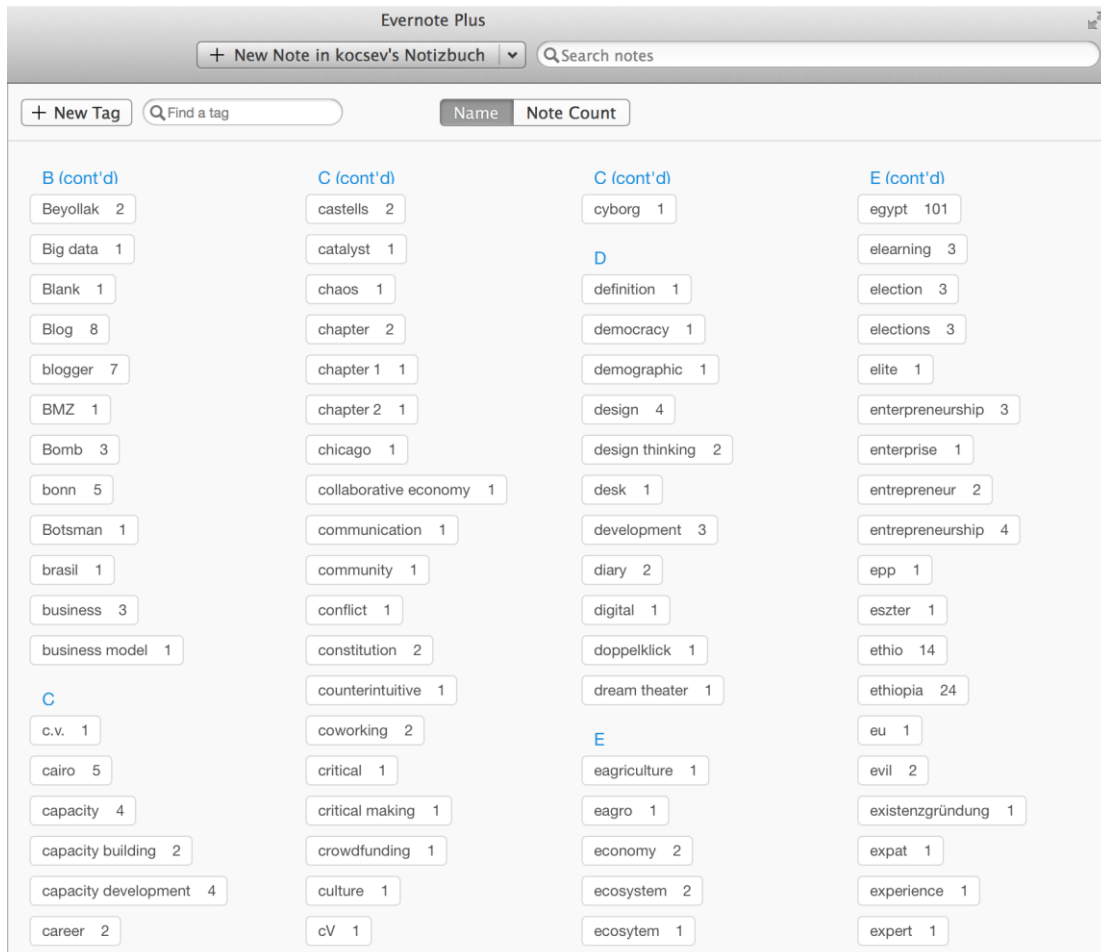


Figure 3.6 – Excerpt of tags used in Evernote for the analysis of research diary entries and related information clipped from the web (Source: author)

In total I created 230 research diary records in Ethiopia (2009-11) and 115 in Egypt (2011-14). There were two reasons why the importance of my research diary declined in Egypt. On the one hand my direct work environment was less connected to the issues raised in my research. On the other hand, the recording of Egyptian social media accounts offered better insights into the use and proliferation of ICTs in Egypt than recording them into my research diary would have been (Subsection 3.4.3). Through Evernote I was also able to tag my notes and clippings from social

media (Figure 3.6). Moreover, through the steady betterment of Evernote's functionalities, I was able to connect my research diary with social media data as well (Figure 3.7).

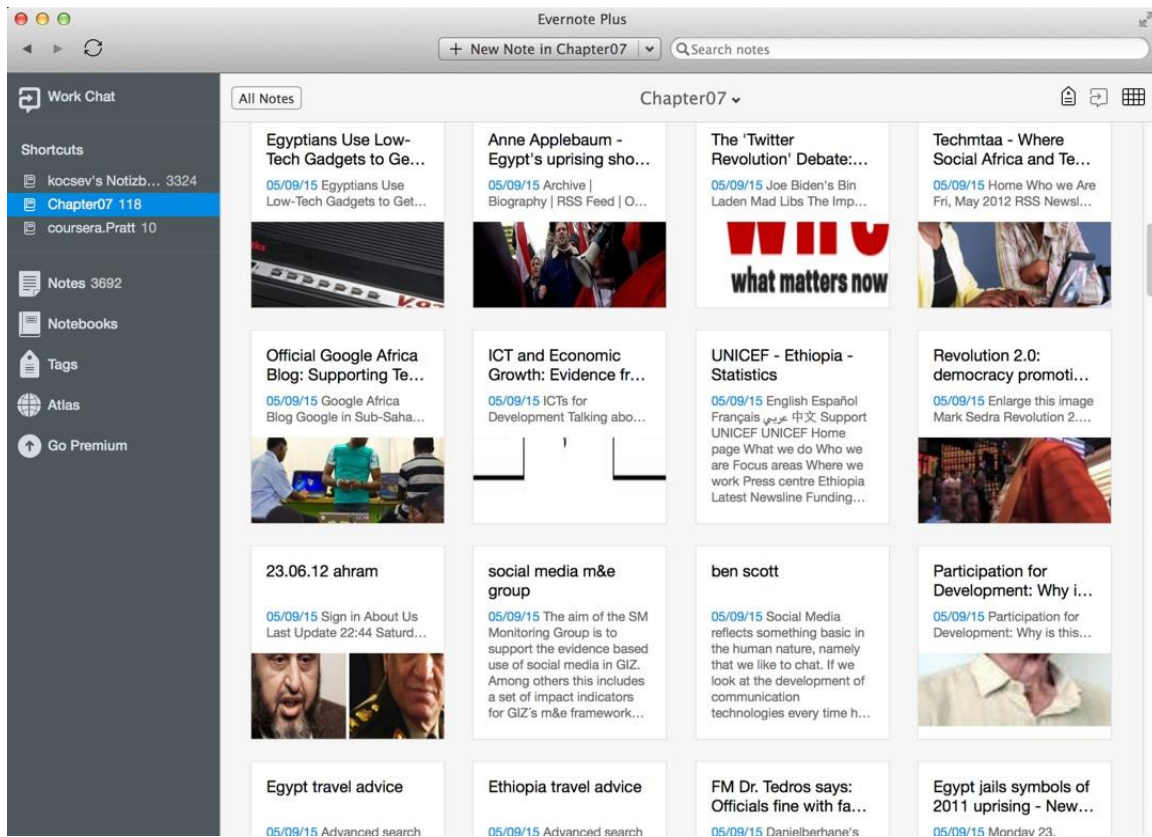


Figure 3.7 – Using Evernote for organising information directly clipped from social media or other web sources (Source: author)

In order to safeguard the anonymity of people mentioned in my research diary, I removed all names in the research diary quotes throughout this thesis. Names are replaced with an X or Y in all quotes and followed by a brief description of their position in brackets.

3.2.2 Media analysis

The gradually increasing importance of my research diary, and, in particular, the recording of highly politicised situations, demanded the better embedding of these events. In order to build context for my observations I started to collect clippings from the local press. In total I have collected 308 articles in Ethiopia and 249 in Egypt.

In both countries I attempted to balance accounts from press sources close to the government with articles from government critical newspapers. In Ethiopia the following newspapers and news sources belong to the former: *Ethiopian News Agency*, *Walta Information Center*, *Addis Zemen*. *The Ethiopian Herald*, *Capital*, and *Fortune* newspapers are privately owned and provide more critical analysis with regard to the social and economic development of the country. However, their criticism is limited by the restrictive and often oppressive censure imposed by the Ethiopian establishment. The revival as well as official establishment of development journalism as journalistic standard by the establishment (Skjerdal 2010) forced media outlets into the unequivocal endorsement of the EPRDF's development narrative. The interventionist practice of development journalism force both print and electronic media into following the establishment's agenda-setting. The favouring of the governing elite as well as the manifold of fundamental flaws with regard to framing democratic practices Ethiopian media outlets amplify the official rhetoric of the EPRDF's developmentalism (Skjerdal and Hallelujah 2009; Skjerdal 2011a). Accordingly, for my research newspapers brought forward a condensed version of government agendas. The press analysis I did helped me to pinpoint the underlying priorities that drove EPRDF's agenda.

Unlike in Ethiopia, by the time of my arrival in Egypt the relevance of print media declined heavily in the aftermath of the 25th of January uprising (Lynch 2011; Iskander 2011). Due to their false reporting during the seventeen days of protests that led to the ousting of President Mubarak, Egyptians massively turned away from newspapers and adopted new sources of information (Chapter 8). I still followed one state-owned newspaper (*El Ahrām*) in order to understand to keep track of official endorsements. Nevertheless, more valuable for my research are the new, critical online newspapers that appeared between 2011 and 2013 (*The Daily News Egypt*, *Madamasr*), which I also followed and collected clippings from.

Additionally, international sources such as *The Guardian* (UK), *Trouw* (The Netherlands), *NRC* (The Netherlands), *Die Zeit* (Germany), *Süddeutsche Zeitung* (Germany) have been also used to complement the information on Ethiopia and Egypt. This latter group was particularly important to counter the growing bias

towards both countries during my stay. All clippings were tagged in order to facilitate the analysis. The same tags were used as for the social media analysis. During the data collection period I employed 56 tags.

3.2.3 Social media analysis

Social networking sites (e.g. Facebook, Ning, LinkedIn), blogs, microblogs (Twitter) and augmented reality applications (Foursquare, Geoloqi) provide insights into the evolution of, as well as into the scope of agency of participatory technology communities (Hanna *et al.* 2011). Through the analysis of such online communities my particular purpose was to understand the opportunities as well as the limitations of individual agency through ICTs. Of particular interests are the terminological specifications (insider language) and cross-border networks of these communities. These two aspects assisted my analysis with regard to the evolution of participatory technology communities, their forms of expression, specific identity-building, as well as their global embeddedness.

| | Group name | Profile/URL |
|----|--|---|
| 1. | Google Technology User Group Addis | http://gtugaddis.eahead.net/ |
| 2. | Mobile Monday Addis | https://www.facebook.com/groups/221599964543194/ |
| 3. | Addis All Around | https://www.facebook.com/groups/addisallaround/ |
| 4. | Barcamp Ethiopia | https://www.facebook.com/groups/140783585944111/ |
| 5. | ice-ethiopia | https://www.facebook.com/groups/iceethiopia/?ref=group_browser_new |
| 6. | Ethio Info Desk | https://www.facebook.com/groups/546086215445038/ |
| 7. | ETC sucks | https://www.facebook.com/groups/112900380991/ |

Table 3.2 – Overview of observed technology communities in Ethiopia

| | Group name | Profile/URL |
|----|---------------------|---|
| 1. | Harrasmap | http://www.harassmap.org |
| 2. | Megawra Focus Group | https://www.facebook.com/groups/213229872049997/?ref=group_browse_new |
| 3. | Flat6Labs | http://www.flat6labs.com |
| 4. | Injaz Alexandria | http://www.injaz-egypt.org |
| | Egypreneur | https://www.facebook.com/groups/egypreneur/?ref=group_browse_new |
| 5. | Mobile Monday Egypt | http://www.mobilemondayegypt.net/ |

Table 3.3 – Overview of observed technology communities in Egypt

I followed and analysed the digital presence of a set of online groups operated by technologists in Ethiopia (Table 3.2) and in Egypt (Table 3.3). These groups were selected along the following criteria:

1. Relevance: reflecting the views of local technology communities and their experiences, preferably with a focus on ICTs
2. Size: the number of actors as well as their affiliation is representative for local technology communities (e.g. in Facebook based upon the number of members, number of Likes; for Twitter on the number of followers or re-postings/RTs)
3. Neutrality: it does not promote extreme political or religious views

Moreover, I followed the blogs of several technologists in Ethiopia (Table 3.4) and Egypt (Table 3.5) alike. The blogs provided an excellent access to the aspirations as well as specific language of technologists in both countries. From the blogs I often received contextual information about the use of specific terminologies within these technology communities. By using this knowledge I gained better access to the events of these communities as well. Context specific information and a good knowledge of the main actors within these groups helped building trust with my informants.

| | Blog | Profile/URL |
|----|--------------------------|---|
| 1. | Abel Asrat | http://freedombloggersdotcom.wordpress.com/ |
| 2. | Markos Lemma | http://eweket.wordpress.com/ |
| 3. | Billene Seyoum | http://africanfeminism.com/ |
| 4. | Sarah Suker | http://sukersays.com/ |
| 5. | Endalkachew Hailemichael | http://endalk.wordpress.com/ |

Table 3.4 – Overview of blogs followed in Ethiopia

| | Blog | Profile/URL |
|----|----------------------------------|---|
| 1. | Egypt Tech Talk | http://blogs.msdn.com/b/egtechtalk/ |
| 2. | Tech Egypt | http://www.techegypt.com |
| 3. | Sarah Abdelrahman (videoblog) | http://www.youtube.com/sarrahsworld |
| 4. | Sandmonkey (pseudonym) | http://www.sandmonkey.org |
| 5. | Zeinobia (pseudonym) | http://egyptianchronicles.blogspot.com/ |

Table 3.5 – Overview of blogs followed in Egypt

3.3 Appreciative inquiry

In order to interview my second target group, local technology activists, as noted in Section 3.1, I decided to use a more participatory and interactive method. Focus group discussions would have been the obvious choice, since they provide for an environment, which actively promotes the idea of ownership as well as empowerment. However, based on my experience with focus groups in Ethiopia and Egypt, the term itself, as well as the underlying methodology have become corrupted. They are so widely applied by donor agencies that focus groups are in fact trademarks of these agencies. Therefore, using the term might unintentionally suggest an affiliation of my research with a development agency and accordingly create either expectations (e.g. of financial benefits in the form of *per diems*) or refusal on the part of the participants.

Another reason for avoiding the term was that in my experience, focus group discussions are rarely used in a constructive manner (often due to poor co-ordination and moderation) and only act as mouthpieces of public discontent. Without willing to discredit the validity of such accounts, in my survey I aimed to unearth narratives that invest both ICTs and capacity development with new meanings. These considerations led me to the decision not to use the term focus group. Nevertheless, I tried to find a survey method through which I could access and analyse positive meanings around the use of ICTs and capacity development.

Unlike in the interviews with high-level stakeholders, my aim here was not to acquire a dataset on how ICTs are interpreted as well as used to reinforce top-down power relations, but rather to identify opportunities for empowerment and human agency through the use of ICTs. The goal was therefore to analyse existing cases which successfully promote agency through ICTs, as well as to improve these practices. In sharp contrast to my initial idea, which assumed that by deriving the success factors of such practices and experiences, a quasi-universally valid model could be created, I rather aimed at incremental improvements.

For this reason I decided to turn this around and use participatory inquiry methods in order to obtain data on how agency is practised in these communities. For this mediating step, I chose appreciative inquiry (Cooperrider and Pasmore 1991; Cooperrider and Whitney 2005) as a method, which allowed me to engage with these communities and act on some of their challenges, but in a more reflective and less ambitious manner. The two latter aspects were crucial for my sense-making process, since I wanted to avoid directly imposing my intellectual models, particularly those identified in the conceptual framework, on the participants. The goal was rather to find a process of co-production of ideas with these communities and to "work toward a solution through a collaborative process, appreciating multiple perspectives on issues, learning about strengths, and finding shared values [...]" (Stratton-Berkessel 2010, p. 51). The inherent focus on co-production (Figure 3.8) by appreciative inquiry was a particularly important aspect in my decision to use this method. It also offered a coherent and gradual process to "co-construct what can be done to build capacity (practically) and what should be done (morally)" (ibid, p. 32). Its emergence is inherently rooted in facets of the postmodern: globalisation and the

information revolution, which linked well into my conceptual framework (Lewis *et al.* 2008).

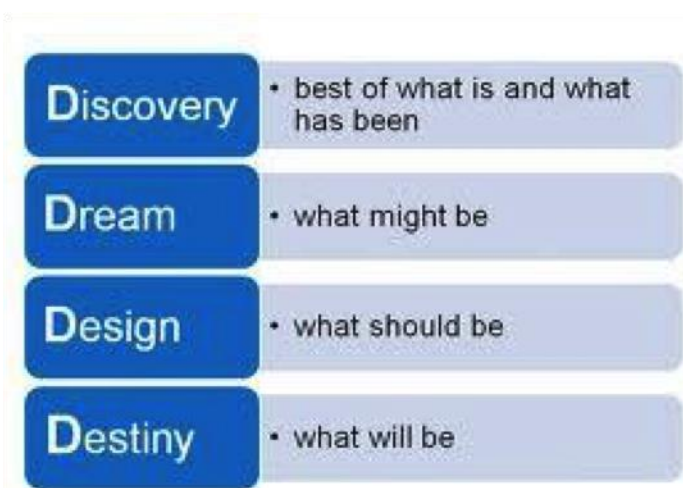


Figure 3.8 – The four principles of appreciative inquiry (Source: www.360facilitated.com)

3.3.1 Participants and sampling

Appreciative inquiry sessions were specifically designed for technologists (cf. Section 3.2.1). Each appreciative inquiry session consisted of at least 8 and at most 12 participants. Due to the interview method deployed, the number of participants had to be an even number (8, 10 or 12). The aim was to reach 12 participants at every location, but often fewer people attend workshops than confirm. I had to devise a strategy for situations where the number of participants was uneven at the beginning of the workshop. Two sessions were conducted at each survey location, with at least 16 and at most 24 participants at each location. In the case of appreciative inquiry sessions, only one group of participants was targeted, namely technologists. However, sometimes government or development agency officials participated in the sessions as well.

As mentioned, these people often have multiple forms of engagement when it comes to ICTs. Many of the ICT bloggers are also members in informal networks for the promotion of ICTs in their respective environments. Participants for my survey were chosen either through their personal interfaces (e.g. blogs) or through their group affiliation (e.g. active member in Mobile Monday Cairo). Initially I considered choosing participants through the former; that is, by sampling ICT-blogs at the

survey locations. The advantage of this would have been that the selection of participants would have relied on statistical facts, such as the Google-rating of their blogs or the number of visitors to their blogs. Nevertheless, in the process of doing so I realised that such statistics are misleading. For example, high ratings with Google have more to do with good SEO (Search Engine Optimisation) than with the quality of the content or actual popularity. This, in turn, also impacts upon the number of visitors, without reflecting anything about the quality of a certain blog. More importantly, not everyone blogs, let alone does it in English. The dependency on the availability of a blog, as well as a high Google rating, would have automatically restricted my access to the target group.

Reaching out to the informal networks also posed challenges, but it certainly eliminated the “online presence” bias. By relying on such self-organised, though informal, networks, my access to people also took a more participatory form, where these networks acted as my local partners. Such networks can facilitate not just the sampling process itself, but also much of the logistics related to organising survey sessions. From the methodological point of view, even more important was that such networks provide for a basic level of trust and familiarity among the participants. Trust is key to the success of such sessions and cannot automatically be generated when participants are selected individually. To eliminate a lengthy and not necessarily representative sampling process and to get around the lack of trust and differences in communication codes, I decided to work through the informal technology networks in order to create the sample. Key to my work with the networks were the contact persons. I conducted the entire participant selection process in close co-operation with my contact persons.

An important aspect to the co-operation with local, informal networks is the way it is framed. Introducing myself and framing my research either around my role as a PhD student or that as a GIZ employee might have been misleading. The former would have suggested a rigid survey set-up, which could easily have been questioned by the networks with whom I was going to co-operate. The latter automatically raises expectations, in my experience, in terms of a future co-operation with GIZ and/or direct financial benefits (e.g. *per diems*). Therefore, I decided to opt for a strategy which had already proved successful in my professional activities with

GIZ. In order to keep expectations low and to create a co-operation on an equal footing with local NGOs, I often used my identity as a co-founder of the *ice* (innovation, collaboration, entrepreneurship) network. This network has been funded and partially managed by GIZ, but it operates as a networking platform for technological innovation in Ethiopia and Egypt.

Nevertheless, I am aware of that this practice is questionable from an ethical point of view, since it might be seen as misusing a proxy organisation to cover my professional or academic identities. However, unintentionally raising participants' expectations and not being able to deliver on these, or creating a "researcher and researched" setting are no less problematic in ethical terms. At the time, using an identity which made an equal partnership with the local networks possible appeared more important. Nevertheless, in the conversations with local partners, my roles at GIZ or my research were also openly discussed.

Following this approach also gave me the opportunity to frame my survey sessions as a co-operation between two grassroots networks. The sessions should become part of the official programme of the networks and be marketed accordingly. This would also make them transparent to other network members.

3.3.2 The survey instrument

Both in Ethiopia and Egypt I conducted two appreciative inquiry sessions, amounting to a total of six sessions. For the sessions I adapted Stratton-Berkessel's (2010) formats for the exploration of ICTs as well as some capacity development issues. The usual size of appreciative inquiry groups varied between 14 and 17 participants. Since the selection of the participants was conducted through non-formal, grassroots communities of practice, the level of familiarity between as well as the organisational affiliations of the participants varied greatly.

Appreciative inquiry workshops use a four-stage model, also called the 4Ds (Discovery, Dream, Design, Destiny), which guide participants through a process of collaborative and affirmative sense making and storytelling (Lewis *et al.* 2008; Schensul *et al.* 1999; Stratton-Berkessel 2010). Participants reflected on their

previous experiences, whereby the focus was on positive forms of knowing. This created an opportunity to collect and analyse experiences of how people produce capacities through the use of ICTs. For the elaboration of key aspects concerning the emergence and functioning of agency, appreciative inquiry offers three possible prefabricated scripts (collaboration, technology, global interconnection). In my workshop design, I merged and weighed these scripts as my research evolved. In order to explore different aspects of individuality and agency, I designed an iterative process which took participants from the role and value of technology to questions of individuality and collaboration, as well as their global embeddedness. People began to make sense of complex issues, and together they created new knowledge.

Along the 4D cycle, appreciative inquiry sessions also make use of various approaches to collect personal experiences as well as produce new perspectives. In the discovery phase, I used peer-interviews as a tool to create interaction as well as trust among the participants. Furthermore, this strengthened my role as a facilitator, rather than an interviewer. In contrast to focus groups, this allowed me also to promote and explain to the participants that the process creates value for them, instead of just for the researcher, as is often criticised by action researchers (see for example (Whitehead and McNiff 2006; Drake and Heath 2011; Costley *et al.* 2010). Later, visual and verbal methods were used to create shared visions for future action, as well as to plan activities.

Developing a conversational practice stands in the middle, whereby, as Lewis *et al.* (2008, p. 112) suggest, “moments of clarity” are created. The conversational practice that evolves helps participants interpret their own stories, as well as those of others. For my data collection, these stories provided important insights into how technologists view the role of technology in their lives and their own roles in society. Stories which evolved from this reflective practice helped me and the participants test our hypotheses concerning the value that ICTs create, the role of technological thought leaders in their local communities as well as their global connectivity.

The appreciative inquiry sessions consisted of four phases, called “Focuses,” and were conducted sequentially from Focus 1. to Focus 4. Except for Focus 2, all phases consisted of guiding questions for the participants. In total, 18 questions were listed on the participants’ worksheet. Each phase focuses on a single issues:

Focus 1: Best contribution of ICTs (10 questions), Focus 2: Technology that serves (no specific questions), Focus 3: Future possibilities (3 questions), and Focus 4: Immediate Enhancements (6 questions).

3.3.3 Conducting the appreciative inquiry sessions

Each workshop took approximately 2 hours and 45 minutes. I moderated the sessions, but also engaged co-moderators for all four sessions. Open-mindedness as well as respect for the opinions of others was necessary for the sessions; these factors were hard to check for during a phone conversation, and therefore recommendations played an important role. The phone conversations also served to clarify the availability of the co-moderators during the planned dates, as well as their financial expectations. Non-availability or extravagant financial claims were automatically an elimination criterion. Only the selected co-moderator was called back.

Once the co-moderator for the survey location was selected, he/she was briefed on the aim of the session as well as the method. The briefing took place by telephone or Skype at least a month before the session. Co-moderators received the Co-moderator's Worksheet (Annex 6), the Participants' Worksheet (Annex 7) via email. In order to ensure the most neutral context possible, co-moderators received only general points with regard to my survey and were not informed about the exact aims or the research questions. I collected some personal data about each participant at the end of the session on a separate sheet that was filled in by the participants themselves (Annex 8).

With respect to the location of the sessions, I aimed to use spaces that were also regularly used by the respective technologist communities. This strengthened the framing as an event of the community, and had the advantage that the location was well-known among the participants (Figure 3.9). Besides creating a sense of familiarity, this also eased concerns around the logistics of the event (for example, no need for tedious descriptions of how to find the location).



Figure 3.9 – Conducting an appreciative inquiry session at the ICEADDIS tech hub in Addis Ababa, August 2013 (Source: author 2013)

3.3.4 The method in reflection

Even though I spent a considerable amount of time on developing this methodology, the data gathered were not as useful as I had hoped. The main challenge was how to weave in the data from the appreciative inquiry sessions into the actual analysis. There were two problems. First, the part focusing on the present conditions was intended to collect information in a rather positivist fashion. While that part provided me with a very detailed account of the ICT usage patterns of technologists in Ethiopia and in Egypt, the data merely quantified what I already knew through my observations, namely the globally minded, freethinker attitude and practice among technologists. Second, the part that focused on the future again reconfirmed that technologists are connected way beyond the borders of Ethiopia and Egypt. Their identities are complex and formed in online, transnational spaces, that transgresses the ardent nationalism present in both Ethiopia and Egypt during my research (cf. Chapter 4).

In summary, this method was above all an outcome of my attempt to identify practices for ICT capacity development and, in particular, to find participatory practices that could enrich the otherwise technocratic, top-down and sometimes out of touch instruments of GTZ/GIZ. Nevertheless, the method also had two main positive contributions for my research. First, it was widely appreciated by participants. They often pointed out that the workshop helped them to understand the necessity of looking beyond the status quo around them. I have received several invitations after the workshop to design participatory processes with technologists. Second, the positive feedback as well as the direct interaction forged new, more trustful relationship with techie communities in Ethiopia and Egypt.

3.4 Interview, but how? Engaging with key informants.

To interrogate and understand the perspectives of international agencies or institutions that promote ICT4D in the recipients' countries, I considered two possible methodologies: stakeholder dialogues (focus group discussions) and individual interviews. The former would represent a participatory trait, which would have let various perspectives, particularly elite and subaltern, converse with each other and create separate authorities of knowledge. Conversely, individual interviews provide more details about one perspective, while also exploring the interviewee's motivations and personal narratives.

Bloor *et al.* (2001) and Elliott (2005) suggest that it is rather premature to introduce data acquisition strategies at the beginning of a fieldwork assignment which explicitly aim at interrogating a set of different meanings represented through a number of various stakeholders. Such dialogue formats have the inherent risk to become dominated by those in power and re-establish top-down and centre-outside communication strategies (Chambers 2008). These settings only further exacerbate existing differences in power as well as reinforce established and officially endorsed development paradigms.

In some cases (e.g. government representatives and blogger groups), an early confrontation between different stakeholders might provoke conflict. This would

have a serious negative impact on the trust relationships, which need to be established with all stakeholders. Based on my experience with facilitating stakeholder dialogues in Ethiopia, I concluded that an early attempt to facilitate a multi-stakeholder dialogue would only have a harmful effect on reaching my research objectives.

3.4.1 The survey instrument

Many publications in the social sciences explore methods of interviewing and locate it in qualitative, quantitative and participatory scholarship (Mayoux 2006, Elliott 2005, Schostak 2006, Hollway and Jefferson 2000). As indicated by Schostak (2006), it is an appropriate tool to gain insights at the beginning of the fieldwork into how people in different positions and with different power status construct their meanings and experiences. Seidman (2006, p. 9) for example argues that “the purpose of in-depth interviewing is not to get answers to questions, nor to test hypotheses, and not to ‘evaluate’ as the term is normally used. At the root of in-depth interviewing is an interest in understanding the lived experience of other people and the meaning they make of that experience”. The analytical purpose of my research – to uncover power relations within ICT-driven capacity development as well as to let different perspectives on ICT4D converse with each other – is best served when it is built upon a catalogue of meaning.

Similarly to the catalogue I had built around the mainly academic and donor-dominated discourse on capacity development, I needed to create a catalogue that reproduces locally negotiated meanings of capacity development. To explore meaning on the widest possible scale, I chose to conduct semi-structured or guided interviews (Simon 2006a; Seidman 2006; Chambers 2008) with my target groups.

By using open-ended questions, the goal was to explore the participants’ own sense-making processes and to let them reconstruct their experience concerning the promotion and the use of ICTs (Seidman 2006). However, as meaning is contextual, I was faced with the challenge of how to engage with the participants in their own contexts. As Silverman *et al.* (2004) suggest, a one-off interview approach did not allow for rigorous contextualisation of the interviewees’ perspectives, but at the same time, I had to deal with rather complex logistics as well. Schuman (1982) and Seidman (2006), for example, suggest a set of three interviews with each participant,

which allows for establishing his or her life history, details of experience and reflection on meaning.

The same instrument was used for each of the three groups described above (cf. Annex 4). The interview contained 31 main questions, focusing on the following objects: Part 1: capacity development (9 main questions), Part 2: alignment (5 main questions); Part 3: ownership (4 main questions); Part 4: ICTs (5 main questions) and Part 5: social media (8 main questions). The interview contained both open-ended and closed-ended questions, part of the latter with yes/no answers, part of them with Likert-scales. After each numbered part, there was opportunity for the interviewees to address any additional issues they considered relevant concerning the given subjects but not covered by the interview.

As participation was voluntary and interviews could be interrupted at any time, subjects were not forced into unwanted situations. In addition, the interruption of the interview was not followed by any negative discrimination. A sample of the data collection sheet used at the end of the interviews is attached in Annex 5.

Through the pilot interviews I realised that allowing only 1.5 hours for an interview was too optimistic. The complete interviews took at least 2 hours at a normal, conversational speed and avoiding a test-like atmosphere, which might have stressed the participants. The format of the interview was well suited to note-taking during the interview.

Additionally, the pilot interview showed that some of the questions, which related to the organisational background of the practitioners, were not relevant or could not be answered. In some cases, practitioners related back to their experiences when working with a development organisation or an institution of a recipient government. I deleted questions of this type, decreasing the number of questions from 59 to 43 questions in total.

In both interviews, definitions (of terms like alignment and ownership), which I had planned to use to help orient the participants, were also deleted so as not to prompt any possible answers. This left the option open that the participants might be unaware of these terms.

3.4.2 Conducting the interviews

Participation in the interview was voluntarily and could be discontinued by the interviewed person at any time. Names were not collected and stored. Personal data were used only for research purposes. Personal data and the interviews were identified by a personal identifier, which was chosen by the interview participants. This provided an opportunity for me to collect further information from the participants after the interview as well. In case of a discontinuation, the participant was asked to indicate his or her reason to discontinue the interview.

The reason for collecting the personal data at the end of the interview was so as not to provoke opposition from survey participants right at the beginning of the interview. According to my experience, asking for personal information might have caused dismissive reflexes in certain settings. After the interview, it was more likely to get this information due to the fact that the questions were already known to the participants. In addition, the positive atmosphere of the interview was often enough to reassure them about the safety of their personal data.

During the interviews, I took notes. Voice recording, if agreed with the respondents, only supported the data collection and helped to verify the statements of the participants. I did not exclude anybody from the sample because they did not agree to have the interview voice recorded, however, eventually only two participants declined (a high-ranking public servant in Ethiopia and a junior public servant in Egypt). The results would, however, have been even more negatively influenced if these interviews had not taken place at all. Personality-related factors (e.g. a disposition of being more anxious or suspicious) would have had a less negative influence on the results than the loss of critical opinions (which might not have wanted to be recorded). Besides the data collection aspect, taking notes was also essential for creating a trustful and cooperative interview climate. It signalled to the interview participant that I was listening to what he/she was saying and that his/her opinion was valuable for my survey. By doing so, I also avoided a test-like atmosphere, which could have created stress for the participant and by this bias the outcome. Additionally, it also helped me to control the flow and the speed of the interview.

Considering the host of factors that can potentially influence the selection of the appropriate time and place for the interview, I decided to leave the final decision to the interviewees. In the end, they were the ones who knew best when and where they feel comfortable and at ease. The time and location was thus discussed with the participants once I received a positive response to my interview enquiry via email.

The security situation in Cairo during 2013 nevertheless severely affected my attempts to continue my interviews. Security concerns greatly increased the logistical difficulties. Particularly during the months of February, March, June and July in 2013, when I had to resort to safe interview locations as well as to using alternative travel routes. For example, after the events of 30th of June I wasn't able to reach my interview locations in Downtown Cairo by road, since military checkpoints were established and several bridges over the Nile were blocked. In order reach Downtown Cairo on several occasions, I chartered a speedboat (Figure 3.5). This gave my interview days a secretive, almost James-Bond-like touch, since the speedboat often dropped me at the safely guarded jetties of the exclusive Downtown yacht clubs of the upper class.



Figure 3.10 – Entering Downtown Cairo on a chartered speedboat to conduct interviews in July 2013 (Source: author 2013)

3.5 Positionality and the evolving ethics of practice

In Chapter 1 (cf. Section 1.4) I have briefly pointed out some of the major difficulties that arose from my convoluted positionality on the field. There is a vast body of literature on issues of positionality, however, most of these accounts reflect on the relationship between the researcher and the researched as an intersubjective process (Jackson 2001; Ley and Mountz 2001; Mohammad 2001). Even though these accounts informed my data collection, they did not address issues of organisational embeddedness and inherent biases. Moreover, my positionality was not only framed by my institutional embeddedness at GTZ/GIZ, but by the considerable pressure I experienced with the Ethiopian establishment. Questions about my loyalty towards the EPRDF establishment as well as issues of security significantly affected my data collection. Therefore, this section reflects on these issues and their consequences with regard to the evolutions of my private and professional identities.

3.5.1 Dual roles and the question of positionality

Since I was employed by GTZ/GIZ throughout my research, I was continually confronted with apparent contradictions between theory and practice. Whilst developing my conceptual framework, it became clear that this provided a rare opportunity to enhance an exchange between theory and practice (Supervisory records May 2010). Many of the new perspectives I have come to engage with through the academic literature on development have greatly contributed to my sense-making process, as well as to my successes (and conflicts) as a junior GIZ officer in Ethiopia.

Successively, I came to realise that the term 'exchange' is insufficient to construe the challenging dynamics between notions of theory and experiences of practice. Exchange requires two separate identities, of which only one can be practised at a time. Practically, this meant that in certain situations, I identified myself as a researcher, while in others, I was a practitioner. The uneasiness of making choices between multiple roles for insider researchers has been the topic of very considerable academic scrutiny (see for example Levin 2012; Lavis 2010; Coghlan

and Holian 2007), to which I will return in the following paragraphs. However, early attempts to negotiate between my various identities (Ravitch and Wirth 2007) has been fragmented and therefore more frustrating than fruitful. In this regard, my thinking has been rather bound to a certain polarizing instrumentalism, suggesting that "practical knowledge (such as management or negotiation skills) can only be used to improve practice, whereas research [is] aimed at the construction of theory," implying that it "is the pursuit of knowledge for its own sake" (Elliot 2004, p. 13).

During the process of reflection, I developed questions with the explicit aim to overcome my bias:

- 1) Why did I fail in negotiating between my different identities until now, and how can I improve this?
- 2) Have there been any ethical implications of my complex positionality in the field and have I consciously engaged with these?
- 3) How should I mediate between my different identities (and their political dimensions) and the various power relations in which they are embedded, or which they traverse or transgress?

The following paragraph takes on each of these questions in turn to begin to develop my methodological apparatus. First, I discuss the issue of negotiating between my roles in theory as well as in practice. This also begins to develop a framework in which such negotiation processes can be embedded. I then reflect on the ethical implications of moving between a variety of roles, be these in the field or between realms of practice and theory.

3.5.2 Negotiating between theory and practice

Zuber-Skerritt and Perry (2002, p. 171.) point out, "most students [part-time students in full-time employment] find it difficult to distinguish between the collaborative project work with their colleagues, and their thesis work which has to constitute their individual, original contribution to knowledge in the field". This dilemma has also characterized my research since its beginnings. One possible reason for this could

be the fact that the link between the two was initially taken for granted. Since I was working in the field of ICT4D in Ethiopia, the linkages between my work and my research were insufficiently critically assessed. For example, in the process of developing my conceptual framework, I often experienced the relationship between my different identities as a tension. Humphrey (2007) suggests that employment roles and research roles can be explicitly in conflict. In my case, this meant that as an "employee with operative tasks" (using the official GIZ term), I sometimes had to act contrary to what I had become convinced of through engaging with various bodies of development literature. I tried to decrease this tension through a number of attempts to "come out".

There were pointers to two apparent problems in this relationship: first, the influence that non-neoliberal development scholarship had on my thinking was in conflict with my employer's self-image; and second, while my research informed my thinking and initiated reflection, I did not have any opportunity to share or discuss the emerging tensions between what I had to do and what I thought was right.

Eventually, in retrospect, my research played a crucial role in my institutional coming of age. Through my dual roles, I have developed a semi-outsider identity and gradually have become an "irreverent inmate" (Cooklin 2000). Even though I have not reflected on this role in academic terms, I came to nurture this identity within GIZ. Admittedly, the fact of being less bounded by GIZ's organisational thinking, has also played a great role in the acceptance that I initially enjoyed by the Ethiopian government until mid-2010. Moreover, this role negotiation process also helped to increase the relevance and impact of ICT4D activities I was responsible for within ECBP. Through direct engagement with the various target groups and a continuous learning effort by my team, we managed to provide blended learning courses to approximately 10,000 Ethiopian students. While the numbers impressed our Ethiopian partners, the increased relevance of e-learning to the overall programme was widely appreciated in GIZ, too (GIZ annual employee assessment, March 15, 2011).

Problems such as dual roles in organisational settings, role negotiation (Ravitch and Wirth 2007) or pre-understanding (Coghlan and Holian 2007) have been discussed in various bodies of action research literature, and particularly in the

emerging field of Insider Action Research. Brannick and Coghlan (2007, p. 6.) suggest that insider action research "can be seen to involve managing three interlocking challenges", namely that of pre-understanding - the ability to step in and out of roles and reflecting on them critically; that of dual roles - role confusion, role conflict, and role overload - and that of managing organizational politics. Coghlan and Holian (2007) also add the aspect of change to this catalogue and suggest that since action research is dynamic and iterative (Coghlan and Holian 2007, p. 6), the relation between these aspects will shift over time.

Also important for my own reflection process was the understanding that the high level of personal involvement and identification goes hand in hand with "high hassle and high vulnerability" (Buchanan and Boddy 1992, p. 41). Thus, much of what I have experienced as hectic over the years was in fact normal for such research situations. My non-conscious behaviour (or in hindsight sometimes outright cavalier attitude) with regard to my continuous shifting between insider and outsider roles has, among other factors, also contributed to eventual conflicts with the Ethiopian partner. The fact that the ICT tools, which were introduced to Ethiopian universities by our team, spurred extracurricular discussion and collaboration crossed into the forbidden territories of the Ethiopian state. At the same time, it was increasingly appreciated by GIZ (GIZ annual employee assessment, March 15, 2011).

(Drake and Heath 2011, p. 36) suggest that many "insider researchers are often attracted by three specific methodologies: grounded theory, action research and case study". In my case, it was the other way around. I had been involved in non-mediated quasi-action research since the beginning of my research without having reflected sufficiently on the ensuing challenges. Some of the symptoms of this non-mediated nature of the research (during 2009-2011) were:

- a) The exchange between theory and practice was only unidirectional; I did not have a framework for pre-understanding;
- b) The role negotiation was not conscious or mediated, which led to multiple role conflicts and eventually role overload;

c) The outputs of my research were not a sufficiently integral part of my work at GIZ, which made successful organisational politics impossible.

Throughout this thesis I will engage with the specific challenges that derived from my convoluted positionality. Admittedly, finding the right way to negotiate my identity in the turbulent and often hectic everyday life in Ethiopia and Egypt posed serious challenges. Nevertheless, my unique access to the diagonally opposite sides of the political and social spectrum in both countries allowed me to continuously adapt my actions and deeply influenced my personal development.

3.6 Conclusion

This chapter has outlined the methodological approach applied during my research. It has also reflected on the challenges that each method posed and highlighted some of their benefits and potential disadvantages of each approach. An important aspect of my methodology is that it gradually evolved into participatory action research, instead of being defined as such from the beginning. In hindsight it would have been beneficial to set up the necessary strategies for participatory action research from the very beginning. However, I am also aware that I could not foresee the opportunities that would arise for contributing to the practice of capacity development and ICT4D at the very beginning of my research. Even though the difficulties that arose from my promotions and reassignments at GTZ/GIZ during my research created momentary confusions and often seemed not surmountable, these constantly increased my access to valuable information. As I learned to appreciate these new opportunities, I gradually reframed my methodological approach into an action research framework. With time, I also developed a better grasp for methodologies with which I can positively influence practice as well as impact my research setting in Ethiopia and Egypt. The next chapter will describe the research context by elucidating the socio-economic and political setting in these two countries.

Chapter 4 – The research context

This Chapter provides an outline of the socio-economic and political context pertinent to my research. During the entire course of my research I struggled with the question of the comparability of Ethiopia and Egypt: can developments in two countries so similar and at the same time so different be compared at all? During my empirical work, I often had the impression that I was observing two countries whose contemporary socio-economic and political evolution resembled each other. While certain phenomena I was interested in started to arise in Ethiopia, they were already in full bloom or had begun to vanish in Egypt. This effect of “similar but different” was amplified by the events of 25th January in Egypt and the rising ethnic and political tensions in Ethiopia after the death of PM Meles Zenawi (2012). Although it is not my objective directly to compare the two countries, this asynchronous development of phenomena informed and guided my observations and analysis.

Historical accounts of contemporary Ethiopia and Egypt are dominated by political history. This is particularly true in the case of Ethiopia, where the *Derg* regime’s ideological puritanism left a remarkably dire landscape of simplistic historiography embedded into a rigid dialectic of political struggle. The tendency of the dominant political discourses to exploit the long existence of both countries – whose political proto-identities stretch back to pre-historic times – often produce romantic historical narratives. Unfortunately, these blurred timelines and historical parallels that travel back to Axumite Ethiopia or Pharaonic Egypt find their ways into ethnographic research. While these accounts replicate discourses of fictitious legitimacy, they pay little attention to economic forces, socio-economic segregation or the emergence and demise of elites.

This chapter focuses on the evolution of the contemporary political economies of Ethiopia and Egypt. It pays special attention to the ways in which contesting ideologies such as socialism and transnational capitalism have found their ways into policy making. These developments are informative with regard to the production of

development narratives and their controversies in these countries. Moreover, these histories also inform us about the genesis of the urban upper middle classes that, along with the political and donor elites, are at the centre of my research. This chapter also provides an introduction to the status of ICTs in Ethiopia and Egypt in order to describe the infrastructural frameworks in which issues of techno-politics, informational capitalism and dissent through ICTS can be analysed. This introduction to the two countries is provided in two separate sections (4.1 and 4.2) that summarise the socio-political issues, the rise of urban elites and describe the level of ICT penetration.

Thereafter, I also describe my work settings at the GIZ in Ethiopia and Egypt in order to provide a organisational genesis for my thesis (Section 4.3). This will explain how I gained unique access to data as well as limited my abilities to explore.

4.1 Ethiopia

4.1.1 Overview

In Northern public perception, Ethiopia is still synonymous with acute poverty and famine. Despite the country's economic growth, which has averaged 8% to 10% in annual GDP growth since the early 2000s (Hailu 2015), it currently ranks at 174 out of 188 countries on the Human Development Index (UNDP 2015) and generally suffers from a negative public image. Ethiopia is still frequently associated with the series of famines that occurred during the early and mid-1980s (1983-85, cf. Clay and Holcomb 1986; Young 2006). This is not to deny that extreme poverty still exists in Ethiopia, but rather to point out that recent economic development has changed the economic outlooks of the majority of its citizens and has also given birth to an upwardly mobile, aspiring middle-class (Subsection 4.1.3). Nevertheless, approximately one third of the population still lives below the national poverty line of 0.60 USD/day (IFAD 2015) and local outbreaks of famine continue to occur. One such incident occurred during my field research in Southern Ethiopia in 2011, affecting more than 3 million people (*Economist* 2011; Rice 2011).

Contemporary Ethiopia is certainly a country of paradoxes, in which the

government attempts to build a balance between its growing economic prosperity and political influence in the East African region, and its piecemeal infrastructure and social security net. This paradox presents a major challenge to the governing party, the Ethiopian People's Revolutionary Democratic Front (EPRDF), which ousted the communist *Derg* regime in 1991, since when it has dominated the political scene and established the current political and legislative order.

More than 100 different ethnic groups constitute the Ethiopian population. The two largest ethnic groups are the Oromo (34.4%) and Amhara (27%) (CSA 2015). More than 90 languages and numerous dialects further complicate the country's ethnic diversity. However, the regional distribution of these is unequal. Whereas the northern and north-western highland regions are ethnically and linguistically homogenous (Amhara, Oromo or Tigray), the southern lowlands are heterogeneous. The constitution only recognises Amharic as the official *lingua franca* of the country; however, the federal states are allowed to determine their own working languages. Even though the semblance of ethnic sovereignty was established in 1993, inherent mechanisms protect the political and economic primacy of the Tigray and Amhara ethnicities (Abbink 2009; Hagmann and Abbink 2011). These two ethnicities are the governing forces within the EPRDF. The return to a multi-ethnic state after three decades of vehement Ethiopianisation under Mengistu, reinstated the century-old repression and marginalisation of the Oromo ethnic group, which in fact comprises the majority of the country's population.

Recently, besides issues of ethnicity, religion has come to play a role in the political identity-building process in Ethiopia. Although the country is often depicted as a traditionally Christian (Coptic) country – an image the EPRDF establishment attempts to maintain – in recent decades, the country's Muslim population overtook Christians in number and forms a majority (Muslim Population in Africa 2014). At the same time, the traditionally animistic tribes in the country's South turned to various Neo-Protestant churches due to intense missionary work since the early 20th century (Robert 2000; Bekele 2011). In addition, Neo-Protestant denominations are gaining popularity among the aspiring urban middle classes, especially in the capital. The constant rise of the Muslim and Neo-Protestant segments of the population undermine official accounts with regard to the political legitimacy of the Tigray-

Amhara and Coptic legitimacy of the EPRDF establishment. That the current Prime Minister, Hailemariam Desalegn, belongs to a Neo-Protestant denomination is a cause for annoyance among the traditionally Ethiopian Orthodox political and economic elite.

4.1.2 Governance

The 1994 constitution championed by the EPRDF introduced ethnic federalism by disassembling the centralised *Derg* state that negated the existence of ethnic identities and forced a hollow Ethiopian identity upon the entire society (Levine 1974; 2011). The armed insurgence that brought the EPRDF to power originated from regionally and ethnically defined opposition against the *Derg*; the party was therefore heavily biased against a homogenous Ethiopian identity. Accordingly, the 1994 constitution reinstalled ethnic self-government and created nine ethnically defined states (*kililoch*) and two major cities (Addis Ababa and Dire Dawa) that are granted self-governance. However, the ninth federal state, the Southern Nations Nationalities and Peoples' Region, is an exception to the ethnic rule; it is an artificially formed container-state for minor ethnicities and tribal groups located outside the highland areas. The federal states have the power to raise and spend their own revenues.

Ethnic representation is also assured through a bicameral parliament at federal level. While the Council of People's Representatives (*Yehizbtewekayoch Mekir Bet*) is elected along party lines, the Council of the Federation (*Yefedereshn Mekir Bet*) assures representation for each officially recognised ethnic group, whose representatives are designated by the regional councils. Members of both chambers are elected for five-year terms. Even though more than twenty political parties are registered with the Ethiopian Electoral Commission, only five of them are represented in the Council of People's Representative. Ethiopian elections are regularly wrought with recurring electoral tensions. The controversial parliamentary elections in 2005 for example were followed by a massive government crackdown on protesters from the opposition in Addis Ababa (Addis Ababa Police Massacre) as well as in the regional capital cities.

The EPRDF's course to correct the oppressive tendencies that were inherent in the *Derg* apparatus received much international acclaim as well as denunciation

for the EPRDF. While the international community celebrated decentralisation and ethnic diversity (Mengisteab 1997), the critics suggested that ethnic governance resurrected the centuries-old enmities that have riddled the country's early modern and modern history (Abbink 1995; Aalen 2006). Whereas the constitution grants the right of secession to the federal states (Article 39), the EPRDF maintains close control over the entire country through its close-knit party and parastatal structures. In line with the arguments of the opponents of ethnic governance, Ethiopia has seen a return of ethnic segregation (Praeg 2006; Girma 2012; Epple 2014).

Critics, such as Young (2006) and Berhe (2009), emphasise that the EPRDF maintains the historically rooted supremacy of the Amhara and Tigray ethnicities. This is apparent not only in party politics but also on the labour market, which favours the Amhara and Tigray nationalities. In order to counteract ethnic segregation, the EPRDF launched an extensive nation-building campaign in 2008 (Aalen 2006; Hagmann and Abbink 2011). A common Ethiopian identity is being formed around alleged national symbols such as the Ethiopian flag and historic sites. However, these symbols are rooted in and built around the Amhara and Tigray heritage (Abbink 1995).

Contemporary Ethiopian history books are eager to trace the roots of modern Ethiopia to the Amhara and Tigray dominated Ethiopian orthodox highlands. The glorification of the Aksumite Kingdom (1st - 10th century), the victory of Adwa (1986) and Menelik II's state building (1889-1913) all celebrate the Amhara-Tigray dominance and negate other ethnic histories. However, the country's economic trajectory is central to the EPRDF's nation building project. The EPRDF requires the selfless commitment of every Ethiopian, regardless of their ethnicity or social status, to reach the country's economic goals (Zenawi 2012).

4.1.3 Between command economy and transnationalism

With a GDP per capita of \$1,600 (2014), Ethiopia is among the poorest countries in Africa. Numerous factors contribute to the country's low economic performance: its long economic isolation, the legacies of the communist command economy, an underdeveloped physical infrastructure and educational system and the low productivity and competitiveness of the private sector (GTZ 2008). Its special

geographical and political situation as a landlocked country since Eritrea's independence (1993) is further aggravated by its frequent conflicts with neighbours. Emperor Haile Selassie's (1930-74) economic and social reforms were aimed at breaking the country's traditional isolation, but it maintained and strengthened the powers of the landed feudal aristocracy.

The anti-royalist movement of the 1960s grew out of a very thin bureaucratic and military elite that, to varying degree, renounced the apparently feudalistic tendencies of the Selassie era. They demanded land and industrial reform. It was a small, leftist military group (the *Derg*) that ousted Selassie and gradually introduced radical communist reforms. The *Derg* regime, while introducing progressive ethnic policies that removed the preferential treatment of the Amhara and Tigray tribes that was inherent to the modern Ethiopian Kingdom, returned to the economic isolationism characteristic of the pre-Selassie times. Even though it maintained preferential trading links with Communist allies (Cuba, USSR, GDR), the country was economically sealed off even from its East African neighbours. After almost two decades of civil conflict between ethnic-based militias, the coalition army of the insurgents (EPRDF) ousted the *Derg* regime in 1991.

The EPRDF replaced the Stalinist communist legacy of the *Derg* by its own communist ideology derived from Maoism and Albanian communism (Easterly 2002a; Dercon *et al.* 2009). Accordingly, it embarked on an agriculture-led industrialisation programme that kept the mechanisms of a command economy intact (Kelsall 2011, Oqubay 2015, 2017). The main goal of this policy is to increase productivity in the agricultural sector in order to boost agricultural exports (Cramer 2003; Weis 2014). The intention is that the resultant profits will subsequently be invested into industrialisation. However, since more than 90% of the agricultural sector is made up of smallholders, its scope for growth is limited. Owing to its communist legacy, the EPRDF leadership refuses to commit to reforming land ownership in Ethiopia (Chinigò 2015). Currently all land is owned by the state, which can be leased on a 90-year tenure. The inability to own land further hampers private investment in Ethiopia (Hailu 2015). However, the leasing of large plots of land to foreign investors – primarily from the Gulf countries and China – demonstrates the

establishment's willingness to compromise the rights of its political backbone, namely small holder farmers (Chinigò 2015; Brautigam *et al.* 2016).

Moreover, public investment in the industrial sector prioritises state-owned companies or enterprises that belong to the parastatal regional endowment funds (Vaughan and Gebremichael 2011). The two most important endowment funds (EFFORT and Tiret) are located in the political and economic hinterland of the EPRDF, in the Tigray and Amhara Regional States, respectively. Endowment funds were accused of participating in the arms trade during and after the armed insurgency of the 1980s (Horrocks 2010; Mulugeta 2015).

Ethiopia's economic development efforts were widely recognised internationally by the late 2000s. Even though it was considered as a donors' darling, it did not shy away from refusing conditionalities – such as structural adjustment policies from the World Bank – that were deemed not to fit with the EPRDF's own intentions (Kelsall 2011). The late Prime Minister, Meles Zenawi, dominated the EPRDF's economic vision (Weis 2014, Oqubay 2015;). He attempted to strike a balance between the communist legacy of the party and the mounting transnational capitalist pressure from international organisations. He repeatedly argued against the neoliberal global market and advocated for self-guided national economic development (Zenawi 2012; De Waal 2013). However, as many analysts have also pointed out (Demissie 2008; De Waal 2013), his course has steadily moved towards a transnational capitalism over the last decade in order to initiate or sustain economic growth.

4.1.4 Economic planning in Ethiopia

Ethiopia was an early adopter of the International Monetary Fund's Poverty Reduction Strategy Papers (PRSP), introducing its first PRSP in 2003/04. The Plan for Accelerated and Sustained Development to End Poverty (PASDEP) was a comprehensive instrument to transfer and communicate Ethiopia's economic reform plans both to its own civil servants as well as to international donors. The strategy aimed to raise the competitiveness of the Ethiopian economy by enhancing the business climate, improving the marketing of agricultural products and promoting

private investment. It stipulated a mid-term economic development agenda to which all sectors as well as international donors were to subscribe. PASDEP also outlined that Ethiopia aspired to attain the MDGs by 2015 as well as to become a middle-income country by 2025 (Hailu 2015).

The PASDEP period of economic planning (2005/06–2009/10) was followed by the endorsement and implementation of the Growth and Transformation Plan (GTP) in 2010. This planning instrument aimed “to sustain [the] rapid and broad-based growth path witnessed during the past several years and eventually end poverty” (GTP 2010, p. 7). In terms of economic growth, it aspired to reach an annual GDP growth of 11% in order to balance the rapid population growth. In terms of its industrialisation policy, it eventually broke away from the earlier strategy of agriculture-led industrialisation and embarked on a visibly more open and neoliberal trajectory. By the end of the GTP planning period (2009/10 in Coptic Calendar, 2015/16 in Gregorian Calendar), the industrial sector was expected to contribute 27% to the GDP. During the first three years, the sector grew on average at a rate of 16.7%, but this steep growth already shows signs of slowing down. With the deceleration trend in the industrial sector, the service sector has already overtaken agriculture as the main contributor to Ethiopia’s GDP (Hailu 2015).

The PASDEP and GTP economic planning cycles reveal the subsequent neoliberal turn in the EPRDF’s economic policy making. The policies that achieved stability in terms of food security during the 2000s were transformed, step-by-step, into a clear orientation towards the global market. At the same time, they preserved elements of a command economy approach the EPRDF drew from its communist host of instruments. The most apparent of these elements in both policy documents was the assignment of growth and export quotas to each industrial sector, which were broken down to individual factories (Brautigam *et al.* 2016; Oqubay 2017). The EPRDF, nevertheless, is slowly dismantling its communist heritage and embarking on a neoliberal development path exemplified by its quest to embed Ethiopia in the global market (Aalen 2014; Wedekind 2015).

4.1.5 The rise of a new urban elite

The annual population growth rate is 2.89% (Capital 2015), which poses one of the major socio-economic challenges for the country. Even though only 19.5% of the 88.5 million people live in urbanised areas, industrialisation and the emergence of a service sector propel urban growth. Lately the capital, Addis Ababa, has become the epitome of the economic upswing the country has experienced over the last decade. Originally founded by King Menelik II as a military camp (1886), its long-preserved social and economic structures have undergone tremendous change. Shack (1973) claims that the city's original military structure facilitated a balanced social order, which prevented segregation. The poorer population settled around the military compounds of the rich Amhara noblemen. The constant interaction between the poorer and richer segments of society safeguarded social security.

After the reign of Haile Selassie, the city's population stagnated in size. It barely reached 2 million people when the EPRDF troops gained control of the city on 28 May 1991. Since the early 1990s, the city has experienced substantial growth and has become the symbol of the economic prosperity orchestrated by the EPRDF. The growing economic power of the city also intensified migration from the rural areas. According to the Ethiopian Statistical Authority, the population of Addis Ababa is 3.4 million, with an annual growth rate of 3.4% (CSA 2015). Urban planners, however, estimate that more than 5 million people live within the city borders (Angélil and Hebel 2009; 2010). Many of the people who are unaccounted for live in informal areas that are scattered around the city. In an attempt to downplay the growing social segregation within the city, the Addis Ababa government fenced in the informal areas in 2011.

This move by the city government is symbolic of the brewing social and economic tensions. The city has invested heavily in urban infrastructure upgrading for its middle class citizenry (social housing programmes, public transport), but it has only marginally improved the living and working conditions of the poor and partly migrant population. There is little academic research on the changing character of the Ethiopian urban middle class. In recent years, however, inflation has begun to erode the incomes of the bulk of salaried, traditionally white collar and state-employed middle class (Maula 2014). At the same time a new, financially potent and

business-minded niche arose amidst the middle class. The latter increasingly redefines the image of the middle class along Western patterns. Private car ownership, access to modern housing – heavily subsidised by the state – and a set of consumer lifestyle attributes define this new middle class (Beaugé 2013; Hailesilasse 2013; Maula 2014). In terms of its size, only estimates exist, but it can realistically be put below the 1 million mark.

4.1.6 ICTs in Ethiopia

Ethiopia ranked 159th out of 166 countries on the ICT Development Index in 2013 (ITU 2014). Even though between 2003 and 2008, Ethiopia out-performed its African counterparts in terms of mobile phone penetration (Geldof 2010), its initial continental advantage, faded away as other national mobile phone markets opened up for private investment. While mobile subscriptions grew tenfold between 2007 and 2012, still only a meagre 27.3% of the population use mobile services and those cover only 64% of the country (Lishan 2012). Moreover, only 2.9% of the population have access to the Internet (2014): fewer than 3 million users in the second most populous country in sub-Saharan Africa. The majority, however, access the Internet in Internet cafes, since household Internet access remains low, with only 2.3% of the households being equipped with a connection to the Internet.

While the EPRDF establishment has repeatedly emphasised the importance of ICTs for its national development strategy, two main factors have impeded the efficient delivery of ICT upgrading. First, the telecommunication monopoly enjoyed by the state, which allows only the state-owned Ethiopian Telecom (until 2011 under the name Ethiopian Telecommunication Company, ETC) to operate in Ethiopia. Second, owing to its socialist legacy, the establishment considered the idea of telecommunication services, and in particular Internet access, as a luxury good. Accordingly, mobile telephony and Internet prices are among the highest in the world and the provision of new technologies remains slow. ADSL, for example was only introduced in 2010. Moreover, the Ethiopian Telecommunication Authority as well as ETC prioritised the expansion of fixed-line services over mobile telephony.

At the same time, several government-led initiatives created parallel ICT infrastructures in order to accelerate the use of ICTs in education and public administration. The actual impact of the two vast infrastructural projects, SchoolNet and WoredaNet respectively, are hard to assess. SchoolNet's evaluation, which the co-sponsor World Bank conducted in 2010, remains foreclosed from public access. There is also little information available about WoredaNet, which connects the 255 *woreda* administrations of the country via a satellite web-link. Gagliardone (2014) and Beyene *et al.* (2015) argue that most of the massive infrastructure projects served political purposes. Their impact on their actual sectors – education, civil service, justice system – has been marginal, primarily due to frequent technical failure. Until 2010, the Ethiopian Information and Communication Development Agency (EICTDA) supervised most of the major ICT infrastructure development projects. The agency was then upgraded and became the Ministry of Communication and Information Technology (MCIT).

The MCIT also inherited the tasks of the Ministry of Information, a powerful propaganda ministry led by Debretsion Gebre Michael, a close confidante of the late Prime Minister, Meles Zenawi. The establishment continues to deploy a strict surveillance infrastructure to monitor telecommunication activity (Gagliardone 2011; Beyene *et al.* 2015). Phone tapping and the monitoring of Internet traffic are part of everyday normality in Ethiopia. Due to the establishment's close co-operation with China, its companies play an important role in rolling out surveillance infrastructure. Even though the main goal of online surveillance is to block foreign content that is critical of the EPRDF, recent years have also brought increasing control of local online dissent. Symptomatic of this change was the arrest of eight bloggers, known as the Zone 9, which received international attention (BBC 2014; Foltyn 2015).

Among many reasons due to the establishment's close monitoring of local online content, blogging remains extremely marginal, with there probably being only 20-25 resident bloggers in 2010. At the same time the use of other social media has rapidly grown recently among Ethiopians. Particularly Facebook reached an important role among the urban middle class. Currently a little over 900,000 Ethiopians are registered on Facebook (Internet World Stats 2015); which equates to one third of Internet users.

4.2 Egypt

4.2.1 Overview – challenges to stability

The previous section noted the main factors (religion, population growth, urban elites) that pose a challenge to the stability of the EPRDF establishment in Ethiopia. The following paragraphs reflect on the similar challenges Egypt has been facing, while Subsection 4.2.2 provides a more in-depth genesis of the immanent religious conflict that had a major influence on the course of political events during my stay.

With 87 million inhabitants, Egypt is the most populous country in the Middle East. It ranks 110th out of 187 countries on the Human Development Index (UNDP 2014). With an annual per-capita income of 6,600 USD (2013), it by outmatches Ethiopia by far. Nevertheless, Egypt's economy has suffered from high unemployment and resource consumption over the last two decades. Egypt ranked 118 of 148 countries in the Global Competitiveness Report 2013/2014 and 108 out of 142 countries in the Global Innovation Index 2013. Despite its high level of industrialisation and a strong service sector, socio-economic indicators merely mirror its economic power. About a quarter of the population live below the national poverty line and adult literacy is at a meagre 73% (CIA World Factbook 2015).

Population growth (1.8% per year) puts considerable pressure on the limited resources of the country. 90% of the country's territory is desert and the only inhabitable areas are along the Nile and on the Mediterranean coast (Ask-Aladdin 2015). The country has experienced rapid urbanisation since the 1970s. Today, approximately 43% of its population are city dwellers, with an annual urbanisation rate of 1.7% (CIA World Factbook 2015). The three largest cities are Cairo, Alexandria and Giza. Only the area of Greater Cairo (comprised of Cairo and Giza Governorates) houses more than twenty million people. Population densities of almost 2,000 people/sq. km, as well as decaying urban infrastructure, overstrain urban centres.

Most notably, water supply has become a major issue for which the country is heavily reliant on the Nile. While a series of colonial agreements dating back to the late 19th and early 20th century safeguard Egypt's right to the majority of the Nile's

average annual flow, securing the uninterrupted flow of the Nile has repeatedly led to disputes with other riparian states, most recently with Ethiopia. Under President Mubarak, the Egyptian government successfully disrupted Ethiopian intentions to rally international recognition as well as financial support for a hydroelectric dam on the Blue Nile (Carlson 2013). Exploiting the recent political turmoil in Egypt, the Ethiopian government started the construction of the dam in late 2011.

4.2.2 An economic account – from communism to neoliberalism

Even though the British Protectorate of Egypt was abolished in 1922, British troops remained in the country until 1947 (until 1954 in the Suez Canal area). In 1952, a revolutionary group of army officers (the Free Officers) led by Gamal Abdel Nasser and Muhammad Naguib overthrew King Farouk and subsequently established the Republic of Egypt. Three military officers (Gamal Abdel Nasser, Anwar Sadat and Hosni Mubarak), who had been groomed within the circles of the Free Officers, ruled the country until 2011. Their consecutive presidencies were an experiment in modern state economy – it brought dogmatic socialism (Nasser), pragmatic capitalism (Sadat) and eventually neoliberal capitalism (Mubarak).

Gamal Abdel Nasser's rule (1956–1970) turned Egypt into the first socialist country in the region. He launched an industrialisation campaign and rallied other leaders in the region around his notion of Arab socialism. Due to Nasser's industrialisation and social welfare policies, the labour movement still wields considerable power in the political sphere. Under Nasser, Egypt became a strong ally of the Soviet Union. Anwar Sadat's rule (1970-1981) brought a major reorientation in the country's economic as well as political aspirations. After the Six Day (1967) and the Yom Kippur wars (1973), Egypt re-evaluated its foreign policy and oriented itself towards the United States. Since Egypt plays a key role in the stability of the North African (Maghreb) and Middle Eastern (Mashreq) regions, it has received steady military and economic aid from the United States since the mid-1970s.

Powered by the well-organised labour movement as well as some militant student organisations, Sadat's rule was challenged by leftist dissent (el-Hamalawy

2015). Sadat responded with the Open Doors policy (*Infitah*) that welcomed Western investors and encouraged private enterprise. It attempted to break away from the Nasserist promise of full employment – that was carried out by overstraining the public sector – and aimed to deploy a more plural economic system. While Sadat was inspired by free-market liberalism, he also retained certain socialist elements (e.g. upholding the state's ownership of heavy industry). The *Infitah*, however, mainly benefitted a thin, entrepreneurial layer of the Egyptian society, giving way to the rise of a new urban middle class. At the same time, it neglected lifting the majority of the population out of poverty.

President Mubarak's rule (1981-2011) continued Sadat's economic transformation by further cementing the influence and ownership of the military in the country's economy. He also intensified the privatisation of state-owned enterprises, leading to the further influx of Western investors during the 1980s and 1990s. During the Mubarak regime, Sadat's Open Door policy was transformed into neoliberal market capitalism (Armbrust 2011; Maher 2011; Roccu 2012). Despite the impressive growth figures of the 1990s, the public safety net was demolished and the public sector was neglected. Both Sadat and Mubarak aimed at decreasing public employment in order to force capitalist structures to develop. Nevertheless, due to public dissent that resulted in major strikes starting in the late 1970s, both presidents were forced to facilitate the influx of millions of employees into the public sector. Eventually, public employment accounted for 30 to 40% of total employment between 1980 and 2011 (El-Wassal 2014). By 2011, the costs of public employment amounted to 26% of the total government expenditure (with another 30% spent on food and fuel subsidies).

Under President Mubarak, the Egyptian economy also underwent an extensive, IMF-led structural adjustment programme, which aimed at transforming Egypt into a liberal market economy and integrating it into global economic networks. The successive market liberalisation policies, however, only amplified the effects of the Open Door policy (Bromley and Bush 1994). It positively impacted private enterprises, but did not alleviate the core problems of un- and underemployment (low-wage public sector jobs, informality). Mubarak's regime subsequently emphasised the development of the tourism and ICT sectors in order to create new

jobs. While the former added new jobs during the 1990s and 2000s, the latter had only limited effects (cf. 4.2.3). Accordingly, the relatively small corporate elite that had connections with the upper leadership of the military continued to dominate the medium and large enterprises. It held great political sway and was better able to safeguard its interests. Mubarak also cemented the military's influence in the civil economy, where the military was and is a major actor, particularly in the infrastructure and construction sector. The military also enjoys statutory economic privileges (e.g. tax exemption, free access to labour in the form of conscripts) and occupies key positions.

The 1990s and 2000s were characterised by the increasing fragmentation of society along economic and religious fault lines (Singerman and Amar 2006). By the early 1990s, a new economic elite crystallised in Egypt's major cities. Due to its Western-oriented lifestyle as well as economic capabilities, this distinct upper middle class is often compared to the middle class of Northern societies. In 2011, it constituted approximately 10% of the society. Peterson (2011) estimates that approximately 4 to 5 million people can afford the consumer lifestyle that is celebrated in Cairo's mall culture (Abaza 2001). This well-off, cosmopolitan class is increasingly detached from the reality of the other Egyptians. Symptomatic of its detachment is its relocation into the new American-style, gated suburbs that dot the desert in the Greater Cairo area (Beverly Hills, Palm Hills, Evergreen or Katameya Heights).

This urban upper middle class draws massive benefits from the social exclusion imposed on the rest of the middle class and the lower class. Through family and business ties they became accomplices of the corrupt political elite in assisting the transfer of privilege, wealth and political power to businesspeople. Their affluent, proto-aristocratic lives perpetually negate, abuse, as well as bizarrely tolerate the co-existence of the lower classes. They symbolize a new form of internal colonialism – with a touch of cosmopolitan sensibility – that thrives on the newly found neoliberal economy of the Mubarak times.

4.2.3 The influence of Islam on Egyptian politics

The previous subsection outlined the major shifts in economic policy and socio-

economic priorities since Egypt's independence from colonial rule. I have also pointed to the nexus between the Egyptian military and economic as well as political power, which had a major influence on the political events during my stay in Egypt. Besides the influence of the military in non-military matters, I need to speak about Religious sectarianism had a major influence on the course of events as well as the worldviews I encountered during my research. The Open Door policies of Sadat led to heavy social fragmentation. However, the severe division between urban middle classes provided a breeding ground for religious sectarianism. The revolutionary events of 2011-2013 have exposed the extent of religious influence as well as fragmentation within Egyptian society. Apart from the flaring up of anti-Coptic sentiments in the aftermath of the 25th of January 2011 uprising (Subsection 4.2.4), sectarianism among the Muslim population further complicated the political landscape.

The Egyptian Muslim population (ca. 90% of the entire population) follows the Sunni sect of Islam and has traditionally subscribed to rather liberal views (Goldschmidt 2008). The co-existence of the Muslim majority and the Coptic minority (around 9% of the population) can be described as peaceful for centuries. However, Muslim religious organisations have capitalised on the rapid population growth that has also resulted in uneven social welfare. Their influence has grown steadily since the 1980s. Most important among these organisations is the Society of the Muslim Brothers or, in its short form, the Muslim Brotherhood (MB). Originally founded as a religiously inspired, anti-colonial movement in 1928 (cf. Walsh 2003), it was suppressed and deemed illegal almost continuously until the 1970s. President Sadat released the supreme guide as well as other leading figures of the organisation in 1978. Sadat's assassination (1981) was officially linked to the Muslim Brotherhood, which resulted in massive anti-Brotherhood campaigns throughout the entire rule of President Mubarak.

Despite the retaliations, the Muslim Brotherhood successfully continued to expand its reach both among the rural population and the urban poor. Campagna (1996) points out that the influence of the organisation could not be kept in check by force under the Mubarak regime, which made the latter constantly seek and negotiate consensus with the Muslim Brotherhood. Even though "the West assumes

that debates about the application of Shari'a law and gender control dominate Brotherhood politics – and certain populist factions of the Brotherhood do continue to obsess about the comportment, morals, and bodies of women and girls” (Singerman and Amar 2006, p. 8-9) – the Muslim Brotherhood is practically the first established opposition party in contemporary Egyptian history (Avnery 2012). Along with other Islamist groups, it began to advocate political party pluralism from the 1990s on, with policies that included “the rights of secular parties to exist within a proposed Islamic state and full rights of citizenship for Coptic Christians and for women” (ibid, p. 8).

4.2.4 The 25th of January 2011 uprising and its aftermath

During the two-and-a-half years I worked in Egypt (October 2011 to February 2014), I witnessed three presidential and two parliamentary elections, one military coup, two civilian and two military governments. To provide a representative yet brief account of the political and governance structures in Egypt during this period is almost impossible, but it is essential to understand this background to appreciate the context of the research and practice environment in which I was working.

As shown above, though, the neoliberal Mubarak establishment amplified the fragmentation of Egyptian society. It could not effectively handle its main challenge, the growing un- and under-employment, particularly among the youth. This led to the flaming up of labour conflicts championed by the workers’ unions, the growing influence of religious organisations and eventually the creation of new secular political movements (Aouragh and Alexander 2011).

The first outbursts of the growing social upheaval against the Mubarak regime date back to 2005. The *kifaya* (enough) movement expressed the public discontent and the active rejection of the regime’s corrupt, anti-democratic and plutocratic practice. This new kind of – mainly urban – claims introduced by *kifaya* induced a public discourse that questioned the legitimacy of a “state run in the interests of an elite, state-subsidized ring of Cairo-based capitalists who call themselves liberals or globalizers or democratizers because they facilitate foreign investment in the economic sphere, even as they insist on repression, the extension of the Emergency Law, and police-state practices in the political sphere” (Singerman and Amar 2006,

p. 9). The *kifaya* movement, together with a set of other, minor forms of resistance (April 6 Movement, The National Movement for a New Egypt, Egyptians for Free Elections), can be seen as the predecessor as well as moderator of the 25th of January uprising.

The eighteen days of mass protests that started on 25th of January 2011 unified a broad coalition of Egyptian opposition forces and finally overthrew the Mubarak regime. The abdication of President Mubarak (7th February 2011) was followed by an intermediary period lasting until the presidential elections. During this period, Field Marshall Tantawy's military government under the Supreme Council of the Armed Forces (SCAF) governed the country. The intermediary period re-animating and partly further amplified political and religious antagonisms that were suppressed during Mubarak's presidency. The postponement of the elections until May 2012 further exacerbated the political conflict and questioned the SCAF's mandate. Due to its role in the violence against protesters, the police force was removed from the streets after Mubarak's fall. The military overtook the protection of the public sphere and applied martial law, resulting in a series of tumults that left numerous civilians dead (e.g. Maspero Massacre). This further eroded the population's sympathy for the military government and turned it against the military's favourite presidential candidate, Ahmed Shafik.

Mohammed Morsi, the candidate of the Freedom and Justice Party, became the fifth president of Egypt with a low margin and was sworn into office on 30th of June 2012. The party is the civilian arm of the Muslim Brotherhood. While it could rally the support of the poorer segments of the population, it had considerable difficulties earning the trust of the affluent urban middle-class. In the beginning of his presidency, President Morsi showed signs of a commitment to civil governance and to the achievements of the 25th of January uprising. For example, he removed Field Marshall Tantawy from his government, where he had held the position of Minister of Defence. Even though this move earned him the temporary support of the secular citizenry and the unionised workers, the Constitutional Declaration of 22nd November 2012 was followed by the eruption of anti-Morsi protests. The declaration granted the president supra-constitutional powers and was widely regarded as a stepping-stone for the "Islamists to hegemonise power in the country" (Charbel 2012, no pagination).

The liberal opposition launched the *Tamarod* (Rebel) movement in early 2013, which vowed to remove President Morsi from office by calling for new elections. It claimed to have collected 15 million signatures by June 2013. Even though these claims have been contested since the removal of President Morsi, *Tamarod* successfully aligned the fragmented liberal, Nasserist and even Islamist opposition. The mass protests organised by *Tamarod* activists paved the way for the military take-over on 3rd July 2013. The military claimed to have intervened on behalf of the Egyptian people in removing President Morsi from office. In order to establish control over the country, the second military government, under Field Marshall el-Sissi, essentially occupied the key sites in Cairo and around the country, and imposed a curfew until the end of September 2013. In the presidential election of May 2014, el-Sissi was elected president of Egypt. His presidency is regarded as the end of the intermediary period that started with Mubarak's abdication and signalled the return to a military-led quasi-democratic rule in Egypt.

The Muslim Brotherhood called for civil disobedience and rallied against the military government. The military eventually forcefully cleared its main protest camp at the Raba'a Mosque in Cairo (August 2013), killing more than 600 people.

As the above section also demonstrates, the intermediary period between 2011 and 2014 was permeated with constant political strife. Many of the significant events were re-evaluated as political and social change unfolded. Due to the frequent changes in political power, most of the terms are biased and reflect only one particular perspective on the events. A prominent example of this is the ousting of President Morsi. While the Muslim Brotherhood called it a coup, the liberal opposition first celebrated these events as the Second Revolution. Later, even liberals shifted to denote it as a coup or counter-revolution.

This thesis frequently refers to the events that brought down the Mubarak regime. For reasons explained above, instead of calling it the "revolution" or the "first revolution", I prefer to adopt Iskander's (2011) term: the 25th of January uprising. The legacy of the 25th of January uprising is broadly acknowledged among the Egyptian population and is a politically neutral term used to describe the period between the first mass protests in Cairo (25/01/2011) and the abdication of President Mubarak (07/02/2011). In this thesis, I, however, use the term to denote the entire period from

the 25th of January 2011 until the ousting of President Morsi (30/06/2013). Looking back at this period of instability between the removal of President Mubarak and President Morsi it is clear that it in fact constitutes a single political era of transition, volatility and conflict. Multiple political forces – Islamist, liberal, socialist-secular, and old elites – attempted to dominate the political and public space in order to cement their influence. Therefore when this thesis uses the expression “the 25th of January uprising” I refer to this entire period of contestation and political unrest that was eventually halted by the military intervention of 30th of June 2013. When I refer to the concrete events between 25th of January and 7th of February 2011 the year (2011) is added (the 25th of January 2011 uprising).

4.2.5 ICTs in Egypt

Egypt ranked 89th on the ICT Development Index in 2013 (ITU 2014). While being by far the most populous country in the Middle East and North Africa (MENA) region, it performed just below the regional average in terms of access to ICTs as well as national ICT skills levels (ITU 2014). Although the 25th of January uprising tarnished the country’s economic performance as well as its political stability, Internet penetration and access to mobile telephony continued to increase. By mid-2014, 44.5 million Internet users were registered, which accounts for 54.1% of the total population. The mobile penetration rate (the number of mobile connections divided by the population) reached 120%, with 74% of the population owning mobile phones (ITU 2014).

Egyptian society as a whole, and particularly the business community, have been able to take advantage of the rapid upgrading of the ICT infrastructure since the mid-1990s (Ghonim 2012; Howard and Parks 2012). This swift expansion of telecommunication infrastructure aimed at fulfilling the government's plans to rapidly add new jobs (Sayed and Westrup 2003). The subsequent diffusion of ICTs and particularly of access to Internet infrastructure, however, mostly catered primarily to the needs of the middle and upper classes (Mehanna 2010).

Between 1985 and 1995, Egypt invested heavily in ICT infrastructure in order “to establish a full-fledged information infrastructure capable of keeping pace with the

developments taking place globally” (Kamel 2010, p. 843). In 1999, the Ministry of Communications and Information Technology (MCIT) was established with the goal to attract international investment as well as turn Egypt into a global offshoring location (Marson and Blodgett 2007; Oshri *et al.* 2009). These aspirations culminated in the establishment of the Smart Village initiative (2001), an ICT park on the outskirts of Cairo that is modelled after Indian offshoring locations. It attracted international corporations such as Oracle, IBM, Intel and Vodafone. By 2009, the ICT market generated around 2.9 billion USD in annual revenue (Kamel 2010).

In order to bridge the rising disparity between the urban and rural population's access to ICTs, Mubarak launched the Egyptian Information Society Initiative (EISI) in 2003. Its main aim was “to help bridge the digital divide and facilitate Egypt's evolution into an information society” (Kamel 2010, p. 846). The EISI received international praise, but in fact did little to impact the disadvantaged segments of the population (McBride and Stahl 2009). At the same time, the growing competition between telecommunication providers drove down the costs of access to mobile telephony as well as the Internet. This, in turn, allowed access to mobile, particularly mobile Internet, for the poorer segments of the society, too. This unparalleled access to ICT tools played a key role during the 25th of January uprising. Chapter 8 will explore this particular role more in detail.

4.3 From the Blue Building to the Silver Tower

This section provides a brief description of the two GTZ/GIZ programmes for which I worked during my field research in Ethiopia and Egypt. The little over six years that I spent in these two countries with GTZ/GIZ intensively shaped both my professional and private lives. My attempts to try to come to grips with the institutional complexity of German development aid and the Ethiopian state apparatus at the same time constantly forced me to re-evaluate questions of power and positionality (cf. Section 3.5). The socio-temporal metaphors of Blue Building and the Silver Tower, where the two programmes were headquartered, aptly describe these struggles.

My initial employer, the Deutsche Gesellschaft für Technische Zusammenarbeit (GTZ), was transformed into the Deutsche Gesellschaft für

Internationale Zusammenarbeit (GIZ) in 2011. GIZ was established through the merger of three German development organisations: the Deutscher Entwicklungsdienst (DED), the Deutsche Gesellschaft für Technische Zusammenarbeit (GTZ) and the Internationale Weiterbildung und Entwicklung (InWEnt). In this thesis, I use GTZ for the period prior to 2011 and GIZ afterwards to talk about my employer. When I reference projects that took place during both periods, then I use both acronyms (GTZ/GIZ).

4.3.1 The Engineering Capacity Building Programme

During most of my field research in Ethiopia the country also had one additional ministry, the Ministry of Capacity Building (MOCB). It was established in 2005 as a supra-ministry that was mandated to intervene in other ministries' work on behalf of the government. The attention given to the founding of MOCB clearly situated capacity development within the developmental narrative of the EPRDF party-state. The assignment of Tefera Walwa – a civil-war veteran and a founding member of the Tigrayan People's Liberation Front (TPLF – one of the predecessor organisation of the EPRDF) – as the Minister of Capacity Building also underlined the importance of the ministry (Tigabu 2014). Tefera had held several important political positions since 1991 – including as mayor of Addis Ababa and as Minister of Defence. Tefera was renowned for his “bush fighting” mentality – a reference to his role in the insurgency against the *Derg* regime. After the elections in 2010, the MOCB was merged into the Ministry of Civil Service. The new minister, Junedin Sado, a Muslim and ethnic Oromo EPRDF cadre, was, however, soon publicly blackmailed for his family's alleged ties to an underground Islamist organisation and fled the country in 2013. He was shot at the border with Kenya. I worked with both ministers during my research and the opportunity to observe their career paths and that of their clientele, provided important insights about the arbitrariness and sometimes cruel logics of the party-state.

Most of my research was carried out within the domain of the MOCB. The Ethiopian Engineering Capacity Building Programme (ECBP) was a development programme of the MOCB supported by the GTZ. The main scope of MOCB's work was administrative reform; however, it also managed all major ICT programmes of

the government. The Ethiopian Information and Communication Development Agency (EICTDA) was also supervised by the MOCB.

During my four years in Ethiopia (2008–11), I worked as a GTZ/GIZ employee in the Engineering Capacity Building Programme (ECBP). As an Ethiopian-German bilateral aid programme, it was established as an exemplary effort to symbolise the importance as well as the effectiveness of the Paris Declaration. The programme was fully Ethiopian owned and completely aligned with the country's development strategy at the time (PASDEP). The programme was originally scheduled to last almost ten years (November 2005 to June 2015) to provide mid-term support to the Ethiopian government's private sector development reform. In order to highlight the importance of the programme, the Ministry of Capacity Building was put in charge of overseeing it. ECBP was headquartered at the Blue Building, a newly-built high-rise in the business district of Addis Ababa. The name of the building quickly became synonymous with the programme and was often used interchangeably.

While the Ethiopian and German partners showed that the programme had an enormous impact, its administration was increasingly hampered by management conflicts. It was terminated in 2012, three years before the planned end of the programme. As a technical co-operation programme, it was also the largest GTZ had ever executed on behalf of the German Federal Ministry for Economic Co-operation and Development (BMZ), with an approximate budget of € 13 million per year. The Ethiopian government contributed the same amount of funds, however, mainly in kind.

ECBP was originally designed with four major components that operated nationwide. In 2006, however, a fifth, cross-cutting component named eCapacity Development was added to tackle the implementation of ICTs in the main components. I joined this component in 2008 as a junior programme officer. Due to the MOCB's interest in ICTs, the component grew to a team of 15 employees by 2009. It was responsible for the roll-out of nine e-Learning Competence Centres for the Ethiopian universities and for the implementation of business software solutions in the private sector. In 2008 and 2009, I mainly coordinated the implementation of these two activities. This allowed me unparalleled access to university as well as company sites across the country. In 2010, I took over the management of the

component (Figure 4.1). Through my new position, I had the opportunity to directly work together with decision makers in the MOCB and MOE. This involved regular meetings with various secretaries of state and ministers. This unprecedented level of access to the inner circles of political power enabled me to reflect more critically on the deployment of ICTs in Ethiopia. ECBP was housed at a new office building commonly known as the Blue Building in the capital's Bole district (Figure 4.2).

Figure 4.1 – My team at ECBP, 2010 (Source: author 2010)



Nevertheless, it also increased my exposure to the intricate power struggles of the EPRDF regime. The scramble for power within the establishment was further revealed by the parliamentary elections in 2010. Even though the heightened political activity of 2010 and 2011 permitted me to glimpse the capriciousness and arbitrariness of power-grabbing within the EPRDF regime, it also rendered my workplace an auxiliary operating theatre. The apparent strife within the EPRDF structure disabled vital decision-making processes within the partner ministries.

In late 2010, I co-founded a business incubator together with my team at ECBP, ICEADDIS (innovation, collaboration, entrepreneurship) at the Addis Ababa University. ICEADDIS was conceived as a grassroots innovation hub for home-

grown innovations with a strong social and environmental commitment. Its main aim is to create a physical nexus point for students, young academics and young entrepreneurs from various technology and business backgrounds to develop entrepreneurial and leadership skills as well as turn business ideas into viable start-up companies. It provides a springboard for youth to become successful in the job market, turn their ideas into viable businesses, and easily connect to higher-level innovation and incubation networks in the region.

By championing technological creativity and social and business ingenuity, ICEADDIS enhances the common business incubator approach to develop a more entrepreneurial driven and self-sustaining concept using training and ICTs to create appropriate, environmentally beneficial and long lasting solutions that fit into the local and regional context.



Figure 4.2 – The Blue Building in Bole, Addis Ababa (Source: GoogleMaps)

4.3.2 The Green Jobs Initiative

In October 2011, GIZ temporarily re-assigned me to the Employment Promotion Programme in Cairo, which was headquartered at the Silver Tower (Figure 4.3). The transition from the Blue Building to the Silver Tower stands as a metaphor for a serious change in my perception of development work and the role of donors. The assignment became permanent in January 2012, when I took over the management of a new programme, the Green Jobs Initiative (Figure 4.4). This was a relatively small programme that was launched as an immediate response to Egypt's youth employment crisis. It aimed at addressing job creation through further training and the promotion of self-employment. The objective of the programme was to promote the creation of environmentally relevant jobs and development of the corresponding qualifications.



Figure 4.3 – My team at the Green Jobs Initiative in Cairo (Source: author 2012)

Even though the project had limited resources (€ 1.5 million for two years), I enjoyed more autonomy in designing and executing the activities than previously in Ethiopia. While the programme addressed a niche segment of the labour market (green jobs), I was encouraged to collaborate closely with the ICT sector in Egypt. Through this, I had the opportunity to work with a rather heterogeneous group of stakeholders in the Greater Cairo area, Alexandria and Aswan. At the same time, I repeatedly worked with the Ministry of Education and the Ministry of Trade and Industries.

One of the main targets of my work in Egypt was to initiate and catalyse the creation of two new business innovation hubs. Based on my experience with ICEADDIS, I was tasked with creating business hubs in Cairo and in Alexandria. ICECAIRO was created in the wake of the post-revolutionary entrepreneurial boom in Cairo (Seligson 2011; Torchia 2012; Schroeder 2013) and underwent several metamorphoses from being a business incubator to a safe haven for green technology activists. In the direct aftermath of the events of the 25th of January uprising, I refined the mission of ICECAIRO together with my colleagues step by step. It became a pre-incubator that addresses Egypt's urging societal challenges such as energy needs, sustainable manufacturing, technological advancements, ecological awareness and affordable housing and living.



Figure 4.4 – The Silver Tower in Cairo (Source: Mina Ghalim, GIZ 2015)

The work with the ICECAIRO team has been a tremendous influence on my thinking about the inherent mechanisms of arrogance at several donor agencies and NGOs alike. Having been in the role of what one could call a mediator between donor and recipient, I had the opportunity to reflect on codes of conduct and assumed hierarchies at donor agencies. This experience has been particularly

informative as a form of self-reflection about how I used to act with beneficiaries. It provided a first hand experience into on the one hand how recipients are consistently put at the mercy of donor agencies. On the other hand it also illustrated the extent to which recipients become vulnerable and defenceless against donor agencies. Moreover, it demonstrated that often the resulting subservience is not only a condition, but an expectation from the donors' side.

4.4 Conclusion

This chapter has described those particular socio-economic as well as political developments in Ethiopia and Egypt that framed and influenced this research. Some of the inherent tensions were also outlined, such as the rise of new, urban elites in Ethiopia and Egypt and the capricious and often brutal hegemony of the EPRDF regime. The 25th of January uprising was a formative experience for me. This research benefitted enormously from the long-term stay – well over 5 years – in Ethiopia and Egypt that exposed me to the everyday lives of protagonists from often diagonally opposite sides of the political and economic spectrum. The underlying diversity and sometimes volatility of complex social, economic and political realities not only determined, but equally contributed to my understanding of the capillaries of power within the discourse of development.

This chapter has set the scene for the subsequent four empirical chapters in which the data are analysed through the specific lens of a participatory observer. To engage with these set of data also opens a way for me to unclutter the past – in which more often than not the tyranny of the urgent characterised my work in these countries – and re-consider the importance of various agendas of development. The discourses of power that are inherent to both capacity development and ICTs are concealed by the very hybridity and multiplicity of everyday moments. The next chapter will start with an analysis of the in-the-field implications of the Paris Declaration and continues to delink the declaration from notions of capacity development.

Chapter 5 – The in-the-field implications of the Paris Declaration

5.1 Introduction

The Paris Declaration, endorsed in 2005, obliged international donor and recipient countries alike to act in accordance with five principles: ownership, alignment, harmonisation, results and mutual accountability. This landmark agreement stands as the political culmination of two decades of aid effectiveness discourse within the international aid landscape. Numerous evaluations and reports speak to the OECD's considerable efforts with regard to the issue of aid effectiveness over the recent years (Wood *et al.* 2008; Stern *et al.* 2008; OECD 2009; Lawson 2009; Clay *et al.* 2009; Wood *et al.* 2011). However, the positive inclination of these documents towards compliance with the principles of the Paris Declaration is rather a further indication of the self-contained and technocratic nature of many discourses within development. These self-referential debates neglect the origins of the aid effectiveness discourse. It was deeply rooted in the fundamental critique of the negligence and assertiveness of Northern donors seeking to re-legitimise the notion of development (Schuurman 1993; Nederveen Pieterse 2009). The discourse of aid effectiveness essentially stems from the demand to assess and redefine how political power is produced and reproduced within international aid.

The need to question the prevailing notion of aid effectiveness as a technocratic measure became acutely important to me due to the various conflicts between donors and the Ethiopian establishment. Power claiming through this international legal framework represented by the Paris Declaration found multiple manifestations in my immediate work environment. Assumed or actual acts of abuse of the Paris Declaration dominated my entire stay in Ethiopia. As I will show later, the Paris Declaration played little to no influence in Egypt. In light of the unfolding challenges of implementing the Paris Declaration within the confines of the ECBP, I

saw the necessity to unpack some of the questions of power immanent and often contradictory to the technocratic intention of the aid effectiveness discourse.

In Subsection 2.1.3 I argued that from a historical perspective, the OECD-led international political process on aid effectiveness evolved in parallel with the notion of capacity development (in the late 1990s to mid-2010s). These two notions co-existed within the arena of international aid for more than twenty years without apparent theoretical linkages. Their parallel evolution was reflected in the professional belief system that was propagated in my immediate work environment and initiated my research. Even though in Chapter 2, I demonstrated that the two notions evolved along separate paths and by doing so are both conceptually and politically detached, my empirical work confirms the artificial, albeit locally intelligible nature of this argument. The familiarity with the Paris Declaration of my informants in Ethiopia is significantly higher (3,7 times) than in Egypt. Table 5.1 shows the distribution of the affirmative responses with regard to the Paris Declaration.

| | | | |
|-------------------------|------------------------------|------------------------------|----------------------------------|
| By country | Egypt: 18% (4 out of 22) | Ethiopia: 66% (14 out of 21) | International: 100% (3 out of 3) |
| By type of organisation | Donor: 60% (9 out of 15) | Recipient: 45% (5 out of 11) | Other: 35% (7 out of 20) |
| By type of position | Executive: 50% (9 out of 18) | Middle: 43% (7 out of 16) | Self-employed: 41% (5 out of 12) |

Table 5.1 – Familiarity with the Paris Declaration among interview respondents

Besides the higher level of acquaintance with the declaration in Ethiopia on the one hand, respondents in Ethiopia are more aware of the declaration than those in Egypt. On the other hand, donor representatives are more familiar with the Declaration than their counterparts in both the Ethiopian and Egyptian governments. Admittedly the political and administrative discontinuity owing to the ongoing political turmoil in Egypt might bias my data. Nevertheless, I observed a significant difference between the how the Ethiopian and Egyptian establishments employed international

agendas of aid. In the case of the latter I noticed a remarkable indifference towards such agendas. One possible explanation for this apparent apathy towards international aid, as suggested by a high-level donor representative, is the actual economic insignificance of some of the donors in emerging countries like Egypt:

Aber auch, wir müssen uns bewusst sein, dass es für den egal ist, was wir hier machen. Ich meine, wir bringen 25 Millionen Euro mit. Das ist etwa vergleichbar mit dem Jahresprofit aller Kneipen auf Zamalek. (But at the same time, we have to be aware that it doesn't matter to them [the Egyptian government] what we do here. I mean, we bring 25 million Euro with us. That is comparable to the total annual profit of all the pubs in Zamalek [an upscale neighbourhood in Cairo]). (EG03)

The importance attached to the Paris Declaration in Ethiopia, both for the Ethiopian state as well as the donors, is confined to the necessity to ideologise development within the confines of the Ethiopian developmental state (Altenburg 2010; Zenawi 2012; De Waal 2013).

The following sections unpack two important notions from within the Paris Declaration: alignment and ownership. In the OECD's hierarchy of aid effectiveness indicators, these two are at the top. Section 5.2 interrogates the state of alignment between donors and recipients in Ethiopia and Egypt. This is followed by a critical analysis of the notion of ownership (Section 5.3). By dissecting these two notions, this chapter aims to uncover the multitude of interpretations that exist and dominate the practice of development in Ethiopia and Egypt.

5.2 Alignment

It was the growing criticism towards donors' propensity to prioritise their own development agendas above those of the recipients that led to the codification of alignment (Woods 2005; Degenbol-Martinussen and Engberg-Pedersen 2003). Critics of aid argued against the embeddedness of donors in political frameworks that

facilitate the superiority of the North and reinstate neo-colonial practices (Crewe and Harrison 1998; Greenidge 1997). Since aid organisations are forced to follow the funders' priorities (Easterly 2002b; Natsios 2011), their practices eviscerate and weaken the recipients' capacity for planning and prioritisation (Djankov 2008; Birdsall 2004; Roodman 2005). The general picture with regard to the perception of alignment is rather negative. As the following two accounts also illustrate, government and NGO representatives, in particular, complained about the absence of alignment:

Very few of the international donors are successful in that. Very few, but the majority are horrible. (EG 10)

It [the requirement for alignment] would affect us if we had a donor that implemented it. (EG 12)

Three main issues arise from my empirical work with regard to the practice of alignment: First (5.2.1), the conditionalities that are imposed through alignment with local actors; second (5.2.2), the continued burden of overinflated aid bureaucracies and their impact on the delivery of aid (Easterly 2002b; Natsios 2011); and finally (5.2.3), the emergence of new donors on the horizon of aid landscapes that disrupt the traditional logic of conditionalities (Woods 2005, 2008).

5.2.1 From conditionalities to crowding out

The issue of tied aid is a prominent element of the discourse on aid effectiveness (Schraeder *et al.* 1998; Tingley 2010). As outlined in Chapter 2, one of the main intentions of the OECD-led political process was to untie aid from its political and economic conditionalities (Alesina and Dollar 2000; Berthélemy 2006; Hoeffler and Outram 2011). Even though Egyptian respondents were less familiar with the Paris Declaration, their concerns about conditionalities encased within the practice of aid are remarkably higher and more articulate. This subsection traces possible reasons for the omnipresent suspicion that my Egyptian informants entertained with regard to donor organisations. The following account from an Egyptian high-level government representative reflects the perception that I found among many Egyptians:

It depends. You can't just put them all in one basket, because each international donor has their own agenda, their own goals and – I mean – their own objectives. [...] I can tell you two things. One thing is that it depends on what kind of aid agency. If you are talking about projects funded by the European Commission or other EU countries, than the answer should be yes. [...] Sometimes donor X [a US-based agency] is, for example, considered as a way to pressure the [Egyptian] government to do certain tasks. (EG 02)

As the above account also shows, Egyptians regularly distinguished between European and US-based donor agencies, their suspicion being considerably higher towards the latter. This confirms Elagati's (2013, p. 10) findings that “based on the geographic origin of the funds”, Egyptians’ perception varies, generally with “European funding being the most positive [...], followed by Japanese.” Conversely, “funding from the United States and the Gulf States” (ibid) has a negative connotation. Arab donors were not mentioned or rated at all in any of my encounters. The reasons for this might be the careful separation Egyptians, particularly within the upper middle class, maintain between their Western, cosmopolitan identities and Arab, nationalistic identities (Wynn 2007).

Why did Egyptians react more suspiciously towards donors’ intentions than Ethiopian informants? Initially, I attributed the prominence of mistrust among my Egyptian respondents to a certain tendency towards conspiracy theories in the Egyptian socio-political discourse (Aziz 2012; Mustafa 2015). The aftermath of the 25th of January uprising provided abundant material for the production of conspiracy theories that attributed the failure of the political and social transformation beyond January 2011 to the influence of foreign forces. Even though some of the manifestations of conspiracy theories appeared outright funny to outside observers like myself, they were expressions of a “popular xenophobia and paranoia which has been used as a political tool by the former president, Hosni Mubarak, the deposed president, Mohamad Morsi, and the current army-backed regime” (Urquhart 2013, no pagination).

However, the type of issues as well as the demographic niche from which the responses emerge is indicative of the underlying rationale that spurs mistrust. The mistrust against donors is especially high among civil society representatives and

among informants with an upper middle class background. This was especially true for informants with an upper middle class background. Their fears are rooted in the perception that donors undercut prices by providing training either for free or below market prices. As shown by Elagati (2013), Egyptian civil society plays a major role in filling the gaps in social services left by the government. Due to government restrictions on foreign funding (Brownlee 2002; Langohr 2004), however, civil society organisations are often semi-private operations that rely on the sales of their services:

NGO X is afraid that we [GIZ] might come in and destroy the market. They think that we would provide trainings for free, which would mean that no one would attend their trainings unless they make them free of charge, too. (Research diary, 12/06/2012, Cairo)

However, this criticism of foreign aid is only prevalent among the young, upper middle class NGO representatives. Moreover, it is combined with the assumption that a donor presence paves the way for an economic invasion, as also referred to by Elagati (2013). The following account from an Egyptian NGO representative aptly reflects this perspective:

Maybe this is how the North is getting into developing countries nowadays, you know. They are not getting in directly in the form of companies, but they are coming as development agencies and then from there (Laughs). And from there they give entrance to other companies or sources. (EG 08)

Even though the above accounts confirm Elagati's work, I suggest that the aversion against foreign interference – be it in the civil society or the private sector – is dominated by a demographic niche, namely that of the charitable segment of the upper middle class. Section 4.2.2 dealt with the social seclusion which led to the geographical and, accordingly, social separation of a rich upper middle class. Due to its history rooted in Sadat's and Mubarak's neoliberal economic policies, this segment of society has very strong ties to the private sector (Peterson 2011). The financial and political privileges enjoyed by this segment re-established the suppression and exploitation of the middle and lower classes (Denis 2006).

This almost colonial oppression exerted by the upper middle class is in stark contrast – however somewhat complementary – with their charitable activities. I suggest that the animosity expressed by the young upper middle class citizens towards donors intends to defend the charitable territory previously reserved to their class. The attempt of this foreign educated, internationally oriented youth – who also often bear multiple nationalities – to discredit donors as Eurocentric imperialists (Baaz 2005) legitimises their charitable endeavours and protects the economic stakes of their families. Nevertheless, I acknowledge that a host of other factors – such as their resentment against glass ceiling human resource policies that are prevalent among INGOs – may be at play as well, and that for clarification further research is necessary.

5.2.2 Aid bureaucracy

As criticised by Easterly (2002) and Natsios (2011), development agencies often opt for fulfilling their donors' administrative priorities, most notably those that relate to spending targets. In order to verify the critique that claims bulging donor bureaucracies I collected estimates from my informants working with donors. Moreover, I relied on my own experience as a component manager in two different GIZ programmes. I found that the average percentage of work time spent on organisational bureaucracy among my informants is staggeringly low (27%), particularly considering that most of them were in middle or upper management positions. This stands in stark contrast with my own experience of the perpetual and everyday struggle to abide by the rules and regulations of GTZ/GIZ. In 2010, I attended a time management training course especially directed to middle managers in donor organisations. During this course I observed the following in my research diary:

Many of us in the course [all representatives of donor agencies] complained that they barely have the time to focus on their actual work – finishing administrative tasks takes most of the time. Therefore, the quality of the capacity development projects – for which we expat technical experts are actually responsible – is seriously affected. Personally, I can very well relate to this problem – I almost have no time to focus on conceptual work, since the

management apparatus requires so much paperwork, so many signatures that I have constantly someone standing in front of my desk needing a signature.
(Research diary, 19/09/2010, Addis Ababa)

After the training, I introduced a tracking system that recorded all interruptions that were caused by my administrative duties. These were time-stamped and signed by those colleagues on whose behalf I had to expedite bureaucratic tasks. The resulting data is rather revealing about the inefficiencies and time costs of constrained bureaucracies. Even though I decided to stop using the system after a month because of complaints from my Ethiopian colleagues, the data from October 2010 shows that I spent an average of five to six hours per day on administrative tasks.

Natsios (2011) argues that the international regime of aid effectiveness imposes new levels of compliance in aid bureaucracies. As a result of an exacerbated politics of accountability, the implementation capacity of aid organisations is undermined. Aid effectiveness enables the surge of a counter-bureaucracy that diverts resources into the monitoring of measurable results. This in turn distorts the more risky, ambiguous and not-measurable task of institution building and innovation. Experience shows that “work that produces measurable outcomes tends to drive out work that produces immeasurable outcomes” (Wilson 1989, p. 161). The following account from my research diary exemplifies the constant dilemma of aid workers who are forced to comply with the fiscal regulations of the donor country:

One participant [a representative of a development agency] was unsure about how to develop an implementation structure, including the budgeting and training measures for the programme, and asked the participants to develop priorities. Then the director of the programme intervened and made clear that from the perspective of donor X, it is less of a problem if we don't reach our objectives. However, not spending the money or spending it incorrectly [not according the organisation's rules and regulations] is a culpable mistake.
(Research diary, 16/12/2012, Cairo)

This account corresponds to Natsios' observation at USAID that "activities with measurable outcomes have, over time, crowded out those activities [...] that are more difficult to measure" (2010, p. 37). The side effect of aid effectiveness is a bureaucratic surge that creates false incentives for donor employees. In essence, the resulting incentives distort the very notion of effectiveness and weaken donors' ability to adapt to the recipients' needs.

The internal power struggle I witnessed within ECBP adds further detail to the issue of increased bureaucratic load as a result of aid effectiveness. The bureaucratic burden within ECBP was born out of the confluence of two different administrations: the GTZ/GIZ one and that of the MOCB. Because of MOCB's continuous insistence on the rigorous implementation of the alignment clause of the Paris Declaration, ministry and GTZ/GIZ officials jointly supervised all administrative processes (e.g. recruitment and procurement). On the one hand, this caused serious delays in the execution of the programme and was continually highlighted as a restrictive practice on the part of GTZ/GIZ. On the other hand, the obvious inconsistencies resulting from the non-compatibility of the two systems also allowed for malpractices. The following excerpt from my research diary exposes an incident where I was put under considerable pressure by high-level MOCB officials to expedite their wishes:

Yesterday evening, I was approached by X, I [my Ethiopian counterpart] and Y [the Ethiopian programme director] after working hours at my office. The reason for their visit was to ask me to employ four or six consultants whose task would be to download illegal eBooks for the eLibrary that is planned for Ethiopian universities. Even though I explained that the activity is incompatible with GTZ's policies, they stressed the point that we [GTZ] would be much faster at employing these people, since the Ministry's [Ministry of Capacity Building] employment processes are way too slow. (Research diary, 11/03/2010, Addis Ababa)

This experience of latent extortion – which was partially made possible due to my inexperience and young age – stands in stark contrast to other accounts where the GTZ/GIZ administration was purposefully blocked by invoking the principle of alignment. The following excerpt from an e-mail conversation between the Ethiopian

and German directors of ECBP highlights the tensions as well as the skilful deployment of the concept of joint management in order to block GTZ internal decision making. This was often used by the Ethiopian management to gradually extend their jurisdiction into GTZ/GIZ procedures.

Dear Y [the German director of ECBP] the principles and agreement of recruitments any experts not only gtz staffs any other staff for the program should jointly agreed and jointly conducted, you know it very well. It should be transparent of course [...] what we [MOCB] are saying [that] let us involve in the process as we did it for many years before. You are violating it systematically. [...] Therefore let us not repeat mistakes what you and others committed before and affected the harmony of the program. Let us follow the jointly and transparent way following the above otherwise. By the way this applies for international staffs as well as for national staffs. Management assistance [assistants] hired in violation of this well established [and] on-going systems. If you continue unilaterally the candidate will not join ecbp [ECBP]. We [MOCB] are not going to accept [accept] and allow her/him to work here. (E-mail, 08/07/2010, Addis Ababa).

The apparent paradox between these two accounts exemplifies the interpretability of the notion of alignment. There is a certain interpretative flexibility in the notion of alignment that renders its practice malleable according to the power relations between donor and recipient. Moreover, in these specific instances, the codification of alignment provided the Ethiopian establishment with a cover of legality.

5.2.3 Beyond alignment – emerging donors

In Chapter 2, I pointed out that certain bodies of literature link the discourse of aid effectiveness to the emergence of new donors, particularly that of China, India, Iran as well as the Arab States (Woods 2005, 2008). In certain bodies of literature that are sympathetic towards the modernist agendas of development, the depiction of emerging donors is obsessively negative (Collins 2007; Naim 2007). These accounts accuse emerging donors for spreading ‘toxic aid’ that disregards Northern

developmental premises, such as liberal governance. Others, recognise the opportunities non-DAC donors present, for example by adding new forms of resource sharing within the international community or by presenting alternative models to economic growth (Manning 2006; Kondoh *et al.* 2010; Sato *et al.* 2010)). These accounts, understandably, also remain concerned about the implications that the non-conformity of the non-DAC donors has on the “soft law that guides the DAC's norms and standards” (Kim and Lightfoot 2011, p. 711). However these worries, whether the non-DAC donors will abide by the same standards of transparency, good governance, environmental sustainability or gender equality as their DAC counterparts, still remain within the technocratic confines of Northern, liberal notions of development. Other bodies of literature recognise that “the 'rise' of the non-DAC donors and development partners is one of several factors contributing to uncertainty and change in contemporary aid governance” (Mawdsley 2012, p. 17). This subsection engages with the immanent issues the changing landscape of aid.

Through my fieldwork in Ethiopia and Egypt, I gained exposure to the presence and practice of emerging donors, particularly that of China (in Ethiopia) and various Arab donors (in both Ethiopia and Egypt). I could discern an important difference in the perception of Northern donors and Chinese workers by the locals. The following excerpt from a discussion during a field trip in Northern Ethiopia captures the difference in perception:

As we drove by a road construction site that was populated by Chinese workers, X [my MOCB counterpart] told me about his admiration for them. “The Chinese are different – they work with you on the construction site and don't just boss around like Western engineers do.”

(Research diary, 07/12/2009, Bahir Dar)

China's presence in Africa has been the subject of much scholarly attention lately (Brautigam 1992; Wu 2006; Alden *et al.* 2008; Mohan and Power 2008; Michel *et al.* 2009; Tan-Mullins *et al.* 2010; Power *et al.* 2012). There is a rising criticism of neo-colonialism against models of international co-operation practiced by China (Mohan 2006; Brookes 2007; Michel *et al.* 2009). However, my counterparts in the MOCB and MOE in Ethiopia repeatedly expressed their awe with regard to the Chinese contribution to Ethiopian development. While the perception of locals might

seem of minor significance, it nevertheless reflects change in terms of international co-operation. The inherent power claims of development aid that are wrapped into the fabric of humanitarian solidarity are challenged by different ideological approaches towards international co-operation. These new forms of co-operation – while not being void of power claims – disrupt the logic of alignment. A high-level private sector representative in Ethiopia specifically drew my attention to the growing gap between Northern and emerging donors' practices:

The donors haven't adapted to the change fast enough. The Chinese are picking up on these changes much faster. Since donors are part of larger governmental bureaucracies of their own countries, they don't change fast enough. (ET 04)

The conditionalities of the Northern donors are often rooted in the liberal governance ideals of the Enlightenment (Hattori 2003; Mawdsley 2012). The mechanisms put in place by new donors, however, question this very logic of liberal modernist conditionalities that underlie the dispersion of aid. The flexibility and non-conditionality introduced by emerging donors disrupts and replaces them with an environment of competition and capitalist profit making. The modalities of international co-operation propagated by emerging donors divest development from its liberal and humanitarian wrapping. Instead, business-like conditions are introduced that disrupt the previous systems of conditionalities that rely merely on the knowledge and governance approaches within the confines of the developed North (Lederach 1997). It constitutes a step away “from modernist ideas premised on eventual social convergence, i.e. the underdeveloped world eventually approximating the developed” (Duffield 1997, p. 529).

The experience of non-liberal conditionalities of international co-operation and economic development undermine the purposefulness of Northern donors. The reasons to abide by the strict liberal conditionalities are eliminated by the non-conditional and attentive practices of emerging donors. This, in turn, allows for the levering out and eventual reversal of conditionalities. The following account from a high-level donor representative illustrates the expanding erosion of liberal aid conditionalities:

Sie sehen Projekte als schöne Zuckerstückchen an. Sie sagen "Was hast du schönes?", "Was gibst du mir?" [...] Sie sehen uns als eine Beschaffungseinheit, wo man Geschenke bestellen kann. Wie z. B. fancy Macintosh Rechner oder ähnliche Sachen. Wenn du aber fragst wofür sie diese brauchen, kommt keine Antwort. (They see us as a procurement office, where they can order presents. Like fancy Macintosh computers and so on. If you ask them for what they need these, you won't get an answer.) (EG 03)

The somewhat placid and apparently jaded practice of recipient governments to extend procurement wish lists to the donors as a precondition for co-operation is not new. However, as I experienced several times, the non-fulfilment of these wish lists drives the recipients towards cooperating with emerging donors. The latter are willing to fulfil these requirements without the necessity for rational arguments and long-term plans.

The rapid rationalization of international co-operation and the disruption of the codex of liberal frameworks by the non-liberal world (Richmond 2009) is immediately cast into sharp relief by the position that the liberal foundation of aid represents a universal blueprint. Much of the criticism against emerging donors, however, masks the real challenge confronted by Northern donors in their humanitarian rhetoric. Whereas the attributes of transparent aid governance are certainly lacking in, for example, the Chinese development practices introduced above, their real danger for Northern donors is the gradual petering out the effectiveness of conditionalities to pressure or even penalise recipients into fulfilling the Northern, liberal ideas of state building propagated through the notion of development aid. Moreover, these examples also confirm Furtado and Smith's (2009) observation that recipient governments are increasingly well versed in extracting the best possible conditions from an increasingly diverse aid portfolio. Hagmann and Abbink (2011) pointed out similar tendencies with regard to the Ethiopian establishment by acknowledging their successful harvesting of "donor capital, including humanitarian and relief aid" (p. 587).

5.3 Ownership

As shown in Subsection 2.2.4, ownership as an operational term, similar to capacity development itself, has its roots in human-centred, bottom-up development traditions and can be traced back to the early 1980s (Smillie 2001). It has, though, been co-opted by neoliberal institutionalist development practices in the late 1990s (Richmond 2009). Its definition and role in the Paris Declaration is framed within this neoliberal institutionalist practice. The Paris Declaration defines ownership along the criteria that “partners have operational development strategies” or “countries with national development strategies (including PRSs [Poverty Reduction Strategies]) ... have clear strategic priorities linked to a medium-term expenditure framework and reflected in annual budgets” (cf. Annex 11)

The goal of this subsection is to understand the dynamics between donor and recipient countries in the process of “creating ownership” (Lopes 2002; Sobhan 2009). It analyses the implementation of ownership as codified by the Paris Declaration as well as divergent notions.

Table 5.2 shows that none of my respondents was familiar with the codified notion of ownership. The descriptions of ownership can be put into three main categories:

1. Ownership as the practice of leadership by the recipient,
2. Ownership as a joint management practice between donor and recipient,
3. Ownership as a form of participation.

The following two subsections will analyse these aspects of ownership in detail.

| Ownership | Type of respondent | Existing development strategy | Leadership | Joint management | Participation |
|-----------|--------------------|-------------------------------|------------|------------------|---------------|
| Ethiopia | | | | | |
| | donors | 0 | 6 | 7 | 5 |
| | recipients | 0 | 3 | 2 | 0 |
| | NGO/PS | 0 | 3 | 2 | 4 |
| Egypt | | | | | |
| | donors | 0 | 4 | 3 | 3 |
| | recipients | 0 | 2 | 0 | 1 |
| | NGO/PS | 0 | 9 | 3 | 9 |
| Total | | 0 | 27 | 16 | 22 |

Table 5.2 – Distribution of responses with regard to the issue of ownership (NGO: non-governmental organisation, PS: private sector)

5.3.1 Codified ownership

Zimmermann (2007) has already criticised the ambiguity of the term ownership, which many interviewees also confirmed. For example, an Egyptian high-level NGO representative explained why he has been avoiding the term in his work:

Because different people have different definitions of ownership. (EG 12)

The fulfilment of the Paris Declaration is measured against three key elements: a) the existence of a national development strategy, b) the operationalisation of national strategies, and c) the practice of effective leadership by the recipient country. None of my interview respondents referenced the term ownership to the existence and implementation of a national development strategy

(PRS), not even donor representatives. The definitions given by the latter only revolved around the following two aspects:

1. The recipients are exercising leadership in a development process.
2. The donor and recipient parties are practicing joint management.

These two aspects often overlap, as the following account from a high level donor representative in Egypt demonstrates:

Ownership bedeutet für mich, dass der Partner sagt, das ist mein Prozess, ihr macht es mit mir in dem Rythmus and auf eine Art and Weise, dass ich immer sagen kann, ich bin derjenige, der das Steuer in der Hand hält. [...] Wir fördern also ownership, indem wir jeden Schritt gemeinsam gehen. Die operational teams besprechen jeden Schritt gemeinsam, von den Terms of References bis zur Auswahl der Consultants. (Ownership for me means that the partners tell us that this is my process, you do it with me at a speed and in a way that always allow me to say that I am the one who holds the rudder. [...]) We promote ownership by taking each step together. The operational teams discuss each step, from the Terms of References to the selection of the consultants.) (EG 02)

Even though I often encountered similar approaches to ownership among my informants as well as in my own practice, I argue that these are not only naïve, but also counter to the pronounced intentions of the Paris Declaration. The latent condescension and paternalism of such co-operation models reinforce the inherent inequalities of power in development. The notion of ownership is thus transformed into gestures of repetitive patronisation in which ownership is granted through the benevolence of the donor.

The lack of accounts that abide by the official definition of ownership, both in the interviews and in my own experience, suggests a low level of familiarity with the actual indicators of the Paris Declaration. Moreover, the tendency among both donors and recipients to define ownership as a joint leadership and management exercise shows that the codified definition of ownership never replaced its original meaning. Its ambiguity, however, allows for abusive practices (see 5.4.2). In the face of the complete absence of accounts that correspond to the definition of ownership

codified by the Paris Declaration, the following subsection traces potential questions about issues of joint management and participatory ownership.

5.3.2 Participation and ownership

There is a significant difference in the perception of ownership between NGO workers and government or donor agency representatives. Whereas the latter two define ownership as a technocratic exercise of joint management and leadership, NGO representatives perceive it as an emergent quality of co-operation. The following account from an Ethiopian NGO representative describes the importance of the context as well as the trust generating aspects of participatory ownership:

First of all ownership is created – it is not given. In the safe haven where people come from is where ownership is being created. (ET 06)

Similar to Richmond's (2009, p. 328) findings, NGO representatives in my study emphasise that ownership is a quality that is actively constructed through the stakeholders involved and is “driven by the search for an ‘authentic’ local and its many lateral and vertical networks in an everyday context, apparently distant to the global, transnational setting.”

The issue of participation as an aspect of ownership is particularly strong among Egyptian respondents. In Egypt, participatory approaches have carried a strong anti-establishment claim since the late 1990s (Abdelrahman 2004). The success of the 25th of January uprising confirmed the positive power of participation. Through my GIZ assignment in Egypt, I had very close links to representatives of civil society. In fact, one reason for my reassignment to Egypt by GIZ was my good track record with civil society as well as my fluency in their participatory terminologies. However, participation, as I observed, posed a serious challenge to Egyptian civil society.

However, the question with regard to the limited participatory understanding of ownership in Ethiopia remains. I would argue that the lower prevalence of participatory approaches among respondents in Ethiopia is a result of what Tronvoll (2010) describes as the government’s attempt to appropriate participation for its own

developmental state narrative. Participation and joint decision-making were built into the government structure. However, the actual intentions of these mechanisms is unclear and have also been broadly criticised by Tronvoll (2008) and Abbink (2009). My own experience with the participatory exercises in the MOCB confirm the superficial nature of Ethiopian government commitment to this process, with the intention only being to create the pretence of participation and to rally people behind the hegemonic view of the EPRDF. There is too little academic literature that attributes such practices not only to donors, but also to recipient governments (Birdsall 2004).

The so called baseball-cap effect illustrates the co-optation of participation by the Ethiopian establishment. My immediate colleagues named this phenomenon after the somewhat simple, however strikingly effective practice of the Ethiopian government to distribute free baseball caps among participants in political events. These caps are usually imprinted with the title of the apparently “participatory” event as well as with the Ethiopian coat of arms. The significance of this spectacle lay in the salient subservience of hundreds of uniformly baseball-capped people. From the point of view of a Northern observer, the proud wearing of such cheap EPRDF regalia (e.g. caps and T-shirts with EPRDF logos) evokes the idea of servility.

Rules of Engagement of ECBP with partner institutions

1. Social understanding

- Creating excellent social understanding. Providing different orientation programs to ECBP's staffs and concerned staffs of our partner institutions

2. Joint Plan

- Prepare joint plan with our partner institutions. Indicate clear division of tasks, which is cascaded up to expert level.

3. Joint Implementation

- Here we need to implement together as one team jointly by going to the ground. Based on value chain analysis approach we need to mobilize other actors to join hands in realization of the plan.

4. Joint Monitoring & Evaluation

- Monthly, quarterly ...meetings can be held together with our partner institutions based on agreements. The meetings should be based on reports. The formats for the reports will be agreed upon. Reporting channels can be more than one to respective ministries.

5. Joint Budgeting and Sharing of other Resources

- Based on agreed up on joint plan and division of responsibility in the plan, the division of resources also will be indicated in the plan. This also includes office spaces and other infrastructural facilities.

6. Ownership

- ECBP has to be fully owned and linked to the respective partner institutions.
- ECBP efforts has to be recognized and considered as full partner.

Figure 5.1 – The Rules of Engagement of ECBP with partner institutions (Original in Annex 12)

Other small-scale participatory exercises were also regularly required by the MOCB management to demonstrate dutifulness and allegiance. Especially during the 2010 election year, such exercises were spawned. Besides issuing guidelines (Rules of Engagement, Figure 5.1) for participatory practice within ECBP, its Ethiopian director also regularly summoned the team leaders – including my counterpart and me – to question whether the project plans had been thoroughly discussed with and agreed in the team. Unfortunately, at that time I was unaware of the importance of this political type of “participation” and refused to take it seriously,

which, in hindsight, affected my credibility with the Ethiopian management of the programme. An expat NGO worker expressed a similar concern when speaking about one of his community initiatives, suggesting that there is a host of problematic issues with government-backed participation:

*Die Nutzer hätten ein Problem, wenn es government gelabelt wäre.
(The users would have a problem if it [the project] was government labelled.)
(ET 12)*

Due to the political appropriation of the term, in the Ethiopian context, participatory approaches were carefully avoided by the private sector and NGOs alike. Those not affiliated with the establishment were more reluctant to promote their activities as being participatory. The following account by an international development practitioner shows the drastic paradox of the notion of ownership being co-opted by the nation-building rhetoric of the Ethiopian establishment (Hagmann and Abbink 2011):

In the case of Ethiopia, I think, ownership is [can be defined as] good when it is not just a sort of chauvinistic or nationalistic or egoistic interest, but when you accept ownership because you feel responsible. (INT 02)

One international NGO representative in Ethiopia also described the ways his organisation avoided “government ownership”. His organisation regularly experienced challenges with its Ethiopian partner, the Ministry of Education (MOE), regarding the joint management of their programme. In 2012, knowing that the Ministry would not approve of a new initiative at the University of Addis Ababa due to fears that it might be a catalyst for a student movement, they decided to circumvent the joint planning process and to create the initiative together with seconded expat staff at the university. This expatriate NGO worker explained the intentionality of this strategy later during an interview:

Wir haben nicht gewusst, wie der Partner reagiert and haben unter der Wahrnehmungsschwelle gearbeitet. Regierungsorganisationen haben wir explizit rausgelassen, da es ein recht neues Konzept ist. Es ist manchmal halt einfacher, das Projekt zu erklären, wenn es schon da steht, als wenn es es noch nicht gibt. [...] Ownership ja, Einmischung nein. (We did not know how

the partner would react, and therefore worked below the radar screen. We explicitly excluded government bodies because it [what we do] is a relatively new concept. It is sometimes just easier to explain the project (to the government) when it already exists, then when it doesn't exist yet. [...] Yes to ownership, no to interference.) (ET 12)

The above account also illustrates the anti-politics that certain NGOs claim, often on moral grounds (Duffield 1997). Since participatory ownership is appropriated by the EPRDF, NGOs piece together instruments that resist and sidestep the official polity. The development of an anti-politics by NGOs illustrates the falsity of the idealisation of NGOs “as disinterested apolitical participants in a field of otherwise implicated players” (Fisher 1997, p. 442). The NGOs’ reaction to oppression and appropriation undermines the authority of the recipient state. Its strong focus, however, also indicates the emergence of novel discourses of aid that argue from a strong value system and enable change makers (Nelson 2010). Section 6.3 and 6.4 will further explore forms of appropriation by the Ethiopian establishment.

5.4 Conclusion

Chapter 2 embedded the Paris Declaration within an international policy framework to enhance aid effectiveness. It also suggested that this discourse is a recent reiteration of a series of legitimacy crises of the notion of development. The attempt to rebuild legitimacy through a set of prominent policy decisions is typical of international aid institutions. The elimination of aid conditionalities played a crucial part in the discourse of aid effectiveness. The notion of aligning donors’ mandates with the recipients’ agendas promoted by the Paris Declaration is celebrated as a major step forward with regard to untying aid. While a series of reports endorse the success of the Paris Declaration and attribute considerable economic growth to its implementation (Stern *et al.* 2008; Wood *et al.* 2008; Lawson 2009; Clay *et al.* 2009; OECD 2009; Wood *et al.* 2011), this chapter has taken a more critical stance. In contrast to the above, celebratory accounts of the codification of aid effectiveness led by the OECD this chapter illustrated the chasms between policy intentions and field practice.

First, it demonstrated that practitioners' familiarity with the Paris Declaration differs significantly between Ethiopia and Egypt. At the same time it also showed that the familiarity with the Declaration itself cannot be equated with the accurate knowledge of its content. The definitions of alignment and ownership codified in the Paris Declaration are practically unknown among practitioners in the field. It exposed the irrelevance of technocratic criteria of aid effectiveness. It exhibited the apparent incoherence between the intentions of high-level development policy and practitioners' perception. Even though the technocratic criteria for alignment and ownership are fulfilled, practitioners' accounts show the continued existence of conditionalities tied to the disbursement of aid.

Second, this sober appraisal with regard to alignment illustrated practitioners' scepticism as well as apparent frustration with donor practices. It also confirmed Natsios' (2011) view that the rise of a counter-bureaucratic practice – that ensures and supervises the implementation of rigid aid effectiveness within donor organisations – further exacerbates administrative pressures. Wilson (1989) suggests that manipulative practices are therefore on the rise within donor agencies in order to counteract the technocratic rigidity that is superimposed by the headquarters of these organisations. The continuous imposition of new technocratic rules obstructs work in the field offices. The latter are deemed to manipulate and circumvent these regulations in order to make meaningful and substantive co-operation with the recipients. Unfortunately, the analysis of these practices of circumvention of rules and internal disobedience within donor agencies would go beyond the scope of this thesis. However, further research into this issue could showcase the adverse effects as well as the often paradoxical nature of the aid effectiveness discourse.

Third, it also pointed out that aid conditionalities are increasingly under pressure through the rise of new donors, particularly that of China. Through the relinquishing of conditionalities that are rooted in Northern, liberal ideals, emerging donors question contemporary models of development. The increasing crowding out of traditional donors by the assumedly distorting practices that exist beyond the framework of development aid illustrates the importance of the discourse of aid effectiveness. The OECD's codification of effective aid practices is an important tool

to protect the mandate and influence of the traditional against those of the emerging donors. It provides an instrument for the former to discount the latter as not effective or even outright exploitative. The OECD's codification of effective aid practices is an important tool to protect the inherent claims-making process of traditional against the discounted, non-moral conditionalities of the emerging donors.

Finally, it outlined the apparent paradox between the technocratic notion of ownership and its field practice. The latter revolves around the notion of participation; however, as the example of the Ethiopian establishment showed, it might be co-opted. Due to the Ethiopian establishment's appropriation of participation as a collective but hegemonic practice, Ethiopian respondents refrained from using the term participation while describing participative practices.

After having explored the issues of alignment and ownership within the framework of the Paris Declaration, the next chapter will divert its focus to the theory-building process as well as the field practice of capacity development.

Chapter 6 – Capacity Development: discourse and field reality

6.1 Introduction

The previous chapter analysed the understanding and effects of the Paris Declaration in Ethiopia and Egypt. It exposed the mechanisms with which ownership, harmonisation and alignment have been enforced as part of the aid effectiveness agenda championed by the OECD. Chapter 2 argued *impasse* of development initiated various attempts to increase the effectiveness of aid (Edgren 2002; Ohno and Niiya 2004; Lavergne and Wood 2006; Bourguignon and Sundberg 2007; Vandemoortele 2011; Booth 2012). The chapter also highlighted that, even though notions of capacity development lacked a unified concept during the 1980s, they adhered to a fundamentally participatory and bottom-up agenda. Chapter 2 claimed that contemporary notions of capacity development, which arose after the *impasse*, lack a rigorous critique. Even though capacity development achieved an almost axiomatic role within the discourse of development, its underlying rationale has never been subjected to academic scrutiny. It is this apparent lack of academic critique and the often wanton use of the term in my immediate work environment that initiated my research.

In Chapter 2, I quoted Edward Jaycox (Berg 1993), then World Bank Vice-President for the Africa Region, who vehemently argued for the authenticity of capacity development. In 1993, he admitted that:

We [World Bank] invented the words "capacity building" in that report (The Long-term Perspective Study [not identifiable]) in a way that would distinguish a new mode of activity, a new way of doing business from what we've been doing in the past. I hope that before this capacity building thing becomes a totally hackneyed cliché, we in fact do change the way we do business.
(Jaycox 1993, p. 9)

As pointed out already in Chapter 1, the absence of constructive and critical accounts of capacity development allowed for its reshaping into a powerful messenger of neoliberal development aid. Creating a critical account of the current notion of capacity development is particularly challenging due to the frequent overlap of authors in donor (grey) and academic literature. Rather often, the same scholars who consulted for donors on the creation of conceptual frameworks for capacity development also published in academic journals. Accordingly, the juxtaposition of donor literature with academic accounts does not help the critical understanding of capacity development. In order to clearly differentiate between scholarly and consultancy work in this thesis, the former is cited using the scholars' name, and the latter is referred to through their institutional (donor) affiliation at the time of writing (e.g. CIDA 1996). Authors that critically engage with notions of capacity development are few (Eade and Ireland 1997; Eade 2007; Eyben 2010) and mostly reflect approaches among International Non-governmental Organisations (INGOs) to capacity development (Eade and Ireland 1997; Eade 2007; Blagescu and Young 2006; Girgis 2007).

Neither development practitioners nor academic researchers question the notion of capacity development. Attempts to confront its amorphousness (Lusthaus *et al.* 1999) mostly result in admittedly more sophisticated, but also increasingly unintelligible and quixotic models. Even though it is presented as a monolithic and linear process, it is a political narrative that is fragmented and disjointed; showing a delicate power politics on the donors' side. This political process – similar to the theory building of capacity development – gradually moved from re-legitimising development and its international institutions to a framework that incorporated civil society and emerging donors such as International Non-governmental Organisations (INGOs) or the BRIC states (Brazil, Russia, India and China).

The following sections thus trace the ellipsis of the rise and consecutive demise and hollowing out of the notion of capacity development. This chapter aims to contribute to the critique of the discourse of capacity development. First, it unpacks the theoretical and ideological ingredients of contemporary definitions and theories of capacity development (6.2). This exercise is essential in order to remove capacity development from its confines of an apparently non-political, but positively

connoted *terminus technicus*. In order to understand practitioners' familiarity with the theories of capacity development, I conflate the insights from the above archaeology with accounts of capacity development from the field (6.3). Section 6.4 and 6.5 then continue to chart the practice of capacity development by unpacking issues of inherent devaluation and mechanisms to claim power.

6.2 The theory-building of capacity development – an archaeological account

Section 2.1.1 explored the origins of capacity development in development studies during the 1980s. It demonstrated the participatory disposition of capacity development as well as its marginality with regard to the mainstream development discourse. The early notions of capacity development originated from theoretical or practical acts of protest against hegemonic forms of development (Eade 1997, 2007; Eade and Ireland 1997). The roots of the contemporary capacity development discourse are in the participatory and human-centred development approaches of the 1980s (Eade 1997). These emphasised the centrality of the development of the individual as well as focused on mentorship approaches. It is tightly associated with concepts such as friendship work (Girgis 2007) and community empowerment (Chino and DeBruyn 2006). However, it also pointed out that beyond the 1980s, the evolution of this notion has been deeply interwoven with the crisis of development (Schuurman 1993; Nederveen Pieterse 1998; Brinkerhoff 2005). The emulation of capacity development by donor organisations entailed an extensive exercise of theory-building. By interrogating and dissecting the ideologies enclosed in the definitions of capacity development, this section aims to unearth the gradual co-optation of capacity development by mainstream development. On the use of the term archaeology in this thesis cf. Section 2.1.

Teskey (2005, p. 4) claims that “capacity building is a rather unusual subject in development in that it has no agreed definition, it has no formal academic body of knowledge and there are no university courses teaching it.” Definitions of capacity development nevertheless emanate an inherently optimistic view of development and compete with each other in terms of selflessness and dedication to solving the

problems of the global South. However, their vagueness, impracticality and elasticity leave their implementation open for interpretation. Lusthaus *et al.* (1999) claim capacity development is a collection of substantialist ideas that only broadly define the purpose of development, but fail to back it up with a distinguishable set of methodologies. In the early phase of my research, I experienced considerable difficulties with regard to reading and understanding these definitions. For a practitioner like myself, it was difficult to distil and transfer the plethora of positive intentions encased within these definitions into practice. They often left me with two questions: How do I do this and how is this relevant for my situation?

This section is therefore an experiment to demonstrate not only the complex notion into which capacity development has evolved, but also how it is ideologically entwined within the neoliberal turn in development. By doing so, this section is also a first step towards what would probably be called a “Practical Guide to Reading Capacity Development Jargon” (cf. Table 6.1). While it certainly cannot be comprehensive by the way of the limitations of this thesis, it provides stepping stones for further research into the critical understanding and de-politicisation of capacity development. This section builds its way through the maze of capacity development literature by focusing on definitions of capacity development used by donor agencies. For the sake of recognisability as well as to distinguish them from ordinary quotes, examples of such definitions are in text boxes. Moreover, I also underline key terminologies in the definitions, which help to identify their conceptual origin, by underlining them. For a comprehensive overview of all definitions used for the analysis in this section see Annexes 10 and 11.

6.2.1 First phase – the institutionalist models

Section 2.1.3 outlined the crisis of and subsequent neoliberal turn in development. The growing criticism of development aid was diverted into criticism of technical co-operation. The early champions of capacity development among donor organisations were the World Bank (World Bank 1991), CIDA (Morgan and Baser 1993; Baser 1994; CIDA 1996), JICA (2003, 2004b, 2006) DFID (2006, 2008) and UNDP (Lopes 2002). The theory-building in these institutions particularly emphasised the importance of instigating institutional reform through capacity development.

However, the strenuous effort to extend the mandate of this notion beyond single institutions is well exemplified by the following quote from a concept note written for CIDA:

Capacity development as the next 'big wave' in development co-operation (like basic needs in the 1970s or structural adjustment in the 1980s) [...] is centered around institutions, assumes a multi-disciplinary approach and has substantial implications for restructuring relationships. [...] While capacity development is centred substantially on institutions, the concept itself is broader than institutional development. The latter is concerned with the performance of individual organizations and their ability to make effective use of the human and financial resources available. Capacity development goes beyond individual organizations to broader systems, groups of organizations or inter-organizational networks. Institutional development can thus be an important component of capacity development, but is not the same as capacity development itself. (Baser and Bolger 1996, p. 3-4)

The above account demonstrates the delicate mechanisms of co-optation that started to reshape the initially participatory notion of capacity development (during the 1980s) into an institution building exercise. As shown in Section 2.1.2, the notion of capacity development was formed around ideas of bottom-up action in order to empower individuals or communities (Honadle 1979; Chambers 1980, 1986; Richards 1981; Eade and Ireland 1997; Botes and Van Rensburg 2000; Cannon *et al.* 2003; Girgis 2007). It portrayed institutions as instruments that rather inhibit than enable the agency of individuals and/or communities. From the early 1990s, when capacity development entered the mainstream development discourse, two key theories influenced its conceptual evolution: New Public Management and New Institutional Economics (Teskey 2005; Craig and Porter 2006).

New Public Management (NPM) gained popularity particularly in OECD countries during the 1990s, especially as a measure to strengthen the economic compatibility and competitiveness of states (OECD 1996; Horton 2001). The core idea of New Public Management was the incorporation of private sector practices into public management (Gruening 2001; Lane 2002). Public administration should

be modelled after the management of companies in order to eliminate inefficiencies. This involved the definition of business processes, value addition and functionalist approaches such as the focus on skilled personnel. The recurring use of keywords such as *process*, *function*, *performance*, *efficiency*, *institutions*, *key actors*, *value addition* and *skilled personnel* make the influence of NPM easy to identify. Furthermore, these often connote a logic of planning, customer satisfaction as well as problem solving.

UNDP defines capacity as the ability to perform functions, solve problems, and set and achieve objectives (Lopes 2002, p. 8).

Figure 6.1 – Capacity development definition reflecting the influence of New Public Management

The presence of NPM elements in capacity development definitions of the 1990s implies the subtle shift that moulded capacity development into an institutionalist development practice. Furthermore, the economisation of the public sector (Dunleavy and Hood 1994; Denhardt and Denhardt 2000) undermined participation and community empowerment. Capacity development was transmuted into a mechanism that enforced and supervised the imperatives of efficiency and productivity (Hood and Peters 2004).

The main influence of New Institutional Economics (NIE) was the adoption of two notions: institution building and social capital (Teskey 2005; Hameiri 2007; Keefer and Knack 2008). The early adopters of capacity development – the World Bank, the UNDP, OECD and CIDA (cf. Table 6.1) – further refined the institutionalist frameworks by differentiating between organisations and institutions (North 1990, 2007). Teskey (2005) even argued that “because of the lack of conceptual clarity, the term capacity development (or capacity building – some writers even like to argue over this distinction) is often used synonymously with institutional development and state building.” This demonstrates the strong tendency among donors to frame capacity development as an approach to state building (Teskey 2005; Hameiri 2007; Hameiri 2009).

From the conceptual body of New Institutional Economics, the notion of social capital influenced the theory-building of capacity development the most (Moore 1995; Hameiri 2009). A discourse analysis of notions of social capital with regard to

capacity development is beyond the scope of this thesis. Nonetheless, it is important to emphasise that social capital is represented as an institutional practice to strengthen governance (Morgan 1998; Lopes 2002) in the capacity development literature.

Capacity building is a complex notion – it involves individual and organisational learning which builds social capital and trust, develops knowledge, skills and attitudes and when successful creates an organisational culture which enables organisations to set objectives, achieve results, solve problems and create adaptive procedures which enable it to survive in the long term (DFID 2008, p. 3).

Figure 6.2 – Capacity development definition reflecting the influence of New Institutional Economics

The framing of social capital “as morally and ethically neutral, facilitating all manner of individual and collective endeavors” (Hunt *et al.* 2009, p. 17) illustrates the adoption of a Colemanian framework (Coleman 1987, 1988). This further underlines the neoliberal economic and functionalist interpretation of social capital. In Coleman’s model, it is the role of the individual to derive the benefits of social capital; the state is only a provider of a set of norms that create social capital. This interpretation furthermore also emphasises and presupposes the existence of basic political institutions and the rule of law in the recipient countries (Fukuyama 2002). The following excerpt from a UNDP policy document reflects this neoliberal economic and political agenda in a concise manner:

Capacity development thus takes place not just in individuals, but also between them, in the institutions and the networks they create – through what has been termed the “social capital” that holds societies together and sets the terms of these relationships. [...] Communities with high levels of trust and strong networks are said to be better off than those without. This is because social capital is reflected in better jobs, less disputes and in a more prompt response to citizen concerns. (UNDP 2002b, p. 9 and 26 respectively)

The integration of New Public Management and New Institutional Economics into the notion of capacity development led to its gradual transformation. Its earlier emphasis on participation (1980s) as well as its human-centeredness receded and gave place to a neoliberal institutionalist instrumentarium. This transformation

reiterated the importance of effectiveness, efficiency and sustainable institution building. Furthermore, it infused the notion of capacity development with a distinct rhetoric of ownership. The sidelining of national institutions constituted a considerable part of the critique of development aid (Lethem *et al.* 1983; Brinkerhoff 1990; Buyck and Mundial 1991; Berg 1993; Baser 1994).

Donors employed capacity development to address this criticism by adding the emphasis on country-led approaches (Bossuyt and Laporte 1994; Jerve 2002; Goldberg and Bryant 2012; Booth 2012). The reinforcement of country leadership became part of capacity development definitions as well. The above exploration confirms Phillips' and Ilcan's (2004) claim that during the 1990s and early 2000s, capacity development became “a technology of neoliberal governance” (p. 393). It extended the borders of neoliberal governance into recipient countries by endorsing neoliberal institutional practices (OECD 1996).

6.2.2 Second phase – the theory of change models

A new phase of criticism against technical assistance historically demarcates the next phase of theory-building from the neoliberal institutionalist era. In the early 2000s, donors – particularly the World Bank (World Bank 2005, 2006, 2009), the UNDP (UNDP 2002a) and DFID (Teskey 2005, DFID 2006) – reanimated earlier criticism of technical assistance:

The rethinking of the development paradigm requires the rethinking of TC [technical assistance]. TC has played and continues to play a large role in setting global agendas and in the design of both international and national development policies. Its substantive content has generally been shaped by the Washington Consensus [...]. There is remarkable lack of attention to empirical evidence (of what works and why) or to learning from those countries that have been successful in developing their economies and societies. In short, there is both promise and concern in aid and TC as transfer mechanisms and catalysts for development. (Fukuda-Parr 2002, p. 34)

However, the renewed self-criticism among donor organisations also targeted the institutionalist legacy of capacity development tradition (Lopes 2002; World Bank 2006; DFID 2006). These accounts criticised these approaches to capacity development for being “reductionist in orientation” and “with little attention paid to system interrelationships” (DFID 2006, p. 11). A group of donors (DFID, JICA, UNDP and World Bank) called for a more comprehensive focus on social change and for the adaptation of capacity development frameworks that take the complex nature of social change into account (World Bank 2006; JICA 2006).

The second phase of theory-building is characterised by the incorporation of three key concepts: the rejection of previous expert-planning paradigms, the focus on higher level (societal) development impact and the emphasis on the inherent dynamism and complexity of systemic change (Taylor and Clarke 2007).

Even though the notions of complexity as well as the refusal of technocratic planning paradigms existed previously, but it was mainly practiced by international non-governmental organisations (INGOs). The origins of these notions go back to the theory of change (Vogel 2012), which evolved from within the family of programme theory approaches. The philosophy of theory of change denies that the future evolves in a linear manner and therefore it rejects rigid technocratic planning paradigms. Instead it describes desired outcomes in the future as well as a set of causal assumptions that link action to the former. Central to these notions were the acceptance of the complexity and emergent nature of social change as well as the rejection of expert-planning paradigms (Beeson and Davis 2000; Jones 2010). As a development practice, it was gradually formalised during the 1990s (James 2011) and entered the INGOs’ practice under a set of different terms (programme theory/logic/approach, causal pathway/chain/model/map, intervention theory/framework/logic, roadmap for change, pathways mapping).

Successful CD [capacity development] processes are not linear and do not follow a blueprint. They are dynamic processes characterised by constant bargaining and strategizing. The more complex the situation, the less it is likely that linear planning approaches will work – and most situations are complex (EuropeAid 2009, p. 23).

Figure 6.3 – Capacity development definition reflecting the influence of theory of change

The existence of a distinct vocabulary makes the identification of the various influences of theory of change rather easy. The presence of actionable keywords such as unlock, unfold, create, adapt, maintain; as well as the emphasis given to the process nature of development or social change reveals the key ideas behind theory of change (*c.f.* Figure 6.3 and 6.4).

Capacity development [is] the process by which individuals, groups and organizations strengthen their abilities to identify and achieve desired goals over time. (Dietvorst 2006, p. 15)

Figure 6.4 – Capacity development definition reflecting the influence of theory of change

These are standard elements of the idea of emergence that permeate theory of change (Beeson and Davis 2000; James 2011). The idea of emergence emphasises that social change cannot be planned or determined by indicators (Jones 2010). Instead, it is the delicate interplay between various actors and power configurations (*c.f.* Figure 6.5). Theory of change approaches are therefore not only methodological aids for development planning, but frameworks that ensure the transparent distribution of power (Taplin *et al.* 2013). Even though Dietvorst (2006) and Blokland *et al.* (2009) claim that those donors that emulated theory of change recognised the inherent complexity of power relations within development projects, this can't be justified based on donors' literature.

An extreme manifestation of donors' acceptance of complexity is EuropeAid's, which acknowledges that "[capacity development] is an intervention affecting the lives of people and organisations, for good or bad – or both" (Boesen 2007, p. 4). However, the immanent fatalism also confirms Jaycox's assumption from seventeen years earlier (see above) that capacity development is on the way to becoming a "*hackneyed cliché*".

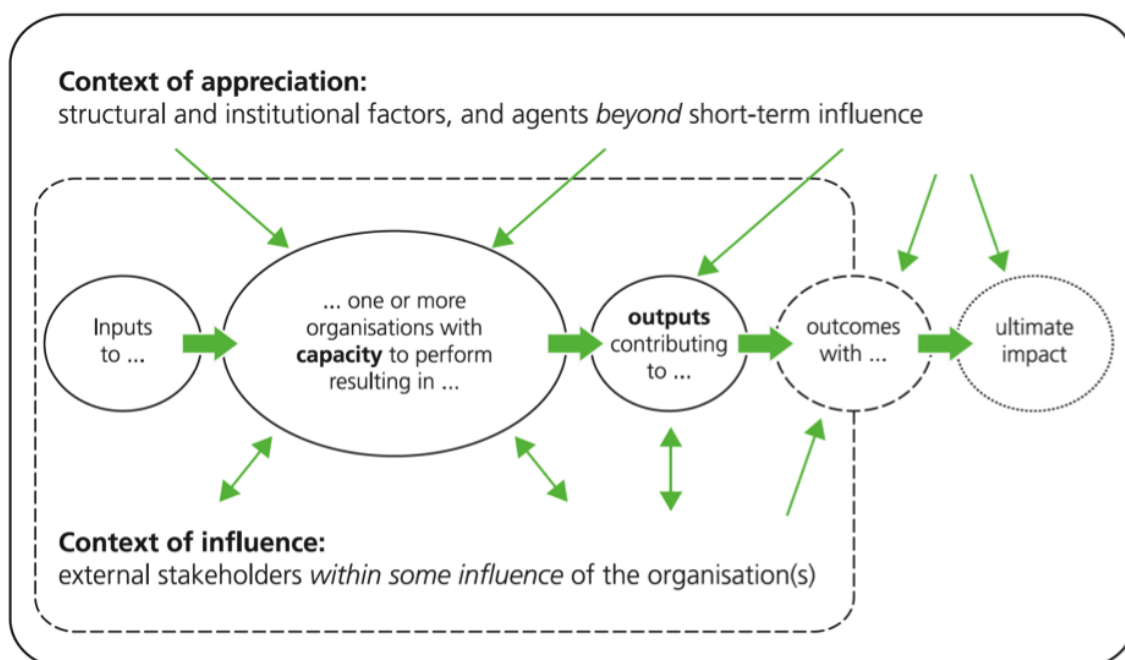


Figure 6.5 – Graphical representation of a Theory of Change model for capacity development (EuropaAid 2005, p.7.)

The use of the postfix “over time” – used in definitions of e.g. JICA 2004 (*c.f.* Figure 6.6), EuropaAid 2005, LenCD 2007, GIZ/KfW 2011 – also signals the presence of theory of change. Certain bodies of theory of change literature (Beeson and Davis 2000; Jones 2010) emphasise the emergent nature of social change. Nevertheless, it is important to note that the literature does not allow a rigorous distinction between the systemic and societal levels. Donors’ literature does not define the societal level; it is left open for interpretation. It does, however, suggest the necessity to extend the impact of capacity development to the entire society, and by doing so, it expands its mandate. This absolutistic ambition resembles the universalistic aspirations of the entire discourse of development (Kothari and Minogue 2001; Kothari 2005; Rist 2009; Escobar 2011). It furthermore shows the extent to which the development discourse absorbed and tamed capacity development.

The adoption of theory of change also led to the development of more elaborate models that describe the donors’ partnership environment. Particularly DFID and UNDP (Teskey 2005; Wignaraja 2009) championed such models by adding a fourth intervention level within capacity development. Whereas institutionalist capacity development only considered three levels (the individual, organisational and systemic), DFID and UNDP added the societal level.

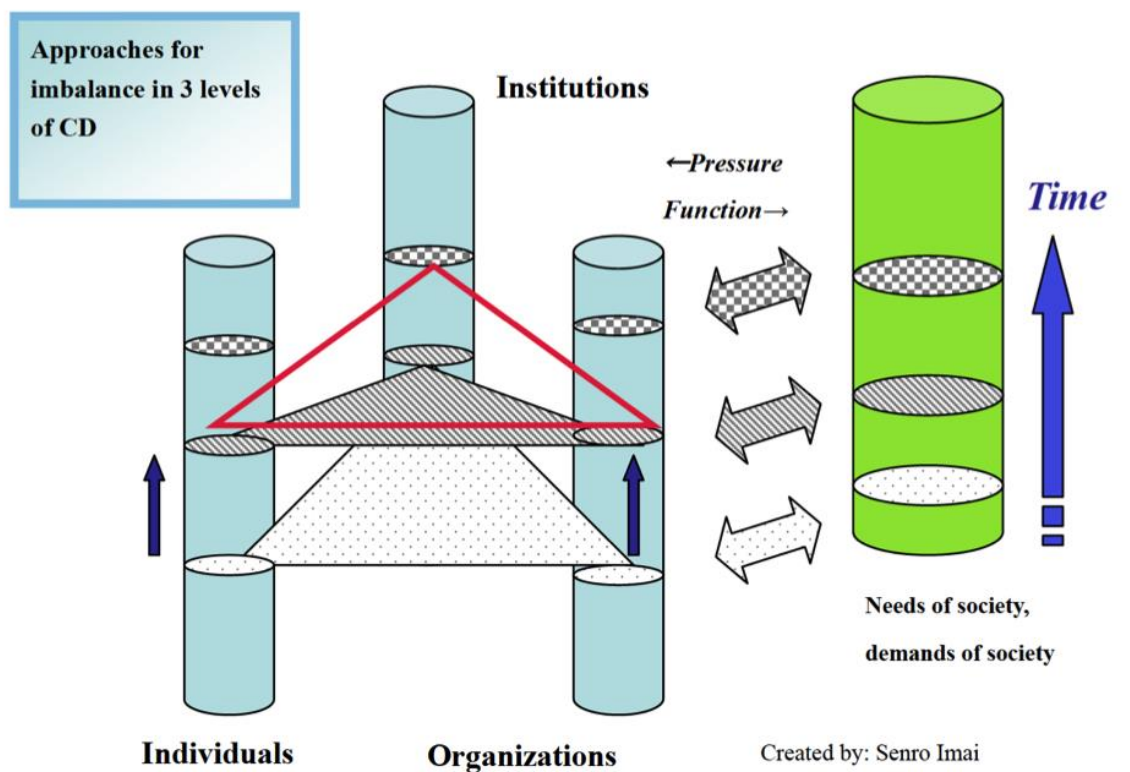


Figure 6.6 – Graphical representation of the time factor in a capacity development model (JICA 2004, p. 19.)

The influence of theory of change is also revealed through the emphasis on the precariousness of social change. The understanding that capacity development takes place in “highly contested environments, characterised by uncertainty and insecurity” (Blokland *et al.* 2009, p. 2) that require continuous adaptation is almost in complete opposition to the technocratic institutionalist practice of the first phase. It also situates capacity development within a framework of late modernity that is governed by risk (Beck 1997, 2008) and the experience of liquidity (Bauman 2000b).

The adoption of theory of change models by mainstream donor organisations underlines their propensity to co-opt progressive notions. This subsection referred to the re-appearance of anti-technical co-operation sentiments in the early to mid 2000s. I argued that, in order to legitimise mainstream development, there was a necessity to upgrade the notion of capacity development. However, the question of why the explicit use of theory of change models was adopted by mainstream donors remains unanswered. Vogel’s (2012) and James’ (2011) research shows that INGOs

adapted theory of change during the 1990s in order to increase the effectiveness of aid delivery. According to Vogel (2012), the main influence of theory of change on INGOs that adopted this approach was fourfold:

1. It functioned as a “framework from which to assess impact and improve monitoring and evaluation, to test the assumptions, demonstrate impact and learn from it.”
2. It is focused on “improving relationships with partners and stakeholders by identifying opportunities for dialogue and collaboration.”
3. It strengthens “the clarity, effectiveness and focus of programmes.”
4. It provides a “more flexible alternative to working with log-frames for complex programmes and contexts” (ibid, p. 11-12).

Moreover, only a few donors (DFID, EuropeAid, JICA, GTZ, GIZ/KfW, LenCD) adopted second phase definitions. Some of them eventually reverted to earlier, institutionalist definitions (JICA, GIZ). There is no evidence in the literature that their revision and return to institutional definitions was a premeditated decision. Section 6.4.1 will further unpack the underlying reasons for adopting Phase I. or Phase II. definitions and explore the issue using the notion of capacity development to raise power claims within the German aid discourse.

Cohen (1994) and Lusthaus *et al.* (1999) criticised the lack of coherence as well as clarity of the notion of capacity development. This section traced potential reasons that explain the undiminished popularity of capacity development in spite of its incoherence. The first phase of theory-building (1990s and early 2000s) within the mainstream development discourse cast capacity development into a neoliberal institutionalist notion. It addressed two main points of critique with regard to official development assistance: On the one hand, it emphasised the importance of local institution building as a measure to counter the creation of parallel institutions through development programmes; on the other hand, it highlighted that recipient countries determine their own development goals (local ownership). The second phase of theory-building (mid- to late 2000s), however, introduced elements of theory of change. Besides the increased importance of local ownership (endogeneity), the acceptance of the complexity and the emergent nature of social change enriched the former rigidity of institutionalist approaches. The necessity of

the second phase of theory-building arose through the appearance and rise of new donors (mainly INGOs) that questioned the effectiveness of mainstream development organisations. The adoption of theory of change into mainstream ODA organisations can be seen as an attempt to co-opt elements from the practice of the competing INGO sector. Despite its distinctive ideological orientation, capacity development does not constitute a concise methodology. The extensive theory-building process explained above, however, established capacity development as a normative notion that governs – to various extent though – mainstream development organisations.

| Nr. | Name of organisation | Phase I. | | Phase II. | |
|-----|----------------------|----------|-----|------------------|---------------|
| | | NPM | NIE | theory of change | relationalism |
| 1 | IDRC 1995 | X | | | |
| 2 | UNICEF 1996 | X | | | |
| 3 | CIDA 1996 | X | | | |
| 4 | UNDP 1997 | X | | | |
| 5 | CIDA 1998 | | X | | |
| 6 | World Bank 1998 | | X | | |
| 7 | CIDA 2000 | X | | | |
| 8 | UNDP 2002a | X | | | |
| 9 | UNDP 2002b | X | | | |
| 10 | JICA 2004 | | | X | X |
| 11 | EuropeAid 2005 | | | X | X |
| 12 | World Bank 2005 | | X | | |
| 13 | World Bank 2006 | | X | | |
| 14 | JICA 2006 | X | | | |
| 15 | InWEnt 2006 | X | | | |
| 16 | OECD 2006 | | X | | |
| 17 | GTZ 2007a | X | | | |
| 18 | InWEnt 2007 | X | | | |
| 19 | GTZ 2007b | | | | X |
| 20 | LenCD 2007 | | | | X |
| 21 | DFID 2008 | | | X | |
| 22 | World Bank 2009 | | X | | |
| 23 | NEPAD / AU 2009 | | | X | X |
| 24 | EuropeAid 2009 | | | X | X |
| 25 | GIZ/KfW 2011 | | | X | |

Table 6.1 – Donors' definition of capacity development according to their conceptual origin (Source: author)

6.3 Perspectives from the field

Building on the insights of 6.2, this section juxtaposes the complex theory of capacity development with the reality in the field. The core question it aims to answer is whether the theory of capacity development matches its practice in the field. It has two main parts, each focusing on one key questions with regard to the observed practice of capacity development in Ethiopia and Egypt:

- a. Are practitioners familiar with the theory of capacity development?
- b. Which elements constitute/define capacity development among practitioners?

The first subsection (6.3.1) uncovers how development practitioners view capacity development. The following subsection (6.3.2) briefly engages with the issue of the terminological subtlety of capacity development vs capacity building. Subsection 6.3.3 then dissects practitioners' notions of capacity development and integrates these with the insights from Section 6.2.

6.3.1 Theory in practice – a test among practitioners

This subsection compares the complex rhetoric of capacity development literature with the field realities in Ethiopia and Egypt. This is done in two stages. First, it assesses how practitioners define capacity development. Then the elements of these definitions and descriptions are analysed. In the interviews, I explicitly asked my interview partners to define capacity development in their own words. The rationale behind this question was twofold: first of all, I wanted to explore whether development practitioners can define a notion that is an essential part of their daily work. Particularly, since in my immediate work environment I observed a serious lack of knowledge about capacity development. This made me strongly suspicious about the coherence and integrity of capacity development practice. Secondly, I wanted to test whether their understanding matches the complex theory of capacity development.

Contrary to my expectation, the first interviews already suggested that the ability to define capacity development is not self-evident. For my first analysis of these responses, I established two conditions that had to be fulfilled in order to consider an answer as a definition of capacity development:

1. It reflects complexity – it describes a complex developmental effort that encompasses multiple social and/or organisational levels;
2. It is concise – the answer is short and precise (2-3 sentences maximum) in order to eliminate long answers.

According to my original reasoning, those answers that abide by both criteria demonstrate the interviewee’s familiarity with mainstream theories of capacity development. These parameters also helped to eliminate concise, but fragmented answers such as:

Capacity development is that you get training. (ET 13)

I considered all answers that did not fulfil these criteria as descriptions of capacity development.

| Capacity Development | Ethiopia N.et = 21 | Egypt N.eg = 22 | International N.int = 7 |
|----------------------|-----------------------|--------------------|----------------------------|
| Definition | 2 | 1 | 1 |
| Description | 19 | 21 | 6 |

Table 6.3 – Interviewees' ability to define or describe capacity development (N=50)

Table 6.2 shows that only four out of 50 interviewees were able to produce a definition of capacity development. The low number of definitions is particularly significant in the light of the fact that all definitions originated from GIZ employees at

Table 6.2 Donors' definitions of capacity development according to their conceptual origin

the senior management level. Moreover, these definitions closely match GIZ’s own definition. This is indicative of the importance capacity development played within

GIZ. It testifies to the familiarity with capacity development theories that was required at higher management levels within GIZ. Moreover, it also underlines that GTZ/GIZ not only joined the capacity development discussion late (6.2), but that at the time of my research it was more central to its operations than to other donor organisations'. This necessarily influenced my understanding of capacity development and potentially biased my early frameworks with regard to the importance of this notion. Section 6.4.2 will further draw out this idea in order to identify the potential rationale behind the apparent prominence of capacity development at GIZ.

The insights from my archaeology of contemporary notions of capacity development (6.2) would suggest that the definitions of capacity development vary according to organisational affiliation. However, the institutional background of the respondents proved to be irrelevant. The majority of the respondents (42 out of 50, 84%) did not define capacity development, but described it through a set of attributes. A common trait of these attributes is their exclusive focus on the individual level. As the following accounts from Ethiopia and Egypt suggest, practitioners omit the institutional or systemic levels:

[Capacity development] ist die Steigerung persönlicher Fähigkeiten. Vorhandene Kompetenzen nutzbar zu machen. (Capacity development is the enhancement of personal abilities. To make use of existing competences.)
(ET 09)

Giving people the tools to build their own capacity to allow them to reach their potential and to grow. (EG01)

Each person has his capacity of skills or space of skills, which they can use in every part of their lives. When you get to develop these capacities or build on these capacities is when you do capacity building. Sometimes you need to do it as a formal training, sometime in other forms, meet new people for example.
(EG02)

The prevalence of the individual as the ultimate focus of capacity development measures questions the need for the elaborate theories analysed in Section 6.2. The zooming in on the individual level is indicative of the capacity development notions of the 1980s (cf. 2.1.2). This tendency among practitioners

practically renders irrelevant the wide mandate that extends into institution building or societal change. This phenomenon is, however, accompanied by the propensity to associate capacity development with training. Subection 6.4.1 will continue to unpack the prevailing association of capacity development with training among practitioners.

The proclivity of practitioners to concentrate on individual capacity development is made even more explicit through the emerging narrative of mentorship among my informants. However, it is tied into the rejection of capacity development. In both Ethiopia and Egypt, I observed that practitioners – particularly among civil society actors – were inclined to mentor individuals. However, mentorship was framed in opposition to training massive numbers of people, which was the standard way to deliver capacity development. The issues of mentorship and friendship work (Girgis 2007) are among the areas where my research directly influenced my own practice. The growing understanding of capacity development as an appropriated and hollow notion paved the way to the dissociation with training-based formats (except for skills-based technical training). Girgis' (2007) concept influenced my thinking and practice and led me to the step-by-step adoption of mentorship techniques.

6.3.2 Capacity development vs capacity building

In Chapter 2, I suggested that capacity development and capacity building are essentially identical terms. Whereas certain bodies of literature (Jaycox 1993; Potter and Brough 2004) suggest a complementarity between these two terms, I adopted Teskey's (2005) approach, which uses the two terms as synonyms, since a significant difference between them cannot be argued from the available literature.

In my interviews, I consequently used the term capacity development. Clarifying the terminological difference between the two terms, i.e. between capacity building and capacity development, did not constitute part of my research. Nevertheless, the data that I have collected through my interviews and field practice show that the two terms are used interchangeably. The majority of practitioners I either interviewed or worked with did not differentiate between capacity development

and capacity building. A profound experience during my interviews was that respondents ignored my consequent use of the term capacity development. They instead used both forms without any distinct difference. Only three respondents differentiated between the two terms. The underlying logic was, however, arbitrary; this was also admitted by a high-level donor representative:

Capacity development ist wahrscheinlich der fließendere Begriff, während man bei capacity building denken kann man baut ein Gebäude. Capacity development ist fließender and mehr prozesshaft, aber das sind Bilder im Kopf. Deswegen lohnt sich die Debatte nicht. (Capacity development is probably the smoother terminology, while with capacity building, you could think it is like constructing a building. Capacity development is smoother and more process oriented, but these are only images in the head. That is why the debate is futile.) (EG 03)

Within my direct working environment in GTZ/GIZ, I was aware of a careful distinction between capacity building and capacity development, which was, however, obscured into ambiguous rhetorical subtleties. GTZ/GIZ exclusively used the term capacity development, whereas capacity building was used in a disdainful manner. However, this distinction is not documented in any of the GTZ/GIZ documents on capacity development (GTZ 2007a; 2007b). The following account by a GTZ employee aptly describes this otherwise undocumented distinction between the two terminologies:

Es gab erstmal capacity building and dann switchte die Diskussion ins capacity development rüber. Capacity building ist das rudimentäre, während bei capacity development auch die Nachhaltigkeit der Kapazitäten betrachtet wird. (There was capacity building first and then the discussion switched into capacity development. Capacity building is more rudimentary, while capacity development also takes the sustainability of the capacities into account.) (ET 09)

I suggest that the differentiation and assumed hierarchy between the two terms is specific to the GTZ/GIZ context in which I was working in Ethiopia. Since the main co-operation partner of the programme was the Ministry of Capacity Building

(MOCB), an especially high value was attached to capacity development. However, this entirely ignored the fact that there was no translation for capacity development in Amharic and that the Ethiopian government exclusively used the term capacity building (አቅም ግንባታ – akem gimkata). Section 6.4 will continue to unpack the inherent power claims situated within the discourse of capacity development at the MOCB as well as at GTZ/GIZ.

6.3.3 The intentions of productivity and resilience building

The previous section highlighted the absence of the complex theory of capacity development in the field. Practitioners' understanding lacks the sophistication exhibited by the theories I briefly outlined in Section 6.2. Instead of complexity, practitioners almost exclusively focus on the individual level when talking about capacity development. This subsection continues to compare the theory with the field practice by analysing the traces of ideology in practitioners' accounts.

Section 6.2 suggested that theories of capacity development are vehicles that transport ideologies (e.g. neoliberal institutionalism and theory of change). There are a total of 25 separate areas and purposes for capacity development mentioned in my interview data. These describe individual skills that can be acquired through capacity development. This collection can be grouped into two main categories of competences. On the one hand, practitioners tend to emphasise the enhancement of personal productivity through capacity development. On the other hand, the building of resilient behaviours dominates. Table 6.3 depicts these two prevailing categories, as well as the attributes that did not fit into these categories.

The categorisation of these attributes is not arbitrary, but follows the growing antagonism between two distinct agendas of capacity development I observed during my fieldwork. I observed the promotion of a distinctly capitalist agenda in my own capacity development activities. This stood in sharp contrast to agendas of resilience within development that I came into contact with during the preparation of my conceptual framework (Folke *et al.* 2002; Manyena 2006; Masten and Obradović 2006; Berkes 2007; Pike *et al.* 2010). The awareness that my work contributed to the promotion of a capitalist world order caused a serious moral dilemma for me. The

gradual realisation of how my own work fitted into the bigger framework of the expansion of capitalism was crucial for my professional coming of age. I recognised that my roots in participatory development, in which I was engaged during my studies, as well as my academic convictions were in conflict with my job at GTZ/GIZ. In 2010, in the midst of my research for the conceptual framework, I shared this observation with ECBP's German management team:

We were discussing the GTP today at a short meeting at X's [German programme director] office. I enjoyed the discussion, since I eventually could use the reading I have done for my conceptual framework. Nevertheless, what I said was probably completely inappropriate: "Grundsätzlich was wir hier tun ist nichts anderes als die äthiopische Wirtschaft an die globale Wirtschaft anzuschließen." [Basically, what we are doing here is nothing else but linking the Ethiopian economy to the global one.] (Research diary, 15/08/2010, Addis Ababa)

The insensitive nature of my observation at the meeting, however, went unnoticed. I assume that it was just attributed to my youthful naiveté. Nevertheless, this episode also exposes the intensity of the moral and professional paradox of insider action research (Coghlan and Holian 2007).

The attributes listed in the productivity catalogue suggest that capacity development in essence contributes to the proliferation of competences and skills that support economic development (Clarke 2005). It can be read as a distinctly capitalist set of characteristics. Furthermore, its notions promote a capitalist work ethic that underscores the necessity to acknowledge failure, act rationally and be accountable (Sennett 2011; Harvey 2006; Amable 2011). The resilience catalogue emphasises a skill set that is necessary to navigate the increased precariousness and vulnerability of everyday life. The skills included within this catalogue instigate the ability to adapt (Schoon 2006; Pike *et al.* 2010).

| | Productivity | Resilience | Other |
|----|----------------------|--------------------------------|--------------------|
| 1. | effectiveness | problem solving | passion |
| 2. | efficiency | flexibility/adaptive to change | happiness |
| 3. | productivity | negotiation skills | (feeling) content |
| 4. | transparency | collaboration | creativity |
| 5. | rationality | proactive | personal growth |
| 6. | customer orientation | skills acquisition | exposure |
| 7. | acknowledge failure | core competences | mindset (shift in) |
| 8. | faster & better | critical thinking | |
| 9. | accountability | communication skills | |

Table 6.4 – Attributes of capacity development among practitioners in the field

These two catalogues also provide further insights into the internal controversies of the capacity development discourse in Ethiopia. Among Ethiopian respondents, the prevalence of productivity attributes was particularly high (78% of the Ethiopian respondents used one of the attributes). This is indicative of the shift towards a capitalist economic narrative in Ethiopia. This, however, is obscured by the Ethiopian establishment's developmental narrative apparently rooted in the EPRDF's socialist heritage (Vaughan 2011; Hagmann and Abbink 2011). The association of capacity development with notions of productivity further confirms the co-optation of the term by the Ethiopian establishment and confirms the successful indoctrination by the establishment (Desta 2015; Bach 2011).

This section demonstrated the apparent chasm between donors' complex theories of capacity development and the lack of familiarity among practitioners.

Whereas the former encase capacity development in the complex language of neoliberal institutionalism and theory of change, the latter tend to reduce the notion to human resource development measures. The evident lack of intention among practitioners to engage in institution building and societal change suggest the absence of transfer mechanisms within donor organisations that aid the implementation of capacity development. This, however, confirms the stance of capacity development critics who question the practical value of complex capacity development theories (Cohen 1994; Lusthaus *et al.* 1999).

Similarly to Kühl (2009), I observed that the field practice of capacity development lacks methodological foundations. At the same time, the lack of methodological instruments specifically designed for the implementation of capacity development theory opens up new opportunities for practitioners. They interpret and adapt the notion according to their own value codes. These value codes, however, primarily facilitate the influx of notions of productivity. At the same time, notions of resilience building signal the growing awareness among practitioners of the increasing complexity and unpredictability in today's world. In the previous section, I suggested that the adoption of theory of change in mainstream capacity development definitions also indicate a similar awareness among donors. However, in order to verify these assumptions, further research will be necessary. Nevertheless, this section also suggested that the propensity among practitioners to engage in individual mentoring suggests a link to early, participative notions of capacity development (cf. Subsection 2.1.2).

6.4 The practice of capacity development

The previous section outlined a set of factors that indicate the fundamental alienation between theories of capacity development and its practice in the field. It also pointed out that the field practice of capacity development is inherently simpler than its complex theories, although it is entwined with notions of productivity and resilience. Moreover, it suggested that capacity development achieved an almost synonymous meaning to training. The restriction of capacity development to training further questions its validity. This section analyses the effects of the increasing equation of

the two terms. It contours the different grades of hollowing out and disintegration that accompanies the practice of capacity development.

6.4.1 The uni-dimensionality of capacity development

Section 2.1 suggested that donors' view capacity development as a set of methods that provide instruments for systemically approaching development challenges (Morgan 2005, 2006). On contrary to this, I suggested in the previous sections that capacity development lacks a concise methodology that is implemented in the field. In fact, development practitioners simplify the complex theories of capacity development by exclusively focusing on enabling individuals. Subsection 6.3.1 already referred to the inherent risk inherent in this simplification: capacity development increasingly becomes synonymous with training. The following accounts also testify to the amalgamation of training and capacity development:

Capacity development is that you get training. (ET 13)

Well, speaking of the term itself [...], based on my experience working in the development field, it is always related to training people. And giving them information through training. (EG 10)

Normally, if you take an overall picture, capacity building means trainings. (EG 05)

Academic critics of capacity development have criticised the lack of clarity with regard to the methodologies and instruments of capacity development since the early 1990s (Cohen 1994; Lusthaus *et al.* 1999). As shown in Section 6.1, the theory-building of capacity development only produced more elaborate models for capacity development. These theories were, however, not translated into instruments. Therefore, training remained by far the most prominent form of capacity development in the field. A high level Ethiopian government representative expressed his concern about the methodological uni-dimensionality of capacity development:

People [donor representatives] are only talking about training and training. Development agencies should show other dimensions of capacity development. [...] Other aspects of it were not propagated well. (ET 07)

This peculiarly restricted perception of capacity development among my interview partners is, however, very similar to my own observations. Through my own practice at GTZ/GIZ in Ethiopia and Egypt, I was closely involved with the development and deployment of training as a capacity development measure. Between 2010 and 2013, I supervised the training of approximately 2,500 individuals (1,821 people in Egypt during 2012-13, Source: GIZ 2014; for Ethiopia only estimates are available). These experiences exposed me to the mass production of training and made me aware of the way capacity development amalgamated training practices and was eventually rendered non-distinguishable from these. The following excerpt from my research diary also underlines the difficulty of identifying other instruments of capacity development.

X [a male GTZ colleague in Ethiopia], Y [a female intern] and I met today to help structure her thesis. X suggested to use her research in order to try to find new dimensions of capacity development. Despite the repeated claims of X that at least five different forms existed, we could not come up with more than three: training, study visits and gate keeping (Research diary, 12/11/2009, Addis Ababa)

My interviews eventually confirmed the previous observation from the field. The great majority (32 out of 36 interviewees, 70%) of my respondents equated capacity development with training. However, these accounts also indicated that this uni-dimensionality of capacity development potentially harbours and facilitates its own demise. Both in Ethiopia and Egypt, respondents framed training as a wasteful practice that does not produce impact:

[Capacity development is] wasting a lot of money on trainings that doesn't bring any impact. (ET 04)

I hate to use the word capacity building because it is associated with a massive number of people trained. (EG 11)

The significance of the interplay between the uni-dimensionality of capacity development and the resulting oversupply of training cannot be underrated. I suggest that the popularity of capacity development led to the further increase of training-based formats in delivering development programmes. The absence of other formats that led to the dominance of training within the practice of capacity development, however, contributed to the devaluation of this notion.

This subsection suggested the inherent uni-dimensionality of capacity development. The following subsections explore two distinct phenomena (the commoditisation of and disillusionment with capacity development), which illustrate the hollowing-out and subsequent demise of capacity development.

6.4.2 The commoditisation of capacity development

The previous subsection suggested that capacity development became synonymous with training in both Ethiopia and Egypt. In the absence of other methods, training dominates the field practice of capacity development. The oversupply of training, however, further enforces the encapsulation of capacity development. This subsection continues to unpack this increasingly quixotic phenomenon of training that has dominated the practice of development for decades. My goal is to understand the negative impact created by the association of capacity development with training.

A donor representative in Ethiopia explained that capacity development initiated a culture of training (“Trainingskultur”) among Ethiopian government employees:

Es [capacity development] ist problematisch wegen der Fluktuation (der Beamten). Nach erfolgreichem capacity building gehen die Leute weg. Dies hat mich persönlich demotiviert. Aber aus gesellschaftlicher Sicht ist es erfolgreich. Es hat sich ein Trainingskultur entwickelt. Deswegen wollen wir per diems abschaffen. (It [capacity development] is problematic because of the fluctuation [of public servants]. After successful capacity building, they leave the organization. This has demotivated me personally. But from the

point of view of the society, it is successful. A culture of training has been established. That is why we want to abolish per diems.) (ET11)

During my work in Ethiopia, I also became aware of the misappropriation of capacity development among project partners, particularly within the public service. In late 2008, I conducted a survey on the success factors of previous e-learning projects in Ethiopia. Numerous projects attempted to introduce e-learning to Ethiopian universities; however, their rate of success was rather low (Schultz and Petzoldt 2011). I concluded that, among a number of other comparatively minor reasons, their failure could be attributed to building the capacity of the wrong target group, namely the universities' teaching staff. Therefore, I recommended in my report to stop training teachers. I reasoned that outsourcing tasks that require specific technical skills, such as the creation of SCORM objects or server maintenance, for example, would ease the teachers' workload. The rules introduced, that were made compulsory within ECBP from 2010, would have allowed teachers to exclusively focus on their subject and would have obviated the need to acquire technical skills. Teachers, nonetheless, protested against this rule and demanded comprehensive technical training. The rules that were introduced touched upon two sensitive issues for the teachers. First of all, it undermined their assumed supremacy in terms of knowledge within the confines of the university that would have been further enhanced by becoming an e-learning practitioner. More importantly, however, it eliminated a significant source of additional income. Evidently, the latter was highly aggravating.

Due to the campaign-like use of the term capacity development in Ethiopia – which was championed by the MOCB – capacity development achieved financial importance. For many public servants, attending capacity development measures – in other words, training – was a non-negligible, additional source of income. Moreover, due the high supply of donors' and government capacity development measures, a scarcity of participants emerged. This in turn elicited a fierce competition to secure training participants by offering them better *per diems*. In a personal discussion, a representative of a high-level donor agency suggested to me that this apparent "culture of training" turned participation into a commodity - a commodity that donor agencies can buy:

Teilnahme hat sich zu einem Gut entwickelt – wir können dieses Gut kaufen, um unsere Indikatoren zu erfüllen. (Participation has become a good – we can buy this good in order to achieve our [programme] indicators)
(Research diary, 15/10/2010, Addis Ababa)

Similarly to Ridde (2010), I argue that this competition and *per diem* schemes transformed training from a transaction of learning into a commodity exchange. The transformation of participation into a commodity that donors need to purchase erases any hope for real ownership. Vian (2009) suggests that such systems of incentive-giving radically twist the logic of development. In this case, capacity development is no longer a demand driven and participatory process where the recipients practice ownership of their own development agendas.

6.4.3 Disillusionment with capacity development

The over-supply of capacity development evidently erodes and questions its authenticity. The increasing disconnection between the intentions of capacity development and its field practice is also exemplified by the following quote from an Egyptian NGO representative:

I realise that working in development, the easiest thing you can do is to conduct trainings and put this into a report. This will make you look extremely good. Mish moheem [it doesn't matter] whether the training was good, did help them [the participants] grow, did increase their income. No matter, you take some good pictures, put it in your report. It makes you look extremely good. (EG 05)

The uni-dimensionality of capacity development and the oversupply of training measures did not only induce the emergence of false incentives, but also undermine the credibility of the very notion. Mass capacity development is under scrutiny due to two major factors: The campaign-like nature of capacity development that renders its delivery a hierarchical, top-down measure, and the lack of individualisation, which results in one-size-fits-all delivery models, as illustrated by the above quote.

The criticism is based on the assumption that, in the hands of government and aid bureaucracies, capacity development has become a technocratic exercise and has lost touch with the real needs of the population:

The case with the government is kind of different. [...] Sometimes they just do the training because they have to. Sometimes maybe it is because of the regulations. Two training courses have to be done. And they just have to make sure that this is fulfilled and then the [responsible] ministry is satisfied.
(EG 02)

This is similar to Mikhail's (2014) findings, which analysed the political role of civil society in post-revolutionary Egypt, where much of the political discourse with regard to social and economic agendas is located. As Elagati (2013) claims, civil society has naturally engaged in political activism since the late 1980s and has played a crucial role in articulating the social agendas of the 25th of January uprising. These have been particularly critical of top-down development practices as demonstrated by the NDP governments and civil society sectors closely linked to the party:

Not many institutions really believe in it, in what they are doing, so they build this relationship with their beneficiaries and make sure that they invite the right people to the trainings they do and activities they conduct. [...] The way it [capacity development] is applied, the way I see it, is more about training a big number of people than about building their capacity ... it is not about the individual. I think it is more about the indicator and the task [of an aid worker]. You do a training, twenty people come; done! (EG 05)

This subsection has outlined two issues that question and undermine the credibility of capacity development. The previous sections illustrated the tendency to incorporate capacity development within the bureaucratic apparatus of recipient countries. Besides donor agencies, national bureaucracies in Ethiopia and Egypt alike deliver extensive capacity development programmes. It is interesting to note, however, that while Ethiopia focuses its attention on non-government employees, Egypt almost exclusively trains civil servants. The difference in terms of target

groups illustrates the dissimilarity of the two governments' intentions in terms of providing capacity development.

6.5 The ambiguities of a rhetoric – the inherent power dynamics of capacity development

This section adds further detail to the gradual hollowing out and appropriation of capacity development discussed throughout this chapter. The following two case studies from my research aim to illustrate the ways the elastic notion of capacity development is appropriated for power claims. First I analyse the particular role capacity development played in the public and political discourse in Ethiopia (6.5.1). Subsequently, I use the conscious differentiation between the terms capacity development and capacity building within the German discourse on capacity development to illustrate the inherent power of this discourse (6.5.2).

6.5.1 Power claims and mandate creation – the Ministry of Capacity Building in Ethiopia

One of the first observations from my empirical work in Egypt was the realisation that, in contrast to my experience in Ethiopia, hardly anybody talked about capacity development. I made a note of this to my supervisor during our supervisory meetings, explaining that the awareness of capacity development in Egypt is very low in comparison to Ethiopia. I could neither observe discussion about capacity development at work, nor as part of the public discourse. At work, hardly anyone talked about capacity development, it was neither part of official or non-formal meetings with programme partners. Similarly, I could not find any references in public newspapers either. In hindsight I understood that the issue of aid was considerably less important to Egyptians than to Ethiopians; be it the public or private sector. I have explored some of this issues in Section 5.1.

By contrast, there had been a sense of urgency in Ethiopia with regard to capacity development. I used my interviews to raise this difference between Ethiopia

and Egypt with some practitioners, whose critical and well-reflected opinions I had learnt to respect. These questions, first of all, turned out to be a very good icebreaker. Moreover, they revealed that at least some sections of society (non-government, non-donor representative) are aware of a prevailing “*rhetoric of capacity development*” (ET 19). However, there were various different forms of rhetoric produced in order to ascertain political or organisational goals. Ethiopian respondents almost unilaterally linked their first exposure to capacity development to the founding of the Ministry of Capacity Building (MOCB) in 2005.

The first time I heard about capacity development was when MOCB was created. (ET 13)

Many informants eagerly emphasised the political importance of both the founding of the new ministry and the appointment of Tefera Walwa as Minister. Similar to what Skjerdal (2011) found, the information policies of the Ethiopian government over-emphasise all activities that feed into its hegemonic developmental narrative. The high level of awareness with regard to the circumstances in which the ministry was created – eight years prior to the interviews – underlines its high significance in the public political discourse. The attention given to the founding of MOCB clearly situated capacity development within the developmental narrative of the EPRDF party-state. This was also underlined by the fact that it was installed as a super-ministry and was led by Tefera Walwa (Tigabu 2014), the civil-war veteran and founding member of the TPLF. His reputation as the EPRDF’s go-getter designated him for the role of Minister of Capacity Building.

As a supra-ministry, various powers were invested in the MOCB that allowed it to operate independently from other ministries. To analyse the entire spectrum of internal mechanisms that allowed MOCB to enforce reform in both the public and private sector goes well beyond the scope of this thesis. However, to illustrate the top-down nature that helped impose the change desired by the government, I briefly focus on the use of the notion of mindset within the Ethiopian political elite I was closely working with. The mindset of someone, an organisation or company, meant their willingness to embrace the reform prescribed by the establishment.


Changing the mindset of certain target groups was also part of my team's capacity development tasks. Every three months, I submitted a capacity assessment of our key partners – seven Ethiopian universities as well as a handful companies – to the MOCB.

Figure 6.7 shows the fields of these standard capacity assessment forms for the MOCB. Besides technical capability and organisation (management), the partner's mindset and perceptions had to be assessed as well. Moreover, for each project, the same exercise had to be done for our team as well (noted as "ecbp Addis" on Figure 6.7). The peculiarity of these capacity assessments was their public character. They were discussed in the presence of both the Minister of MOCB, Tefera Walwa, and the programme partners themselves. My lack of experience as well as my dedication to make a good impression as a new team manager in early 2010, got me into two serious public conflicts. By trying to appeal to and win the favours of the MOCB management I intentionally criticised the lack of dedication to reform programme of the Dean of the Faculty of Engineering at Mekelle University (Northern Ethiopia). This led to a rather ferocious public dispute between him and myself during the meeting. On another occasion I criticised my MOCB counterpart, which eventually brought me on collision course with some of the officials in the Ministry.

However, as I gradually understood, the purpose of these assessments was not necessarily to apply pressure on the partner, but to exercise self-criticism (see upper left block: "Not yet fully integrated with sector associations like LIDI"). I was aware of similar practices in the ranks of former Eastern European, and particularly the Soviet, Communist Parties. In November 2009, I made a note of this similarity in my research diary:

Full identification with the programme [ECBP] is crucial. Everyone who is not in line or critical of the approach is being ridiculed and thrown out of the window [by the Ethiopian establishment]. Reminds me pretty much of "Die Revolution entlässt ihre eigenen Kinder" (The Revolution dismisses its own children [Child of the Revolution – Leonhard 2010]) (Research diary 30/11/2009, Addis Ababa)

In his autobiographic book *Child of the Revolution*, Leonhard (2010) describes various occasions of public self-criticism within the Soviet Communist Party during the 1930s. Here, self-criticism facilitated the establishment and maintenance of discipline within the party. Such practices were inherent in the EPRDF as well. Bach (2011) argues that the “‘gem gema’ [self-criticism] is a process of ‘evaluation’ and ‘self-criticism’ inherited from the TPLF’s internal organization” (p. 659). Hagmann (2005) furthermore suggests that this technique is used to suppress dissent among public servants and is also often employed in the organisation of the rural population, particularly in farmers’ organisations. Both TPLF and the current EPRDF draw their legitimacy from Albanian socialism, which I would argue is the potential source of the practice of self-criticism. This example, however, demonstrates how autocratic practices are fused into capacity development and appropriate it in order to suppress opposition or create obedience.



MATRIX ACTORS / CHALLENGES

| | Mindset and perception | Technical capability | Organization / system / input |
|---------------|---|--|---|
| ecbp Addis | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Not yet fully integrated with sector associations like LIDI <p style="text-align: right;">1</p> | | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Frequent turn over of local experts. <p style="text-align: right;">2</p> |
| Companies | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Low level of awareness among the management about the potential benefits of business software to speed up operational process. <p style="text-align: right;">3</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Technical knowhow and IT skills missing among the companies' personnel. <p style="text-align: right;">4</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Financial bottlenecks to acquire very expensive and complex but very essential software's such as ERP (Enterprise Resources Planning). <p style="text-align: right;">5</p> |
| | | | |

Figure 6.7 – MOCB reporting table with mindset assessment questions (Source: author)

6.5.2 *Deutungshoheit* (The primacy of meaning)

With this second case study, I aim to illustrate the way in which the notion of capacity development enables power claims within the arena of international donor organisations. Early in my empirical work, I failed to appreciate the significance of my

German respondents' first encounter with capacity development. Their accounts confirmed that the point in time when capacity development entered the German aid discourse perfectly corresponds to my archaeology (cf. 6.1). The interviews verified that German aid organisations, including their commissioning party, the BMZ, only entered the global discourse on capacity development during the second half of the 2000s. Accordingly, their awareness of capacity development as an emerging trend within international development was more vivid than that of other donor representatives:

Capacity development is a trend, but a well-meant trend within development co-operation. (ET 18)

Senior GIZ officials were, however, also quick to add that “*it was a debate dominated by the headquarters*” (ET 20). I became interested in the underlying reasons behind Germany's late entry into this international discourse. It is in this political arena that certain aspects of power and power struggles become apparent. I discerned two different types of power-claims that can be traced back to the emergence of German aid organisations in the field of capacity development. First, some argued that the notion of capacity development was to position German aid organisations in the arena of international organisations:

Germany was too small and wanted to play an important role in development co-operation. Capacity development offered a niche for Germany to profile itself. (EG 03)

My analysis of the theory-building of capacity development (6.1), however, diffuses the claim made by the above senior official with regard to a niche in development politics. By the second half of the 2000s, when German aid organisations joined the debate about capacity development, the notion had already passed its zenith (cf. Table 6.1). I argue that the emergence of capacity development within the German aid discourse is embedded within its own discourse. The scrutiny with regard to the plurality of aid institutions that acted on behalf of the German government was resurrected during the late 2000s. At that time the German government had four main aid organisations: the Internationale Weiterbildung und Entwicklung (InWEnt), the Deutsche Entwicklungsdienst (DED), the Kreditanstalt für

Wiederaufbau (KfW Development Bank) and the Deutsche Gesellschaft für Technische Zusammenarbeit (GTZ). Due to public pressure, the merger of these institutions came up again in the political debate.

In the face of the apparent unavailability of a merger, the term capacity development was instrumentalised. A senior GIZ official explained that the debate on capacity development among German aid agencies was predominantly about the “*Deutungshoheit*”. The term *Deutungshoheit* denotes someone’s primacy in a terminological dispute (supremacy or primacy of meaning). This dispute emerged between InWEnt and GTZ/KfW. The former used the term capacity building within its work, while the latter adopted the term capacity development. Both parties defined capacity development as the core of their services (InWEnt 2007, GTZ 2007a, 2007b). The terminological difference between capacity building and capacity development became an important characteristic that fed their organisational identity. Both organisations attempted to increase their bargaining power in the prologue to the merger between InWEnt and GTZ in 2010.

6.6 Conclusion

The aim of this chapter has been to analyse the practice of capacity development by questioning its constituting elements as well as the underlying political and economic aspirations feeding the notion. This chapter has followed the evolution of the concept of capacity development, juxtaposing theory-building with the field realities in Ethiopia and Egypt. By doing so, it has traced the gradual demise of as well as appropriative practices towards capacity development.

First, it has outlined donors’ use of capacity development as a rhetorical device to re-legitimise the notion of development amidst the growing criticism of the early 1990s and early 2000s. Donors minted capacity development according to their own needs for legitimacy by co-opting a formerly participative and human-centred notion. The two intense phases of theory-building infused capacity development with a thoroughly neoliberal institutionalist framework, eventually also appropriating theory of change models from the INGO sector. The theory-building process of

capacity development thus illustrates and reconfirms the propensity of the development discourse to appropriate progressive notions. Through this thorough process of theoretical and ideological re-shaping, capacity development is added to a long list of notions that continue to legitimise the idea of development. This chapter adds a new cycle to Rist's (2009) historical analysis of appropriation within the discourse of development.

This chapter has allowed me to draw parallels between the evolution of capacity development within mainstream development and the political process of aid effectiveness. Contrary to the fierce conviction of my professional environment at GTZ/GIZ - where this research journey started – the unfolding of the notion of capacity development was detached from the OECD process on aid effectiveness. Whereas parallels can be drawn in terms of common issues (institution building and local ownership), the discourse of aid effectiveness (cf. Chapter 5) and that of capacity development are two separate phenomena. Based on the evidence above, I argue that the forceful attempts to unify these two phenomena were based on the fact that German aid organisations were late entrants to the discourse of capacity development. When they joined the debate in the second half of the 2000s, this coincided with key moments in the discourse on aid effectiveness, such as the signing of the Paris Declaration (2005) and the Accra Agenda (2008). Embedding capacity development in the influential OECD process on aid effectiveness lent further credence to capacity development and strengthened GTZ's bargaining power with its commissioning party, the BMZ, against other agencies such as InWEnt.

Second, this chapter has exposed the contradiction between the rhetorical intentions of capacity development theories and their lack of practicable methodologies. The archaeology of contemporary notions of capacity development reveals the absence of a distinct methodology. It confirms that capacity development is a flexible construct that can contain and transport various theoretical and ideological ingredients and within which claims of power can be developed. As such, it does not have, and indeed cannot have, a unified methodology.

Third, the chapter has demonstrated the apparent chasm between the complex theories of capacity development and its field practice. The latter lacks both the theoretical and ideological sophistication as well as the complexity of the former.

Practitioners' almost exclusive focus on the individual level did not imply an ideological neutrality of the field reality of capacity development; it carries strong ideological affiliations. These promote the increase of individual productivity through capacity development. This, in turn, enables the enforcement of a capitalist mode of development. At the same time, resilience building plays an equally important role among practitioners.

Fourth, the chapter has exposed the uni-dimensionality of capacity development. In the field, capacity development is increasingly associated with training. This in turn leads to the oversupply of training measures and the establishment of false incentive systems in order to secure the necessary attendance. The oversupply and the apparent lack of impact kindle disillusionment among practitioners. The devaluation of capacity development manifests itself in post-revolutionary Egypt. The growing opposition to capacity development in the civil society of post-revolutionary Egypt surely carries a portion of anti-establishment sentiment.

In contrast to the situation in Egypt, the notion of capacity development is woven into the nation-building project of the developmental state in Ethiopia. As Bach (2011) and Abbink (2009) argue, whereas the EPRDF's nation-building exercise appears to be fervently anti-neoliberal and participatory in its rhetoric, its practice reveals a deeply neoliberal and elitist economic development agenda. The level of subtle indoctrination among Ethiopians is also confirmed by the prevalence of productivity attributes among my Ethiopian respondents. The establishment's narrative of capacity development depicts this twist – the goal of capacity development is to produce neoliberal citizens, who are able to meet the demands of a globalised world economy.

The production of the capacity development narrative took place within the local civil society – it existed here and flourished due to the absence of state services for disadvantaged communities. It was excessively built around a rhetoric of resilience, aiming to equip underprivileged communities to act on their own behalf and take matters into their own hands. Capacity development has therefore become a counter-narrative to the failure of state services and is situated within a larger anti-establishment narrative driven by civil society.

Finally, a note of retrospection. The analytical claims contained in this chapter underwent several critical changes over time. Similar to the other empirical chapters, my analysis struggled with the double vision that resulted from my evolving practice of participatory action research. Only gradually did I manage to demolish the dogmatic premises of my work environment at GTZ/GIZ. As a fellow PhD student pointed out to me in 2010:

Don't forget that you are working with Germans! They organise and classify everything and then put it into a box with a label. It is putting reality into a storage – the attempt to track down reality with complete accuracy. But logic is just one way to deal with reality. [...] Don't get caught in your premises!
(Research diary, 26/05/2010, Addis Ababa)

In order to do justice to this invitation, this chapter has questioned the authenticity of the capacity development discourse. Furthermore, it also unearthed the inherent power claims attached to the importance of capacity development in the German capacity development discourse. Throughout the following chapters, I intend to continue shedding as many preconceived notions as possible of the ones that were imposed on me through the positionality of my research.

Chapter 7 – Rethinking ICTs, the state and authoritarian development in Ethiopia

7.1 Introduction

Chapter 5 established capacity development as a neoliberal institutionalist practice and embedded it in the discourse of aid effectiveness. It also sought to dismantle some of the more important conceptual frameworks both within the academic (Berg 1993; Blagescu and Young 2006; Boesen 2007) and grey literatures (Morgan and Baser 1993; Baser and Bolger 1996; CIDA 2000), which depict capacity development as a concise methodology that addresses developmental challenges. By challenging these frameworks, Chapter 5 also suggested that capacity development has been a vehicle for various development agendas and can be moulded according to the power claims of both donors and recipient countries.

Informationalist literature creates the narrative of an informational mode of development that explains the logic of a highly technicised and global socio-economic order (Stalder 2006; Castells 2011a, 2011b). It highlights the mechanisms that enforce new forms of global competitiveness and require compatibility. States are pressure by transnational corporates to achieve compatibility in terms of the skills of the labour force as well as infrastructure.

This chapter has three major aims. Section 7.1 explores donors' motives in promoting ICTs in Ethiopia. It also unpacks one of the paradoxical quests that accompanied my research. Subsequently, Section 7.2 draws the contours of the Ethiopian establishment's notion of ICT promotion for economic growth. This is done by consecutively questioning three premises of transnational informational capitalism that underlie the necessity of ICT for economic growth: the assumption that ICTs are the primary source of efficiency and productivity in today's economy; the necessity of

ICTs to facilitate the interaction with the global market; and the proposition that high value creation requires the transitioning to a post-industrial knowledge economy.

Sections 7.3 and 7.4 intuitively follow the emerging issues of transparency and corruption with regard to the promotion of ICTs. These issues, which unexpectedly emerged during my empirical work, allow me to thematise the roles that states play in the promotion of ICTs. The interrogation of various perspectives on the Ethiopian establishment's ICT promotion adds further details to the understanding of transnational informational capitalism in the global South.

There is a plethora of perspectives one can draw on regarding the socio-economic as well as political developments of the last 30 years in Ethiopia (*c.f.* 4.1.3 and 4.1.4). This chapter is not an attempt to draw up a socio-economic balance sheet for the EPRDF government, but rather tries to expose some of the contradictions inherent in a party-state in transition. Instead of debating the rightness or wrongness of economic policy making in Ethiopia, it uses ICTs as a narrative device to demonstrate the convoluted reality, heterogeneity and in-built contradictions of the EPRDF establishment. While on the one hand, this chapter will certainly criticise issues that emerge from this very complexity, on the other hand it also acknowledges the achievements of the contemporary Ethiopian state for improving the economic outlooks for the majority of its population through industrialisation, infrastructure building, health services and so forth.

The on-going struggle between the EPRDF's deep-seated commitment to socio-economic development and the necessary "Realpolitik" for remaining in power, however, is a narrative worth unpacking. ICTs provide a perfect magnifying glass to do so. Nevertheless, I am also aware that such struggles are not unique to Ethiopia. The existence of certain dichotomies between the expressed interests and the actual power claims of political or economic actors is probably true for any political system to a greater or lesser degree. This chapter only sets out to document some of these dichotomies in the Ethiopia of 2009-13, using the rather unique positionality and experience – at the convergence of states (Ethiopia and Germany), party, military and foreignness – that I held during my stay in Ethiopia.

In spite of my original intention to interrogate the idiosyncrasies of transnational informational capitalism in both Ethiopia and Egypt, the 25th of January uprising intervened. The political upheaval in Egypt between early 2011 and 2013 prevented me from collecting as much empirically sound evidence with regard to the ICT promotion agendas of the Egyptian government as I would have liked. The *de facto* political interregnum that followed the ousting of President Mubarak uprooted governmental power. The ensuing paralysis of the executive and the fractional tug of war precluded the proactive promotion of ICTs. Even though I interviewed several government representatives during my stay, their accounts only reflect apathy and the lack of follow-through. The following account by one of the state secretaries in the Ministry of Communication and Information Technology (MCIT) in late 2013 reflects the state of affairs in the government at the time rather succinctly:

Now the Ministry [of Communication and Information Technology] thinks [that] the [current] Minister is temporary. Not only him, but [other] people will [also] go soon. Faa [Therefore] long term strategies we don't have. Or it is not the right time for discussing any long-term project. Yani [you know] we will not go for major changes, because it is not the right time. [...] Now it is yani [you know] a transition[al] government. It is just [for] day to day operation. It is not for planning long term. And now we have the cabinet agendas and the Prime Minister agenda issue [the Prime Minister's agenda] is about the security and the economy. It is not yani [you know] subsidy and ICT. It is not on the main priorities of the cabinet. I think these two priorities are the most important. [...] We have a long-term plan until 2017, which I prepared, but he, the Minister, is not sure whether he will continue [after the January 2014 elections]. Of course, we have a road map and blueprint [but it is] for his yani [you know] successor (laughs). (EG 06)

The rapid succession of four governments within a period of 17 months that often espoused contradictory policies (cf. 4.2) rendered even the implementation of previously developed strategies impossible. The following account from a high-level government official in 2013 describes the apparent lack of direction within the responsible governmental structures:

So the [ICT] strategy, this was one of the very first strategies and it was put down in 2010. And, unfortunately, what happened was that the revolution came in January 2011. You may actually want to mention that [the revolution] in your thesis. And this caused a strong disruption in the rhythms of the ICT sector. Because what happened was that there were four different ministers for ICT in this only two years. And each minister got a new CEO for TIEC [Technology Innovation and Entrepreneurship Center, an ICT incubator under the MCIT], which is the technology innovation Centre. And each one came with his own mandate and own vision and bla-bla-bla. Some of them didn't even know about the strategy that I was just telling you about. Only recently have they started looking into it again. A lot of the ICT activities were very ad hoc in the last two years. They didn't really follow a structure or a plan, a strategic plan, because of what happened in Egypt. (EG 13)

Due to this dysfunctionality, I could only extract loose fragments about the promotion of ICTs under the Mubarak regime. However, even these were muted by the excitement caused by the use of social media during and after the 25th of January uprising. I will explore this in detail in Chapter 8. Due to the governmental paralysis in Egypt, a comparison with Ethiopia is not possible. This chapter therefore focuses exclusively on Ethiopia.

7.2 ICT capacity development and the marginality of participation

This section aims to achieve two goals. First, it offers insights into my research journey by highlighting the process of the gradual deconstruction and eventual vanishing of the quest for ICT capacity development (7.2.1). After the adoption of a more plural and flexible analytical framework, I trace the construction of ICT promotion agendas among donor representatives in Ethiopia (7.2.2).

7.2.1 A brief introspective reflection on eCapacity Development

This research was conceived within the framework of the Engineering Capacity Building Programme (ECBP) in the Ethiopian Ministry of Capacity Building (MOCB). The original intention of the Ethiopian government was to conceptually underpin and scientifically legitimise the viability of eCapacity Development as a novel approach to ICT4D tested within ECBP. Chapter 1 and Chapter 4 briefly elaborated that, despite the lack of any detailed descriptions, eCapacity Development represented a thoroughly constructionist approach (Section 1.2, Section 4.3). However, the concept exclusively existed in practice and, at best, was outlined in a few PowerPoint slides. However, there was a strong sense among my colleagues in GTZ/GIZ that eCapacity Development differed from other, in their eyes conventional, ICT4D measures. The term eCapacity Development was used interchangeably with ICT capacity development at ECBP. The key characteristics of eCapacity Development – as already identified in Section 1.1 – were:

1. Anything we (that is the employees of the eCapacity Development department) “touch” should be faster, better, smarter or cheaper through ICTs.
2. Bias to action: implement first, contemplate later.
3. No ideology: under no circumstances question the ideological approach of either Ethiopian or German partners.
4. People over technology: ICTs are only a small part of the solution that we provide and are not the focus of our work.

However, this vivid agility and progressive human-centredness of eCapacity Development was contradictory to the top-down developmentalism practised within MOCB and ECBP. Chapter 5 outlined the mechanisms of transnational appropriation with regard to the notion of capacity development, as well as demonstrated the Ethiopian establishment’s restricted use of this notion in order to reify its nation-building project.

In hindsight, it is surprising that even though I was increasingly aware of the authoritarian appropriation of capacity development, I was still preoccupied with the attempt to establish a concise theory of ICT capacity development (eCapacity

Development). The paradox, however, became evident during the interviews I conducted. The interview data mirrored my own perplexity and indicated the ambiguous relationship between ICTs and capacity development. Out of 43 interviewees, only 5 (11%) provided a definition when asked to define what ICT capacity development in their own worlds meant (cf. Annex 1, ICTs/1). Other respondents admitted their confusion and asked for clarification. The ensuing discussions demonstrated the non-existence of, or rather, the plurality of views about ICT capacity development. It is understood and explained in various ways. The two main interpretations I discerned can be summed up as:

1. The aim of ICT capacity development is to use ICTs in order to enable capacity development activities (e.g. e-learning).
2. ICT capacity development aims at developing ICT capacities (for example by developing ICT literacy or by the way of extending mobile or internet facilities).

The fact that there were multiple interpretative possibilities with regard to ICT capacity development was an important conceptual breakthrough in my research journey. It showed the futility of my technocratic determination, which wanted to pin down the ingredients of successful ICT4D activities. Moreover, it defeated my intention to show the primacy of technological constructionism and condemn deterministic ICT4D agendas. This decisive methodological influence helped me evolve from a rigid understanding inspired by my direct surroundings in Ethiopia and Egypt to a more explorative empiricism. Furthermore, it also pinpointed inherent issues of institutional blind spots idiosyncratic to participatory action research (Anderson and Herr 2005; Chambers 2008; Smith *et al.* 2010).

My positionality – particularly the strong ties to GTZ/GIZ as well as my junior position in the beginning – obscured from me the extent to which the entire notion of eCapacity Development was embedded in institutional micropolitics (Chambers 1986). In retrospect, eCapacity Development was a pragmatic management notion that skilfully utilised the powerful discourses of capacity development and ICT4D. It was, however, predominantly defined by its agility and received its mandate from the Ethiopian establishment's obsession with capacity development. It also intelligently alluded to the vague symbolism that ICTs exerted within the Ethiopian political

discourse (cf. Section 7.2 onwards). Its credibility lay in an agile and flexible team that was quickly able to respond and implement new projects. This is what secured the necessary buy-in from the Ethiopian political class. The following excerpt from a discussion with one of my supervisors at GTZ underlines the importance of loyalty to and the consistent evasion of conflict with the Ethiopian establishment:

Marton, niemals, niemals, darfst du dich hier in eine Grundsatzdiskussion einlassen. (Marton, you should never ever engage here [in ECBP] in a debate of principles.)

(Research diary, 10/11/2009)

The three signature elements of eCapacity Development (ICT solution, content and information, and capacity development – cf. Figure 1.1) celebrate a constructionist take on ICT promotion by emphasising the adaptability of ICTs as well as the mixture of human and technological elements. Nevertheless, the notion of eCapacity Development only existed in the encased, limited and walled-off reality of ECBP. Therefore, the endeavour to verify its existence beyond ECBP would be a futile attempt. The question whether constructionist notions for promoting ICTs exist in Ethiopia, however, remains. The following two subsections question the donors' notions and motives for promoting ICTs in Ethiopia.

7.2.2 The quest for constructionism

There is often a certain naiveté that characterises participatory ICT4D research agendas. Due to the apparent lack of participatory-constructionist social theory that underpins ICT4D projects, these often remain encased in issues of locality and neglect the various sources of hegemonic power that surround project locations. Constructionist approaches argue that the socially constructed character of technology allows for its contextual negotiation (Bijker *et al.* 2012). Technology is not a fixed entity but the outcome of phases of negotiations in the social and political spheres (Pinch and Bijker 1987; Bijker and Law 1994; Williams and Edge 1996; MacKenzie and Wajcman 1999). Through the malleability and negotiability of technology, human agency is restored.

Sections 7.3 and 7.4 will unpack the predominantly deterministic accounts I collected. There is scattered evidence among donor representatives that deploy ICTs that they do so in order to empower their beneficiaries and spur local agency.

Why are they so attracted to it? I think it is something like a game. To be honest with you, it is something ... one person said to me when I touch a computer, that is all I need to know that I was an equal amongst others. That there is a sense that if you don't have any IT than you are less of a person. [...] I have seen women actually just touch the computer and then say now I am equal. (ET 06)

The next account, however, also exemplifies that it is rather the symbolic powers of ICTs (Souter 2004; Waldburger 2004; Beardon 2004; Sciadas 2005; Rye 2009) that donors use in order to address their specific agendas. ICTs are in fact relegated to an auxiliary role and are re-appropriated to be mere magnets to the donors' various agendas:

You know, a guy who is 20 years old, who have never touched the computer; his attitude is like, computers are mostly for those who went to university or for those who are from wealthiest families. [...] But the thing is that, since the community give for technology a very high value and [it is considered] something unreachable, the moment they write their name on the screen using the keyboard, you boost their confidence. (ET 19)

Hollow (2010, p.32) argues that “the most significant impact of ICTs often relates to a desire for status symbols”. The misappropriation of the strong symbolism that ICTs possess is not inherently negative, but it should be acknowledged that it is questionable from a strictly ethical perspective. Moreover, there remains a semblance of naïveté and a sense of patronising underestimation of ICT4D beneficiaries. This eventually renders technology, ICTs in particular, non-malleable and non-negotiable, and forecloses its adaptation to the beneficiaries' needs.

This section first showed the inherent ambivalence of the term ICT capacity development. It also illustrated its situatedness within the institutional micropolitics of MOCB and GTZ/GIZ. My positionality within this particular institutional context as well as the initial stiffness of my analysis prevented the critical questioning of the

professional belief system of eCapacity Development. These obscured the marginal position as well as the artificial origins of this notion.

After abandoning the forlorn pursuit of defining ICT capacity development, I traced constructionist agendas of ICT promotion among donor representatives in Ethiopia. Donor representatives' accounts of ICTs were highly fragmented and mostly rooted in their personal convictions about the role of ICTs. As this example also shows, these personal accounts are based on individual convictions, and are tinted in idealistic notions of exposure to technology (Wilson 2004). Exposure to ICTs was advocated through a fragmented maze of individual accounts and exposed a high level of developmental hipsterism (Branchu 2014; Grossmann 2014) among its proponents. Even though donor representatives often present ICTs as a tool for participation and empowerment, they also exploit the strong symbolic powers of this technology. The deployment of ICTs for the clandestine transmission of donor agendas is ethically questionable.

7.3 ICTs and industrial development – an anachronism?

Section 7.2 illustrated the apparent lack of constructionist notions of technology among donor representatives. Moreover, it also showed that ICT4D initiatives that operate at the grassroots level neglect the opportunity to make technology negotiable for beneficiaries.

The notion of transnational informational capitalism is permeated by two core ideas. First, it assumes that ICTs are essential – and to some extent obligatory – components for maintaining the competitiveness of national economies on the global market (Pilat 2005; Draca *et al.* 2006). Second, the presupposition that ICT services (e. g. outsourced back-offices, telemarketing or programming) are the source of high value addition in the contemporary global market (Sklair 2001; Carroll and Fennema 2002; Carroll *et al.* 2010). The promise of rapid economic growth pre-empts and necessitates the transitioning into a “knowledge economy”. Aspirational models such as South Korea, Taiwan and Singapore (Low 1996; Castells 2011a) reassure recipient countries that they can leapfrog intermediate technologies by embracing

ICTs (Wee 2007; Lee and Ku 2007). The logic of transnational informational capitalism suggests that through the transitioning into a “knowledge economy”, economies of the global South can catch up on economic development (Friedman 2007; Kobayashi-Hillary and Sykes 2007). The following sections analyse the many ways Ethiopian policy-makers address these issues, as well as use them to position themselves in the global economy.

The centrepiece of Ethiopian economic policy making, widely supported by different donor governments, is the distinctly Marxist concept of Agricultural Development Led Industrialisation (ADLI, cf. Section 4.1). It seeks the enhancement of state revenues by increasing the export of Ethiopian products (Hagmann and Abbink 2011; Hess-Nielsen 2013; Weis 2014). The establishment's command economy determined that eight sectors (Textile and Apparel Industry, Leather and Leather Products Industry, Sugar and Sugar Related Industries, Cement Industry, Metal and Engineering Industry, Chemical Industry, Pharmaceutical Industry and Agro-Processing Industry) were to uplift the Ethiopian economy (cf. GTP 2010, p. 27).

This section plots the contours and motives of the Ethiopian establishment in deploying ICTs within the framework of economic development. This section in particular questions three premises that permeate contemporary informational capitalism. Subsection 7.3.1 analyses the issue of productivity. ICTs re-animate hopes for rapid economic development in the global South by promising higher productivity (Chinn and Fairlie 2006; Basant *et al.* 2006; Steinmueller 2001; Indjikian and Siegel 2005; Heeks 2010).

Subsections 7.3.2 and 7.3.3 question the scope of the acceptance of and transition towards an informational mode of development in Ethiopia. The former follows Ethiopian policy making with regard to using ICTs as a measure to increase international competitiveness within its industrial policy. The latter deals with the intriguing promises and elusive prospects of “leapfrogging” (Steinmueller 2001; Alzouma 2005; Fong 2009), “catching up” (Freeman 1994; Wilson 2002) and “level playing field” (Friedman 2007; Kobayashi-Hillary and Sykes 2007; Trimi 2008) are followed by the Ethiopian establishment.

7.3.1 ICTs as a precursor to productivity

Informational capitalist scholarship suggests that ICTs further increase economic efficiency and productivity. The technological optimism of these accounts suggest that the deployment of ICTs is a prerequisite for economic development (Steinmueller 2001; Chinn and Fairlie 2006; Basant *et al.* 2006; El Khoury and Savvides 2006). The issue of productivity was astonishingly important to the Ethiopian informants I worked with. The following account by a high-level Ethiopian government official vividly echoes this:

Technology [ICT] has the effect of speeding up work. So to speed up. What it was taking two days or three days without using technology we can do it even within half an hour ... within a period of half an hour. [...] it is all about efficiency, the more efficient you will be. If you are more productive it is obviously, that is what we call achievement. [...] Through ICTs, productivity will go up in Ethiopia. (ET 13)

The notion of increased productivity through ICTs permeates Ethiopian accounts across the board. The almost unilateral endorsement of ICTs by my Ethiopian informants as a vehicle to increase the productivity of the Ethiopian economy was overwhelming during my empirical work. Not only civil servants, who could be liable to reproduce the establishment's official narrative, but also private sector and civil society representatives underlined the importance of ICTs to increase economic output. These accounts are indicative of the ways informational capitalism infiltrates popular thinking.

ICTs are thus expected to help produce more productive manpower that represents a globally competitive workforce. As expressed by a high-level government representative,

It [ICT capacity development] is all about human capital development. [...] The institution now up-scaled to ministry level [Ministry of Information and Communication Technologies] ... this is [shows] a good commitment [towards ICT capacity development from the government]. But as a long-term

commitment, there should be more institutions producing skilled manpower.
(ET 13)

I discerned two major points of view among my respondents with regard to the role of ICTs for Ethiopia's economic development. On the one hand, ICTs were to alleviate the apparent productivity problem among the Ethiopians. On the other hand, it was intended to train enough skilled workers to sustain economic growth. The former opinion is well represented by an Ethiopian donor representative:

By using ICTs, you can increase accuracy in these sectors [health, education, agriculture]. Increasing the productivity of Ethiopia would mean increasing the productivity of those people [rural population]. Improved productivity would mean improved income, in my opinion. (ET 14)

The emphasis on productivity in this account is indicative of the establishment's focus on creating a competitive economy. It also reproduces a key element within the establishment's nation-building narrative. It is the intention of the ADLI to create a competitive workforce in the agricultural as well as in the industrial sectors. A good example of this is the rural market information systems that were implemented during my empirical work, aiming at facilitating better trade flows from the farmers to the market. This would, in turn, also increase the farmers' income. The SMS-based market information system implemented by the newly-established Ethiopian Commodity Exchange helps to "protect the rights and benefits of sellers, buyers, intermediaries, and the general public" (ECX 2008, no pagination). As one of my informants also pointed out the SMS-based market information system not only increased the farmers' income, but also generated further revenues for the state.:

ECX is also using the same approach. So ECX gets a little bit and the government gets a little bit. (ET 14)

The notion of a productive workforce transcends the issue of rural transformation. ICTs play a key role in the creation of a productive industrial workforce. The following quotation from an Ethiopian donor representative provides an idiosyncratic example of the underlying control narrative:

Because it is easy to monitor the communication. Easy to monitor the outcome of certain assignment. And also to track mistakes [...] That is the biggest advantage of having ICT. (ET 10)

The government's intense focus on using ICTs for increasing productivity as well as to establish a productive workforce also permeates the educational sector. This also demonstrates the holistic approach Ethiopian policy makers take with regard to economic development. However, such an approach, unfortunately, precluded using ICTs as a form of progressive didactics or cultivating creative forms of learning. The following account by a high-level government official illustrates the prevalence of the logic of productivity:

So people [students] need to be productive in their education for instance, so they should score better results, and they should learn more things now than before using these tools. (ET 10)

Maintaining the momentum of rapid economic growth required the guaranteed and constant supply of skilled workers. Therefore, in 2006, the Ethiopian establishment embarked on an extensive plan to increase the number of university graduates, who were intended to provide this supply of skilled workers. A strategy inspired by the Chinese educational system (Mekasha 2005; Tessema 2010) increased the intake of state universities tenfold (Saint 2004; Ashcroft 2005; Tessema 2009). The designation of e-learning as a tool to cope with the increased intake further demonstrates the simplistic and thoroughly deterministic understanding of ICTs:

So we feel that e-Learning is an area where we can make the biggest impact. It can address the need to be able to handle higher number of students starting let's say from the universities where there is rapid extension of universities but still faced with some severe capacity constraints in terms of handling the load that is put on. (ET 15)

The expectation of increasing the teachers' productivity through ICTs was clearly expressed in the annual planning documents as well as in the e-learning scoping missions performed by my colleagues (Schultz and Petzoldt 2011). E-learning became a key instrument to increase the throughput of universities.

Person X [a high-level government representative] explained to me that it is unacceptable that “our students are not provided with state-of-the-art content. Students need to get access to current textbooks and learn from current materials in order to become competitive on the world market.” And of course, added the always compulsory “we don’t have time to waste”.

(Research diary, 07/04/2010, Addis Ababa)

My colleagues and I, however, advocated for a more holistic notion of e-learning that also cultivates critical thinking and creative thinking, even though our repeated discussions with ministry representatives at the MOE and MOCB, did not bear fruit. Thus, we adopted an approach in line with the Ethiopian establishment’s development priorities. This is well reflected in the annual objective of our department for the year 2004 (in Coptic Calendar):

To enhance the efficiency and quality of the teaching-learning process in the 6 FoTs [Faculty of Technology] and MIT [Mekelle Institute of Technology], through this, students will have access to the state-of-the-art information society. (ECBP/eCapacity Development annual objective 2004 [C.C.]

By suggesting that e-learning activities will create a semblance of modernity and progress mandated my team to implement collaborative software solutions as well as to train students in online research and collaborations techniques. While the idea of modernity appealed to the bureaucrats, students were more encouraged by the notion of collaboration, which played a key role in our e-learning campaigns at the universities (Figure 7.1).

The establishment’s deployment of ICTs served the increase in the supply of a skilled workforce as well as its productivity, which in turn benefits the poor economically in the medium term. The contribution of ICTs as a tool for productivity is undeniable for economic development in Ethiopia. However, the same rationalisation and standardisation of the labour force is a double-edged sword in the long term. Holtgrewe and Scholten (2005) Wagenaar and Boersma (2008) as well as Comor (2010) point out that conforming to the skill demands of the global economy – particularly in low-skilled economies – also builds a dependence on price advantages (e.g. low -cost textile production) and exposes these countries to the

volatility of the global market. The same exigency, which increased the productivity of Ethiopian employees in the short term, also puts their income opportunities at risk by exposing them to tides and flows of international markets (Keyzer *et al.* 2000; Geboye Desta 2009; Ahmed 2010).

This fascination with a productive workforce, however, exhibits the sometimes-contradictory nature of the establishment's policy making. On the one hand, it is rooted in radical Marxism (Habtu 2003, 2004; Kefale and Aredo 2008). However, on the other hand, it sometimes allows neoliberal agendas to permeate its policy making (Abbink 2009; Bach 2011). It further highlights that the establishment only deployed ICTs when it directly served its developmental narrative (Beyene *et al.* 2015).

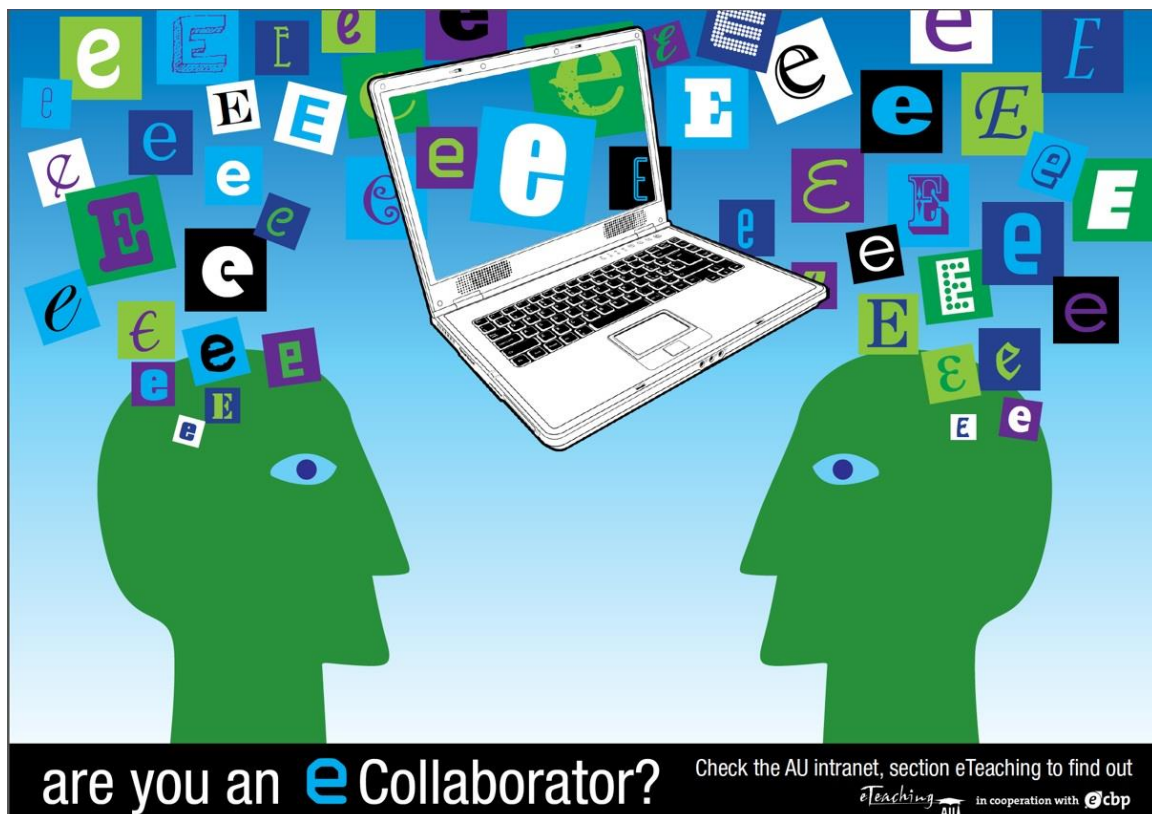


Figure 7.1 – Poster developed by my team promoting e-learning at the Adama University, 2010 (Source: Jörn Schultz, GIZ)

7.3.2 The notion of global competitiveness

The Ethiopian establishment's intrusion into the private sector is widely explored in the literature (Furtado and Smith 2009; Altenburg 2010; Lefort 2012). Whereas its rationale is subject to continuous criticism from both the international private sector as well as the donor community, the establishment repeatedly asserts its primacy in terms of private sector policy making. The following account from a government official shows the rationale behind this interventionism.

I think actually many [people] think it is a historical thing that the private industry has been somewhat weak and plus there is also a belief currently that the government can play a key role with the resources it has in terms of moving things forward. (ET 15)

Altenburg (2010), Kelsall (2011) and Oqubay (2015) provide excellent accounts of the EPRDF establishment's industrialisation policy and its interventionist posture with regard to private sector development. These policies are rooted in the direct critique of the neoliberal policies of international organisations such as the IMF and the World Bank during the 1990s. Prime Minister Meles Zenawi championed this progressive critique (Weis 2014), which resulted in the establishment's interventionist industrialisation policy (*c.f.* 4.1.4). Oqubay (2015) and Brautigam *et al.* (2016) point out that these policies aimed at retaining Ethiopia's sovereignty over its economic policy making as well as protecting its immature industrial sector. Moreover, from 2002 one can observe a convergence between the protectionist policies of the Zenawi government and Chinese growth models (Brautigam *et al.* 2016). Whereas the focus of these policies on processing primary goods as the driver for industrial development have been heavily debated (Cramer 2003), the steady annual GDP growth, averaging well above 10% for almost ten years, confirms their success.

Key to the establishment's industrialisation policy is the export orientation of key economic sectors (Oqubay 2015). While the previous subsection demonstrated the importance of ICTs with regard to increasing industrial productivity in general, this subsection analyses the relationship between the establishment's export-led strategy and the role designated for ICTs.

In transnational informational scholarship, ICTs are a key component to facilitate the exchange between national economies and the global market. Moreover, Souter (2004) suggests that ICTs provide a leeway for transnational companies to extend their influence on these economies. The availability of ICTs is a prerequisite to entice foreign investments (Steinmueller 2001). This view was confirmed by a donor representative:

Die deutsche Entwicklungszusammenarbeit hat sicherlich auch das Interesse die Wettbewerbsfähigkeit der Äthiopier auf eine individuelle Ebene and auf eine company Ebene auf ein internationales Niveau zu bringen, dass es auch deutsche Firmen auf die äthiopische markt kommen and hier gute Angestellte, human resources, finden. Oder Partnerfirmen finden mit dem sie kooperieren können. [...] Und dadurch, dass Äthiopier in der Nutzung von ICTs trainiert werden, auch eine größere Erfolg für deutsche Investitionen garantiert wäre. Das ist meine persönliche Meinung, dass auch CIM and die GIZ ein großes Interesse beziehungsweise mit ihren Interventionen einen Auftrag [von der deutschen Regierung] haben das quasi mit herzustellen. [...] Was meiner Meinung nach auch 100% legitim ist, weil sowohl GIZ and CIM hauptsächlich aus Steuergelder finanziert sind and daher auch die Interessen der deutschen Steuerzahlern ja vertritt. [German development co-operation certainly has the interest to bring the competitiveness of the Ethiopians to an international level, both on an individual and a company level, in order to allow German companies to come here and find good employees, human resources. Or to find partner companies to work together with. [...] And through training Ethiopians in the use of ICTs, a higher rate of success can be guaranteed for German investments. My personal opinion is that CIM and GIZ also have a stake, or rather are commissioned [by the German government] to bring this about through their interventions. [...] Something that is, in my opinion, 100% legitimate, because both GIZ and CIM are mainly financed from government taxes and hence represent the interests of the German taxpayers.] (ET 11)

That donor agencies act as facilitators of national or corporate economic interests is widely debated in the literature (Martens et al. 2002; Martens 2005; Radelet et al. 2006). This perception was something from which I sought to distance

myself in my professional life, but it is admittedly widespread among recipients, as the following note from my diary indicates:

Yesterday X [a representative of one of the programme's key partners] explained to me that GIZ's actual goal is to facilitate market opportunities for German companies. (Research diary 20/02/2011, Addis Ababa)

This general sentiment regarding the intentions of bilateral donor agencies is a fascinating one, however, more from the side of the Ethiopian establishment.

The establishment recognised and supported the use of ICTs to facilitate the export of goods from its key industrial sectors. Here, however, I exclusively rely on my own experience within ECBP. As I described in Section 4.2, my team in ECBP installed Human Resource, Customer Relationship and Enterprise Resource Management systems in six textile companies (Almeda, MAA Garment, Adama Spinning, Addis Garment, Novastar, Knit to Finish) as part of the country's industrialisation plan. Due to their production inefficiencies, many of the Ethiopian companies that the government had designated as export-oriented enterprises (cf. PASDEP and GTP) lost numerous international customers, which included Tchibo, C&A as well as the American National Football League. The delays were attributed to failures in store and customer relationship management (e. g. late delivery of materials or late product shipping). The introduction of ICTs was intended to serve the purpose of faster communication with suppliers and customers alike as well as to increase production speed. Numerous manual administration protocols had to be replaced by ICTs in order to accelerate production as well as output (Figures 7.2 and 7.3).

This evolving sense within ECBP regarding how ICTs will be best able to contribute to economic development – the programme's main mandate – is reflected in its 2011 (C.C.) five-year plan. This plan draws a direct line between ICTs and Ethiopia's industrial development.

The objective of the department [on.e | eCapacity Development] is facilitating and accelerating capacity development processes using ICT enabled tools to support efforts for industrial development in Ethiopia.

(PowerPoint slide, ECBP Five Year Plan, 2011 C.C.)

Even though the sentence is somewhat muddled with development jargon, it is explicit about the role of ICTs as an auxiliary to support industrial transformation in Ethiopia.



Figure 7.2 – Manual store management at a major Ethiopian textile exporter (Source: author, 2010)



Figure 7.3 – Installing an Enterprise Resource Management system at a major Ethiopian textile exporter (Source: author, 2010)

Figure 7.4 illustrates the impact of ICTs on the store management and human resource management of two companies. ICTs had to contribute to the better planning of human and material resources within Ethiopian companies in order to eliminate delivery problems that resulted from complex paper-based resource management. The establishment understood that the key to the success of Ethiopia's industrialisation is the compatibility of the export-oriented industrial sectors with the global economy. Good communication with customers and timely delivery were essential for securing the necessary sales that, in turn, secure jobs and income. The introduction of ICTs not only increased productivity but also obtained the necessary compatibility to and interoperability with the systems of the global economy (e.g. online procurement and sales management systems).

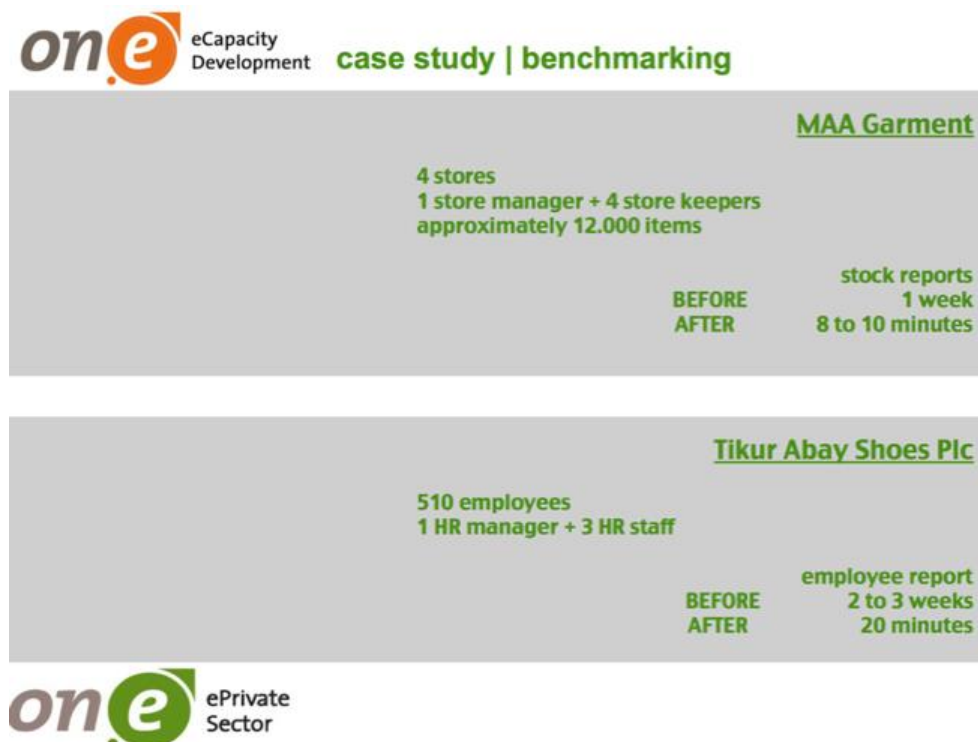


Figure 7.4 – Benchmarking report prepared for the MOCB illustrating the advantages of HRM and ERP systems (Source: author, 2011)

7.3.3 The non-production of ICTs

A tale of contradiction often re-told by both donor and government representatives is the establishment's singular focus on ICT infrastructure in the face of the repeated breakdown of the very same infrastructure. Many criticised the Ethiopian government's ICT infrastructure development (Belachew 2010;

Lessa *et al.* 2011). Nationwide ICT projects – exclusively managed by the MOCB – such as the WoredaNet (a dedicated uplink connection for district governance offices) and the SchoolNet (a dedicated uplink connection and educational broadcast for 200 high schools) projects stood as symbols of a series of non-functional, but grand ICT development measures instigated by the establishment (Adam 2010; Gagliardone 2014). Despite the apparent failure of these infrastructure-building initiatives, they provide a semblance of progress largely due to their sheer size and complexity, (Gagliardone 2011, 2014; Beyene *et al.* 2015).

The establishment's neglect with regard to the breakdown of these mega-projects questions how it intends to use ICTs for inclusive socio-economic development (GTP 2010). It underlines the GTP's intention that ICTs are not considered as a source of high value creation for economic growth (Sklair 2001; Carroll and Fennema 2002; Carroll *et al.* 2010), but instead they play an auxiliary role to the establishment's industrial endeavour (GTP 2010).

The case of the long-planned ICT Park in Addis Ababa also raises the question whether intentions to prioritise ICTs really exist in Ethiopia. One senior private sector representative echoed the negative perception widely shared throughout the ICT scene in Ethiopia with regard to the ICT park:

Ethiopia is also building an IT [ICT] Park that is not properly connected to the Internet. It could be another white elephant. (ET 04)

I first heard about the ICT Park when I arrived in Addis Ababa in early 2008. Over the years, recurrent invitations to government presentations on the ICT park followed. My colleagues in the MOCB were asked every year to propose new ideas for equipping the ICT Park, which remained a 3D rendered idea on PowerPoint slides. It gradually became an object of mockery and ridicule among my colleagues as hopes for its construction faded. A donor representative's account describes the fading hopes of many ICT practitioners in Addis Ababa as follows:

I am sure you know this ICT park concept. When did they start talking about it? 2002 [C.C.], right? You know once someone came to ice [a co-working space in downtown Addis Ababa] and they preach me about this ICT park.

Then I said unless I saw it happening I don't believe it is going to happen. [...] So this [ICT park] is a simple indication that most of the things they do is a show off. (ET 19)

These accounts are interesting in the light of how neighbouring countries, such as Kenya and Rwanda, pursue Business Process Outsourcing (BPO) agendas, while the Ethiopian government seems to neglect this economic opportunity. However, the account of Mann *et al.* (2015) suggests that these pursuits by the Rwandan and Kenyan governments remain unrealised even after years of promise. In the light of this, one could even commend the Ethiopian government for its wisdom of not engaging in this BPO quest.

7.3.4 ICTs as an auxiliary to economic transformation

The previous sections outlined the argument that ICTs would create and maintain Ethiopia's efficient integration into the global market. However, ICTs also play another auxiliary role. The Ethiopian establishment, unlike many other governments of the global South (Ostry 1995; Mutula and Van Brakel 2007), did not chase the mirage of rapid economic growth through the provision of ICT-based services (e.g. outsourcing). ICTs are restricted to the role of enabling the establishment's vision of industrialisation. They are intended to facilitate the export of goods necessary to reaching the penultimate goal of increased foreign currency earnings (GTP 2010). The role of ICTs was to facilitate the global competitiveness of the Ethiopian economy and not to produce informational goods and services for the global market. ICTs primarily served the purpose of accelerating the global competitiveness of traditional sectors of the Ethiopian economy.

The restricted deployment of ICTs enabled the establishment to maintain its sovereignty in terms of economic policymaking and to evade the intrusion of transnational corporations. This ability to outmanoeuvre the forces of the neoliberal global economy provides a novel perspective and, to some extent, an antithesis to Harris's (1999, 2008) and Overbeek's (2002) claim that transnational capitalism, and especially the integration of ICTs, erodes the boundaries of national economies. The ability to resist the global mechanisms of informational capitalism goes hand in hand with the establishment's notorious resistance towards the transnational centres of power (World Bank, International Monetary Fund). This resistance stems from the

Ethiopian establishment's direct critique of neoliberal policy-making (Zenawi 2012). While this self-determination earns praise for the Ethiopian establishment from those who celebrate its resistance to the forces of the neoliberal global economy (Altenburg 2010), the restrictive provision of ICTs (e.g. overpriced internet services, the installation of a nation-wide firewall) might be considered rather counter-productive to the nation's socio-economic development. The following two subsections address this issue by interrogating accounts of transparency, civil service reform (7.4) and corruption (7.5).

7.4 ICT use in the civil service

Section 7.3 illustrated the strictly compartmentalised role ICTs play in transforming the Ethiopian economy. ICTs are solely an enabler of the industrialisation of traditional sectors of the economy. In contrast to the premises of informational scholarship that declare the demise of industrial production (Castells 2011a, 2011b; Castells and Hall 2014), the Ethiopian establishment uses ICTs as an auxiliary to its industrialisation programme. More importantly, the previous section also demonstrates that economic sovereignty can be defended against transnational capitalism.

ICTs certainly facilitate the accretion of further margins of productivity as well as secure access to the global market. Whereas critiques of informational capitalism problematise the steady encroachment of rationalisation and standardisation of the labour force through ICTs (Holtgrewe and Scholten 2005; Wagenaar and Boersma 2008; Comor 2010), there is little understanding of other mechanisms that enforce compliance with global capitalism. This section, however, garners a distinctly specific outcome of my empirical work that sheds a different light on the role of ICTs in the global South. The frequent lamentations of my informants about bureaucracy caught my attention and made me realise that service delivery is a narrative located within the public and not the private sector.

Initially, I mistook this body of ideas as an element of the global competitiveness narrative. This was partly due to the fact that this narrative was

fragmented and was often mentioned together with economic development. Moreover, my informants spoke about it in an abbreviated form, only mentioning *service*, which led me to link it to economic development. It took me considerable effort to separate the narrative of service delivery from notions of economic growth that characterised the narrative of global competitiveness.

7.4.1 Issues of transparency and corruption

During the 2013 period of my fieldwork, I observed a gradual change in public opinion with regard to the establishment in Ethiopia. The ubiquitous references to issues of transparency and the recurrent remarks about corruption made me curious. Feyissa (2011) shows that the Ethiopian establishment has profiled itself as a non-corrupt state, which has also been widely acknowledged by the donor community (Feyissa 2011) and has earned Ethiopia several commendations (McLaughlin 2005; Hackenesch 2011). Most strikingly, however, the issue of corruption came up within the context of ICTs (in the interviews and appreciative inquiry sessions alike).

Initially, I understood the recurring suggestions from my informants to use ICTs in order to increase transparency as reflecting the prominence of petty corruption in the civil service. I was aware of cases of minor bribery, as exemplified by the following account about public services from an Ethiopian returnee:

Dann hatte ich auch dass Gefühl, daß [der Mitarbeiter meint] na ja wenn du mir noch 200 Birr [Ethiopian currency] oder 300 Birr dazu gibst dann, weisst du, würde ich vielleicht eine Ausnahme machen. [Than I had the impression that well [the clerk was suggesting that], if you add another 200 birr or 300 birr, you know, I might make an exception.] (ET 05)

The entirely unexpected number of references to issues of transparency and accountability made it clear that the issue needed to be unpacked. In fact, they raised two entirely different problems. On the one hand, they highlighted the slow and bureaucratic civil service.

By now in Ethiopia, this is my analysis, we have this bureaucratic nature ... we are, and I should say, a bureaucratic people. So to solve this one, ICT

solution is very good. [...] at least will run by itself. For example, once the request is in the system you cannot say 'Oh you are late' and so on. No, the request is here, it is in the system. The ICT solution itself kind of force him [the public servant] to do things [and he cannot say] 'No the paper is not yet here, I haven't received it'. (ET 08)

Here, the respondent refers to bureaucracy, since bureaucrats were highly trivialised and appeared rather as representations of populist cultural critiques. I briefly looked at the issue of corruption based on its prevalence in my empirical material. The preponderance of this issue shows that, in spite of Ethiopia's relatively clean reputation in terms of corruption, covert forms of corruption exist. Evidently, the further exploration of this issue would go beyond the main focus of my thesis, but this was nevertheless an interesting issue.

On the other hand, however, as I dug into this issue in more detail, I realised that there was more at stake than petty crime or a laggard state bureaucracy. The following two notes from my research diary show my own grappling with this phenomenon:

Everybody seems to be all of sudden concerned with corruption. Even XY [a high-ranking government employee] complained about the rise of corruption. Particularly strange is that, all of a sudden, the military is a topic in public conversations. I had never heard anyone talking of military officials in public before. (Research diary, 31/07/2013, Addis Ababa)

Between two interviews, I met some old friends in a café at Arat Kilo [downtown Addis Ababa]. Just wanted to understand why everyone seems to be talking about corruption nowadays. They explained that there have been repeated campaigns that use corruption allegations against businessmen and high-level politicians. (Research diary, 03/08/2013, Addis Ababa)

The latter account exposes the more implicit and organised forms of corruption in Ethiopia. The cracks that appeared after the death of the late Prime Minister Zenawi (August 2012) within the otherwise monolithic establishment allow for a more critical view on the inner mechanisms of the Ethiopian economy. Section 7.5 will give separate attention to this particular issue. The following two subsections

engage two particular issues with regard to the establishment's ICT policies: first, the deployment of ICTs within the framework of a wide ranging civil service reform (7.4.2); and second, some of the paradoxes that surround the notion of ICTs in Ethiopia (7.4.3).

7.4.2 The economisation of the civil service

As discussed in Section 7.3, the establishment's main motivation for utilising ICTs was to increase economic growth. I suggested that the academic discourse on the Ethiopian establishment's ICT policies is, however, often simplistic. As mentioned above, the accounts provided by Gagliardone (2014) and Gagliardone *et al.* (2015) on the Ethiopian government's techno-politics had a major influence on my research, especially since these articles appeared during the final phase of my analysis (2014–2015). Their analysis skilfully dissected the underlying motives for ICT megaprojects in Ethiopia. However, it surprised me that the research team – that comprised two Ethiopian researchers as well – exclusively focused on ICT mega-projects. While they criticise the way the establishment exploits the symbolic powers of ICTs through such mega-projects in order to create a semblance of progress, they leave other areas that constitute the state's technopolitics unmentioned. I would argue that the apparent failure of the projects that Gagliardone *et al.* (2015) criticise only marginally affects the success of the establishment's techno-politics. I suggest that the Ethiopian state's techno-politics – let alone that of the establishment – cannot be restricted to ICT mega-projects. In my view, these are only the tip of the iceberg of a multi-layered techno-political regime laid out by the government. Other, less visible or less triumphalist state-led ICT initiatives also belong to and complement the transformation process envisioned by the government's ICT techno-politics. The general reform of the civil service that ensued in 2009 – an area I had particularly good access – provides other insights into the rationale behind the government's ICT techno-politics.

The following excerpt from the *Daily Ethiopia*, a government-run newspaper, provides a good account of what motivates the government to embark on the reform of the civil service:

The number of foreign investors has been growing by about 60% over the past years, but only 20% of the investors have actually started operations due to the bureaucratic nature of the customs and financial institutions according to a report submitted by the Ministry of Trade and Industry to parliament. (Daily Ethiopia, 10/04/2010)

Subsection 7.3.4 thematised the issue of foreign investment and illustrated that ICTs play a key role in facilitating the establishment's industrialisation policy. Investment into ICT services is not encouraged or, with regard to the local market, is actually outright forbidden. The ineffectiveness of the civil service, however, is a bottleneck to foreign investments, as the following comment shows:

So all the government institutions in the country [...] they need to fix all these processes through ICT. To have a very relatively faster services and quality services. (ET 10)

The public service reform process is an archetypical example of the state-led developmental discourse in Ethiopia. The MOCB led various campaigns that intended to re-gear public administration around notions borrowed from the private sector. The reform's two most characteristic campaigns were borrowed from the management literature of the early 1990s:

1. Business Process Reengineering (BPR) – in 2009-10; and
2. Balanced Scorecard (BSC) – from 2010.

The apparent influence of New Public Management – similar to its effects on the notion of capacity development (cf. Section 5.3) – indicates the establishment's gradual acceptance of and shift towards neoliberal development models. The establishment's adherence to its socialist roots on the one hand, and its partial acceptance and adoption of capitalist development modules is similar to the Chinese growth model. The introduction of management notions such as BPR and BSC from New Public Management into the civil service is part of a wider interventionist industrial strategy.

As originally devised by Johansson *et al.* (1993), Jacobson *et al.* (1994) and Grover *et al.* (1995), ICTs play a key role in BPR. The Ethiopian establishment

accordingly also highlighted the importance of ICTs and encouraged their use by the BPR teams:

Currently various activities are being undertaken to establish institutional transformation such as BPR and BSC. BPR is fully operational in most of federal and regional government institutions, while BSC is at its first step to be implemented. Hence for effective, efficient, transparent and accountable civil service as well as to increase their contribution for institutional transformation it is important to support the reform process, i.e., BPR and BSC, with ITC. (GTP 2010, p. 60)

A high level government official from the ICT Center of Excellence in Ethiopia also volunteered to explain the methodology devised to streamline ICTs into the BPR process:

We feel that one key concept that can make a difference in terms of ICT [is to make it] better align ... with business goals. That is the concept of service management. The concept of service management is that basically ICT and the business ... that they [both] identify ... basically the business says 'Here are the key areas where we need ICT to deliver on. These are the key obstacles or key opportunity areas and then say we need you to deliver on that'. And ICT identifying from that saying 'Here is what we can deliver on.' So to have ICTs deliver really on key and measurable services [within organisations] that can impact the organisation in a meaningful way. (ET 15)

Between 2009 and 2011, I gathered first-hand experience with the BPR reform, first as it was carried out at public universities, and later when it reached my department in the MOCB. The encounters with various BPR teams, however, showed that the reform was primarily an exercise of political education. For example, none of the BPR meetings I participated in discussed the use of ICTs, even though that was the reason for me being invited.

The submission of the civil service to the rationales of neoliberal management models such as BPR and BSC exemplifies the convoluted reality of policy making that comes with the adherence to one's socialist roots on the one hand and the urgency for economic development on the other. The professionalisation of the civil

service is a necessity for driving economic growth through ensuring Ethiopia's compatibility with the global economy. It is nevertheless remarkable that BPR and BSC provided ample opportunity for the introduction of ICTs, it largely failed to do so. The following subsection illustrates a set of possible reasons that led to the underutilisation ICTs in the public service.

7.4.3 Obstruction from within

The failure of using ICTs to expedite the reform process left an overwhelming impression among my informants. As the following account from a mid-level government representative testifies, BPR had little lasting value since politically motivated campaigns were a regular occurrence in the public service:

BPR's idea was to make your service effective and efficient. It was promoted as a campaign and then after a while everyone forgets about it. People just tend to forget the previous one [reform campaign]. [...] They [ICTs] could have played a prominent role [in the reform, but] officials are not that keen on ICTs utilization. [...] But particularly decision makers, still they are sticking on the customary way of communicating and the customary way of designing process. (ET 07)

Various bodies of literature discuss the change of power structures associated with the introduction of ICTs (Silva and Figueroa 2002; Thompson 2005; Constantinides and Barrett 2006; Avgerou 2008), as well as the ensuing mistrust (Chepaitis 2002; Kapurubandara and Lawson 2006; Kuriyan *et al.* 2010; Alam, *et al.* 2012). Issues of organisational hierarchies and potential bureaucratic power-claiming that can undermine the reform, were systematically disregarded in the public service reform in Ethiopia and forebode its failure. A medium level government employee illustrated the problem as follows:

Because what I have seen is, when there is a system – for example there was [a] manual system and this was changed to software system. The only thing, however, what changed is that there are computers in front of these people and maybe there is more printing done. But at the end, it is even more

complicated and every now and then there is an ICT officer, a help desk guy at the back of these people. A system hunk which [whom] nobody understands, nobody knows. So basically they think that the whole process is interrupted because of this solution. The ICT solution is creating more problems. When you see in their face[s], they see being rejected, maybe even hopeless, because he [the public servant] cannot solve it [the software problem]. You see – he [the public servant] is at the mercy of some guy [the system administrator] coming from the seventh floor or third floor with his nice ICT terminologies and so on. And eventually what happens that he [the system administrator] doesn't fix it. So he [the public servant] has a mistrust. (ET 08)

A more aggravating challenge for the use of ICTs in public administration was that it disregarded institutional hierarchies. I observed that many of my informants in the public sector lamented the lack of willingness among civil servants to implement ICTs. The following account from a high-level government employee describes well what many of my informants were suggesting indirectly:

The question should be: Is there buy-off from the top management? Not in a lip service way but in a very strong way. Where they are engaged pushing aside resistance, which always arise, when you change the basics of an organisation. (ET 15)

This section first followed the issue of transparency and corruption that emerged in my empirical work. By bringing together the evidence from Section 7.2 with the questions arising from civil service reform, I suggest that increasing effectiveness – along the lines of corporate management – within the civil service played a key role in bringing the government's industrial policy to fruition. In order to remove the operational bottlenecks in the civil service that hampered economic growth, it was subjected to a reform to bring effectiveness and efficiency. Despite the prominent role designated for ICTs to increase efficiency within the civil service, there is little evidence of its successful deployment. Furthermore, it illustrated the internal mechanisms that obstruct the implementation of ICTs.

7.5 Smoke and mirrors – Who benefits in the end?

Sections 7.3 and 7.4, respectively, demonstrated the compartmentalisation of ICTs in Ethiopia. They argued that ICTs played an auxiliary role to the establishment's industrialisation policy. ICTs are relegated to facilitate the interaction with the global market, but do not constitute a priority as an industrial segment to be developed. In fact, the establishment showed little signs to develop the ICT industry. This very quest for effectiveness and efficiency both in the development of the private sector as well as in the reform of the civil service, demonstrates the complex, and sometimes contradictory nature of economic policy making during Meles Zenawi's reign. At the same time, it is important to note that the establishment's interventionist industrial policy successfully protected the country's economic sovereignty from the intrusion of transnational capital (McLaughlin 2005; Hackenesch 2011), which would have jeopardised long-term economic growth as well as employment creation. I also wanted to draw attention to the complex interplay between protecting the country's interests and the promotion of ICTs. In certain cases, however, the restrictions on the use of ICTs (e.g. high cost of ownership for internet connections) might have produced adverse economic effects as well.

Contrary to the assertion of transnational informational scholarship, the Ethiopian establishment successfully asserted its economic sovereignty (Kelsall 2011; Weis 2014). However, the question remains open as to whether it is for the benefit of the Ethiopian population. The following subsection briefly explores this question through evidence of systematic and high-level corruption.

7.5.1 The deep state

Subsection 7.4.1 already raised the issue of transparency and corruption. I argued that accounts of petty bribery in the civil service concealed a different form of corruption in Ethiopia. Furthermore, I also alluded to the fact that the issue of corruption seems to have appeared after the death of the late Prime Minister, Meles Zenawi, in August 2012. Many of the conversations indicate a change in the political dynamics of the country. Some of my interviewees reported that since Zenawi's

death, an internal power struggle was going on within the EPRDF. It struck me as something unusual, in the light of the Ethiopians' pride in being a fairly non-corrupt country, which also corresponded to my experience while living and working there. Therefore, I made the following note in my research diary:

These allegations [of corruption] are only a proxy for the power struggle within the EPRDF. Since Zenawi did not leave a political heir, both the conservative "bush-fighter" as well as the liberal branch of the party raise claims to power. (Research diary, 03/08/2013, Addis Ababa)

The internal tension between the old, military and the new, political elites was not kept in check. The internal struggle to safeguard economic positions was thus fought through mutual accusations of corruption (Levine 2007; Hassan 2013). The change in people's perception with regard to ICT capacity development and the power struggle among the party elites signals Ethiopia's farewell from a tightly knit, post-revolutionary political and military elite as this elite is disintegrating. This political struggle exposed the systemic corruption within the party-state (Minilik 2012; Hess-Nielsen 2013).

Let me come to this corruption. The government knows all the corrupted people, they know, [but] they wouldn't touch them. But you know, [for example] Marton, Person X, and Person Y and menamen menamen [and so on are corrupt]. When Marton start[s] asking questions, they will pull out that [evidence]. „Oh Marton you are doing this so you will go to jail.” (ET 19)

The question of systematic corruption within the EPRDF system does not concern this thesis in further detail. However, the interlocking relations between state and party-owned conglomerates illustrate some of the contradictions between the establishment's inclusive development policies and its politico-economic protectionism (Vaughan and Gebremichael 2011). In terms of ICT infrastructure for example the establishment systematically discouraged or outright disabled private investment in mobile telephony, whereas it allowed this type of investments for party-owned conglomerates:

The greatest news today is the one with ZTE setting up a mobile assembly plant in the Amhara Region. The plant is being set up in co-operation with Tiret. (Research diary 21/12/09, Addis Ababa)

Two points need to be mentioned here. First, this investment in co-operation with ZTE did not succeed in entering the market before 2012. Moreover, the programme was hidden from public discussion. Between late 2009 and early 2012, I could not find any publicly available information on this mobile plant. Second, it was an investment by Tiret, an EPRDF affiliated national endowment fund (owned by the Amhara branch of EPRDF). Tiret is the second biggest national endowment in Ethiopia and was set up after the guerrilla war ended in 1991. It is closely linked to the guerrilla army turned Ethiopian Armed Forces. As also confirmed by Vaughan and Gebremichael's (2011) account, the financial resources of these endowments were partly amassed during the guerrilla war or originated from weapon sales after the war.

Tiret's TANA Mobile later faced intense competition from a Chinese mobile phone producer (Techno Mobile), which led to an intervention by the state, as depicted in the following account from a medium level government official:

And they [Techno Mobile] have so much pressure from the government, because the government also sells its TANA mobile. Which [the phone] is not great. [...] So they are against these peoples [Techno Mobile]. There is an unfair competition. TANA is Ethiopian; it belongs to the high officials (whispering). They couldn't penetrate the market very well and they are losing ground. (ET 08)

The establishment restricted opportunities for ICTs and monopolised the entire telecommunication infrastructure. At the same time, it seized business opportunities in ICTs for party-affiliated companies. I have discussed the merits of the somewhat restrictive and interventionist logic of the Ethiopian government's industrial policy. Moreover, I have also credited the government's strategy to by-pass the failings of policies that promote ICT outsourcing in neighbouring countries. Nevertheless, the granting of special privileges to party-owned corporations sheds light on the existence of other, to certain extent competing, economic agendas within

the EPRDF. The existence of a deep state or party-elite that operates outside the norms and prescriptions of Ethiopian industrial policy makes me question the makes me question whether we can speak of the state prioritising its own needs over that of the Ethiopian population. The development of the latter would genuinely benefit from better access to ICT services through private investment.

7.5.2 Self-reflection

In Subsection 7.4.1, I briefly reflected on how my positionality initially inhibited a critical analysis of ICT capacity development. My direct embeddedness in both the GTZ/GIZ as well as MOCB structures restricted critical questioning and the unpacking of inherent controversies within these systems. Sections 7.2 and 7.3 uncovered the ways in which the Ethiopian establishment enforced its own notion of ICT utilisation and submitted it to its industrialisation policy. More importantly, the previous sections also argued that the efforts to connect the Ethiopian economy to the global market indirectly aided the economic interests of the clandestine state-military complex. The privileges granted to party-owned companies allowed them to exploit business opportunities in the otherwise restricted realm of ICT industries.

The above sections made me realise that due to my position within the establishment's structures, I was complicit in advancing the profit-seeking of the EPRDF establishment. My work with party-owned enterprises (especially the EFFORT group), exposed some of the special economic privileges that these companies were granted. The MOCB mandate to oversee the introduction of Human Resource, Customer Relationship and Enterprise Resource Management Systems at a select group of companies allowed me to work with those companies that spearheaded the establishment's efforts to increase export revenues. These measures directly impacted the lives of thousands of unskilled, low-wage workers by enforcing the precise control of working hours, the measurement of individual productivity and the efficient use of resources.

Admittedly, I hardly reflected on the ethical implications of bringing ICTs to the private sector at that time. My subscription to and support for party-owned companies does shock me in hindsight. Although I was critical of the establishment's productivity narrative as it was forced onto the university system

(Subsection 7.4.1), I readily executed the Ethiopian establishment's wishes in the private sector at the same time. Whereas, the benefits of the Ethiopian industrial policy for raising people out of poverty are without question, I consider the granting of special privileges to party-owned companies to be questionable not only from a business law perspective, but also from an ethical standpoint. This apparent paradox illustrates that despite my critical stance on EPRDF's authoritarian developmentalism, I was easily tricked into supporting its mechanisms to enforce control.

7.6 Conclusion

This chapter has traced the constructionist agendas of ICT promotion among donor agencies, as well as the role of the Ethiopian establishment with respect to ICTs. It has three main conclusions.

First, it has illustrated the ambiguous relationship between ICTs and capacity development. Furthermore, it validated the absence of constructionist-participatory agendas for promoting ICTs in the donor community. The scarce evidence of constructionist notions among donors further erodes hopes for more participatory approaches to ICT4D. The misappropriation of ICTs for delivering on various other agency priorities testifies to the lack of relevant methodologies as well as a deeper understanding of technology. It also highlighted that donor representatives' motivations for promoting ICTs are highly disjointed. Individual convictions and agendas provide different small-scale rationales for using ICTs.

Second, this chapter also outlined some of the specific characteristics of the Ethiopian establishment's practice of deploying ICTs for economic development. Most importantly, it identified two key parameters that dominate the establishment's use of ICTs. On the one hand, it illustrated the auxiliary role that ICTs play in the establishment's pursuit of economic development. This chapter highlighted the ways ICTs enable the progressive forming of a more productive and efficient industrial sector. However, these enhancements increase the control that company owners, who are often members of the establishment itself, exert over their employees. The

creation of a new mechanism of control further extends the limits of the rising transnational capitalist developmental state in Ethiopia. On the other, this chapter also demonstrated that in spite of the growing transnational pressure, Ethiopia successfully averted an influx of transnational corporations that could question or compromise its economic sovereignty (Kelsall 2011; Weis 2014; Oqubay 2015).

Third, the chapter briefly explored the internal antagonism within the EPRDF establishment. Clandestine linkages between the party, the state and the military – best exemplified by party-owned companies – for example allow the EPRDF to circumvent the restrictions on investments into the production of ICTs. This covert access to otherwise sealed off market niches, such as mobile phone production, expose the somewhat unfair economic strategy of the EPRDF.

Chapter 8 – Non-hegemonic narratives of ICTs among technologists in Ethiopia and Egypt

8.1 Introduction

I spent the night of Hosni Mubarak's resignation (February 14th 2011) in an Ethiopian government resort. After our workshop finished, my colleagues from the Ministry of Civil Service (MOCS–ET) all retired to the TV room of the resort to follow the live broadcast on Al-Jazeera from Cairo. My Ethiopian colleagues – all of them in the middle and higher ranks of their ministries – celebrated Mubarak's resignation later that night. The cheerful acceptance was partly shocking, since a political leader similar to Ethiopia's Meles Zenawi had just been ousted from office by a popular revolution. However, I had to realize that no-one present there drew a parallel between Ethiopia and Egypt at that time. The reason for the celebratory atmosphere after Mubarak's resignation had nothing to do with the popular uprising or a Facebook revolution, but was pure expression of Ethiopian nationalism. An Ethiopian colleague of mine explained that

now we can eventually build a dam on the Nile. Mubarak will not be able to stop us anymore. (Research diary 10/02/2011, Nazret)

Eight months later (October 2011), I was accidentally caught up in a mob in downtown Cairo. The incident became known as the Maspero Massacre, which resulted in 28 deaths and 212 injuries. Having just recently arrived in Cairo, I was not yet part of GIZ's emergency telephone cascade and in a somewhat careless fit, I had neglected to collect information before entering the street. This incident made me painfully aware of how ordinary Cairo residents orient themselves amidst the daily violence on the city's streets. I was rescued by a cab driver who used Twitter to circumvent the hotspots of violence in downtown Cairo and to cross the Nile safely just behind Maspero Square. By October 2011, Egyptians had reconfigured social media into a navigational tool, which served to disseminate security information

across all segments of society. This incident showed me novel ways of using social media and initiated to rethink my former notions about its use.

Chapters 5, 6 and 7 explored the ways in which both the Ethiopian and the Egyptian establishments enforced their own discourses of transnational capitalism. The Ethiopian establishment deployed both the notion of capacity development and ICTs to direct its citizens towards a thoroughly transnationalist economic development. In Egypt on contrary, I observed a segregation of the notion of capacity development. It was reserved for the non-governmental sector and represented an anti-establishment narrative. At the same time with regard to the promotion of ICTs both the EPRDF and the Mubarak establishments used the symbolic powers of ICTs to create a sense of modernity for their particular national discourses. Chapter 6 illustrated that the Ethiopian establishment promoted ICTs as part of its nation-building project, but also that its ICT capacity development discourse was not seeking the introduction of an informational mode of capitalism. In contrast, the Mubarak regime's ICT promotion was explicitly geared towards transforming the Egyptian economy into an informational capitalist economy (Nederveen Pieterse 2005; Kozma 2005; Murphy 2009).

By engaging informational bodies of literature, Chapter 6 furthermore demonstrated deterministic notions of ICTs within the dominant and normative national discourses. Donor agencies as well as the Ethiopian and Egyptian governments promoted ICTs in order to ascertain or maintain the global compatibility of their national economies. This chapter questions these normative discourses by focusing on three major aims. First, Section 8.2 explores grassroots notions of ICTs among Ethiopian and Egyptian technologists. This is done through both theoretical considerations and by interrogating the genealogy of grassroots technology communities. These critical insights are used to understand whether grassroots notions of ICTs can support individual agency to resist the dominant socio-economic discourses. Second, it traces the boundaries between dissent and loyalty within these technology-enabled surrogate communities (Section 8.3). The third aim is to examine fragments of transnational capitalist ideology that infiltrate online surrogate communities (Section 8.4). This will be instructive in demonstrating that the

dominance transnational technology companies wield through the provision of online platforms is not void of ideology.

8.2 Non-hegemonic narratives of ICTs

This section traces participatory narratives of ICTs in Ethiopia and Egypt. In particular, it examines how ICTs enable citizens to circumvent those nationalistic and hegemonic notions of ICTs examined in Chapter 6. I intentionally use the term grassroots throughout this chapter, although the technology communities explored here would not qualify to be called grassroots in development literature (Subsection 3.3.1). I use the term grassroots here for the reason that members of the technology communities I worked with describe themselves as grassroots. Being a grassroots technology activist constitutes an important element, notwithstanding their non-grassroots backgrounds, of their personal identities.

I am also aware that the privileged access to ICTs enjoyed by urban and essentially middle or upper middle class technologists in Ethiopia and Egypt is not representative of the grassroots' situation more widely in these countries. However, their better access to ICTs allowed technologists to spearhead and promote alternative notions of ICTs in their countries. Even though these groups in both countries came from urban middle class backgrounds, their access to ICTs was significantly different. While technologists in Ethiopia were bound by restrictions and meagre infrastructure (Hanafizadeh *et al.* 2009), Egyptian technologists benefitted from the swift expansion of the telecommunication infrastructure in the late 1990s (Sayed and Westrup 2003; Kamel *et al.* 2009).

Accordingly, the latter were not only more affluent, but also better equipped and more connected than their Ethiopian counterparts. During my empirical work I often had the impression that I was seeing two subsequent stages of socio-economic and technological development. While certain phenomena were just arising in Ethiopia, they were already in full bloom or had completely vanished in Egypt. This difference was further amplified by the 25th of January uprising in Egypt. Therefore, in order to provide a somewhat more balanced account, I excavated as much

evidence from before the uprising as possible. Although the development of these narratives is asynchronous in the two countries, they mutually inform each other.

At the same time, my account does not contest that a plethora of other grassroots narratives of ICTs exist in both countries. Yet most of these do not question the establishment's dominant discourse, at least not explicitly (Den Tandt 2002; Atton 2003). For example, Negash (2006) and Adam (2007) explored how grassroots notions and practices of ICTs nurture the agency of rural communities in Ethiopia, while Wheeler (2007) and Mahmoud and Arima (2015) undertook similar analyses on the use of ICTs in informal settlements in Egypt. Nevertheless, these narratives do not question or expose the dominant economic or political discourse in the respective countries. This section traces grassroots narratives of ICTs among Ethiopian technologists that question the dominant socioeconomic discourse of their countries (Redden 2001; Hands 2004; Castells 2011a).

More specifically, this section explicitly examines grassroots narratives within communities that are built around the constituting power of ICTs. Chapter 3 introduced the notion of technologists and technology communities. ICTs exert a constituting role in terms of their individual and group identities among local technologists (Komito 1998; Castells 2000; Haythornthwaite and Kendall 2010). Technology communities are characterised by a participatory culture (Jenkins 2006; Jenkins and Deuze 2008). Castells (2007) furthermore also suggests that ICT-enabled agency within these communities is played out in occupied online spaces.

The notion of agency in constructionist and deterministic philosophies of technology is narrated through binary opposition. In particular, constructionist bodies of literature feature agency as the participatory action which is directed against the dominant or hegemonic practice (Feenberg *et al.* 2010; Feenberg 2011). However, in these accounts agency is geographically limited (Bijker and Law 1994; Bijker *et al.* 2012). The malleability and negotiability of technology is often bound to the local by suggesting that it is constructed out of the premises and needs available locally. By doing so, technological constructionism often omits the growing availability of non-local knowledge, particularly through the transnational impact of the Internet. Even though contemporary transnationalist and informationalist philosophies of technology

question this binarity, but at the same time tend to overemphasise or exaggerate the aspect of the global (Jenkins 2006; Castells 2007, 2011) .

8.2.1 Global exposure

The previous chapters demonstrated that the Ethiopian and Egyptian establishments linked the notion of development to nationalistic discourse. In the case of Ethiopia, national identity and socio-economic development formed a tightly knit and strictly controlled ideological construct. The submission to the ideology of Abyotawi democracy was a requirement for Ethiopian citizens (Bach 2011). Questioning the establishment's developmental discourse was considered anti-Ethiopian. Both capacity development and ICTs played a constituting role in the formation of this national discourse. In contrast, since the Egyptian establishment had already abandoned its socialist ideals during the 1970s (Open Doors Policy), the Mubarak establishment (1982-2011) could allow more socio-economic diversity. In the case of Egypt, capacity development and ICTs were only employed if they served the interests of the country's elite (Zubaida 1992; Blaydes 2006, 2008).

Chapter 6 outlined the technological determinism as well as transnational capitalist orientation of the ICT capacity development policies of the Ethiopian and Egyptian establishments. Social constructionist bodies of literature argue within a set of opposites: hegemonic technological determinism vs grassroots construction of technology and meaning (Feenberg *et al.* 2010; Feenberg 2011). Agency that is enabled by technology thus negates the locally or the globally dominant discourse (Kallinikos 2002, 2004). Moreover, social constructionist thinking embedded within the context of development often overemphasises the local constitution of technology and creates a bias against regional or national discourses. Contemporary social constructionist literature, neglects the global flow of ideas, particularly through the exposure to ICTs (Morley *et al.* 2002; Kietzmann *et al.* 2011).

Technologists in Ethiopia and Egypt equally highlighted that ICTs allowed them to create connections beyond their national borders. Social media enabled them to gain exposure to global cultural, technological and political discourses. Particularly the interaction with peers beyond borders presented these technologists

with new opportunities. One of my informants, for example, explained that for his blog posts, he often reached out to people outside Ethiopia:

I have a close contact with the Ethiopian diaspora. [...] She was raised in America and she is in congress. And she also worked with Obama. So just because of the social media connections I ask her updates about American policy on Ethiopia or any new updates. So [via] physical connection [this] won't be possible. (ET 02)

The ability to interact with foreigners had a tremendous appeal among Ethiopians. The opinions I gathered among technologists after the first Barcamp Ethiopia event in August 2010 (cf. Annex 14) also underscore the aspiration of being globally connected. Through my involvement in the organisation of the first participatory event that was organised exclusively for the admittedly self-denoted grassroots community of technologist in Ethiopia, I could gain direct insights into the internal dynamics. The technologists had only previously met online before this first physical event, and were scattered across various online exchange platforms. An opinion poll during the event revealed that contact with the outside world was the primary gain from the event for the participants. I also noted the importance of this in my research diary:

Many of the participants showed off the e-mail addresses and phone numbers they have collected from the foreigner visitors who flew in for the event. Their number seems to be limited, probably 15 or 20 among the 300 Ethiopian participants. (Research diary, 11/09/2010, Addis Ababa)

The experience of Ethiopian technologists is dominated by the notion of living on the global periphery. Similar to Burgess' (2011) account of two women activists in Ethiopia, technologists perceived that their participation in global discussions was limited by economic and political domination. The following excerpt from a blog even draws historical parallels in terms of political and cultural isolationism between the medieval and contemporary Ethiopia:

As many people agreed, and the Ethiopian history clearly showed that most of current economical and social problems came from closing the nation from the outside world. The kings at that time were busy with much external

interference and couldn't do much except closing the borders [borders] and guarding the country. This was the best idea at that time [...] Though, the result is rather poverty and backwardness. The way, Ethiopia closed itself from the world; the world closed itself from Ethiopia – sad story! I am afraid to tell you this, but it is still happening. The world is moving so fast with information technologies, telecommunications and innovations. Ethiopia still closed itself from the external world – thanks to Ethio Telecom! The result is rather the same. More poverty. More backwardness. (eweket, blog post, last accessed 29/07/2011, <https://eweket.wordpress.com/2011/07/29/ethio-telecom-the-internet-service-provider-which-doesn%E2%80%99t-use-internet/>)

Ethiopian technologists felt themselves excluded from global progress. ICTs allowed them to connect beyond physical borders and break through the establishment's exclusive developmental discourse (Skjerdal 2011a).

In Egypt, it was considerably more complicated to reconstruct elements of exposure. However, I was able to detect a similar perception among Egyptian technologists, one of whom, for example, explained that the main benefit of ICTs

is the exposure. It is our window to the world. (EG 14)

Van Dijck and Poell (2013) claim that “users retain significant agency” by using social media. Kaplan and Haenlein (2010) furthermore suggest that global exposure through social media will play a significant role in closing the gap between the North and the South. The wealth of opportunities presented through the expansion of ICTs is reflected in the following account from a technologist in Ethiopia:

You can access information about anything; you can ask people to feedback, you can ask people for knowledge. And everyone who is not asking [questions online] can passively watch what is happening in the world. (ET 04)

Among engineering students in Addis Ababa, ICTs were equated so intensely with global interaction that the e-learning team at ECBP introduced a social networking site along with the university's e-learning platform. The rationale behind this step was to exploit the magnetism that social media exerted among students.

The actual function of the social media platform was to transfer students to the e-learning platform after they logged onto the social media platform. Even though both platforms were offline – they run on the local area network of the university and were disconnected from the Internet – students were still attracted to it because of their lack of differentiation, or possibly for their lack of knowledge to differentiate, between social media and the Internet. I noted down one specific occasion in my research diary when this apparent confusion between the local and the global appeared. This account illustrates the host of expectations as well as enthusiasm that were attached to introducing e-learning services:

After the opening ceremony of the e-learning programme at the Adama University, we met students in the computer rooms. [...] One of the students explained that he is excited about e-learning, because “now I can talk with professors in Germany. I can exchange ideas or send them my papers.”
(Research diary, 15/10/2009, Adama)

It is important to note that the e-learning introductory courses for students that were provided by my team were explicit about the fact that services and also exchange between users was only possible within the locality of the campus.

Discussions with Egyptian technologists also revealed that early adopters of ICTs in Egypt experienced a similar appeal. Those informants who owned a personal computer used it to source information from outside Egypt. This is particularly true for the young upper middle class who followed a cosmopolitan lifestyle and participated in global subcultures (Singerman and Amar 2006; Elsayed 2010). The communities of technologists, who mainly came from the Cairene and Alexandrian upper middle classes, used ICTs to import ideas and underscore their cosmopolitan lifestyle (Singerman and Amar 2006; Peterson 2011).



Figure 8.1 – Ethiopian social media activist using Afro-American slang to appeal to the young audience (Source: author 2013)

By 2013, I could also observe similar traits among Ethiopian technologists. Although the use of social media, particularly Facebook, was still in its infancy, it allowed the influx of foreign lifestyles and cosmopolitan ideas. Young technologists in Addis Ababa were, for example, especially keen to adopt something that they considered to be Afro-American culture. One of the prominent bloggers explained that he even switched to Afro-American slang in order to be able to connect with more technologists (Figure 8.1).

[...] prior to chat [Facebook Messenger, August 2011], I was writing in normal grammar, but to capture the attention of the new Ethiopian generation who is accustomed to the African-American style ... like they consider it as a swag or a way of being modern to use short term. Since they are part of the passive audience I want to awaken, I communicate with them with [through] their own interest [language]. (ET 02)

Similar to Schech's (2002) findings, both the Ethiopian and Egyptian technologists confirmed that ICTs offered the opportunity to participate in global cultural discourses. The interaction with these global cultural discourses becomes a source of empowerment and emancipation (Schech 2002; Mohan 2006):

We were always like “Egypt, Egypt, Egypt is the most important country in the world.” Umm el Dunya [Mother of the World – a common Egyptian metaphor for Egypt] and all that stuff. Of course I think it [social media] is a good thing because it is elevating people's thinking standards. Yeah, of course [laughs] [...] people are much more connected with the outside world and lot of people are getting ideas from abroad. I feel like we are so much more in tune and we are so much more empathetic with the global context than we were. And the Arab Spring and all the revolutions around the world and we think we are the reason for it [laughs] even though it is not the case. You know [Egyptians say] “we started occupy Wall Street”, “we started bla-bla-bla”. Egyptians were never like this. We were like China. We never really knew what was happening outside Egypt. (EG 12)

Both Ethiopian and Egyptian technologists highlighted that social media is a source of ideas which are unavailable in their own countries. ICTs thus complement national discourses of technology and ICTs explored in Chapter 6. With the help of social media, technologists could circumvent these narrow and hegemonic discourses. In my work with technologists, it often shocked me that they purposely disconnected themselves from their local reality. The following account from my research diary is indicative of many encounters with local technologists:

Person X amazed me completely. He is an absolute opposite to what one would expect from an Ethiopian student. He is inventive, explores and takes risks. His main drive is to localise global technology for the needs of Ethiopian people. He could easily sit in the Silicon Valley and do just exactly the same. He has just set up the first app-store in Ethiopia and explained it with the outmost simplicity. “What we needed was this: the application. We needed just to download it, right, and make the application [work] on Android on my phone. So we put it there on the Moodle platform, we downloaded it and tried the money transfer function. The money goes here and there and eventually

we tried to hack it [meaning “to repair it” – Ethiopian technologists sometimes wrongly appropriated terms from global technology communities. However, through the use of such terms they made their own identity visible against mainstream Ethiopian culture in which hacking connoted wrongdoing. In contrast, in global technology communities hacking increasingly stands for qualities such as inventiveness and creativity] and it worked perfectly fine.”
(Research diary, 27/07/2013, Addis Ababa)

Escobar (1995, p.225) claims that ICTs can “offer unexpected opportunities that groups at the margin could seize to construct innovative visions and practices”. Ethiopian and Egyptian technologists alike employed ICTs, and social media in particular, to gain exposure to global discourses. The evidence from these technology communities exposes the magnitude of global exposure through ICTs and by doing so it questions previous notions of agency within the constructionist discourse (Feenberg *et al.* 2010; Feenberg 2011). Through the global exposure that ICTs provide, agency is constantly negotiated between the local and the global.

Moreover, to complement the notion of global exposure, Egyptian technologists also emphasised that ICTs allowed them to broadcast their case to a global audience (Morley *et al.* 2002; Kietzmann *et al.* 2011).

They basically told the world that we exist. We are here, we are doing things, look at us, pay attention to us. So I think this is great, and it is exactly what we needed. I think IT ... the role of IT was remarkable. (EG 17)

Constructionist bodies of literature emphasise the importance of the local construction of techno-social realities (Kallinikos 2004; Feenberg *et al.* 2010). In Ethiopia and Egypt, however, grassroots narratives were constructed and negotiated at the intersection between the local and the global. Similar forms of intermingling have been conceptualised by earlier academic literature that deployed the notion of glocal (Thornton 2000; Ritzer 2003; Sullivan 2008; Luke 2008). However, these bodies of literature mainly arose from globalisation research before the emergence of social media. Therefore the technological aspects, and particularly the implications of ICTs for the counter-cultural could not be analysed. On the other hand Castells’

later account of the counter-cultural use of ICTs did not employ the notion of glocal (Castells 2007, 2013).

Besides the sourcing of ideas from abroad, as shown above, the broadcasting of one's existence was an influential factor that formed and constituted the technologists' agency. The exposure to the global was complemented by the export of the local to the global (Castells 2011; Lim 2012). The following excerpt from an Ethiopian technologist exemplifies the importance of the continuous exchange between the local and the global:

I think what is important is to exchange beyond the local community, to network internationally and be a part of the global sort of community. (ET 10)

8.2.2 The notion of community and the confluence of online and offline action

The previous subsection demonstrated that technologists' narratives of ICTs were negotiated between the local and the global. The cross-border, transnational exchange enabled by ICTs permitted technologists to engage globally. Technologists' exposure to global discourses, moreover, helped them to put local or national discourses in their countries into perspective. This section continues to trace this issue by analysing the ways in which Ethiopian and Egyptian technology communities attempted to substitute or circumvent public discourse through the use of ICTs.

These communities fulfilled at least two functions that were exempt from public discourse. First, these communities served as spaces of dialogue. Especially in Ethiopia, the cultural and political circumstances strongly restricted public dialogue. Public discourse was similarly corrupted in pre-revolutionary Egypt. The autocratic and neopatrimonial political order (Alterman 2000, Koehler 2008) confined dialogue to the realms of politics (cf. Subsection 5.3.2) and reserved it for the political elite. Public space was put under the complete control of the establishment in order to consolidate its own agenda (Eickelman and Anderson 2003; Ismail 2011). Young people were generally discouraged by various sets of cultural restrictions

from challenging the public mainstream or from even expressing their opinion among their fellow citizens:

Ethiopians don't ask [questions]. Because they fear the repercussions for their engagement. (ET 02)

The following quotation from an Egyptian NGO representative, however, suggests that social media enabled technologists to contrast and question the locally dominant socioeconomic discourse (Juris 2012; Bennett 2012):

Whenever we post something, you open the door for debate. You know you want people to debate and you want to challenge people and you want all these kind of discussions you know. (EG 12)

Picazo-Vela *et al.* (2012, p. 506) claim that “social media enhances citizen involvement by increasing opportunities to participate and collaborate”. Ethiopian and Egyptian technologists commented that, while collaboration is discouraged in society, social media allowed for online and offline forms of collaboration. These strengthened the sense of community and achievement among technologists:

It brought people together who have a lot of potential and who have exchanged their ideas, but [also] others developed ideas and projects together. It created attention in the general community to the fact that a lot is possible [...] if those are given the space to self-coordinate then things can happen fast. (ET 10)

Various bodies of literature explore the notion of community empowerment through social media (Bertot *et al.* 2010; Magro 2012; Van Dijck 2013). However, insufficient attention has yet been given to the notion of transparency. Bertot *et al.* (2010) emphasised the importance of transparency with regard to the role of social media in public discourse. Technologists in Ethiopia and Egypt, nevertheless, highlighted that the transparency of social media was key to enhancing collaboration, which was discouraged in the public sphere:

I know Marton and I see Marton is supporting this and this, and probably Marton is aware of all the information and he is among those that I trust, so I

will follow Marton. And I will do what Marton tells me. Which is a key factor in the successfulness of social media. (EG 10)

ICTs thus enabled technologists to cultivate practices and qualities that were missing from or were discouraged in the public discourse. Dialogue, collaboration and transparency fostered trust. This in return further strengthened the sense of community among early technologists in Ethiopia and Egypt:

Blogging is the best way that I've been able to share my ideas and views about several topics so far. [...] It's not until I attended an amazing discussing [discussion] with fellow bloggers that I felt, somehow, powerful with having a blog. March 5th, 2011, marks the date that I, for the first time, felt like a part of something bigger than myself. I attended a small but cozy event called Digital Identity Ethiopia Forum. (Sukersays, blog article, last accessed 15/06/2016, <https://sukersays.wordpress.com/2011/03/11/334/>)

This subsection has illustrated the role ICTs play in establishing surrogate communities. ICTs enable grassroots agency by circumventing traditional or corrupted spaces of public discourse. The similarities between the genealogies of the Ethiopian and Egyptian technologists – even though with a certain lapse of time – are striking. Moreover, these accounts demonstrated how individuals as well as groups of individuals tried to reclaim their agency amidst restricted and dominant national discourses. In contrast to constructionist notions of technology, ICTs allowed technologists to surpass the binarity of local versus global (Feenberg *et al.* 2010; Feenberg 2011).

During the later phase of my research, particularly after the military *coup d'état* in Egypt (June 2013) and the almost simultaneous and bloody suppression of protests in Ethiopia (August 2013), the issue of trust arose very prominently. The exposure to acts of explicit violence and suppression initiated the strengthening of these surrogate communities. Unfortunately, I had neither the time nor the appropriate analytical apparatus to better understand the ways in which these surrogate communities started to mould and transform dialogue, collaboration and transparency into trust. These initial traits support Brüggmann's (2014) argument that it is the constant cultivation of credibility, reliability and intimacy produces trust in

online communities. These experiences from the Ethiopian and Egyptian technology communities suggest that the active nurturing of practices that were banned or restricted in national public discourses – dialogue, collaboration and transparency – produced the perception of trust among members of the technology community.

8.2.3 Convergence between online and offline action

Even though I could not verify the process of trust building, I was able to trace the converging nature of offline and online dissent. The notion of online surrogate communities that substitute or replace communities in the physical world is central to Jenkins' (2006) and Castells' (Castells 2011a, 2011b, 2013) social theories. After the events of the Arab Spring, Castells (2013) further developed his argument suggesting that the “real world in our time is a hybrid world, not a virtual world or a segregated world that would separate online from offline interaction” (p. 232). The notion of hybridity – between the offline and online worlds – emphasised Castells' (2007) earlier hypothesis with regard to online action that transgresses into the physical world:

Planning was done online [during the 25th of January 2011 uprising]. And people had a lot of exchange over ideas. So you exchange ideas. A lot of ideas were exchanged online and [then] you go on the ground and do them.
(EG 17)

Fuchs (2012b, p. 781) challenges Castells' claim by suggesting that it conveys “a logic that is based on overt technological determinism” and “fails to see that not the Internet creates social, but human actors who are embedded into antagonistic economic, political and ideological structures of society.” My empirical evidence from the Egyptian technology community supports Fuchs' critique of Castells' enthusiasm. It is people that transfer online dissent into the physical world, not the other way around. ICTs merely amplify their agency as also exemplified by the following account from an Egyptian technologist:

Just witnessing how IT and social media mobilised people [laughs] during the revolution. I think it is just a case study that should be studied. With the

revolution they [people] have seen that they could actually make real change. The change they have made was tangible. And you saw this shift that people thought that they can solve real problems by using ICTs. (EG 17)

Less optimistic accounts about technology's role during and after the Arab Spring rightfully suggest that the uprising was the result of a confluence of multiple factors (Reardon 2012; Fuchs 2012a, 2012c; Hermida *et al.* 2014), and that social media only aggregated and amplified these individual factors. Nevertheless, the simplistic and popular ideas of a Facebook or Twitter revolution appealed to my informants in both countries.

This section has explored grassroots notions of ICTs, and suggested that the global exposure, the sense of community, and the convergence between online and offline action enabled technologists to reassert their agency. Social media allowed technologists to create surrogate communities, where the control exerted by the locally dominant discourse could be circumvented or ignored:

The social network platform Facebook has helped transfer Internet ownership out of the hands of foreigners and governmental organizations to Ethiopians. This might sound like a contradiction, since Facebook is run by a US company. But for the first time, Ethiopians are using the Internet, in this case Facebook, to disseminate information that is important to them, to share it with others and create their own digital public sphere. For the first time in Ethiopian Internet history, Ethiopians themselves are the targeted Internet users. (ET 10)

This subsection has also demonstrated that ICTs, contrary to constructionist notions, enabled technologists to constantly negotiate their agency between the local and the global. Technology communities in both countries benefited from their exposure to global discourses, which supplied them with ideas not available in their locality. The agency of the technology communities was rooted in the discursive opposition between the abundance of the global and the restrictions of the local.

These communities were just starting to appear during my research in Ethiopia, whereas they had already entered the social mainstream in Egypt. Section 8.3 will therefore explore in detail how the mechanisms of surrogate communities entered the public mainstream in Egypt after the 25th of January uprising.

8.3 The boundaries of agency through ICTs

Section 8.2 demonstrated that ICTs enabled technologists to reassert their agency and dissent from the dominant socioeconomic discourse. But how much agency did the use of ICTs actually allow in Ethiopia and Egypt? With regard to the extent of agency that ICTs enabled, the two countries differ significantly. The 25th of January uprising that brought down the Mubarak establishment also disengaged the state intelligence. The following two subsections trace the limits of agency that the surrogate communities were allowed in Ethiopia and Egypt.

8.3.1 Tracing the limits of technology communities in Ethiopia

Chapter 4 outlined the peculiarities of the Ethiopian political landscape, especially its limitations after the 2005 elections. ICTs, in particular mobile phones, played a key role in the mobilisation of protesters during the 2005 protests (Abbink 2006; Lahra Smith 2007; Ekine 2010). During the protests, mobile services were cut by the government and only reactivated in August 2006. SMS service remained shut down until August 2007 (Nazret 2007). The monitoring of telephone calls and SMS services remained tight even after the complete reactivation of mobile phone services. My informants often reported that their phone calls were intercepted or their phones were bugged. Among expatriates, several urban legends circulated about the interception of phone calls. I noted one of these in my research diary:

Person XY [a high level donor representative] told a story that a phone operator intercepted one of his recent calls to Germany by saying: "Bitte unterbrechen Sie die Leitung nicht. Wir wechseln den Übersetzer" [Please stay on the line, we are just changing the interpreter]. (Research diary, 18/02/2009, Addis Ababa)

Many of these accounts were merely urban legends disseminated among expatriates. Even though, in my perception, they were exaggerated stories that some expats wanted to boast with, they reflect the randomness and surrealism of phone surveillance in Ethiopia. Through my work with technologists, I had several encounters with intercepted phone calls or tapped phone. Although I personally

never noticed or had proof that my phone calls were tapped, some of the technologists I worked with did regularly come under surveillance by the Ethiopian secret service. Some of them told me about occasions of outright threats from police officers by phone or attempts of blackmailing and intimidation. After a major event of the technology community in Addis Ababa, for example, I noted the following situation in my research diary:

Some post-Barcamp trembles are going on – Person X is being harassed on the phone by a student council representative [the only student organization at the AAU, close to the EPRDF]. He wants to know where certain participants live. The police came to Person X's place and looked for them there, too. She was visibly stressed out and nervous. She told me that she changed her SIM card already twice today. The police still finds her and keeps calling. Later I went to EIABC [one of the campuses of the AAU] to talk to Person Y. He is definitely in trouble. [...] I decided that we meet in a place that is most probably not wired, outside the EIABC campus. (Research diary, 26/09/2011, Addis Ababa)

These circumstances demonstrate the establishment's fierce control of telecommunications. Nevertheless, even though the establishment openly controlled communication services, technologists' surrogate communities remained intact until 2011. The self-organisation of technologists through social media (see Section 8.1) went generally unnoticed by the Ethiopian establishment until the events of the Arab Spring. The relative freedom these communities enjoyed up until this point was due to three key behavioural attributes:

First, the technology communities in Ethiopia had no apparent political affiliation and revealed no aspiration to claim political agency. The progressive notion of breaking through the establishment's rigid developmentalism (Hagmann and Abbink 2011; Bach 2011) that created a uniform citizenry, motivated many of these technologists. By sharing personal opinions and expressing lifestyle choices other than the ones pre-set by the EPRDF establishment, they could explore alternatives to the soulless uniformity of the Ethiopian model citizen.

Reasons why I love blogging [...]: Entertainment. So unlike other bloggers who have a strict point of view and specific facts, I want to write for the happiness of my readers. Whether I'm writing about love or life and what I think about it, I wanna think that my readers are smiling as they read along. (Sukersays, blog post, last accessed 11/03/2011, <https://sukersays.wordpress.com/2011/03/11/334/>)

Such aspirations, however, did not conflict with the establishment's own desire. The establishment openly encouraged students – a demographic segment where most of the technologists came from – to use foreign educational content in order to educate themselves (see also 6.2).

Second, local technologists openly disassociated themselves from the political activism of the Ethiopian diaspora. While the Ethiopian expatriate blogosphere is overwhelmingly a place for radical political activism against the EPRDF establishment, both public perception and the academic literature (Skjerdal 2009; Skjerdal 2011b; Donald Nathan Levine 2007; Gemedda 2012) equate the term Ethiopian blogosphere with this particular online activism of the diaspora. This left no space for those who wanted to write about issues such as technology (*Eweket, Kirbaview*) or lifestyle (*Sukersays, Aboutaddisababa, Afterride*). Local bloggers discredited the diaspora blogosphere for its constant and exaggerated political agitation:

Today the discussion between Person X and Person Y [a local blogger] at the Digital Identities Ethiopia [Digital Identities Ethiopia Forum, DIEF] event struck me as interesting. Person Y explained "the diaspora doesn't know what they are talking about". They have their political agenda, but it is not related to the Ethiopian reality." (Research diary, 06/03/2011, Addis Ababa)

Third, most local technologists subscribed to the establishment's developmental narrative. Even though they persistently criticised the lack of access to ICTs or scrutinised the establishment's inability to provide stable mobile and Internet services, their accounts never questioned the legitimacy of the EPRDF establishment. One of the most active technology advocates explained this paradox to me:

So these two [persons] are two other sides [opposite sides]. This one is pro-government [Daniel Berhane], this one [Endalkachew Haile] is not anti, but new moderate. (ET 02)

Even though some technologists styled themselves as activists, their polemic can be at most described as a set of proxy wars. Several Facebook groups and individual technologists, for example, led strident attacks against the establishment's notion of ICT capacity development. Technologists, however, only attacked what they perceived as the vanguards of this notion: the Ethiopian Telecommunication Corporation (ETC) and the Ethiopian Television (ETV).

A lot of efforts have been made from the online community via different platforms and social networks for Ethio Telecom [ETC] to enhance the internet service. Though from my personal experience, things are getting worse instead of getting better. (Eweket, blog post, last accessed 29/07/2011, <https://eweket.wordpress.com/2011/07/29/ethio-telecom-the-internet-service-provider-which-doesn%E2%80%99t-use-internet/>)

ETV + Printer = Addis Zemen [one of the government-owned daily newspapers] (Facebook post, 18/10/2013)

The Facebook group “ETC sucks” is a good example of technologists’ proxy wars with the Ethiopian establishment. The group collects complaints against the Ethiopian Telecommunication Corporation (ETC) and had some 2,500 members; it became the main online space for venting anger against ETC. It ridiculed not just ETC, but openly questioned and debated the establishment’s telecommunication monopoly. My informants in the technology community often referred to this page and expressed their perplexity about the fact that the group administrator – whom everyone knew by name – had not been arrested yet. Nevertheless, according to the group administrator the group never received any attention from the establishment, let alone suffered any repercussions. One possible explanation for the establishment’s indifference is that the group does not take any political stand. It does neither offend EPRDF nor does it attack particular politicians or officers. It merely, even though very often in crass terms, criticises shortcomings in the infrastructure.

However, the neglect by the establishment started to change after the events of the Arab Spring. The borders between loyalty and dissent became increasingly blurred. Subsection 8.3.2 thus examines the fluidity of the limits of online dissent in Ethiopia.

8.3.2 No trespassing

The previous section argued that Ethiopian technologists step-by-step gained agency by using ICTs. The attributes exhibited by Ethiopian technologists apparently left their activities irrelevant to, and unnoticed by, the establishment. This subsection argues that the events of the Arab Spring marked the beginning of a change in the establishment's attitude towards technologists in Ethiopia and, in particular, towards social media. The earlier support that government officials had exhibited for ICT capacity development at universities dramatically changed.

In April 2011, I noted the following comment from a high-ranking official in the Ministry of Capacity Building (MOCB) in Ethiopia:

Person X (my counterpart in the MOCB) came to me today with a message from Person X [a high ranking official in the MOCB]. He and apparently Person Z [state minister in the MOE-ET] are suspicious because we use Facebook "just like the people in Egypt." He spoke in a very friendly manner, so I guess he was trying to help. Well, I told to him my usual mantra that we use Facebook only as a communication platform and that the social media platform at the university is only for e-learning purposes. (Research diary, 21/04/2011, Addis Ababa)

The changing attitude of the establishment towards technologists did not come as a surprise. By this time, I had already factored in the effects of the Arab Spring in my own practical work at GIZ. An episode from my collaboration with a technologist is indicative of this change. Together with a colleague of mine, we decided to ask a local blogger to post-edit an article he wrote about a technology community event. In our perception, his opinion amounted to criticism of the

government, which could possibly draw attention to him as well as result in repercussions for the entire technology community.

Endalk, I think it is probably better not to ruin the movement right in the beginning – I would probably use less sensitive language in the beginning and let the forum and the bloggers become a bit stronger. But all these are just suggestions. (My comments on Endalk's article, Word document, 09/03/2011)

The relative freedom of the Ethiopian technology community ceased after the events of the Arab Spring. Even though it is hard to define the point in time when the secret service's behaviour changed, I first found evidence of the encroaching surveillance in May 2011. This is only a couple of weeks after the downfall of President Mubarak in Egypt. My own first encounter with the secret service was during the third Digital Identities Ethiopia Forum (cf. Annex 13), which was a small, irregular event initiated by local technologists:

Person XY did a great work at the Digital Identities Ethiopia Forum. Even though he had to do the presentation during one of the regular Sunday power cuts. [...] After the event he told me that he felt very insecure, because of the presence of a "representative from the Addis Ababa city council" among the audience. He thought the man could be a plain-clothes policeman. (Research diary, 29/05/2011, Addis Ababa)

Discerning plain-clothes police was a rather easy matter for Ethiopians due to their informal-looking, though specific government-issue dress code. One of the appreciative inquiry sessions I conducted in August 2014 in Addis Ababa was also observed by a secret service agent, who, in his own account, was working for the Addis Ababa City Council.

In September 2011, the president of the Addis Ababa University allowed the annual Barcamp of the technology community only under the condition that "*the secret service will be present*" (Research diary, 22/09/2011, Addis Ababa).

During the event I noted:

The session on community radios in Ethiopia started discussing participation and democracy ... it was a very weird situation. The chairs were organised in circles and the person from the secret police was sitting in the inner circle and taking notes. I had to leave the room because I could not handle the pressure. (Research diary, 24/09/2011, Addis Ababa)

The increasing monitoring and control of the offline events held by the technology community, however, did not lead to defence mechanisms among technologists. On the one hand, since the outlines of what constituted native online dissent were blurred, technologists received verification of their assumption that online activism would converge into offline action. Moreover, they also received reassurance from the Arab Spring.

Obviously, when we increase the connectivity of people, it might create a revolution or any other unrest. (ET 10)

8.3.3 Social media enter mainstream public discourse in Egypt

By the time of my arrival in Cairo, the role that social media had played during the 25th of January uprising was widely celebrated by the media. Various bodies of literature arose in the aftermath of the Arab Spring that underscored the populist accounts and depicted the popular uprisings in Tunisia and Egypt as a Facebook revolution (Harlow and Johnson 2011; Peterson 2011; Aouragh and Alexander 2011; C. Wilson and Dunn 2011; Cottle 2011; Attia et al. 2011; Khamis and Vaughn 2011; Korany and El-Mahdi 2012; Comunello and Anzera 2012; el-Nawawy and Khamis 2013). Fuchs (2012, p.383) suggests that the events of the Arab Spring created “a new fetishism of technology that distracts from the contradictions of capitalism underlying contemporary societal changes and conflicts”. Nevertheless, the 25th of January uprising was widely interpreted in informational terms (Jenkins 2006; Castells 2013), that led to exaggerated accounts about the role of ICTs.

More balanced accounts, such as by Eltantawy and Wiest (2011), Bhuiyan (2011) and Reardon (2012) have provided detailed explanations of the use of Facebook in the preparation of the 25th of January uprising in Egypt. The role of Twitter during the escalation of violence has been analysed in Hounshell (2011) and

Starbird and Palen (2012). Even though these accounts endorse the notion that ICTs enabled the Egyptian uprising, they do not extrapolate the empirical evidence from the 25th of January uprising into a social theory. Moreover, their appreciation of the role ICTs played in the events of the 25th of January uprising does not overshadow the more subtle reality about the gradual emergence of various social and political factors that led to the 25th of January uprising.

On contrary to the above accounts, this subsection is concerned with the growing importance of social media after the 25th of January uprising. The following paragraphs suggest that in Egypt certain uses of ICTs that provided the agency of the urban and admittedly subcultural surrogate community transgressed into to social mainstream and public discourse:.

The people of Egypt were very ready to revolt against the system! But they needed to organise themselves so that they can pick a date and are able to go down in mass numbers. (EG 13)

As the above quotation from a high level representative of the Egyptian government suggests, the acknowledgment of social media's decisive role in subverting the Mubarak establishment was overwhelming among the population. The growing influence of social media among Egyptians after the 25th of January uprising is, however, much less visible in the literature, even though my informants pointed out that an explosion in the reach of social media happened after the revolution:

But after the revolution [...] social media, Facebook, Twitter all this just exploded. The amount of people that joined Twitter within Egypt just multiplied within a month. Like it was X and then it just went X times 50. It was just exponential. (EG 17)

In January and February, Egypt added over 1 million Facebook users, which represents a monthly growth rate of 30.76% (Socialbakers 2015). By December 2011, Egypt counted 9.4 million Facebook users, which represented a penetration rate of 11.4% (Socialbakers 2015). In comparison, Ethiopia had a penetration rate of 0.5% (Socialbakers 2015). In September 2015, the number of Egyptians on Facebook was over 16 million, which was approximately 18% of the population (Socialbakers 2015). Twitter experienced a less radical increase in 2011, but than

rose dramatically in 2012. The 520,000 accounts in December 2012 constitute a penetration rate of 3.25% (Socialbakers 2015). Statistics for Twitter use in Ethiopia could unfortunately not be retrieved.

The 25th of January uprising demonstrated the possibility that online surrogate communities can coordinate coherent grassroots social action (Eltantawy and Wiest 2011; Castells 2013). These credentials initiated the involvement of segments of society that had previously been offline or had not been using social media. Even though various groups emerged since the 2000s that contested the Mubarak regime (cf. 4.2), their techniques of organisation and protest strategy was known to the police and military alike (Halliday 2011; Ghonim 2012). While mosques and coffee houses, the meeting points of the Islamist and labour union campaigners respectively, certainly played a role in the 25th of January uprising, their continuous surveillance by the establishment seized any potential for revolt (Ghonim 2012). The circumvention of the establishment's authoritative power through online organisation during the 25th of January uprising lent both credence and significance to social media. This in turn led to a massive interest in social media, particularly Twitter and Facebook, among the rest of the society.

My informants often proudly talked about how their parents started using social media after the revolution:

Then, my mother after the revolution was saying that the Internet has a lot to tell [and] she created her account and than my father got jealous and [asked me] "Why don't I have one?". This segment [of the population] without the revolution wasn't ever go online. (EG 14)

As the following account from an NGO representative illustrates, the organisational success of the uprising proved the importance of social media and provided a positive image for its use:

The use of Facebook in Egypt after 2011 is massive. And I am talking about all generations! I am not only talking about our generation, I am talking about all generation. Everyone was joining Facebook, everyone, everyone, everyone! I could find my parents, my relatives. And 5 years ago they would say „What are you doing? You are wasting your time. Stop wasting your time.”

How they [the protesters] mobilise themselves, this made them [my parents] curious and see the benefits of accessing information. Because at the end of the day [previously] everyone granted that TV is giving us the information. But TV was a disappointment during the revolution. (EG 10)

The denial of broadcast media after the uprising is a recurring theme in my data. My informants often pointed out the shrewd manipulation of images on television that intended to misinform citizens about the magnitude of the protest. Iskander (2011) argues that the loss of trust in public media and the positive reputation of Facebook and Twitter among the population allowed social media platforms to occupy spaces of public discourse previously held by television and radio. Facebook and Twitter became navigational aids to public administration, party politics and personal security. One private sector representative explained that "*from that point on [after the uprising] it [social media] just became the tool [emphasis mine]*" (EG 17).

8.3.4 Three areas of public discourse

Strengthened by the success of the 25th of January uprising, social media entered the mainstream of public discourse in Egypt after the uprising. Even though the impact of social media platforms as counter-cultural spaces received much scholarly attention prior to and after the Arab Spring (Jenkins 2006; Castells 2007, 2013; Hounshell 2011; Harlow and Johnson 2011; Aouragh and Alexander 2011), its effects as mainstream platforms of public discourse have been little studied. Kreps (2011) and Fuchs (2012a) warn about the growing dominance of privately owned social media in our lives, but little empirical research has been done into the effects of transnational technology companies controlling and owning public discourse.

This subsection proposes three areas where further research is necessary to identify the long-term effects of Facebook, Twitter and Google entering mainstream public discourse. It explores three sectors where the increasing dominance of transnational technology companies in public life could be identified in Egypt. These are the area of work, public safety and political authority.

After my reassignment to Cairo (January 2012), I was baffled by the extent of Facebook's role as an official communication platform in civil society. One of the first entries in my research diary in Cairo was as follows:

I think GIZ assigned me to Egypt first and foremost for my previous experience with tech geeks in Ethiopia. Although I keep repeating that I am not an ICT expert, my previous experience in using Facebook and Twitter to engage local partners [NGOs] has already made me something like an authority on this subject. (Research diary, 25/02/2012, Cairo)

Even though I was used to and also sympathetic to the idea of engaging with civil society actors through Facebook, this was less expected in communications with state authorities. After initial introductions to my counterparts in the Ministry of Trade and Industry (MOTI), Ministry of Education (MOE-EG) and the Ministry of Communication and Information Technology (MCIT), communication with ministry officials took place mainly via Facebook. Appointments with two state ministers in MOTI and MCIT, respectively, were regularly organised via Facebook as well.

In the direct aftermath of the 25th of January uprising, technological optimism increasingly diverted the communication with and among public servants to Facebook and Twitter as well. Facebook groups were initiated, for example, by government ministries, schoolteachers, and hospital doctors with the intention to replace e-mails. In my own case, Facebook also replaced email when communicating with government partners. This is also well illustrated by the following case when I asked a high-level government representative whether she would be available for a follow-up interview:

Yes, why not? I am busy, but you can contact me via Facebook and we can fix a time. What is your username on Facebook? (already checking the Facebook app on her smartphone) So, now we are friends on Facebook. Write me a message and than we can fix a time. (EG 06)

The imminent controversy of the control transnational technology companies exert over public discourse as well as their appropriation of ownership is currently underexposed in the literature. The following example poignantly illustrates this controversy:

Person X [an Egyptian colleague of mine in GIZ] asked me to accompany him to Person Y [state minister in the MOE-EG]. Apparently, some teachers who were trained by us [GIZ] created their own Facebook group to coordinate the follow-up activities. But they started quarrelling and calling each other names, and also attacking the ministry [MOE-EG]. The state minister showed us the Facebook group on his tablet in his office and asked for advice on how to control the anger. Of course neither the ministry nor us [GIZ] had administrator rights to the group. (Research diary, 17/07/2012, Cairo)

Public safety remained a major concern in Cairo after the 25th of January 2011. The Egyptian population discredited public media for its various affiliations: With the Mubarak establishment, political parties, religious authorities or foreign states (Iskander 2011). In various parts of Cairo, residents mainly relied on Twitter and Facebook to navigate political strife and skirmishes. The following three accounts illustrate the importance of social media amidst armed conflict in Cairo; they were selected to show different perspectives on one single episode – the Raba’a massacre in August 2013 – when the Egyptian military cleared a protest camp of the Muslim Brotherhood:

@ahauslohner Wa Po's @SharafAlhourani saw anti-Morsi men armed w sticks halt bus of Islamists at Cairo U [University]; latter fled; former tried to set bus on fire (ahauslohner, tweet, 03/07/2013)

@Sandmonkey AJM [Al-Jazeera Egypt] is showcasing an empty tahrir [square] from earlier today & a live rab3a [Raba'a] protest. CBC [Capital Broadcast Center, a private satellite TV station close to the Egyptian military] showing a full tahrir [square] & no Rab3a protest. Our media is shit (Sandmonkey, tweet, 05/07/2013)

I live next to Raba’a [Mosque], maybe one street or two streets away. So when these events [the Raba’a massacre in August 2013] happened there and I wake up in the morning and I hear bullets and gunshots and so on. And I smell teargas and I don't know what is going on. I open the TV and nothing is there. So the first thing is I go to Facebook and then to Twitter. I don't use Twitter a lot, but in such occasions I go to Twitter and try to know what is

happening. I instantly get people reporting from the place where it is happening. (EG 04)

Twitter had clearly achieved an important navigational role among the Cairene population; it became the most important source of security information. During my field work in Cairo, Twitter also played a crucial role in my own security precautions:

I passed under Tahrir Square in the metro today while there were massive fights between the black block [football hooligans who regularly supported anti-Muslim Brotherhood protests] and the riot police. It is quite surreal to sit in a metro carriage a couple of meters below the fights and read about them on Twitter at the same time. (Research diary, 15/01/2013, Cairo)

Understandably, politics remained the third area where social media platforms increasingly channelled the public discourse. Iskander (2011) warned that “the key role of social media [in Egypt] is perhaps not to replace traditional media or to act as an alternative political sphere but rather to focus on ensuring that traditional media are transparent” (p. 1235). However, as also shown above, social media replaced traditional media and was used to obtain reliable information (Figure 8.2 and 8.3).

Rensmann (2014) took on Castells’ notion of hybridity and argued that transnational public spaces generated through cyberspace, in which citizens appear and act, do not undermine political autonomy, but may help empower political action in distinct ways (p. 1). While these platforms definitely supported political action in the case of Egypt, they also replaced traditional forms of political autonomy. In post-revolutionary Egypt, social media further obscured the contours of state sovereignty. The following two tweets refer to the events of 30th of June. In the wake of the military takeover on 30th of June 2013, Twitter amplified the fact that neither the Muslim Brotherhood nor the Egyptian military adhered to the democratic ideals the 25th of January uprising had sought to establish. Even though the actual force used by the military against Muslim Brotherhood officials (on the 30th June) was not broadcast, the ideological battles between the two forces could be followed by anyone on Twitter.



Figure 8.2 – Security information on Twitter during the military coup of 3rd July 2013 that removed President Morsi from office (Source: author 2013)

@iyad_elbaghd... What other country in a serious crisis has had its political powers communicate publicly through Twitter accounts & FB [Facebook] fan pages? #Egypt (Iyad El-Baghdadi, tweet, 30/06/2013)

@iyad_elbaghd... At some point someone will have to write a book about how Twitter/FB are now mainstream tools of public communication in #Egypt. (Iyad El-Baghdadi, tweet, 30/06/2013)

Castells (2013) argues that “the more the movement is able to convey its message over the communication networks, the more citizen consciousness rises, and the more the public sphere of communication becomes a contested terrain” (p. 237) Even though the post-revolutionary public sphere in Egypt readily testifies to Castells’ logic, the statement ignores the fact that the amplification of communication and citizen consciousness can also obscure democratic practices.



Figure 8.3 – Reactions to the Twitter exchange between military officers and the Muslim Brotherhood during the military coup of 3rd July 2013 (Source: author 2013)

The above sections have traced the boundaries of surrogate communities enabled by ICTs. In the case of Ethiopia, I showed that although surrogate communities might cultivate emotions of dissent against the establishment, these are not necessarily threatening to the latter.

In the case of Egypt, this section has shown how online surrogate communities all of a sudden became the social mainstream within society. Moreover, their mainstreaming also led to the increasing occupation of the public sphere. Hodgkinson (2008, p. 1) warns of the “commodification of human relationships, the extraction of capitalistic value from friendships”. The occupation of the public discourse by transnationalist technology companies, however, raises more severe questions that go beyond Hodgkinson’ notion. It is the commodification of democratic institutions and the undermining of state sovereignty. Coll (2012) suggests that the dominance of transnational companies of the public discourse demonstrates the shift from a national sovereign to transnational corporate sovereigns.

8.4 Social media and the ideology of transnational capitalism

The previous section argued that social media platforms expedite the creation of online safe spaces (surrogate communities), but that they are also the property of large transnational companies. Accordingly, transnational technology companies increasingly dominate the public discourse. This section follows along the same path and interrogates these transnational platforms for traces of ideology. Its main focus is the technology communities in Egypt that after the 25th of January uprising turned them into flamboyant and cosmopolitan spaces of ICT entrepreneurship. In other words, this section follows the idea put forward by Kreps (2011, p. 698): “Just as the hacker-hobbyist of not so long ago has become the cool online social networker partaking in a new transnational economy, so too the Arab youth that used Facebook to organise revolution may soon be using it to promote their own business interests”.

Informationalist (Jenkins 2006, Castells 2011a, 2011b) bodies of literature celebrate the increasing importance of social media. They argue that social media provide a platform for transnational dissent (Castells 2013) and the rise of a “participatory culture” (Jenkins and Deuze 2008, p. 239). The events of the 25th of January in Egypt are usually seen as verifying this notion. Critics such as Fuchs (2011b; 2012a; 2013) and Kreps (2011), however, emphasise that these theories are uncritical and omit the question of ideology (Fuchs 2012d). The following subsections trace the ideological implications of the growing influence that transnationalist companies exert or can exert over large numbers of citizens.

8.4.1 The transfer of ideology

Section 8.3 demonstrated that Facebook and Twitter have progressively occupied public discourse. Their influence surpassed generational boundaries, and these platforms were mainstreamed into everyday life. The previous section argued that these two social media platforms replaced traditional media out of necessity. However, the qualities that Facebook and Twitter represented among Egyptian users also connoted them positively:

From my interaction with people from Germany I had this concept of ... maybe you would know this better ... that in Germany Facebook is considered not something nice. And like people don't use it or if they use it they don't tell a lot. But in Egypt it is the opposite. Everyone is on Facebook and it is something good. (EG 04)

And to be honest with you, now Facebook and Twitter are our heroes. They even have this comic that the Egyptian Minister of Education would like to thank Facebook for teaching our young children who didn't ever want to write. Now they [children] started using actual Arabic words by using the chat. (EG 14)

Informationalist bodies of literature celebrate Facebook and Twitter as a force of empowerment and agency (Hirst 2012; Oh *et al.* 2012). However, they overlook the importance of the ideology that these companies transport and ignore the fact that the growing significance of transnationalist companies within the public discourse also transfers key notions from their own business ideals (Fuchs 2011a; Kreps 2011). This chapter argues that there is an interplay between the sudden influence Facebook and Twitter asserted in the Egyptian public discourse and the celebration of ICT start-ups in the aftermath of the 25th of January uprising.

Besides Facebook and Twitter, I also include Google among those transnationalist companies that influenced the public discourse before, during and after the events of the 25th of January uprising. In comparison to Facebook and Twitter, Google neither received much direct attention from the media, nor is it discussed in the academic discourse with regard to the 25th of January uprising. Even though Google did not provide a platform for organisation, its involvement in the popular uprising of 2011, although more indirect and subtle, should not be overlooked. The relative neglect by the academic discourse of Wael Ghonim's role in the uprising and his relationship to Google further illustrates the technology-centredness of the debate. Ghonim was a Dubai-based Google executive who administered the Kullena Khaled Saied (We are all Khaled Saied) Facebook page and participated in the 25th of January uprising. His page is widely considered to be the pivot point for the uprising (Khondker 2011; Khamis and Vaughn 2011; Ghonim 2012). During his abduction by the Egyptian state security, Google remained in the

background. After his release from prison on 7th of February, 2011, he repeatedly asserted that he acted anonymously and as private person. My discussion with a high-level Google executive revealed that the company purposely distanced itself from him:

Great discussion with Person X [a high level Google executive] today at the conference. He told me that he knows Wael Ghonim very well. “Yes, Wael was on my team before the revolution. When he was taken to prison, well, I told him ‘Wael, OK we will get you out of prison, but that’s it. You better leave Google afterwards.’ So we got him out of prison, which was a miserable story, but he got out.” (Research diary, 06/05/2013, Berlin)

Nevertheless media accounts after his release never failed to celebrate Ghonim as a Google executive (Giglio 2011; Halliday 2011; El-Erian 2013). The close affiliation of a young revolutionary with Google underpinned the utopian notion that the new transnational technology companies are the representations of the “intrinsically positive, emancipatory and democratising forces” (Rensmann 2014, p. 18.) inherent in social media.

However, these three transnational companies which, to different extents, influenced the events of the 25th of January uprising, also cultivate a very specific business ideology. This ideology is “a heterogeneous mix of engineer's culture, free market economics, and counter-culture libertarianism originating from the Silicon Valley” (Smyrnaio 2012, p. 5). Their role in the uprising reinforced the positive image that they enjoyed through the provision of surrogate public spaces. For many young Egyptians, these companies stood for the success of the 25th of January uprising and initiated an upsurge in ICT business start-ups.

But after the revolution ... how these websites popped up in a matter of months, you know. Polling websites, political websites, websites to mobilise the community. Social media – Facebook, Twitter – all this just exploded. And when people saw this, every start-up, every engineer that wanted a start-up, there first thought was IT. “I am gonna do a website.” or “I am gonna do this, because it is fast!” (EG 17)

The idolisation of social media has been much debated within the literature. Theories of social action (Jenkins 2006; Castells 2013) and contemporary capitalism are often juxtaposed (Kreps 2011; Fuchs 2012a; Fuchs 2012c). At the same time, there is a lack of attention dedicated to the imminent ideologies of new transnational technology companies – idiosyncratically represented by Facebook, Google and Twitter – is overlooked.

One of the key success factors of these new corporations is the provision of ICT solutions that can be personalised. It is the ability of the individual to create their own network (Bauman 2009). However, the growing dominance of transnational technology companies also allows them to spread and transplant ideologies, in particular the Silicon Valley type of capitalism. Social media platforms transport the ideals that the founders of Facebook, Twitter and Google represent (Fuchs 2011a), namely a shortcut to wealth and fame. The attitudes, language and behaviours of these Silicon Valley companies is mimicked by many of the ICT businesses that started after the 25th of January uprising:

It is somehow strange to meet people who are my age or probably younger and already call themselves CEOs and CFOs and what not. At today's event at Flat6Labs I met so many CEOs as never before in my life. However, what most of them are CEOs of is not much more than an idea. Nevertheless, they talk about Mark Zuckerberg and Steve Jobs as if they had written their biographies. (Research diary, 25/05/2013, Cairo)

Being an ICT entrepreneur in Cairo meant the internalisation of attributes and attitudes that were considered to depict a successful Silicon Valley entrepreneur. Stercken's (2015) research among ICT entrepreneurs in Cairo suggests similar traits, as well as the overt celebration of Silicon Valley. To *et al.*'s (2008) research among ICT start-ups in Hong Kong supports this notion as well as provides an excellent critique of it based on Bauman's concept of liquid modernity.

8.4.2 Unpacking the ethos of Silicon Valley

The above subsection suggested that the growing dominance of transnationalist technology companies in the public discourse also provided a channel for a revived interest in the ICT business. Transnational technology companies transplanted their notion of economic development to Ethiopia and Egypt. In Egypt, this led to the outright celebration of the ICT start-up. Google engaged in promoting ICT start-ups in Egypt right after the uprising and launched two campaigns in 2011 to promote ICT start-ups in Egypt.

A bus branded with the Google logo will be traveling across 10 governorates in Egypt starting this week, including stops at universities in Cairo and Alexandria, scouting for the next generation of technology entrepreneurs with home-grown ideas on the scale of Facebook or LinkedIn. “We will put someone’s dream through a seven-month crash course that will help turn it into a commercially viable business,” said Wael Fakharany, Google’s manager in Egypt. (New York Times, 28/11/2011)

Google exploited the social and economic upheaval after the 25th of January uprising. It established a normative discourse that was built on the business ideology of Silicon Valley-based transnational technology companies. Its ICT business idea competitions in Egypt, called Ebda (“Start”), created a wave of economic optimism and proliferated the notion of fast economic recovery through ICT start-ups (Wong 2004; Van Stel *et al.* 2005; Acs 2006; To *et al.* 2008).

Business idea competitions are on mass. Every weekend, you can go to one in Cairo. But then no one follows-up, so the ideas never get turned into a company. (EG 18)

The normative role of Google in Egypt demonstrates the growing influence transnational technology companies exert in the area of economic policy. In Egypt, governmental and donor agencies alike raced to copy Google’s initiatives in the promotion of ICT start-ups. The mimicry of ICT start-ups as well as what can be considered as a Silicon Valley lifestyle led to an overt celebration of start-up capitalism. ICT start-ups became so heavily promoted by the private sector, government and civil society that it was impossible to ignore how ineffective and, in

fact, superficial these campaigns were. ICT start-ups became a commoditised accessory to the post-revolutionary social upheaval that was eventually hollowed out. One private sector representative, for example, told me during an interview that

Look, I just got an email this morning about the start-up battle. Which is a Start-up Weekend [a privately owned and globally used workshop format] for the winners of other Start-up Weekends ... from Mansoura, from Alex [Alexandria], from Cairo. They will bring those winners together and have them compete against each other for the Start-up Battle [laughs]. [...] A couple of years ago no one would have imagined that we would be fighting off ICT start-ups because they are irrelevant. (EG 17)

Stercken's (2015) analysis provides a detailed empirical account about the bloom and collective celebration of ICT entrepreneurship in Cairo. In contrast to Stercken's work, the major concern of my analysis is the appropriation of narratives that revolve around grassroots agency. Transnational technology companies and international finance linked social upheaval to capitalist ideology. In the direct aftermath of the 25th of January 2011 protest, the notion of ICTs was associated with a counter-cultural and anti-establishment social movement in Egypt. These attributes were re-used and deployed to promote an ethos of the Silicon Valley.

So there was this boom, this massive boom [after 25th of January 2011]. An explosion of IT start-ups. And investors recognised that one can invest minimal amounts of money and actually gain returns relatively quickly. This is also where you can see the returns also ... I don't mean just financially, but it is fast ... any other start-up in a different field would need so much more time and energy to develop. Because again ICTs from an investor's perspective ... the probability for them of getting returns within a year or two is much higher than in any other industry. (EG 17)

The notion of ICTs represented by transnationalist technology companies had rather positive connotations after the 25th of January 2011. Their perception as counter-cultural was further verified and strengthened. By promoting ICT entrepreneurship among Egyptian youth, transnationalist technology companies not only misused their position, but – to paraphrase Hodgkinson (2008) – also managed

to extract surplus value from the political and social turmoil after the 25th of January 2011. Taking on Fuchs argument (2011a), the above illustrates that Google and other transnational technology companies advance ideology by promoting “a management style that presents itself as decentralized, flat and based on self-organization”, which alludes to a “techno-determinist ideology that information technology will solve society’s problems” (no pagination).

Google also actively lobbied for opportunities for private institutions from international finance. Its engagement in financing ICT start-ups was widely known. Moreover, as the following excerpt from a high-level government employee shows, Google received further credit for its engagement:

There is the government providing some funding [for ICT start-ups] and there are VCs. Not really VCs but angel investors. [...] There is of course a lot private ... like Google. They with their Ebda [Start] initiative. (EG 13)

I also noted an incident with a high level Google employee in early 2013, to which I did not pay much attention at that time. However, in hindsight, it shows the lobbying work Google did together with international financial institutions:

Person X told me about the plans on the Greek Campus [one of the old campuses of the American University in Cairo]. He mentioned in a matter-of-fact manner “that we are buying the Greek [Campus]”. If I got it right, than it is a joint project between Google and Sawiri Ventures [an Egyptian venture capital firm]. The Greek Campus should than become something like a “Cairo downtown version of the Silicon Valley.” (Research diary, 09/05/2013, Berlin)

The promotion of ICT start-ups is part of a global capitalist narrative (To *et al.* 2008) that revolves around dispersing entrepreneurship skills as a subset of attitudes (Lau 2012) that are required to navigate liquid modernity (Bauman 2000b). It builds upon the post-dot-com bubble success of the Web 2.0 Economy (Funk 2008, van Dijck and Nieborg 2009). The latter restored the promise of the dot-com era by suggesting that the digital economy allows fast scaling and comparatively high returns on investment. Kreps (2011, p. 698) asserts that maintaining hegemony requires continual shifting and repositioning of the strategies and tactics that maintain consent, and requires that new, oppositional or counter-cultural

movements, and socially revolutionary subcultures, are not only absorbed by the mainstream, but if potentially truly profitable, become the mainstream, once they have been cleansed of their political dimensions, and can be harnessed to replicate existing power dynamics.

The gradual change in the perception and practice of the counter-cultural and its shift to mainstream financial capitalism is best epitomised by Wael Ghonim's – the former activist and idol of the 25th of January uprising – employment by Google Ventures. Ghonim was signed up by the venture capital arm of Google in 2013 as entrepreneur-in-residence (Helft 2014).

In conclusion, this section argued that the 25th of January uprising helped transnational technology companies establish themselves as positively valued counter-cultural figures. Besides their growing dominance of the public discourse (cf. Section 8.3), they increasingly transplanted a Silicon Valley type of capitalist culture to Egypt. The role these companies played in the promotion of ICT start-ups illustrates the ways transnationalist companies represent and transport ideology. The catalogue of ideals promoted by this ideology (decentralised, self-organised, flat management) is the actual opposite of the non-functionalities of the liberal state: the demise of pension systems, unemployment and failing economic policies in the face of the unchecked powers of transnational companies.

The section also drew attention to the commodification of the counter-cultural. The platforms that helped local technologists express dissent against the dominant socioeconomic discourse eventually brought back the celebration of transnationalist capitalism, now branded as counter-cultural and new.

8.5 Conclusion

This chapter has engaged with various bodies of scholarship that explore contemporary and grassroots narratives of ICTs and demonstrated that ICTs play a crucial role in re-establishing grassroots agency in Ethiopia and Egypt. It interrogated the genealogies of these narratives based on constructionist notions of technology and explored the limits of ICT-enabled agency and dissent through ICTs. Finally, it

explored some ideological concerns with regard to the growing influence of transnational technology companies on the public discourse.

The chapter discarded the binary opposition between the local and the global that constructionist bodies of literature emphasise. In contrast, it showed that agency among technologists is negotiated on the cross-section of the global and the local. ICTs provide exposure for technologists to a wealth of ideas from outside their geographic location. The exposure to the global enables them to break away from the locally dominant discourse. Technologists' negotiation between the local and the global also supports Kallinikos' (2004, p. 287) argument that, while having made important contributions to the study of ICTs, "social constructivism has now achieved a state of dominance that betrays those unmistakable characteristics of paradigm consolidation, i. e., indifference to other ideas, arrogance, and a certain inability to accommodate alternative viewpoints".

Furthermore, by tracing the genealogies of Ethiopian and Egyptian technology communities, this chapter has outlined some of the key factors that strengthen technologists' agency. ICTs enable technologists to practice values (dialogue, collaboration, transparency) that have been absent or suppressed in the public discourse. The creative interplay of these factors enabled by ICTs has established various surrogate communities. These communities have nurtured self-organisation and have served to question the locally dominant socioeconomic discourse.

By applying Castells' concept of convergence (Castells 2013) and dissent (Castells 2011a, 2011b), this chapter has also traced the boundaries of technologists' nonconformity within national contexts. The ability to compare technology communities in Ethiopia and Egypt provided a valuable empirical tool to evaluate the techno-optimism after the events of the Arab Spring (Fuchs 2012a). While not questioning the ingenuity and inventiveness of these events, the chapter has exposed the normative dominance that social media achieved in Egypt after the 25th of January 2011. The mainstreaming and consecutive occupation of the public discourse by social media also led to the dominance of transnational technology companies.

This chapter has also illustrated that the events of the Arab Spring – despite their immediate empowering impact on technology communities in Ethiopia – also triggered a growing suspicion of the Ethiopian technologists by the establishment. In contrast to Ethiopia, Egyptian technologists experienced the mainstreaming of their hitherto surrogate practices into the public discourse. The events of the 25th of January uprising proved and legitimised social media as a tangible social force across the Egyptian society. However, this also led to the disproportionate dominance over the public discourse by transnational technology companies that provide social media platforms.

Finally, this chapter questioned the assumed ideological neutrality of these transnational technology companies. It argued that there is a general ignorance in the contemporary literature on social media and ICTs with regard to the ideological implications of the essentially Silicon Valley based transnational technology companies (Smyrnaioi 2012; Fuchs 2012b). By appropriating the success of the 25th of January uprising, transnational technology companies not only occupied public discourse, but also supplied and promoted their economic ideology. Actors such as Google co-opted the successful counter-cultural narrative the uprising embodied and drew parallels to the subversive nature of Silicon Valley capitalism. The celebration of ICT start-ups in Egypt and increasingly in Ethiopia highlights the inherent paradox of capitalism, which constantly needs to reinvent itself by mainstreaming the counter-cultural. Similar developments can be seen in numerous East African countries as well, where the elusive notion of ICT entrepreneurship raises high-hopes particularly among the young, however, fails to deliver on its promise (Graham and Mann 2013; Mann *et al.* 2015).

Chapter 9 – Conclusion

9.1 Introduction

This thesis has contributed in significant and original ways to understanding the scope of capacity development discourse by providing a critical account of its theory-building process and combining it with its practice in the field in Egypt and Ethiopia. Furthermore, it has unpacked the mechanisms of subversion through the promotion of ICTs in Ethiopia. Its evidence about surrogate communities has added a new dimension to our understanding of forms of contemporary dissent in the global South. It has also reflected on my personal dilemmas and transformation that occurred during this research. This chapter concludes the analysis by integrating the main findings and conclusions, assessing them in relation to the aims, objectives and research questions as set out in Chapter 2 and indicating possible directions for future research.

This thesis explored three main questions with regard to capacity development and ICTs. Its original intention to establish a concept for ICT capacity development (eCapacity Development) turned out to be an academic *-de-sac*. The consequent, however admittedly belated, rejection of underwriting this professional belief system that dominated my immediate work environment in Ethiopia caused this research to eventually follow two separate tracks.

By systematically breaking up the assumption that the Paris Declaration endorses capacity development, the belief system that dominated my professional environment in Ethiopia, this thesis has demonstrated the falsity of this assumption. Even though it uncovered similarities in these two discourses as well as affirmed that both are attempts to re-establish or maintain the legitimacy of mainstream development, it demonstrated the distinct separateness of the evolution of the notion capacity development and the OECD-led aid effectiveness process. By exploring

field accounts of the Paris Declaration it has provided further insights about the alienation between aid politics and practice on the field. Moreover, it also alluded to symptoms of the changing field of development. Accounts of legitimacy-seeking, the changing landscape of aid conditionalities and the fending off of emerging donors demonstrated the amount to which development became a contested territory. The co-presence of different processes of claims-making by donor organisations, however, further add to the confusion within the territory of development. The parallel existence of multiple agendas of re-legitimation – Millennium Development Goals, aid effectiveness, capacity development – illustrate the importunate existence of fissures that emerge within the landscape of development.

This research then continued to question why capacity development plays such a central role on the agendas of donors and recipient countries. I did so by deploying an archaeological method to understand the underlying reasons that propelled the notion of capacity development to such prominence within the scene of international development during the 1990s and 2000s. The high expectations and early optimism attached to the appearance of capacity development in mainstream development suggested the onset of a new era. It supposed to provide an answer to the loss of legitimacy the notion of development. It promised a type of development that, instead of undermining the economic sovereignty of states in the South, enabled them to regain control over their economic and social development. In this thesis I challenged these intentions by providing a creative impetus for the further research and critical analysis of capacity development.

I first demonstrated the appropriation of the originally progressive notion of capacity development. I then traced its transformation into a vehicle of top-down, elitist and neoliberal aid agendas. Moreover, the attempts of either the Ethiopian state or GTZ to appropriate the Paris Declaration for self-assertion and dominance showed additional facets of the intricacies of the aid landscape. Second, this thesis outlined some of the ways through which the notion of capacity development enables donors to infuse novel ideologies into the South. Third, this thesis also highlighted that the practice of capacity development is increasingly estranged from its codified theory. In the field the husk of capacity development is being filled by assumptions or the individual intentions of development workers, which do not correspond with the

intricate theories of their organisations. Furthermore I also illustrated that this very lack of methodological distinctness and ambiguous practice erodes the mandate of capacity development and leads to disappointment or outright rejection. I therefore argue that capacity development already passed its eclipse and will gradually disappear and be replaced by new catchwords.

The second part of this thesis addressed the apparent chasm in ICT4D literature that either follows agendas of technological determinism or abides by an ever-stricter code of social constructivism. This thesis also argued that popular informationalism exerts a disproportionate influence on public policy making with regard to the promotion of ICTs in the global South. I also suggested that, on the other hand, the idolisation of constructivist approaches among ICT4D researchers creates a blind spot for understanding and scrutinising non-local mega-discourses such as the expansion of transnational informational capitalism. Therefore, I sought to grasp the motivation of state actors in Ethiopia and Egypt for promoting ICTs and conflated these accounts with the intentions of communities of technologists. Whereas the 25th of January uprising eliminated an opportunity to compare the ICT promotion policies of the Ethiopian and Egyptian establishments, it richly compensated me by the exciting empirical work among young urban activists in the turbulent two-and-a-half years until the military *coup d'état*. Through the accounts of ICT promotion in Ethiopia, this thesis illustrated the ways in which ICTs can be appropriated by an increasingly alienated and rogue elite to exert and tighten control over ordinary citizens.

By doing so, this thesis has highlighted further facets of the shrewd mechanisms of control that dominate the technopolitics of the Ethiopian establishment. In contrast to previous research, however, my analysis did not concentrate on the establishment's prestige objects with regard to ICT promotion, but rather suggested that the boundaries of ICT promotion in Ethiopia were carefully domesticated as well as guarded by the establishment. This domestication shows that the Ethiopian establishment has a sophisticated economic and industrial policy that goes beyond the careful pruning of ICT mega-projects. It is the establishment's export-oriented industrial policy that, in some cases, appropriated the use of ICTs for the economic interests of the party-state. The contours of a deep state – the actual

mechanisms and influence of party endowments such as the EFFORT group – only became apparent during the late stage of my research, but offer an exciting, although admittedly risky, topic for further research.

Finally, this thesis asked whether ICTs enabled individual agency in Ethiopia and Egypt to withstand and protest the hegemony of the state. My work among young urban elites – technologists – showcased the existence of surrogate communities that use ICTs to resist the dominance of the state. The technological practice of both the nascent techie community in Ethiopia as well as its post-revolutionary counterpart in Egypt illustrated the enabling impact of ICTs. Their accounts, however, also contested the binarity of participatory–constructionist research agendas that neglect the interplay between the local and the global through the advent of the Internet and particularly social media. Even though social media is often credited with bringing about the Arab Spring, I avoided such techno-optimism.

The fall of the Mubarak regime was the consequence of several social and economic pressures that largely predated the advent of social media, the latter merely catalysing the growing discontent. The particular significance of my research in Egypt is the tracing the mainstreaming of social media into the public discourse. Other accounts of the 25th of January uprising fail to recognise the importance that social media platforms achieved beyond the realm of the political. Facebook and Twitter became central to public security as a navigational tool, as well as invaded the realms of public service. My analysis of the ideological influencing transnational companies such as Facebook and Google exerted after the 25th of January 2011 has been brief. More research is needed for the better understanding between the converging domains of the public discourse and private business.

The following two sections use the outcomes of my research in order to identify future research areas. Chapter 9.4 concludes by providing a sketch of the evolution of my own practice as a participatory action researcher.

9.2 Capacity development – a contested territory

Capacity development is not a monolithic notion with a solid conceptual basis, but is instead a diverse and fragmented discourse. It carries various ideological elements of claims-making and the installation of development agendas both by donors and recipient countries. I have also demonstrated the apparent chasm between the elaborate theories of capacity development and their manifestation in the field. The analysis of field practices in particular aimed to illustrate its steady devaluation. The lack of methodological clarity further obfuscates the alleged distinctiveness of capacity development. As my accounts from the field have illustrated, capacity development is used synonymously with training, which further dilutes and evaporates the former's necessity as well as legitimacy.

The following subsections demonstrate two key insights from my research with regard to the discourse of capacity development as well as indicate directions for further research. Chapter 9.2.1 outlines the immanent contestation of ideological territory and legitimacy-making in the field of development. Chapter 9.2.2 traces the long term effects of transport of ideologies through the vehicle of capacity development.

9.2.1 Re-legitimising development – competing discourses of legitimacy

This thesis started out by questioning the professional belief system that prevailed in my direct professional environment in Ethiopia. This featured capacity development as the dominant macro-discourse of contemporary development practice in the organisation for which I was working. This belief system within the GTZ/GIZ structure also suggested that capacity development has been codified in the Paris Declaration (2005). By excavating the histories of capacity development and the Paris Declaration, this thesis suggested that there is no direct connection between the two. I demonstrated that the OECD-led international political discourse on aid effectiveness did not endorse capacity development, but aimed at re-establishing the legitimacy of development. Furthermore, it intended to maintain the primacy of Northern donors by codifying principles that constitute effective aid. The fending off

of emerging donors through the codification of principles of aid effectiveness is celebrated in Northern bodies of literature (Manning 2006; Woods 2008). By defending and reinstating the humanistic fundamentals of international co-operation, Northern donors successfully frame themselves as actors that protect the interests of recipient countries.

In order to demonstrate the distinctiveness of the two discourses I traced their respective institutional archaeologies. First of all it argued that there are various discourses of aid effectiveness that reflect various organisational or inter-organisational agendas. Second, I suggested that even though the OECD-led aid effectiveness discourse bears certain similarities with the aid effectiveness discourse of the early 1990s, its origins lie in the late 1990s and early 2000s. It is disconnected from the *impasse* of development and one of its aim was to re-animate the notion of development against the emergence of new donors that questioned the legitimacy of mainstream development organisations (Woods 2005, 2008). The Paris Declaration and its associated resolutions represent the OECD's attempt to domesticate the rising presence of INGOs and new donor countries by making them to abide by the same code of action. It is thus similar in intention to the second phase of the theory-building of capacity development, but not integrated with its notion. Even though the two discourses exhibit similar intentions as well as make use of certain similar terminologies, there is no apparent organisational coherence between the two.

As demonstrated in Chapter 6, the theory-building process of capacity development stretches from the *impasse* of development in the late 1980s to the late 2000s. During this period, it underwent a metamorphosis within the confines of the mainstream development organisations. The brief history of capacity development further exemplifies the mechanisms of survival within the discourse of development, which necessitate the regular establishment of new paradigmatic notions. These, in turn, are ground down and then subsequently shed for new notions and ideas. By relying on Rist's (2009) theory of the cyclicity of development notions, this thesis has outlined the continuum of invention, establishment and the subsequent discrediting of capacity development. Furthermore, it has argued that it is yet another attempt that Northern donor organisations deploy to legitimise the notion of development. However, whereas Rist (2009) suggested that the Millennium

Development Goals (MDGs) constitute the latest manifestation of this idiosyncratic process of re-legitimation, this thesis suggests that the current discourse of development is much more fragmented and accommodates multiple attempts of legitimation.

9.2.2 The production sites of capacity development

This thesis has also initiated the excavation of the ideological roots of capacity development. It demonstrated that capacity development is not a distinct method to do development, but rather a flexible construct within which narratives of development and claims of power can be developed. The notion of capacity development does not build one hegemonic structure but is broken up into several narratives that produce alternating notions of it. Whereas capacity development does not exist as a unified methodology, it does provide a vehicle to transport and unfold various agendas of development in the field. Its theory and practice are actively produced and reproduced in the field and enables the pursuit of various development agendas.

Table 9.1 outlines the production sites of capacity development narratives in Ethiopia and Egypt. It indicates that in Ethiopia the production of capacity development occurred on all three levels, at the government level, among the implementers of capacity development measures and among the users or target groups of such measures. At the same time in Egypt, only civil society produced narratives of capacity development. These narratives, however, are essentially different to their counterparts in Ethiopia. While in Ethiopia civil society was financially incentivised as well as politically pressurised to participate and re-produce narratives of capacity development, in Egypt it developed from anti-establishment sentiments.

| Production site | Government | Donors agencies | Civil society |
|------------------------|------------|-----------------|---------------|
| Ethiopia | X | X | X |
| Egypt | | X | |

Table 9.1 – Production sites of the capacity development discourse in Ethiopia and Egypt

In Ethiopia the notion of capacity development is woven into the wider nation-building project of the developmental state. The latter utilises the acceptance and legitimacy of the notion of capacity development to legitimise its own nation-building exercise. The amorphousness of capacity development allows the Ethiopian establishment to determine the ingredients for its own nationwide capacity development exercise. Abbink (2009) and Bach (2011) argue that this nation-building exercise of the party-state is anti-neoliberal and participatory in its rhetoric, but still draws legitimacy from its previous insurgency. However, its practices reveal a deeply neoliberal and elitist economic development agenda. The establishment’s narrative of capacity development depicts this twist because their goal of capacity development is to produce neoliberal citizens, who are able to fulfil the demands of a globalised world economy. The developmental state is thus neoliberal and hegemonic, serving the goals of its leadership, which is securing economic gains and increasing the compatibility of the Ethiopian economy within the global economy.

In this thesis I have argued that the notion of capacity development creates a vehicle for the Ethiopian establishment to pursue its desired goals. Capacity development on the one hand camouflages the moulding of Ethiopian citizens into a cohort of submissive and productive work force. On the other hand, it lends legitimacy to the anchoring of donors’ mandates and subsequent control of their work within the confines of its nation-building agenda. These elements suggest the rise of a developmental state in Ethiopian that “establishes as its principle of legitimacy its ability to promote and sustain development, understanding by development the combination of steady high rates of economic growth and structural

change in the economic system, both domestically and in its relationship to the international economy” (Castells 2000, p. 198).

In contrast to the all-pervasive presence of capacity development in Ethiopia, its production was confined and marginalised. Capacity development was associated with civil society and existed in and flourished due to the absence of state services for disadvantaged communities. Its rhetoric is determined by the notion of resilience and pro-poor action in disadvantaged communities. Capacity development rather exhibits signs of a counter-narrative against the failure of public services. Particularly, the pervasive presence of anti-establishment sentiments that dominate the production of capacity development are in stark contrast to the top-down, state driven capacity development of Ethiopia. The separation of capacity development from the state’s own development initiatives was also emphasised by the unanimous dissociation from capacity development among civil servants in Egypt. Government representatives perceived capacity development as something to be delegated to civil society, suggesting that it was considered an inferior task. This low prestige of capacity development among civil servants in Egypt demonstrates the state’s alienation and dissociation from the underprivileged. It reproduces elitist divides and enhances the marginalisation of the poor within the neoliberal order of the Egyptian society.

Through these inherent inconsistencies and sometimes contradictory constructions of capacity development, this thesis also demonstrates the dissonance that determines the structure of the discourse. Even though the appropriation and subsequent incorporation of capacity development into mainstream development discourse aimed to consolidate and re-legitimise the notion of development, it became complicit with a range of neoliberal hegemonic agendas.

9.3 Elite appropriations of ICTs

From its original, rather confined premise that aimed to establish a solid paradigm for eCapacity Development, this thesis adopted a critical approach to both capacity development and ICTs. With regard to the latter it argued that much current ICT4D

research agendas fail to bridge the gap between locality, government and transnational structures of power that are imposed through the promotion of ICTs. I suggested that this practice of ICT4D is naive. Due to the lack of participatory-constructionist research agendas, researchers cannot assemble a coherent picture, one that not only takes into account the local construction of ICTs, but which is also aware of the non-local, political and economic forces that disable the positive effects of technology's malleability and negotiability.

To refine this claim raised in the conceptual framework (Chapter 2.2.5), it needs to be added that the lack of such research agendas contributes to the exacerbation of the theory-practice dichotomy. Academic ICT4D research often criticises the technology-driven nature of ICT4D practice. Much of the apparent lack of necessary adaptation and circumspection is than often blamed on foreign practitioners and their cultural incompetency or heavy-handedness. The lack of acknowledgment for practitioners among researchers and *vice-versa* exacerbates the gap between theory and practice. The apparent disconnect is an all the more important issue for the relatively new field of ICT4D.

In this thesis I have grappled with issues of power that are inherent to the field practice of capacity development as well as the promotion of ICTs. Its intention is to sensitise for the existence of power-relations that influence practitioners, but in no way to justify these. In order to overcome the dichotomy of theory and practice within the ICT4D field this thesis suggests three aspects for consideration: first, it emphasises the inherent mechanisms of control that underlie the promotion of ICTs in the global South (9.3.1); second, it points out the ongoing existence of bifocality within ICT4D scholarship that continues to reproduce division of privilege between the global North and South; and third, it suggests that the fluidity of social class that characterises contemporary global modernity overrides the dominant perception about binary opposition between indigenous vs foreigner in ICT4D literature (9.2.3).

9.3.1 The elusive narrative of a global level playing field

This thesis purposely brought in the perspective outlined in the transnational informational literature (Jenkins 2006; Jenkins and Deuze 2008; Castells 2011a,

2011b). I also argued that populist assumptions about the inherently positive impact of ICTs made by this body of literature has a disproportional influence on the public discourse with regard to the use of ICTs, including policymaking. Informationalist bodies of literature literature (Jenkins 2006, Castells 2011a, 2011b) endorse and replicate a host of popular truisms that suggest the advent of a new economic era dominated by ICTs. Nevertheless, this new imperative of ICTs actively renews old promises woven into the notion of development. It resuscitates hopes about rapid economic growth and catching-up in the global South. These promises, however, further amplify the influence of transnational capitalism in the global South and accentuate the supremacy of economies of the North. The consequent framing and celebration of ICTs as an opportunity and necessity blankets the ensuing erosion of national boundaries and the methodical subversion of the labour force to the global mechanism of transnational capitalism.

My account has questioned these assumptions and interrogated the role of ICTs, particularly in the Ethiopian establishment. On the one hand, I demonstrated the Ethiopian establishment's ability to resist the encroaching influence of transnational companies. Whereas the restriction of ICTs to an auxiliary role within the establishment's industrial development agenda appears anachronistic, it assures control. More importantly, on the other hand, I have also exposed the deceptive manipulation and misuse of the symbolic powers inherent within ICTs. The inherent and powerful symbolism that underlies the perceptiveness of both donors and recipients to promote ICTs inhibits the questioning of their intentions. I have illustrated a new form of deception that proactively produces a semblance of modernity through a restricted narrative of ICTs. My account complements recent studies done on the technopolitics of the Ethiopian establishment (Gagliardone 2011, 2014; Beyene *et al.* 2015). These studies successfully appraised the shrewd calculation encased within a set of exemplary prestige projects launched by the Ethiopian establishment. Beyene *et al.* (2015) suggest that the Ethiopian establishment appropriates the symbolic powers of ICTs in order to increase its influence and control among the non-urban sections of the society.

This thesis, however, has argued that the expansion of control through ICTs has multiple manifestations in Ethiopia. The misuse of power within highly-visible ICT

infrastructure projects is only one part of the ongoing subversion of the Ethiopian citizenry. The more subtle control mechanisms that permeate the economy, education and civil service indirectly, though permanently, assist to the moulding of a subservient cohort of productive citizens. Similar to the notion of capacity development ICTs are co-opted by the Ethiopian establishment in order to expedite its own economic agenda. Accounts of a deep state that is exempt of the otherwise strict restrictions exposes the shrewdness of the Ethiopian developmental state.

9.3.2 Spaces of agency and dissent

This thesis has also combined the disguised complacency of the state with the persistent questioning of its legacy by bottom-up, participatory activism enabled by ICTs. In 2010 I argued that ICT4D scholarship failed to acknowledge the increasing demand for technologies “2Go” (Kocsev 2010). From my observations among technology activists in Ethiopia, I ascertained that the fading era of computers necessitate a better understanding of the emerging culture of the “2Go”. My first attempt to make sense of the emerging trends of social media admittedly failed. However, my field work in Egypt after the 25th of January uprising exposed those deeper mechanisms, such as the repurposing of social media for political activism or navigational ends that indeed determine a tectonic shift in the use of ICTs.

Much of the focus with regard to the role of ICTs in the Arab Spring has been dedicated towards political activism (Harlow and Johnson 2011; Peterson 2011; Aouragh and Alexander 2011; Wilson and Dunn 2011; Cottle 2011; Attia *et al.* 2011; Eltantawy and Wiest 2011; Khamis and Vaughn 2011, 2012; Korany and El-Mahdi 2012; Comunello and Anzera 2012; el-Nawawy and Khamis 2013). The depiction and celebration of social media, however, helps reproduce romantic tropes about grassroots activism directed against corrupt or decaying authoritarian regimes. The persistency and pertinence of social media that pervades public discourse and structures the ensuing debate and contestation of the domains of politics, economy, and religion are left unquestioned. The enthusiasm of the post-Arab Spring debates transformed social media into a romantic metaphor for political activism in Egypt and beyond, although its spectrum of activism transcends the terrain of the political.

The confluence of digital and physical realities gives space to new and non-authoritative systems of influence and context creation. Influence is increasingly based on forms of capital that are retrieved through participatory channels instead of an authority invested by the state, church or economy. It is not any more the interconnectedness of actors, but the interdependence of their realities through augmentation. More importantly, though, is that social media not just allow actors to hyper-individualise, but also create the necessary social fabric to navigate everyday life. The decline of authoritative information sources, such as newspapers, public radio and television, exposes the fragmentation of public discourse on the one hand, as well as the erosion of boundaries between the offline and online on the other.

The interplay between the ongoing erosion of the old and the emergence of the new, augmented agency also signals the increasingly liquid human condition. Bauman (2009, p.121) argues that those “eminently breakable bonds” of social media are idiosyncratic to the contemporary human experience are “as fluid as the identity of the network’s ‘hub’, its sole creator, owner, and manager. Through networks, “belonging” becomes a (soft and shifting) sediment of identification” (ibid). By outlining the normative dominance social media achieved in the public discourse in Egypt, this thesis aimed to illustrate that social media transgresses from being a metaphor into a condition. The intense convergence of offline and online produces a new human condition in the global South. This condition is, however, reserved to an urban elite that disproportionately benefits from infrastructure development.

Contemporary research with regard to online-offline convergence exclusively focuses on experiences in the global North (Downey *et al.* 1995; Turkle 2005; Case 2010; Case and Wauklyn 2012). Particularly, cyborg anthropology, an emerging field of social sciences rooted in the post-humanist tradition, studies the evolution of new practices along the convergence of online and offline worlds. This thesis has attempted to illustrate that the convergence and augmentation between online and offline agency also exist in the global South. The existence of cyborg experiences in Ethiopia and in Egypt further disputes the binary opposition between the developed North and the developing South. It eliminates the boundaries of space and time between the global North and South and subsequently deconstructs the notion of transfer. However, current ICT4D scholarship lacks the scholarly apparatus to

analyse cyborg experiences in the global South. Its terminological and topical interests are laid out to reproduce the distinctness of what can be experienced in the global South.

9.3.3 The invasion of spaces of agency

Spaces of agency, such as the online surrogate communities in Ethiopia and Egypt, are susceptible to appropriation. The co-optation of various surrogate communities in Egypt demonstrates that transnational capitalism readily invades and transforms counterhegemonic spaces by adapting to their language. The transformation of surrogate communities into communities that celebrate entrepreneurial risk taking as well as profit making demonstrate the slow erosion of their countercultural impact. During the last phase of my empirical work, the infusion of a Silicon Valley-type of ethos into the texture of many surrogate, activist communities hinted at how the counter-cultural and counterhegemonic becomes contested by transnational capitalism. This ongoing contestation, however, emerges beyond the traditional juxtaposition of local vs global. It becomes a contested territory where global elites impose their often arbitrary agendas of development.

Transnational progressives are “supporting what they perceive as ‘progressive’” (Fonte 2004, p. 118). These transnational progressives are representatives of transnational elites (Conradson and Latham 2005; Robinson 2012) who observe, cultivate and promote a globalised Millennial lifestyle. Lyons *et al.* (2012) showed similar traits with regard to volunteer tourism practices and suggested that neoliberal co-optation actively contributes to the global re-production of its value system. This thesis suggested that while the presence of transnational progressives increases the perceived value of surrogate communities they also accelerate the solidification of a Silicon Valley type of entrepreneurial ethos. Another segment of transnational elites that dominate the evolution of surrogate communities into spaces of business promotion are representatives of the local upper middle class.

Surrogate communities that during the early phase of my empirical work promoted engagement against the hegemonies of state and were characterised by

Barcamps and hackathons, are transferred into Shark Tank capitalism (cf. Chapter 9.4.2). This gradual transgression however omits the confrontation between the Western educated entrepreneurial hipsterism of the urban, globally-mobile upper class and the aspirations of less well-off middle-class youth.

9.4 Self-reflection – from role-switching to honest brokering

The following two subsections address the specific facets of my evolving practice, from the point of its conception to its mainstreaming into the contemporary instruments of GIZ. First, Chapter 9.3.1 reflects on how the laboratory conditions imposed by the various propaganda systems of my immediate working environment formed many of my convictions and much of my critique of mainstream development practice. Subsequently Chapter 9.3.2 abstracts the main methodological insights from my evolving practice.

9.4.1 Doing participatory action research

Early on, my thesis resembled more the trajectory of a conventional PhD thesis written from a university perspective, largely omitting the fact that I was a part-time student based in the field. Only gradually did its participatory character emerge. Eventually, however, it morphed into an exercise in participatory action research. Therefore, besides its contribution to theories of capacity development and informationalism, it adds new perspectives on insider participatory research within development institutions. My work at GTZ/GIZ in Ethiopia and Egypt became a laboratory for exploring and developing new forms of engagement with stakeholders. The continuous contestation of power exposed through the oppressive practices of the EPRDF establishment or the economic and social turbulence of post-revolutionary Egypt reframed my understanding.

My positionality introduced a number of parameters that could not be accounted for in a traditional, textbook type of research design. Two parameters were of particular importance for the evolution of my own practice. First, was my

encounter with various, sometimes even extreme, forms of violence and oppression. The immanent security risks that arose either through the circumstances I was in (for example the Maspero Massacre, see Chapter 8) or were calculated steps of risk-taking on my behalf (encounters with the Ethiopian secret service, cf. Chapter 7 and 8) made me question the status quo. The surreal contrast between risk and the pretension of normality encouraged the scrutiny of underlying ideologies. Chomsky (1987, no pagination) suggests that “the mechanisms of control and indoctrination work in a totally different fashion” and adds that the “intellectual elite is the most heavily indoctrinated sector, for good reasons. It’s their role as a secular priesthood to really believe the nonsense that they put forth”. The in-betweenness of the participatory action researcher not only exposes questions of role-switching, but also of authenticity.

Second was the exposure to various figures of counterculture who rigorously opposed and often fought the oppression and arbitrary misuse of power by the military regimes in Ethiopia and Egypt. Their contestation of top-down narratives of development, and rejection of hegemonic nation-building discourses deepened my awareness of the inherent inequality, precariousness and vulnerability of Bauman’s liquid modernity (Bauman 2000b, 2005). The emergence of new elites and the dissolution of the middle class through as idiosyncratic features of contemporary transnational capitalism that disproportionately afflict the younger and poor segments of society (Bauman 2000a; Sassen 2007).

By bringing these experiences into view, I hoped that the contours of my own practice would also reveal themselves. The emerging awareness of elite re-appropriations through capacity development or ICTs, globalizing hierarchies of economic control, new transnational claims that polarise societies of the global South, as well as the antagonisms of nation-building and subversive activism slowly revealed the compartmentalised and isolated nature of my experience. They showed the extent to which participatory action researchers are caught by the subliminal meta-discourses of their own environment. In my direct environment the professional belief systems about the interrelatedness of capacity development and the Paris Declaration or the particular *esprit de corps* among GTZ/GIZ staff in Ethiopia can be considered as distinctly dominant. Such meta-discourses inhibited both my ability to

undertake unbiased analysis as well as authentic action. The constrictions they enforced exacerbated my in-betweenness and demanded to constantly manoeuvre between these elite world-making projects without losing sight of subaltern social protagonism. In my experience the attempt for role-switching can easily become a monotonous practice that eventually denies the cross-fertilisation of analysis and practice. As well as denies access to non-hegemonic spheres of action (e.g. Ethiopian bloggers or Egyptian revolutionaries).

The impracticality of role-switching became particularly apparent when the various forms of tension that surrounded me in my work environment made the gears stuck. Traditional forms of participatory action research did not provide tools that help navigating the dangerous terrain of exploitative and hegemonic power structures, which surpass the inconsistencies and petty fears of organisational politics. Moreover, I lacked the acknowledgment that the ambition to ground my practice in the intellectual tradition of anthropology of development by insisting on a "radical critique of, and distancing from, the development establishment" (Escobar 1997, p. 498.) disproportionally enhanced my chances to be overwhelmed and encumbered.

9.4.2 From friendship work to honest brokering

In earlier versions of this thesis, I described my experience in Ethiopia as a personal and professional *rite de passage*. However, I gradually realised that this reference conceals an elitist misapprehension, one that neglects the hubris and arrogance idiosyncratic to this experience. Whereas it is surely correct to insist on the uniqueness of working in Ethiopia, it also produces a distorted self-image among practitioners. In Chapters 5 and 6, I alluded to the existence of what was colloquially called the Ethiopia syndrome among expatriate development workers in Ethiopia. Generally speaking, this colloquial expression was used as a derogatory term to denote foreign individuals who identified too closely with the policies and practices of the Ethiopian establishment. Their successful indoctrination that degraded their moral disposition as well as their professional identities signifies the strength of the EPRDF propaganda system.

Admittedly, until the conflicts of 2010 I suffered from the Ethiopia syndrome as well. Moreover, it was layered over by the particular *esprit de corps* of GTZ/GIZ's expatriate staff in Ethiopia. These two propaganda systems distorted my self-image and resulted in the assertion of exclusivity and uniqueness. The notions of predestination and self-importance inherent to this *esprit de corps* are best expressed by the following account from my research diary.

During lunch one of them [a medium management level donor representative] explained that being an expat aid worker is something similar to being a soldier for the German government. It is not a military operation, but a humanitarian one in order to safeguard the geopolitical interests of the German government at the Horn of Africa. (Research diary, 15/10/2010, Addis Ababa)

Both propaganda systems emit a certain magnetism of power and re-produce archaic notions of heroism that hide and conceal real issues of power. However, the consistent breaking away from these propaganda systems, revealed the weaknesses of mainstream development practice and allowed me both to think and to act as an anthropologist of development who centres his/her "analysis on the institutional apparatus, the links to power established by expert knowledge, the ethnographic analysis and critique of modernist constructs, and the possibility of contributing to the political projects of the subaltern" (Escobar 1997, p. 505.).

McNiff (2002, p. 240) claims that perhaps the most important contribution of an action researcher is the "public acknowledgement that your practice and theory are integrated and non-divisible, in the sense of being distinct but not discrete. You are showing how your theory is grounded in your practice, and in turn feeds back into new practice". A series of grave conflicts with representatives of the EPRDF establishment during 2010 revealed the impracticality of role-switching. These conflicts deepened my awareness about the fierce and shrewd logic of the propaganda systems that many elites put in place to keep ordinary people under control and prevent them from asking too many questions that might expose the real intentions of elites (McNiff 2002). Moreover it revealed my own complacency that

assumed that the status of a foreigner and a high professional status would protect me from being exposed as a target for such propaganda systems.

Due to the fierce political environment, my attempts to switch between the roles of a development practitioner and researcher failed. The persistency of knowing when to switch required enormous amounts of mental capacity and produced mediocre results at best. Moreover, I realised that due to the critical perspectives I acquired through the preparation of the conceptual framework, my practice was both exposed and increasingly labelled as subversive. This initiated the subsequent rethinking of in-betweenness and role-switching, particularly since it also hid my natural disposition to mediate between fields of activities instead of switching between them.

My practice evolved from constipated attempts at role-switching as well as from a series of conflicts with the Ethiopian establishment. On an emotional level – which admittedly dominated my actions in the beginning – I thought of it as a form of resistance that made me an “irreverent inmate” (Cooklin 2000). However, I gradually latched on that creative resistance is an intellectually beneficiary form of practice. The careful recognition and unpacking of constraints and mechanisms that define systems allow for the premeditated levering out of hegemonic power. Moreover it does not necessarily mean challenging the dominant systems at work, but rather “being pliable and bending with the prevailing wind, but not breaking” (McNiff 2002, p. 179.). By amalgamating the roles of a researcher and practitioner I was transformed from an irreverent inmate to a creatively compliant employee (Kushner and MacDonald 1987). Creative compliance means “adapting to imposed systems but working creatively within them in order to find a way through. [...] The aim is not to change the external ‘system’ so much as to influence people within the system, so that individual practices realize their potential for transforming wider thinking” (McNiff 2002, p. 179).

Eventually, the very rejection of role-switching led to unexpected results. By insisting on a unified practice that ameliorated hands-on, pragmatic work with critical reflection and organisational de-affiliation, I developed ideas that enriched instead of inhibited my ambitions. I consider the conceptualisation and evolution of the ICE-

Hubs model as my most distinct contribution to developing new practice (cf. Chapter 4.3). ICE-Hubs are community driven technology innovation spaces with a strong social and environmental commitment. They promote the invention and development of home-grown technological products and services that constitute affordable and viable technological solutions for local challenges. They are constituted in participatory manner so that they bring together a diverse community of action-oriented thinkers, doers and leaders. Currently four ICE-Hubs exist (Addis Ababa in Ethiopia; Cairo and Alexandria in Egypt and Weimar, Germany). Its methodological framework became part of GIZ's product portfolio in 2013 and is replicated in parts or in its entirety in various GIZ programmes worldwide.

Bearing witness, however, also means protesting against the ongoing appropriation through discourses of Silicon Savannah and global entrepreneurship that stifle the authentic activism of technology communities. The recent boom of digital entrepreneurship in Africa produced a new cohort of young African entrepreneurs, as well as a series of new spaces (technology innovation hubs) that promote a Silicon Valley ethos of digital innovation (Okutoyi 2015). Once positioned as a figure of counterculture (Ayittey 2011) the young, computer-savvy innovator/entrepreneur is turned into an icon of a neoliberal development narrative. Online and offline spaces of activism become places of hubris for the urban upper class. Transnational entities increasingly exploit these discourses and claim as well as award rights of representation.

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Annex 1 – Table of interviews in Ethiopia

| Code | Local/ Foreign | Age Group | Job | Position | Education | Male/ Female | Interview date/s |
|------|-------------------|--------------|-------|----------|-----------|-----------------|--------------------------|
| ET01 | L | 2 | PS | H | T | M | 05.03.2012 25.07.2013 |
| ET02 | L | 1 | NGO | M | T | M | 05.03.2012 03.08.2013 |
| ET03 | F | 1 | NGO | H | T | M | 07.03.2012 01.08.2013 |
| ET04 | L | 2 | PS | H | T | M | 01.08.2013 |
| ET05 | L | 2 | Donor | M | T | F | 08.03.2012 05.08.2013 |
| ET06 | F | 3 | Donor | H | T | M | 09.03.2012 |
| ET07 | L | 3 | Gov | H | T | M | 09.03.2012 |
| ET08 | L | 3 | Gov | M | T | M | 10.03.2012 04.08.2013 |
| ET09 | L | 2 | Donor | M | T | F | 11.03.2012 27.07.2013 |
| ET10 | L | 2 | Donor | M | T | M | 11.03.2012 28.07.2013 |
| ET11 | F | 2 | NGO | M | T | M | 12.03.2012 28.07.2013 |
| ET12 | L | 2 | PS | M | T | M | 14.03.2012 04.08.2013 |
| ET13 | L | 3 | Gov | H | T | M | 14.03.2012 |
| ET14 | L | 2 | Donor | M | T | F | 04.08.2013 |
| ET15 | L | 3 | Gov | H | T | M | 17.03.2012 04.08.2013 |
| ET16 | L | 2 | NGO | M | T | M | 05.05.2012 04.08.2013 |
| ET17 | F | 3 | Donor | H | T | M | 06.05.2012 |
| ET18 | L | 2 | NGO | H | T | M | 08.05.2012 04.08.2013 |
| ET19 | F | 3 | Donor | H | T | M | 28.07.2013 |
| ET20 | F | 3 | Donor | H | T | M | 09.05.2012 04.08.2013 |
| ET21 | L | 2 | PS | M | T | M | 11.05.2012 28.07.2013 |

Annex 2 – Table of interviews in Egypt

| Code | Local/ Foreign | Age Group | Job | Position | Education | Male/ Female | Interview date/s |
|------|-------------------|--------------|-------|----------|-----------|-----------------|--------------------------|
| EG01 | L | 2 | NGO | H | T | M | 23.11.2012 10.07.2013 |
| EG02 | L | 2 | NGO | H | T | M | 23.11.2012 13.07.2013 |
| EG03 | F | 3 | Donor | M | T | M | 25.11.2012 13.07.2013 |
| EG04 | L | 2 | NGO | H | T | M | 25.11.2012 31.12.2013 |
| EG05 | L | 2 | NGO | H | T | M | 26.11.2012 01.01.2014 |
| EG06 | L | 2 | Gov | M | T | F | 07.12.2013 |
| EG07 | L | 3 | Gov | H | T | M | 29.11.2012 |
| EG08 | L | 3 | NGO | H | T | M | 15.12.2012 02.01.2014 |
| EG09 | L | 2 | NGO | M | T | M | 17.07.2013 |
| EG10 | L | 1 | NGO | M | T | F | 16.12.2012 13.12.2013 |
| EG11 | L | 2 | PS | M | T | M | 17.12.2012 28.01.2013 |
| EG12 | L | 2 | NGO | M | T | M | 18.12.2012 01.12.2013 |
| EG13 | L | 2 | Gov | M | T | M | 19.12.2012 |
| EG14 | L | 3 | PS | H | T | M | 21.12.2012 02.01.2014 |
| EG15 | L | 2 | PS | M | T | F | 03.01.2013 06.07.2013 |
| EG16 | L | 3 | Donor | H | T | M | 03.01.2013 |
| EG17 | L | 3 | PS | M | T | M | 05.01.2013 03.01.2014 |
| EG18 | L | 2 | PS | H | T | M | 21.07.2013 |
| EG19 | L | 2 | Gov | H | T | M | 04.07.2013 |
| EG20 | L | 2 | Donor | H | T | M | 11.01.2013 05.07.2013 |
| EG21 | F | 2 | NGO | H | T | M | 12.01.2013 13.07.2013 |
| EG22 | L | 2 | PS | M | T | M | 15.01.2013 |

Annex 3 – Table of interviews with international ICT4D practitioner

| Code | Nationality | Age Group | Job | Position | Education | Male/ Female | Interview date/s |
|-------|-------------|-----------|-----|----------|-----------|-----------------|------------------|
| INT01 | Swedish | 3 | NGO | M | T | M | 09.05.2013 |
| INT02 | German | 2 | PS | M | T | F | 07.07.2013 |
| INT03 | German | 3 | NGO | M | T | M | 10.10.2013 |
| INT04 | German | 3 | NGO | M | T | M | 15.10.2013 |
| INT05 | German | 2 | NGO | M | T | F | 07.11.2013 |
| INT06 | German | 2 | PS | M | T | M | 07.11.2013 |
| INT07 | USA | 3 | PS | H | T | M | 15.12.2013 |

Annex 4 – Interview format with ICT4D practitioner

I would like to ask you some questions on capacity development and ICTs in NAME OF THE COUNTRY.

My goal with this interview is to gain insights on how donor agencies and their employees use capacity development in their daily work, as well as on their views concerning its impact. Nevertheless, I would like to understand how the capacity development approach is used with regard to the introduction of ICTs, and the capacities that should be developed through the use of ICTs. Within this second group of questions I would like to ask a few specific questions concerning the use of social media by your agency.

The interview will approximately take 1,5 hours and is completely anonymous. None of the content of our interview will be shared with any third body. Furthermore, before using any direct quotations from this interview in my thesis I will send you them for your approval. You will be able to decide as well whether you would like to use your own identity or would opt for a cover.

The interview follows a semi-structured format, which means that besides the guiding questions it is also about to give room to issues, which arise during our conversation with regard to capacity development and the use of ICTs in development work.

Would you allow voice recording the interview?

Date of interview:

Capacity development

| | |
|----|--|
| 1. | How would you define capacity development in your own words? |
| | |

| | |
|---|--|
| 2. | What is the purpose of Capacity Development in your opinion? |
| | |
| 3. | To what extent do you agree with the following statement: The Paris Declaration (and the Accra Agenda for Action?) has played a central role in making capacity development mainstream in development co-operation? |
| | Strongly disagree <input type="checkbox"/> Disagree <input type="checkbox"/> Neither agree nor disagree <input type="checkbox"/> Agree <input type="checkbox"/> Strongly agree <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 4. | How does the Paris Declaration (and the Accra Agenda for Action?) influence your work? |
| | |
| 5. | Does it play a role in your organisations organisational policies? If yes, how? |
| Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> | |

| | |
|----|--|
| | |
| 6. | Please suggest some positive impacts of the Paris Declaration. |
| | |
| 7. | Please suggest some negative impacts of the Paris Declaration. |
| | |
| 8. | Please suggest some positive impacts of the Accra Agenda for Action. |
| | |
| 9. | Please suggest some negative impacts of the Accra Agenda for Action. |
| | |

Alignment

| | |
|--|---|
| 10. | How would you define alignment with your own words? |
| | |
| 11. | What aspects appear important to you for good capacity development interventions? |
| | |
| 12. | To what extent do you agree that capacity development is relevant for the needs of NAME OF THE COUNTRY? |
| <p>Strongly disagree <input type="checkbox"/></p> <p>Disagree <input type="checkbox"/></p> <p>Neither agree nor disagree <input type="checkbox"/></p> <p>Agree <input type="checkbox"/></p> <p>Strongly agree <input type="checkbox"/></p> | |
| a | Could you please elaborate on the reasons of your opinion? |
| | |
| 13. | Have you encountered specific challenges / problems in working with your partner organization/s previously? |
| <p>Yes <input type="checkbox"/></p> <p>No <input type="checkbox"/></p> | |
| a | If yes, how do you address the challenges? If not, what do you think the reason might be? |
| b | |

| | |
|-----|--|
| | |
| 14. | What are your suggestions for improving the official collaboration with your partner organization/s? |
| | |

Ownership

| | |
|-----|--|
| 15. | How would you describe ownership in the context of development co-operation? |
| | |
| 16. | What defines good ownership in this context? |
| | |

| | |
|---|---|
| 17. | How did/do you address ownership in your activities? |
| | |
| 18. | Did you experience any challenges, which have arisen due to the ownership of your partner? If yes, what kind? |
| <p style="text-align: center;">Yes <input type="checkbox"/></p> <p style="text-align: center;">No <input type="checkbox"/></p> | |
| a | Could you please elaborate on this? |
| | |
| b | How did you solve these differences? |

Questions on ICTs

| | |
|-----|---|
| 19. | Could you define ICT capacity development in your own words? |
| | |
| 20. | Which groups are you targeting with your ICT4D measures? |
| | |
| 21. | What capacities do your target groups acquire through the use of ICT? |
| | |
| 22. | Why are these capacities important for them? |
| | |

| | |
|-----|--|
| 23. | Please describe the impact of your programme/programmes on your target group? |
| | |
| a | Why are these positive (or negative?) impacts? |
| | |
| b | Please describe up to three success stories from your own practice related to ICT4D? |
| | |

Questions on social media use

| | |
|-----|--|
| 24. | Do you use social media tools in your ICT4D work-related activities? |
| | Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> |
| a. | Which social media tools do you use? |
| | |
| b. | What are these tools used for? |
| | |
| c. | What are the specific benefits of each of these tools? |
| | |
| 25. | For which purposes do you use each of these tools? |

| | |
|-----|---|
| | |
| 26. | Do you know other social media tools? If yes, could you please name a few? Mention the ones you have heard the most |
| | |
| 27. | How do social media tools contribute to reaching your programme's goals? |
| | |

| | |
|-----|--|
| 28. | How does your target group benefit from using social media? |
| | |
| 29. | Do social media tools influence the ownership demonstrated by your partner/s? |
| | <p style="text-align: center;">Yes <input type="checkbox"/></p> <p style="text-align: center;">No <input type="checkbox"/></p> |
| 30. | If yes, how? |
| | |
| 31. | Would you agree to the following statements? |
| | The use of social media tools increases efficiency of our programme/s. |
| | <p style="text-align: center;">Strongly disagree <input type="checkbox"/></p> <p style="text-align: center;">Disagree <input type="checkbox"/></p> <p style="text-align: center;">Neither agree nor disagree <input type="checkbox"/></p> <p style="text-align: center;">Agree <input type="checkbox"/></p> <p style="text-align: center;">Strongly agree <input type="checkbox"/></p> |
| | The use of social media tools decreases costs for our programme/s. |
| | <p style="text-align: center;">Strongly disagree <input type="checkbox"/></p> <p style="text-align: center;">Disagree <input type="checkbox"/></p> <p style="text-align: center;">Neither agree nor disagree <input type="checkbox"/></p> <p style="text-align: center;">Agree <input type="checkbox"/></p> <p style="text-align: center;">Strongly agree <input type="checkbox"/></p> |
| | The use of social media tools increases the effectivity of |

| | |
|--|---|
| | our programme/s. |
| | Strongly disagree <input type="checkbox"/> |
| | Disagree <input type="checkbox"/> |
| | Neither agree nor disagree <input type="checkbox"/> |
| | Agree <input type="checkbox"/> |
| | Strongly agree <input type="checkbox"/> |

Thank you very much for your time and your kind help with my research. Before ending this interview would you mind answering some questions concerning your person? These would help me to classify the data, which I have collected through the interviews.

Annex 5 – Data collection sheet for interview participants

| | | |
|---|--|-----------------------------|
| Family Name | | |
| Forename | | |
| Would you like to be called your real name? | Yes <input type="checkbox"/> | No <input type="checkbox"/> |
| If no, please choose a pseudonym (max 12 characters) | | |
| Gender | | |
| Organisation | | |
| Position | | |
| Country (stationed in) | | |
| Nationality | | |
| Highest level of education | Elementary education <input type="checkbox"/> Vocational training <input type="checkbox"/> Bachelor degree <input type="checkbox"/> Masters degree <input type="checkbox"/> PhD <input type="checkbox"/> | |
| Experience in development co-operation (in years) | | |
| Did you work with other development organisations before? | Yes <input type="checkbox"/> | No <input type="checkbox"/> |
| | If yes, which organisations did you serve at? | |

Thank you very much for your co-operation!

Annex 6 – Co-moderator’s Worksheet for appreciative inquiry session on the value of ICTs

Worksheet (adapted from Stratton and Berkessel 2010)

Estimated time budget: 2 hours and 45 minutes

Lead-In Statement

ICTs are one of the most influential technologies that shape our life and have brought about extensive change in how we live and work in the last few decades. They have largely contributed to many aspects of our private and professional lives, among other to higher efficiency in the economy, and better availability of knowledge. ICTs also play a transformative role in the Egyptian society, in how we work, learn or socialize. ICTs are also rapidly changing in performance and size. Gadgets become smaller, connection faster and internet access more and more mobile.

This session is about finding out how ICTs influence our lives, especially about the positive effects they create. The discussions and the stories, which will come up in our workshop are about understanding what works well and how to create more of it. In other words how to replicate the positive effects of ICTs and repair some of the existing flaws.

Focus 1 — Best Contributions of ICTs

(in paired interviews – 40 minutes, each interview 20 minutes)

INSTRUCTIONS: Participants form pairs and interview each other along the following guiding questions. After forming the pairs the facilitator distributes the guiding questions to each participant, as well as explains the rules for the interview briefly (this is also included on the worksheet). Participants then take turn interviewing each other in their pairs. Each interview lasts approximately 20 minutes. The answers (user profiles) are written down by the interviewer.

Q1. What is your favourite ICT solution of today?

Q2. Why do you think it is innovative?

Q3. Could you describe in detail what this particular piece of technology does?

Q4. What are their benefits to the users they are intended for?

Q5. What excites you about this technology?

Q6. Please name five ICT solutions that you use in your daily life?

Q7. How do they serve you? In which ways do they make your private and/or professional life different?

Q8. Do these technologies help you reach your own goals?

Q9. Do they increase your quality of life?

Q10. Could you explain how and when do you use these technologies?

Focus 2—Technology That Serves

(Interview pairs combine to form groups of six – 40 minutes)

At this stage the participants will focus on revealing common themes and preferences with regard to using ICTs.

INSTRUCTIONS: Three pairs now create one group (Group A, Group B) each consisting six people. In their groups each interviewer introduces his/her partner (introduction round). After the introductions the partners also share highlights of their exchange by describing one common issue, which has come up in both interviews.

As a next step the facilitator asks each group to select one technology, which has been particularly strongly presented/articulated in the introduction round by the participants. Participants should present what that particular technology provides a solution for, the service it provides and who are using/can use it. This technology is then presented along these aspects to the other group. Groups should be encouraged to use visual methods (picture, painting, drawing) to present as well as highlight the benefits of each technology. The beneficiary attributes of each technology should be listed and shared with the other group as well. In case of using a visual presentation these could be for example visually emphasized too.

Focus 3—Future Possibilities

(Small Groups – 50 minutes)

At this stage the small groups (Group A, Group B) think about the future and create imaginative descriptions of how life and work could look like in 5 years time. These images of future life should then presented to the other groups in a creative way: a drawing, a skit, a metaphor, a media format, whatever way helps participants to explain their dream-technologies. The groups will be given 30 minutes to prepare their presentation and will have 10 minutes to present as well as answer questions from the other group.

Explanation for the groups

Imagine that it's five years into the future and you come to work and you have the best and most helpful technology for your job. Be as creative as you can in imagining your future work- place. Show how you really enjoy your new technologies and equipment—you get great benefits, your friends and kids think it's awesome.

Q1. What types of ICT applications are you using, and what do they allow you and others to do? How is this experience different?

Q2. What else would be good to have in order to make your job satisfying, enjoyable, and meaningful?

Q3. In your imaged future, how have you been trained and how are you keeping up-to-date to ensure you are continually at the leading edge of technological innovations?

Focus 4 — Immediate Enhancements

(Small Group and Individual Reflection – 30 minutes)

Each groups should elaborate on practical steps how to reach the imagined technology. First they are guided through a set of questions, which help them to brake the task down into steps. Then they are asked to chart a roadmap for the implementation of the technology. Eventually, each group presents their roadmap to each other.

Q1. Respective to your imagined technology, what enhancements do you recommend to current technologies?

Q2. Which features would make your life and work easier if they appeared tomorrow? Why?

Q3. What would be the short-term beneficial impacts?

Q4. Could you develop these features or do you know someone who could do so?

Q5. What would it take to implement?

Q6. What are the beginning steps? Could you chart a roadmap?

By the moderator:

Thank you very much for your time and active participation in this session. Before ending the session would you mind answering some questions concerning your person? This would help us to analyse the outcomes of this session. Also we would appreciate your kind feedback concerning the session. You will find these questions at the end of this sheet.

Annex 7 – Participants' worksheet for appreciative inquiry sessions

Thank you for participating in today's workshop! The estimated time of the workshop is 2 hours and 45 minutes. During the session you will be walked through four discussion phases by the moderator. At each phase you will receive detailed information by the moderator about the tasks at each phase.

At phase 1, 3 and 4 you will also receive the guiding questions from the moderator.

This workshop is an open discussion, which means that there are no right or wrong answers. We are interested in your opinion.

Worksheet 1

Focus 1 — Best Contributions of ICTs

(in paired interviews – 40 minutes, each interview should take approximately 20 minutes)

Q1. What is your favourite ICT solution of today?

Q2. Why do you think it is innovative?

Q3. Could you describe in detail what this particular piece of technology does?

Q4. What are their benefits to the users they are intended for?

Q5. What excites you about this technology?

Q6. Please name five ICT solutions that you use in your daily life?

Q7. How do they serve you? In which ways do they make your private and/or professional life different?

Q8. Do these technologies help you reach your own goals?

Q9. Do they increase your quality of life?

Q10. Could you explain how and when do you use these technologies?

Worksheet 2

Focus 3—Future Possibilities

(Discussion in small groups – 50 minutes)

Q1. What types of ICT applications are you using, and what do they allow you and others to do? How is this experience different?

Q2. What else would be good to have in order to make your job satisfying, enjoyable, and meaningful?

Q3. In your imaged future, how have you been trained and how are you keeping up-to-date to ensure you are continually at the leading edge of technological innovations?

Worksheet 3

Focus 4 — Immediate Enhancements

(Discussion in small groups – 30 minutes)

Q1. Respective to your imagined technology, what enhancements do you recommend to current technologies?

Q2. Which features would make your life and work easier if they appeared tomorrow? Why?

Q3. What would be the short-term beneficial impacts?

Q4. Could you develop these features or do you know someone who could do so?

Q5. What would it take to implement?

Q6. What are the beginning steps? Could you chart a roadmap?

Annex 8 – Data collection sheet for appreciative inquiry participants

Thank you very much for your time and active participation in this session. Before ending the session would you mind answering some questions concerning your person? This would help us to analyse the outcomes of this session. Also we would appreciate your kind feedback concerning the session. You will find these questions at the end of this sheet.

| | | |
|--|--|-----------------------------|
| Family Name | | |
| Forename | | |
| Would you like to be called your real name? | Yes <input type="checkbox"/> | No <input type="checkbox"/> |
| If no, please choose a pseudonym (max 12 characters) | | |
| Gender | | |
| Country (stationed in) | | |
| Nationality | | |
| Highest level of education | Elementary education <input type="checkbox"/> Vocational training <input type="checkbox"/> Bachelor degree <input type="checkbox"/> Masters degree <input type="checkbox"/> PhD <input type="checkbox"/> | |

Your feedback on the session

Are you satisfied with the moderation of the session?

Has the information provided to you during the session been clear and enough?

Are you satisfied with the timing and the location of the session?

If you were organising this session what would you change?

Your additional comments and recommendations:

Annex 9 – Key indicators of the Paris Declaration on Aid Effectiveness (2005)

| OWNERSHIP | | TARGET FOR 2010 |
|-----------|---|---|
| 1 | <i>Partners have operational development strategies</i> — Number of countries with national development strategies (including PRSs) that have clear strategic priorities linked to a medium-term expenditure framework and reflected in annual budgets. | At least 75% of partner countries have operational development strategies. |
| ALIGNMENT | | TARGETS FOR 2010 |
| 2 | <i>Reliable country systems</i> — Number of partner countries that have procurement and public financial management systems that either (a) adhere to broadly accepted good practices or (b) have a reform programme in place to achieve these. | <p>(a) Public financial management – Half of partner countries move up at least one measure (i.e., 0.5 points) on the PFM/ CPIA (Country Policy and Institutional Assessment) scale of performance.</p> <p>(b) Procurement – One-third of partner countries move up at least one measure (i.e., from D to C, C to B or B to A) on the four-point scale used to assess performance for this indicator.</p> |
| 3 | <i>Aid flows are aligned on national priorities</i> — Percent of aid flows to the government sector that is reported on partners' national budgets. | Halve the gap — halve the proportion of aid flows to government sector not reported on government's budget(s) (with at least 85% reported on budget). |
| 4 | <i>Strengthen capacity by co-ordinated support</i> — Percent of donor capacity-development support provided through co-ordinated programmes consistent with partners' national development strategies. | 50% of technical co-operation flows are implemented through co-ordinated programmes consistent with national development strategies. |
| 5a | <i>Use of country public financial</i> | PERCENT OF DONORS |

| | | | |
|-----------|--|--|--|
| | <i>management systems</i> — Percent of donors and of aid flows that use public financial management systems in partner countries, which either (a) adhere to broadly accepted good practices or (b) have a reform programme in place to achieve these. | Score* | Target |
| | | 5+ | All donors use partner countries' PFM systems. |
| | | 3.5 to 4.5 | 90% of donors use partner countries' PFM systems. |
| | | PERCENT OF AID FLOWS | |
| | | Score* | Target |
| | | 5+ | A two-thirds reduction in the % of aid to the public sector not using partner countries' PFM systems. |
| | | 3.5 to 4.5 | A one-third reduction in the % of aid to the public sector not using partner countries' PFM systems. |
| 5b | <i>Use of country procurement systems</i> — Percent of donors and of aid flows that use partner country procurement systems which either (a) adhere to broadly accepted good practices or (b) have a reform programme in place to achieve these. | PERCENT OF DONORS | |
| | | Score* | Target |
| | | A | All donors use partner countries' procurement systems. |
| | | B | 90% of donors use partner countries' procurement systems. |
| | | PERCENT OF AID FLOWS | |
| | | Score* | Target |
| | A | A two-thirds reduction in the % of aid to the public sector not using partner countries' procurement systems. | |
| | B | A one-third reduction in the % of aid to the public sector not using partner countries' procurement systems. | |
| 6 | <i>Strengthen capacity by avoiding parallel implementation structures</i> — Number of parallel project implementation units (PIUs) per country. | Reduce by two-thirds the stock of parallel project implementation units (PIUs). | |
| 7 | <i>Aid is more predictable</i> — Percent of aid disbursements released according to agreed schedules in annual or multi-year frameworks. | Halve the gap — halve the proportion of aid not disbursed within the fiscal year for which it was scheduled. | |
| 8 | <i>Aid is untied</i> — Percent of bilateral aid that is untied. | Continued progress over time. | |

| HARMONISATION | | TARGETS FOR 2010 |
|-----------------------|---|---|
| 9 | <i>Use of common arrangements or procedures</i> — Percent of aid provided as programme-based approaches. | 66% of aid flows are provided in the context of programme-based approaches. |
| 10 | <i>Encourage shared analysis</i> — Percent of (a) field missions and/or (b) country analytic work, including diagnostic reviews that are joint. | (a) 40% of donor missions to the field are joint. (b) 66% of country analytic work is joint. |
| MANAGING FOR RESULTS | | TARGET FOR 2010 |
| 11 | <i>Results-oriented frameworks</i> — Number of countries with transparent and monitorable performance assessment frameworks to assess progress against (a) the national development strategies and (b) sector programmes. | Reduce the gap by one-third — Reduce the proportion of countries without transparent and monitorable performance assessment frameworks by one-third. |
| MUTUAL ACCOUNTABILITY | | TARGET FOR 2010 |
| 12 | <i>Mutual accountability</i> — Number of partner countries that undertake mutual assessments of progress in implementing agreed commitments on aid effectiveness including those in this Declaration. | All partner countries have mutual assessment reviews in place. |

Annex 10 – First phase definitions of capacity development

| Nr. | Name of organisation/author | Phase I. | |
|-----|-----------------------------|--|---|
| | | NPM | NIE |
| 1. | Cohen 1993 | | [Capacity development is] any system, effort or process... which includes among it's major objectives strengthening the capability of elected chief executive officers, chief administrative officers, department and agency heads and programme managers in general purpose government to plan, implement, manage or evaluate policies, strategies or programs designed to impact on social conditions in the community. |
| 2. | World Bank 1998 | | Capacity building is investment in human capital, institutions and practices. |
| 3. | CIDA 1998 p. 2. | Capacity development refers to the approaches, strategies and methodologies, which are used by national participants and/or outside interveners to help organizations and/or systems to improve their performance. | |

| | | | |
|----|---|--|---|
| 4. | UNDP 1997 | | The process by which individuals groups, organizations, institutions and societies increase their abilities: to perform functions solve problems and achieve objectives; to understand and deal with their development need in a broader context and in a sustainable manner. |
| 5. | Lusthaus <i>et al.</i> 1995 | | Capacity strengthening is an ongoing process by which people and systems, operating within dynamic contexts, enhance their abilities to develop and implement strategies in pursuit of their objectives for increased performance in a sustainable way. |
| 6. | UNICEF 1996 | | Capacity building is any support that strengthens an institution's ability to effectively and efficiently design, implement and evaluate development activities according to its mission. |
| 7. | CIDA 1996 (in Lavergne and Saxby 2001) | Capacity development is a process by which individuals, groups, organizations and societies enhance their abilities to identify and meet development challenges in a sustainable manner. | |

| | | | |
|-----|---------------------|--|---|
| 8. | InWEnt 2006 | | Capacity Building encompasses advanced professional training, personnel and organizational development so as to achieve a given set of objectives. Capacity Building also focuses on strengthening one's partner's capacity to plan and finally to implement lasting development strategies and policies. |
| 9. | InWEnt 2007 | | Capacity Building steht in der international en Zusammenarbeit für Weiterbildung, Personal- und Organisationsentwicklung. Capacity Building hat das Ziel, die Fähigkeit der Partner zu stärken, zukunftsfähige Entwicklungsstrategien und -politiken zu planen und umzusetzen. |
| 10. | UNDP 2002a | | Capacity development is defined in this paper as the ability of factors (individuals, groups, organizations, institutions, countries) to perform specified functions or specified objectives effectively, efficiently and sustainably. |
| 11. | UNDP 2002b p. 30 | | Capacity development is a process of change, and hence it is about managing transformation. |
| 12. | UNDP 2002c p. 16-18 | | Capacity is the ability to set objectives, develop |

| | | | |
|-----|----------------------------------|--|--|
| | | | strategies draw up action plans develop and implement appropriate policies develop regulatory and legal frameworks build and manage partnerships foster an enabling environment for civil society mobilize and manage resources implement action plans monitor progress. |
| 13. | World Bank 2005 (in DFID2006) | | Capacity building is a long-term process requiring a systematic approach, demand for improved public sector performance, and supply of well-structured organizations and skilled personnel. |
| 14. | JICA 2006 p. 2. | | Capacity development (CD) refers to the ongoing process of enhancing the problem-solving abilities of developing countries by taking into account all the factors at the individual, organizational, and societal levels. |
| 15. | OECD 2006a, p. 14-15. | | CD [capacity development] encompasses developing the ability of individuals, institutions and societies to solve problems, make informed choices, define priorities and plan for the future. |
| 16. | World Bank 2006, p. 20. | | Capacity is demonstrated through the |

| | | | |
|-----|---|---|---|
| | | | functional presence of a combination of most of the following factors: viable institutions and respective organizations; commitment and vision of leadership; financial and material resources; skilled human resources. In short, Capacity = Institutions + Leadership + Resources + Skills + Practices – Constraints. |
| 17. | GTZ 2007a | Capacity development – as GTZ sees it – strengthens the performance capabilities of individuals, organizations and societies: people are to increase their learning capacity and acquire the skills that enable them to assume a role in society. | |
| 18. | World Bank Africa Region, World Bank Capacity Development Resource Center. Without date and place. Last accessed 14/07/2016. http://web.worldbank.org/ | | [Capacity] is the proven ability of key actors in a society to achieve socioeconomic goals on their own. |
| 19. | ECDPM 2005 | | The ability of a system to perform, or to create, or provide value added. |
| 20. | UNDP 2007 | | The ability to perform functions, solve |

| | | | |
|-----|--------------------------------|--|--|
| | | | problems, and set and achieve objectives. |
| 21. | USAID 2007 | | Human Capacity Development, or Investing in People, is a key crosscutting activity designed to improve local capacities through education and developing opportunities for all citizens, while also helping local institutions operate more efficiently. |
| 22. | eLearning Africa, without date | | Capacity is the proven ability of key actors in a society to achieve socioeconomic goals on their own. |

Annex 11 – Second phase definitions of capacity development

| Nr. | Name of organisation/author | Phase II. | |
|-----|--|---|--|
| | | Theory of Change | relationalism |
| 1. | JICA 2004a p. 17. | CD is the process through which capacity is conserved, created, strengthened, adapted and maintained over time. It is an endogenous process in which partner countries take the lead. | |
| 2. | OECD 2006b | | [Capacity development] is understood as the process whereby people, organisations and society as a whole unleash, strengthen, create, adapt and maintain capacity over time. |
| 3. | EuropeAid 2005 (p. 5) | | Capacity development (CD) is the process by which people and organizations create and strengthen their capacity over time. |
| 4. | LenCD 2006 (in Dietvorst 2006, p. 15) | a process of enabling individuals, groups organizations, institutions and societies to sustainably define, articulate, engage and actualize their vision or | |

| | | | |
|----|-------------------------|--|--|
| | | developmental goals building on their own resources in the context of new Afro-centricity paradigm the AU-Nepad Capacity Development Initiative (CDI). | |
| 5. | GTZ 2007a (p. 5) | Capacity Development ist ein ganzheitlicher Prozess, durch den Menschen, Organisationen und Gesellschaften ihre Fähigkeit, Entwicklung nachhaltig zu gestalten, mobilisieren, erhalten, anpassen und ausbauen | |
| 6. | EuropeAid 2009 (p. xii) | Capacity development is the process whereby people, organisations and society as a whole unlock, strengthen, create, adapt and maintain capacity over time. | |
| 7. | NEPAD 2009 and AU 2009 | Capacity development refers to the approaches, strategies and methodologies, which are used by national participants and/or outside interveners to help organizations and/or systems to improve their performance. | |
| 8. | UNDP 2009a (p. 4) | | UNDP defines capacity development as the |

| | | | |
|-----|---|--|--|
| | | | process through which individuals, organizations and societies obtain, strengthen and maintain the capabilities to set and achieve their own development objectives over time. |
| 9. | GIZ 2011 (p. 1.) | Dies [capacity development] versetzt die Kooperationspartner in die Lage, einen wirtschaftlich, ökologisch und sozial nachhaltigen Entwicklungspfad einzuschlagen und ihre Lebensbedingungen heute und in Zukunft zu verbessern. | |
| 10. | President Paul Kagame, address to the gala dinner to celebrate the 20 th anniversary of the African Capacity Building Foundation, Kigali, February 8, 2011 (in Baser 2011) | | Capacity development goes beyond formal qualifications and technical skills development to include the cultivation of invisible or “soft” attributes such as the ability to drive change and to build processes, organizations, and institutions which can deliver public services over the long term. |

Annex 12 – “Rules of engagement” with Ethiopian partner institutions at ECBP

Rules of Engagement of ecbp with partner institutions

1. Social understanding

- Creating excellent social understanding. providing different orientation programs to ecbp’s staffs and concerned staffs of our partner institutions

✓ 2. Joint Plan

- Prepare joint plan with our partner institutions. Indicate clear division of tasks which is cascaded up to expert level.

✗ 3. Joint Implementation

- Here we need to implement together as one team jointly by going to the ground. Based on value chain analysis approach we need to mobilize other actors to join hands in realization of the plan.

✓ 4. Joint Monitoring & Evaluation

- Monthly, quarterly ...meetings can be held together with our partner institutions based on agreements. The meetings should be base on reports. The formats for the reports will be agreed upon. Reporting channels can be more than one to respective ministries.

? 5. Joint Budgeting and Sharing of other Resources

- Based on agreed up on joint plan and division of responsibility in the plan, the division of resources also will be indicated in the plan. This also includes office spaces and other infrastructural facilities.

? 6. Ownership

- ecbp has to be fully owned and linked to the respective partner institutions.
- ecbp efforts has to be recognized and considered as full partner.

NB; These rules of engagements for the integration process is brain stormed and prepared by taking TVET (C2) as a model

Way Forward

→ Meeting should be start as early as possible with our respective partner institutions (by conducting step by step approach starting from top managers to the experts level on social understanding).

Annex 13 – Poster promoting an event of the Digital Identities Ethiopia Forum (2011)

PROMOTING ETHIOPIA THROUGH ONLINE TOOLS
Monday, March 5th
5:00 pm - 8:00 pm
Bole Rock

HEINRICH BÖLL STIFTUNG ETHIOPIA
THE Reporter
iceaddis
PRO VOICES

Social Media Marketing and Business - State of the Art
Geraldine De Bastion
newthinking communications
Berlin, Germany

Online PR in Ethiopia
Markos Lemma
Bill Aberham
Karen Obling

Panel-Discussion
Online Tools vs offline Tools

Register :
prometh.eventbrite.com

Annex 14 – Invitation to a Barcamp Ethiopia event (2010)



A barcamp will be held on the EiABC campus (Ethiopian Institute for Architecture, Building Construction & City Planning) in Addis Ababa from 17th-18th September 2010. Everyone is welcome to attend Barcamp Ethiopia and everyone is encouraged to take active part in the preparations. The general topic for Barcamp Ethiopia 2010 is:

NEW LEARNING | NEW THINKING | NEW BEHAVIOR

*"Revolution doesn't happen when society adopts new technology,
it happens when society adopts new behaviors"*

- Clay Shirky: Author, "HERE COMES EVERYBODY"

As opposed to regular conferences, a barcamp is organized and held not by an organization or a company, but by an open community of interested individuals who gather around a common topic to exchange ideas and experiences in an informal setting. Barcamp has no pre-structured program. The actual topics for the conference-sessions and discussions are collected by everyone on the morning of the first conference day. Still, at any time the agenda can be changed and every attendee is encouraged to participate actively at any time. In general, barcamps are characterized by an atmosphere of non-hierarchy, openness, sharing, creativity, efficiency and fun.

BAR = "Beyond All Recognition". More than 350 barcamps have been held all over the world with different thematic focus, also in several other African countries. Every barcamp is individual - To understand barcamp: Attend it!

Sponsors are very welcome to help make Barcamp Ethiopia a success. By sponsoring a specific item, like food, drinks, soundsystem, etc., your institution will be associated with a creative and forward-thinking context. Your logo will be presented on various web-based platforms, printed promotional materials, participant t-shirts and your name will be mentioned in communications before, during and after the event. Barcamp Ethiopia is an example of new thinking and acting in Ethiopia. Be a part of it!

*For more info & to participate, visit:
barcamp.org/BarCampEthiopia
and
elearningethiopia.ning.com*

Sponsors, please contact: EiABC / Omar Dawut, +251-(0)910576532, barcamp@eiabc.edu.et

Sponsors:



EiABC



(Your logo here!)