The International Science Programme in Bangladesh: A case of self-interest, interconnectedness or social empowerment?

Master Thesis in International and European Relations

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Abstract

The aim of this thesis is to analyze different forms of North-South development assistance with regard to its widespread critique and to examine whether the field of international research capacity building holds alternative development cooperation strategies that have the potential to reconcile some of the criticisms. The focus is on the International Science Programme (ISP) and the empirical research carried out in Bangladesh and Sweden on the ISP-Bangladesh collaboration in the form of semi-structured interviews constitutes the core case study evidence. Three theoretical perspectives – realism, interdependence liberalism and constructivism – provide the framework of the case study and serve as guiding tools to understand the ISP’s role and motivations as an actor in international relations. The main goal is to investigate whether the ISP can be best perceived as an instance of self-interest, interconnectedness or social empowerment.

Key words: realism, interdependence liberalism, constructivism, official development assistance, research capacity building, International Science Programme, local ownership, empowerment, partnership

Notes:

Information regarding empirical data (anonymized interview summaries, coding steps etc.) can be provided on request.
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Contents

1. Introduction .................................................................................................................. 1
  1.1. Research “puzzle“ and purpose of the thesis ........................................................ 1
  1.2. Reasons for selecting the ISP as an object of investigation ................................. 2
  1.3. Thesis design ........................................................................................................... 3

2. Methodology ................................................................................................................. 4
  2.1. Ontological and epistemological views................................................................. 4
  2.2. Methods and analytical techniques ......................................................................... 5
    2.2.1. Case study method ......................................................................................... 5
    2.2.2. Content analysis of documents and archival records ..................................... 6
    2.2.3. Coding and pattern-matching of semi-structured interviews ....................... 6
  2.3. Indicators of success for North-South development assistance ............................. 7
  2.4. Limitations of the research ...................................................................................... 9

3. Theories and derived hypotheses .............................................................................. 11
  3.1. Realism .................................................................................................................. 11
  3.2. Interdependence liberalism ................................................................................... 12
  3.3. Constructivism ...................................................................................................... 13

4. Development assistance: A prominent characteristic of North-South relations .. 15
  4.1. North-South divide and the problematic concept of development ......................... 15
  4.2. Defining development assistance ........................................................................... 15
  4.3. Brief history of official development assistance ................................................... 17
  4.4. Global trends in official development assistance .................................................. 19
    4.4.1. Quantity of ODA: global facts and figures .................................................. 19
    4.4.2. Quality of ODA: different approaches ........................................................... 20
  4.5. Has traditional development assistance failed? ..................................................... 24
    4.5.1. Answers from aid “radicals” ........................................................................... 24
    4.5.2. Answers from aid “reformists” ...................................................................... 26

5. Alternative development strategies: North-South research capacity building..... 28
  5.1. Importance of higher education and research for a society ......................... 28
  5.2. Global trends in research and development ....................................................... 28
  5.3. Different forms of North-South research capacity building ............................. 30
5.4. Arguments against development support to higher education and research ....... 32

6. Case study – Part I: International Science Programme ................................. 33
   6.1. Programme description .............................................................................. 33
   6.2. ISP’s objectives in relation to those of Sida and Uppsala University .......... 34
   6.3. ISP’s mode of operation ........................................................................... 37

7. Case study – Part II: ISP-Bangladesh collaboration ..................................... 39
   7.1. Background information on Bangladesh ...................................................... 39
   7.2. ISP’s engagement in Bangladesh ............................................................... 39
   7.3. Conducted interviews ................................................................................ 43
      7.3.1. Framework of the interviews ................................................................. 43
      7.3.2. Predictions according to theories .......................................................... 45
      7.3.3. Interview outcomes in relation to six derived themes ......................... 46
      7.3.4. Reported advantages and disadvantages of ISP support .................... 55

8. Research findings .............................................................................................. 60
   8.1. Empirical results: Evaluation of ISP’s success ........................................... 60
   8.2. ISP’s approach in comparison to traditional approaches in development assistance .................................................................................................................................................. 63

9. Theoretical analysis: Relating predictions to outcomes ............................... 65
   9.1. Realism ........................................................................................................ 65
   9.2. Interdependence liberalism ........................................................................ 66
   9.3. Constructivism ............................................................................................ 68
   9.4. Need for a new theory? .............................................................................. 69

10. Conclusion ....................................................................................................... 71

11. References ....................................................................................................... 73

12. Appendix: Interview guides ........................................................................... 79
Figures

Figure 1: Official development assistance, 1960-2011 ......................................................... 19
Figure 2: World shares of scientific publications, 2001 ....................................................... 29

Tables

Table 1: Distribution of expenditure in Bangladesh ................................................................. 42
Table 2: Overview of all conducted interviews ........................................................................ 43
Table 3: Predictions deriving from IR theories ........................................................................ 45
Table 4: Advantages and disadvantages of ISP support ......................................................... 56
Table 5: Interview outcomes with regard to six established themes ....................................... 60
## Abbreviations and Acronyms

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Abbreviation</th>
<th>Description</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>AECD</td>
<td>Atomic Energy Centre Dhaka, Bangladesh</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ANRAP</td>
<td>Asian Network of Research on Antidiabetic Plants</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BUET</td>
<td>Bangladesh University of Engineering and Technology</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DFID</td>
<td>Department for International Development, United Kingdom</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DU</td>
<td>University of Dhaka, Bangladesh</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ERD</td>
<td>Economic Relations Department, Ministry of Finance, Bangladesh</td>
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<tr>
<td>EU</td>
<td>European Union</td>
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<tr>
<td>GBS</td>
<td>General budget support</td>
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<td>GDP</td>
<td>Gross domestic product</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GHD</td>
<td>GHD Pty Ltd., the company contracted to undertake the ISP Evaluation in 2011</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IMF</td>
<td>International Monetary Fund</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IPICS</td>
<td>International Programme in the Chemical Sciences</td>
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<td>IPMS</td>
<td>International Programme in the Mathematical Sciences</td>
</tr>
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<td>IPPS</td>
<td>International Programme in the Physical Sciences</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IR</td>
<td>International Relations</td>
</tr>
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<td>ISP</td>
<td>International Science Programme</td>
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<tr>
<td>MDG</td>
<td>Millennium Development Goal</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NGO</td>
<td>Non-governmental organization</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NITUB</td>
<td>Network of Instrument Technical Personnel and User Scientists of Bangladesh</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ODA</td>
<td>Official development assistance</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>OECD</td>
<td>Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sida</td>
<td>Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SWAp</td>
<td>Sector-wide approach</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TA</td>
<td>Technical assistance</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>UN</td>
<td>United Nations</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>UNDP</td>
<td>United Nations Development Programme</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>UNESCO</td>
<td>United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>US AID</td>
<td>United States Agency for International Development</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>UU</td>
<td>Uppsala University</td>
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<tr>
<td>WHO</td>
<td>World Health Organization</td>
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1. Introduction

1.1. Research “puzzle” and purpose of the thesis

Lesotho is a small landlocked country in Southern Africa with a population around 1.3 million. In 1979, the country received around $64 million in official development assistance and in 1997, 72 international agencies and NGOs were operating in the country. Again and again development projects were launched and again and again they failed to improve the living standards of the people. No matter how many times that happened, someone else was ready to try again a new project.

(Ferguson, 1997: 7-21, cited in Burnell and Randall, 2008: 32)

This narration on the failure of development attempts in Lesotho is illustrative of the dilemma surrounding the concept of development assistance. While almost every state in the world today is an aid donor, receiver or both, and while the amount of official development assistance provided worldwide has never been as high as today, the effectiveness of development assistance and its ability to bring about sustainable progress in poorer countries is strongly contested. Studies show that not only examples of failed North-South development attempts exist in abundance (Boone, 1996; Moyo, 2009; Riddell, 2007), but also that handouts often come with strings attached (Alemany and Dede, 2008; Dijkstra, 2011).

In the presence of so much critique, one is left wondering whether all North-South development support is fruitless or whether a successful example of development
assistance exists that has the potential to challenge skeptical views by demonstrating a high level of efficiency as well as an empowering impact. If such an example exists, which factors contribute to its success and how does it operate? What can development theorists and practitioners learn from it? Which motivations lay behind such cooperation and how can they be explained by theoretical frameworks of IR? These are the questions that will guide this research and motivate new hypotheses. The purpose is to investigate the “ingredients” of empowering development assistance, examine the explanatory power of different IR theories and contribute to the inter-disciplinary debate on the issue.

1.2. Reasons for selecting the ISP as an object of investigation

In the quest for a unique model of North-South development assistance, I came across the International Science Programme (ISP) which is a research capacity building institution located at Uppsala University. The ISP has been providing long-term support to research groups and networks in African, Asian and Latin-American countries since 1961 with the aim to contribute to the “development of active and sustainable environments for higher education and scientific research in developing countries” (ISP Annual Report to Sida, 2010: 1). The description of its objectives, its mode of operation and achievements sparked my interest because the institution seemed to be driven by altruistic motives and by the commitment to local ownership and sustainable impact. Furthermore the ISP appeared to have achieved a healthy balance between being a donor and a partner to Southern collaborators due to its emphasis on personal contact and onsite monitoring.

Another reason why the ISP presents an interesting case at hand is its dual character: it is a Common Unit within the Disciplinary Domain of Science and Technology of Uppsala University and, as such, part of an academic institution, but it derives 84 percent of its funding from the Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency (Sida) and is, hence, influenced by the development strategies of the Swedish government. Exploring such an institution can offer valuable insights in the intersection of official development assistance and academia. Moreover, the only external evaluation of the ISP carried out in the last 10 years was the 2011 evaluation, which was quantitative in nature. As the ISP is currently active in 20 developing countries, there is still need for country-specific qualitative research. With the focus on the ISP-Bangladesh collaboration – which constitutes one of the longest and “deepest” collaborations of the ISP with a developing country – the case study conducted in this thesis can be viewed as a complementation of the 2011 evaluation in the framework of social science research.
1.3. Thesis design
In order to explore the nature of the ISP and its role as an actor in international relations, different IR theories will form the backbone of this study and will provide tools to answer the question whether the ISP and its approach in in Bangladesh can be best perceived as an instance of self-interest (realism), interconnectedness (interdependence liberalism) or social empowerment (constructivism). These three theoretical frameworks offer contrasting views on why actors in the global arena engage in relations with one another and on the meaning of their actions on a global level. It will be interesting to investigate which theory will be most adequate to account for the empirical data that has been collected in Sweden and Bangladesh.

Therefore, the research conducted in this thesis will unfold on two levels: a theoretical and an empirical one. Both levels will be intertwined, with one informing the other. The starting point of the case study will be a deductive approach, i.e. several hypotheses will be derived from realism, interdependence liberalism and constructivism and will – in the form of concrete predictions – guide the interviews carried out with supported scientists, ISP staff and related officials. The indicators of success will be based on concepts underlying the Paris Declaration for Aid Effectiveness as well as concepts from feminist, post-colonial and post-structuralist writings, i.e. local ownership, empowerment and partnership. These indicators will be operationalized through different themes related to research capacity building which can be explored in interviews and ISP documents.

The overall structure of the thesis will be as following. Section 2 will lay out the adopted methodology with regard to epistemological standpoints and analytical techniques. Section 3 will present three theoretical IR perspectives and derived hypotheses that will form the basis of the case study. Section 4 will provide background information on official development assistance (ODA) and elaborate arguments for its failure. In section 5, research capacity building will be introduced as a field of international development cooperation which encompasses useful lessons for North-South support. Section 6 will entail the first part of the case study in which the ISP’s approach, objectives and mode of operation will be analyzed. In section 7, the field study carried out on the ISP-Bangladesh collaboration will be presented and the dis/advantages of the collaboration will be examined. Section 8 will comprise most important empirical results, while section 9 will entail the theoretical analysis of results. In section 10, the thesis will be concluded with a summary of findings and with ideas for further research.
2. Methodology

The term “methodology” refers to the analysis of concepts, theories and basic principles of reasoning on a subject (Moses and Knutsen, 2007: 5). It comprises the techniques used to resolve epistemological and theoretical issues. Before dwelling on those techniques, a short examination of ontological and epistemological stances will serve as an introduction.

2.1. Ontological and epistemological views

Assumptions about the existence of a real and objective world (ontology) and about the possibility of knowing this world (epistemology) range from the most objectivist, i.e. positivist, to the most subjectivist, i.e. humanistic ones (Della Porta and Keating, 2008: 23). The basic common idea among positivists is that there exists a reality outside the perception of the individual and that it is knowable if one manages to isolate as many variables as possible that determine a phenomenon. The aim is to follow the lead of natural sciences and to arrive at universal laws for social behavior (Moses and Knutsen, 2007: 9).

Humanists, on the other hand, believe that no reality exists separately from the human mind and that social science is “not an experimental science in search of laws but an interpretative science in search of meaning” (Geertz, 1973: 5). Between these two extreme positions lies a variety of gray shades and most contemporary social scientists are considered post-positivists or interpretivists. Dwelling into these matters is an important departure for every serious research because it makes the researcher think about the – often implicit – assumptions about the nature of the social world and about how it should be studied, leading the researcher to the appropriate methods and analytical tools.

Having an academic background in sociology, linguistics and gender studies, I regard my own inclination to be towards the post-positivist tradition. I believe that social phenomena are to a great extent influenced by the way human beings construct meaning as they interact with each other. Statistical data cannot represent a universal truth because lived realities cannot be entirely squeezed into numbers and tables. However, only relying on interpretative methodology deprives a social science researcher of recognizing a trend in observable phenomena, so I would argue for a complementary utilization of quantitative and qualitative data, as a way of viewing both sides of the same coin or regarding different parts of the same picture.
2.2. Methods and analytical techniques

The methods applied in different methodologies range between quantitative research consisting of large-N (statistical analysis) and qualitative research consisting of small-N (comparative) analysis (Della Porta and Keating, 2008: 240). For reasons outlined above, an attempt will be undertaken in this thesis to combine quantitative and qualitative methods. The discussion on ODA in section 4 will be predominantly quantitative and will entail global figures, statistics and impact studies which will provide a general picture of how ODA has been organized in the past, what has achieved and how it has failed. Section 5 will be structured in a similar way with a focus on why science and innovation are essential for knowledge societies, who is involved in research capacity building and how. The case study method adopted in section 6 and 7 will be based on mostly qualitative analytical techniques which will comprise content analysis and the analysis of semi-structured interviews. In the following, the case study method and the reasons for choosing that method will be described and the techniques used in the data analysis will be elaborated.

2.2.1. Case study method

A case study is a research strategy based on the in-depth empirical investigation of one or a small number of phenomena in order to explore the configuration of a case and to elucidate features of a larger class of phenomena by developing and evaluating theoretical explanations (Ragin, 2000: 64-87). The reason for choosing the case study method was the initial assumption that the ISP constitutes an exceptional or unique case of North-South collaboration. A unique case is highly suitable for a disciplined configurative case study approach because it has the potential to confirm, challenge or extend existing theories (Della Porta and Keating, 2008: 227). Therefore, the role of the ISP as an actor in international relations and the quality of the ISP-Bangladesh collaboration will constitute the dependent variable, whereas the contrasting explanations for North-South cooperation provided by the three theoretical frameworks will constitute the independent variables. Examining the ISP and its engagement in Bangladesh through this case study method offers the opportunity to climb up the ladder of abstraction and classify what the ISP “is an instance of” (Rosenau 1980: 33). Consequently, the question is whether the ISP is an instance of self-interest, interconnectedness or social empowerment.
The case study method integrates different sources of evidence that are relevant for attaining in-depth knowledge of the case. Such sources can be documentation, archival records, interviews, direct observations, participant observations and physical artifacts (Yin, 2009: 47). For this case study, semi-structured qualitative interviews, documents and archival records will compose core material for analysis. In the following, the different sources will be specified and the analytical tools applied to the examination of these sources will be described.

2.2.2. Content analysis of documents and archival records

One source of evidence used within this case study analysis will be a variety of ISP documents such as supported groups’ Grant Applications and Activity Reports, ISP’s Annual Reports to Sida, Project Catalogues, Working Strategies, Conference Proceedings, guidelines for Grant Applications and Activity Reports etc. Together with Uppsala University and Sida strategy papers, these documents will be examined in a discursive manner. The emphasis will lie on the self-presentation of the ISP, its stated objectives and the relation between the stated objectives and its guidelines. Furthermore, texts will be scanned for relevant content with regard to six themes that will serve as indicators of successful development assistance.

2.2.3. Coding and pattern-matching of semi-structured interviews

One pivotal source of the case study evidence will be 23 semi-structured interviews conducted by me in March and April 2012 with supported scientists and students, ISP staff and public officials. For qualitative research, the amount of interviewed persons is comparatively high. The reason behind selecting that many participants is the aim to obtain a tendency in the answers and to ensure anonymity during the process of presentation of interview answers. In contrast to quantitative research, qualitative research does not place as much emphasis on numbers and variables as on context and meaning. The feature “semi-structured” refers to a method of interviewing whereby a prepared interview guide with established themes serves as a source of orientation, but does not need to be followed in a strict manner in order to allow the conversation to develop naturally and in order to let the interviewee steer the conversation spontaneously in the desired direction (Bryman, 2008: 439).
The conducted interviews will be individually transcribed and subsequently analyzed through a method called “coding”. This coding process is a longsome procedure in which each given sentence of the interviewee is scanned for relevant content with regard to the established themes. Different parts of the interview material are therefore grouped into the respective categories and examined according to tendencies and unexpected patterns. Next to the process of coding, all mentioned merits and shortcomings of the ISP support in all given statements will be distilled and will serve as additional information for the final assessment.

Furthermore, pattern-matching will be another tool applied in the interview analysis. Pattern-matching is a process in which established theoretical predictions are matched with empirical outcomes for compliance or non-compliance (Yin, 2009: 136). The results of the pattern-matching process will be analyzed in section 9. This will not be done in a strict manner comparing every single pattern and explaining it, but in an interpretative manner though highlighting relevant observations. This process facilitates the internal validity of the study and the possibility of drawing conclusions about the initial theoretical considerations.

2.3. **Indicators of success for North-South development assistance**

The indicators for the success of North-South research capacity building adopted in the case study will derive from the **ownership** principle rooted in the Paris Declaration on Aid Effectiveness and Accra Agenda for Action, from feminist, post-colonial and post-structuralist concept of **empowerment** and from the **partnership-model** established in development literature on research cooperation.

Within the Paris Declaration and the Accra Agenda, the principle of ownership plays a central role. It stresses that donors must “respect partner country leadership and help strengthen their capacity to exercise it” (OECD, 2008: 3). Translated to the field of research capacity building, this means that a successful development approach would be categorized by the donors’ ability to transfer the freedom of decision-making regarding money expenditure, research topics, methodology etc. as much as possible to the supported scientists. In this case study, the concept will be termed “local ownership” to indicate the direction of power towards the Southern collaborators and will be explored in ISP documents as well as in interviews with supported scientists.
The idea of ownership is linked to the concept of empowerment that has emerged in feminist writings and in post-colonial and post-structuralist critique of the configuration of the modern world. In this modern world order, development assistance perpetuates existing power relations through a system of knowledge control and through the limitation of cultural expression and self-determination of “Third World” people (Escobar, 1995; Simon, 1997). Empowerment is viewed as a multidimensional social process that helps people gain control over their own lives. “This is a process that fosters power (that is, the capacity to implement) in people, for use in their own lives, their communities, and their society, by being able to act on issues that they define as important.” (Page and Czuba, 1999: 25). This concept will be investigated through the ability of supported scientists to work on research issues that are relevant for the Bangladeshi society.

Next to the concept of empowerment, the partnership-model has been explored in several works (Costello and Zumla, 2000; Bradley, 2007; Masseli et al., 2006; Molenaar et al., 2009), with the emphasis on the potential of achieving a non-hierarchical structure between Northern and Southern partners even in the case of money flow from the North to the South. Mutual trust and respect are emphasized in these egalitarian collaborations, whereas the similar professional background of partners is considered to serve as a common ground for understanding and equality. Although the ISP does not engage in common research projects with supported groups, it does facilitate collaborations between scientists from different countries and seeks personal contact to supported researchers. Thus, it will be interesting to examine the partnership concept in the interviews with scientists on both sides.

The three introduced concepts, i.e. ownership, empowerment and partnership, will constitute the benchmarks for the assessment of the ISP’s success in its collaboration with the Bangladeshi scientists because they are at the heart of the public critique of traditional development approaches. In order to be able to further specify these concepts, they will be operationalized according to six following themes:

1. **Sweden’s motivations**: Perceived interests of the Swedish state to provide financial support to researchers in Bangladesh.

2. **Brain drain**: Correlation between ISP support and of loss / maintenance of students after graduation.

3. **South-South collaboration**: Impact of ISP support on the regional collaboration between scientists in developing countries.
4. **Scientific independence:** The level of freedom/restriction with regard to money expenditure, choice of topic and methodology and the issue of authorship of publications made during sandwich programmes.

5. **Impact on own country:** Impact of supported scientists on development challenges of their own country.

6. **Quality of collaboration:** Attitudes of supported scientists towards ISP representatives and vice versa; the meaning of the quality of the relationship for the success of the collaboration.

These six themes will be explored in the ISP’s documents as well as addressed in different types of questions during the interviews. The categories have been chosen in connection to the type of assistance that the ISP provides and to the ISP’s scope of possibilities. Furthermore, the ISP itself highlights point 2 to 5 as its strength so that it will be interesting to investigate how the self-assessment correlates with empirical findings.

### 2.4. Limitations of the research

A single case study approach entails certain disadvantages that should be mentioned at this point. Firstly, examining a single case carries the risk of restricted possibility for generalization to a wide range of cases. The parsimony and broad applicability is compromised for a high degree of explanatory richness for a well-defined type or subtype of cases (George and Bennett, 2005: 27). The ISP is an institution that deals with research capacity building, operates from a university and is predominantly funded by a government agency. Therefore, it presents a quite special case that is not directly comparable to other donors such as international NGOs, donating governments or intergovernmental development organizations. However, the knowledge gained from the analysis of the ISP can, by all means, be extended to other forms of development assistance as the lessons learned go beyond the field of research capacity and scientist-to-scientists cooperation.

Another limitation of this research is that no in-depth analysis of another similar research capacity building institution can be undertaken in the thesis due to the restriction of time and resources. Of course, a comparative study of two or multiple similar cases would offer valuable insights into the nature of each institution and would highlight differences in a more nuanced manner than can be done through the examination of only one case. This shortcoming, however, is balanced through the attempt to contrast the ISP’s
approach to a variety of traditional approaches within ODA, so that conclusions can be drawn on a more general level. Moreover, viewing one exceptional or unique case from different theoretical perspectives contains potential for theory testing and theory development which is not to that extent given in a comparative study of two or multiple cases.

Another danger of the applied methodology is that the semi-structured interviews conducted in Bangladesh which serve as the main source of case study evidence might entail dishonest answers or exaggerations as the ISP is the largest donor of most presently supported research groups and networks in Bangladesh. This risk is always given in interviews with persons who are financially dependent on the institution that is being scrutinized. In order to avoid that pitfall, the number of chosen participants has been relatively high (23) in order to gain a trend in the answers. Moreover, different types of persons have been interviewed in order to cover currently and previously supported individuals as well as individuals from different academic levels (see section 7.3.1.). Attention was paid to my presentation as an independent researcher and notice was taken of statements made by participants outside the interviews when the recorder was off. On the whole, my impression throughout the 2.5 weeks of field study was that participants were not trying to make the attempt to disguise their true opinion and that disadvantages were discussed in an open way.
3. Theories and derived hypotheses

The relations between different actors in the global arena, their motivations for action and the meanings of those actions within the wider system of social relations have been interpreted differently within different theoretical traditions of the IR discipline. In order to understand what the ISP is an instance of and how it can be perceived theoretically, three perspectives which provide contrasting explanations of North-South development assistance will make up the framework of the case study: realism (structural realism), interdependence liberalism and constructivism.

The reason for choosing these theories is the possibility of exploring the explanatory potential and limitations of a aid-negative theory (one that views development assistance as being mainly driven by egoistic motives), i.e. realism, of an aid-positive theory (one that views development assistance as being mainly driven by the wish and necessity of actors to interlink in a globalizing world), i.e. interdependence liberalism and of an aid-neutral, interpretative meta-theoretical approach which stands in contrast to the former two, i.e. constructivism. Another benefit of adopting these theories is that they operate on different levels of analysis: realism is preoccupied with states and their interests, interdependence liberalism includes domestic and international actors such as multilateral organizations, NGOs etc. and constructivism stresses agency of every individual in the process of norm creation. Furthermore, realism and interdependence liberalism represent positivist traditions which search for an objective understanding of reality. Constructivism, on the other hand, belongs to the post-positivist school of thought and has been chosen to provide a counterweight to the other two theories by highlighting the importance of ideas and values. In the following, each theory will be shortly introduced and hypothesis deriving from the basic postulations of each theory regarding ISP’s role and motivations will be established.

3.1. Realism

The realist school of thought with currents such as classical realism, structural realism and post-neorealism is one of the most influential traditions within the field of international relations. It derives its explanatory power from the emphasis on power relations, states as the dominant actors in the global arena and the constant struggle for power between states motivated by political, economic etc. interests (Morgenthau, 1948; Waltz 1979). For
realists, a concept such as altruism does not possess any significant meaning because in the anarchical global society with no overarching authority to control and restrain the behavior of states, every state is considered to be struggling for survival (self-help system) and cooperation only takes place when it is considered strategically profitable (Buzan and Little, 1993).

According to realists, national and international institutions are mere instruments of states and help states to achieve desired goals (Rittberger and Zangl, 2006: 14). Governmental and inter-governmental institutions that convey the impression of having philanthropic objectives also behave according to the state-interest principle as they are steered by the political elite of the respective country. Thus, all development assistance provided by official donors contains egoistic intentions and the aim to improve the own status vis-à-vis other states (Maizels and Nissanke, 1984: 891; Alesina, 2000: 55).

This school of thought will compose one theoretical baseline for the case study. As the ISP is to 84 percent sponsored by the governmental agency Sida, the theory predicts that the ISP’s approach is characterized by the attempt to benefit from its involvement in Bangladesh. Hence, following hypotheses can be derived from the realist point of view:

- The ISP attracts talented Bangladeshi students to Sweden in order to cover the shortage of students in basic sciences and to benefit from the intellectual capacity of talented Bangladeshi students (brain drain).
- The ISP restricts supported scientists in their choice of topic and methodology and tries to persuade them to focus on research areas relevant for solving Swedish problems instead of local ones.
- The ISP constraints South-South collaboration in order to remain the dominant destination for capable students and scientists.

3.2. Interdependence liberalism

Interdependence liberalism is rooted in the liberal school of thought that is characterized by a more optimistic view of the world and by a belief in change, progress and in human development. Instead of focusing on power relations, it stresses (rational) interests and (free) choices of individuals and acknowledges the importance of non-state actors such as international organizations, civil society groups, NGOs, transnational corporations etc. (Jørgensen, 2010: 58). In an increasingly globalized world, interdependence between
different players on the economic, political, technological and social level plays an important role, so that cooperation becomes an invaluable tool to bring about desired development. Intensifying interdependence make states more sensitive towards each other, therefore, increasing the costs of conflict and making cooperation the more beneficial choice of action (Keohane and Nye, 1977: 9).

Consequently, development assistance is regarded in a more positive light within interdependence liberalism as it stresses the mutual benefits (even if asymmetry exists) of increased collaboration for both donors and receivers. ODA and support provided by non-governmental and non-profit institutions bears indispensable advantages for all involved, otherwise collaboration would not take place. From this point of view, following hypotheses can be derived with regard to the ISP’s engagement in Bangladesh:

• The collaboration between the ISP and research groups in Bangladesh benefits both sides and is perceived that way by the involved persons.
• As acting unilaterally is not an option in an increasingly globalized world, scientists feel the need to interlink with scientists and institutions in other countries in order to be able to advance their skills and knowledge.
• Swedish collaborators wish to promote scientific and socio-economic development in Bangladesh because they realize the challenges of developing countries constitute global challenges; at the same time the scientists in Bangladesh gain financial support, use advanced research facilities in Sweden and can establish new contacts.
• The collaboration is not characterized by dominance or force as these methods are perceived as unfavorable in an interdependent world.

3.3. Constructivism

Constructivism is a broad meta-theoretical approach to social theory rather than a single IR theory. It is a rich current of thought that embodies a range of different post-positivist perspectives. Whereas empiricism makes postulations about phenomena in an objectively measurable world that can be correctly perceived through human senses, constructivism views the reality in which we live as a product of conceptualizations in the creation of which every single person is constantly involved in (Della Porte and Keating, 2008: 81). Constructivism stresses agency rather than structure, so that human beings are not
perceived as mere products of societal categories such as gender, class, race etc. (although most people experience them as real categories), but have the freedom to construct their own realities through the interaction with others (Jørgensen, 2010: 164). Similarly, states are not trapped in a global structure of pre-existing positions, but have different identities in different situations, as is demonstrated in Alexander Wendt’s renowned work *Anarchy is What States Make of It: The Social Construction of Power Politics* (1992).

As constructivism acknowledges the role of identity, ideas and values, the study of development assistance becomes a practice in which shared meaning, established norms and the quality of interaction are emphasized. Every state and organization must be viewed distinctively as they have different identities and derive their motivations for action from different historical contexts and related institutions. From the constructivist point of view, it is difficult to establish precise hypotheses about the nature of the ISP-Bangladesh collaboration prior to a close observation of the circumstances in which involved individuals find themselves and of the norms and values that have been established throughout the years. However, an attempt will be made here to formulate initial assumptions:

- The ISP derives its norms and values from its mother institution, Uppsala University, and from the Swedish state’s approach to welfare and development which can be traced back in Sida’s and other governmental documents.
- The established relationships between programme directors and supported researchers play a significant role for the quality of the collaboration and its development throughout the years.
- The effectiveness of the ISP-Bangladesh development cooperation highly depends on trust and commitment on both sides.
- Scientists in Bangladesh have a specific view of the Swedish state which generates certain set of attitudes towards financial assistance and towards involved collaborators from Sweden.
4. Development assistance: A prominent characteristic of North-South relations

4.1. North-South divide and the problematic concept of development

The idea of North-South relations stems from a conceptually constructed division between the so-called “North” and the so-called “South”. The former term comprises a group of wealthy, industrialized states that are considered “developed” and the majority of which lies in the Northern hemisphere, while the latter term refers to states which are – in comparison to their Northern counterparts – regarded as less industrialized, less wealthy and less “developed” and which are mostly located in the Southern hemisphere (Weiss, 2009: 271-273). This North-South divide as well as the idea of development and underdevelopment are equally problematic: both linguistic differentiations reflect generalized assumptions about whole populations and create conceptual opposites which are loaded with numerous connotations and which shape the way we think about people from different parts of the world.¹

In the post-World War II period, the modernization project reached a new level when mass poverty in Africa, Asia and Latin America was “discovered” and gradually became a global issue which the North-American and European countries dedicated themselves to tackle (Biccum, 2010: 35). The aspiration for more development became a driving force of economic and political actions so that the development discourse was slowly introduced to all parts of the world, including the so-called “Third World”. Development was initially equated with urbanization, industrialization and the raise of per capita gross domestic product (GDP), but was gradually extended to include aspects such as life expectancy, illiteracy rates, maternal and infant mortality, gender equality etc. (Burnell and Randall, 2008: 318). While there is no doubt that differences between populations exist, the various criteria which have been established to assess what is important and desirable for a society have originated mostly from Western values. The World Bank, different United Nations (UN) bodies, Western economists, demographers and educators have had the power to shape the way we speak about development and to create perceived abnormalities such as “malnourished”, “underdeveloped”, “illiterate” and many more (Escobar, 1995: 39-47).

Taking the controversial character of the development discourse into account, the question arises how the issue of development, as well as the differentiation into North and South can be adequately handled in this thesis. The objective of this work is not to investigate the ideological grounds on which development assistance rests or to challenge the development aspirations of individuals living in poorer countries as being imposed by the West. Rather, the attempt will be undertaken to critically analyze alternative ways of development assistance that exist within international relations and contrast them with traditional development strategies while staying sensitive to power relations. In order to avoid inventing new vocabulary, the terms Northern and Southern will still be used, however, primarily with the intention to indicate the geographical location of collaborators rather than their positioning on the socio-economic scale. Moreover, the terms developed and developing country will be kept as they belong to the language use of Southern partners who have been interviewed, but they will be used with awareness to their problematic connotations.

4.2. Defining development assistance

The literature on aid is an enormous body of works with roots in various disciplines like development studies, international relations, economics, postcolonial studies and other related disciplines. In these works, the terms development aid, foreign aid or development assistance are often used interchangeably. The linguistic shift towards terms such as development assistance, cooperation or partnership indicates the emancipation or an attempt of emancipation of the traditional donor-receiver discourse with an emphasis on a more egalitarian relationship between Northern and Southern actors.

The most extensive work on the definition of the umbrella term “foreign aid” has been carried out by the Development Assistance Committee (DAC) which is a special forum of the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD). Created in 1960, the DAC has been responsible for coordinating and promoting aid from donor countries. It describes official development assistance as following:

*ODA consists of flows to developing countries and multilateral institutions provided by official agencies, including state and local governments, or by their executive agencies, each transaction of which meets the following two criteria: 1) it is administered with the promotion of the economic development*
and welfare of developing countries as its main objective, and 2) it is concessional in character and contains a grant element of at least 25 per cent [...]. (Führer, 1994: 25)

This definition focuses on the function of aid from the donors’ point of view, i.e. the intention of “developing” poorer countries. The term concessional refers to more generous conditions of development grants which have lower interest rates and longer grace periods than regular market loans. However, this definition of foreign aid is quite narrow as it only accounts for aid provided by governments and inter-governmental organizations.

Riddell (2007: 8), in a more inclusive manner, makes the distinction between 1) ODA, 2) development aid provided by non-governmental organizations (NGOs) and civil society organizations and 3) humanitarian and emergency aid provided by official donors, UN agencies, NGOs and the Red Cross movement. Although these categories may overlap from time to time due to the support of larger NGOs by official donors and due to occasional convergence of developmentalist and humanitarian objectives, it is a useful distinction as it acknowledges the role of civil society actors as increasingly important players in global governance. According to Scholte (2002: 145), the era in which the national state has been the dominant actor in international relations has come to an end, allowing for a diversification and multiplication of powerful groups who have the means to influence decision-making.

In this thesis, the term development assistance will be used to account for all forms of support from official and unofficial donors that are motivated by or are stated to be motivated by a developmentalist purpose. The term ODA will be used in its original definition established by the OECD. A distinction will be made between traditional development strategies which exhibit more donor-centered, top-down approaches and alternative development strategies which possess more recipient-oriented, bottom-up qualities and which will be termed development cooperation.

4.3. Brief history of official development assistance

As ODA constitutes the most prominent form of development assistance, its history is worth examining. The large-scale machinery of development aid was launched after WW II and must be seen in the context of the tremendous destruction of vast parts of Europe and the rising ideological rivalry between Soviet Russia and the United States. The impetus for the Marshall Plan, which foresaw US $13 billion in economic and technical assistance
for the recovery of European economies, can be understood as the fear of the US of a communist spill-over if European countries were not stabilized and integrated into the Western bloc on time (DeConde and Burns, 2002: 95; Stokke, 2009: 131). Another significant form of the internalisation of development assistance after WW II was the establishment of the Bretton Woods institutions such as the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund (IMF) which were set up to manage economic recovery and monitor economic relations on a multilateral level.

During the 1960s and 1970s, bilateral support widened, as did the assistance from multilateral organizations, especially the World Bank. Resources for the reconstruction of Europe and Japan were not necessary any more by the 1960s, so that attention of multilateral institutions gradually shifted towards developing countries. The “soft loan” window of the World Bank (the International Development Association) was opened, and regional development banks were created in Asia, Africa and Latin America (Kanbur, 2003: 6).

At the peak of neoliberalism in the 1980s, more and more complex conditionalities were tied to aid and the era of structural adjustment had begun. This era was characterized by the idea that the key problems of impoverished countries lay in the inability of their economies to successfully participate in the global market (Cohn, 2007: 347). As the main advocates of adjustments policies, the IMF and the World Bank gave countries loans on the condition that they privatize public services, liberalize trade, adopt austerity measures and devaluate their currencies. Especially Latin America and African countries were hit hard by these measures and showed the deterioration of living-standards of marginalized people, particularly during the transitional phase (Wise and Roett, 2003).

After the end of the Cold War, a gradual shift in thinking about development collaboration with Southern actors took place (Murray and Overton, 2011: 313). The Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) that were established in the Millennium Declaration in 2000 strongly focused on poverty, human rights and contained the idea of helping those in need to help themselves. Moreover, the Paris Declaration in 2005 and the Accra Agenda for Action in 2008 meant an ambitious step towards the treatment of Southern actors as equal partners who are encouraged to use their knowledge and capacities to tackle problems such as extreme poverty, diseases, climate change etc. In these documents five core principles stand out, i.e. ownership, alignment, harmonization, results and mutual accountability.  

-18-
4.4. Global trends in official development assistance

4.4.1. Quantity of ODA: global facts and figures

Of all development assistance provided worldwide, ODA accounts for 80-85 percent with about one third of ODA being channeled through multilateral sources such as international financial institutions (World Bank, IMF etc.), UN agencies (particularly the United Nations Development Programme, UNDP), the European Union (EU) and other agencies (Rogerson et al., 2004: 29-31). With some downwards and upwards trends, global ODA numbers have been steadily growing since the 1960s and have reached an unprecedented level of over US $130 billion in 2011 (OECD, 2012a). Figure 1 shows the development of ODA levels throughout the second half of the 20\textsuperscript{th} century until 2011.

Figure 1: Official development assistance, 1960-2011

![Figure 1: Official development assistance, 1960-2011](source: OECD statistical database, 2012a)

\[2\] The Paris Declaration has become an ideational and methodological point of orientation for national development agencies and international development organizations worldwide. OECD (2008) describes the main principles of the declaration as following. Ownership: countries must have more say in the development policy formulation and stronger leadership in the systems of aid delivery. Alignment: donor countries must align behind the stated objectives and use local resources. Harmonization: donor countries must coordinate and simplify procedures and share information to avoid duplication. Results: developing and donor countries must shift focus towards results-based management and measurable impact. Mutual accountability: donors and partners must be transparent and accountable for development results.
Although these numbers suggest a growing commitment of wealthy states to development assistance (in spite of the “aid fatigue” in the 1990s), the global ratio of ODA to gross national income (GNI) has been steadily declining since the 1960s, with a new upwards trend from 2001 on (OECD, 2012b). The international aid target of 0.7 percent that DAC countries have set themselves has never been met by most bilateral donors with the exception of Sweden, Norway, Luxembourg, Denmark and the Netherlands (OECD, 2010: 2). In absolute terms, the largest donors in the world are the US, France, Germany, the United Kingdom and Japan. The different levels of ODA at different times in history must be seen as a result of a complex combination of factors such as humanitarian disasters and their degree of publicity, the beliefs about the impact of aid on development, the economic and financial situation within individual donor and receiver countries as well as their political and strategic motivation (Riddell, 2007: 23). The question that arises from looking at these global trends is in which form the immense amounts of development assistance have been distributed and how effective they have been.

4.4.2. Quality of ODA: different approaches

Project aid

On a global scale, development assistance can be differentiated into two main types: project aid and programme aid. The majority of ODA consists of specific projects that are undertaken in sectors like health, education, rural development including agriculture, transport and power, housing, water supply and sanitation, and more recently, democracy, human rights and peace-related projects (Riddell 2007: 180). Most of these projects have a clear goal to achieve specific outputs such as building roads, hospitals, school buildings or delivering skilled training and know-how. Project aid involves the direct participation of the donors in the design and the implementation of developmental projects (Jelovac and Vandenberg, 2008: 2). As self-evaluation and monitoring have become key measurements for the quality of development agencies over time, hundreds of thousands of project completion reports have been written and many published by larger donors. The proportion of projects which achieve their established objectives varies between 70 and 85 percent (Flint et al., 2002; UNDP, 2003; World Bank, 2005a).³

³ The question remains whether apart from achieving their immediate targets, these projects are relevant to the needs of recipients and whether they are not overlapping with or undermining parallel development attempts.
Programme aid: SWAps and budget support

On the other side of the spectrum is programme aid which comprises all assistance that is not linked to specific activities (OECD, 2005: 34). Due to growing critique of unsustainable ad-hoc projects carried out by donors, programme aid has recently become popular. It comes in two main forms: sector-wide approaches (SWAps) and budget support. A SWAp can be understood as the engagement of a donor to support “a single sector policy and expenditure programme, under government leadership, adopting common approaches across the sector, and progressing towards relying on government procedures to disburse and account for all funds” (Foster, 2000: 9). In budget support, donors provide financial assistance to the recipient government budget and have the ability to impose conditionalities on how to allocate the available resources (Jelovac et al., 2008: 2). General budget support (GBS) is not earmarked financial assistance which is more associated with a partnership model. Both SWAps and budget support are regarded as ways to lower transaction and management costs of aid and to align with donor policies and preferences. However, the actual impact of SWAps and GBS is difficult to measure as they usually represent a small amount of the overall budget and are not aimed at specific outcomes. A joint evaluation commissioned by 24 aid agencies and partner countries on GBS provided between 1994 and 2004 in 7 countries found that the impact of GBS on poverty reduction was very limited, but that it did contribute to the improvement of harmonization, alignment and policy development (Dom, 2007). Foster and Mackintosh-Walker (2001) who conducted a study on the effectiveness of SWAps came to a similar conclusion: the impact on poverty reduction was restricted, but the overall sectoral funding could be stimulated.

Technical assistance

The other two forms of aid are technical assistance (TA) and aid for capacity building which can be organized as project or as programme aid. TA has been a prominent form of aid since World War II and continues to play a major role today, especially in key UN agencies. United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO, 2012) defines TA as “non-financial assistance provided by local or international specialists. It can take the form of sharing information and expertise, instruction, skills training, transmission of working knowledge, and consulting services and may also involve the transfer of technical data.” Today, the assumption exists that TA has been a failure in the past due to the manner in which it has been provided (Riddell, 2007: 203). Although the immediate goals such as training teachers and technicians or providing consultants for
ministries, for instance, have been predominantly achieved, the long-term impact through the creation of sustainable and efficient institutions has been limited. The UNDP study *Rethinking Technical Cooperation* carried out in 1993 shows that traditional approaches to TA have been ineffective in Africa because the donor- and supply-driven nature of TA has caused inefficient allocation of resources, weak local ownership and limited commitment (UNDP, 2012). As a result of this critique and the aid fatigue of the 1990s, there has been a paradigm shift towards capacity development and strengthening of institutions.

**Capacity building**

Capacity building has become a popular term in aid literature and is elaborated in almost every publication on aid effectiveness. It is described as the only promising approach to bring about long-term sustainable development in poorer countries. The Paris Declaration and the Accra Agenda for Action (OECD, 2008: 16) emphasize the importance of capacity development (as it is increasingly called) as having the potential to achieve more local ownership, more local expertise and stronger institutions. The UNDP (2009: 5) regards capacity building as a process in which the individuals, institutions and society as a whole establish and maintain the ability to achieve own development objectives over time. This sounds highly abstract and can be better understood in context with the question “capacity for what?” (OECD, 2006: 8). Each country has its own needs in different societal sectors (education, legal system, public administration etc.) and must create tools how to best strengthen these sectors in order to benefit the poorer population. This should ideally not happen through the transfer of know-how from the North to the South – as has been done in the past – but through unleashing own local knowledge and strengthening South-South collaboration.

Today, many leading official donors include capacity building in their development programmes. However, because capacity building is a long-term process, its impact is difficult to measure. As with other forms of aid, many disappointing examples of capacity building attempts exist (OECD, 2006: 3; World Bank, 2005b: 13-18) with the exception of some successes as in the case of USAID’s support to the judicial system in Costa Rica or Sida’s support over 30 years to the National Bureau of Statistics in Tanzania (Jones et al., 2006). Reasons for the failure to develop capacity are similar to those found in other forms of support: missing commitment on the side of the recipients to take the lead and foster the achievements as well as the lack of a close cooperation between donors and recipient-country institutions with clearly identified goals.
Top-down and bottom-up approaches

One important feature of every development project or programme is the direction of its organization: whether it is top-down or bottom-up. The former used to be associated with the World Bank where economic policy reforms have been implemented as measures to stimulate growth and achieve a trickle-down effect (Lancaster 2006: 49). It now increasingly refers to aid which is regulated downwards by development agencies and higher-level officials of recipient countries in a prescriptive manner. The bottom-up approach is associated with NGOs as it emphasizes small-scale community development activities in which the local community is engaged in planning of aid activities as a means of encouragement to take responsibility for the success and sustainability of projects (Lancaster 2006: 49). Most ODA is carried out in a top-down manner as it depends on the planning of national and international development agencies which usually collaborate with recipient ministries and top officials rather than local communities and civil society.

Tied aid

Development assistance can be tied or untied. Tied aid refers to bilateral grants or loans which restrict procurement to companies in the donor country or in a small group of countries (Clay et al., 2009: 5). This type of assistance often prevents recipient countries from receiving good value for money in goods and services as they are not free to choose the best alternative. Due to a growing discourse on the disadvantages of tied aid for recipient countries, DAC members agreed in 2001 to untie most aid to least developed countries (Clay et al., 2009: 6). According to OECD estimates, tied bilateral aid could be reduced from 54 to 18 percent between 1999 and 2008 (OECD, 2012c).

Other forms of tying aid are conditionalities applied by the World Bank and the IMF during the structural adjustment era of the 1980s and 1990s where loans were provided on the condition that public education and health programmes of the recipient country be cut, state-owned resources be privatized and industries be opened to the global market (North and Cameron, 2003: 28). Studies show that these policies led to an increase in poverty, unemployment and inequality in especially the least developed countries, whereby women as traditional community and family supporters were hit hardest (Cohn, 2007: 348-350; Alemany and Dede, 2008: 35). Realizing the damages, both the IMF and the World Bank have restructured their strategies, although the new Poverty Reduction Strategy Papers still entail conditionalities for the attainment of loans (Dijkstra, 2005: 462).
4.5. Has traditional development assistance failed?

Differing ways exist to judge the overall usefulness of development assistance. On the one hand, one can ask the practical question whether the majority of development projects has achieved the expected targets, i.e. managed to improve roads, create health-care facilities, provide technical assistance etc. This question can be answered through a growing number of project evaluation studies in which results are matched against expectations. On the other hand, a more critical question is whether development assistance has the potential to tackle the structural causes of “underdevelopment”. The difficulty in answering that question lies in the variety of stances on the actual roots of poverty and inequality.

4.5.1. Answers from aid “radicals”

In her paper *Transcending the Great Foreign Aid Debate: Managerialism, Radicalism and the Search for Aid Effectiveness*, Gulrajani (2011) makes an intriguing distinction into two prominent camps within the public aid debate: the aid “radicals” who believe that development assistance makes more harm than good and will never work and the aid “reformists” who believe that aid effectiveness is a matter of the right approach. Ironically, the camp of aid skeptics consists of voices from the right (neoliberals) as well as the left (neo-Marxists) with both groups opposing development assistance for very different reasons.

**Aid-skeptics on the right**

Neoliberal thought was established in the inter-war period and derives its ideas from the political philosophy of classical liberalism. It stresses the priority of the price mechanism, the free enterprise, the system of competition and the impartial state (Mirowski and Plehwe, 2009: 14). Proponents of neoliberalism regard the unregulated market with its prices that indicate demand and supply as a crucial prerequisite for the eventual prosperity of a society. The success of East Asian countries which have become highly industrialized between 1960 and 1990 (termed “East Asian Miracle” by the World Bank) has been mainly attributed to the liberalization of markets and export-led trade regimes by neoliberals (Cohn, 2007: 352). Hence, state intervention and development assistance are viewed highly critically within this stream of thought.

Radical neoliberal economists such as Bill Easterly in *The White Man’s Burden* (2006) or Dambisa Moyo in *Dead Aid* (2009) argue that development assistance fosters
dependency, nourishes corruption and perpetuates poor governance and poverty. According to these economists, development assistance does not work mainly due to the planning mentalities that surround the donor industry. While the commend-and-control approach is considered ineffective because it is imposed in a top-down manner, it keeps the aid industry and its elites in business (Easterly, 2006: 11). A more promising solution, according to the authors, is the endorsement of market-oriented strategies and the encouragement of entrepreneurship in developing countries.

As evidence for the ineffectiveness of ODA, neoliberals point towards the African continent which has received approximately US $1 trillion of aid from wealthy countries since the 1940s (Moyo, 2009: 35), but which is still disproportionately troubled by malnutrition, disease, maternal mortality and poverty. Furthermore, neoliberals quote studies which show that investment is curtailed in countries which receive great amounts of ODA. For instance, Reichel (1995: 279) finds that there is a negative correlation between ODA and savings, whereas Boone (1996: 293) sees “no significant impact of aid on improvements of infant mortality, primarily schooling ratios nor life expectancy”.

**Aid-skeptics on the left**

The second radical stream of public critique – although one that is less visible in the mainstream media – comes from proponents of neo-Marxist anthropological, sociological and postcolonial traditions. These scholars stress that the discourse about “underdevelopment” established by the aid industry represents poor countries and their citizens as helpless subjects who are dependent on Western assistance (Escobar, 1995: 49-54; Loomba, 2005: 91; Patel and McMichael, 2004: 242). Through the dominant top-down approach, an effective network of power is established over people in the South perpetuating the old colonial discourse of superiority of Northern developed states.

Hence, unlike neoliberals who focus on the statistically calculated ineffectiveness of development assistance, theorists associated with the neo-Marxist and postcolonial stream are preoccupied with the unequal distribution of power that is imbedded in the development project as a major obstacle to the progression of poorer countries. Their major concern is that the neo-colonial aid machinery distracts attention from the structural, capitalist sources of poverty and that North-South development projects which provide Southern actors with expertise, strategies and the “right methods” reduces the autonomy and agency of local communities and citizens (Gulrajani, 2011: 202).
According to neo-Marxists, the solution to this dilemma is the dismantling of aid planning architectures and aid experts and the strengthening of indigenous social movements, communal civil society groups and North-South partnerships for progressive research (Simon, 2006: 17-19). Because people in developing countries know best what they need, the West should abandon its aggressive Big Plan of eradicating world poverty, which will never work, step back and give local communities the opportunity to find their own solutions to local problems. As Ferguson and Lohmann (1994: 181) suggest: “For Westerners, one of the most important forms of engagement is simply the political participation in one’s own society that is appropriate to any citizen.”

4.5.2. Answers from aid “reformists”

Whereas aid radicals on the right and the left see more harm than good emanating from development assistance, aid reformists are convinced that aid is an inevitable tool to bring about development and that it has to be modified and made more effective in order to work properly. The arguments of reformers exhibit a mainly managerial logic stressing that public bureaucracies are performing poorly and must be formally restructured along the lines of the private sector in order to become more efficient and results-orientated. This logic comes from a stream called “managerialism” that has been part of the US administrative ideology almost throughout the whole 20th century (Gulrajani, 2011: 204) and is increasingly adopted by NGOs and UN bodies (see the principles of the Paris Declaration on Aid Effectiveness). Therefore, a growing number of development agencies now strives for improved performance measurement systems, monitoring and evaluation systems and results-based management.

Other reformists hold that aid must be reformed, but only in connection with a deeper analysis of different political dimensions, especially the political structures of weaker states (Riddell, 2007: 7). The suggestion is that aid strategies must be designed after a thorough investigation of the internal political configuration of recipient countries and after the examination of the forms of development assistance which are likely to work in the respective environments. Kosack (2003: 14) goes further to propose that aid is only effective when combined with efforts to democratize recipient countries because it tends to

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4 The view of aid radicals on the right and the left that the best plan is to have no plan with regard to the problems of the “Third World” is contested as many would argue that the situation that poorer countries find themselves in is the heritage of the colonial past and that developed countries have the responsibility to make up for past exploitation and oppression by providing assistance.
be misused in autocracies. The idea is that in a well-functioning democratic system with checks and balances and low levels of corruption and nepotism, development assistance has more chances to be used for its original purpose. Thus, donors should either apply country selectivity as a means to achieve aid effectiveness or combine the provision of development assistance to autocratic states with measures of democratization.

While these different views stress that aid can be made effective once development agencies have aligned with business principles and once the proper political environment has been created in the receiving states, they are still based on the assumption that aid agencies are necessary to manage the complex bulk of development work between Northern and Southern countries. Taking into account the critique of neoliberals and neo-Marxists, however, one is left wondering whether the set-up of development agencies which usually exhibit a top-down manner of providing assistance and which are created for the purpose of “developing” poorer populations are contributing more to the problem rather than to the solution. From the neoliberal point of view, development agencies hinder incentives and problem solutions from local individuals and entrepreneurs by creating unrealistic plans that are imposed on marginalized populations. From the neo-Marxist and post-colonial perspective, the idea of the Westerner on the white horse who comes to the rescue of the “underdeveloped” poor is a perverted one and is strongly manifested in the Northern development agency which perpetuates the power inequality in international relations.

What is the solution to this dilemma? One possibility to reconcile the aid radicals and aid reformists is to look at examples from research capacity building, a rather neglected area in development literature, and to explore the alternative approaches to development that can be found in this type of international cooperation. Analyzing research capacity building might entail interesting insights for several reasons. Firstly, it comprises collaborations that take place between Northern and Southern universities and does not typically involve development agencies for strategic planning and implementation. Secondly, research capacity building is oriented towards long-term development and the thriving of sciences which are viewed as pillars of every healthy society. Thirdly, research capacity building involves individuals with similar backgrounds who can face each other as partners on equal terms and not first and foremost as individuals who distribute or receive hand-outs. In the following chapter, the different forms of research capacity building will be introduced and its benefits and shortcomings will be elaborated.
5. Alternative development strategies: North-South research capacity building

5.1. The importance of higher education and research for a society

As the above example illustrates, knowledge has come to play an invaluable role in modern societies and is widely believed to be an essential prerequisite for the social and economic development of a nation. Especially since the Industrial Revolution in Western Europe during the 18\textsuperscript{th} and 19\textsuperscript{th} century, scientific knowledge has brought about tremendous changes in agriculture, manufacturing, healthcare, transportation and later in information and communication technology, raising the living standards of millions of people (Garett and Granqvist, 1998: 11-14). It is suggested that modern knowledge societies have the capabilities to identify, produce, transform, disseminate and use information to build and apply knowledge for human development (UNESCO, 2005b: 27).

Advances in the resolution of many health issues are owed to the application of scientific knowledge as in the case of the cowpox vaccine to prevent smallpox, for instance, or in the case of GPS handheld devices that can be used to find water in drought stricken areas. Other examples include progresses in areas such as volcanology and climatology which have improved the ability of countries vulnerable to climate change to predict and prepare for natural disasters like floods and tsunamis (Gaardhøje et al., 2006: 35). The list is long, but the crucial point is that knowledge has the potential to solve many problems which a society faces and to trigger human and economic development.

5.2. Global trends in research and development

Considering the importance of science, research and innovation for a society, it is worrying that the least developed countries in the world account only for less than 5 percent of gross
expenditures for research and development (UNESCO, 2005a: 3). In its 2009 report “Accelerating Catch-Up”, the World Bank found that the neglect of investment in tertiary education and research has impeded development in many parts of Sub-Saharan Africa. The report stresses that deficiency in resources, shortage of teaching staff, brain drain, extreme weakness of graduate programmes and low incentives for research are obstacles to economic growth and competitiveness of the continent (World Bank, 2009: 50-57).

Figure 2

Some argue that rather than the economic gap, it is the inequalities in scientific and technological capabilities that characterize the global divide between the North and the South today (Melin, 2001: 7). The US, Europe and Japan continue to dominate the global knowledge production, although leading Asian economies like the Republic of Korea, Singapore, Taiwan, India and China have strongly expanded their contribution to research and development. Figure 2 illustrates the 2001 global distribution of scientific publications in international peer-reviewed journals – one of the main indicators of research output.

Source: UNESCO, 2005a: 11

The figure shows very low research outputs in Africa, Latin America and Oceania⁵, while Asia has a rather improved position due to the successes in the newly industrialized

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⁵ Oceania’s small world shares in GERD and scientific publications are not worrying due to the region’s small population size of approximately 30 million people (comparable to those of single OECD countries).
economies. The rates of research are very similar to those of investment in research and development, indicating that increased funding in that field is an important factor in generating scientific results. Other indicators, such as the share of researchers in different world regions, show a similar distribution of power (UNESCO, 2005a: 5).

Acknowledging the global gap in knowledge production, many Northern governments, international organizations and development banks have launched research cooperation programmes to support poorer countries in their attempts to enhance their research capabilities. Obtaining a global overview of research capacity building programmes is not an easy endeavor because the number of organizations is vast, the literature providing global figures is scarce and the information given on the organizations’ websites is very general. A study carried out by the Overseas Development Institute (ODI, Young and Kannemeyer, 2001: 3-11) has identified 49 main organizations which explicitly describe the objective of “strengthening Southern research capacity” in their mission statements. These include six UN agencies, four Foundations, three CGIAR agencies (Consultative Group on International Agricultural Research), five coordinating agencies, four bilateral programmes, seven research institutes, 11 international and nine regional NGOs.6

Among those mentioned, certain bilateral donors have been prominent in the area of research support and cooperation, i.e. Norway, Sweden, Denmark, Canada, France, Germany and the Netherlands (Simonsen et al., 1999: 63). Various higher education and research institutions as well as governmental authorities in especially the Scandinavian countries have been acknowledged to have solid expertise in strengthening research capacity in developing countries through their long-lasting commitment in that area.

5.3. Different forms of North-South research capacity building

Research capacity building programmes differ greatly from one another in their strategies and approaches and also from traditional forms of development assistance as they often aim for long-term assistance rather than short project support. The majority of organizations focuses on networking, research partnerships and training (56 – 70 percent), somewhat less than a half is engaged in institution-building and about 37 percent provide direct funding to research and capacity-building (Young and Kannemeyer, 2001: 5).

6 These do not subsume bilateral or multilateral donor agencies, but include operational agencies that have been set up to help the donor agencies manage their programmes. In addition to donors listed in the 2001 ODI study, there are innumerable other development and research organizations working collaboratively with southern research partners who are de-facto involved in capacity-building.
UN agencies such as the UNESCO, the World Health Organization (WHO) and the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) are coordinating authorities and play an important role in disseminating information on their specific issues, creating linkages with other global and regional actors in capacity building and influencing policies. The World Bank, like other development banks, provides low-interest loans (to middle-income countries) and concessional grants (to least developed countries) such as the credit of US$ 81 million for the Higher Education Quality Enhancement Project for Bangladesh (HEQEP) in 2009 (World Bank, 2012). That particular project is managed in a top-down manner through the Bangladesh Ministry of Education that distributes the grant to public and private universities on a competitive basis.

Similarly, bilateral research capacity building programmes organized by national development agencies are usually managed top-down. For instance, Sida, NORAD (the Norwegian Agency for Development Co-operation) and Danida (Denmark’s Development Cooperation Unit) are all organized under their national Ministries of Foreign Affairs. In the Swedish case, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs makes a cooperation agreement with a developing country and decides on a strategy. Consequently, Sida is given the task to establish collaboration with the responsible ministry in the partner country (usually the Ministry of Education or the Ministry of Science) which, in turn, gets in contact with the management level of the targeted educational institution. At the university level, the faculties are invited to apply for grants after following a long list of guidelines established by Sida. In this top-down approach, established goals may sometimes lead to unrealistic expectations and impose an unnecessary burden on the supported scientists because the goals have not derived from the actual incentives of the concerned research groups.

Capacity building programmes which originate from educational institutions work differently, as in the case of the ISP. It is quite an exceptional example of North-South collaboration because the directors (who are themselves scientists), by chance or through a scouting process, establish contacts to weak, but promising research groups in developing countries and invite them to apply for a grant. Collaborations that evolve in this way are described to be characterized by a close personal relationship between the involved scientists, by mutual trust and frequent face-to-face interaction. This bottom-up partnership approach is one of the main reasons why the ISP has been chosen for this case study.

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7 This information has been provided independently by two interviewees who have closely worked with Sida over a long period of time.
5.4. Arguments against development support to higher education and research

Before engaging with the ISP, it is important to look at arguments that are brought forward by opponents of support to higher education. First of all, many believe that assistance should be directed towards the most marginalized people who have become the core target group for ODA since the MDGs and who often lack the basic means for survival such as food, clean water, shelter and health-care. Secondly, investing into the university level is sometimes viewed as advantaging the already advantaged, especially in societies that offer little social mobility and that suffer from high levels of corruption, nepotism and inequality. These concerns are understandable, but must be opposed by arguments brought forward previously. The question of how poverty is to be fought is increasingly answered with reference to long-term, sustainable development that comes with education and scientific advancement. Investment in higher education does not only produce innovative scientists, but also more competent future teachers and skilled workers in healthcare institutions, businesses, civil services, NGOs etc. Thus, investment in higher education should be at least as important as investment in primary and secondary education.

Furthermore, proponents of the realist school of thought claim that research capacity building is a means for donor countries to attract talented students and scientists to their universities which are currently experiencing reduced enrolment ratios, especially in the field of engineering (Gaardhøje et al., 2006: 57). Brain drain is indeed the result of many Northern research programmes that have focused on individual student support instead of on the enhancement of the local research environments (Simonson, 1999: 27). To which extent brain drain is a desired target of Northern donors is debatable as no donor would ever openly admit that. It will be an explicit target of the ISP case study to test the hypothesis of self-interest and brain drain by regarding empirical facts and assessments on the side of the Southern collaborators.

Another danger of North-South research cooperation is that power inequalities between collaborators may restrict the ability of Southern scientists to determine the framework and direction of their research because research communities in the donor countries are often more advanced, more influential and often gain more scientific merit (Masseli et al., 2006: 35). This argument will also strongly inform the investigation of the ISP’s approach in Bangladesh and will be integrated in the interview guides created for the interviews with supported scientists and students as well as ISP staff.

6.1. Programme description

Starting out as a fellowship programme for physicists in 1961 at Uppsala University, the ISP gradually developed into a full-fledged international programme providing long-term support to developing countries with the aim to build research capacity at universities and research institutes and to promote regional cooperation (ISP Strategy Plan, 2003-2007: 9). The ISP is divided into three subprogrammes: the International Programme in the Physical Sciences (IPPS, since 1961), the International Programme in the Chemical Sciences (IPICS, since 1970) and the International Programme in the Mathematical Sciences (IPMS, since 2002). The reason for the focus on basic (enabling) sciences is the conviction that advancement of these sciences in poorer countries will eventually contribute to economic growth and poverty alleviation (Sundin et al., 2012: 1).

Being formally part of Uppsala University, the ISP’s governance arrangements are determined by the Board and the Vice-Chancellor of Uppsala University. An Executive Committee monitors the ISP’s financial performance, participates in the programme development and establishes delegations and responsibilities within the ISP. Each subprogramme has a reference group consisting partly of scientists from the South and partly of scientists from the North who are experts in different fields of the respective discipline. Reference group members evaluate Grant Applications, provide strategic advice to the ISP programme directors and assist in identifying scientific experts and networks.

The main contributor to the ISP is Sida. In 2011, funding emanated to 84 percent from Sida (25 million SEK), 7 percent from Uppsala University, 3 percent from Stockholm University and to 6 percent from other sources (GHD, 2011: 16). The ISP runs a core programme over which it has strategic control and a coordination programme in which it assists Sida in its bilateral and regional research support activities and in which it must align with Sida’s guidelines and priorities. Following the Swedish policy on focused bilateral development cooperation (Swedish Government, 2007), the ISP had to phase out support to many countries and is currently involved in 20 developing countries, mostly on the African continent (ISP Application to Sida, 2012: 3).

The follow-up process of achievements has been enabled through annual Activity Reports which supported groups and networks must submit by the end of the year and which serve as the basis for ISP’s Annual Reports to Sida. The guidelines for Activity
Reports have been changing over time with a growing focus on more detailed output and impact description. In addition, regular onsite visits of ISP staff, reference group members and cooperating scientists as well as frequent e-mail communication allows for close monitoring and involvement.

The selection method of supported groups that has been applied in the past can be described as a “scouting” approach, whereby the programme directors would meet scientists during their travels to collaborating countries or during conferences and invite them to apply for a grant when they believed that these persons had the professional and personal qualities of becoming competent and committed group leaders. This approach has been recently undergoing changes as Sida has scrutinized it for being not transparent enough and not giving all potential groups the opportunity to compete for a grant in an open-application procedure.

On Sida’s request, an evaluation of the ISP has been carried out in 2011 which has identified a number of strength and weaknesses. In terms of effectiveness and impact, the ISP’s approach has been found to respond well to its objectives and has been described as positive with regard to its research capacity building activities. Weaknesses have been identified in terms of lack of transparency (selection process of supported research groups and reference group members is not open enough), lack of results-orientation (log-frame for the effective assessment of results is missing) and lack of a structured monitoring and follow-up system (no systematic way to keep track of alumni, to collect case studies etc.). These recommendations have been partly followed in the ISP’s latest Grant Application to Sida and are being integrated in its modus operandi, which shows a strong alignment with Sida’s guidelines.

6.2. ISP’ objectives in relation to those of Sida and Uppsala University

The goals and strategies of the ISP are laid out in various sources such as the ISP’s Strategy Plan 2003-2007 and Working Strategy 2009-2010, ISP’s Annual Reports, and in the most recent Grant Application to Sida. According to the Ordinance from the National Swedish Board of Universities and Colleges (UHÄ-FS, 1988: 18), the ISP has the task to:

[…] initiate and support long-term collaboration in research of foremost Swedish institutions with institutions in the developing countries. The purpose herewith shall be to increase the research capacity of universities and research institutes in the Third World. ISP shall also encourage regional collaboration amongst countries of
In order to align with the Swedish government policy, the Sida strategy, and the 2011 evaluation, the overall objective has been expanded to include a more clear results focus. The amended objective of the ISP is to bring about “increased production and use of scientific research results and postgraduate training relevant for the fight against poverty by researchers in basic sciences in developing countries and regions” (ISP Application to Sida, 2012: 10).

The ISP is an intermediate actor between Uppsala University and Sida / Swedish government and the influence of both can be clearly identified when closely examining the formulation of its objectives and comparing them to the objectives of Uppsala University and Sida. The report *Research for Development* produced by the Department for Development Policy and the Information Service of the Ministry for Foreign Affairs in 2010 lays out the objectives of the Swedish government’s development cooperation policy and strategies for Sida’s support for research cooperation as following:

- The overall objective of Sweden’s international development cooperation is to contribute to fair and sustainable development in the world and to help create conditions that will enable poor people to improve their lives.
- Swedish support for research cooperation is to abide by the principles concerning aid efficiency laid down in the Paris Declaration and in the Action Plan adopted in Accra in 2008.
- The objective of research support is to strengthen and develop research of relevance to the fight against poverty in developing countries.

Both the ISP’s and the Swedish government’s objectives indicate altruistic motives for research support in developing countries as they stress the benefits for the recipient countries and converge in the objective to strengthen research activities that are aimed at poverty reduction in these countries. One can assume that the ISP embodies the (presented) norms of development assistance of the Swedish state since Sida has been the biggest donor and an influential body since the creation of the ISP.

In a similar vein, the Uppsala University internalization strategy also constitutes a focus point for the ISP as the ISP has been “socialized” through this university by being a part of
it for decades. In *Goals and Strategies for Uppsala University* from 2007 and *Uppsala University Internationalization Program* from 2008, a detailed account of motivations, aims and strategies with regard to collaboration with other countries is presented:

- Uppsala University is committed to strengthening its position as a world-leading university (UU, 2008: 2).
- International cooperation represents a means and strategy for improving the quality of research and study programmes (UU, 2008: 2).
- Uppsala University shall play an active role in global society, promoting development and innovation, equality and diversity, as well as openness between different cultures (UU, 2007: 4).

The first two objectives suggest a less altruistic motivation for internationalization and outreach. As a high-ranking university, Uppsala University wishes to preserve its status vis-à-vis other universities and identifies international collaboration as a means to achieve that goal. Similarly, the objective of the ISP to connect the “foremost Swedish institutions” with institutions in the developing countries – in a less blunt way – indicates that it supports Uppsala University’s concern to bring forward the most renounced Swedish universities and their quality of research and education.

Viewed from a realist perspective, the motivation of internalization out of selfish reasons makes perfect sense due to the realist assumption that no actor ever engages in actions that will not improve its own position vis-à-vis other actors. In this view, the Uppsala University benefits from the exchange of scientists and students that the ISP provides and can enhance its quality of education and reputation. Stated philanthropic objectives of the ISP and the Swedish government are mere pretensions, according to realists, and cannot be possibly confirmed in the actual behavior of both actors.

From a point of view of interdependence liberalism, the objectives of Uppsala University are also more plausible than the purely philanthropic approach set out in the ISP’s and Swedish government’s development cooperation objectives since it is the felt need and benefits of interlinking rather than pure altruism that is stressed by interdependence liberals. Hence, both theories are unable to account for the (presented) objectives of the ISP and the Swedish government.

Is constructivism more helpful in this regard? Constructivists do not make general assumptions about actors’ motivations, but look at the existing values and norms in a
specific context. It would be perfectly plausible to claim that selfish motives are the driving forces of Sweden’s development cooperation if norms stressing self-interest and competition were prevalent in particular political and institutional sectors. In contrast, it could also be claimed that Sweden, being an example of the “Nordic Model” (also called the “Swedish Model”) with a large welfare state and high rates of investment in human capital (Andersen et al., 2007: 13) has stronger development-oriented and philanthropic values than other states. Either way, the ISP as an institution that is informed by strategies and guidelines of Sida and the Swedish government, will embody these values in its mode of operation which will be examined in the following section.

6.3. ISP’s mode of operation

The ISP’s mode of operation as described in the Strategy Plan 2003-2007 is characterized by several core aspects. Firstly, support is directed at research groups and scientific networks rather than individuals in order to create capacity in the Southern institutions and prevent brain drain by establishing a research environment that students can return to. By providing resources to a team of scientists, the ISP can extend its support to students who are taught at the concerned institutions and has the potential to create more human resources and greater institutional capacity than in the case of individual support (which is often blamed for causing brain drain).

Secondly, ISP support is provided on a long-term basis – 17 years on average – due to the conviction that research capacity building is a dynamic process that takes time and requires flexibility. This approach is a crucial factor for a sustainable research environment as it may take 10-15 years to establish a well-functioning research group in a developing country because research staff has first to be trained on a Master’s and Ph.D. level and because procurement of new equipment and the training of scientists to use that equipment may take a rather long time. Thirdly, the ISP puts emphasis on close onsite monitoring and evaluation of supported projects. This is enabled through regular visits of ISP staff and reference group members, frequent e-mail contact and the reporting system that captures all progress made by the groups each year.

Furthermore, the so-called “sandwich” approach allows postgraduate students from supported countries to attain fellowships for 3-10 months and perform part of their Ph.D. research at a foreign laboratory (North or South) that possesses needed equipment and know-how. This gives students the opportunity to gain experience abroad without
becoming estranged from the domestic environment as they are away for only several months instead of years as in the case of a degree attained fully abroad. When students come to Sweden, the ISP’s administrative staff takes care of social concerns such as airport pick-up, accommodation, opening of a bank account, problems with supervision etc. Meetings for students from the ISP core programmes are organized regularly and trips are planned once or twice a year to different destinations in the region in order to bring students together and make them feel welcome.

Another mode of operation is that in its collaboration with scientists from developing countries, the ISP puts effort into gaining in-depth knowledge about the concerned countries and regions and working according to local conditions in order to enhance the effectiveness of its support. Regular visits and frequent communication deepen the knowledge of local structures. Moreover, the ISP tries to provide support that is “tailor-made” for every individual project according to project proposals. Experienced reference group members assess which projects proposals are feasible and discuss challenges and opportunities with applicants. Through its flexibility, the ISP can adapt to the specific needs of the groups and enhance its effectiveness.

Since the 1980s, the promotion of South-South collaboration has gained more importance and is seen as a way of benefiting a whole region through support of scientific networks, student exchange and regional conference attendance. In 2009, the ISP organized a conference in Addis Abeba on “Regional and Interregional Cooperation to Strengthen Basic Sciences in Developing Countries” to raise awareness on the issue. This shift towards the South goes hand in hand with the ISP’s attempt to transfer administrative responsibilities regarding project support as much as possible to the respective groups with the aim to strengthen local ownership.

These different strategies applied by the ISP are identified as strengths by ISP staff and are considered to be unique in comparison to other donors. The purpose of the investigation of the ISP-Bangladesh collaboration is to challenge these assumptions by testing how fruitful these strategies are in reality and which attitudes towards these approaches prevail among collaborators in Bangladesh. The parameters for assessing the success of North-South development support that have been established in section 2 – local ownership, empowerment and partnership – will be operationalized through six themes, i.e. 1) Sweden’s perceived motivations, 2) brain drain, 3) South-South collaboration, 4) scientific freedom, 5) impact on Bangladesh and 6) quality of collaboration.
7. Case Study – Part II: ISP-Bangladesh collaboration

7.1. Background information on Bangladesh

Bangladesh is a country in South Asia with an estimated population of 148 million people. The United Nations classifies Bangladesh as a least-developed country with a human development index that is below world average (UN-OHRLLS, 2012). Although some achievements have been reported with regard to maternal and child mortality, poverty reduction, school enrolment and gender parity in primary and secondary education, the country still faces major challenges in the area of child malnutrition, unemployment, overpopulation, corruption, water-borne diseases connected to environmental degradation and many more (UNDP, 2011).

The situation of the higher education sector in Bangladesh also presents a number of challenges. Although the country has 34 public, 55 private and 3 international universities (UGC, 2012), the research system is highly fragmented so that research at universities is primarily conducted by M.Phil. and Ph.D. students. The lack of incentives and motivation to do research combined with low salaries has led to both external and internal brain drain from universities. Moreover, research and development is poorly institutionalized at universities and is mostly undertaken by individual researchers in a limited research environment (Sida, 2010: 10). Therefore, support to higher education and research appears to be highly relevant in the Bangladeshi context.

7.2. ISP’s engagement in Bangladesh

ISP’s engagement in Bangladesh dates back to the early 1970s. Although scientific contacts to physicists at the University of Dhaka (DU) have already between established in 1961, group support has not started until 1973 in chemistry and 1977 in physics. Until today, 4 research groups and 2 scientific networks in chemistry and 4 research groups in physics have been supported. The IPICS groups BAN:01, BAN:03 as well as the IPPS groups BAN:01 and BAN:03 have been phased out due to various reasons, mostly due to sufficient advancement of the groups. The focus in this case study will be on the currently supported groups IPICS BAN:04, IPPS BAN:02 and IPPS BAN:04, the networks NITUB (Network of Instrument Technical Personnel and User Scientists of Bangladesh) and ANRAP (Asian Network of Research on Antidiabetic Plants) as well as the phased out
group IPICS BAN:03. In the following, a brief overview over each group and its documented achievements will be presented.

**IPICS BAN:03 (1988-2008): Diabetes research**
The group has its origins in the group BAN:01 which conducted chemical and biological studies of medicinal plants. Coordinated from the Bangladesh Institute of Research and Rehabilitation in Diabetes, Endocrine, and Metabolic Disorders (BIRDEM), Dhaka, the group has been researching the biochemical and molecular basis of diabetes and its complications in Bangladeshi population, including nutritional evaluation of local food materials with particular reference to management and prevention of diabetes and cardiovascular diseases. In the period of ISP support, the group has produced 43 Ph.Ds., 237 M.Sc./M.Phil. students and 57 international publications. Moreover, the group played an important role in the creation of ANRAP, which has stimulated much regional collaboration through scientific meetings, fellowships and exchange visits.

**IPICS BAN:04 (since 2000): Organic pollutants in food and environment**
The group is located at the Department of Chemistry, DU, and also has its roots in the previously supported group BAN:01. It analyses pesticide residues, persistent organic pollutants, antibiotics and other food contaminants. Between 2000 and 2009, the group has produced 1 Ph.D., 14 M.Sc./M.Phil. students and 2 international publications. It has taken an active role in the training programmes of NITUB and has established many contacts to regional universities through student exchange programmes. Moreover, the group regularly organizes workshops and seminars on food safety and submits reports to the government on health-related issues, e.g. the usage of pesticides in rice, the reasons of contamination in shrimps, persistent organic pollutants used by the industry etc.

**IPPS BAN:02 (since 1980): Magnetic materials**
Coordinated from the Department of Physics at the Bangladesh University of Engineering and Technology (BUET) in Dhaka, and the Atomic Energy Centre, Dhaka (AEC), the group investigates magnetic, structural and electrical properties of ferrites, nanocomposite and perovskite materials. Between 1980 and 2009, the group has produced 11 Ph.Ds., 116 M.Sc./M.Phil. students and 88 international publications. Furthermore, a number of advanced machinery could be procured with ISP support over the years which benefits the research capabilities of undergraduate and postgraduate students at the department.
**IPPS BAN:04 (since 2011): Biomedical physics and technology**

The new group is located at the Department of Biomedical Physics and Technology, DU. It is concerned with the development, application and dissemination of innovative and low-cost healthcare technologies in order to benefit the common people in Bangladesh as well as in other developing countries. This shall be achieved through the creation of leadership through Ph.D. and M.Phil. programmes, and dissemination of technology through regional and international exchanges, workshops and conferences.

**IPICS ANRAP (since 1994): Research of anti-diabetic plants**

The network is a multidisciplinary platform connecting scientists from Bangladesh, Pakistan, India, Nepal, Sri Lanka, Malaysia and others. Its mission is to facilitate collaboration between scientists in the effort to discover better therapeutic agents for diabetes and, at the same time, to develop skilled and scientific infrastructure in the concerned laboratories in general. ANRAP arranges exchange of visits between scientists working in the field and trains junior researchers, especially postgraduate students, through ANRAP fellowship programmes at laboratories where proper facilities are available.

**IPICS NITUB (since 1995): Repair and maintenance of scientific equipment**

NITUB is coordinated from the Department of Chemistry, DU, and has the reputation of being one of the most successful ISP networks. Its primary mission is to provide hand-on training on the use of instrumentation and the theoretical background of the function of instruments. NITUB offers yearly training programmes in which more than 600 user scientists and technical personnel has been schooled on how to repair and maintain widely used scientific instruments. Furthermore, NITUB has repaired about 1,100 scientific instruments in different educational and research institutions in Bangladesh since 1996.

The achievements of each group are documented in yearly Activity Reports which have become more and more detailed throughout the years. In the 1980s and 1990s, the output was documented mainly with regard to trained students, produced publications and visits. The forms were held simple and contained broad categories. In the last decade and especially since 2008, Activity Reports have become much more elaborated including a detailed account of regional contacts, conference attending, outreach activities, environmental impact, gender distribution etc., allowing for a better assessment of impact.
From the beginning of ISP support until 2010, the above introduced groups had received about 20 million SEK. Table 1 displays the distribution of expenditure showing that research groups received approximately double the amount of networks yearly and that development activities have mainly had precedence over training activities within research groups (breakdown only available from 2007).

**Table 1: Distribution of expenditure in Bangladesh (in kSEK = 1.000 SEK)**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>IPICS</th>
<th>IPPS</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Group</strong></td>
<td>BAN:03</td>
<td>BAN:04</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total Start-2006</strong></td>
<td>4.512</td>
<td>1.456</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>2007 Allocation</strong></td>
<td>385</td>
<td>400</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Training</td>
<td>63</td>
<td>115</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Development</td>
<td>316</td>
<td>262</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>2008 Allocation</strong></td>
<td>350*</td>
<td>435</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Training</td>
<td>116</td>
<td>131</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Development</td>
<td>234</td>
<td>304</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>2009 Allocation</strong></td>
<td>0</td>
<td>435</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Training</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Regional activities</td>
<td>118</td>
<td>80</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Development</td>
<td>226</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Scientific exchange</td>
<td>91</td>
<td>116</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>2010 Allocation</strong></td>
<td>410</td>
<td>210</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Training</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Regional activities</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>184</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Development</td>
<td>328</td>
<td>21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Scientific exchange</td>
<td>41</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Support is allocated according to the groups’ Grant Applications that outline which equipment needs to be acquired, how many students must be supported, which conferences will be visited etc. The reference group members scrutinize these applications and decide whether the requested amount is acceptable. Usually, the amount granted is lower than the one requested by the groups in the Grant Applications. A high level of transparency seems to be given in this application process because groups get elaborated feedback from reference group members in organized sessions in which projects are presented.
7.3. Conducted interviews

7.3.1. Framework of the interviews

On the whole, 23 semi-structured interviews were conducted in March and April 2012 in Dhaka, Bangladesh and Uppsala, Sweden. Except one telephone interview, all interviews were conducted in person. The group of interviewees consisted of ISP-supported scientists and students from the introduced research groups and networks, ISP staff and two public officials. Table 2 presents an overview of all conducted interviews, the categories of interviewees, description of the variation within the groups and the purpose of the interviews.

Table 2: Overview of all conducted interviews

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category of interviewees</th>
<th>Number</th>
<th>Variation within the group</th>
<th>Purpose of interview</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Group: ISP-supported research group leaders</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>- half of group from IPPS, other half from IPICS - half of group currently supported, other half previously supported - 1 female, 5 males</td>
<td>Find out scientists’ assessment of ISP support, their sentiments towards ISP representatives and suggestions for improvement</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Group: ISP-supported research group members</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>- 1 member from IPPS, 4 members from IPICS - all members currently supported - 2 females, 3 males</td>
<td>Find out scientists’ assessment of ISP support, their sentiments towards ISP representatives and suggestions for improvement</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Group: ISP-supported students</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>- half of group from IPPS, other half from IPICS - half of group current students, other half graduates - 2 females, 4 males</td>
<td>Find out the students’ assessment of ISP support, its impact on their lives and suggestions for improvement</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Group: ISP staff</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>- 2 programme directors, 1 assistant director, 1 Board and Executive Committee member - 1 female, 3 males</td>
<td>Find out the employees’ assessment of ISP’s strategies, impact, strengths and weaknesses and their view of supported scientists</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Group: Public officials (Bangladesh and Sweden)</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>- 1 ERD official responsible for development assistance from Nordic countries, 4 years of experience - former Sida official, occupied different positions within area of research support for 20 years</td>
<td>Find out the officials’ attitudes towards development collaboration, their assessment of states’ motivation for cooperation and of the effectiveness of different kinds of development support</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
As Table 2 illustrates, an effort was made to cover different categories of persons located at different levels. Attention was paid to include former as well as currently supported individuals, to cover both the chemistry and physics programme as well as to represent both genders. The contacts to supported scientists as well as the former Sida official who had been responsible for the collaboration with the ISP for many years were provided by the ISP. The contact to supported students and the official at the Economic Relations Division (ERD), Ministry of Finance, Bangladesh, was facilitated by the scientists in Bangladesh. All interviews had been scheduled prior to the departure and participants had received basic information about the objectives of the case study via e-mail. I was introduced to the participants as a student of International Relations who is collecting data for the Master thesis on North-South relations and development assistance. From the very beginning, participants were very cooperative so that no struggle was required to persuade persons to participate in the study.

Before each interview, participants received a brief verbal overview of the research objectives (without indications of theoretical postulations) and the structure of the interview and were asked for consent to be recorded. All but one interviewee agreed to be recorded. Furthermore, participants were assured about the confidential treatment of answers and anonymity of the case study with the intention to yield the most spontaneous and honest answers. In order to make the interviewees feel comfortable and forget the recorder, some simple personal questions were asked in the beginning of the interview. In all but three interviews, the interviewee and I were alone in the room. On the whole, my impression was that the interviewees were quite relaxed during the conversations and were not making an effort to deceive in their statements. The conversations lasted between 30 and 80 minutes. Some continued after the recorder was turned off.

During the interviews, an interview guide served as a thematic framework (see Appendix) although some conversations developed beyond the prepared topics. Questions varied slightly across different groups of interviewees according to relevance and the respective amount of knowledge. The questions covered six themes (among others): 1) Sweden’s perceived motivations, 2) brain drain, 3) South-South collaboration, 4) scientific freedom, 5) impact on the own country and 6) quality of collaboration. These themes were explored in explicit and implicit questions, depending on the sensitivity of the issue. In the following, predictions deriving from realism, interdependence liberalism and constructivism with regard to the six themes will be presented.
7.3.2. Predictions according to theories

As three theoretical frameworks of IR constitute the foundation for this case study, approximate expectations regarding interview outcomes can be derived from hypotheses towards North-South development assistance which were established in section 3. These predictions are points of orientation and do not constitute parameters demanding absolute validity.

Table 3: Predictions deriving from IR theories

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Theme 1: Sweden’s motivations</th>
<th>Realism</th>
<th>Interdependence liberalism</th>
<th>Constructivism</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Majority of interviewees feels that Sweden’s financial support has egoistic motives</td>
<td>Majority of interviewees feels that both Sweden and Bangladesh benefit from the collaboration</td>
<td>Observable pattern is that perceptions of interviewees are shaped by pre-established ideas about Sweden</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Theme 2: Brain drain</th>
<th>Realism</th>
<th>Interdependence liberalism</th>
<th>Constructivism</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Majority of supported scientists feels that the collaboration with the ISP causes brain drain and that the ISP aims at keeping talented students in Sweden</td>
<td>Majority of supported scientists feels that the ISP helps to curtail brain drain and, at the same time, provides Sweden with short-term international students</td>
<td>Observable pattern is that supported scientists describe the issue of brain drain as being related to interests and circumstances of individual students</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Theme 3: South-South collaboration</th>
<th>Realism</th>
<th>Interdependence liberalism</th>
<th>Constructivism</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Majority of supported scientists feels that the ISP impedes S.-S. collaboration and wants Sweden to stay the dominant host country for scientists and students</td>
<td>Majority of supported scientists feels that the ISP promotes S.-S. collaboration, but still prefers to be the main host country for scientists and students</td>
<td>Observable pattern is that supported scientists view S.-S.-collaboration as depending on their established relations to scientists in other countries</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Theme 4: Scientific freedom</th>
<th>Realism</th>
<th>Interdependence liberalism</th>
<th>Constructivism</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Majority of supported scientists feels that is has no scientific independence and is restricted by the ISP regarding money allocation</td>
<td>Majority of supported scientists feels that it has scientific independence and is able to set own priorities regarding money allocation</td>
<td>Observable pattern is that the assessment of own scientific freedom reflects values embedded in the respective research group</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Theme 5: Impact on Bangladesh</th>
<th>Realism</th>
<th>Interdependence liberalism</th>
<th>Constructivism</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Majority of supported scientists feels that impact of ISP support on their own country is restricted and that there is pressure to work on Swedish research problems</td>
<td>Majority of supported scientists feels that there is an adequate balance between the focus on Bangladeshi and on Swedish research problems</td>
<td>Observable pattern is that supported scientists view their impact on their own country as varying according to research topic</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Theme 6: Quality of collaboration</th>
<th>Realism</th>
<th>Interdependence liberalism</th>
<th>Constructivism</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Majority of supported scientists describes the collaboration with the ISP as an unequal one and feels looked down upon; no mutual respect</td>
<td>Majority of supported scientists describes the collaboration with the ISP as an egalitarian one; feeling of being treated as scientists; mutual trust</td>
<td>Observable pattern is that descriptions of the quality of collaboration vary according to the meaning and length of the collaboration with ISP representatives</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
7.3.3. Interview outcomes in relation to the six derived themes

**Theme 1: Sweden’s motivations**

One significant question posed to all interviews was which main motivations the participants identified behind Sweden’s financial support to a developing country like Bangladesh. The outcome was that all except one of the 17 ISP-supported scientists and students stressed the altruistic side of Swedish support and identified the motivations as being guided by mainly philanthropic feelings. The answers contained descriptions of problems that Bangladesh faces in higher education and on broader societal level and of Sweden’s knowledge of these problems. Main words used here were “eager to support”, “wish to assist”, “concerned to help”, “wants to develop”, “very generous”, “kind approach” etc. These answers indicate a perception of the Swedish state as a solidary one that is motivated to assist people in Bangladesh to solve their problems.

One research group leader smiled when hearing the question and said that the basic reason is probably to support poorer countries, but that choice of supported countries primarily depends on political decisions, “whether to support a communist country or an autocratic ruler”. This statement indicates the perception that political considerations play a role in the choice of supported countries, but that the will to assist some poorer countries is still given. The view that politics play a major role in the selection process was shared by the Sida official as well as by one ISP staff member. The former observed that in 2007, the newly elected conservative government decided to seize support to “communist” countries, but that there was nothing peculiar about that decision as that is the way politics work. The latter noted that the Swedish state pursued more altruistic objectives in the 1970s and 1980s and has now become more concerned with trade relations and economic benefits.

Another research group leader stressed that the Swedish state has had a long tradition of supporting developing countries, especially in basic sciences: “Swedish philanthropic philosophy of helping people in developing countries was very wide-known and recognized. […] Sweden only benefits mentally, that they are capable to assist a nation which is enthusiastic to develop.” A different interviewee spoke about own experience:

> Me and my family have met many Swedish people and can say that people are very nice and are eager to support development in our part of the world […]. I stayed in the USA, but thought that people were much more calculative, always at their own interest, particularly material interest. Compared to that, I found the people [in Sweden, T.K.] much nicer.
The former statement presents a benevolent image of Sweden that is “wide-known” and “recognized” (-> constructivism). The latter explains Sweden’s support with reference to cultural differences, suggesting that Swedish culture is less calculative in comparison to others. A comparison made by another research group leader who took some time elaborating personal experiences with US AID and the EU which s/he used to collaborate with. Both donors were described as being mainly motivated by own interests, i.e. in selling own products (in the case of US AID) and making sure that European scientists have a large involvement in the development process of new technology (in the case of the EU) (-> realism). According to the interviewee, the Swedish approach was much more generous and sincere in comparison to the above mentioned donors as no conditionalities were attached to Swedish assistance.

An exception to the rule on the Bangladeshi side was one student’s answer which did not entail a reference to the concept of solidarity: “If students go to study abroad, any university in that host country welcomes that, that’s one thing. Also, technical development decreases the gap between understandings.” In the first part, it is indicated that Sweden as any other country has an interest in attracting students to its universities (-> realism). In the second part, it is proposed that another motivation for support might be the wish to build bridges to overcome the existing knowledge divide (-> interdependence liberalism).

A different perspective was offered by the ERD official who brought forward the argument that “it is the obligation of developed countries to give some assistance to developing countries. Developed countries spend around 1% of their GDP on developing countries, so maybe there are bindings or obligations.” Here, the idea is introduced that developed countries feel some pressure to spend a certain amount of the state budget on development assistance because of existing international norms (-> constructivism). As no overarching authority exists in the world that would enforce international law, the pressure to abide may only come from the fear of losing face and not being recognized as a decent member of the international society.

On the whole, the feedback from the supported scientists in Bangladesh was quite univocal leaving little doubt that the Swedish state is perceived to be acting mainly altruistically with regard to its involvement in Bangladesh and that supporting people in their struggle for improvement constitutes the core reason for Swedish development support.
Theme 2: Brain drain

The question on the amount of ISP-supported students that leave the country after graduation and on the correlation of the sandwich programme and brain drain was addressed to research group leaders and research group members and produced a clear tendency in the answers. 10 out of 11 interviewees stressed that the ISP’s support to groups instead of single individuals and the opportunity to send students abroad on a sandwich fellowship was successful from keeping students from eventual emigration.

Several reasons were given for the success of the ISP sandwich approach. One emphasized reason was the opportunity for students to use foreign, more advanced laboratory facilities for a restricted time without being completely alienated from the conditions in their home laboratories. Another interviewee lauded the possibility for students to see “what is out there”, so that they can satisfy the wish of going abroad without having to complete a whole degree at a foreign university, which in ca. 50 percent of cases leads to brain drain (number suggested by 3 research group members). One research group leader stressed that the sandwich approach is so successful in preventing brain drain that programmes such as the German Academic Exchange Service (DAAD) have now introduced it and that others should also follow that example.

The opinion of another research group leader was that the strength of the ISP sandwich approach is that students get “disillusioned” about life abroad when they go to a new country for a short time and realize that they can have a meaningful life and develop at home. They see that travelling is not a big deal and that in Bangladesh one can buy much more for the same money. Those who do a whole degree abroad usually get used to the new culture, lab facilities etc. and have no incentives to return. Similarly, those who have never been abroad imagine how it would be and are more inclined to leave. Hence, the suggestion is that the sandwich programme is the perfect middle way out of both dilemmas.

After the interviews, three research group leaders provided student lists documenting the current location and occupation of all graduates from the research group. Two lists were not complete as the location of a few students was missing. The data that is available shows that the majority of graduates stayed in Bangladesh (72% - 88%) and that graduates now occupy teaching positions at educational and research institutions, in private companies, medical centers etc. Among those who have left, the majority went to the US, Canada, Australia and Japan. Only one graduate in all three groups emigrated to Sweden. This high amount of skilled people staying in the country indicates a positive effect on
Bangladeshi society. The successful prevention of brain drain cannot be solely attributed to sandwich programmes as only Ph.D. fellows benefit from this exchange opportunity. However, M.Phil. and M.Sc. students have been reported to benefit from ISP support in other indirect ways, i.e. through participation in workshops and the usage of modern laboratory equipment and consumables which have been mainly sponsored by the ISP.

**Theme 3: South-South collaboration**

Another question explored in the interviews was how the South-South collaboration has developed throughout the years and which role the ISP played in that development. This question was not posed to students as research group leaders and members have greater knowledge of the issue. One trend in the answers was that the ISP does not oppose, but rather promotes regional collaboration (10 out of 11 answers). The given feedback suggested that there was no pressure from the ISP to send students to Sweden. Selection of country depends mostly on the specific area of study of the respective Ph.D. fellow, so that the opportunity is given to do part of the research at a university in a neighboring country with an ISP fellowship if the particular host department offers the necessary equipment and know-how.

Different groups reported different amounts of regional collaboration. One group was able to establish contacts to scientists in Korea, Thailand, Nepal, Pakistan, India, South-Africa, earlier Sri Lanka and recently to Laos and Cambodia. “The ISP is encouraging us to establish networks to increase South-South collaboration. Nowadays collaboration is essential, it is not possible for one country to have success alone”, was the statement of one interviewee (→ interdependence liberalism). The reported contacts were mostly initiated by the Bangladeshi scientists, but the ISP facilitated communication if it had own contacts in the respective countries. Conferences and seminars were described to be an essential basis for establishing linkages to scientists from neighboring countries. The attendance of such events is usually financed by the ISP, so the ISP’s role in the promotion of South-South collaboration was stressed in this regard.

In one group, South-South collaboration hardly took place during ISP support. The responsible scientist made the following statement:

*Unfortunately it was not very successful. It only depends on the research group leader who wants to make the South-South collaboration stronger. If I look into the history of the last 25 years, the picture is not very encouraging. We started...*
collaboration with Vietnam, but it was closed down. With India we could also not make that much. Of course, it is difficult to answer the question whose fault this was.

Here, the suggestion is that the ISP did not make a great effort to promote regional collaboration within this group, but that the group leaders were also unable or unwilling to initiate new contacts.

A positive catalyzing effect was ascribed to the network ANRAP which was reported to have attracted much attention in neighboring countries because the network organizes seminars in the region and is well-known. Furthermore, the intercontinental network on natural products AFASSA (Asia, Africa and South America) was initially supported by the ISP, but turned out to have limited success in spurring student exchange between the collaborating countries, so ISP support was seized.

Two research group leaders stressed the uniqueness of the ISP in regard to the liberty of sending and receiving students to and from any collaborating country with ISP funding. One of the scientists compared the ISP’s approach to the grant that s/he had received from the British Department for International Development (DFID), which prohibited to send students anywhere but to Britain. From this and other experiences the scientist concluded that the ISP has a “very sincere and liberal attitude” as it focuses on what is best for the supported country and does not give any guidelines with regard to the host country (-> interdependence liberalism).

When interviewing ISP staff on this issue, it was stated that the establishment and consolidation of South-South collaboration as a strategy for increasing the effectiveness of ISP support became an objective in the late 1980s. Since then, the ISP has been trying to link stronger institutions in the South with weaker ones. As an example of such linkage is the University of Dar es Salaam in Tanzania. That institution has been long supported by the ISP and has now become a resource center in East Africa, especially for Kenya and Zambia. Another example from South-East Asia was the Mahidol University in Bangkok, Thailand, which has the potential to support and link weaker countries in that region.

On the whole, the picture presented gave reason to believe that the ISP does not stand in the way of South-South collaboration and that egoistic motives to position Sweden as the main destination for students from supported countries cannot be identified as a driving force of the ISP’s approach in Bangladesh. Scientists have the possibility to send their students to any matching institution. Apart from some unsuccessful attempts to establish
fruitful South-South links by one group, the ISP seems to be supportive of the flow of knowledge and resources between developing countries.

**Theme 4: Scientific freedom**

Several questions posed in the interviews aimed at finding out how independent the supported scientists and students are in their research, how the authorship of papers is dealt with during sandwich programmes and how free the research group leaders are in deciding what and whom to spent money on. The result within the answers was clear. All scientists stated that they felt free to choose their own methodology and research topic and that there was no pressure to focus on research problems that are relevant for developed countries or for Sweden specifically. Regarding money allocation, the feedback on the initial Grant Applications lays out which fields the prospective grant will cover (fellowships, equipment, dissemination of papers, attendance of conferences etc.), but flexibility is given to research group leaders to reallocate the money if priorities suddenly change.

One research group leader expressed enthusiasm about the ISP approach as one of the most liberal approaches that s/he has witnessed in development assistance. Comparing the ISP approach to that of the World Bank, s/he stated that “when the World Bank gives money, I have to follow all requirements of the government. If I would publish a newspaper tender, I would have to follow the government’s restrictions on what to write.” Furthermore, the interviewee gave several examples of personal experiences with USAID and the EU in which both donors refused to subsidize the cheaper technology developed by the interviewee because this investment did not correlate with their interests (-> realism). The difference between the US and the EU was that the EU was frank about its objectives and the US used excuses why the cheap technology could not be supported. Therefore, the scientist regards the ISP grant as an “extraordinary experience”.

Other researchers pointed out that there are, of course, standard requirements on how to conduct research in a scientifically correct way, but that those standards are international and must be followed by all scientists. Moreover, some mentioned ISP guidelines regarding the writing of yearly Activity Reports and Grant Applications. However, these guidelines were perceived as necessary to ensure that expenditures are monitored and to “show the Swedish tax payers where their money goes”. Two scientists specifically stated that the necessity to write the report by the end of the year puts a lot pressure on the scientists to produce results, but both relativized their points by adding that this kind of pressure was absolutely inevitable to reach own targets.
The interviewed students who have not studied abroad reported to have no direct guidelines by the ISP. Their instructions are provided solely by their supervisors. Those students who have done their research work outside Bangladesh during their Ph.D. degrees were advised by their co-supervisors in the respective country on how to proceed and manage the given problem. However, no restrictions or pressure by any supervisors to go in a certain direction have been reported by the students.

When asked about how important independence is in their work as researchers, all scientists emphasized that scientific freedom played a very important role. One research group leader stated that if s/he had to work with a donor that dictates the direction of research and restricts the group’s freedom in any other way, this collaboration would not hold longer than 1 or 2 years. These results indicate that the ISP seems to have found the right balance between insuring the independence and local ownership of supported scientists and the responsibility to monitor the development process.

Theme 5: Impact on own country

Another important question was aimed at exploring the perceived impact or future impact of supported scientists and students on the improvement of the situation in their country. Here, different interviewees highlighted different aspects which can be summarized under following categories (according to stated frequency): 1) creation of human resources through teaching and supervision, 2) enrichment of the body and quality of scientific research produced in Bangladesh, 3) contribution to health and environmental problems through application of knowledge produced in the own thematic field 4) contribution through leadership/membership in one of the ISP networks, 5) establishment of own development projects/institutions.

The largest personal impact was attributed to the training of students who will be future leaders in research institutions, government agencies, industry, medical centers, NGOs etc. As brain drain among Ph.D. students in the ISP-supported groups has been limited, many graduates now occupy positions through which they are able to contribute to the socio-economic development of the country. Secondly, most interviewees felt that through the advancement of research produced in Bangladesh, the country can tackle its own problems and does not have to borrow from knowledge produced somewhere else which might not be adequate to address the local challenges.

With regard to the thematic contribution, scientists from different fields described their research foci. The chemistry group at DU linked its impact to research on persistent
organic pollutants in fish, the examination of the amount of pesticides and toxic metals in rice and, consequently, the promotion of food security. The physicists at BUET and AECD elaborated on magnetic nano particles as having the potential to be used for water purification since contaminated ground water constitutes a major problem in Bangladesh. The biomedical physics group at DU listed a variety of projects related to development and dissemination of low-cost healthcare technologies. Previously supported scientists in chemistry referred to the involvement in 20 established healthcare centers where millions of people are getting treatment, to various lab technologies developed at the Bangladesh Institute of Health Sciences (BIHS) that have become a model to other institutions and to the empowerment of women as 70 percent of the group members have been female.

The list of reported impact on society is long and indicates that the ISP provides room for supported scientists to work on projects in their own country. In the descriptions of their contributions, two interviewees independently mentioned that the ISP not only tolerates, but encourages them to focus on topics that address national problems, which suggests that the ISP approach can be viewed as an empowering rather than an exploitative one. Accounts given by ISP staff with regard to the question of ISP’s impact on developing countries followed similar argumentation with several additional aspects. One staff member gave following answer:

*Good research also teaches people about ethics. You don't pretend to have done something, you cite what other people have done, you give credit. So the kind of scientific thinking as such can be important - how to identify a problem, how to try to solve it, how to report on it. That's the kind of research thinking that can be important not only in the academia, but also in industry and in society in general.*

This viewpoint is intriguing as it suggests that the scientific mindset itself can be beneficial for the well-being of a society. This correlates to what a research group leader observed: “Doing basic science is also creating minds to ask basic questions and generate basic data.” Viewing ISP support from this angle leads to the assumption that ISP impact goes far beyond measurable variables of development as it creates soil for a new way of thinking and acting which is regarded as a positive change on both sides.
Theme 6: Quality of collaboration

The last and most intriguing set of questions aimed at exploring the nature of the ISP-Bangladesh collaboration, namely how both sides view each other, which terms they use to speak about each other and which problems or benefits they characterize in the interaction with collaborators. In this regard, the perceptions differed according to the length of involvement with the ISP and to the position within the research group. Group leaders and one group member who has been involved in the collaboration for at least 20 years used descriptions like “excellent partnership”, “ISP is an international family”, “there’s a lot of trust”, “unusual and unique collaboration”, “many of the programme directors and related scientists are personal friends”. One of the group leaders expressed that:

ISP is a family rather than an organization. [...] That kind of support is very unique. [...] When I was a WHO fellow, the WHO sent me an envelope with money or pay order, but it was so impersonal. Nobody kept track of what and how I was doing, of what were the personal problems etc. When I switched to ISP, it became almost like a family. They were not only supporting financially, but they were also keeping track and interacting personally.

Similar sentiments were reported by other long-term collaborators. The descriptions emphasized that the collaboration is characterized by a lot of mutual understanding and that the ISP cares and follows up in contrast to other supporters (-> constructivism).

Other research group members who have been involved more recently stated that the ISP is primarily a funding authority and a donor, but that it has other meanings beyond the donor notion. For some, the ISP also functions as a “facilitator”, as “mental support” and “a source of encouragement, motivation and confidence”. Reasons for these sentiments were that the ISP staff provides feedback on proposals and scientific advice when needed. Moreover, when meetings take place, supported scientists feel that they are viewed on equal terms and not as aid receivers (-> interdependence liberalism / constructivism)

The two interviewed students who have been interacting with ISP representatives during their sandwich programmes said that they were taken care of well and that ISP staff was always friendly and helpful. Research group leaders who had done their Ph.Ds. with an ISP fellowship in Sweden also mentioned that the regular meetings organized for students were helpful to get over home sickness and adapt to the new culture. One scientist
stated that the ISP staff was “tuned very well” on how to treat students who might experience a cultural shock.

As a point of improvement of the collaboration, one research group leader described the wish to have a closer relation of research programmes between Sweden and Bangladesh. At the same time, he added that “that is not always possible because the Swedish groups are much more advanced. The host group in Sweden has less interest to directly collaborate with Bangladeshi scientists because they are at a different level.” This statement reveals that although equality is felt in the personal relations between ISP staff and supported scientists, the inequality is felt when it comes to the level of scientific advancement between the two countries. Similarly, when asked about the perceived meaning of the collaboration, another research group member replied: “It’s not that the ISP is working with us in case of research. It is donating money and we are using that money for our development.” These statements give room for questions regarding ISP’s scope of responsibilities, the possible lack of incentives for Northern scientists to directly link research programmes with their Southern counterparts and the merits, shortcomings and feasibility of such deeper linkages.

When interviewing ISP staff members, the descriptions of the collaboration with supported scientists were enthusiastic. “Because the former process of selection of scientists was on a personal basis, there was always a lot of mutual trust and personal touch in the collaboration”, said one interviewee. Another stated that “collaborations are usually based on strong personal relationships and mutual trust which is built up over time”. All interviewed ISP staff members emphasized that the method of selection of supported researchers adopted in the past was one source of ISP’s success because programme directors chose persons who had the potential of becoming competent, dedicated, trustworthy and charismatic group leaders. The opinion that the ISP’s scouting approach is fruitful was shared by one supported scientist who found that it allows to identify a capable person and to develop trust, both being essential factors for successful collaboration.

7.3.4. **Reported advantages and disadvantages of ISP support**

Next to the above described themes established for tackling initial propositions, one open question to supported scientists and students was aimed at general advantages and disadvantages of ISP support and on potential for improvement. Table 4 gives a summary of all stated positive and negative aspects, including those elaborated in the previous
The points are listed according to stated frequency, starting with the ones most often mentioned.

Table 4: Advantages and disadvantages of ISP support

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Reported advantages</th>
<th>Reported disadvantages</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Common understanding about the ownership of research results and the inclusion of authorship (7)</td>
<td>Scientists are put under stress and pressure to deliver detailed Activity Reports in the end of the year (5)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A lot of mutual trust and respect between the Swedish and Bangladeshi collaborators (6)</td>
<td>Students are not well informed about how exactly they benefit from ISP support; communication must improve (2)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sandwich-based approach is beneficial for students and successful in preventing brain drain (6)</td>
<td>ISP’s main funding source Sida has become less reliable, so that groups cannot plan accordingly -&gt; no long-term security (2)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ISP provides independence regarding research topics, methodology and flexibility regarding money usage (6)</td>
<td>ISP’s focus on basic sciences is too narrow, should include technology-oriented research which would better tackle the problems that people of Bangladesh face (1)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Long-term support is unique and beneficial in the area of research capacity building (5)</td>
<td>ISP support is too limited to engage in big-scale projects or establish new institutions (1)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>South-South collaboration is supported and promoted by the ISP (scientific networks, conference attendance, exchange of students) (5)</td>
<td>Not all scientists can be sent to conferences from ISP money, so that tensions can develop within the research groups when priorities are made (1)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ISP serves as a source of motivation, encouragement and mental support (5)</td>
<td>The research of certain supported groups is perceived to have too little impact on society (1)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No conditionalities exist to buy equipment from a certain country or company (5)</td>
<td>Little direct research projects between Swedish and Bangladeshi scientists (1)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ISP closely monitors and keeps track of the groups’ progress (3)</td>
<td>Sida pushes the ISP towards results-based management, which will make the programme less successful (1)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ISP actively encourages collaborators to focus on their national problems in their research (2)</td>
<td>Health-related seminars should not only be organized in big cities, but also in rural areas (1)</td>
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<tr>
<td>ISP is run by scientists and not bureaucrats who have more expertise and sensitivity towards issues of higher level education and research (2)</td>
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<tr>
<td>ISP should give the supported group leaders the possibility to financially support their Ph.D. and M.Phil. students so that they do not have to work (1)</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Staff in Uppsala is attentive to needs and challenges of international students, takes care of them well during sandwich programmes (2)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ISP should support other renounced academic institutions in Bangladesh (1)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ISP gives scientific advice and feedback when needed (1)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ISP supports whole groups instead of individuals which strengthens the local capacity (1)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The utilization of the fund is managed well within the ISP (1)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Scouting approach of the ISP regarding research groups leaders is fruitful (1)</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>ISP has a monitoring system at the root level which other big donors do not have (1)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ISP facilitates the procurement of expensive equipment (1)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Application procedure and decision-making process regarding applications is very transparent within the ISP in comparison to other donors (1)</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

8. This opinion has not been shared by ISP staff. The ISP takes the position that RMB may be a useful tool, if used correctly, to focus on results in a constructive way, and need not be administratively cumbersome beyond the advantage that it can bring.
As the positive aspects of ISP support have been thoroughly highlighted in the previous section, certain dissatisfactory aspects which were given great importance during some interviews need to be elaborated at this point. Firstly, there is a well-known dilemma: the donor wishes to closely monitor the activities of supported groups in yearly Activity Reports in order to follow their development, however, the time-consuming process of reporting reduces the time spent on research and teaching so that development is halted. As many research groups are dependent on support from multiple donors, they face a variety of bureaucratic requirements which can impede the overall goal of development assistance. Furthermore, scientists become so preoccupied with delivering results that the scope for their scientific freedom decreases. This calls for a reconsideration of donor practices and monitoring systems and, especially, for more donor alignment (similar reporting requirements in order to reduce the bureaucratic burden on supported individuals).

Secondly, interviewing currently supported students led to the conclusion that they are not very well aware of the options of ISP support that exist for them and of how exactly they are linked to the ISP except through the usage of ISP-financed equipment and instruments. Two students expressed discontent about not knowing what the options for student support were. Some confusion was also felt in the conversations with graduated Ph.D. students who were not able to say how much financial support they had gained during their fellowship at the host university. They referred to their supervisors for further information as those were managing all financial matters. This is rather odd and requires improved communication between the ISP and students or students and research group leaders regarding ISP fellowships and other benefits.

Thirdly, Sida’s unclear positioning towards further support of the ISP has become a source of worry and uncertainty for some scientists because long-term planning is constrained. This issue can be either regarded as an external factor or as something that the ISP can actively solve by putting an effort into amplifying the scope of funding sources. This perception correlates with the 2011 evaluation of the ISP that has found that a diversification of revenues would assist ISP’s sustainability (GHD, 2011: 24). From the supported groups’ point of view, such a diversification would allow more stability in their long-term planning and in their budgetary freedom. The reply given by ISP staff in this respect was that it is certainly a goal to attract new unilateral and multilateral donors, but that the attempt to do so has not been very successful so far.

Another aspect strongly emphasized by one research group leader was the perception that the ISP should broaden its spectrum of assistance and consider supporting projects that
have a greater direct linkage with problems that the majority of the poorer population in Bangladesh and other developing countries faces. Examples would be projects that deal with targeted application and technology-oriented research rather than pure basic science research. The suggestion was that the ISP should develop sensitivity and understanding that developing countries have different needs from developed countries as industrial revolution in the former never took place. Thus, so the view, it is essential to combine the support for basic sciences with that of applicable research that can lead to the development of affordable local healthcare technology and to technology facilitating everyday-life. This is an interesting point as it touches upon the crucial critique of Northern development strategies being formulated according to Western parameters and being too detached from specific local challenges of developing countries (Castillo, 1997).

When raising this issue in the interviews with ISP staff, the reply was that applicability does play a role in the selection of supported groups and examples of projects with direct benefits to society were given. At the same time, it was stressed that since the ISP is a research capacity building institution, basic science research must constitute a significant part of project proposals. This issue leads back to the question of the importance of pure research capability and the advancement of the scientific mind and culture for the development of a society. The observation of one supported scientist was that most donors are obsessed with immediate applicability and direct results and do not even wish to be brought in connection with projects that mention the word research in their descriptions. Hence, the suggestion was that the ISP is unique in its firm dedication to basic science research and should uphold that strength.
8. Research findings

8.1. Empirical results: evaluation of ISP’s success

The starting points of this case study were two core research objectives: an empirical and a theoretical one. This section summarizes the empirical investigation which was motivated by the wish to explore whether the ISP can be viewed as an example of successful North-South collaboration, the indicators of success being 1) local ownership, 2) empowerment and 3) quality of partnership. Taking into consideration the achievements of supported groups as presented in ISP documents, the described advantages and disadvantages of ISP support identified by supported scientists as well as tendencies within interviews will help to draw conclusions in this regard. Table 5 summarizes the main trends in relation to the six established categories which constituted the backbone of the study.

Table 5: Interview outcomes with regard to six established themes

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Group 1: ISP-supported research group leaders</th>
<th>Theme 1: Sweden’s motivations</th>
<th>Theme 2: Brain drain</th>
<th>Theme 3: S.-S. Collaboration</th>
<th>Theme 4: Scientific freedom</th>
<th>Theme 5: Impact on own country</th>
<th>Theme 6: Quality of collaboration</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Clear result: Sweden’s interests perceived as mainly altruistic (6/6)</td>
<td>Tendency: ISP sandwich programme prevents brain drain (5/6)</td>
<td>Tendency: ISP promotes S.-S. collaboration (5/6)</td>
<td>Clear result: Scientists feel independent in their work (6/6)</td>
<td>Clear result: Collaboration characterized by mutual trust and respect (6/6)</td>
<td>Clear result: Collaboration characterized by mutual trust and respect (6/6)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

| Group 2: ISP-supported research group members | Clear result: Sweden’s interests perceived as mainly altruistic (5/5) | Clear result: ISP sandwich programme prevents brain drain (5/5) | Clear result: ISP promotes S.-S. collaboration (5/5) | Clear result: Scientists feel independent in their work (5/5) | Clear result: Scientists feel independent in their work (5/5) | Tendency: Collaboration characterized by mutual trust and respect (4/5) |

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Group 3: ISP-supported students</th>
<th>Clear result: Students feel contribution to own country (6/6)</th>
<th>Clear result: Students feel contribution to own country (6/6)</th>
<th>Only 2 able to answer question: Felt taken care of well during their sandwich programmes</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

| Group 4: ISP staff | Tendency: ISP’s interests perceived as mainly altruistic (3/4) | Clear result: Brain drain is prevented through sandwich programmes and the strengthening of infrastructure | Clear result: S.S. collaboration is an increasingly important objective (4/4) | Clear result: Local ownership has always been an objective (4/4) | Clear result: Convincing of ISP’s role in development of supported countries (4/4) | Clear result: Collaboration characterized by mutual trust and respect (4/4) |

-60-
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>Group 5a:</strong> Government official, ERD</th>
<th>Sweden’s interests perceived as driven by international rules and norms</th>
<th>**</th>
<th>**</th>
<th>Strategies are discussed and developed together</th>
<th>National studies show positive impact of development assistance on Bangladesh</th>
<th>Very good experience collaborating with Scandinavian donors</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Group 5b:</strong> Government official, Sida</td>
<td>Sweden’s interests perceived as mainly altruistic, but Sida causing more harm than good</td>
<td>If local institutions are strengthened, sandwich students will return</td>
<td>No great danger in N.-S. student exchange as long as there is a place to return to</td>
<td>Development agencies like Sida work top-down and perpetuate “patrimonial” thinking</td>
<td>Development agencies cannot bring about real impact, but non-bureaucratic research collaborations can</td>
<td>Development agencies like Sida are by default unable to regard recipients as equal collaborators; no mutuality</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* Students do not have sufficient knowledge to answer that question
** ERD official is not professionally involved in research capacity building

The trends in the answers suggest that, on the whole, satisfaction with the strategies that the ISP has taken in Bangladesh and the way it has approached and supported scientists is very high. The fact that the majority of the interviewed scientists could not even name any disadvantages which would be in the realm of ISP’s influence expresses a great approval of ISP’s mode of operation. Of course, the question remains whether negative opinions were held back out of the fear that expressing them might disturb the quality of the collaboration or even lead to discontinuation of support. This risk always exists when financial dependency from the donor is given. However, the assumption is that after interviewing 17 supported individuals, a general dissatisfaction or frustration about an important issue would have made its way into the comments as interaction also took place outside the interviews. Moreover, scientists from groups that have been phased out had fewer reasons to exaggerate the merits of the ISP, yet they have been the most enthusiastic ones about the collaboration.

The concept of **local ownership** has been explored with regard to the ability of supported scientists to be independent in their research and to establish South-South bridges in order to eventually overcome dependency of Northern support. This aspect is quite strong within the ISP as the freedom of building alliances and sending students to other Southern universities is given. Moreover, scientists report to have freedom in the choice of research topic and methodology and are encouraged by the ISP to engage in areas that are of concern to their own country. The only disadvantage with regard to local ownership that can be found in the ISP’s approach is the process of micro-management and monitoring that puts collaborators under constant observation and requires them to spend a
large amount of time on Grant Applications and yearly Activity Reports. Although this creates pressure and stress, it is viewed as necessary by the supported scientists as they understand is as a means of transparency towards the Swedish tax payers whose money they are using.

The idea of empowerment is linked to the ability to tackle problems that surround you with your own effort. The impact of supported individuals on the societal level can be identified on several dimensions. Firstly, teaching and supervising students creates future human resources needed in various societal areas. Secondly, contribution to the scientific body of knowledge that is created in Bangladesh has an impact to long-term development of a knowledge-based society, which enables Bangladesh to compete with more advanced countries. Thirdly, several groups work directly on health and environmental problems as in the case of research on food safety, anti-diabetic plants, healthcare technology etc. Output in these areas is captured in detail in Activity Reports and Project Catalogues. The role of the ISP in creating empowerment is most strongly expressed in the prevention of brain drain through sandwich programmes. It is reported that Ph.D. sandwich programmes are attractive alternatives for M.Phil. students who would otherwise have done their Ph.Ds. entirely abroad. The majority of graduated Ph.D. sandwich students stays in Bangladesh and occupies high positions in academic and research institutions, public service, industry, medical facilities etc., hence, benefiting the broader society.

Regarding the partnership criterion, the observation can be made that the quality of the collaboration does not strongly reflect the structural inequality that exists between Sweden as the richer, donating country and Bangladesh as the poorer, receiving country. Collaborators on both sides view each other as scholars who have similar goals and who trust and respect each other. Especially among the research group leaders, strong bonds with previous programme directors and collaborating scientists as well friendly feelings towards ISP staff were characteristic of the answers. Younger research group members have a more distanced relationship to the ISP, but report to have never felt disrespect or encountered a condescending attitude on the side of ISP collaborators. As face-to-face meetings between the programme directors and supported groups take place at least once a year, room is given for the development of a personal connection. Face-to-face interaction between North-South collaborators has been found to have great advantages for the quality and the effectiveness of development projects (Mawdsley et al., 2005). The personal nature of the collaboration between the ISP and supported scientists can be viewed as a strength and a model to other donors.
8.2. ISP’s approach in comparison to traditional approaches in development assistance

The approach that the ISP has taken stands in stark contrast to orthodox North-South development approaches adopted by official donors such as development banks, national development agencies and multilateral organizations. The most fundamental difference is that the ISP is not an institution that has been deliberately set up to “develop” individuals living in poorer countries, but has evolved from cooperation between scientists in the North and the South. Individuals on both sides of the collaboration work in a similar field and can interact in a more egalitarian and mutually empowering way. This kind of mutuality is rarely given in a setting where Northern development agency officials, who are not personally linked to the environment of supported individuals, create strategies on how to solve their problems and distribute financial support in an impersonal manner. This traditional way of development assistance has been extremely distorted and perpetuates colonial beliefs as it creates an ideational hierarchy between aid donors and aid receivers.

Another contrast to official donors is that the ISP works on the micro-economic instead of a macro-economic level. It follows a bottom-up approach which starts with researchers, entrepreneurs and individuals who are working in the field of health-care, environmental problems or technological problems and who are aware of the problems of the poorer population rather than with high-level officials who come from a separate sector in society and must follow specific bureaucratic guidelines. Through its personal contact with supported scientists, its small size and its previously described mode of operation, the ISP is much more flexible and can adapt to changing demands on the local level.

Furthermore, there are no conditionalities attached to ISP support in comparison to most funds available through institutions such as the World Bank, the EU, bilateral donors etc. Although tied aid could be globally reduced to 18 percent in the last decade (OECD, 2012c), many donors still establish internal conditionalities which have been described by the interviewed scientists. The freedom of procuring the best/cheapest laboratory equipment, developing own technology or sending students for exchange to any country with the donor’s money, which is given within the ISP, is still quite an exceptional instance in the area of development support.

Finally, the ISP has a long-lasting impact on the supported countries in comparison to a large amount of ODA which is mostly organized as project aid. The ISP supports groups over a very long period of time, focuses on the promotion of basic scientific knowledge which can tackle societal problems and contributes to the creation of future teachers and
human resources for other societal areas. This view has been shared by the former Sida official who stated in the interview that:

_You can compare ISP’s work to other things like projects on material infrastructure that are now rusting away, you can compare it to democracy projects which focus on promoting NGOs etc. that are withering away because they are not constituted by the local people but by some individuals, you can compare it to money that has been running through general banking support and is now in Swedish bank accounts and so on, but what the ISP has been doing is for real, you can never take it away, it’s there and it has many traces in society._

On the whole, the ISP’ approach can be regarded as a successful instance of North-South development support which can be followed by other donors to the extent that is feasible in their specific field of activity. Although certain aspects have been criticized by interviewees such as the pressure to compose detailed activity reports by the end of the year, the lacking information system for students and a too strong focus on basic sciences, the reported advantages by far exceed the disadvantages. The reasons for the satisfaction of Bangladeshi scientists have been the ISP’s long-lasting support, involvement of individuals from a similar background in the ISP, a bottom-up, micro-economic approach, untied distribution of grants, promotion of South-South collaboration and a sincere motive. The last aspect might be the crucial starting point for the effective implementation of the other approaches because when the objective of development assistance is determined by self-interest, which one interviewee has experienced in the collaboration with US AID, the EU and the DFID, it is very unlikely to bring about long-lasting development or foster empowerment and local ownership.
9. Theoretical analysis: Relating predictions to outcomes

9.1. Realism

The second objective of this research was to view the ISP case from three different IR perspectives in order to understand how the ISP as an actor in international relations can be perceived of and whether the skeptic view that all development ambitions are doomed to be contra-productive due to their dubious motivations entails some truth. Realists view development institutions as instruments of states to seek advantages and pursue selfish interests through the cooperation with other states (Maizels and Nissanke, 1984). Philanthropic reasons and the motive of solidarity often put forward by development institutions are dismissed by realists as more or less conscious pretensions with the claim that positive side-effects which development cooperation brings to states are clearly calculated and outweigh the financial losses. Hence, no cooperation will ever take place out of pure altruism.

When viewing the ISP through the realist lens, the objectives of the ISP as presented in the beginning of this section must be understood in the context of the Swedish state’s interests and of the power struggle of Swedish universities and scientists on the international level. As stated in Uppsala University’s internationalization policy, the goal is to “strengthen its position as a world-leading university” and “international cooperation represents a means and strategy for improving the quality of research and study programmes” (UU, 2008: 2). This point correlates with realist assumptions that by collaborating with promising students and scientists in developing countries, the ISP serves as a tool to improve the research capacity and the image of the university.

However, when looking at the case study findings, it can be ruled out that making Uppsala University a popular destination for scientists is the main driving force for ISP’s engagement in developing countries as it supports student exchange to other destinations, primarily South to South. Group leaders in Bangladesh have been able to send students to Pakistan, Thailand, South Korea and other places using ISP money. Moreover, South-South collaboration is also promoted by the ISP through the financing of regional scientific networks and conferences, so that the self-interest argument cannot be upheld in this regard.

Furthermore, brain drain is relatively low in ISP-supported groups and the sandwich approach is reported to be a very successful tool in preventing brain drain for previously
stated reasons. Students who have done part of their research at a Swedish University were mainly coordinated from their supervisors at home, so that the thematic focus was rather on domestic research problems than on Swedish ones. Reported encouragement of ISP staff to engage with local issues dismisses the realist argument that scientists from developing countries provide cheap resources that are used to solve existing problems of Sweden or of developed countries in general. No interviewed collaborator in Bangladesh reported to have felt pressure from the ISP in this regard. Similarly, the flexibility given to supported groups in the utilization of the fund indicates that the ISP tries to shift power and to promote local ownership.

Surely, there are benefits for the ISP, Uppsala University and the Swedish state through the collaboration with Bangladesh. One of the interviewees in Uppsala admitted that Swedish students profit tremendously from intercultural experiences and friendships with non-European students. However, these benefits do not appear to constitute the core motivations of ISP’s work. The approaches that the institution has established over the years suggest a much more development-orientated motif the sincerity of which is felt by the collaborators. Of course one could take the realist argument one step further and claim that benefiting mentally from a good deed like helping another country also adheres to the egoism principle. However, such a perspective would miss the point since it is the actual impact, the quality of the collaborations and the results of provided support which count by the end of the day.

9.2. Interdependence liberalism

Interdependence liberalists regard the growing interconnectedness between states on the economic, political, technological, cultural etc. level as main reasons for cooperation. In a globalized world, North-South development assistance is a necessary tool to achieve further human development. Progress plays a central role in the liberal tradition of thought. Similar to realists, liberalists also departure from the rationalistic premise that human beings are mainly driven by their own interests. What divides the two schools of thought is that liberalists attribute much more importance to the process of learning, socialization and cooperation which are seen as essential elements leading not only to the advancement of the individual, but also of society as a whole (Keohane, 1988: 380).

Therefore, development-oriented institutions are not viewed in a power structure, but rather as independent entities that have their own histories and interests. Receivers of
development support are not the exploited class in the global hierarchy as indicated in the neo-Marxist school of thought and also not individuals suppressed by the dominant Western knowledge structure as suggested in post-colonial and post-structuralist writings. Far more, these individuals have a free will and a free choice and decide to collaborate with Northern actors because they truly believe that it will benefit them. Thus, the ISP is viewed more positively in this perspective and the approaches that it takes to bring about real development on the ground is considered to give proof of the benefits that this interconnectedness can entail.

Indeed, when viewing the multiple ways in which both Sweden and Bangladesh benefit from the research cooperation gives reason to believe that the explanation given by interdependence liberalism contains some truth. On both sides, interviewees identified the necessity to develop further and to interlink with other scientists for the sake of improving the quality of produced research and for the sake of reaching a similar international level. As one interviewed scientist put it: “Nowadays collaboration is essential, it is not possible for one country to have success alone.” Research is a much more international undertaking today than it used to be in the past and one must keep up with the advancement if one wants to do good science.

Furthermore, the idea within interdependence liberalism that the use of force is gradually reduced in an interdependent world and hierarchies become less expressive can explain the egalitarian way in which scientists from Sweden and from Bangladesh interact and view one another. Mutuality in personal interaction has been emphasized by all interviewed persons and scientific freedom and flexibility in utilizing the grant has been described as a valued characteristic of the collaboration. In the liberalist understanding, the collaboration is socially empowering for the Bangladeshi scientists because it is their free choice and the best existing option to engage in that relation.

However, the limitation of interdependence liberalism is felt when it comes to understanding the lack of direct common research programmes between both countries. As one supported scientist put it: “Swedish groups are much more advanced. The host group in Sweden has less interest to directly collaborate with Bangladeshi scientists because they are at a different level.” Interdependence liberalism has a blind eye on existing economic and structural power relations and hierarchies and, therefore, cannot fully explain the extent to which actions are shaped by these power relations. Moreover, the meaning of the collaboration in terms of established values and norms and the way in which certain ideas about the collaboration have been constructed in the process of interaction throughout the
years is not addressed within the liberal framework. That is, however, crucial if one wishes to understand the distinct nature of the ISP’s approach, its effectiveness in terms of the satisfaction among supported scientists and the impact of the groups.

9.3. Constructivism

In contrast to realism and interdependence liberalism which use a rationalistic approach to explain how international actors behave in the global arena, constructivism is engaged in the interpretation of contextual meaning and is not supportive of broad generalizations and universal principles. Printed pieces of paper represent a means of payment only because people are engaged in a constant process of attributing a certain value to them (Searl, 1995: 42). Similar to the concept of money, institutions and organizations are a product of the recurrent construction of meaning through the interaction of involved individuals. Institutionalized norms play an important role in the functioning of an organization and the way it is viewed by others (Finnemore and Sikkink, 1998).

In the case of the ISP, existing norms are embedded in the outwards orientation of the Uppsala University and in the Swedish development policy encored in Sida rules and practices. Uppsala University represents the normative cradle of the ISP. When the International Seminar in Physics (as the ISP was initially called) was established in 1961, the aim was to use the established capacity at the Institute of Physics of Uppsala University and to share knowledge with scientists from developing countries by providing “possibilities for individual participation in qualified experimental research” (Lindqvist 2001: 17). From the very beginning, the nature of the relation with Southern scientists was a collaborative one, hence, laying the foundation for the ISP’s partnership approach.

Similarly, as the largest funding source, Sida has also influenced ISP’s norms and methods over the years. In 1980, it was Sida who encouraged the ISP to consider promoting the exchange of scientists among developing countries (Lindqvist 2001: 31). Furthermore, it was on Sida’s request that the ISP withdrew from a number of supported countries after the new government’s focus policy in 2007 which was justified with the ambition to achieve more efficient development support to only few bilateral countries (Swedish Government, 2007). Moreover, the ISP’s recent shift towards results-based management can be viewed as a reaction to Sida’s demands in this regard. While certain forms of influence of Sida over the ISP are beneficial for supported scientists, others are less so. The point is that the ISP is not an institution that acts in a vacuum, but reflects
Sida’s and, consequently, the Swedish government’s objectives as well as Uppsala University’s norms and values.

Another strength of the constructivist lens is that it steers the attention towards the meaning and the connotations that Sweden as a country and a donor possesses for collaborating scientists. One research group leader stated the idea that Sweden is well-known and appreciated for its sincere development approach. Other scientists have expressed their admiration of the Swedish people and the philanthropic nature of the Swedish funds in comparison to other funds. One can hypothesize that collaboration with a country that has a good reputation and whose assistance is viewed positively evokes less skepticism and mistrust on the side of the supported groups and leads to a better quality of collaboration and, eventually, to better outputs.

There is, however, also a downside to adopting an interpretivist perspective. Constructivism does not allow for a generalization of the ISP approach as a model to other donors as the circumstances that shape the success of a specific collaboration are not given in a different institution or country. Many factors play a role for the success of the ISP-Bangladesh collaboration and shared meaning has been built over time, so that institutions with a different set of norms might not necessarily find the ISP’s approach attractive. Moreover, constructivists – similar to interdependence liberals – dismiss structuralist explanations which in the case of lacking common research projects between Swedish and Bangladeshi scientists would be particularly interesting to understand.

**9.4. Need for new theory?**

Viewing the results of the theoretical analysis, it can be concluded that interdependence liberalism and constructivism are more useful than realism in predicting and explaining the nature of the ISP and the way it is perceived by supported individuals. Climbing up three different ladders of abstraction led to the insight that the ISP is best understood as an instance of interconnectedness and social empowerment rather than selfish interest. However, none of the three theories could account for all research findings. A theory would be necessary which has the potential to perform a balance between recognizing the structural inequalities that exist in international relations and, at the same time, paying attention to involved interests and norms. Would such a theory be imaginable? The function of a theory is to point out significant aspects from a bulk of data and social phenomena, put different events into perspective on a more abstract level and explain why things are happening the way they are
(Jørgensen, 2010: 8). Hence, focusing on too many aspects at the same time would not constitute a good theory.

Perhaps it is the mix of theories that is necessary to understand different aspects of the same phenomenon. If so, has the range of possible theoretical frameworks been exhausted in this work? The goal was to shed light on the ISP from theories which offer contrasting interpretations of an institution acting within the international arena of development assistance and theories which provide a positivist (realism, interdependence liberalism) and a post-positivist (constructivism) epistemological basis. However, realism and interdependence realism are “grand” theories which try to explain many aspects of social interaction on a very abstract level. In order to engage with interpretation on a lower level of analysis, a “middle-range” theory would be necessary that would be capable of accounting for interaction of institutions with one another.

Dependency theory, which is a neo-Marxist theory, was initially regarded to be a reasonable starting point for this research, but was eventually abandoned due to too much focus on capital and economic exploitation on the structural level. Another possibility was the solidarism perspective of the international society tradition. However, although this perspective focuses on universal human rights and the responsibility of all members of the international society to support each other, it is unable to account for the different interests that specific institutions have when engaging with other actors (which is stressed within realism and interdependence liberalism). The list of possible ways to look at North-South relations and development assistance is long, hence, it would be an interesting task for future research to find a combination of mid-level theories that can exhaustively analyze the nature of an institution that provides development assistance.
10. Conclusion

The research conducted in this thesis was characterized by two main research objectives: an empirical and a theoretical one. On the empirical level, the aim was to challenge radical views prevalent in aid literature which postulate that development assistance is ineffective at best and harmful at worst (Gulrajani, 2011: 200-203). This was done through the examination of the ISP in opposition to traditional forms of development assistance provided by governments, multilateral organizations and development banks. Empirical data collected in the ISP-Bangladesh field study in form of semi-structured interviews with supported scientists served as main case study evidence next to ISP-related documents and archival records. Following the indicators of successful North-South cooperation established to assess the ISP’s approach in Bangladesh, i.e. local ownership, empowerment and partnership, which were operationalized in six themes relevant to research capacity building, the case study revealed that the ISP can be viewed as a fruitful example of North-South development assistance. ISP’s success is achieved through its mode of operation, its long-term support and its egalitarian way of interacting with Southern collaborators.

On the theoretical level, three IR frameworks functioned as the basis for the examination of the ISP. Realism, interdependence liberalism and constructivism allowed to derive hypotheses which functioned as predictions and guidelines for the ISP-Bangladesh case study. The ultimate aim was to find out whether the ISP can be best perceived as an instance of self-interest (realism), interconnectedness (interdependence liberalism) or social empowerment (constructivism). The findings of the theoretical analysis suggest that realist assumptions that the ISP – as an institution mainly sponsored by the governmental agency Sida – is an instrument of the Swedish state to lure talented students to Sweden and have them solve research problems relevant for Sweden cannot be confirmed. Rather than establishing conditionalities and examining a top-down approach which enables brain drain, the ISP follows a soft approach that gives supported researchers freedom to send their students to any desired country and to choose their own research agendas. Collaboration between Southern countries is promoted and financially supported by the ISP, although it is not always successful due to various reasons. The enormous impact that ISP-related scientists in Bangladesh have on their own country seems to be wide-reaching and sustainable because it involves the establishment of a firm basis in enabling sciences.
which can solve health-related, environmental, technological etc. problems, the training of future teachers and the strengthening of human resources in many societal areas.

Interdependence liberalism and constructivism are more adequate to account for the success of the ISP-Bangladesh collaboration, with constructivism being the most elaborate framework. Interdependence liberalism is able to explain why collaboration in the field of research and development takes place in the first place: it is the growing globalization and interconnectedness of states, research institutions and other societal sectors that necessitates deeper contacts between scientists today. From the constructivist point of view, it is shared values and norms between the ISP, Uppsala University and Sida which must be given attention. Here, one finds very altruistic norms of the Swedish state and a strong outwards orientation of Uppsala University.

In retrospect, the chosen theories have turned out to be very useful in understanding the case at hand. Having occupied a dominant position in IR scholarship throughout much of the 20th century, realism seems to gradually lose its explanatory power. In a world in which military rivalry has become a secondary issue and in which more actors have the power to shape ideas and influence decision-making on multiple levels, new thoughts have to be thought and new frameworks have to be established. Making use of middle-range theories as has been long done in sociology would be highly suitable in the context of alternative forms of North-South development cooperation. Post-positivist approaches such as constructivism, post-structuralism and critical theory already exist. It would be intriguing to see future research which attempts to create a symbiosis between interpretative approaches and structural theories such as neo-Marxism and interdependence liberalism.
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-73-

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12. Appendix: Interview guides

I. Interview guide for research group leaders and research group members

1. Asking about using the recorder during the interview.
2. Introducing myself and my study.
3. Explaining confidentiality (answers handled anonymously, no mentioning names in the thesis).
4. Explaining structure and length of interview.
5. Collecting descriptive data: from CVs that they had sent beforehand.
6. Guiding questions:

• How did you become a scientist? Did you have other opportunities?
• Were your parents also scientists? If not, which profession do / did they have?
• How long and how deeply you been involved in the ISP collaboration?
• When did you first come in contact with the ISP? How and with whom was the first encounter? Were you looking for research support at that time? Who contacted whom first?
• Before gaining support from the ISP, how was the level of you research group (persons, equipment, networks, projects etc.)?
• How was your first impression of representatives from the ISP?
• Did you compare the ISP with other sources of support? If yes, why did you choose to collaborate with the ISP instead of a different organization / research capacity building programme?
• How did the collaboration develop throughout the years? How often did someone from the ISP visit Bangladesh? Have you visited Sweden yourself?
• How does the process of initiation of research projects and ideas work? Are there any guidelines from the ISP regarding topics or methodology? (More specific: Can students and researchers choose their topic and approach freely? Were you ever restricted in any regard by the ISP during your research?)
• How important is it for you to be independent in your research?
• What happens to research results when students have been partly studying with a fellowship in a European country? Who has the authority over it? (More specific: Has the host university the right to claim the authority over it? Has that happened before?)
• Which words would you use to describe the collaboration with the ISP? (Would you call it a partnership / collegial collaboration / donor-receiver relation / other? Would you describe it as equal / based on mutual trust and understanding / respectful / empowering / unequal / lacking respect and trust / top-down / disempowering?)
• Which advantages / disadvantages do you see from the collaboration with the ISP? (Which consequences of the collaboration have most value for your research group or for you personally?)
• Have there ever been any tensions with the ISP? If yes, in which circumstances and why?
• Have you ever felt that supporters within the ISP have treated you without respect or looked down on you because you are at the receiving end of the collaboration?

• What do you think is the main motivation for the Swedish government to provide financial support for higher education in Bangladesh?

• Which interests do you think scientists in Bangladesh have to engage with development organizations from the North?

• Who do you think benefits more from the collaboration?

• How has the South-South cooperation developed since ISP support? Would you say it has thrived or diminished? Why? Has the ISP been helpful / hindering in establishing contacts to other researchers in the South?

• Are you planning on staying in your current position or would you like to switch to a different research institution or even move to a different country? Why?

• How great is the brain drain from your research group? Do you keep track of your alumni? (How many percent of former students have left the country?)

• Do you think that students who have been enrolled in an ISP sandwich programme or have gone abroad under other circumstances during their studies are more prone to leaving the country after their graduation or is there no correlation between these two things?

• Do you receive any other support from other Northern governments, development organizations or research capacity building programmes? What do you think about these collaborations? (Are the approaches that these supporters employ different from ISP’s approach? If yes, in which way are they different?)

• Which were the reasons for the phase-out of support to the group BAN:03? How did the phase-out go about? What have been the consequences of the phase-out for your research group?

• Where do you see yourself and your research group in 5 years? Do you think you will still need financial support from the North? Why? How do you think you will manage to become independent from assistance?

• Has the ISP provided your research group with tools on how to become more independent and self-reliant?

• How do you view the implications of your research on the overall development of your country (economy, health, technological advancement, gender equality, environmental sustainability, human rights etc.)?

• How would you assess the advancement of the research capability of your research group without ISP support? (How has the ISP benefited your research group in comparison to other groups who did not receive ISP support? Where would your research group stand now if there had been no ISP support?)

ANY CONCLUDING REMARKS?
II. Interview guide for M.Sc., M.Phil. and Ph.D. students supported by ISP

1. Asking about using the recorder during the interview.
2. Introducing myself and my study.
3. Explaining confidentiality (answers handled anonymously, no mentioning names in the thesis).
4. Explaining structure and length of interview.
5. Collecting descriptive data: name / gender / age / study programme etc.
6. Guiding questions:

- How did you become a scientist? Did you have other opportunities?
- Were your parents also scientists? If not, which profession do / did they have?
- How did you learn about the ISP? By accident or while actively looking for funding sources?
- At which point in your career did you obtain the first ISP fellowship? How much financial support did you obtain?
- Was the ISP grant the first study grant that you had obtained? (If not, what are the other funds obtained before the ISP grant? At the time you applied for the first grant, was the ISP the only potential funding source you knew about? If not, what were the other funding sources?) Whenever there were different funding sources, why did you decide to apply to ISP?
- For those who are enrolled / have been enrolled in a sandwich programme: How many times have you travelled to Sweden or another European country and for which period? How was your experience studying abroad?
- How has impact of the ISP support been on the advancement of your career? (Critical / essential / determinant / moderate / limited / negative?)
- How do you feel about being a grant receiver? Do you feel any advantages or disadvantages for your personal or professional life? (Did the fact of being a grant receiver provide you with a status and recognition or did it provide you with a stigma at your university / family / circle of friends?)
- If you think about your fellow students, which proportion of them receives a study grant? How easy / difficult is it to get in contact or be friends with students who do not have a study grant?
- What are the main qualities / advantages of ISP support (as compared to other research capacity building programmes)?
- What are the main weaknesses disadvantages of the ISP support (as compared to other research capacity building programmes)?
- In your time as an ISP grant receiver, how was the decision-making process regarding your research topics and methodology? Did you have any guidelines from the ISP? (If not answered, more direct: how free did you feel about introducing your own ideas and making decisions regarding your research topics and methodology?)
- What needs to be changed within the ISP programme?
- What have been the main outputs of your ISP related projects?
• What do you think is the main motivation for the Swedish government to provide financial support for higher education in Bangladesh?

• Which interests do you think scientists in Bangladesh have to engage with development organizations from the North?

• For current students: When do you think you will be finished and what are your plans for the future? Do you want to stay in Bangladesh or leave the country? Why?

• For current students: Do you think that you will be able to contribute to the improvement of the situation in your country with your work?

• For graduates: Where do you work and what are the main constraints in your research work today? What are your plans for the future? Do you think you are contributing to the improvement of the situation in your country?

ANY CONCLUDING REMARKS?
III. Interview guide for ISP staff

1. Asking about using the recorder during the interview.
2. Introducing myself and my study.
3. Explaining confidentiality (answers handled anonymously, no mentioning names in the thesis).
4. Explaining structure and length of interview.
5. Collecting descriptive data: name / gender / age / previous position.
6. Guiding questions:
   - How long have you worked for the ISP and why did you decide to work for it?
   - Is this your main occupation or do you have other responsibilities outside the ISP?
   - The ISP started out as a fellowship programme and developed into a fully-fledged international development programme. Which were the decisive reasons for that change?
   - How has the ISP’s approach towards research capacity building change throughout the years?
   - What do you think are the main reasons for ISP’s engagement in developing countries?
   - What do you think are the main reasons of scientists in developing countries to engage with research capacity building institutions or development NGOs from the North?
   - Who do you think benefits more from the established North-South collaborations?
   - What does the Uppsala University gain from North-South cooperation besides improving the quality and quantity of research produced in developing countries?
   - Which criteria are essential in the choice of scientists, research groups or networks for support in the South?
   - How is the ISP’s approach influenced by Sida’s guidelines / policies / requirements?
   - The ISP had to withdraw support from many countries because of the Swedish government’s decision in 2007 to focus on 12 least developed countries. How has that decision affected supported research groups and networks?
   - How is Sida’s own approach to research capacity building in developing countries different from that of the ISP?
   - What do you think is unique about the ISP’s approach compared to other research capacity building institutions, governmental development agencies, NGOs or development banks such as the World Bank?
   - Which aspects of the ISP approach can be improved or are being improved?
   - The evaluation that has been carried out by the company GHD in 2011 concluded that the ISP lacks a results-based orientation and a functioning monitoring system. How do you view this critique? What do you think about the results-based approach? Has the ISP introduced any measures to tackle these perceived shortcomings?
   - How would you describe the decision-making process within the ISP with regard to development strategies, choice of supported groups, money allocation etc.??
• What are the criteria for choosing reference group members who are responsible for evaluating the activities of supported groups and networks?

• Do you think that the ISP’s work is contributing to the overall socio-economic development of the supported developing countries? If yes, how? If no, why?

• Some critics say that the budget of northern countries set aside for development assistance is better spent on direct support of marginalized people (alleviation of hunger, poverty, water-borne diseases, child and maternal mortality etc.). Why would you still argue for research capacity building as a means to achieve overall development?

• The ISP supports mainly basic science research and not so much technology-oriented research. People in a developing country like Bangladesh, however, are in urgent need of cheap local technology that will facilitate their everyday lives. Is there a need to overthink the restriction to basic sciences as the mainly supported areas?

• What are the main challenges of the ISP today?

• Where do you see the ISP in 5 years?

• Where do you see yourself in 5 years? Will you still be employed in your current position?

ANY CONCLUDING REMARKS?
IV. Interview guide for ERD official

1. Asking about using the recorder during the interview.
2. Introducing myself and my study.
3. Explaining confidentiality (answers handled anonymously, no mentioning names in the thesis).
4. Explaining structure and length of interview.
5. Collecting descriptive data: name / gender / age / previous position.
6. Guiding questions:

- How long have you worked at the Economic Relations Division of the Ministry of Finance?

- How has your experience regarding the collaboration with NORDIC actors (governments, development agencies, NGOs etc.) been so far?

- To which percentage does the state budget of Bangladesh consist of development assistance at the moment? Has that number of aid increased or decreased in the last 5 years?

- Is there a difference of the European Commission’s approach to development assistance regarding food security, promotion of human rights, reinforcement of non-state actors, environment, empowerment of women etc. and that of the NORDIC countries?

- Is bilateral cooperation usually considered more or less fruitful than multilateral assistance?

- What do you think are the main motives of European and other “developed” countries to financially support “developing” countries like Bangladesh?

- What do you think are the main interests of developing countries like Bangladesh to engage in economic relations with developed countries?

- Do you think that development assistance has created dependency over the last 3 decades in Bangladesh or do you think that is has brought social empowerment and economic development? Why do you think that?

- How is the general discourse in your institution and in Bangladesh around the idea of development assistance? Is it rather positive or negative? Are there many proponents of the idea that the North is “exploiting” the South by making it dependent on aid? Are there many proponents of the idea that cooperation with the North benefits both sides equally?

- Do you think that Bangladesh must search for other means to bring about development other than development assistance from Northern countries? How probable is it that Bangladesh will become independent from development assistance in the future?

ANY CONCLUDING REMARKS?
V. Interview guide for Sida official

1. Asking about using the recorder during the interview.
2. Introducing myself and my study.
3. Explaining confidentiality (answers handled anonymously, no mentioning names in the thesis).
4. Explaining structure and length of interview.
5. Collecting descriptive data: name / gender / age / previous position.
6. Guiding questions:

   • How long have you worked for Sida and why did you decide to work for it?
   • What are the main tasks / responsibilities in your work?
   • What do you think are the main motivations of Sida to provide development support to developing countries?
   • How does the decision-making process work within Sida?
   • Sida has been supporting the ISP since 1978. What have been the main reasons for that support?
   • How do you think have Sida’s guidelines and rules influenced ISP’s work?
   • How would you characterize the cooperation with the ISP? Have there been any tensions in the collaboration with the ISP and why?
   • How do you evaluate ISP’s work so far?
   • In the last couple decades development assistance has come under continuous scrutiny. Why do you think is Sida’s work still justifiable?
   • How is Sida’s approach to development different from that of other donors?
   • How can Sida’s current development approach be improved?
   • It is often claimed that governmental agencies tend to work top-down and are detached from local problems of communities in need of assistance. Has there been an attempt within Sida to implement the Paris Declaration and put local empowerment and ownership on its agenda? If yes, how? If no, why?
   • In 2007, the Swedish government decided to focus on 12 developing countries for its development cooperation. What do you think were the reasons for that restriction? Do you agree with this policy?
   • How do you see Sida and its work in 5 years? Do you think funding for the development field will increase in the future? Will the ISP be still supported?

ANY CONCLUDING REMARKS?