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An Interdisciplinary Study on Agency Enhancement Process and Factors

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Bridging Practice and Theory through Crystallizing Wisdom
of a Third-Country Expert**

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Empowerment through Enhancing Agency: Bridging Practice and Theory through Crystallizing Wisdom of a Third-Country Expert

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Abstract

This paper tries to identify factors and understand dynamics on enhancing agency (will and ability to pursuit for personal or social goals), commonly understood also as empowerment. Specifically, the question asked is if the ‘black boxes’ existing in current theoretical explanations in the field of empowerment and agency development can be opened up by connecting practice and research, with clarifying context specific factors.

For this purpose, the author first reviews the literature relating to empowerment and agency development to reach a common understanding and to identify the discrepancies between the two schools, as well as to extract a theoretical model of agency development. Second, the paper identifies two dimensions and three factors for analyzing a case study to understand what is unclear from theory can be understood in reality. These are the initial context for developing the project, the actual development of an agency development project, and possible mechanisms of agency development for community members. Subsequently, a case study of the development of a training program called MMO (*Metodologia de Motivacion y Organizacion*) in Nicaragua is reported on, and the processes of its inspiration, development, execution and diffusion are documented in detail. Finally, the possible dynamics of each process of agency development, which are black boxes of the reviewed theories, are to be extracted through analyzing the case. The author also clarifies context specific factors which may have influenced the agency development process as described in the case study.

The major findings are as follows: first, the context specific factors that influence the whole process of agency development of people (both community members as well as support members), such as the upbringing and experiences of the key person and the socio-cultural and economic features of Nicaragua are identified; second, the process of agency development experienced by the aid providers/supporters (core facilitators and village level facilitators), which can be explained by self-determination theory as well as by explanatory frameworks related to social communication such as *concientizacion* (a Brazilian consciousness-raising methodologies and movement) and storytelling, is outlined; and, finally, the plausible mechanisms of agency development perhaps experienced by the community members is explained. This final outcome is divided into four categories relating to discussions on agency development, to promote the understanding of what is actually done on the ground beyond theoretical explanations. In other words, what is actually done in practice to foster the four types of power in relation to agency: “power from within,” “power with,” “power to” and “power over.”

Keywords: agency development, empowerment, third-country expert, process documentation, Nicaragua

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1. Introduction

The theoretical contributions to discussions on development policy and practice have, since the 1980's, seen attempts to adopt a bottom-up development model for poverty alleviation (Sen 1985; Dreze and Sen 1989; Sen 1999). This approach supports the importance of will and ownership amongst community members in relation to the initiatives and actions taken by them to improve or maintain their quality of life, instead of the application of a top-down development model in which outsiders diagnose the problems of insiders and impose solutions.

One of the most important bottom-up schools related to the theme is undoubtedly empowerment. The arguments of this school have been present from the 1980's in international development theory. There is still widespread agreement that the empowerment process can enable people living in poverty, and those who are marginalized, to participate meaningfully in shaping their own futures (Alsop, Bertelsen, and Holland 2006), and how participation can quickly become a token exercise or even a means of maintaining unequal power relations without genuine empowerment (Hickey and Mohan 2008). Thus, empowerment is still an evergreen agenda in international development, both for practitioners as well as academics, but especially for the former.

However, as its conceptual framework is related to terms such as agency, autonomy, self-direction, self-determination, liberation, participation, mobilization, and self-confidence (Narayan 2005), empowerment has been defined in a number of different ways in the literature, and this has caused confusion. For instance, Kebeer (1999) defines empowerment as the process by which those who have been denied the ability to make strategic life choices acquire this ability. Narayan-Parker (2002) defines empowerment as the expansion of the assets and capabilities of poor people that allows them to participate in, negotiate with, influence, control, and hold accountable institutions that affect their lives. Rowlands (1997) asserts that

empowerment is more than participation in decision making; it must also include the processes that lead people to perceive themselves as able and entitled to make decisions.

To make the concept more concise and understandable, from the 2000's, scholars have tried to reframe empowerment by using the term agency and its development. Maholtra et al (2005), through reviewing the mainstream literature on empowerment, concludes that enhancing agency probably comes closest to capturing the concept that the majority of writers are referring to as empowerment. Narayan (2005) points out that there are two dimensions of empowerment: 1) the expansion of agency; and 2) the increases in opportunity structure that provide what might be considered preconditions for effective agency. As for the definition of agency, Sen (1985; 1999) defines this as what a person is free to do and achieve in pursuit of whatever goals or values he or she regards as important, and an agent as one who acts and brings about change.

By contrast, structures are defined as those influencing factors (such as social class, religion, gender, ethnicity, customs, institutions, etc.) that determine or limit agency and the ability to make decisions (Barker 2005). According to Giddens (1984), agency is critical to both the reproduction and the transformation of social structures and society, as it signifies an ability to deploy a range of causal powers, including that of influencing those deployed by others. .

From the aspects of monitoring and evaluation, Ibrahim and Alkire (2007) also suggest that empowerment can be equivalently understood as expansion of personal agency and be divided into four types of power based on definitions by Rowlands (1997). These indicators are power over (ability to resist manipulation),¹ power to (creating new possibilities), power with (acting in a group), and power from within (enhancing self-respect and self-acceptance). Thus, when empowerment is reframed as expanding or developing agency, it becomes more

¹ "Power over" in Rowlands (1997, 13) is defined as controlling power, which may be responded to with compliance, resistance or manipulation. This, however seems slightly different from the definition by Ibrahim and Alkire (2007). The author however does not argue this topic, as it is not the main purpose of this article.

intelligible and connectable with major development theories such as the capability approach, and more measurable by the indicators provided by academic contributions.

Nevertheless, some concerns remain with the integration of empowerment with agency development, which might cause discrepancies between the two schools. One is the individualization of the concept. Empowerment is a concept originally born out of social movements that has been adopted also in international development policymaking (Rowlands 1997). It is thus historically associated with processes as well as with results achieved collectively. In comparison, the term agency seems to be defined as being more individualized. Agency, in Sen's definition, refers to *a person's* scope for achieving that *person's* valued goals (Drydyk 2008).

The second problem is de-contextualization. Related to the first issue, when individual agency and its development are focused this tends to omit the fact that each empowerment or agency development process happens in specific contexts and social relations. In the literature of agency/agency development, there are fewer in-depth case studies than in that of empowerment. As Cornwall (2005) warns, this underscores the historical lesson that, ironically, one-size-fits-all development solutions that ignore context do violence to the very hope of a world without poverty. The third problem is the lack of applied research on how to assist the promotion of empowerment/agency development processes, which are also well-connected to academic theories. On the one hand, the above mentioned literature focuses on explaining what empowerment or agency (development) is and how to measure it, not on how to promote empowerment or agency development. On the other hand, there are countless reports written by development practitioners working for NGOs and development agencies. These witness the changes (in the case of empowerment) as results of their interventions, but are often not connected to theories or macro data, or use the word *agency* at all. Thus, the gap between explanation and practice, representing the gap between the two schools, is a persistent reality. An

alternative approach for conducting research should be intended to make knowledge situated (Haraway 1988).

Given the intention to respond to the above issues and concerns, this paper tries to understand what is being done to facilitate empowerment or agency development in practice by connecting research (academic theories) and practice (development projects) with clarifying context specific factors. Through analyzing and crystalizing a case study, the paper tries to frame a hypothesis (a supposition made on the basis of limited evidence as a starting point for further investigation) on plausible dynamics for enhancing agency divided into the four types/dimensions.

In the following section, the author first reviews the main literature on empowerment and agency to develop a theoretical framework for the agency development process and identifies black boxes of the theories. The author also clarifies the three critical factors for analyzing a case study. Subsequently, a development project is described in detail, one that was implemented with the particular purpose of enhancing the agency of community people. Thirdly, the case is analyzed to understand the black boxes in the theoretical framework, focusing on the following three aspects for analysis: 1) context specific factors, 2) development of an agency development project, and 3) the possible mechanisms in the agency development of community members for enhancing each type of power (power from within, power with, power to, and power over). This is further related to plausible theoretical frameworks adapted from academic disciplines related to human resource development.

The author takes this research approach with the intention to reframe development researches for making a difference: theories can, for instance, explain “*what* empowerment, people’s participation, or gender equalities are or should be,” but cannot answer the question of “*how* to realize or promote them in each context,” which can be only crystalized through case studies in detail. Thus, this paper is not written to prove the validity of certain theories, but to suggest plausible mechanisms of empowerment or agency enhancement in practice, which can

be shaped into a development model through further investigation. Thus, the paper does not give a rigorous impact analysis of the power and power relations in the case study, or focus on women's empowerment.

In this paper, the two terms empowerment and agency development/enhancement are used compatibly. The author defines empowerment as enhancing or developing agency, which is a process within particular domains, contexts and social relations that leads people to perceive themselves as being able to make decisions, and act upon these to make differences (mainly referring to Rowlands 1997, as well as Ibrahim and Alkire 2007). Agency is defined as the will and ability to deploy a range of causal powers in pursuit of identified goals or values (Sen 1999 and Giddens 1984). Although there are a variety of definitions of these terms, the author adopts the above definitions, because they are among the most quoted definitions used by both practitioners and researchers in promoting international development.

2. Research Framework, Methods and the Case Selection

2.1 Research Framework: Identifying Black Boxes of the Current Theories

What is then an alternative way to connect the discussions regarding empowerment and agency, as well as their explanation and practice, so that development studies and development practices can altogether work for the poverty alleviation that should be the shared goal beyond their differences? To answer this, the discussion now turns into the two classic references on empowerment, read and referred to widely in both schools, Kabeer (1994) and Rowlands (1997).

First, regarding the core of empowerment/agency development processes, in *Reversed Reality*, Kabeer (1994), by analyzing the practices of non-profit organizations, strongly emphasizes that power within, such as self-respect, aspiration and sense of agency, is the foundation of the empowerment process. In this way, people can feel entitled to analyze their

current situation, and identify their own needs in the pursuit of well-being. Second, with regard to types of power, in *Questioning Empowerment*, Rowlands (1997), divides them into four; power over, power to, power with and power from within (identical to power within for Kabeer), emphasizing the importance of understanding the generative side and types of power (power to, power with and power from within). Her typology is adopted by Ibrahim and Alkire (2007) in their development of indicators of agency development. The following table shows each power type as developed by both parties (Table 1).

Table 1. Types of power

Type of power	Rowlands (1997)	Ibrahim and Alkire (2007)
Power from within	The spiritual strength and uniqueness that resides in each one of us and makes us truly human. Its basis is self-acceptance and self-respect, which extend, in turn, to respect for and acceptance of others as equals.	Enhancing self-respect and self-acceptance
Power with	A sense of the whole being greater than the sum of the individuals, especially when a group tackles problems together	Acting in group
Power to	Generative or productive power (sometimes incorporating or manifesting as forms of resistance or manipulation) which creates new possibilities and actions without domination	Creating new possibility

Power over	Controlling power, which may be responded to with compliance, resistance (which weakens processes of victimisation) or manipulation	Ability to resist manipulation
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Elaborated by the Author based on Rowlands (1997) and Ibrahim and Alkire (2007, 11).

Third, with respect to the dimensions of empowerment/agency development, Rowlands (1997), reflecting upon her NGO works in Honduras as well as referring to related literature (including Kabeer), divides the dimensions of empowerment into three processes: personal, relational and collective, each of which is interrelated. In the discussion of agency development, Narayan (2005) divides dimensions of empowerment into two, though these are co-influencing: 1) expansion of agency; and 2) increases in opportunity structure for effective agency. Table 2 is an attempt to bring together both arguments, adding the fourth dimension of “social” into Rowlands’ typology. The main difference between collective and social is that while the former represents a community where one physically or mentally resides, the latter represent a collection of communities and institutional transformations.

Table 2. Dimensions of empowerment

Dimension (Rowlands 1997): Process Explanation	Dimension (Narayan 2005): Focus on the Process
Personal: Developing a sense of self and individual confidence and capacity, and undoing the effects of internalized oppression	Expansion of agency
Relational (Close relationship: Family and Small groups): Developing the ability to negotiate and influence the nature of a relationship and decisions made within it	Expansion of agency/Increase of opportunity structure

Collective (Community): Where individuals work together to achieve a more extensive impact than each could have had alone	Expansion of agency/ Increase of opportunity structure
Social: where a collection of communities (society) as a whole try to transform current structures/institutions as an ends and means of empowerment.	Increase of opportunity structure

Elaborated by the author based on Rowland (1997, 15) and Narayan (2005, 5).

Combining the two tables, it is perhaps possible to generate a further table as a research framework for this paper (Table 3). Although each type of power and its exercise are often interrelated in real situations, the author intentionally divides the process into four to make the argument intelligible. The table explains how a person develops her/his personal agency from within (power within) that is the foundation of the agency development process. Then, or at the same time, through relations within small groups, such as with families, and neighbors, how we experience the ability to negotiate and influence a relationship, and decisions made within it, as well as experiencing a sense of the whole being greater when a group tackles problems together (power with). Such social relations may be experienced at a higher level, that of community (a collection of groups), where we experience generative or productive power from the creation of new possibilities and actions through working as a community to achieve a more extensive impact than individuals could have had alone (power to). Additionally, we develop the ability to resist manipulation, allowing a society as a whole to transform current power structures and institutions (power over).

The table theoretically explains *what* the status of agency at each process is. However, as discussed above, it does not explicate *how* agency development can be exercised or facilitated at each process. Thus, it is necessary to carefully analyze an appropriate case study and fill the black boxes of the theories.

Table 3. A process model of agency development of community members

Type	Dimension	Explanation of Status of Agency at Each Process
1st Power from within	Individual (Expansion of Agency)	S/he develops sense of agency (self-respect and self-acceptance) and undoing the effects of internalized oppression.
2nd Power with	Relational (Expansion of agency/Increase of opportunity structure)	S/he develops a sense of the whole being greater than the sum of the individuals, especially when a group tackles problems together as well as foster the ability to negotiate and influence the nature of a relationship within family and small groups
3rd Power to	Community (Expansion of agency/ Increase of opportunity structure)	S/he experiences generative power that creates new possibilities and actions through working as a community to achieve a more extensive impact than each could have had alone.
4th Power over	Social (Increase of opportunity structure)	S/he as develops the ability to resist manipulation, where a society as a whole tries to transform current power structures.

Elaborated by the author through combining Table 1 and 2.

2.2 Research Methods and the Case Selection: Two Dimensions and Three Factors for Analysis

As a research method, the author adopts case studies to understand how agency development is attempted in development practice. The author tries to crystallize a unique development project through documenting how such initiatives are taken, developed and accepted, as well as

interpreting the mechanisms involved through plausible explanations. This approach is taken for contesting to the third concern discussed above - the lack of applied research that is well-connected to academic theories.

Likewise, reflecting the first and second concerns (individualization and de-contextualization of the concept), the paper pays special attention to the following two dimensions: first it looks at the specific socio-cultural contexts of each process of change and external intervention; second it covers the “making of” a development project exercised collectively; how and who have taken initiatives, developed ideas, and made these into projects. To look into the case study, the following three factors are covered; context, promotion of agency through making a development project, and the dynamics of agency enhancement through application of the project.

As the case study, the author chose the MMO training program (*Metodologia de Motivacion y Organizacion*: Training for motivation and organization, edited in 2004, 2005, 2007, and 2012 by INTA, UNAG and JICA), created and implemented over a decade primarily in Nicaragua by a third-country specialist Tetsuo Nohara, a *Nikkei* (Japanese-descended) Brazilian. There are some reasons for this selection. First, this training program is carried out before PRA (Participatory Rural Appraisal, a collection of people-centered participatory research methods) and seems to deal with agency development, although the term agency development or empowerment is not utilized in the program. After MMO, the majority of the villages in this project have conducted PRA, through which over forty participatory community projects have been planned, more than half implemented (Kuzasa 2013). The author thus assumes something had to be done to facilitating empowerment processes. Besides, the titles of the training, such as “Self-respect and commitment,” “Synergy,” and “Social Capitals and Leadership” seem to be strongly related. Second, this training was not elaborated by external actors, but instead its knowledge was created in a specific context by local ownership and social relations on site over ten years. Third, this training has been recognized, well-accepted, and

diffused in the country. It was incorporated in a JICA development project known as *Alianza Comunitaria*,² held from March 2009 to March 2013, and in addition it has been used not only in the target project area, but also in employee training seminars in counterpart organizations and lectures in some national universities, transcending social strata. Fourth, though anecdotal and rather self-reported, the impacts of the MMO are reported in several project documents (Yamaguchi 2011; Hanawa 2011; and Kuzasa 2013). Fifth, the author wants to pay special respect to wisdom and knowledge of third-country specialists, whose achievements are often unsung in the framework of bilateral international cooperation.

The research was conducted over three years between 2012-2015, structured around literature reviews, individual and group interviews both online and on site, and participant observation of training sessions. In the following discussion, after overviewing the initial context, the author traces the process of MMO through each stage from its conception to diffusion so that the contents can be understood. After this discussion, section 4 analyses the factors that supported the development of the MMO and its diffusion, as well as elaborates the possible mechanisms of agency development based on power from within. Concluding remarks follow.

3. Documenting the Process: The Conception, Development, Execution, and Diffusion of the MMO

This section traces the MMO process in detail; how the MMO was conceived, developed, executed, and diffused stage by stage, after introducing the rural sector and living conditions in Nicaragua. Over twenty years have passed since the end of the civil war in Nicaragua, but although steady economic growth raised per capital national income above 1,500 US dollars,³ it is the second most impoverished nation after Haiti in the region. The Ortega administration of the Sandinista National Liberation Front (FSLN), which began its second term in January 2012,

² Details can be found at <http://www.jica.go.jp/project/nicaragua/003/index.html>

³ Data retrieved from <http://data.worldbank.org/country/nicaragua>.

is strengthening relations with left-wing governments internationally and domestically implementing social policies (education, health, etc.) focused on the poorest strata of society. The poverty rate has been steadily declining, but 42% of citizens are reported to be still in poverty,⁴ and the poverty gap between urban areas (26.6%) and rural areas (63.3% in poverty, 26.6% in extreme poverty) is striking (INIDE 2011, 207-09). Among Nicaragua's primary development policies is the National Development Policy (PNDH 2009-2011),⁵ and beneath this is a rural development-specific program, called the Sector-wide Productive Rural Development Program (PRORURAL-Incluyente 2010-2014).⁶ The former suggests a shift from a top-down free market economics model to a bottom-up citizen participation model (Participación Ciudadana). The latter promotes "increased organization, participation, and ability in residents of rural communities," striving for efficient and sustained development through collaboration between residents and municipal authorities. However, this has yet to see realization, so it was under the above conditions that JICA dispatched Nikkei-Brazilian expert Mr. Nohara for several months every year during 2001-2007 for the purpose of "rural organizational leadership," training (MMO training) at administrative bodies, and to foster a sense of self-reliance and collaboration in the same communities.

3.1 Training Conception Stage (-2000)

Although the MMO training program itself was created after 2001, the development of its conceptual base dates back to a much earlier time. Thus, the author positions the life history of Mr. Nohara, who was the key person of MMO development.⁷ Mr. Nohara, who turns 75 years old in 2016, was born and raised in a Japanese-descent community on the outskirts of São Paulo, Brazil. At age 17 he began to attend a seminary to become a pastor. At age 20, due to the

⁴ Details can be found at <http://www.jica.go.jp/project/nicaragua/003/index.html>.

⁵ Gobierno de Reconciliación y Unidad Nacional de Nicaragua (2009), Plan Nacional de Desarrollo Humano 2009-2011, Managua, Nicaragua.

⁶ MAGFOR (2010), Plan Sectorial PRORURAL Incluyente, Managua, Nicaragua.

⁷ This section was written in consultation with Mr. Nohara in reference to the following website: <http://www.jica.go.jp/brazil/office/information/articles/2010/20101216.html>.

recommendation of a bishop, Mr. Nohara advanced to the School of Philosophy of the University of São Paulo. During his time in university, he participated in a “literacy in 48 hours” program, part of Paulo Freire’s *Conscientizacion* (consciousness-raising methodologies and movement), working in the favelas. However, in 1964, General Branco undertook a large-scale purge of student movements, and Mr. Nohara was caught in its net and imprisoned for ten months. Afterwards, he sought asylum in Uruguay, being invited to Bulgaria from 1965 to 1970 on a scholarship, where he studied agriculture. In 1971 he returned to Brazil, and from 1972 to 1994 he worked at the Cotia Agricultural Cooperative, São Paulo branch.⁸ Mr. Nohara’s primary responsibility there was to administer the youth clubs and women’s groups of the union members’ families. He was engaged every day in the trial-and-error process of determining “how to encourage people to voluntarily take actions.”

In 1985, the cooperative headquarters held an investigative analysis of the reasons why some producers were successful, and from the results of this decided to invite a compost specialist to begin training as well as research and development relating to soil amelioration. However, those producers who received the training felt compost-making was a bother and produced none of it, resulting in all the invested funds going to waste. Feeling keenly that producers must identify problems, and learn and act with their ownership to solve them for any progress to be made, Mr. Nohara started reading books on psychology and sociology, while actively receiving training in self-reliance and collaboration so he could understand how an individual and community as a whole would take initiatives and promote actions in pursuit of identified goals. After the dissolution of the Cotia Agricultural Cooperative in 1994, he joined the National Federation of Agricultural Workers branch in São Paulo⁹ as a consultant, and held training programs on local citizen organization. In 1997, Mr. Nohara participated in a sustainable

⁸ This agricultural union was founded in 1927 with 89 members, and at its peak reached a total of 14,470 members (1986); however, due to a decline in business it disbanded in 1994. <http://www.ndl.go.jp/brasil/column/nokyo.html>.

⁹ Federacion de Trabajadores en la Agricultura del estado de Sao Paulo.

local development program conducted by the union headquarters and Ministry of Labor, leading to his involvement in municipal development projects. The program was meant to raise awareness among civilians, but there was question as to whether it would amount to more than one-way instruction resulting in no change. From his experiences as recounted above, it is clearly understood that knowledge generated without ownership or the exercise of agency does not encourage people to voluntarily take actions or lead to empowerment.

3.2 Training Development Stage (2001-2007)

In 2001, Mr. Nohara was for the first time dispatched to UNAG (*Unión Nacional de Agricultores y Ganaderos de Nicaragua*, the National Union of Farmers and Ranchers, Nicaragua) at the request of MAGFOR (the Ministry of Farming and Forestry). Building on his experience in Brazil, he conducted three different types of training programs in five prefectures. At the core of these activities was the development of the MMO training program.

One participant, UNAG Managua representative Dolores Roa, reflects on the time as follows. “When I met Mr. Nohara the first time in 2001, I was told the ‘crocodile story’; the brokers and middlemen are like crocodiles, and as long as the farmers are not united, they cannot sell their goods at a just price and cannot be economically independent.¹⁰ This story left an impression on me. The next day, the 35 of us from management at UNAG attended the ten-day training seminar. This dealt with the meaning of self-respect and organization, subjects I had had never heard discussed before, such as ‘What is the most important thing in your life?’ ‘What is the real nature of humans?’ and other topics—I was repeatedly asked questions that I had never considered before. Up to that point we had received training seminars on topics such as how to care for the soil or poultry, and I realized that we had been neglecting to care for our very souls. The topics of the training program were modified to our needs and increased every year.” Thus,

¹⁰ This was confirmed by Mr. Nohara as being an extract from Peter Senge’s *The Fifth Discipline* (1990).

the training program has made its participants think and reevaluate themselves, and the whole process of making more functional contents situated in knowledge making in practice.

From 2001 to 2003, the training program was simply called “Nohara’s training.” There was no textbook or other organized material. However, in 2004, INTA (*Instituto Nicaraguense de Tecnología Agropecuaria*, the Nicaraguan Institute of Agricultural Technology) was invited to attend the program, which led to the seminar’s contents being transcribed for publication as training material. The text has seen four publications over the years to the present day. Maria Eugenia Cruz, who has been involved in development since the beginning, shared her reflections as well: “I attended the training seminar for a week in 2004. The handouts we received at the seminar were in a mixture of Portuguese and Spanish. I corrected the grammar and retyped them at home. No one requested this, but I felt that I had to make a record of it for some reason.” Thus, she documented the training contents purely with her own ownership without being told by anybody, so that the training contents would become shared knowledge. Her work, done free of charge, was stored in a document that became the first edition of the text.

The second edition was written with illustrations in 2005, when Mr. Nohara returned to Nicaragua to conduct a seminar. The reputation of the seminar has spread gradually by word of mouth, and in 2007 the third edition was produced by 17 members who had voluntarily participated in the program, coming from INTA, UNAG, JICA, and UNAN (*Universidad Nacional Autónoma de Nicaragua*, the National Autonomous University of Nicaragua). This was the first time the book came printed with something like a table of contents. At this time, the members of the group began to create fables as well, leading to the production of a thin textbook containing only fables for the use of training program participants in villages and towns. This was also distributed, photocopied, or hand-copied to read at home, because people wanted to reread and share, without any instructions from aid workers or village leaders.

3.3 Training Execution Stage (2009-2013)

Between 2009 and 2013, the development project *Alianza Comunitaria* began supported by JICA, with the MMO at its core, and held in three prefectures and twelve villages. The poverty indicators of the three prefectures are given in Table 4. It is noticeable that Matagalpa Prefecture's poverty ranking and rate is much higher than the national average, while those of Managua and Masaya are not. However, the selected villages' poverty rates are higher than the average (Hanawa 2011). No data was taken to measure the status of life and agency before the project. From the domicile visits in 2014 and 2015, it seemed that the majority of the village facilitators were not categorized into the poorest of the poor in the communities, and were rather of the lower-middle classes, while the majority of the village training participants were from poor families.

Regarding the "levels" of their agencies before involvement in the training, it can be seen that there were few participants in the first training sessions, that some people had serious drinking and domestic violence problems (but did nothing), that there were no leaders or occasions in the communities to discuss common issues, that members of the agricultural cooperatives were working with cooperation, and that very few women participated in village meetings (Sato et al. 2015). Thus, it can be assumed that the status of agency before the training implementations was not good at all.

Table 4. Poverty indicators of the three cities

Prefecture	City	World Bank (2008)			INIDE (2008)		
		Poverty Ranking Among 153 cities	Extreme poverty rate*	Below Poverty Line**	Poverty Ranking Among 153 cities	Extreme poverty rate***	Poverty rate****
Matagalpa	Matagalpa	43/153	24%	57%	91/153	37.1%	64.4%
Managua	Tipitapa	139/153	5%	34%	122/153	29.2%	63.1%
Masaya	Masatepe	144/153	4%	36%	123/153	29.0%	60.9%

Source: Hanawa (2011, 25)

* Population lived at average daily consumption of \$1.25 or less.

** Population lived at or below \$1.90 a day.

***Population lived at average annual consumption below US\$334.79.

**** Population lived at average annual consumption below US\$568.65.

In the initial stage, 17 members received training from Mr. Nohara, and they then became the core facilitators who expanded the training out into the 12 target communities. Some reports suggest that the project resulted in noticeable impacts for such a short period of implementation, and the small numbers of Japanese experts (basically two). In the twelve villages, 60 local volunteer facilitators were trained, and these organized 151 training sessions for free with 756 participants, and 42 mini projects were planned. 27 projects were implemented in a self-reliant way, and most participants shared the training contents at home and beyond at their own discretion (Yamaguchi 2011; Hanawa 2011; Kuzasa 2013).

3.4 Training Diffusion Stage (2009-)

Since the arrival of Mr Nohara, but more pronounced after the commencement of the JICA project *Alianza Comunitaria*, the training contents have been shared among villagers through mouth-to-mouth means, especially through children and university students as part of their classes, and public and private organizations through having some training units adopt the staff training methods of the project counterpart institutions. Trained village facilitators have been

invited to share the training in other villages, which they voluntarily accepted and travelled sometimes at their own cost. Similarly, the core facilitators were invited to organizations such as city councils, NPOs and universities, in which they have held training sessions for free. In 2014, the facilitators still held training sessions, a year after the termination of the project. Also, Mr. Nohara, back home in Brazil, holds MMO workshops occasionally, a service that has been also known among members of some agricultural unions.

3.5 Current MMO Training: Structure and Contents (2012-)

In 2012, the latest edition of the manual was published. This edition is more structured compared to the third edition, and features a new chapter based on the lectures of a professor of psychology at UCA (*Universidad Centro America*, the Central American University). However, the text has various issues; there is no introductory chapter; the purpose of the program and the relationship between chapters are not necessarily explicitly stated; it is unclear how the references are reflected in the text; and various other problems. To offset these, this study conducted participant observation on-site, interviewed related parties, and attended the organization of the actual contents of the training program rather than rely on the manual.

The goal of the training program is that “every participant becomes a protagonist so as to build a foundation for realizing self-reliant and collaborative community development.” The table of contents lists 15 chapters, but in the actual seminar only 10 chapters are covered. Through analyzing the contents, the main contents can be divided into three sections excluding Methodology; chapters on Self-Reliance, and chapters on Collaboration and Application, which is shown as in Table 5.

Table 5. Structure of the MMO training: Categorizing the training chapters

Category	Chapters on Self-Reliance: For affirming “power from within”	Chapters on Collaboration: For Affirming “power with”	Chapters on Application: For Affirming “power to” and “power over”
Name of Chapters	2. Self-identity 3. Self-respect and commitment 4. Self-Reliance 5. Body, mind and spirit	6. Synergy 7. Mental health	8. Social Capitals and Leadership 9. Agrobusiness 10. Soil

Elaborated by the author based on INTA, UNAG, JICA (2012).

There are 4 Chapters on Self-reliance, which are intended to affirm the “power from within” of self to commit to self and others. In regard to “Self-identity,” it is explained that the existence of each and every person is itself a miracle, and that every individual is a special and important presence. Anecdotes are used here, such as the story of Viktor Frankl’s experiences at a concentration camp. In “Self-respect and commitment,” it is learned that every person’s existence has value, every person is the protagonist of his or her own life, and that therefore one can commit to oneself and others. In “Body, mind and spirit,” participants learn about differences among reason, emotion, and instinct, so that they may consider why, if human beings are such a sacred and valuable existence, they suffer setbacks, and what is at the origin of human activity. This includes a didactic story about a truck driver who, driven by emotion, smashed his son’s hand. This is followed by a discussion in which participants share their experiences with anger and jealousy and ways to deal with and prevent such emotional outbursts. The “Self-Reliance” chapter is a summary of the preceding sections, asserting that self-reliance is indeed “being *not dependent*” and includes the ability to “stand up by oneself.” Participants

often share experiences on what it is to be independent, when someone offers support to others to enable them to “stand up” by oneself.

The second section is about Collaboration, and consists of two chapters, which affirm “power with” through working together with others. In “Synergy,” they learn that even when an independent person decides to take action, working in groups is necessary for efficiency and effectiveness. Stories like collaboration among migratory geese are used here to illustrate collaboration. The content of the second chapter “Mental health” is about the fact that it is human nature to cooperate to survive, and hence collaboration yields mental stability and health.

The final section containing three chapters is about Application; how to apply the knowledge acquired in training sessions in agricultural activities, which are for affirming “power to” and “power over” through working in environment and alternating power structures. In the “Social capital and leadership” chapter, the importance of looking to their environment as a source of capital and resources, categorized into natural, material, economic, personal, and social capital, shows participants how to make use of other capitals/resources effectively. They also recognize that the most important traits of a leader are to understand deeply the nature of capital (including human capital), and to find how to utilize its potential and special qualities. The example used here is a case study of an innovative union that illustrates both self-reliance and synergy. The main messages of “Agribusiness” are that in agricultural product sales there are three parties, the sellers, the brokers, and the producers, that producers must organize or they will have difficulty seeing profits, and finally that the specifics of the flow of goods from the producer to the consumer must be understood. Here, there are two fables taken from Peter Senge’s *The Fifth Discipline*: “The Lukewarm-water Frog” (producers) and the “The Crocodiles” (brokers). In the final chapter “Soil,” the nature of soil is studied, referring to knowledge of soil science that will allow effective utilization of soil resources.

The training methods in all the sessions are quite simple. Each training session consists of ice-breaking, questions and answers, reading fables or anecdotes associated to the theme, the

sharing of experiences from participants, and a summary by the facilitator. The basic progression of the seminar is simple: that all participants answer the same questions, while all other participants listen closely.

4. Analysis: Context Specific Factors and Plausible Mechanisms of Agency Development

This section analyses three of the structural processes in MMO, which are: 1) context; 2) promotion of agency through making a development project; and 3) the dynamics of agency enhancement. This is achieved through application of the project to the understanding of the mechanisms of agency development in contextualized situations also connected with academic theories. The author first clarifies the context specific factors that have influenced the development of the MMO (4-1). Second, the processes of agency development of core facilitators (project counterparts) and village level facilitators (community leaders) are explained and connected with academic theories when appropriate (4-2, 4-3). Finally, the mechanisms of the agency development of village level participants (community members) are analyzed to fill the black boxes of the theoretical framework outlined in Table 3 (4-4).

4.1 Context Specific Factors behind the Process

As expressed in the previous section, the MMO process has been influenced by context specific factors. The first is Mr. Nohara's background and personality. He has rich experience in "human development" as he has been involved in social movements and purged, exiled and then welcomed back to his home country, working in agricultural cooperatives to support farmer livelihoods. Additionally, he has a wide range of academic backgrounds and interests, such as theology, philosophy, agriculture, psychology and organizational management, which are all strongly related to human nature and well-being. Thus, it is perhaps his life work to explore what it means to live well, and how we can support others to pursue their own wellbeing by

themselves. His background and experience richly support the contents of training programs as well as the selection of episodes/stories utilized in the texts. Then there is Mr. Nohara's personality, which generates overwhelming trust and respect. From the on-site investigation, it was understood that that he is respected and trusted far and wide, not only by his counterparts in training program-creation, or in the JICA project and other projects, but also by local women in the villages as well as the Minister of Agriculture and Forestry. His background and personality can thus be linked to the reasons why the training sessions have been implemented so widely within and beyond the project villages.

The other context specific factors are rather more associated with Nicaraguan socio-cultural specificities. First is the social acknowledgement of volunteer activities and cooperative works in Nicaraguan history. Of those interviewed during the investigations, several had also volunteered under the Sandinista administration in the 1980's, or volunteered at some other NGO, or were members of the producers' unions, and so on. Nicaragua has a relatively long history of socialist government and, combined with the influence of Christian culture, it can be said that a foundation for volunteerism and benevolence toward others already existed. Nicaragua has also experimented with social movements such as literacy training based on Freire's methods and liberation theology that have socialist aspects. Second, judging from comments received from people in the villages, such as "I had never heard the word 'self-respect' before," it is likely that the training program has a strong novelty and freshness for those leading information-limited lives. In reality, however, in those target villages that were located near cities or villages in which many people went to work at sewing factories and received their wages in cash, there was not much analysis of the training program's effectiveness. Third, reading through reports, it was found that residents can probably receive external support when necessary (though not sufficiently), helping them not to become demotivated.

4.2 Agency Development of Core Facilitators (2002-2007)

In 2001, Mr. Nohara went to Nicaragua for a few months for training content development. Although the inspiration and major ideas of MMO were from Mr. Nohara, the program has been developed based on the needs and knowledge of the Nicaraguan core facilitators, who are staff of the government or NGO members working at central or municipal-level branch offices. This is due to the fact that Mr. Nohara had no intention of creating a textbook for his training program, and hence he did not know the sources of the fables, anecdotes, and concept maps that were created through exchanging dialogue during training sessions. The Nicaraguan core facilitators have mainly edited the training text, though they have not been paid extra for this task. Nevertheless, it can be confirmed that Mr. Nohara is very much respected, and that, through MMO training program development, a good relationship of trust has been built among the core facilitators in the twelve years of its existence.

One of the possible academic theories explaining the strong ownership held by the core facilitators is self-determination theory, a major school of psychology. According to this theory, individuals have three innate needs to be motivated: a need for autonomy (the desire to be the source of one's own actions); a need for competence (the desire that one's actions have an effect on others or one's environment), and a need for interpersonal connections (the desire to build connections with others). Many experimental studies suggest that the circumstances in which these needs are to a certain extent fulfilled facilitates autonomous motivation (i.e., the will to commence and continue identified actions) (Deci and Flaste 1999). This theory, when applied to the MMO case, seems to explain the observed phenomena well. First, the Nicaraguan core facilitators chose and determined the MMO training program content, editing, and projects that satisfied the need for autonomy. Second, the program contents had a favorable effect on themselves, those around them, and their environment and satisfied their need for competence, and finally, through executing and editing the training programs, good personal relationships were established that satisfied their desire to build connections with others. In this way, the

Nicaraguan members can be thought to have fostered a sense of agency and a trust relationship through developing the contents of MMO.

4.3 Agency Development of Village Level Facilitators (2009-2013)

Between 2009 and 2013, the JICA project *Alianza Comunitaria* was implemented in twelve village communities within three cities in three prefectures, and the local facilitators selected from village level communities were trained. These executed MMO training sessions not only in their own communities, but also in neighboring communities, including at schools and city councils. On observing the training sessions being carried out, it was confirmed that they have digested and internalized the contents quite well and are able to handle the sessions with confidence. It was also witnessed that training methods have been quite simple, and that providing MMO training sessions has contributed to their confidence levels.

Although these phenomena can be explained through the use of self-determination theory, there could be also other explanatory frameworks, given the fact that village level facilitators have not necessarily been able to handle the training content at the beginning. For instance, their education level is relatively low. The author noticed that many of them could not write grammatically correct Spanish phrases. Through domicile visits, it was also observed that they were not necessarily the better off people in their communities.

It is worth thinking about what enables people without much money and formal education to handle the training contents confidently. The following reasons possibly explain this phenomenon, backed up by some academic theories. The first is probably the loose application of Freire's theory of *concientizacion* (raising critical consciousness) in this context, which itself is a representative of classic individual and social transformation theory. Though the phrase itself does not directly appear in the MMO training program textbook, it does appear repeatedly in interviews with Mr. Nohara. He explains the concept as “over coming oppressive conditions and fostering thoughts and behavioral patterns that create better conditions for

individuals' lives and society's future." Freire (1998) suggests that it is a process of developing an awareness of one's social reality through reflection and action, which is a sociopolitical educative tool that engages learners in questioning the nature of their historical and social situation, or "reading the world." In the training itself, the theory is applied by the simple method of "answering a question by each participant," "question-driven discussions" and "the interpretation and application of stories/tales (fables and anecdotes) to real life."

The second is the use of stories (anecdotes and fables) for raising conciseness through reflections. There are seventeen of these printed in the current textbook. In fact, in the textbook that participants carry back to their homes, there is nothing but anecdotes and fables. This method of expression and transmission of social messages by story rather than direct explanation has been used in mythology and folklore since antiquity to deliver social messages (Nakazawa 2002). There are a couple of reasons why this method is supportive of agency development for MMO. The first is familiarity. The participants can feel an association with the stories that are commonly heard in their daily life, as well as understanding that story telling is a common way to deliver messages. For example, biblical stories or in novels in the text are based on stories that they also listen to in churches that they go to.

The third reason is accessibility. Given that stories are told colloquially and in relatively easy to understand words, or are easy to ask somebody to read aloud even if they cannot read well, the recipients can understand the contents without feeling intimidated. Children without much education can also understand the contents. The fourth follows from this fact, and is the flexibility to allow interpretation by storytellers, which facilitates knowledge creation with ownership leading to agency development, as well as internalization of the social messages. One of the main features of storytelling is that, although the stories are easy even for children to understand and remember, they allow many varied and complex interpretations and versions or retellings. Even in the actual MMO training seminar, a story in the training textbook was re-interpreted frequently, or even fashioned into a brand new story. Storytelling is an ancient but

also contemporary method applied in the field of business management studies, and utilized in various companies for product ideas or to share values, to train employees, and/or to sell products (Nakahara and Nagaoka 2009).

The fifth factor is the strategies for increasing replicability through making the training program content as simple as possible. The core of the MMO seminar consists of three parts: questions (all participants answer a question written on a card), storytelling and reflection (volunteer participants read aloud the stories of life experiences related to them so that they are shared among participants), and the summary of the sessions given by the facilitator. The tools necessary for the training program include easily acquired items like markers, paper (simili or imitation vellum), cards (cut to easily usable sizes), and masking tape. To prevent the content of the program from diverging too widely across villages and central areas though, municipal-level members serve a liaison function, participating in training sessions at both central and village levels to alleviate discrepancies in contents and to share information relating to all sessions.

The point that is consistent throughout the above methods is that the theory, language, and tools utilized are quite simple but profound, and are familiar or close to the people's everyday lives. Therefore, it is easy for village facilitators to convey the content of the training program to others, which likely leads to increased self-confidence as well. On the topic of raising consciousness, in the course of the program, facilitators are not asked to have complicated skills to lead the training, but to "just listen carefully" to each and every participant's experiences and opinions, treating them as valuable knowledge. Regarding the usage of stories and their interpretation and application in the daily lives of participants, a wide variety of interpretations may be given though a simple method, and this can be said to grant the interpreter creative space or self-expression as a protagonist. Further, because liaisons are in place, which mean that some core facilitators are stationed at local levels, local facilitators can always ask for inquiries on the training as well as discussions on the contents, and this creates a sense of solidarity and security that can be interpreted as fostering relationships of trust.

4.4 Agency Development of the Village Level Training Participants (2009-)

“MMO is my second bible. I have become able to live with pride. It taught me ways to be both independent and also collaborative with others”, and “I am sharing the training contents at home and beyond” were the most heard comments at the village level training participants throughout the field research. From this impact research (Alianza Comunitaria 2010), it was also found that more than 95% of training participants have talked about the training contents at home. In this section, three hypothetical process mechanisms or dynamics of agency development incorporating training participants that have been attempted by the MMO, to fill the black boxes in the research framework of Table 3, are formulated to aid in the understanding of how it is intended to enhance several types of agency in practice; a task that is not easily explained by existing theories (Table 6).

Table 6. Possible mechanisms of agency development of MMO participants in processes

Process of agency development	Corresponding chapters of MMO training sessions	Explanations of how agency development is facilitated at each process
First process: Affirming “power from within” of self to commit to self and others	<u>Chapters on Self-Reliance</u> 2. Self-identity 3. Self-respect and commitment 4. Self-Reliance 5. Body, heart, and mind	By repeatedly receiving the message through content and attitude in training sessions that “your existence itself is valuable ‘bundle of potential,’” a participant recursively recognizes her/himself as an existence with full of potentialities. This feeling is strengthened by the experience of “Self-Reliance” through acting upon others and one’s environment.
Second process: Affirming “power with”: working together with others	<u>Chapters on Collaboration</u> 6. Mental health 7. Synergy	The participants learn that it is more effective and efficient to cooperate with others for solving problems, which is also “natural” for human beings and understand that they can affirm “power from within” of others and rely on them.

<p>Third process: Affirming “power to” and “power over”: working to environment and alternating power structures</p>	<p><u>Chapters on Application</u> 8. Social capital and leadership 9. Agribusiness 10. Soil</p>	<p>The participants learn and practice collective resource management; seeing into what exists in their surrounding as resources and understanding their natures and act upon them. They also learn alternating power relations through working together.</p>
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Elaborated by the author combining Table 3 and 5.

The First Process (Chapters on Self-Reliance): Affirming “power from within” of self

The work on Self-Reliance consists of four chapters: “Self-identity” (everyone is a special presence no matter the circumstances), “Self-respect and Commitment” (every person is the protagonist in his or her own life when committing to oneself and others), “Body, mind and spirit”(how setbacks happen and how to avoid to be caught up in them), and “Self-Reliance” (a summary of the preceding points sharing participants’ experiences of becoming independent physically and mentally). In process terms, the most important defining feature of the MMO training program is that, unlike typical self-development seminars, it begins not with raising awareness of self-reliance but with a fundamental affirmation of one’s existence itself. In the training program itself, the first chapter that precedes “self-esteem and commitment” and “independent” is a chapter named “self-identity.” Here the message, oft-repeated by program organizers and directed at the participants, is that “the very existence of each and every individual is a miracle, precious, and full of potential.” This message is emphasized through the seminar policy of letting all participants express their own opinions, which are listened to carefully and with respect.

What do the participants start perceiving after they receive the message again and again via words and actions? Perhaps it is possible to imagine them thinking the following: first, they

recognize the message that “my presence is considered important and valuable by others;” next, perhaps they start thinking, “if I am considered important to others, perhaps it is also possible for me to consider my presence important.” This is the beginning of a recursive realization of the value of one’s own presence (feeling of self- affirmation), and also of a relationship of trust with oneself (self-confidence). This feeling is strengthened through experiences of commitment to oneself or others through daily actions, and when this commitment being appreciated the participant develops a sense of self-efficacy in that s/he believes that they can now act in the same way on his/her surrounding environment. Gradually, the continuous experience of committing to others leads to increased self-confidence, which helps participants to affirm the “power from within” of oneself. It is important that such affirmation is not generated in vacuum, but in relationships with others in a process like that espoused by the MMO. Voices from the training participants such as “I could feel that I am the protagonist of my life for the training especially through learning the first few chapters,” or “most of the aid agencies, political parties or church organizations have proposed that, in the context of their own interests such as agriculture, children’s wellbeing or importance, people have faith in God. But the comment that “training truly taught me how to live every moment of everyday of my life fully with much pride and without any flags,” bears witnesses to their change with respect to agency during this stage.

The Second Process (Chapters on Collaboration): Affirming “Power with” working together with others

The second set is about Collaboration, and consists of three chapters: “Synergy” (working in groups and divisions of labor are necessary for efficiency and effectiveness); “Mental health” (it is human nature to cooperate to survive, which is also good for mental stability and health); and “Social capital and leadership” (acknowledging their environment as capitals/resources so they can make best use of them, which is also a necessary skill for leaders). Through a collaborative development process within this stage the participants learn that it is more effective and efficient to cooperate with others in solving problems, which is also a “natural” function for human

beings in facing real episodes. They also learn that they can affirm “power with” by working together with others, and by relying on them through shared experiences and the learning case studies of successful cooperatives, as well as by reflecting on their daily work in cooperatives. As positive relationships among participants have already been established in the first stage, it can be assumed that they can relatively understand the contents of the sessions. Many participants also suggested that they started talking to and listening more to their own family members, as well as learning that they could do things more effectively in the cooperatives they belonged to when they collaborated more closely.

***The Third Process (Chapters on Application): Affirming “power to” and “power over”:
working to environment and alternating power structures***

The final three chapters are about the application of this model to rural and agricultural development, about “Social capital and leadership” (the importance of looking at their surrounding environment to provide the capital and resources to enhance its potentialities, which is a must for leaders), “Agribusiness” (producers must organize themselves and understand how products are best distributed for profits), and “Soil” (producers must understand the nature of soil scientifically to best utilize it as resource). Through the process based on this stage, the participants learn and practice “collective resource management,” and understand the “power to” work upon environment collectively. This enables them to see what exists in their surroundings as resources, to understand their nature, and to act upon them collectively to best develop them. They share their own bitter or positive experiences of agriculture and its business, and how to make plans how to improve their resource management so that they can obtain sustained profits. They also stop relying on brokers and try bringing their own products to the market, as well as holding their own market on the roadside collectively to avoid being exploited by brokers. This can be counted as the experience of “power over.”

During the project, there were 27 community and agricultural mini-projects run by community volunteers mainly with their own resources, some of which are still active today.

People started to sell vegetables directly on the side of main roads, built a pre-school and water tanks at schools, developed bee-keeping in groups, and facilitated fruit cultivation for home consumption and for selling. Such changes reflect “exercising agency” at this level.

5. Concluding Remarks

The purpose of this paper was to understand factors and elaborate plausible dynamics of agency development in practice by connecting research (academic theories) and practice (development projects), with and clarifying context specificities. For this purpose, the author first reviewed the literature on empowerment and agency development, to comprehend issues and develop a theoretical process model of agency development, identifying their black boxes. Second, the following three parameters of the analyses were identified to truly understand agency development in practice; the black boxes of the theoretical model, the context of an agency development project (stories of practitioners’ experiences), and the actual mechanisms used in the agency development of “stakeholders” or “community members.” Subsequently, a case study was conducted to analyze the three parameters in detail. A program instituted in Nicaragua called MMO was selected, and the process of its inspiration, development, execution and diffusion was documented. Finally, the case was analyzed to advance understanding of the conditions as well as the mechanisms of agency development in practice, with further reference to related theories.

Regarding the conditions of agency development, what is understood from the case study is that no particular training package can be developed in vacuum and applied to foster the growth in the agency of individuals, no matter where and who these might be. But rather, it was found that the whole process of developing and executing such training programs matters in multilayer structures. First, there are context specific factors influencing the whole process, such as the upbringing and experience of the key personnel, and the socio-cultural and economic

features of Nicaragua. Second, it was confirmed that there is a process of agency development experienced by the core facilitators as well as village level facilitators, that can be explained by self-determination theory as well as by explanatory frameworks relating to social communication, such as *concientizacion*, storytelling, and devices that increase the replicability of simple training contents and the experience of liaison staff.

Third, in regard to the mechanisms enhancing the agency development of community members, the processes in this change were explained to fill the black boxes of the theoretical framework, thus allowing understanding of what is actually done in practice to foster the four types of power or agency; “power from within,” “power with,” “power to” and “power over.” It was confirmed that each block of MMO training chapters fosters different types of power/agency in a loosely incremental manner.

In conclusion, it should be noted that some issues have been identified through this research. The first is a methodological constraint. The author wrote out the practical knowledge “as is” in field notes to the greatest extent possible, and then interpreted these to build the hypothetical model; but it is difficult to judge with absolute certainty that the specific academic fields quoted in the interpretation were the most appropriate, given the limits to possible proof and demonstration. Additionally, in listing the factors that made the case study a “success story,” it was not in fact possible to understand how far context specific factors are fundamental and indispensable, when attempting to assess the likely replicability of the training program in other countries. Third, the impact of the training cannot be rigorously measured unless panel data is taken and analyzed.

This is perhaps an indispensable part of the process by which development studies will mature as an empirical science and make a difference to the assessment of context-bound reality. Indeed, this conclusion may mean that “the social sciences that call themselves empirical sciences ought not to aim for rapid growth within specific academic disciplines, but instead

consider deeply how a real empirical science can be formed, one faltering step at a time (Uchida 2000).”

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Abstract (in Japanese)

要約

1980年代以降の開発援助政策と実践においては、「人々の主体性 (Agency) を尊重し、その働きを支援する」という「当事者主体」の試みが広くなされてきた。しかし主体性醸成 (Agency Development) のメカニズムや過程の詳細は、未だにブラックボックスの中にある。本稿では、事例と理論をつなぎ合わせることで、主体性醸成がどのような構造やメカニズムで行われているのかについて、第三国専門家が主導するニカラグアでの事業を事例研究として明らかにしていく。

まず、エンパワメントと主体性の醸成をめぐる主要議論を俯瞰し、両者の議論の接合点および相違点を洗い出した。次に、理論上の主体性醸成のプロセスモデルを抽出作成するとともに、そのブラックボックスを明らかにし、研究における課題を整理した。そして主体性の醸成のメカニズムを、先行研究レビューのみではなく、事例を通じて理解するためには、1) 「受益者」の主体性醸成のメカニズムそのものだけでなく、2) 文脈的な要因および、3) 「支援者」となる主体性醸成に関わる人々のプロセスと変容も研究の射程に組み込む必要があることを指摘した。続いて、ニカラグアにおけるMMOといわれる主体性醸成研修の展開 (開発・実施・普及) 課程を、関連文書および現地調査よりその発案・開発・実施・普及の段階ごとにプロセスを描いた。

一事例研究という限られた研究対象ではあるが、本研究を通じて、以下の3点が明らかになった。まず主体性醸成には、肯定的に影響する文脈的な要因があり、それが全ての過程に影響していることである。具体的には、発案者の経験や人柄など属人的要素、さらには、地域の経済状況や文化社会的な特性 (社会主義およびボランティア活動の定着度合い、宗教的価値観、外部支援資金の有無など) が考えられる。次に、「支援する側 (研修作成者およびコミュニティレベルのリーダー)」の主体性醸成のプロセスがあり、その現象は自己決定理論および経営学や意識化などのソーシャル・コミュニケーションにかかる説明枠組みより分析できることである。最後に「支援される側」である「受益者」の主体性醸成プロセスは、3段階[①自らの内なる力の醸成 (Power within)、②他者と働くことによる主体性の醸成 (Power with)、③環境に働きかけ権力構造を変える力の発見・肯定・強化 (Power to/Power over)]でなされていることである。



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