

Resumen

En la disciplina de Desarrollo Internacional (DI), las relaciones entre los actores se percibe mediante el concepto de 'development partnership'¹. Este concepto ha ganado tal importancia que la mayor parte de los agentes que operan en el campo de desarrollo definen su trabajo a través de 'partnership'. La importancia de partnership reside en la percepción de que tal relación sirve para minimizar las desigualdades, en cuanto a poder, entre los actores del sur y los del norte.

Esta tesis investiga como Ibis, una ONG Danesa, comprende el concepto de 'development partnerships'. Ibis ha realizado proyectos en Mozambique desde 1976 y, recientemente, introdujo su nueva estrategia de partnership que define cómo Ibis únicamente trabajará a través de partnerships en Mozambique.

A través de análisis crítico del discurso (ACD), la forma en que Ibis entiende partnership es analizado a tres niveles. Éstos corresponden a partnership como *principio*, partnership como *estrategia* y partnership *en la práctica*. El análisis muestra que hay mucha variación en cómo Ibis entiende el concepto de partnership a los distintos niveles. Ibis emplea discursos propios del DI, caracterizado por 'fortalecimiento de la sociedad civil' y 'apropiación de los procesos de desarrollo' por parte de las ONGs del sur. Sobre todo, Ibis pone énfasis en fortalecer las capacidades profesionales y administrativas de las ONGs del sur. Sin embargo, también existen discursos contradictorios al fundamento normativo de partnership, como es el caso del uso de un discurso de paternalismo. Esto crea una relación de inferioridad respecto a los socios del sur. El análisis concluye, primero, que existen discursos contradictorios que luchan entre sí para definir el concepto de partnership. Segundo, que en el entendimiento de Ibis existe una paradoja entre el ideal de partnership en DI y la realidad de trabajar en Mozambique, donde Ibis describe la sociedad civil como débil.

Estas conclusiones forman la base para una discusión acerca del rol de partnership en DI. Basándose en la teoría, la discusión muestra que la aplicación universal de los conceptos formados en el campo de DI, no se pueden aplicar universalmente y a cualquier contexto. En el caso de Ibis, el contexto específico de Mozambique crea una paradoja. Además, permite el ejercicio de poder hegemónico a través de representaciones paternalistas propias del postcolonialismo y al no permitir que las ONGs del sur desarrollen sus propias filosofías.

Finalmente, la tesis concluye que el rol de partnership en el DI, no necesariamente consigue cambiar las desigualdades que existen entre los actores del sur y los del norte, ya que es posible ejercer poder hegemónico a través de partnership. Además, el estudio recomienda más transparencia en el campo de DI para evitar ambigüedades lingüísticas que sirven para esconder relaciones de desigualdad. Adicionalmente, la tesis recomienda un 'des-empoderamiento' de las ONGs del norte.

¹ La palabra 'partnership' no tiene una traducción exacta al castellano. En su estudio de partnership, M.Packard (2007) lo explicó de la siguiente manera, con el fin de realizar entrevistas con ONGs de Latinoamérica. El autor lo describió como "una relación de igualdad entre participantes, quizás con responsabilidades diferenciadas". Dada esta explicación, simplemente utilizaré la palabra inglesa 'partnership' en el resumen, para mayor facilidad y comprensión.

List of abbreviations

CDA	Critical discourse analysis
CS	Civil Society
CSO	Civil society organization
GAP	Guía de avaliação de parceiros
GOM	Government of Mozambique
ID	International Development
NGO	Non-Governmental Organization
NNGO	Northern Non-Governmental Organization
PA	Partnership Assessment
PDP	Partnership development plan
PS	Partnership strategy
SNGO	Southern Non-Governmental Organization

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Chapter 1

Introduction

In the history of development aid, a range of approaches have been promoted as the most appropriate to eradicate poverty and its effects on societies. Scholars have even talked about changing paradigms in International Development (Tandon 2000, Stieglitz 1998). In contemporary development thinking, top-down approaches and conditionalities have progressively been replaced with more bottom-up and people-centered interventions. This has been referred to as the 'alternative development paradigm' (Tandon 2000). The new people-centered paradigm has the notion that development cannot be delivered from outside, that people can develop themselves, and that their own participation, commitment, and contributions are a necessary foundation for sustainable development. Within this new paradigm, development partnerships are put at the heart of development.

The conception of partnership as a formal development strategy was spurred when the DAC promoted development partnership in its strategy for the 21st century, *Shaping the 21st Century* (OECD/DAC 1996). The approach was subsequently integrated in the development strategies of most development actors and agencies; partnership was one of the four pillars of The World Bank's Comprehensive Development Framework (CDF) and the UN incorporated 'Global Partnership' as the 8th Millennium Development Goal. In Denmark, Danida's overall development strategy is called partnership 2000.

Thus, the partnerships principle has become a part of the development agenda of almost the entire spectrum of development institutions, from the World Bank to the multitude of NGOs. Even though not all development organizations have specifically designed policies and strategies for partnership, most now refer to their work in terms of partnership (Eriksson Baaz 2005: 3).

1.1 Problem area

'*We only work through partnerships*'. This sentence resounded as a mantra in Ibis Regional Office in Maputo, Mozambique, during my five months internship with Ibis Mozambique. On the first day of the internship, I received a thorough introduction to Ibis' programmes and activities. From the beginning, the most emphasized facet was Ibis' new partnership strategy, which was in its initial stage at the time. The second most emphasized aspect was the difficulty, ranging to impossibility, of carrying out partnerships in Mozambique. Nevertheless, with the introduction of the new partnership strategy, partnership had become the *sine qua none* for Ibis' development interventions: '*We can only work through partnerships*'.

During my internship in Mozambique, I was constantly puzzled by the ubiquitous idea about partnership amongst Northern NGOs (NNGOs) and the equally ever-present comments regarding the difficulty of working with Mozambican NGOs. The ideal of partnership was in conflict with the social dynamics that represented the reality of North-South partnerships in Mozambique. The distinct divergence between, on the

one hand, the idea about partnership and its development potential and, on the other, the reality of engaging in partnerships amongst North-South NGOs made me wonder about the meaning - or meanings - of partnership.

The question of how Ibis understands partnership cannot simply be answered through a formal definition of partnership. Rather, it requires a thorough analysis of how Ibis actually gives meaning to the concept of development partnership in the specific context of Mozambique. For this purpose, discourse analysis is essential. Critical discourse analysis investigates the underlying assumptions and the 'hidden truths' behind discourses. Further, it provides a framework for analyzing the consequences of a specific discursive practice on the wider social practice of International Development. Therefore, it provides the basis for investigating what Ibis' understanding of partnership suggests for the role of development partnerships in international development.

1.2 Research question

The research question that guides and structures this thesis is:

How does Ibis understand the concept of development partnership; and what does this understanding suggest for the role of partnership in International Development?

In addition, the three sub-questions below represent areas that will be particularly emphasized throughout the analysis, namely:

1. How does Ibis provide meaning to partnership, when the concept is disentangled from its normative resonance?
2. How do the specific contextual factors influence how Ibis gives meaning to the concept of partnership?
3. Does the partnership concept represent a change in North-South power relations?

My initial position is that Ibis' understanding of partnership will question the applicability of the partnership concept in postcolonial countries like Mozambique. Further, my hypothesis is that applying the concept of partnership universally will have consequences for the role of partnership in international development.

These assumptions will be tested in the thesis.

1.3 The argument

In international Development, partnership is portrayed as having both a normative and an instrumental dimension. According to the normative dimension, partnership is based on equality, mutuality and trust. The instrumental dimension or, as it will be called in this thesis, the 'development understanding', focuses on civil society participation, local ownership and capacity building. Both dimensions relate to partnership in terms of power; whether it is about achieving *equality* in the normative understanding or *local ownership* in the development understanding. Hence, in International Development theory, the key role of partnership is to challenge the unequal power structures that exist between the global North and the South.

The concept of development partnership is currently applied globally in development. Regardless of context, culture and social structures, partnership is the way to carry out development interventions today. It seems the goodness of partnership is an uncontested truth in development practice.

The above leads to the following arguments of this thesis; First, Ibis' understanding of partnership includes a number of co-existing discourses. Mainly, Ibis draws on a development discourse, a discourse of managerialism and a postcolonial discourse. Some of these discourses are even opposing. On one hand, Ibis understands partnership in accordance with the development understanding. This means that for Ibis, partnership is highly valued in terms of its potential to strengthen civil society, to lead to local ownership and as a perfect way to carry out capacity building. On the other hand, Ibis' discursive practice includes discourses, which perpetuate the power differences between the Northern and the Southern NGO (SNGO).

The analysis shows that Ibis' understanding of partnership in the context of Mozambique leads to a paradox: Ibis understands partnership as being the best remedy to strengthen the weak civil society, but, at the same time, it is not possible to achieve authentic partnerships in contexts with weak civil societies.

The analysis concludes that Ibis' understanding of partnership does not necessarily challenge the power relations in North-South NGO relations. The reasons for this are twofold: First, Ibis' discursive practice includes a paternalistic discourse, through which the Southern partners are represented as inferior to the NNGO. Second, the discussion highlights how, in particular, the concept of capacity building allows the exercise of hegemonic power. I find that this can also be explained by the influence of Ibis' main donor, Danida.

These analyses conclude that development partnership can perpetuate the unequal power relations between the North and the South through hegemonic practices.

Finally, I recommend a 'dis-empowerment' of the NNGO. Such an approach could lead to more equal partnership and real local ownership of development processes. Further, I promote more flexibility simply by not forcing the concept of partnership to be applied to all relationships in the development system.

1.4 Structure

The thesis is divided into three parts; a theoretical, an analytical and a discussion part.

- Chapter 2 provides an overview of how partnerships have been conceptualized in International Development, highlighting the 'normative understanding' and the 'development understanding'. Next, it discusses how some scholars have criticized development partnership for being simply a buzzword with the potential to hide asymmetrical power relations. The chapter also presents the theoretical framework formed by Postcolonial Studies and Development studies.
- Chapter 3 presents the methodological considerations. It presents the data and explains how the main concepts and methods of Fairclough's critical discourse analysis are used in the thesis.

- Chapter 4 analyzes Ibis' understanding of the concept of development partnership at the level of principle, strategy and practice applying critical discourse analysis. The chapter answers the first part of the research question: *how does Ibis understand the concept of development partnership?*
- Chapter 5 discusses the implications of the findings in chapter 4. The theoretical framework from chapter 2 will be applied, in order to answer the last part of the research question: *What does this understanding suggest for the role of partnership in International Development?*
- Chapter 6 ends the study with a conclusion and perspectives.

1.5 Relevance of the study and delimitations

A number of scholars have studied the discourse of foreign aid (Doty 1996, Cornwall 2007). Others have focused on the difference between the ideal of partnership and partnership in practice (Crawford 2003, Lister 2000). However, few have conducted detailed case studies, which link the linguistic analysis at the micro level and analyses of the wider social practices and processes (Hastings 1998). There is a lack of attention to the underlying assumption of the ideological constructs in development and the effects hereof on the practice of international development. In particular, there is a lack of empirical studies investigating these aspects at the detailed level of case studies.

This study aims at providing such a holistic investigation of how a specific NGO understands partnership, a central development concept, in order to link this understanding to the wider social practice of development. Consequently, the study is also an example of how to apply critical discourse analysis to an analysis of development practice and theory.

Thereby, the thesis aims at adding to the discussion of partnership as a construct in development theory. Further, it is hoped that this study will contribute to the discussion on how to make the concept of development partnership more context-sensitive. This is particularly relevant given the extremely widespread use of the partnership concept and the focus on Mozambique as one of the main recipient countries of Danish development assistance (See for example Danida 2008c).

1.5.1 Delimitations

This study only focuses on Ibis' understanding of partnerships and, consequently, it excludes Ibis' partners from the analysis. This risks creating a one-sided picture of the partners as merely 'passive recipients' or 'powerless' as portrayed by Northern images. In critical discourse analysis, the aspect of representations and social identities is essential, especially when a postcolonial reading is applied. However, the idea behind the analysis of Ibis' discursive practice is to investigate how a NNGO understands partnership. Consequently, not including the partners is a necessary delimitation.

Chapter 2

Partnership in Theory

This chapter provides a review of the existing literature on development partnership and presents the theoretical framework. First, the chapter begins with an explanation of the central role of NGOs in people-centered development. Second, the concept of partnership will be conceptualized in a literature review, as the normative understanding and the development understanding of partnership are outlined. Next, development partnership will be looked at from critical lenses. Finally, the theoretical framework will be presented.

2.6 NGOs in people-centered development

In the introduction, it was briefly mentioned how the current development paradigm is characterized by people-centered development and bottom-up approaches. Within the 'alternative development paradigm', NGOs are considered central actors (Tandon 2000). Brinkerhoff argues that NGOs have on-the-ground contacts that allows for a more accurate understanding of the development context (Brinkerhoff 2002: 49). Tandon stresses that they have the opportunity to operate at a very local level (Tandon 2000). Moreover, NGOs are 'pioneers' when it comes to development partnerships, as partnership has essentially been their aspiration (Crawford 2003: 140). Fowler even claims that the current focus on partnership in development originates from NGO's interrelationships (Fowler 2002: 35-36).

The number of active NGOs has grown steadily and the nature of their projects has changed. The role of NGOs has changed from service delivery to maintaining a focus on rights-based interventions and advocacy (See for example Kortzen 1990). Pearce states that NGOs are moving from 'implementers' to 'facilitators'. He refers to how NGOs begin to facilitate development projects with local organizations, rather than having the direct control as project implementers (Pearce 1993).

Thus, people-centered development is thought to be well carried out through NGOs due to their support to SNGOs, facilitating role, and local level interventions. These characteristics supposedly endow them with the capacity to meet Southern organizations on equal terms in what is assumed to be a relationship with an overall peer-to-peer nature. In theory, all of this confers legitimacy to the NGOs as valid actors on the international scene.

2.7 Conceptualizing development partnerships

Given the contemporary importance of development partnership, the concept has been used and investigated by scholars and practitioners alike to provide a framework for understanding and criticizing the nature and functions of partnership. Guided by the research question, the following section provides a review of the most common understandings and conceptualizations in the literature of partnership in international development (ID).

Different conceptions of partnership can be distinguished. Yet, when examining the literature, two main strands of thought underpinning partnership in Development stand out; a *normative understanding* of partnership and a *development understanding* of partnership. The normative understanding bases partnership on a series of normative values that are essential for partnerships to be effective. The development understanding focuses on partnership as an approach that may incorporate other development approaches and lead to certain desired outcomes.

Alan Fowler combines these two understandings in what he calls 'authentic partnerships', a concept specifically designed to describe the ideal relation between Northern and Southern NGOs. That is, he includes the normative understanding in a development setting.

2.7.1 Partnership: a normative understanding

Equality, mutuality and trust are the three values that are principally emphasized by the scholars when it comes to the normative foundation of development partnership (Eade, Fowler, Lister).

2.7.1.1 Equality

In the majority of North-South NGO partnerships a degree of inequality will probably be present, as the NGO from the North is likely to have financial and technological advantages. However, when scholars talk about equality in North-South partnerships, they often refer to equality in decision-making and in rights and responsibilities (Fowler, Brinkerhoff). Fowler also talks about equality in ways of working, equality in visions and development strategies, and equality in the relationship; in size and character of the organization and also in how people are treated and whose voices count (Fowler 1998, Hoksberg 2005). Hence, it seems that within the literature, there is a tendency to, pragmatically, find a definition of equality that does not instantly discard the possibility of attaining equality in North-South partnerships as would a focus on economic inequalities. However, this does not imply that economic inequalities are without importance, as they may influence the relationship, as argued by Baaz (Baaz 2005).

2.7.1.2 Mutuality

Johnson & Wilson (200X) consider differences as a basis for constructive sharing:

"In the ideal view, difference is a driver of mutuality. The ideal view of partnership is based on ideas of dialogue, reciprocity, trust and sharing different values, knowledges and practices to realize mutual benefits. Mutuality, in this ideal sense, makes a virtue of difference, enabling each partner to offer and gain something (Johnson & Wilson: 7).

In other words, the authors argue that mutuality does not equal 'sameness'. Rather, mutuality can be seen as a principle of complementarity that embraces difference as a potential for dialogue, reciprocity and sharing of different values, knowledge and practices, enabling the partners to offer and gain something. That is, mutuality does not refer to the partners being 'the same'. In fact, some scholars argue, that there would be no reason to engage in partnerships if the partners had the same personality (FAU 2002)

Brinkerhoff extends the considerations of mutuality to include power relations. She argues that mutuality is horizontal and provides equality in decision-making, rather than the domination of one of the partners (Brinkerhoff 2002: 15). Hence, if the partnership is based on mutuality, it may help reduce unequal power relations.

2.7.1.3 Trust

For Fowler, trust and reciprocity are key elements in authenticity. Relationships based on trust are the only way to achieve authentic partnerships and only authentic partnership will have the intended outcome of civil society participation and strengthening (Fowler 1998). 'Trust' in development partnerships can be seen as the contrary of 'contract'. Earlier in development, North-South development relations were characterized by conditionalities and contract-based relationships. In regards to formal agreements between NGOs, Fowler argue that they *"may define transactions and obligations on paper, but the self-protection and lack of mutual confidence which are implicit within contracts, call for mechanisms of guidance, control and enforcement"* (Stewart 1995 in Fowler 1998). The author states that in relationships build on formal agreements, the SNGOs are more likely to participate as workforce in NNGO financed projects, which will be counterproductive in regards to the desired development outcomes of local ownership, empowerment and sustainability (Craig and Mayo 1995 in Fowler 1998).

2.7.2 Partnership: a development understanding

In *Shaping the 21st Century*, the DAC summarizes three important aspects, which development partnerships should entail according to contemporary ID theory, namely participation, local ownership and capacity development. The organization writes that donors should operate within a partnership framework that *"encouraged strong local commitment, participation, capacity development and ownership"* (DAC 1996: 14).

2.7.2.1 Participation by civil society

According to Fowler, *"the quality of national and international NGO relations contributes to the 'social capital' which enables civil society to better control states and markets at all levels of their operation"* (Fowler 1998: 145). Thus, partnerships of a certain quality contribute to civil society in developing countries assuming its role as watchdog for the state and the market.

Hoksberg acknowledges that exactly how civil society arises and becomes strong is not yet fully known. However, he points out four areas in which NNGOs can strengthen civil society in developing countries; a) by providing financial resources, b) through training and capacity building; for instance through workshops, classes, and mentoring and by sharing *"particular tools, methods, and systems of work (e.g. logframe analysis) that ensure effective technical work at the grassroots and sound management within the organization"*; c) through solidarity and d) via networking. (Hoksberg 2005: 18-19). In this way, Hoksberg argues, development partnerships, ideally, de-emphasize Northern dominance and help people in the South' become the architects and engineers of their own development' (Ibid).

2.7.2.2 Local ownership

The term 'local ownership' is best known for its inclusion in the UN Paris Declaration as one of the five principles designed to enhance the effectiveness of official development aid. Local ownership refers to the developing countries being in charge of their own development policies and strategies, and managing their own development work on the ground.

Schmidt (2002) states that "ownership and partnership are closely linked" and that local ownership would "replace the existing aid relationship, which is heavily controlled by developed country governments for reasons of self-interest, differences in world view, and perceptions of pervasive corruption or incapacity of African partners" (Schmidt 2002: 2). The author claims that the previous aid relationships that occurred without local ownership were dominated by Western actors because these had an interest in incorporating their world views in the aid relationship.

In *Shaping the 21st Century*, the DAC writes:

"In a partnership, development co-operation does not try to do things for developing countries and their people, but with them. It must be seen as a collaborative effort to help them increase their capacities to do things for themselves. Paternalistic approaches have no place in this framework. In a true partnership, local actors should progressively take the lead while external partners back their efforts to assume greater responsibility for their own development" (DAC 1996: 13).

The fact that local actors should clearly take the lead, in order to achieve 'true partnership' accentuates a bias in the power structure *towards the SNGO* and, subsequently, a reduction of Western dominance.

2.7.2.3 Capacity development

According to Eade, Amartya K. Sen's work on entitlements and capabilities provides insights into the dynamic nature of the exclusion that capacity building seeks to address (Eade 2007: 632). Thus, NNGOs may provide capacity building in the partnership, which should then reduce exclusion.

In accordance with the local ownership principle, capacity development is also achieved by engaging the partner actively in the designing, implementation and managing of the development processes. As DAC is cited in Baaz (2005: 3): *"In a partnership, development co-operation does not try to do things for developing countries and their people, but with them. It must be seen as a collaborative effort to help them increase their capacities to do things for themselves"*. In other words, capacity building is in many ways seen as help to self-reliance.

An increased capacity to manage the development process is one of the expected outcomes of development partnerships. It is assumed that the NNGO has an advantage in terms of organizational knowledge, technology, human resources, etc. and that the NNGO through the partnership will transfer knowledge and capacities to the Southern partners.

Kommentar [L1]: Spell out when arguing for development discourse

Kommentar [L2]: Follow up if in the vision or other docs, capacity building is presented as an anti-poverty strategy, as in Sen and contrasts to instrumental cap.build.

Both 'participation', 'local ownership' and 'capacity building' can be seen in relation to a perceived need to assure sustainability (Baaz 2005: 7). Baaz argues that "the supposed lack of sustainability is today often attributed to partners' organizational and institutional capacity and aid-dependence" (Ibid). Ideally, capacity development increases self-reliance and, consequently, sustainability, hence securing continuity after the NNGO is no longer involved.

Fowler has made an attempt to develop a concept that describes how partnership should ideally be in ID, namely, the concept of 'authentic partnership'. His concept is addressed here, as it is an attempt to define how partnership should be conceptualized by including the normative values underlying the partnership concept in a North-South NGO framework. According to Fowler there is an urgent need to regain the initial meaning of the concept of partnership in development. He argues that

"the concept used to mean something like: common goals; a shared interpretation of the causes of poverty and marginalization; agreed principles with people-centred ways of combating the structural nature of these and other social ills; a mutuality in the contribution NGOs could make in working for a more equitable, just and sustainable world; and respect for the autonomy of each organization. In short, partnership was intended to be equality in ways of working and mutuality in respect for identity, position and role" (Fowler 1998: 144).

The above review of how partnership is conceptualized in the literature is particularly relevant for the first part of the research question, because it focuses the analysis regarding how Ibis draws on existing understandings of the partnership concept.

In sum, development partnerships are conceptualized normatively and from a development perspective. The normative values are conceived as the essential bricks upon which a sustainable partnership may be constructed. The most commonly mentioned are equality, mutuality and trust. The development understanding focuses on how a partnership approach may embrace other approaches, particularly capacity building or development oriented outcomes such as local ownership and civil society participation.

2.8 Partnerships under critical lenses

Despite the great potential of development partnerships and the apparent consensus swathing the concept, it has also instigated controversy. A number of scholars have contributed to the debate with a critical perspective on partnership as a development tool. As the this section shows, these scholars argue that the widespread use of the partnership concept leads to ambiguity and hidden power inequalities.

Reviewing the literature, two main criticisms regarding development partnerships stand out. The first is concerned with 'partnership' as a development buzzword that is vague enough to cover relationships contrary to authentic partnerships (Cornwall, Fowler, Lewis). The second regards the power relations within North-South partnerships (Crawford, Lister 2001, Fowler 1998, Baaz 2005).

2.8.1 The fuzz of buzz: partnership as a euphemism

A review of the existing research on 'development discourse' shows that an entire vocabulary inherent in the development discipline exists. The partnership principle can be located within this development vocabulary. 'Partnership' is positively valued, because the word communicates the values explained above and used in a development context, it also points away from relationships dominated by the North.

According to Andrea Cornwall (2007), the problem is that buzzwords are not only code words to funding or mere professional terminology. Rather, she claims that this vocabulary is constituted by *buzzwords*. Namely, words that are vague, ambiguous, all encompassing and positively loaded with value. She explains that the vagueness and euphemistic qualities are powerful, because the buzzwords might cover multiple meanings, and have a 'normative resonance' (Cornwall 2007). Hence, the work that these words do for development is to place the sanctity and inviolability of its goals beyond reproach. In other words, the buzzwords serve to gain *legitimacy* for the development interventions, because of the intrinsic 'rightness' and goodness they represent (Cornwall 2004).

In order to escape what Cornwall considers 'the emptiness of buzzwords', she suggests to pay close attention to meaning. She calls for a 'disentanglement of the normative and the empirical, a focus on actual social practices rather than wishful thinking' (Cornwall 2007: 481). This process of disentanglement, she argues, would then bring about awareness of how buzzwords are included in a belief system and how they can be used mischievously.

"Dislocating naturalized meanings, dislodging embedded associations, and de-familiarizing the language that surrounds us becomes, then, a means of loosening the hegemonic grip – in Gramsci's (1971) sense of the word 'hegemony', as unquestioned acceptance – that certain ideas have come to exert in development policy and practice" (Cornwall 2007:).

Thus, Cornwall argues that partnership, along with other of development's buzzwords, is employed with unquestioned acceptance, because of its 'intrinsic goodness'. However, the words may potentially be used as a façade for realities other than that which the implicit 'feel good' factor connotes. If this façade is a cover up for power relations, then there is an even greater problematic than merely the difference between rhetoric and results.

A number of scholars thus criticize the widespread use of the concept of partnership, because it includes a loss of meaning and, consequently, a misuse in terms of hidden power relations. A process of disentanglement and dislocation of naturalized meanings, as advocated for by Cornwall, is what this study aims at, by the means of discourse analysis.

2.8.2 Power in partnership

The other line of criticism is concerned with the power relations within the North-South partnership. In particular, some scholars argue that partnership is a way of maintaining status quo, and thus continuing Western or Northern dominance. Uneven power relations are one of the main reproaches to the authenticity

Kommentar [L3]: Follow up, does Ibois use partnership as a buzzword? Yes and no...

of development partnerships. As Fowler puts it: "Partnership is a politically correct codeword, which mystifies and sanitizes power relations²" (Fowler 2000). This statement is of course controversial as it presents a direct disagreement with the normative understanding of partnership, which emphasized equality and mutuality as bearing principles. The literature, thus presents an area of tension regarding the nature and practice of partnership.

2.8.2.1 Follow the money

For many scholars, the economic inequalities between NGOs from the North and their counterparts in the South are in the way to make authentic partnerships a reality (Lister 2000, Kajese 1987, Baaz 2005). Kajese takes this stand claiming that: "The southern NGOs are quite aware that money and know-how spell power in the hands of the northern NGOs" (Kajese 1987: 2). Lister partly supports this position, explaining that the most frequently mentioned constraint to the formation of authentic partnerships is the control of money, and that this may make true partnership impossible (Lister 2000). However, it is a rather fatalistic approach to partnership, if economic inequalities and authentic partnerships are mutually exclusive since, in most cases, the NNGO will have exceeding amounts of funding in comparison to the SNGO.

On the other hand, authors criticizing the power of finance in NGO relationships also focus on the relationship between the donor and the NNGO (Lister, Fowler). Fowler finds that NGOs are often accountable to their funders in a way they are not to their beneficiaries or partners, which makes it plausible that the NGO carries the agendas of Northern funders to their work, rather than represent the interests of the people they support (Fowler 1997).

Power can also be exerted within the partnership by influencing the core values of the SNGO's organizational identity. This way, partnership becomes a way of penetrating deeper into a country's development processes. As Fowler argues:

"There is an inevitable danger that a new local organization, induced by an NNGO and relying on external resources, defines itself by taking on aspects of the NNGOs identity and mission. Such identification brings higher risk of patronage relations, external dependency and potential for unsustainability, especially if the new entity does not become respected and supported in its own right as an integral part of local society" (Fowler 1997: 95).

Hence, having the ability to project ones image onto the Southern NGO is not only an expression of power on behalf of the NNGO, if exerted, it is also an antagonism to the ideal of local ownership and sustainability.

² Here, Fowler does not refer to 'authentic partnerships', but to how some North-South partnerships are carried out in practice. See Fowler 1998.

2.9 Theoretical framework

The literature review above, has served to guide the theoretical framework. First, Development Studies provided an understanding of partnership that included a set of normative values, as well as a focus on civil society participation, local ownership and capacity development. The theoretical framework of this study is shaped by a combination of Development Studies, Postcolonial Studies and Gramsci's concept of hegemony.

2.9.1 Power

An elaborate conceptualization of power is not within the scope of this thesis. However, since power is a central aspect of the criticisms of partnership, it is relevant to provide a brief outline of how different theories conceptualize power.

2.9.1.1 *Three dimensions*

It is possible to roughly distinguish between three dimensions of power. The first dimension is provided by Dahl, who states that: 'A has power over B to the extent that he can get B to do something that B would not otherwise do' (Dahl in Crawford 2003: 144). The *two-dimensional view* extends the scope of power to control the political agenda of decision making, that is, to determine what issues are included and also, what is *excluded* (Ibid). However, the limit of this view is similar to that of the first; it is restricting itself to the exercise of power by *individuals* and to *observable* conflicts in the decision making process (Ibid, italics in original).

To these existing dimensions of power, Lukes includes a third dimension with two essential additions. One is that power relations can also be enacted by collectivities and social forces (Ibid). The second; that power does not only operate through observable conflicts; it can also influence the thoughts and desires of its victims without their being aware of its effects (Hindess 1996: 5). Hence, the subjects upon whom power is being exercised may not make any attempts to defend their interests. Hindess describes Lukes' third dimension of power as "... A dispersed form of social regulation that not only acts directly on the behavior of its subjects but also moulds their thoughts and desires" (Hindess 1996). As Hindess argues, this conception of power relates to the Gramscian notion of hegemony. The concept of hegemony is of particular interest for this study, as it goes beyond the quantitative notions of power of the two first dimensions of power.

Inequalities based on dimensions that can be enounced through 'lack of' statements (lack of financial resources, lack of education, etc.) are often quite evidently unequal between the NNGOs and the SNGOs and frequently conclude with 'zero-sum evaluations'. However, as mentioned in the literature, differences can become the basis for mutuality. The third dimension of power allows a deeper analysis of how power can be exerted, even without the awareness of the actors involved. Gramsci's concept of hegemony will be applied to study this type of power, since it is a concept that has also influenced Postcolonial Studies.

When discussing power relations and discourse, Foucault is of course a central theorist to consider. However, for the purposes of this study, Foucault's work only has limited explanatory potential. Foucault rejects both the quantitative notion of power and the perception of power as being based on consent. Unlike

Lukes and Gramsci, he argues that power is ubiquitous and reversible (it is everywhere and available to anyone). Hence, he concludes, there is little to be said about power in general (Hindess 1996: 141). However, it is not possible to apply Foucault's theories directly as a framework for detailed linguistic analysis. Foucault argues that language is merely driven, shaped and reflective of power (Hastings 1998). His view of the relationship between power and language is unidirectional and, consequently, not in accordance the constructionist approaches to discourse analysis (Ibid). A basic argument of this thesis is that discursive practices and social practices are interrelated. Furthermore, Foucault did not ground his theories in the micro level analysis of discursive events, such as texts or talk. Therefore, as Hastings explains, Foucault does not allow micro level linguistic events to be explained in terms of macro level structures and processes (Lemke, 1995 in Hastings 1998: 195). For these reasons, an analysis of power in the Foucaultian sense is not as relevant for this study..

2.9.2 Hegemony

Gramsci did not provide a precise definition of the concept of hegemony. However, as Lears (1985: 568) points out, one of the fundamental aspects of hegemony is that it is characterized by "spontaneous consent". This consent is given by the subaltern groups to the dominant group. (Ibid). The relationship between *hegemony* and *domination* is explained through the relationship between *coercion* and *consent*. Consent and coercion coexist, though one is essentially dominant in a given relationship or period. If the ruling group exerts its power through coercion, *domination* reigns. Conversely, if the ruling group rests on the consent of the subalterns, *hegemony* prevails.

A relevant aspect of hegemony is that it prevents the subaltern classes from developing what Gramsci referred to as 'spontaneous philosophy'. Subalternity and domination are not only physical domination, power and control over the use of resources. They are constituted by the inability to develop a coherent world-view; a 'spontaneous' philosophy that actually relates to one's own life and place in society (Ives: 79). This is highly relevant when it comes to development partnerships, as local ownership of strategies and interventions is one of the main intended effects of partnerships. In other words, the Southern partners ought to be capacitated to develop a 'spontaneous' philosophy that actually relates to their own life and place in society. Hence, developing a spontaneous philosophy is correlated to achieving real local ownership of the development process.

Without discussing spontaneous philosophies or hegemony explicitly, Fowler argues that partnerships can be:

"An instrument for deeper, wider and more effective penetration into a country's development choices and path... By appearing to be benign, inclusive, open, all-embracing and harmonious, partnership intrinsically precludes other interpretations of reality, options and choices without overtly doing so. Thus, it serves to co-opt and sideline potentially opposing ideas and forces that express and propagate alternative views" (Fowler 2000: 7).

Here, the author combines the critique of buzzwords with a conception of partnership as hegemonic power, when he argues that '*partnership intrinsically precludes other interpretations of reality, options and choices without overtly doing so*'. Hegemony relates to a conception of power that is not mechanical, but subtle, mind-indulging and unconscious; a dispersed form of social regulation that moulds thoughts and desires.

Hegemony can be conceptualized as non-coercive relations in which subaltern groups (actively) consent to and support belief systems and structures of power relations that do not necessarily serve or even work against the interests of those groups (Lears 1985). Nevertheless, the concept of hegemony cannot be understood without taking into account the specific historical context the analysis is situated in (Cox 1983, Lears 1985). In this case, the historical context, in which the analysis is situated, is provided by Postcolonial studies.

2.9.3 Partnership: a postcolonial critique

History and context are very important factors in this study. The study situates and analyzes development practitioner's understanding of partnerships in relation to both the development aid context and the postcolonial context. The development aid perspective has been investigated through the conceptualization of partnerships as a development tool. The historical context is provided by postcolonial studies. Drawing upon Eriksson Baaz, the postcolonial perspective should be seen as "one source of meaning that is drawn upon while providing meaning to the particular circumstances that characterize the development aid setting". As a discipline, Development Studies cannot stand free of the postcolonial context, in which it is embedded, as Said claims: "*There is no discipline, no structure of knowledge, no institution or epistemology that can or has ever stood free of the various socio-cultural, historical, and political formations that give epochs their peculiar individuality*" (Said 1989: 211 in Kothari 2005: 50). The intention with this section is to emphasize some of most relevant contributions of Postcolonial Studies in regards to the research question.

2.9.3.1 The problem of representation

Edward Said examined the problem of representation. He argues that the Orient was discursively constructed by the West – as its inferior 'Other'. In fact, the Orient and the West were, according to the author, represented through discourse as opposites (Said 1979). Said explains that the dichotomy East/West was presented through couples of binary oppositions, such as irrational/rational, backward/progressive, feminine/masculine. Baaz writes that similar dichotomies have been established in the meeting between the colonizer and the colonized by several other scholars (Baaz 2005: 43). This converts the case of opposite representation to a more general issue in colonial discourses, as the colonized Other was continuously represented in much of the same dichotomies. These representations of 'otherness' had the effect of legitimizing foreign presence and intervention in the colonized areas, as the colonial venture then became a civilizing mission (Baaz 2005: 45).

The term 'subaltern' has its origins in Gramsci, who used the term to refer to the subordinated and oppressed groups in society. Subsequently, the term has further been developed as a discipline by authors such as Gayatri Spivak (Prasad 2003). Spivak is well-known within postcolonial theory for her essay *Can the*

subaltern speak? in which she raises the question of representation. That is, she questions the Western project of giving the subaltern a voice. For instance, she criticizes Western feminism for its universalism and inadequacy in an international/Third World context.

Spivak is critical of Western hegemonic knowledge. For instance, her studies on feminism, reveal that Western feminism embodies a vision that is similar to “imperialist narratives, promising redemption to the colonized subject” (Spivak 1997: 76-7 cited in Chowdhry & Nair 2004: 14) She is critical of notions of universal values and emphasizes the importance of contextualizing struggles and critiques in specific historical, geographical and cultural locations. Hence, concepts that are applied universally, without context-sensitivity and which promote Western knowledge to the salvation of post-colonial populations is presented as a manner of exerting power. Spivak conceives of the problem of representation as a problem of power, which is enforced onto those being represented. The author argues that misrepresentations occur, when universal values are applied disregarding context (Spivak 1997).

Kommentar [L4]: Husk i discussion

Some scholars argue that development in itself is hegemonic (Rist 1997, Doty 1996). According to these authors, the goals, definitions and values that embed this discipline are reflected not in the countries that are in need of ‘development’, but in the world view of Western societies. Likewise, Sheila Nair states that the discourse on human rights is mired in Western social and political thought and histories (Chowdhry & Nair 2005: 255). She attempts to show how the human rights debate may be advanced by a postcolonial critique. These authors point out that Western ideologies and concepts, however just and urgent their defense may seem, are not necessarily universally applicable, particularly in a postcolonial context as emphasized by Nair. Thus, they proclaim the need to contextualize and re-configure the Western ideas of development. It is an approach that is generally adopted by a number of scholars that have become known as post-developmentalists.

According to Development Studies, local ownership and participation help assure that the poor speak. Furthermore, as outlined in the first part of this chapter, the role of NGOs from the North is currently conceived in terms of advocacy and civil society support. This can also be seen as a point of tension between the two disciplines. Whereas NNGOs engaging in advocacy and support to CSOs may be seen as assuring local ownership within Development thinking, they may be acting in a distinctive postcolonial manner, according to postcolonial theory.

2.9.4 Existing research and contributions of the study

Scholars such as Lister (2000), Crawford (2003), Baaz (2005) and Hurt (2003) have analyzed power relations in development partnership. However, not much has been written about partnership in an African context.

Sarah Lister conducted her study *Power in partnership? An analysis of an NGO's relationships with its partners* in 2000. Her case study investigates the relationship between a NNGO in the US, a Central American NGO and a bilateral donor agency. She applies a framework adapted from Dahl to explore issues of power in the relationships. However, Dahl's conception of power is limited to those instances in which

there is a difference between the will of the actors and an observable conflict hereby arises. Hence, it corresponds to the first dimension of power. Lister finds that greater importance should be given to relationships between individuals, yet she also highlights the potential for the partnership discourse to reinforce existing power asymmetries. The author states that it was beyond the scope of her study to look further into the discourse and power structures operating within the framework of international development assistance, but that this aspect is pertinent to include: *"It is not sufficient just to consider asymmetries of power between agencies as constraints to partnership, but the wider framework within which those agencies operate, and the mechanisms for establishing those frameworks including the use of discourse, must also be taken into consideration"*. Hence, she points to a lack in the literature, which this study aims at contributing to cover. Namely, to investigate how discourse reproduces or changes the wider frameworks of International Development through the concept of partnership.

In her much nuanced book, *'the Paternalism of Partnership'* (2005), Maria Eriksson Baaz carries out a postcolonial reading of identity in Development Aid. Her study takes place in Tanzania and focuses on how social identities are discursively constructed in the development aid system. She finds that the images of 'Self' and partner produced by development workers do not correspond with the message of partnership. The reason for this is that the development workers tended to use a discourse of superiority; a discourse in which the development workers saw themselves as being at a higher level of development. Baaz's findings are based on interviews carried out with various Northern development workers and discourse analysis. Identity is equally important for this thesis, as it is an area of tension between the Development understanding of partnership and the postcolonial reading of North-South encounters. Through discourse, social identities and relations may be established according to the ideal of mutuality and equality in partnerships or according to a postcolonial superior 'self'. Baaz study is particularly interesting, as she focuses on development worker's partnership discourse in an African country with a theoretical framework based on Postcolonial Studies and Development studies, which is consistent with the theoretical framework of this study. Nevertheless, she does not engage in any linguistic analyses of interviews and texts. Hence, she does not make the link between micro level analysis and the wider social structures in ID, which is such a neglected area of research (Hastings 1998).

2.9.5 Contributions of the study

This study aspires to contribute to what has been deemed a lack in the studies of North-South relations, namely to connect a micro-level linguistic study and the wider level of the Development theory (Hastings 1998). The combination of applying Postcolonial and Development Studies to provide meaning to the context, in which Ibis Mozambique is situated, permits a thorough analysis of how partnership is constituted within and shaped by the discourses and contradictions inherent to both disciplines. This aspect is important as the inclusion of contextual factors has gained little attention to the study of NGO partnership.

The focus on hegemony, rather than the more quantitative understandings of power, also assures a nuanced approach to study of North-South relations. This way, the analysis does not focus merely on the difference between the ideal of partnership and partnership in practice. Rather, the focus is on, first deciphering the

complex understanding of an equally multifaceted concept. Second, to link this understanding to the broader social processes within North-South NGO relations and, third, to discuss what the links between the level of discourse analyses and the social practices suggest for the role of partnership in contemporary development.

Chapter 3

Methodology

3.1 Introduction

In this chapter, the overall methodological framework will be presented. The research design is primarily based on a single case study and qualitative methods, namely interviews and document critique. The data is essentially qualitative with semi-structured interviews as primary data in addition to some of Ibis' internal documents. These data will be analyzed through critical discourse analysis.

Using discourse analysis has various implications for the study and the research question guiding it. First of all, it implies that knowledge about the world and world views are believed to be culturally and historically embedded (see Jørgensen & Philips 1999). Ibis Mozambique is a Danish development NGO and may position itself according to this role. Still, Ibis is not operating in a void; it is a NNGO operating in a particular geographical, historical and social setting. That is, a specific context, which also influences how meaning is created. It is this dialectical relation between language, discourse and social practice, which is at the center point of the analysis.

3.2 The case study

The research question will be answered through a case study of Ibis Mozambique. The case study is an appropriate research strategy for this study, as the aim is to study partnership in the country context of Mozambique. Yin explains that:

As a research strategy, the distinguishing characteristic of the case study is that it attempts to examine: (a) a contemporary phenomenon in its real-life context, especially when (b) the boundaries between phenomenon and context are not clearly evident (Yin 1981: 3).

In other words, the case study is highly appropriate for this study because it aims at investigating how Ibis' understanding of partnership is created in the field of tension between ID and postcolonialism as the social and contextual conditions believed to be pertinent to the research on development partnership (Yin 2003: 13).

3.2.1 The single case study

The single case study of Ibis as a NNGO in Mozambique engaging in development partnership does not represent an extreme or unique case. Rather, the organization faces many of the same issues as similar NGOs from the North operating in postcolonial countries. As mentioned in the previous chapter, the partnership concept has become greatly embedded in ID at all levels. The literature review showed how partnership is presented as the best way of conducting bottom-up and people-centered development work, in order to change earlier North-South power structures and assure local ownership. For many organizations, it

is an obligatory approach to Development work, which is also the case for Ibis as will be apparent later on. Thus, the partnership concept, as a well established theory in ID, deserves to be empirically tested in what represents a 'critical case'. The 'critical case' is one of the single case designs highlighted by Yin (Yin 2009: 47). For these reasons, the single case study is an appropriate research strategy that can 'confirm, challenge, or extend' current Development theory (Ibid).

3.3 Ibis as case

Ibis Mozambique is an interesting case, not only because the NGO represents a 'critical case', but also because Ibis recently decided to work solely through partnerships. Ibis has been in Mozambique since 1976, when the country had just gained independence. In Mozambique, Ibis' focus is centered on civil society strengthening through education and governance.

Ibis is one of the six Danish NGOs that receive a so-called framework agreement from Danida. Of these, Ibis figures as the second largest receiver of frame-assistance in Danidas Annual Report from 2008.³ In 2006, a self-financing requirement was stipulated for the six Danish NGOs. The requirement means that the NGOs in the future must supplement the contributions they receive from the state with an amount paid from privately raised funds. In 2006, the self-financing requirement was 5 per cent, rising to 10 per cent in 2007, at which level it has remained (DANIDA 2007). Before 2006, Ibis received between 80 and 90 % of its funding from Danida. Ibis' dependence on Danida for funding is also an aspect that makes the Danish NGO a very interesting case.

3.4 Mozambique as case

Mozambique is located in the South-Eastern corner of the African continent. It is one of the world poorest countries, heavily indebted and aid dependent. In fact, Mozambique is among the largest recipients of development assistance in Sub-Saharan Africa and the world's eighth most aid dependent country, with an aid to GNI ratio which is four times the average for sub-Saharan Africa (De Renzio & Hanlon 2007: 3). Danish aid to Mozambique can be traced back to the 1970's (Danida 2008c). Danida has especially focused on government and the civil society sector in Mozambique, ranking as the third largest donor in this area in terms of commitment (Ibid). Mozambique has often been labeled a 'donor darling', a name that indicates the exceptionally large number of aid agencies active in the country (Danida 2008c).

3.4.1 NNGOs in Mozambique

Mozambique is a postcolonial country that is still very affected by the recent independence from Portuguese colonial rule 1975 and the subsequent civil wars. When the war ended in 1992, Frelimo, the winning party, took over government. However, they continued to apply some of the control methods from the colonial state (Sogge 1997). The Frelimo government created various organizations called 'Mass Democratic Organizations', which were supposed to be representative of civil society. However, these were subjected to

³ Mellefolkeligt Samvirke is the largest receiver and Folkekirkens Nødhjælp (DanChurchAid) is the third (Danida 2008b)

strict control (Negrão 2003: 2). In other words, these organizations did not represent an independent and active civil society, but were created and controlled by the ruling Marxist-Leninist party⁴.

With the debt crisis in the 80s, Frelimo was forced to adopt World Bank structural adjustment programmes (SAP), which put a limit on state intervention and budget. Pheiffer explains the boom of NGOs in Mozambique with this 'retreat of the state', arguing that the void that was subsequently created got filled by NGOs (Pheiffer 2004: 360). In fact, Mozambique became the host to perhaps the largest concentration of international NGOs and development agencies in any single African nation (Pheiffer 2004: 361). Subsequently, the NNGOs and their donors began to conjecture a re-configuration of the Mozambican civil society by replacing the Mass Democratic Organizations with structures typical of NGOs of the North – development NGOs. According to Sogge, many NNGOs tended to "scan organizational life in the South through conceptual lenses made for the North" (Sogge 1997: 5). The NGOs from the North, Negrão argues, used methodologies and answered to agendas, which were conceived and developed outside the country (Negrão 2003). In this context, the partnership principle translated into a mushrooming of local NGOs with no 'personality' or missions besides those adopted from the NNGO (Sogge 1997). For many Mozambicans, NGOs are a 'foreign thing' (Ibid) and a way of doing business, as 'employment with a foreign aid agency became the best way to earn a substantial salary' and secure the family's livelihood (Pheiffer 2004: 364).

3.5 Data collection and processing

The data upon which the analysis is based comes from a variety of sources. The material includes semi-structured interviews, Ibis' global vision, *Vision 2012*, and more 'operational' documents, for instance, Ibis' Partnership Assessment.

In order to achieve a thorough understanding of Ibis' understanding of partnership, the analysis will be carried out on three different levels; first, partnership as Ibis understands it in *principle*, second, how the concept is understood at the level of *strategy* and third, how Ibis understands partnership in *practice*. The data has been selected based on the structure of the analysis, that is, the data material has been chosen according to its ability to provide insight to the understanding of partnership from the angle of principle, strategy and practice.

The analysis of partnerships as a principle within Ibis will be based on Vision 2012, which is Ibis' global vision statement. The Vision guides Ibis' work at an overall level, that is, it serves to guide stakeholders in all the countries, in which Ibis' is active. Next, partnership as a strategy will be analyzed. At the strategic level, there are quite a few documents available. Given the rather extensive method of critical discourse analysis, it is not possible to carry out an analysis of all the documents and a delimitation of the data is required. I have therefore chosen a document, which exists in a global version and a version adapted to the Mozambican context by Ibis Mozambique, namely the Partner Assessment. The partner assessment is one of the strategic steps Ibis takes in the partnership process. Thus, Ibis has a global Partner Assessment (hereafter

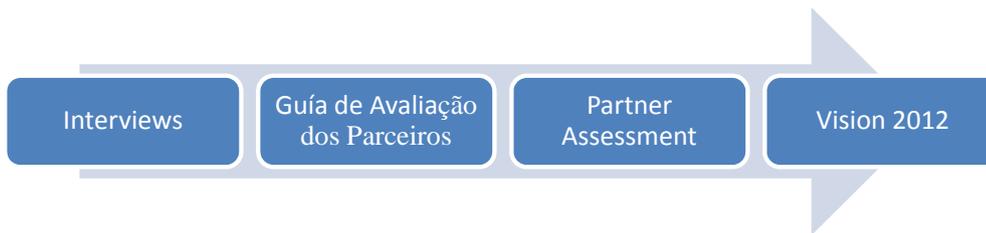
⁴ In 1977 Frelimo declared itself to be a Marxist-Leninist party (Newit 1995: 543).

PA) document that explains the overall approach to carrying out a partner assessment. It is a 'tool box paper', which introduces the how and the why of assessing partners. It is the first section of the PA which will be analyzed. This document has been adapted by Ibis Mozambique to a version that fits the Mozambican context called *Guia de Avaliação dos Parceiros* (hereafter GAP). The level of practice will be analyzed through interviews with Ibis Mozambique's Administrative Director, Anne Hoff and Deputy Director, Lucy Hayes. The interviews will also be analyzed using CDA.

Having data material, which consists of both 'global' documents from the Head Office and data from Ibis Mozambique, is an advantage. The reason for this is that it covers Ibis Mozambique's understanding in a way that, on one hand, respects the specific Mozambican context and, on the other hand, includes Ibis' Mozambique's organizational identity as part of a Danish NGO with its overall core values and strategies.

The data in this study is rather varied in terms of both elaboration and scope. On one extreme it is possible to locate the interviews, since they are not, or very little, elaborated by Ibis beforehand and are carried out in the scope of two people; the interviewer and the interviewee. On the other extreme is, for instance, Ibis vision 2012, which is a greatly elaborated document and is meant to present Ibis' Vision publicly. This idea is depicted in the figure below.

Figure 1: The progression of the data in terms of elaboration and scope.



According to Yin, using a single source of evidence is not recommended for case studies (Yin 2003: 97). On the contrary, he argues that data triangulation is particularly relevant for the case study. The main reason for this is that it strengthens the validity of the study. The findings are much more likely to be "convincing and accurate if they are based on several different sources of information" (Ibid: 98).

3.6 Interviews

I will conduct interviews with the Administrative Director, Anne Hoff, and the deputy director, Lucy Hayes, of Ibis Mozambique. The interviews will be semi-structured in order to encourage the interviewees to elaborate on the aspects of development partnerships that they find most significant. However, there are certain topics that I intend to cover. Especially, the questions will aim at discovering how Ibis relates to aspects of context, when asked about the partnerships, for instance; What partnership means in a Mozambican context, how identities are established, and how the partnerships are generally portrayed.

It has not been possible to carry out face-to-face interviews. In stead, I will use telephone interviews. On the one hand, this can be seen as a limitation of the study. Doing the interviews by phone may have some implications for the 'temperament' of the information obtained. By this I mean, that the interviewees may be less disposed to talking freely and uninterruptedly, because they cannot see the reaction of the interviewer. However, it may also turn out to be an advantage. Theresa F. Rogers (1976) found that the quality of data obtained by telephone was comparable to that obtained by interviews in person. If anything, the data she obtained suggested that those interviewed in person were somewhat more likely to give socially desirable answers than those interviewed by telephone. However, for the researcher, it might be an inconvenience since gesture, mimic, hesitations and other non-verbal symbols are more complicated to discover and interpret.

The data will be analyzed through discourse analysis. More specifically, the method used for the analysis will be critical discourse analysis (CDA) as developed by Fairclough.

3.7 Data analysis: discourse analysis

Discourse analysis is not about finding the 'truth' behind the discourse, the object of analysis is the discourse itself. According to Jørgensen & Philips, critical discourse analysis seeks to problematize and empirically investigate the relation between discursive practice and social and cultural developments in different social contexts (1999: 72). Fairclough's language study is particularly relevant for the thesis, because it seeks to expose otherwise hidden connections between language, power, ideology (Fairclough 2000: 4 in Pierce 2008: 285). As highlighted in the literature review, power relations and ideology, were considered essential in the study of development partnerships, especially in a postcolonial context.

In addition, CDA encourages an exploration of the social consequences of the discursive practice. This helps answering the second part of the research question, which concerns the role of partnership in International Development.

3.8 Fairclough's critical discourse analysis

3.8.1 A theoretical introduction

Discourse refers to a certain way of understanding the world; it is a closure of meaning within a certain domain (Jørgensen & Philips 1999). Fairclough understands discourse as a three-dimensional event that is simultaneously a text, a discursive practice and a social practice⁵ (Fairclough 1992: 4-5).

One of the premises of this study is that understandings and representations of the world are historically and culturally specific and contingent. In accordance with Fairclough, I perceive of the relationship between discourse and other social dimensions as dialectic. Conversely, other discourse theorists like Laclau and Mouffe argue that 'everything is discourse', whereas Fairclough restricts the conception of discourse to texts,

⁵ These three dimensions will be further explained in section xxx

pictures, speech, and other semiological system such as gesture. (Jørgensen & Philips 1999: 28). For instance, Fairclough criticizes Laclau and Mouffe for ignoring structural limitations and focusing too much on contingency: everything floats and all possibilities are open (Jørgensen & Philips 1999: 68). Conversely, Fairclough argues that a structural domain must be conceived, in which the structures may be socially constructed, yet they are slow and difficult to change – especially for dominated groups (Ibid). In the case of Ibis Mozambique, it means that a discourse analysis of partnership should be complemented with other socio-cultural theories. One should keep in mind the structural limitations that may be put on the organization and on the partnerships, both in terms of operating in a postcolonial context and within the development system as a social practice.

3.8.2 Orders of discourse

One of Fairclough's main concepts regarding CDA is that of *order of discourse*. The order of discourse is defined as a complex, heterogeneous and contradictory configuration of discourse types within the same social domain or institution (Fairclough 1992, Jørgensen & Philips 1999). 'Discourse types' refers to discourses and genres (e.g. interview). It is within the order of discourse that it is possible to study processes of change, because different or even contradictory discourses 'struggle' to achieve a closure of meaning, and to become naturalized in the order of discourse. There are various degrees of naturalization, 'common sense' assumptions representing the highest. In this study, the order of discourse is the social domain of 'development partnership'.

3.8.3 Common sense

Fairclough is particularly concerned with the relationship between discourse, common sense and ideology. A discourse can become ideological, when it is elevated to and accepted as common sense. 'Common sense' refers to assumptions that are "implicit in the conventions according to which people interact linguistically, and of which people are generally not consciously aware" (Fairclough 2001:2). As such, they become natural and therefore not only acceptable, but desirable.

The discourses that become ideologies by building on common sense assumptions legitimize existing social relations and differences of power by taking them for granted through language and behavior (Ibid). As Fairclough explains: "*Ideological power, the power to project one's practices as universal and 'common sense', is a significant complement to economic and political power... and is exercised in discourse"* (Fairclough 2001: 27).

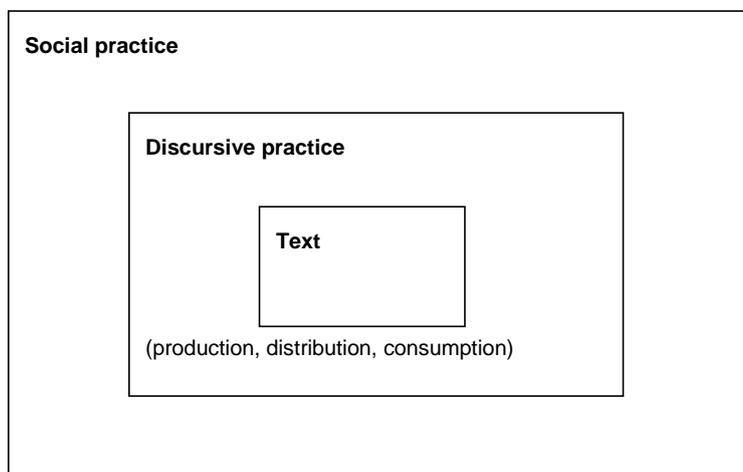
Remembering Gramsci, when the dominating groups exert hegemony, the subordinate groups are not able to develop their own common sense or spontaneous philosophy. This is because the dominating group's practices have become common sense. Roughly summarized, consent is built this way. As Fairclough states, ideology is the prime means of manufacturing consent (Ibid). In the analysis of Ibis' discursive practice, I will therefore focus on what 'truths' are presented as 'common sense'.

Besides the theoretical contributions to discourse, Fairclough's also provides a very specific method to the analysis of discourses. This method will be explained in the following.

3.8.4 The three dimensions of CDA

According to Fairclough, any discursive event has simultaneously three dimensions, which should be analyzed separately. The first dimension is *text*, the second dimension is *discursive practice*, and the third dimension is *social practice*. These dimensions are depicted in the figure below:

Fig. 2: Fairclough's three dimensional model for critical discourse analysis (Fairclough 1992: 73).



When carrying out a CDA these three levels should always be included in the analysis (Jørgensen & Philips 1999: 80).

3.8.4.1 The three dimensions of CDA: Text

The focus of the first dimension is the text's formal characteristics, such as vocabulary and grammatical considerations. In *Language and Power*, Fairclough provides ten questions (and some sub-questions) that are meant as a guide for the analysis of the discursive event as text. The questions are not meant as a blueprint (Fairclough 200: 92). Thus, I will only include the aspects that are most relevant for the analysis. Some of the aspects that I will focus on in the analysis are outlined below. They are all taken from chapter 5 in Fairclough 2001.

- Vocabulary and grammar
 - Experiential-, relational- and expressive values of words and grammatical features
- Textual structures
 - What larger scale structures does the text have?

The three different kinds of values that Fairclough distinguishes between are interesting because they are subsequently linked to three aspects of social practice which may be constrained by power. Thus, *Experiential* values are traces of the way the text producer's experience of the natural or social world is represented. It has to do with knowledge, beliefs and contents. An important aspect of the experiential values is 'classification schemes', which refers to which vocabulary is organized in discourse types. A formal feature with *relational* value is a trace of the social relationships, which are enacted via the text in the discourse. *Expressive* value refers to a trace of the producers evaluations (in the widest sense) of the bit of the reality it relates to. It is to do with subjects and social identities (Fairclough 2001).

Furthermore, chapter 8 in Fairclough 1992 includes other aspects that will be centered on in the analysis:

- *Ethos*; features that go towards constructing 'selves', or social identities.
- *Grammar*:
 - Transitivity; the objective is to discover whether particular processes and participants are favored in the text, whether the voice is passive or active, and how significant is the nominalization of processes. A major concern is agency, the expression of causality, and the attribution of causality, and the attribution of responsibility.
 - Modality; a major concern is to assess the modality features for social relations in the discourse and controlling representations of reality.

3.8.4.2 *The three dimensions of CDA: Discursive practice*

The discursive practice is an analysis of discourses and genres that are articulated in the text. Particularly, I will focus on two aspects. First, the concept of *interdiscursivity*, which refers to how the text draws on other existing discourses and genres in and outside the order of discourse and how they are combined. When discourse types are mixed and articulated in unconventional ways it opens up for change within the order of discourse and thereby for socio-cultural change (Jørgensen & Philips 1999: 85). Conversely, if the discursive practice is constituted by a conventional mix of discourses, it helps maintain the dominating order of discourse and thus, the existing social order (Jørgensen & Philips 1999: 85).

The second aspect, which will be the focus of the analysis of the discursive practice, regards the common sense assumptions that exist in the discourses.

It is my assumption that within the order of discourse of development partnership, a number of different discourses are likely to appear in the analysis of Ibis' understanding of partnership. The intention is thus, to discover these and deconstruct the closure of meaning that they defend.

3.8.4.3 *The three dimensions of CDA: Social practice*

Fairclough acknowledges that the analysis of social practice is more difficult to reduce to specific dimensions or questions that need to be investigated (Fairclough 1992: 237). However, the general objective is to specify, first, how the discourse practice relates to the wider social practice, in which it is embedded, and second, what the effects of the discourse practice upon the social practice are.

The discursive and the social practice are interrelated, as they influence each other. That is, there is a dialectic relationship between the social context and discourse practice. Not only can the discursive practice alter the order of discourse, but it is also influenced by the social context and the discourses shaped by this specific social dimension.

In *Language and Power*, Fairclough argues that the analysis of the social practice is that one *explanation*, whereas the analysis of the discursive practice was one of *interpretation*. Explanation is 'a matter of seeing discourse as a part of processes of social struggle, within a matrix of relations of power' (2001: 135).

In the analysis in chapter 4, I will focus on how the common sense assumptions relate to the wider social practice of development. Next, I will explore the relationship between the discursive practice and the order of discourse. For instance, the idea is to look at the kinds of network of discourses, to which the discursive practice belongs.

The discussion in chapter 5 is also an analysis of the social practice. However, in chapter 5, the focus will be on the consequences of Ibis' discursive practice on the wider social practice of ID, in order to answer the second part of the research question. .

3.9 The role of the researcher

When conducting discourse analysis it is important that the researcher tries to 'ignore' the knowledge she already possesses. This is particularly relevant when working with discourses one is close to, since it can then be difficult to see the discourses as what they are; socially constructed systems of meaning, which potentially could have been different. Often, the researcher will have extensive knowledge about or be part of the culture that the investigation is embedded in. In this case, having worked rather closely with Ibis during an internship period of five months, it is of course important to be aware of 'common sense' statements that seem a matter of course. It is exactly these 'trivial' aspects that are the object of the discourse analysis. The researcher needs to discover why certain statements as a matter of course are accepted as 'truths' and others do not (Jørgensen & Philips 1999: 31-32).

3.10 Generalization, reliability and validity

A common concern for the case study is that it allows little room for generalization. However, Yin argues that case studies are appropriate for 'analytic generalization'. An existing theory is used as a template with which to compare the empirical findings of the case study (Yin 2003: 33). The goal of doing a case study is, thus, to expand and generalize theories (Yin 2003: 10). The question is, rather, whether the results can be generalized to some broader theory (Ibid: 37). The theories used will be valued in terms of their ability to explain the phenomenon, in this case, North-South NGO relations in the case of Ibis Mozambique.

As mentioned above, multiple sources of evidence and data triangulation is an approach that helps assure validity in the study (Yin 2003). By using multiple sources of evidence, the intention has been to investigate the findings from more than one source and, thus, augmenting the probability that the conclusions are valid. Furthermore, validity is sought by prior selection of theoretical propositions to guide the data collection and

the analysis (Yin 2009: 18). This has been done, for instance, by outlining how partnership has conceptualized in the literature.

Yin explains that reliability in case studies can be achieved by making as many steps as operational as possible. Even though it is not possible to repeat the *same* case study, the thesis aims at documenting the procedures that have been followed, in order to strengthen the reliability of the study. This is done by carefully applying Fairclough's three dimensional model, which makes it possible for the reader to follow the steps taken to reach the conclusion.

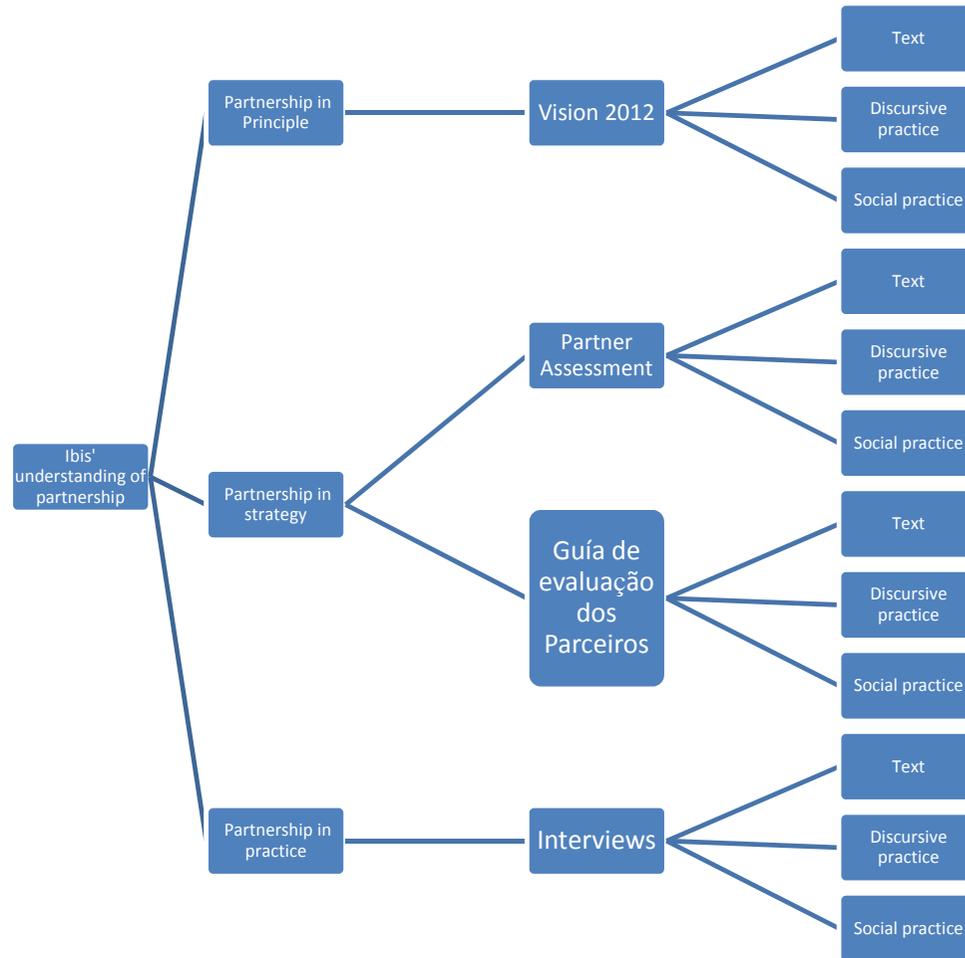
Chapter 4

From principle to practice

This chapter consists of discourse analyses of the three levels that represent *principle*, *strategy* and *practice*. It answers the first part of the research question, by providing a thorough analysis of Ibis' understanding of partnership. The conclusions of this first part of the guiding question will be the point of departure of the second research question, namely what Ibis' understanding of the partnership concept suggests for the role of partnership in International Development.

Below, the structure of the analysis is illustrated. As the model shows, the level of principle will be analyzed through Vision 2012. The level of strategy includes two documents to be analyzed, namely the 'Partner Assessment' and the 'Guía de avaliação dos parceiros'. At the level of practice, the CDA will be applied to the interviews. All the documents and interview will be analyzed at the level of text, discursive practice and social practice.

Figure 4: The structure of the analysis



4.1 Partnership in principle: Vision 2012

Ibis' vision 2012 is an expression of the core values that Ibis as an organization stands for and the direction of its work. The vision can be seen as the basis of Ibis' identity. Ibis' other strategies, such as the partnership strategy, are guided by the overall principles in Vision 2012. Thus, this key document is the foundation for understanding Ibis in terms of the organization's core values, principles and identity. As the name states, Vision 2012 presents the vision for the year 2012:

Text 1

"In the year 2012, the impoverished and oppressed are representing themselves, regardless of social status, race, gender or ethnicity. They demand that their individual and collective rights be respected; they want their fair share of political power and an equitable part of the planet's wealth"... "Ibis is involved in activities that contribute to the impoverished deciding over their own development and gradually becoming independent of foreign aid. At a global level, Ibis' activities provide knowledge and inspiration to the development of alternatives to liberal society – first and foremost through collective solutions" (Vision 2012: 5).

4.1.1 Dimension 1: Text

This level of analysis will treat the aspects regarding the experiential, relational and expressive values of words and grammar.

4.1.1.1 *Experiential values*

The experiential values focus on aspects of content and knowledge revealed in the text producer's use of words and grammar.

One of the most striking features of this text is the extent to which it is loaded with ideologically significant words. Words and expressions such as: poor, oppressed, social status, race, gender, ethnicity, own development, independent, popular organizations, marginalized local ownership, equality, legitimacy, carriers of social and economic change, civil society, democratization and reform, just to mention a few, are what Fairclough denominates 'ideologically contested'.

Some of these words also form ideologically significant meaning relations. An example of this is the subject positioning made in the expression 'the poor and oppressed'. This is the group that forms Ibis' intended beneficiaries. However, the group is, interchangeably, called 'the impoverished and oppressed' or simply the 'impoverished'. It indicates that 'the impoverished' are the same group of people as 'the impoverished and oppressed'. In other words, the meaning of oppressed is somehow included in the meaning of impoverished, and is thus its hyponym. It also suggests that 'the poor and oppressed' form a collective or a unity that can be addressed as such.

Classification schemes are studied by focusing on which vocabulary is organized in discourse types. Ibis' vision and proposed solutions follow two schemes; one can be classified in terms of *self-reliance* and the other in terms of *collectivity*. For example, in text 1, the former is represented in positively loaded expressions, such as 'representing themselves', 'demand individual and collective rights be respected' 'deciding over their own development', 'independent of foreign aid', 'greater influence on life conditions' (text 2 below).

Text 2

"In the South, Ibis works to achieve that the impoverished and oppressed can achieve greater influence on their conditions of life. We do that by supporting their organizations and by strengthening the cooperation between popular organizations, NGOs and interest groups in the South and in the North. The programmes are developed in close dialogue with partners and should be further carried out under local ownership" (Vision 2012: 6).

The latter is classified as a success by insisting on 'collective solutions'. In text 2 this becomes apparent in the expressions such as: 'strengthening cooperation', 'close dialogue', and in text 1; 'alternatives to the liberal society' and 'collective solutions'. What is also interesting is that both classifications are used repeatedly, which, according to Fairclough indicates that it is an area of ideological struggle (Fairclough 2001: 96).

The text also presents a classification scheme of poverty, or the nature of poverty. Thus, poverty is classified in terms of the lack of: rights, political power, participation in democratic processes, gender equality and possibilities to receive an education.

The experiential values of grammatical features are relevant for the analysis, because they have to do with the type of processes and participants that predominate (Fairclough 2001: 100).

Text 3

"Ibis chooses partners with point of departure in our vision, core values and strategies. In the specific cooperation, equality between Ibis and its partners is pursued. Ibis' partners in the South include an array of different organizations with very different view points. They could be popular organizations, NGOs or traditional structures. Ibis' partners must have legitimacy in regards to their constituencies and a potential to become carriers of social and economic change processes" (Vision 2012: 10).

The first sentence is a simple SVO type sentence; *Ibis* (subject) *chooses* (verb) *partners* (object). The process that the sentence expresses is an action. An action contains to participants; the agent (*Ibis*) that acts upon a patient (*partners*). The second sentence, however, is passive and of the SVC type; *equality* (subject) *is* (verb) *pursued* (compliment) and the type of process it refers to is an attribution. The attribution involves only one participant (*equality*), but is followed by a non-possessive attribute (*pursued*). This has relevance for *agency* in the sentence. 'Pursued' is the attribution of 'equality', but the sentence reveals nothing about

by who equality is pursued. This leaves Ibis with less direct ownership of the action, since ascriptions of responsibility are left unclear.

“A strong civil society is an important measure to sustaining the democratization process and the necessary political and administrative reforms (Vision 2012: 10).

This is another SVC type sentence. The subject (S) is ‘a strong civil society’ and the rest of the sentence after the verb represents the attribution of the subject. In this case, the attribution can also be read as causality. There is a link between a strong civil society and democratization processes. This link/attribution is an argument for partnerships in terms of its developmental outcomes. However, this ‘argument’ is not explained, it is stated as a fact through the SVC sentence. The sentence does not contain any modal verbs, such as ‘a strong civil society *might* be an important measure...’. Rather, it is a claim of truth, or in Fairclough’s words; ‘a categorical commitment of the producer to the truth of the proposition. As mentioned in the previous chapters, common sense is an important concept for both Gramsci and Fairclough, because ‘ideological interest’ can be found in the authenticity claims (Fairclough 2001:107).

4.1.1.2 Relational values

The idea behind a vision statement is to describe the organization identity of the organization, in terms of values and principles and goals. In other words, to establish the *ethos* of the organization in a way that is attractive for its stakeholders. That is, Ibis relates to the readers of the text through its approach to development.

Modality is articulated by modal auxiliary verbs, such as *may, might, must, should, can, ought* and their corresponding negations. In the citations from the Vision, modality is present in the sentence *Ibis’ partners must have legitimacy in regards to their constituencies and a potential to become carriers of social and economic change processes” (Vision 2012: 10).* ‘Must’ indicates obligation – it is mandatory for the partners to hold legitimacy and a potential to become carriers of change. According to Fairclough, when the authority on the basis of which the writers impose obligations is not made explicit, there is reason to highlight this as implicit power relations.

4.1.1.3 Expressive values

The social identity of the partners is mainly mentioned regarding the selection of partners: *“Ibis’ partners must have legitimacy in regards to their constituencies and a potential to become carriers of social and economic change processes” (Vision 2012: 10).* Legitimacy is often discussed in development, but is more often referring to INGOs and their legitimacy in regards to development work in foreign countries. Here, Ibis uses the word to describe the relation of its Southern partners with its constituencies. The expression ‘*carriers of social and economic change processes*’ has qualities as a metaphor. It seems that the word ‘carriers’ highlight the developmental idea of the SNGOs becoming the lead actor in stead of passive recipients.

The next level of analysis is that of the discursive practice. This level mediates the relationship between the formal features of the text and the social effects.

4.1.2 Dimension 2: Discursive practice

The discursive practice focuses on Interdiscursivity, that is, the mix of discourses that are drawn on. Further, it analyzes the common sense assumptions that underlie the discourses.

4.1.2.1 Development discourse

The main reason to argue that the representing discourse is a development discourse is that the meaning attached to partnership in Vision 2012 is corresponding with that of development. The development discourse is present in the text, when Ibis talks about local ownership, civil society strengthening and participation as the conceptual attachments to partnership.

The development discourse can further be divided into other discourses. Above, the classification schemes represented a development discourse of self-reliance and independence, which is ideologically related to a 'liberal democratic' oriented framework. On the other hand, the vision also promoted development discourse, which emphasized 'collective solutions' and an explicit distance to the liberal society model.

4.1.2.2 Humanist discourse of development

It is also possible to locate a humanist discourse, exemplified in the first sentence of the Vision; "In the year 2012, *the impoverished and oppressed are representing themselves, regardless of social status, race, gender or ethnicity*". It is very significant that *income* is not a part of this list. Poverty is here depicted as a lack of representation based on aspects such as social status, race, gender and ethnicity. Furthermore, poverty includes aspects such as oppression, the impossibility to influence one's conditions of life, along with other lacks of choices. The significance of being poor goes well beyond income in the vision.

4.1.2.3 Vision statements

Another discourse type that characterizes Vision 2012 is genre-specific, namely that of vision statements. The vision statement is a genre that has its origins in the North American corporate management literature. This type of document stresses 'a specific approach to defining an organization through its *central focus* and *coherence of values*' (Roberts et al. 2005: 1851). In this sense, Ibis' vision statement is rather conventional and follows the structure generally used in vision statements. It has a section describing Ibis vision for the future, its core values and principles. The language used in the Vision is rather academic and is aimed at closing the meaning around what Ibis' vision for Development intervention is. This aspect was also supported by the previous analysis regarding the use of modality, as Vision 2012 makes many categorical claims to truth regarding development.

4.1.2.4 Common sense assumptions

One of the main common sense assumption within the Vision is the very issue of this chapter, namely that partnership can be conceived as a principle. For people unfamiliar with the NGO world, a partnership may not be regarded a relationship, which ought to be pursued as a principle, if such a relationship was not the

most suitable for their endeavor. However, in Vision 2012, partnership is envisioned as a principle. Furthermore, cooperating in partnerships with the organizations of the poor is conceived as the best strategy to achieve fight poverty. Here the humanist discourse on poverty should be remembered. Thus, the assumptions underlying partnership as a principle are that partnership is 'good' and that it can be achieved universally, that it is the underlying solution for a number of structural problems regarding poverty.

Similarly, the developmental outcomes of partnership are also represented as common sense assumptions. It seems natural to link civil society and partnership in the development discourse. Within other types of discourses on partnership, for example, business partnerships, linking partnership with synergy effects or cost effectiveness would possibly be more commonsensical. In the Vision, it was expressed as 'a strong civil society is an important measure to democratization'. The common sense assumption is thus an equation looking strikingly like: partnership = participation = local ownership=strong civil society = democracy.

4.1.3 Dimension 3: Social practice

In the previous level of analysis, some of the common sense assumptions were discerned. The focus is now on explaining how the discursive practice relates to the social practice of International Development. Particularly, the idea is to discuss how the ideologies, which are built into the common sense assumptions, relate to the social practice. Finally, the discursive practice will be related to the order of discourse.

4.1.3.1 Development assumptions and ideologies

A number of common sense assumptions were included in the development discourse. These can be related to the ideology underlying the social practice of International Development. One of the common sense assumptions derived from the text analysis regarded the 'categorical claim to truth', with which the link between a strong civil society and democratization processes was maintained in Vision 2012. This claim is also one of the main characteristics of the understanding of partnership in ID. The partnership principle has been promoted by most major actors in International Development. It can be seen as an ideological assumption that is integrated in the development system and the various institutions within it. The Development ideology is manifested through the claim to truth about the supposed effects of partnership for development.

The foundation of Vision 2012 is that Ibis as an NNGO can have a *global* vision for its development work. Furthermore, it is assumed that partnership as a principle can be part of that global vision, as it will lead to a strengthening of civil societies. Thus, Ibis as a NNGO can reduce poverty in the South by choosing the right kind of partners (the ones that have legitimacy and a potential to become carriers of social change) and supporting and cooperating with these partners.

Ibis is not the only NGO that has developed vision statements, mission statements, evaluation systems, etc. The social context of Development work has been characterized by an increasing professionalization amongst NGOs. There is an overall tendency for NGOs to introduce conducts that have been common to the sphere of business and managerialism. The Paris Declaration called for greater efficiency and effectiveness.

Consequently, an image of professionalism is necessary for many organizations to receive funding from larger donor institutions.

4.1.3.1.1 NGO solidarity

In the Vision, Ibis presents the organization's origins as "springing from the Freedom movements of the colonies". History is very explicit in this example as Ibis constructs its identity on past social practices. This past points to earlier idealist presentation of the order of discourse, as North-South NGO relationship then sprung from the solidarity movements. Ibis acknowledges to be encouraging solutions that focus on collective solutions rather than liberal ones.

The focus on solidarity, cooperation and partnership, suggest a horizontal relationship between Ibis and its Southern partners. However, the text analysis also showed that aspects of agency were left unclear when it came to pursuing equality. Conversely, when it came to partner selection, Ibis was the active agent with the power to choose. This suggests that despite the horizontal nature of partnership, it was possible to hint some degree of power relations with a bias towards Ibis.

4.1.3.2 *Vision 2012 and the order of discourse*

The discursive practice in Vision 2012 relates rather typically to the order of discourse of North-South NGO relations, when it comes to the development understanding of partnership. In the discourse, Ibis draws on its NGO identity and a development understanding of partnership. Such interdiscursivity is conventional in North-South NGO partnership and the discursive practice does not contribute to a change in the order of discourse. However, the discursive practice also includes a discourse type that draws on a completely different order of discourse, namely that of business. The vision statement does not represent a common discourse type within North-South NGO partnership, as it is a practice, which is rooted in managerialism (Robets et al.2005, Kamat 2004). As such, the discursive practice does show a trace of innovation or creative use of discourse types, as it draws on a discourse type outside the order of discourse.

In sum, Ibis employs a development discourse, which attaches meaning to the partnership principle through the concepts of civil society strengthening and participation of the poor and oppressed. The development discourse in the Vision could be further subdivided. One discourse was based on the more liberal democratic values of self-reliance and independence, whereas the other emphasized collective solutions. Another subdivision was the 'humanist development discourse', which supported Ibis' social identity as an NGO. Through Ibis discursive practice, the development outcomes of partnership, such as participation and local ownership, were presented as common sense. However, the genre of 'vision statements' belongs to the domain of business and managerialism. Hence, Ibis' overall understanding of partnership at the level of principle is rather conventional in its mix of discourses. With the exception of the discourse type of vision statements, the order of discourse of development partnership was dominated by a development understanding of partnership.

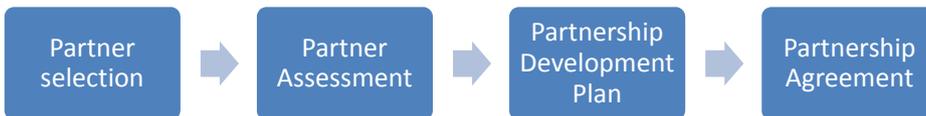
4.2 Partnership in strategy

In order to discover Ibis' understanding of partnership at the level of strategy, I will analyze two central documents; Toolbox Paper 1: Partner Assessment and Guia de Avaliação dos Parceiros. Both of them deal with the matter of partner evaluation.

4.2.1 Strategy 1: Partner Assessment

The Toolbox Paper 1: Partner Assessment (hereafter Partner Assessment or PA) is Ibis' global framework created to introduce and describe the process of partner evaluation. In the new partnership strategy the first step is the partner selection, next the partner assessment is the step prior to writing a 'Partnership Development Plan'. Finally, the process ends with signing the partnership agreement. Figuratively:

Figure 3: Ibis' partnership process



4.2.1.1 Dimension 1: Text

4.2.1.1.1 Experiential values

Here, the experiential values refer to the analysis of ideologically contested words, classification schemes and the expressive values of grammar, hereunder nominalizations.

The ideological words and collocations used in the text are for example: 'Fundamental part'/fundamental instrument', 'assessment of partner', 'social change', 'rights', 'marginalized men and women', 'serious professional and political role', 'well organized and legitimate organizations', 'constituency', 'need and reality of the partner', 'participatory process', 'empowering', 'gender focused', 'cost effective', 'learning oriented', 'action oriented'.

The text presents a classification scheme of methodological approaches to partnership. First, the methodological approach follows a scheme of documents and plans elaborated by Ibis. The logic of the process is to begin with the Partnership Selection, continue with the Partner Assessment and end with a Partnership Development Plan (PDP). Thus, the methodological classification shows a sub-classification of *progression* of the partnerships, which are classified through a number of frameworks developed by Ibis spanning from selecting a partner to signing the partnership agreement.

Text 4

“As stated in Ibis’ Partnership Strategy (2008), a Participatory Partner Assessment with all civil society partners will constitute a fundamental part of Ibis’ partnerships in the South. This Assessment serves as a fundamental instrument to establish a Partnership Development Plan containing concrete challenges to act upon for each partner and Ibis.

This toolbox paper aims at providing Ibis programme staff and partners with a functional methodology that can be used for the initial assessment of a partner organization, Further, the approach provided in these guidelines also serves as a tool to be used annually during the Annual Joint Project Monitoring (Step 3) in order to learn from, measure and validate the desired progress and prioritize actions for the next period” (page 1, lines 1-9).

Secondly, the text holds a classification scheme for the role civil society organizations (CSOs) need to play and how they achieve it.

Text 5

“IBIS’ programmes and projects in developing countries supports civil society organisations to work for social change and improved living conditions and rights for marginalized men and women. For civil society to play a serious professional and political role in promoting social change, it requires well organised and legitimate organisations that are constantly learning and reshaping their performance in order to reach their objectives and set up new ones together with their constituency. This is where the Partner Assessment becomes useful. The Partner Assessment represents a very strong tool to assess the present “health” of an organisation in relation to her stated objectives, and secondly serve as a baseline to establish a prioritized and forward-looking development plan for the organization” (Page 1, lines 10-18).

According to the PA, they need to play a serious, professional and political role and are required to be well organized and legitimate, constantly learning and reshaping their performance and use the PA as a baseline and forward looking development plan. Here, the sub-classification scheme of progression can also be discerned, as the organizations need to *reshape, reach objectives and set new ones* (page 1, lines 13-14). Similarly, in line 17, the intention of the partner assessment is valued for serving as a “*baseline to establish a prioritized and forward-looking development plan for the organization*”.

The third classification scheme is one of for adapting the PA to the context of the CSO.

Text 6

“There is no single or right way to conduct a Partner Assessment. Therefore, it is of outmost importance that the suggested methodology outlined below is considered as a point of departure for tailoring an assessment approach that respects the organisation’s present situation, size, thematic and geographic focus and time and resources available for the process. This means that the assessment

of a small rural community based NGO/CBO will be very be very limited and focused according to the need and reality of the partner, while an assessment of a larger national and constituency based partner organisation will normally include far more aspects in the partner assessment process. Time use for an Assessment varies from 2 hours – 2 days according to the type of organisation.

Common for all Partner Assessments is that they should rest on the following overall principles:

- *Participatory process*
- *Empowering for the partner and for IBIS*
- *Gender focused*
- *Cost effective*
- *Learning oriented*
- *Action oriented*

Living up to these overall principles, a Partner Assessment process can be a strengthening process in itself that spurs new energy and focus into the organisation. Done insensitively and without bearing these principles in mind, an Assessment process can cause frustration and resentment in an organisation. Therefore, a Partner Assessment should be designed and conducted carefully”.

According to this text, the organization's present situation, size, thematic and geographic focus and time and resources available for the process should be contextualized. Moreover, there should be a difference between the assessment of small rural CSOs and larger national CSOs. If the PA rests upon the list of principles, it can be *strengthening and spur new energy and focus*. If not, it can cause *frustration and resentment*. The idiosyncrasies of the CSOs should be held up with 'common for all' principles (lines 29 – 34).

“For civil society to play a serious professional and political role in promoting social change, it requires well organized and legitimate organizations that are constantly learning and reshaping their performance in order to reach their objectives and set up new ones together with their constituency” (text 5). The structure of this sentence is interesting when considering aspects of agency. The action in the sentence does not revolve around civil society playing a serious role, but rather the focus is on the attribute that civil society *requires* (the main verb), namely 'well organized and legitimate organizations...'. An alternative structure of the sentence, which puts civil society at the center of the phrase, could be: 'Civil society can play a serious professional and political role in promoting social change, when having well organized and legitimate organizations...'. However, the way in which the sentence is structured in the PA, the focus is on the attributes of the organizations, without which the civil society will not be able to play a serious role. This is further emphasized by the following sentence, where the Partner Assessment is again the subject: *“This is where the Partner Assessment becomes useful”*. 'Assessment' is the subject or part of the subject in all the sentences, despite sentences with 'it' as reference⁶. Assessment as the subject of the sentence appears as

⁶ In such sentences, 'it' is called a 'cataphoric' or 'anaphoric' reference in linguistics.

'Partner Assessment' or 'the assessment process' and with other words; 'this toolbox' or 'the suggested methodology'. This of course gives the PA a role as the absolute protagonist, which means that the *assessment* or *process of assessing* somehow becomes the enacting agent. It is noteworthy that the only agency in the text is inanimate, because it minimizes Ibis' direct agency as the evaluating part.

Using the noun 'assessment' is not an unusual nominalization of the verb 'to assess'. However, it is noticeable that 'assessment' is used 15 times, whereas 'assess' as a verb is only used once (... "to assess the present "health" of an organization" (text 5, line 6). When an action is formulated in the PA, rather than writing 'assess' it is phrased as 'to conduct a partner assessment'.

Using nominalizations is, according to Fairclough, a way of making the process less clear, since there is no clear agency. For instance, "*Time used for an Assessment varies from 2 hours to 2 days according to the type of the organization*" (text 6). Furthermore, assessment starts with a capital letter, so as to underline the formality of the approach, which steers it towards a focus on process rather than on agency. See for instance the last paragraph in text 6; "*Living up to these overall principles, a Partner Assessment process can be a strengthening process in itself that spurs new energy and focus into the organisation*. Here, the emphasis on the process is very clear and serves to validate the Assessment. Using the verb 'to assess', would give much more attention to the action and, at the same time, to Ibis as the enacting agent. For instance: *When Ibis assesses a partner, it can be a strengthening process in itself that spurs new energy and focus into the organization, by living up to these overall principles*.

4.2.1.1.2 Relational values

As mentioned above, agency in regards to who assesses is hazy in the PA. It could equally be Ibis alone as well as it could be Ibis and the partners. The relation between the partners is faintly sketched in the last lines when it is mentioned that a PA can be either a strengthening process in it self that gives energy and focus to the organization or it can cause frustration in the organization if done insensitively (text 6, lines 1- 4). Even though the indefinite article is used, 'an' organization, it must refer to the partner organization, since it can hardly be understood as Ibis being frustrated. Additionally, it is not made explicit who is the part causing the frustration. Is it the partners' own assessment of their organization or Ibis' assessment of the partner? By avoiding direct agency, the relationship is very vaguely depicted through the use of the indefinite article, nominalization and passive voice; "*Done insensitively and without bearing these principles in mind, an Assessment process can cause frustration and resentment in an organization*".

The only time Ibis and the partner are directly mentioned in the same line, it is in the listing of overall principles, upon which the PA should rest: "*empowering for the partner and for Ibis*" (page 1, line 30).

When it comes to the relational values of grammar, Fairclough encourages studying in particular relational modality and the presence of the pronouns 'we' and 'you'. None of these are explicitly present in the text. A more authoritative voice could have been present in the text by directly declaring how to conduct a PA, for instance by changing the sentence in text 6, lines 1-4 in the following way: 'It its of outmost importance that *you/we* consider the outlined methodology as a point of departure for tailoring an assessment approach...'.

Or by using relational modality in stead of the more formal and declarative future tense 'will', for example in the following lines 5-6; 'This means that *your/our* assessment of a small rural community based NGO/CBO *should* be very limited and focused according to the need and reality of the partner'. These examples show that authority is downplayed in the PA towards the readers

4.2.1.1.3 Expressive values

The expressive values of the vocabulary show a very positive evaluation of the PA. The PA is evaluated as an essentiality in the process of constructing partnerships. It is a '*fundamental part of Ibis' partnerships in the South*' and a '*fundamental instrument to establish a PDP*'. Moreover, the mere process of completing the PA influences the ability of SCOs to be effective.

Respect for the social identity and context of the SNGO being assessed is encouraged. '*There is no single or right way to conduct a Partner Assessment*', the text should be considered a '*point of departure tailoring an assessment*' according to the situation, in which the individual organization is placed and according to its '*needs and reality*'.

4.2.1.2 Dimension 2: Discursive practice

Two discourse types, which are being drawn on in the text are particularly worth emphasizing, based on the text analysis.

4.2.1.2.1 Discourse of professionalization

Ibis refers back and forth between strategies, models, tools, frameworks and evaluations, which points towards increased professionalization in the administration of NGO practices. These documents are even used discursively, as they construct an argument. The NGO creates an 'internal logic' in stating that the Partner Assessment is a fundamental tool, because it serves to establish a PDP and can be used in the Annual Joint Project Monitoring.

The partnership approach has been divided into the strategic stages of partner selection, partner assessment, partnership development plan and partnership agreement. The PA helps steer the organization's initial steps on the road laid out by the new partnership strategy. The classification scheme of progress measured in these frameworks indicates a functional approach to partnerships. The discourse of professionalization is based on a more mechanistic view on partnership as something that can be measured and validated. The PA is assumed to be a stepping-stone from which the progress of the partner can be measured and validated. The genre, toolbox paper or sub-strategy, in itself is an evidence of increased professionalization, characterized by more documentation, evaluations and strategy papers at many levels.

4.2.1.2.2 Assessment discourse

The 'Toolbox paper 1: Partner Assessment' introduces the meaning behind *partner assessment* as a concept within the framework of Ibis' overall partnership process. The toolbox paper conceptualizes partner assessment through a number of qualities and specific meanings: If done according to the listed principles, it can be 'good'; '*A strengthening process that spurs new energy and focus into the organization*', if not, it can

be 'bad' and 'cause frustration and resentment'. A partner assessment is also relative; 'There is no single or right way to conduct a PA', and it is context-sensitive. The assessment is virtually the only subject or agent in the text. It is pertinent to ask why the process of assessing becomes the agent, and not Ibis, the organization, which assesses?

Hence, the PA can be seen as a formalized conceptualization of the organization's approach to partner evaluation. The PA creates a closure of meaning, so that 'partner assessment' is understood globally within Ibis. Such an approach, which unifies the organization's understanding of the partnership process, can also be seen as a step towards increased professionalization and organization development.

An assumption underlying the assessment discourse is that it is necessary to assess partners before entering in a partnership and that it is even possible for Ibis to assess a partner. The PA mentions nothing about how an eventual mutual assessment would occur or what Ibis' response would be to a partner assessing Ibis. Furthermore, it is assumed that the process of conducting a PA has value in itself and as a part of a wider strategy.

4.2.1.2.3 Discourse of contextualization

The assessment discourse is not contradictive with the text's insistence on respecting a partner's reality and context. This facet within the PA can be seen as a discourse of 'contextualization'. Through this discourse, the ideal assessment is adapted to the context of the individual partner in terms of a number of aspects; resources, size, etc. Furthermore, it is founded on a set of ideological principles, which span from development (participation and empowerment) to humanism (gender equality) over to economic principles of cost effectiveness and principles that are trendy within organizational studies (learning oriented and action oriented). Contextualization is a discourse, because it encloses the meaning of how an assessment should exist within the order of discourse of development partnership.

The assumption is that the social reality and context of the partner will have an influence on the nature of the assessment. Hence, respecting the particular circumstances of the partner and basing the assessment on the principles will assure a successful assessment, which will have a positive outcome for the SNGO.

4.2.1.3 Dimension 3: Social practice

In the wider context of international development, the previous years have shown a greater focus on efficiency and effectiveness. The inclusion of NGOs as serious actors in the international development system, as described in chapter 2, means that these NGOs have adapted some of the practices of the larger agencies and institutions. For instance, the requirement of being effective has stressed the production of measured results and progress. The social structures of the development system and institutions and the inclusion of NGOs herein, are manifested in the discursive practice of the PA. It demonstrates the tendency to include a variety of genres in NGO work, which deviate from what has previously been the usual approach to development work by NGOs.

Since the partnership strategy is new for Ibis, different components of the strategy, are defined in documents such as the PA. This is done in order to develop a way to speak about the partnership process in a manner that becomes 'naturalized' within the organization. Constructing these overall framework and concepts is a way of developing a 'common sense assumption' about the partnership strategy within the organization. This means that a PA becomes something that is naturally connected with development partnerships.

As the discourse analysis clarified, the PA exemplifies a mechanistic view on how to develop the partnership process. The signing of documents becomes the expression of progress, rather than, for instance, increasingly building the partnership on trust and a sense of mutuality; a process, which is difficult to measure. The formality of partnership as a *strategy* for NGOs within the development system, contributes to the creation of strategy and evaluation papers and to the conception of progress in terms of measurable stages. Going from a partner selection process to a Partner Assessment to formulating a GAP and, finally, signing a Partner Agreement are measurable stages and makes the partnership strategy feasible within a social practice that to an ever greater degree requires documented results, indicators and progress evaluation. However, these practices have consequences in terms of the social relationships that are established in the partnership, which will be discussed in chapter 5.

The PA is Ibis' global framework for assessing partners in a number of different countries and contexts. The reason it is possible to construct a global framework like the PA is mentioned in the text. As long as it builds on the right principles, the PA is assumed to be a healthy process. According to the discourse of contextualization, context-sensitivity is essential, because assessing a partner can be a potentially negative process, '*if done insensitively and without bearing the principles in mind*'. The principles are, thus, assumed to dissolve the power differences between the assessing NNGO and the assessed SNGO.

As this analysis has shown, the discursive practice relates to the order of discourse of development partnership in a rather unusual way. However, it draws on a different order of discourse, which is becoming increasingly common in the development system, namely, the one, which was also mentioned in the previous analysis; the order of discourse of managerialism.

In the following, Ibis' Mozambique-adapted version of the PA will be analyzed.

4.2.2 Strategy 2: Guia de Avaliação dos Parceiros

The Guia de Avaliação dos Parceiros (GAP) is Ibis' Mozambique's context-adapted version of the Partner Assessment. It will also be analyzed at the three levels of Fairclough's CDA. The document is in Portuguese⁷, but the sentences, which are highlighted in the analysis, are translated to English.

4.2.2.1 Dimension 1: Text

4.2.2.1.1 Overall structure

One of the main characteristics of the GAP is that it is shaped as a checklist (See text 7 below for example). This has various consequences for the vocabulary and grammar of the text. To begin with, it means that the sentences are very much alike. The sentences often have the same structure and words are continuously repeated, especially verbs in the infinitive form in the beginning of the sentence. This also indicates that many of the sentences are not even, in a strictly grammatical sense, correct sentences. However, this checklist characteristics can be compared to a 'to do' list. This means that it is possible to put 'we need to' before the sentences.

Since there are no logical connectors between the sentences, the text presents no explicit argumentation. By this I mean that the purpose of the questions is not explained. It is not stated "describe x, in order to discover y, "or is the organization x? since this is important to y".

4.2.2.1.2 Experiential values

When it comes to the experiential values of vocabulary, Fairclough encourages looking at ideologically contested words and classification schemes. Remembering the previous analyses, there were a rather high number of ideologically contested words. In the GAP, however, there are less strictly ideological words and more technical terminology. The dominating words are for instance, 'organizational structure' (page 1, line 18, 20, 24) 'financial reports' (page 1 lines), 'budgets' (page 3, lines 14-32) Words with an ideological content are for example, 'legalized', 'values' (page 2, line 10) 'internal control mechanisms' (page 2, lines 2, 6) 'competences' (page 3, line 33, page 4, line 25), 'dependency' (page 3, line 34), 'qualifications', 'gender equality' (page 4, lines 25, 17, 19).

Inspired by Fairclough, it is possible to affirm that the list itself is a classification of 'how to assess a partner' or maybe rather of 'how to conduct a partner assessment', yet it also draws on other classification schemes (Fairclough 2001: 95-97). The overall scheme for evaluation seems to be one of capacity. The overall scheme of capacities can additionally be divided into administrative capacity, financial capacity, human capacity, and development capacity.

The scheme for evaluating the administrative capacity of the partner is determined through formal indicators in terms of structure, organograms, work register, statutory exigencies, general assembly, membership fees,

admissions, monitoring, and evaluations. Capacities are rated in terms of the organization's capacity to show the adequate and legal documents and a professional internal structure.

Text 7

A. Management and internal systems

1. Describe and comment the organizational structure: The interconnection and functioning of the deliberative organs (for example, the managerial council)

- Describe the composition of the organization's organizational;
- Describe the functions of each of the organization's deliberative organs (tasks;)
- Describe how the the partner's different deliberate organs are interconnected;
- What are the criteria to the establishment of the partner's deliberative organs?

2. Is the organizational structure documented?

- If yes, the partners should present a written organogram;
- If not, why do they not present an organogram?
- Make a copy of the organogram and annex the partner's documentation

3. Has the organization carried out a register of the work that has been done to achieve its goals?

- Is the organization legalized (certified)?
- If yes, it should present a certification register;
- If not, ask why they do not make the register;
- **Does the organization or the members fulfill the organization's statutory exigencies?**
- Does the organization regularly carry out general assembly?
- Does the members pay their (entrance) fees?
- Do they carry out elections regularly for the social organs?
- What are the admission criteria for members?

4. Does a monitoring and evaluations system exist in the organization?

- Briefly describe how it works;

The scheme for evaluating the financial capacity of the partner organization is rated in terms of donor dependency, future perspectives of funding, liquidity, presentation and templates of financial accounts/statements, auditorship of financial accounts, elaboration of balance-sheet, adequate internal control mechanisms, improvement of accounting system, documentation of administrative procedures, elaboration and control of budgets. This classification is the most extensive occupying 65 lines from page 2 line 17 to page 3 line 32.

The classification of the capacity of the human resources is evaluated in terms of the organization's dependency on individuals, knowledge sharing, rotation of staff, and academic levels of staff.

The scheme for the partner's 'development capacity' is rated in terms of the relation between the partner's projects and strategies, the existence of a clear work plan, the contributions of the programme to social change, the geographic area in which the partner operates, the inclusion of elements of gender equality, how the 'bases' are included in the decision-making, and the capacity to create alliances.

Relational values

Lines 12-13 on page 1, read as follows⁸: '*Why does the organization affirm that the objectives and goals are clear (it would be better to promote a debate, in order to hear their perception from them)*'. Even though the Partner Assessment was addressed to both Ibis staff and Ibis' partners, the GAP seems to be for internal use only, based on the division made by the personal pronouns 'their' and 'them'.

The relationship between the writer of the text and the reader is also highlighted in its 'instructive' characteristics. The bold text represents a question that should be answered through the indications below the questions, which are formulated as sub-questions or actions, for instance: "*Describe the constitution of the organizational structure of the organization (page 1, line 20)*".

4.2.2.1.3 Expressive values

With the present focus on ideology, Fairclough stresses the importance of analyzing the expressive values in regards to 'ideologically contrastive classification schemes' (Fairclough 2001: 99). As was showed in the analysis of the classification schemes, the GAP is overall classified in terms of capacities. The expressive values also underpin this, as the identity of the partner, which is promoted in the GAP, dictates that having legitimacy and a formal organizational structure is positive, and so is working as a democratic organization. The identity that is portrayed or sought to imitate is one that values these characteristics. By promoting the specific capacities, which are related to certain classification schemes and excluding others, Ibis evaluates these schemes as positive. Another scheme for evaluation could have been one for valuating other types of potential for change, e.g.: "*has the organization proven independency by being in opposition to any government decision?*". However, such a (fictive) scheme for evaluation would be an entirely different ideological expression.

4.2.2.1.4 Omissions

Ibis' global PA document states that '*Common for all Partner Assessments is that they should rest on the following overall principles: Participatory process, empowering for the partners and for Ibis, gender focused, cost effective, learning oriented, action oriented*'. These principles are omitted in the Mozambican version of the Partner Assessment. Likewise, the GAP does not mention whether there should be made a difference between what questions are directed to the assessment of small CSOs and which are meant to evaluate a larger NGO. This aspect of context-sensitivity was, however, particularly highlighted in the PA.

⁸ The sentence in Portuguese is: *Porque a organização afirma que os objetivos e as metas são claros*, meaning 'Because the organization affirms that the objectives and goals are clear'. However, I believe it is an orthographic mistake and that the sentence should be a question: 'Why does the organization confirm that the objectives and goals are clear?' and will be analyzed in this way.

When it comes to the partnership content within the text, it is practically non-existing. None of the partner assessment questions regard the functioning of partnership, for instance, how the partner understands partnership, how they would like to work in the partnership, what responsibilities should each partner have, etc.

Like the PA, the GAP does not include any considerations about the possibilities of a mutual assessment between the two partners, nor questions regarding how Ibis could benefit from the SNGO.

4.2.2.2 Dimension 2: Discursive practice

The discourse types that can be identified in the GAP are very formal. This can partly be the structure of the text. Since the text is composed by short (non)sentences with no internal connection, argumentation within the text is limited to the thematic structure.

4.2.2.2.1 Administrative discourse

The aspects that are included in the GAP, are very technical in terms of the content they address and the documents that are destined to answer the different questions. The content that is deemed relevant when assessing a partner is based on the partner's administration of the organization, its formal legitimacy (paying of fees, register, admission criteria, audit control etc.).

It is an administrative discourse because the meaning that is attributed to capacities is very formal and mainly concerns the administrative and financial functioning of the organization. The partner organizations are not so much evaluated in terms of their development work, as in terms of their degree of professionalism. Naturally, engagement is also harder to evaluate than the possession of an organogram.

4.2.2.2.2 Interrogative discourse

The text also presents a discourse type characterized by interrogation, which is additionally supported by the checklist appearance of the GAP. Assessing has the appearance of a list of questions. Ibis can more or less literally go through 'the life' of the organization, if all the questions are asked. Some of the questions are rather tutorial in their phrasing, for instance, *"If not, question why they are not registered"* Or *"Why do they not present an organogram?"*

Another example is the question regarding the capacities of the local staff. On page 4, line 5, the question is: *"what are strong and weak spots of the organization's staff? And the following point is: identify the academic level of the organization's staff?"* These are quite personal questions and it is dubious whether a small rural CSO would ask Ibis the same kind of questions. The fact that most of the questions or assessment points can be answered with one word has an exclusive effect on the partner being assessed. Open questions would signal, and most likely inspire, a more horizontal dialogue.

An ideological assumption underlying the discourse types is that it is even possible to assess a partner based on the questions from the GAP. More interestingly, the assumption must also be that these questions

are the most appropriate, when it comes to assessing Mozambican CSOs, since they are adapted from the PA to fit the local context.

Another ideological assumption is that the 'correct' answers to these questions are indicative of what can be assessed as a 'good' organization. Hence, it is assumed to be possible to define the level of strength of an organization through the responses of the aspects included in the GAP.

4.2.2.3 Dimension 3: Social practice

The GAP is the document that until now has represented the most direct interaction between Ibis Mozambique and its Southern partners. The development practice, in which the discursive practice is embedded, is, thus, at a much more local level.

4.2.2.3.1 Ideology and power relations in partner assessment

The GAP is the context-adapted version of the PA, so it is rather peculiar that there are no considerations about how assessments in the specific context of Mozambique should occur. In fact, the context-adapted version of the PA is completely context-free. The aspects that are evaluated upon belong to an extremely formal and Northern value based understanding of what makes a 'good' organization. Ibis cooperates with large national NGOs in Mozambique that are experienced and well-organized, but they also engage in partnerships with small rural CSOs, to whom the GAP is not contextualized.

A pertinent question is why are exactly the aspects listed in the GAP so important? The GAP is meant to end in a Partnership Development Plan. This implies that the capacities, which the assessment revealed to be lacking, should be the focus of the PDP and, thus, be developed in the future partnership with Ibis.

Ibis has decided that the capacities, which are asked for in the GAP are the most relevant to build in the partner. Again, this is not a mutual assessment. Ibis has the power to classify the capacities of the SNGO that need capacity building. These include capacities, structures and formalities that are typically valued in a Northern context. *An example could be that in a Mozambican context, a more hierarchical organizational structure might be in accordance with traditional values regarding respect for elders.*

In a situation in which the SNGO is more dependent on the NNGO than vice-versa, the completion of such a thorough inquest, as sketched in the GAP, is not a negligible display of power.

However, power relations can also be traced upward in the system. For instance, the GAP asks for an internal monitoring and evaluation system. This is an aspect that is specifically required by Danida for all the Danish NGOs receiving frame funding:

The frame organization must ensure that the partner's administration with and control of the transferred grants happens in a responsible and reassuring manner⁹ (Danida .

⁹ "Rammeorganisationen skal sikre, at partnernes forvaltning af og kontrol med overførte tilskudsmidler sker på forsvarlig og betryggende måde".

Hence, Ibis is required to establish a system of evaluation or internal control mechanisms with the local SNGOs, as a condition to receive funding from the Danish government.

4.2.2.3.2 The GAP and the order of discourse

As Ibis states in Vision 2012, North-South NGO partnerships were traditionally motivated by solidarity. For NGOs to cooperate a decade or less ago, it was hardly customary to create such an extensive evaluation of the SNGO's managerial capacities and administrative procedures. This indicates that the discursive practice of the GAP presents discourse types that are not conventional within the order of discourse and hence, contributes to change. It draws on discourses that are not usually present within the network of discourse in development partnership.

In sum, at the level of strategy, Ibis' understanding of the partnership process is much more instrumental or mechanistic than at the level of principle. The different steps of the partnership process are manifested through a series of documents, of which partner assessment is a part. These documents represent the progression of the partnership process.

The PA document serves to 'naturalize' the partnership process, by giving meaning to *partner assessment*, as a concept. Thus, partner assessments become a common sense aspect of Ibis' understanding of partnership. Ibis' staff does not 'assess a partner'; they 'carry out a PA'. This can be seen as a linguistic attempt to hide agency. However, it is the assumption that, when based on the right principles and done with context-sensitivity, it can be an overall healthy process for the partner to be assessed by Ibis. Nevertheless, the context-adapted GAP did not mention the issue of principles. Rather, the analysis revealed an interrogative discourse and an assessment of the SNGOs administrative capacities.

Hence, at the strategic level, the understanding of how to strengthen civil society through partnership becomes linked to professionalism and managerial capacities. Legitimacy is linked to the organization being organized and officially authorized; to its formal and measurable capacities. This can be explained by the social practice of development work with its focus on professionalism and by official requirements.

4.3 Partnership in practice: Interviews

In order to account for Ibis' understanding of partnership at the level of implementation, I conducted interviews with the Administrative Director of Ibis Mozambique, Anna Hoff, and the Deputy Director of Ibis Mozambique, Lucy Hayes. These interviews will also be analyzed through CDA.

4.3.1 Level 1: Text

4.3.1.1 *Experiential values*

In this section, vocabulary and classification schemes are analyzed.

Some of the ideologically contested words and collocations used by the interviewees when talking about partnership are strikingly normative: 'almost like family', 'the right thing to do', 'build on joined vision and mission', 'transparency is the basis for a healthy partnership', 'it refers to two people at the same level', 'successful partnerships depend on a horizontal dialogue'. Other words clearly resound from the understanding of partnership which is most widespread within the development system: 'the best way to build a strong civil society', 'the best added value that a NNGO can give in terms of links, network, solidarity, knowledge', 'facilitation', 'All about sustainability', 'feeling of ownership', 'the best tool', 'a perfect tool', 'a long term strategy', 'the best strategy', 'a strategy for Ibis' contribution to development'.

Text 8

"We want to ensure that the day Ibis withdraw our activities from Mozambique, there is a CS that is still alive so to speak, that they can continue to implement activities. So it is more about building a strong CS to do a lot of work within, and when we talk about Ibis, we talk about the area of citizenship, good governance and education as you know. So it is very much in line with the sustainability and the feeling of ownership".

In addition, the implementation of partnership in Mozambique is evaluated in the text. Partnership is evaluated numerically; 'we have 13 agreements in place', 'we have three capacity building centers' and figuratively as a journey; 'we are on the right track', 'in Latin America they are a little bit ahead', 'in Ghana they are also in the initial phase'.

The text presents a classification scheme of context or aspects of it that Ibis regards as a challenge for partnership in Mozambique. The main challenge mentioned by both interviewees is the weakness of civil society. First, this weakness is classified as a challenge, because it involves all aspects of the partner.

Text 9

Contextualize the partnership strategy in Mozambique is to take the context, in this sense when we talk about CSOs, take the context into consideration, namely that the CS is so weak and the way we do have some strong CSOs they are placed in Maputo and even in Maputo we have very weak organizations. When you come up country you will experience that all the civil society... (small laugh) more or less.. eh ... organizations that you find up there, they are weak in capacity - at all levels, they are weak in the internal capacity and they are weak in the capacity to deliver on the objectives of a programme for instance. What we do when we contextualize this even more is that we put in place

some training for the internal capacity and when we talk about the internal capacity we talk about financial management, we talk about the whole structure of the organization, we talk about build the capacity of the organization to be more democratic in its structure and in its decision-making, we talk about the training of thoughts, training of staff to be able to actually do the account, to be able to write the reports you know, things like that. And then when it comes to the capacity to deliver on the objectives of the programmes we also have to realize that even though it is a partnership that entails that we should be, you know, equally (small laugh) in terms of we have equal interest, we have some joined vision, we have some joined mission that we want to do together, for instance, do something, work in good governance area or citizenship area, we must also realize that even the ability to deliver on results needs training.”

In response to the weakness of civil society, Ibis' main way to contextualize is to build the capacities of the partners through different kinds of capacity building. Weakness is further divided into different levels, such as weakness in the 'internal capacity' and weakness in the 'capacity to deliver on the objectives of a programme'. 'Internal capacity' is described as financial management, organizational structure, 'democratic' capacity in terms of structure and decision making, the capacity to think, the capacity of the staff, specifically in terms of the capacity to do the accounts and to write reports. The capacity to deliver on the objectives of the programme involves having an equal interest, joined vision and joined mission. Thus, weakness has to do with lack of capacities and is therefore linked to the concept of capacity building. Some of the mentioned capacities are instrumental, for instance, writing reports and accounts, whereas others exceedingly ideological, such as 'the training of thoughts' and the democratization of structure and decision-making (text 9).

The weakness of the partners is also described as a challenge, because it is linked to dependency. This situation is described as something that Ibis as a NNGO "suffers from". Dependency is negatively valued because on the one hand it makes the local organizations *inconsequent* with regards to their goals and objectives as they 'run of to where the money is', and on the other, it complicates the creation of equal relations. See text 10 and 11 below.

Text 10

“Another thing that we see a lot or another strive that we've come up against is that organizations are very, very weak... [Inaudible]. This is particularly outside of the capital, and even in Maputo, there are some organizations which are stronger, but many are very, very dependent on funding so their goals and objectives might swing depending on who is offering the money, so, I mean, Ibis is not immune to that, we obviously suffer to some extent from that, but as an organization which has a core frame funding from the DK government that's certainly a quite large amount of flexibility and we have a much more stable source of funding, so we don't have to jump through loops and left and right and turn them upside down in order to survive, and that is the case for lots of CSOs here. And another thing is that dependency on funding from different NGOs and donors creates a sense of competition between organizations, which often makes it harder for them to work in equal relations.”

Text 11

“The fact that organizations are very dependent on funding makes it difficult for them to stick to, if they are even at the stage where they have a strategic plan or goals defined, it is difficult for them to stick to that. Because a lot of times an NGO or an official donor who has another idea of what they might like to do, and so that would often influence what the Mozambican organization is going to do, because they run of to where the money is.”

The second challenge mentioned in the interview regards the power of the government of Mozambique.

Text 12

“We just had elections in Mozambique and the ruling party won, the president won 75 percent of the votes and in the provincial elections the ruling party won 80 % of the votes, so there is definitively a context of reduced tolerance for criticism or opposition or for civil society to have a voice that is different from that of the ruling party. So what you often see in organizations which are a bit stronger or more successful or good at advocacy in particular is that they quickly get sort of marginalized, they get either co-opted or marginalized by the ruling party, so that is a quite difficult situation if what you are trying to do is to create a strong CS voice. That is quiet difficult here in Mozambique.”

Here, the interviewee makes an implicit assumption about the causality between the high percentage of votes and a state of totalitarian control by the ruling party over civil society.

Facilitation was part of the vocabulary used frequently by the interviewees when talking about partnership. It is used as a scheme to classify Ibis' role when implementing partnership according to the new partnership strategy. Ibis' staff will be less direct *implementers* and more *facilitators*. In one of the interviews, the word 'facilitate', 'facilitation' and 'facilitator' is used 16 times. It can be seen as a new lexical item, which is central to Ibis' partnership strategy.

Text 13

“They are going to, and they have already started, so actually they have two roles at the moment, because we are still direct implementing and, at the same time, we have a transition toward less direct implementing and more implementing through partners so from now and onwards they will go from being implementers to be facilitators. So our thematic trainers our instructors within the educational programme are going to be more facilitators and less implementers... When you go from direct implementation to implementation together or through partners you will more work like what we call a programme officer. So what you will have is that you will have a portfolio of x amount or number of partners. Your work is to facilitate the partnership with all it takes from the formulation of the partnership agreements to the monitoring of the same. So you facilitate the cooperation between Ibis and the partner. That is one type of facilitation. Then, of course, you can also facilitate concrete activities. You can facilitate workshops where you build the capacity of the partner to do something. So the facilitation is always something, you have in the back of your mind - that you are facilitating something for others to do.”

With the partnership strategy, partnership becomes linked to facilitation. Facilitation is linked to a number of actions; facilitation of the partnership, which means formulation of partnership agreements, facilitation of activities, facilitation of capacity building and facilitation of the vertical link between partners, which refers to networking. In other words, an instrumental use of the concept of facilitation compared to the normative below.

Text 14

“Successful partnerships are... the people who are involved in them are extremely important, the people who sit around the table, whether they are people who listen, who create space, whether they are facilitators, or whether they are people who dictate. In a case where the Ibis person dictates what is going to happen, the partner is less likely to challenge that because they want the money, but just because they need the money and want the money, Ibis can create a very different atmosphere and that is one of the things we are trying to do is to focus as well on the relationship, communication, facilitation, the kind of space we can create for a more honest, a more frank, and a more horizontal dialogue”.

Partnership is also classified in terms of efficiency and the short term/long term trade off, which the strategy, according to the interviewees, entails.

Text 15

“The experience of Ibis in Mozambique is relatively new partly because of the context of CSOs here and I guess the trade off that you'll always see or, yeah, the short term/long term trade off, eh, you know, in the short term many Ibis staff would argue, well, it is actually better to do it ourselves. We have the skills, we have the knowledge, why are we working with this organization who doesn't have the skills, the knowledge or maybe is a bit too influenced by the ruling party or whatever... there are many reasons you could say it might be more effective in the short term... so that is often the discussion particularly since it is quite a new departure for Ibis, that is often where the tension lies, the staff has been here for a number of few years, etc... we thought that we had better results doing it ourselves and this partnership thing is, you know, its a long term strategy, it is one of the challenges that we face. I, personally, think that it is the only strategy that we could realistically... I think it is the only strategy or the best strategy that we should in the long term. We should accept that in the short term it might be harder to see results on the ground.”

Part of the staff thinks that Ibis Mozambique could implement more efficiently without the partners, due to the local CSO's lack of skills, knowledge and political independence. However, the classification in terms of efficiency is contrasted with one of time span. 'The partnership thing' is a long term strategy against which the short term perspective of visible outcomes on the ground are not valued. This classification is based on a development understanding of partnership, which supports the presupposition that the long term outcome of partnership is civil society strengthening.

Text 16

I will say that the weak CS in Mozambique is what affects the implementation of the new PS most and that it also does it in a way that we go, you know, you cannot build Rome in one day, so the way it affects the implementation of the partnership is that we take our time, we do what we call hand-holding in the beginning.

Another classification scheme that is present in the text is a scheme for civil society/partners and the aspects, which are worth valuing in terms of partnership.

Text 17

"We all talk about having horizontal partnership and that is supposed to be the idea. The organizations Ibis is most likely to have horizontal partnerships with are organizations that are stronger and more active and what they want Ibis for is not only funding but.... I've been in Latin America before, and that is a very different situation with CS, organizations are much stronger. They are better structured, they are more experienced they got more qualified personnel, they've got more analytical or research or networking capacity... better organized, I mean, that's just talking on a kind of a general level, you can still find all sorts of organizations, but it's a more dynamic CS in general."

The positively valued CSO is strong, active, independent, not just seeking funding, well structured, experienced, has qualified personnel, analytical or research or networking capacity, and it is organized and dynamic. It is understood that most CSO in Mozambique are weak, and, thus, do not possess the mentioned qualities.

In text 18, the classification scheme of partnership with civil society refers to power. Particularly, how Ibis can diminish the asymmetries through dialogue and facilitation.

Text 18

"When you think of partners, you are thinking of two people on a similar level, that is what partnership means generally - or should mean- and that is obviously what we aim for, but the same things I were saying about the organizations being quite dependent on funding and the fact that the organizations may be weaker often creates a challenge and we need to find ways to keep that relationship as frank and horizontal as possible. We can do that by giving the organizations long term funding, so that there not every 6 or 12 months turning around wondering whether they get financing or we can do things like, as individuals, create space, we can listen, we can be good facilitators and we can ask questions and listen rather than tell them what we think they should do. As I was saying, I think the relationship and the dialogue, the quality of that... makes the partnership as equal as possible... (inaudible) otherwise we need to recognize that when there is money involved, when one organization needs the money and the other has the money, then it is difficult for them to have an equal partnership."

4.3.1.2 Relational values

The words and collocations that are used to talk about the relation between the two partners are such as: Handholding, as horizontal/equal a relationship as possible, based on transparency, characterized by

dependency, etc. Also, Ibis' role and position in the relationship is conceived by the concept of facilitation. The emphasis on this word is striking in the interviews; Ibis is a facilitator, the staff's job is to facilitate and facilitation in general is something they should 'always have in the back of their minds' (text 13). Facilitation is presented as the opposite of dictating. It refers to listening, creating space, dialogue, and helping rather than ordering. With this self-perceived role, Ibis' staff will go from 'executor' to 'tutor' and the role of the partner must subsequently, transform from being more passive to becoming a doer.

Regarding the relational values of grammar, there is a recurring use of two different prepositions that change the nuance in Ibis' relation with its partners. For instance in line 5-6 in text 13, "*When you go from direct implementation to implementation together with or through partners you will more work like what we call a programme officer*". The relational aspect changes if you work *through* rather than *with* someone. Working *through* partners has the connotation of the partners being a channel, through which activities are streamed.

4.3.1.3 Expressive values

In the interview partnership is presented as something, which is natural for Ibis as a NGO to engage in. The way Ibis defines, one of the interviewees argue, is more like the way it originated; as a solidarity thing between NGOs from the North and from the South. Conversely, when other agencies use the concept it is *high-jacked*. 'High-jacked' has expressive value, because it emphasizes how the interviewee considers partnership as belonging to a certain identity, that of NGOs. When other larger institutions use the word, it loses its meaning. It is high-jacked away from its original identity and becomes ambiguous in its 'overuse' (text 19).

4.3.1.4 Omissions

There are certain aspects of partnerships that are not mentioned in the text. Omissions can be as ideologically significant as the words that are actually pronounced. Synergy, for instance, does not appear when Ibis talks about partnership. However, the lack of synergy is manifested in text 15, where it is explained how Ibis could almost do it better alone. In fact, synergy is beside the point. Rather, it should be accepted that 'in the short term it might be harder to see results on the ground' (text 15).

Another quality that is part of the 'authentic partnership discourse' is mutuality, however, the partner's role and responsibilities are nearly omitted in the interviews. The interviews mainly present partnership as a change in strategy, which has certain implications for Ibis, most of which are complications. The value of partnership is summarized in civil society strengthening and not the potential contributions of the partners, that is, in mutuality.

4.3.2 Level 2: Discursive level

The classification scheme and the other textual elements, help determine the discourse types that are drawn upon in the text. The interdiscursive mix used in the interviews as well as the underlying assumptions are analyzed below.

4.3.2.1 Normative partnership discourse

The authentic partnership discourse exists in the text, though it is presented with a high degree of modality. In both interviews, there are a number of cases, in which modality is used to downplay the more normative understanding of partnership. *"When you think of partners, you are thinking of two people on a similar level, that is what partnership means generally - or should mean..."* (text 19). *"I think the relationship and the dialogue, the quality of that... makes the partnership as equal as possible..."*. The believe in and desire for normatively enviable partnerships contrasts with the context-specific challenges pointed out by the interviewees. *"We all talk about horizontal partnerships and that is supposed to be the idea. The organizations Ibis is most likely to have horizontal partnerships with are organizations that are stronger and more active and what they want Ibis for is not only funding but (...) as a valuable organization with whom to have not just money"*. The highlighted citations ('should mean', 'as equal as possible', 'supposed to be', 'most likely') demonstrate that when the interviewees talk about the normative values underlying the partnership discourse, such as horizontal relationships, dialogue and equality, they are delimited through modality, lexical expression showing uncertainty and even nervous or apologetic laughs.

Conversely, little modality is used when talking about the developmental understanding of partnership.

An ideological assumption here is that partnership is universally linked to a set of qualities, particularly equality. Still, this assumption seems to be struggling with another underlying assumption, namely that the context Ibis operates in is not compatible with the principle, which is why the principle needs 'bending' in the way of 'almost... but not quite'.

4.3.2.2 Development discourse

There are various indicators that the overall discourse used to talk about partnership is a 'development discourse'. In both texts, the main gist of partnership is presented according to the development idea. The two interviewees link the partnership strategy directly to the building of a strong civil society. Civil society is presented as the chief argument to engage in partnership and capacity building is the more specific approach to strengthen the partners. Furthermore, the idea is to achieve local ownership and sustainability, to ensure that when *'Ibis withdraws from Mozambique, there is a CS that is still alive'* and to build *'a strong CS to do a lot of work within'* (Text 8).

The ideological assumption underlying the development discourse on partnership is basically that partnership with local CSOs will strengthen the country's civil society sphere. Civil society is weak, so capacity building is needed. A second assumption is thus that it is possible for NNGOs to pinpoint the capacities that need to be built in the partners –the weaknesses - and hereafter to strengthen civil society through capacity building. This reasoning leads both interviewees to conclude that partnership is the best way to strengthen civil society.

This is where a paradox arises in Ibis' discursive practice: Partnership is the best remedy for a weak civil society, but, at the same time, the weakness of civil society is the main challenge to achieve authentic partnership.

Despite conflicting contextual factors It is still a 'categorical truth' that the equation "partnership=strong civil society= democracy" will add up – in the long run. Furthermore, using a popular expression such as 'you cannot build Rome in one day' (text 16), creates an 'obvious reality' and helps construct the common sense truth of partnerships and civil society.

4.3.2.3 *Discourse of facilitation*

The text contains a striking intent to create a discursive closure intentionally. In '*Language and power*' (2001), Fairclough calls it a codification. He argues that it is a: "*narrowing down of the range of ways of using language and of the range of discourses for representing the world*". The interviewees use the word 'facilitate/facilitator' continuously to explain their new role, as it has been defined by the recently introduced partnership strategy. In the text, the meaning of facilitate is partly understood by a relation of difference between this concept and the word 'implement/implementer'. The practices, which Ibis includes in the meaning of facilitator, were mentioned above, and are directed towards enhancing the quality of partnership. Through the concept of facilitation, Ibis tries to close the meaning potential of the role of the NNGO worker in partnerships.

The assumption here is, first of all, that there is a difference in terms of power between direct implementation and facilitation. Being a facilitator refers stepping out of the picture, giving more responsibility to the local partner in terms of implementing the activities. The assumption is, secondly, that by exerting less direct control over the activities, facilitation actually diminishes the power of the NNGO over the SNGO and, consequently, gives rise to more authentic partnerships.

4.3.2.4 *Paternalistic discourse*

The interviewees also employ a discourse type that creates a distance between the NNGO and the SNGO. Through this discourse type the relationship between the NNGO and its Southern partners gains resemblance of that between an adult and a child. In several occasions, the interviewees say that the weaker partners need 'handholding' in the beginning. This is of course a figurative way of saying that the weak partners need more training or support. However, it is exactly this kind of metaphors that are significant when doing discourse analysis. Using the metaphor of 'handholding' creates a relation of superiority of the "adult self", the NNGO, and the inferiority of the "child", the SNGO. This asymmetry is not as obviously contained in expressions such as, for instance, 'need more training'.

Another example of this type of discourse from the discursive event is when one of the interviewees describes the reluctance of some of Ibis' staff to engage in partnerships with local Mozambican partners. The reasoning was that the NNGO could do it more efficiently alone, since the local partners may not have the skills, the knowledge and might be too influenced by the ruling party (text 15). The discourse apparently used by some of the staff assumes the superiority of the NNGO and shows a lack of trust in the Southern partner both when it comes to capacities and political independence.

One of the interviewees describe that ‘Up country, the civil society is weak at all levels’. ‘All levels’ meant everything from doing the accounts to the ‘training of thoughts’ (text 9). This also resembles the adult-child relationship in that the NNGO needs to teach the SNGO from scratch, a process, which is not mutual.

An ideological assumption that lies behind the paternalistic discourse is that the NNGO can where the weak Mozambican civil society cannot. The NNGOs is better equipped when it comes to assets, resources, capacities, knowledge, experience, worldview, etc. It is a professional. The NNGO is a valid player, when it comes to ‘curing’ the problems of Africa. Conversely, the paternalistic discourse creates an image of the partner as lacking autonomy and being dependent on the NNGO to achieve the values of self-reliance and independence, to build its capacities to act, and even to think.

4.3.2.5 NGO discourse

In the interviews, an identity-based type of partnership discourse is discernible. It can be labeled a ‘NGO partnership discourse’. The interviewees use this discourse when talking about partnership, for instance when arguing as follows:

Text 19

“I personally think that it started off... was used to primarily talk about partnership between Northern and Southern NGOs, between CSOs, and in a way the word has become rather hijacked. Everybody... Danida talks about its partners, you know, Danida’s partners can be anyone, really. Could be the government, could be NGOs, could be other institutions, could be people, could be the other donors... Everyone is a partner so, that is somehow where the word has gotten a bit overused, but certainly what we are aiming for is partnership in the sense of ... how it probably started of, which... more equal relationships of working together in solidarity between Northern and Southern NGOs”

According to this discourse, partnership between NGOs is the ‘authentic type’ of partnership. An assumption found in the NGO discourse is that NGOs as a social institution are more adept than other development institutions to engage in authentic partnerships, because the partnership concept originated within the peer-to-peer solidarity movements between North and South NGOs.

4.3.3 Level 3: Social practice

The social practice discusses the relation between the common sense assumptions of discursive practice and the wider social practice. Below, the underlying assumption of the facilitation-, development- and NGO discourses will be related to the wider social practice of international development.

4.3.3.1 Discourse assumptions and international development

The facilitation discourse is a way of trying to create a more all-embracing term to describe Ibis’ work. It is through the facilitation discourse that Ibis puts particular emphasis into stabilizing meaning. This indicates that it is a matter of ideological struggle, which corresponds to the underlying assumptions having to do with power relations. The facilitation discourse can be seen as a response to the current trends in ID. The ideas

of local ownership, participation and development from below have arisen from the criticisms regarding the asymmetric power relations in ID. The question is whether Ibis has less power by implementing *through* partners than they had before, when they were direct implementing.

The ideologies underlying the development discourse has somewhat been analyzed previously. However, an additional aspect stood out in the interviews, regarding the ethos or, as you might be tempted to call it, superego derived from the development discourse. '*Ibis withdraws from Mozambique, there is a CS that is still alive*'. In other words, without the help of Northern development interventions there is little hope for civil society. The statement should obviously not be taken too literally. However, it does point to a tendency in Development that can be explained as the power of knowledge. It is very common in Development to talk about 'weak states' or 'weak civil societies'. When such a generalizing tag has become naturalized in the development discourse, it is also natural to think that the Development agents are stronger and know better. The development agents become the heroes of their own tales.

The discourse analysis also revealed that Ibis uses a NGO discourse when talking about partnership, which distinguishes their understanding of partnership with that of Danida. This is in line with the historical understanding of NGO relationships as based on solidarity¹⁰ (FAU 2002). Through this discourse, Ibis establishes an ethos. NGO partnership can claim authenticity because it is 'natural' for NGOs for, whereas it has been high-jacked by larger public development institutions, such as Danida. The argument in the interview is that Danida is a partner with everybody, which makes the concept lose credibility (text19). However, in Ibis' global Partnership Strategy it is apparent that Ibis also engages in partnerships with a rather wide range of actors. On page 3 line 36 to page 4 line 6, it is described that the actors, with which Ibis will typically establish partnerships are as follows:

Text 20

- **Constituency based organisations**; e.g. movements, community groups, traditional structures, trade unions, student groups and networks/alliances, these being local, national or international, are considered as the primary and legitimate agents of change.
- **NGO's**; e.g. local or national NGO's providing services, capacity building or supporting advocacy, research institutions and other actors can be agents of change and important supporters of constituency based organisations.
- **Government institutions**, local or national level state institutions and other government entities, international institutions can be important **operational partners** if conducive for promoting citizens' rights, participation and delivering services.

The idea here is not to try to point out inconsistencies in Ibis' argumentation, the intention is, rather, to draw attention to how the NGO identity, and the NGO discourse it is a part of, shapes its world view. It is an ideological assumption that endows the NGO with the 'natural' legitimacy to partner up with local organizations. However, at the same time, Ibis acknowledged that it was very difficult to achieve equal partnership when one organization has more money than the other. Thus, it seems paradoxical that North-

¹⁰ For instance, ideological solidarity such as that of the anti-dependista view shared by European and Latin American NGOs in the 1970s.

South partnerships are only real between NGOs, and at the same time, it is almost impossible for Ibis to have equal partnership with its Mozambican partners.

4.3.3.2 The interviews and the order of discourse

The number of co-existing discourses in the interviews points to a 'discursive struggle'. This refers to how very different discourses struggle to give meaning to the order of discourse of development partnership. In other words, development partnership is an area of ideological struggle (Fairclough 2001). This is particularly so, when the discourses are even opposing, such as the normative discourse on development partnership and the paternalistic discourse.

In sum, at the level of practice, Ibis' understanding of partnership is strongly influenced by the specific context of operating in Mozambique. This was evidenced by the discourses that were drawn on and by the presence of a 'partnership paradox'. The paradox regards how, on one hand, partnership is the best solution for the weak Mozambican civil society, but, at the same time, the weakness of civil society is the main impediment to achieve equal partnership.

In the interviews, the normative understanding of partnership was neglected to favor the development understanding. In the context of Mozambique, Ibis sees the normative understanding of partnership as being challenged by the local context. The reason for this is the difficulty of achieving equality in partnership given the economic inequalities. In order to reduce inequality and strengthen local ownership, Ibis emphasized the discourse of facilitation. Seeing Ibis' role as one of 'facilitating' rather than 'implementing' is assumed to reduce the power inequalities. Nevertheless, Ibis also contributes to creating a distance between itself and the Southern partners through a paternalistic discourse. This discourse portrays the SNGO as inferior to the NNGO. Despite these differences, Ibis understands partnership as a 'natural' approach, due to its identity as an NGO.

4.4 Sub-conclusion: Ibis' understanding of partnership

This section concludes the analytical part of the thesis and thereby sums up Ibis' understanding of the concept of development partnership, as it has been analyzed on the three levels of principle, strategy and practice. Ibis' understanding of partnership defers in important aspects between the three levels. This means that a number of discourses co-exist to provide meaning to development partnership. Some of these discourses are contradictory.

At the level of principle, the dominant discourse within the order of discourse of development partnership was the development discourse. Or translated into less theoretical terms; at the level of discourse, Ibis understands development partnership in accordance with the development understanding.

At the level of strategy, Ibis' understanding of development partnership is much more instrumental or mechanistic. Here, partnership is conceived as a strategy composed by a number of strategic steps. These steps are represented by a series of documents, one of which is the partner assessment. The PA document serves establish 'partner assessments' as a common sense aspect of Ibis' understanding of partnership. Ibis' staff does not 'assess a partner'; they 'carry out a PA'. This can be seen as a linguistic attempt to hide agency. However, it is the assumption that, when based on the right principles and done with context-sensitivity, the partner can benefit from an assessment by Ibis. Nevertheless, the context-adapted GAP does not include these principles. Rather, the analysis revealed an interrogative discourse and an assessment of the SNGOs administrative capacities. Hence, at the strategic level, partnership is linked to strengthening civil society by building up the professional capacities of the SNGO. Legitimacy is linked to formal and measurable capacities. This can be explained by the social practice of development work with its focus on professionalism and by official requirements from Danida.

At the level of practice, Ibis' understanding of partnership is strongly influenced by the specific context of operating in Mozambique. This was evidenced by the discourses that was drawn on and by the presence of a paradox of partnership. First, the normative understanding of partnership was downplayed to favor the development understanding. This means that Ibis understands partnership in terms of its development potential, especially regarding the strengthening of civil society through capacity building. Yet, understanding partnership in terms of the normative values of equality, mutuality and trust was discursively constructed as an unfeasibility. The reason for this was the weakness of civil society in Mozambique.

This is where the paradoxes arise in Ibis' understanding of partnership. First, Ibis argues that it is necessary to have a strong civil society in order to achieve equal partnership, yet, at the same time, partnership is understood as a remedy for weak civil societies. The paradox that appears in the analysis is that *authentic partnership is unattainable in the context, which it is designated to restore to health*. Secondly, a paradox also appears regarding Ibis' identity and the context; Ibis argues that it is 'natural' for Ibis as a NGOs to engage in authentic partnership, yet, at the same time, Ibis' acknowledges that by having greater power, it is almost impossible to achieve authentic partnerships. Thus, the second paradox, which appears in the

analysis, is that *equal partnerships are unattainable, for whom it is thought to be uniquely possible, that is, between NGOs from the North and South.*

In the context of Mozambique, Ibis sees the normative understanding of partnership as being challenged by the local context. The reason for this is the difficulty of achieve equality in partnership given the economic inequalities. In order to reduce inequality and strengthen local ownership, the discourse of facilitation is emphasized. Seeing Ibis' role as one of 'facilitating' rather than 'implementing' is assumed to reduce the power differences. Nevertheless, Ibis also contributes to creating a distance between itself and the Southern partners by drawing on a paternalistic discourse. This discourse portrays the Southern NGO as inferior to the Northern NGO. Despite these differences, Ibis understands partnership as 'natural' for Ibis, due to its identity as an NGO.

Based on the above, it is safe to say that within the order of discourse of development partnership a great amount of discourses co-exist. Some of these are even draw on other orders of discourse, such as the discourses of managerialism and professionalization. Others are directly contradictive. This is the case for example for the normative discourse and the paternalist discourse, as they represent completely opposite ways of establishing social relations. The normative understanding highlights equality between the partners, whereas the paternalistic discourse creates unequal relations.

The analysis of the order of discourse also indicated that Ibis draws on an unconventional mix of discourses when talking about development partnership. This indicates a change in the order of discourse, particularly, the change was the adding of the discourse of managerialism, the discourse of paternalism and the minimization of the normative discourse.

Chapter 5

The paradox of partnership: a discussion

The main findings in chapter 4 were that Ibis' understanding of partnership was based on the development understanding, rather than the normative understanding. Further, Ibis used unconventional discourse types in the order of discourse, most significantly, a paternalistic discourse and the discourse of managerialism, which lead to a very instrumental understanding of the partnership process. Next, the discourse analysis revealed the paradox that arose in the field of tension between the development understanding and the context of Mozambique.

In this chapter, the social consequences of this discursive practice on the social practice of development will be discussed, with a particular focus on power relations. First, the consequences of applying the development discourse in the context of Mozambique will be discussed in 5.1. These considerations provide the basis for the discussion in 5.2, which explains the ways in which Ibis' discursive practice can lead to relations of hegemony in the partnerships.

5.1 The development understanding and power struggles

Ibis prioritizes the development understanding in the discursive practice, which means that partnership is understood through the concepts of civil society strengthening, local ownership and capacity building. In the following section, these concepts will be problematized in the view of the wider social practice of development in Mozambique. Section 5.1.1 discusses the problem of representation in the development understanding and discourse on local ownership and civil society. After that, section 5.1.2 problematizes the social consequences of the discourse of capacity building.

5.1.1 The problem of representation: Local ownership and civil society discourses

The problem of representation lies in how generalizations, such as the overall weakness of Southern actors, are inscribed in the development understanding of partnership.

The problem of representation occurs in the development discourse of local ownership. The aim of local ownership is that the recipient country should take more action and responsibility in the development process. Consequently, Baaz argues, within development, the perception is that the Southern actors are not active enough and that they lack responsibility. She writes: *"the need to activate partner's agency can be seen as the expression of a perceived lack – of partner responsibility and commitment"* (Baaz 2005: 168). This corresponds with Ibis' perception. Ibis' understanding was that the partners were weak at all levels. The NNGO's job is then to build the partner's capacities, so that they eventually will be able to take over the activities and become responsible and professional change agents. Baaz continues; *"the partnership discourse itself remains characterized by a paternalism in which the donor identifies the problem, namely the*

passivity and dependency, and promulgates the right treatment – teaching the partner how to be independent and use their own resources”.

As mentioned in chapter 2, Said refers to how representations occur through opposites. Thus, it is possible to investigate what meaning lies in the partners being ‘weak’ by looking at how its binary opposition ‘strong’ is defined. In the interview, the meaning of a strong civil society was depicted as active, independent, not just seeking funding, well structured, experienced, has qualified personnel, analytical or research or networking capacity, and it is organized and dynamic. The opposite binaries must then be passive, dependent, money seeking, unstructured, inexperienced, unqualified, uneducated, unorganized and apathetic. These ‘flaws’ are considered the main contextual factor that influences Ibis’ partnership in Mozambique.

Thus, partner organizations that do not stand up to certain Western criteria (independence, organized, structured, formal capacities) get the stamp of ‘weakness’. When the civil society of an entire country is characterized as ‘weak’, it must challenge the normative ideals of equality, mutuality and trust.

This thinking can be seen as a result of development partnership being both a means and an end. Partnership is a means to strengthening civil society, but it is also an end in itself, because the partners represent the part of civil society that needs to be strengthened, as stated in the interview: *‘When we talk about CS, in this case, we talk about CSOs within the areas where we work’*. In other words, Ibis understands partnership at the level of implementation as a means and an end at the same time. This is significant in terms of ideology and power. When the partnership is conceived as a means to carry out activities, it is more likely to be a horizontal relationship in which the partners have mutual obligations. On the other hand, if the partnership is an end to strengthen civil society organizations (and thus, civil society), the partners become the ‘activities’, which are to be developed, especially when working with partners that are ‘weak’.

The problem of representation can also be found in Ibis’ civil society discourse. In the interviews, Ibis understood civil society as ‘the organizations working within the same thematic and geographical areas’ as Ibis. Furthermore, Ibis acknowledged being more likely to engage in equal partnerships with larger and better organized NGOs in the capital. However, some scholars argue that it is *“too restrictive to reduce civil society to groups and associations that have a formal character and are essentially benign in intent... By focusing on prominent civic actors there is a danger of excluding large groups of people who do not see in association the main means of solving problems”* (Hearn 2000: 243). Exclusion takes place when partnerships are only promoted between NGOs, because it potentially leaves out other groups of people who are not formally organized in NGOs. The way North-South partnerships have an organizational bias thus contests the link between formal association building and democracy. In addition, focusing on formal NGOs create a sort of ‘NGO’ elite, in which the majority are located in the capital and staffed by academics, who represent a minority of the Mozambican population. It is therefore possible to question the legitimacy in focusing merely on formal, often urban-based NGOs and their role in representing and strengthening the Mozambican civil society.

This implies questioning the role of NGO partnership as the best development tool for strengthening civil society. First, because it may exclude the change potential of civil society groups that are not formalized. Second, promoting and prioritizing formal organizations may not be representative for civil society as they represent a minor fraction of the Mozambican population.

The development understanding of civil society is based on the Anglo-Saxon idea of the horizontal and independent relationship between the three independent spheres of state, business and civil society, which will assure the functioning of the modern democracy (see for example Martinussen). Following the argument about the three spheres, coercion and resistance does not need a place and is excluded by an all-equal relationship in which all actors are partners. However, this is not the case in most African countries. The fact that most African countries are not characterized by neither transparent democratic states nor well-functioning markets, does not question the status of civil society, state and market as an equilateral triangle. As the analysis showed, the main challenges perceived by Ibis in its work with partnership is that of the 'weakness' of civil society and its intermingling with the state, thus challenging the ideal independence of the spheres. The development understanding does not take context into consideration in this case, as the political structures in Mozambique do not follow the same logic as those of a Western neo-liberal democracy.

Ibis' understanding shows that professional NGOs with the capacity to manage development projects are the desired formal manifestation of civil society. This is indeed a political understanding that is not contextualized to the African state-society relations, but is a rather stereotypic and idealized Western concept. In the end, with Ibis' civil society understanding, what the NNGO appears to be doing is to empower people to be citizens of the modern state. However, the actual link between civil society strengthening and partnership in developing country contexts remains a largely theoretical construct, which is de facto challenged by the political structures in those very contexts.

5.1.2 Capacity building and managerialism

At the level of strategy, the CDA demonstrated Ibis' understanding as much more functional. Here, the partnerships were evaluated in terms of administrative and financial capacities, above all. According to this understanding, the impediment to CSOs in fulfilling their democratization role can be ascribed to a lack of professionalism. As a consequence, the assumption is that their potential can be unfolded when they gain experience and administrative and fundraising capacities.

The findings of the analysis, thus, correspond with the trend described by Roberts et al. He argues that there is an overall tendency for NGOs to introduce behaviors that have previously belonged to the domain of business and managerialism. Managerialism, he indicates, has even transformed the form and day-to-day operations of even the smallest NGOs in the global south. Particularly, he refers to how 'managerialism of a distinctly northern type' has been enveloping NGOs' operations (Roberts et al. 2005: 1849). Receiving frame funding from Danida and the institutional pressure for Development actors to focus on results, efficiency and effectiveness, as accorded in the Paris Declaration, may be some of the reasons why Ibis incorporates these practices in their partnership strategy. Roberts et al. state; "It is increasingly the case that in order to be

eligible for project funds, NGO staff must demonstrate that they understand and apply management practices in line with those employed by their donor agencies". Roberts notices, "Formulating a corporate identity is a task linked with defining a coherent vision and mission, but can be as equally geared toward promoting the NGO to state agencies or corporate interests as to its constituencies (Roberts et al. 2005: 1852).

In other words, the institutional background on which the NNGOs, in this case Ibis, are dependent imposes certain practices, which stem from managerialism. This indicates that the influence of the donors is subtly introduced through, for instance, managerial practices. The production of vision statements, evaluations systems, and so on is the sign of a professionalization of NGOs, which according to Kamat is caused by the neoliberal policy context (Kamat 2004: 168).

In sum, the development discourse has the consequences of transferring certain images and concepts to the partnership. These images, such as the problem of representation, are indicative of the NNGO exerting power over the SNGO. Exactly how this done will be explained with a basis in Gramsci's concept of hegemony, which was presented in the theoretical framework in chapter 2.

5.2 The problem of hegemony in partnership

The above showed that certain postcolonial images and difference in power are inscribed in the development discourse on partnership. In this section I will argue that there are three ways in which hegemonic power is being exerted through development partnership, namely through:

- 1) Ibis' own financial dependence on its main donor, Danida and, thus, Danida's strategies, which do not allow alternative forms of change agents in civil society to arise.
- 2) Postcolonial behaviors, which still co-exist with the desire to erase unequal power structures in North-South relations in development partnerships.
- 3) Reduced opportunity to develop own spontaneous philosophies in development partnership.

5.2.1 Ibis and its donor: Danida's requirements

As mentioned in section 3.3, Ibis is highly dependent on Danida. The manner in which the dependency is materialized is for instance in the requirement to work with local partners. It also means that Ibis cannot cooperate with radical groups or CSOs with an explicit political profile against the ruling party. The reason for this is that Danida as a bilateral donor is in an inter-state relationship with the government of Mozambique and must therefore respect the sovereignty of the Mozambican state.

"The foreign aid enterprise of the frame organization, which is financed above the frame, hereunder choice of partner countries, partners, target groups, specific target areas and types of activities, must at any time be in concordance with Danish foreign aid policy... The basis hereof is first and foremost 'The Civil Society Strategy' and 'Denmark's Foreign Aid Policy – Partnership 2000' as well as the on-going initiatives for foreign- and development politics, most recently 'Globalization – Progress in Partnership (Danida 2006: 4).

The focus on the formality of Mozambican CSOs was analyzed as a problem of representation above. However, it may also be a consequence of Ibis' alignment with Danida's principles. Aligning with Danida's principles means that development must occur without explicitly threatening the existing social order through the support to CSOs that do not approve of the current political structures in Mozambique. In this perspective, development partnerships may actually maintain the status quo of the political context rather than promote change. By conceptualizing the manifestation of civil society as 'formal NGOs' that play by the formal rules of the democracy, NNGOs like Ibis, reduce the possibility for its partners to develop alternative resistances; the ones that are not recognized ways of social change.

When this is the case, it is indicative of hegemony, because partnership is then a relation in which the subaltern groups, the poor and oppressed, actively consent to and support the belief systems and structures of power relations.

5.2.2 Paternalism and partnership

The requirements from Danida might also create asymmetries, because the Danish NNGO is supposed to be held responsible for the partners' administration of the financial resources. This requirement is not linked to the ideal of local ownership and the partner taking the lead. On the contrary, the NNGO administrates the money and is given the role of the responsible 'adult', who needs to watch over the partner, whose responsibility is questionable.

In Danida's guidelines for NGOs receiving frame support, it is stated:

"The frame organization must assure that the partner's administration of and control with the transferred grants happens in a responsible and adequate manner. The same accounts for project equipment and other actives, purchased by means of the grant money. It rests with the frame organization to ensure that the partner organization receives the necessary training/information regarding the frame organization's anti corruption policy and/or ethical codex, see section 14 (Udenrigsministeriet 2004: 10, my translation)".

Maria Eriksson Baaz explains the potential effects of the economic inequality in relation to the partnership rhetoric. In the partnership discourse, she argues, the SNGO is encouraged to articulate its ideas and objectives, as if it had nothing to lose. However, in reality, the SNGO, which at this stage might only be a *potential* partner, risks access to economic resources (Baaz 2005: 74). In order to be accepted as a partner, Ibis stated that it is essential to have equal goals and visions. If not, the SNGO may not be considered a suitable partner and thereby loses the opportunity to benefit from the economic resources of the NNGO. According to Baaz, it therefore becomes difficult for the Southern partner to actually live up to the ideal about independence that the NNGO sees as strength. This means that an asymmetry of power exists, as the SNGO is financially dependent on the NNGO, it needs to influence.

According to Ibis' understanding of the contextual factors that influence the partnership, the barriers for authentic partnership are to be found within the partners, not outside. The weakness of partners is perceived as the real challenge to authentic partnership. As mentioned above, the development discourse includes the classification of some developing countries' civil societies as weak. In the case of Mozambique, Ibis stated

that civil society is weak at all levels and needs training at all levels. This included the training of thoughts (text 9), which is an aspect that is also treated in the postcolonial literature. The child-adult relationship that characterizes the paternalistic discourse also applied by Ibis is, furthermore, a way of exerting hegemonic power.

While it is misleading to characterize a specific NNGO like Ibis as an agent of neocolonialism, there is a sense in which there is an imperialism of thought, particular political models and categories being imposed upon and often accepted in the developing world.

5.2.3 Spontaneous philosophies

The concept of spontaneous philosophies was explained in chapter 2.12.2 and is an aspect of hegemony. It refers to the inability to develop a coherent world-view; a 'spontaneous' philosophy that actually relates to one's own life and place in society. In the context of development it is related to local ownership, which refers to the Southern partner developing their own understanding and strategies for the development processes.

Through the need for professionalization, documentation, evaluation processes and efficiency, the Northern NGO can, like Ibis, require to know all aspects of the SNGO from financial matters to the structure of the organization and its dealings with the official power structures and its constituency in the name of an integrated development partnership and capacity building. Furthermore, as already mentioned, this thorough transparency is to some degree one-way. Ibis is informed of all aspects of the potential partners through 'tools' such as the PA and the GAP. The next step in Ibis' partnership process is to develop a Partnership Development Plan, which defines the capacities that are worth building in the partner and the activities to be carried out.

Ibis stated that capacity building was important 'so that there still would be a civil society that was still alive, so to speak', when Ibis left. Local ownership is, thus, also seen as something that can be fostered through capacity building. Hence, according to this understanding, local ownership depends more on the formal capacities provided by the NNGO (to be serious, professional) than on the local CSOs developing their own understanding of how development processes should occur in their country. It seems as if the only valid way to be a change agent is to resemble the Northern NGOs.

In Ibis' discursive practice, the NNGO does not consider its own development. Instead, the focus remains on the character and quality of the SNGOs. This way, the NNGO acts as the teacher and the SNGO as the learner. This is in line with the discussion above, regarding partnership as a means and as an end. As a result of the capacity building and teacher/learner relationship, the SNGO itself becomes the target. Further, the SNGO is obliged to accept this situation because it comes as part of the 'funding package', 'accept the money, accept the training' (Fowler 2000).

The discourse of capacity building assumes that the NNGO is able to define the aspects of the SNGO that need to be strengthened. This is an important display of power on behalf of the NNGO. Firstly, the NNGO can influence or even decide what aspects are 'weak' in capacity and consequently worth training. Secondly,

they can also decide what capacities should *not* be included. An example could be something with a specific political content, since that is not in accordance with Danida's principles for organizations receiving frame funding. Additionally, the capacity building becomes an ideological struggle, when it, as the interviewee says, is about *the training of thoughts* (text 9).

Thus, it is the NNGOs that, with all their educational and organizational sophistication, generally decide and conceptualize the capacities that must be built in SNGOs (Ibid). This means that the capacities, which the NNGO builds are capacities, which are valued in a Northern context. This aspect was evidenced in the analysis of the GAP (section 4.2.2).

The authentic partnership ideal, which was presented in the literature review, implies mutuality. However, the focus on the development understanding allows the NNGO to exert hegemonic power over the SNGO. Hegemonic power is exerted through capacity building, because it prevents the partners from developing a their own spontaneous philosophy. This idea is supported by the literature. Eade argue that "organisations that have priorities projected on to them, however subtly, are almost bound to shift their agendas to match those of their donors" (Eade 2007: 635).

This does not correlate with the idea about the SNGO as the part that defines the goals and takes the lead. Rather, it seems as if the partner becomes a channel through which the NNGO may carry out its development objectives and strategies. In this manner, capacity building dissipates the initiative that should be coming from the South as NNGOs build organizations that are valued in their own cultures and societies.

The previous three sub-sections under section 5.2 have indicated how hegemony can be maintained in development partnership. However, this has raised another paradox: Capacity development was promoted in Development, because it would lead to local ownership. However, the analyses above show that the very same practice of capacity building might also lead to the contrary, namely the inability to develop a spontaneous philosophy, which is indicative of hegemony. Put into different words; *the development understanding of partnership is based on the idea of achieving local ownership, yet, at the same time, hegemonic power relations are enabled by the development discourse on partnership.*

5.3 Evaluation of the theory

In this discussion, Postcolonial Studies has had a particular explanatory value in accounting for the manner in which hegemony might be exerted in development partnership. Especially, the idea about the 'problem of representation' provides theoretical support to the findings.

The problem of representation was highlighted by Said as represented through discourse as opposites, particularly through couples of binary oppositions. The dichotomy of 'strong' and 'weak civil society' is generally applied in Development (e.g. Danida, see *Civilsamfundsstrategien* 2000). They are so profoundly inscribed in the development discourse that they have become common sense 'tags', which can be used without the lifting of eyebrows that such a generalizing statement might otherwise have provoked. As discussed above in section 5.1.1, the development discourse reproduces paternalistic images through the

concepts of local ownership and civil society in contexts such as Mozambique, which are characterized as 'weak' by the development agencies.

The problem of representation was also presented by Spivak. As explained in chapter 2, Spivak is critical of notions of universal values. She argues that concepts that are applied universally, without context-sensitivity and which promote Western knowledge to the salvation of post-colonial populations, is a manner of exerting power. This is indeed in correspondence with the findings from the thesis. As this chapter has shown, the main problematic regarding Ibis' discursive practice are rooted in the intent to transfer the development understanding of partnership to a Mozambican context. The gist of the paradoxes, which were found in the analysis in chapter 4 (see chapter 4.4), lies in the tension between the normative understanding of partnership and the understanding of partnership at the level of practice, which is context-specific.

The discourses of capacity building, civil society and local ownership are all part of the development understanding. However, the above discussions have shown, that when applied to the context of Mozambique, they become a way of exerting hegemonic power through paternalistic images (local ownership), practices that are designed and appreciated in a Northern context (capacity building) and an overall framework that fits a liberal democratic framework, and not the state-society structures of the Mozambican context (civil society).

The social practice and the discursive practice influence each other and, as this study has evidenced, challenge the universal understanding and applicability of the partnership concept. This means that the current role of partnership as a universally applied context in ID is challenged by this case study.

In sum, the above discussion have demonstrated that the concept of development partnership, as it is understood within the Development belief system, still leaves room for North-South relations in which the Northern partner exerts power over the Southern NGO. More specifically, it has been discussed that the type of power being exerted is one that corresponds with the concept of hegemony. If it is possible for NNGOs to engage in partnerships and still maintain the power of decision in contexts of so-called weak civil societies, the negative outcomes may be twofold; on one hand, it allows the perpetuation of asymmetrical power structures, on the other hand, it hides these power structures through consent.

5.4 A way forward for partnership in development

In this section, I will briefly explain two approaches that might serve to unfold the potential of development partnership. These are: dis-empowerment of the NNGO and a call for more transparency and flexibility in the development system.

5.4.1 Dis-empowerment

For mutuality to become a more integrated component of partnership, it might take what Fowler refers to as 'dis-empowerment' of the NNGO (FAU 2002). Fowler affirms that the NNGO rarely wants to let go and that having adult relationships is harder than having parent-child relationships. The analysis supports this view. One of the interviewees commented on the difficulty of Ibis' staff to switch into the partnership approach,

because having the skills and the knowledge made it easier to carry out the implementation alone and not be slowed down by the weakness of civil society. Nevertheless, if authentic partnership is desired, the NNGO must learn to 'dis-empower' itself.

Rather than the premise being the condition a strong civil society in order to achieve authentic partnership, or in other words, for the SNGOs to be at the same conceived stage of development as the NNGOs, the challenge might rather be for the NNGO to dis-empower itself. Such an ambition would also pave the way for the emergence of locally owned development processes.

A manner, in which the NNGO could improve the situation, is by also looking in at itself, in stead of merely out at the SNGO. The NNGO may also need capacity building, for instance in terms of how to operate within the local context of the SNGO. Further, a larger degree of self-awareness, self-criticism, and modesty might reduce the hegemonic power between the North and the South in NGO partnerships. It is possible to question how open Ibis is for partner's ideas if the point of departure is that, at a generally, civil society is weak at all levels and capacity building is needed at all levels - even to think.

5.4.2 Call a spade a spade

Surely partnership is worth pursuing, but until getting there, other types of relationships should maybe not be discarded. Other relational forms may be more transparent, unambiguous, authentic and suitable for the specific characteristics of the relationship.

Fowler argues that it would increase transparency greatly to name the relationship between North-South NGOs according to the actual characteristics of the specific relationship. As he argues, not all relationships can or should be partnerships (FAU 2002). If the NNGO actually has the role of an advisor, or a tutor, or an organizational instructor, naming the relationship as such would at least increase transparency, and maybe ease the relationship between the two NGOs. Further, it would increase the credibility of the aid relationships. If not, he predicts, partnership may become 'the stick with which we will be beaten'.

With 'the stick with which we will be beaten', Fowler refers to the issue of credibility within the development system. The stake is that, if all relationships are described as partnerships, with all the normative ideas that this conjures, there is a risk that development loses credibility if it is not possible to achieve the normative ideals of trust, equality, mutuality along with development outcome of local ownership and CS participation (FAU 2002).

This idea is in line with the criticism of partnership as a buzzword. Using development buzzword may seem like attractive maneuver, since it upgrades the immediate appearance of a development project. However, in order to avoid hegemonic relations and to achieve greater inclusiveness, conceptual transparency may be achieved by de-romanticize, de-'matter of course' and contextualize development concepts such as partnership. The goal should rather be, according to Fowler, to pursue 'authentic partnerships' by taking one step at a time. While pursuing development partnerships, it is possible to maintain other types of relationships. By keeping these transparent and adapted to local contexts there is a greater chance of

reducing the existence of hegemonic relations. This is not merely a matter of rhetoric. By naming the relationship according to the nature of power involved, the partners would be forced to take aspects of power into account instead of treating them as a taboo.

By moving beyond the conceptual luggage of the development understanding of partnership, a more contextualized understanding that can generate social change through authentic partnership may be achieved.

However, is this even possible? The reality of the development system should also be remembered. Given the pervasive focus on the principle, it is difficult for NGOs to obtain financial support without having an explicit partnership component. This indicates that despite the portrayed common sense of partnership, there may be power structures in place, which insist on its appliance. In the case of Ibis and the other five Danish NGOs that receive the frame grant from Danida, partnership is an obligation. As a result of Ibis' dependency on donors such as Danida and the EU, Ibis is required to deliver all projects with an explicit partnership component and involvement of partners. And the donors may not be satisfied with relationships that are not called partnerships.

Chapter 6

Conclusion

This chapter presents the overall conclusions and provides some perspectives for future research.

6.1 Conclusions to the research questions

The research question that has steered this thesis was divided into two components. The first called for a discourse analysis of Ibis' understanding of partnership. Based on the findings of this analysis, the second part of the research question discussed the effects of Ibis' understanding on the role of partnership in International Development.

In **chapter 4**, Ibis' understanding of partnership was analyzed at the level of principle, strategy and practice. On the level of principles, Ibis' overall vision, Vision 2012 was analyzed. Here, the CDA evidenced that Ibis chiefly applied a development discourse. Through this discourse, Ibis attached meaning to the partnership principle by the concept of civil society strengthening. The link between partnership and the strengthening of civil society was presented as a common sense assumption. However, Ibis also drew on the genre of vision statements, which belongs to the domain of business and managerialism. The discourse of managerialism is unconventional in the order of discourse of development partnership.

The analysis of Ibis' understanding of partnership at the level of strategy, showed a much more instrumental or mechanistic understanding of the partnership process. In section 4.2.1, the analysis of the Partner Assessment highlighted how the partnership process was shaped by a 'professionalization discourse'. Similarly, in section 4.2.2, the discursive practice was characterized by Ibis' aim of strengthening the professional and administrative capacities of the partners. These discursive practices were supported by the social practice of development work and its focus on professionalism and by official requirements within the Development system.

Section 4.3 analyzed Ibis' discursive practice in two interviews. Here, it was discovered that Ibis drew on a number of discourses, some of which were even contradictory. This was the case with the normative discourse, on partnership and the paternalistic discourse. Further, Ibis understood partnership through its identity as an NGO, for whom partnership is 'natural'. Overall, the discursive practice in the interviews was also characterized by a development discourse on partnership. In section 4.3.2.2, a paradox appeared in Ibis' understanding, namely that: *authentic partnership is unattainable in the context, which it is designated to restore to health*. This paradox highlights the tension between the development understanding of partnership and the context of carrying out partnership in Mozambique.

In **Chapter 5**, the consequences of Ibis' discursive practice on the social practice of international development were discussed. The discussion was based on the theoretical framework presented in chapter

2. The discussion highlighted that using the development discourse and, simultaneously, more or less excluding the normative discourse is problematic. The reason for this is that the development discourse reproduces certain paternalistic images. Postcolonial Studies contributed to this finding through the idea of 'the problem of representation'. According to the theory, Western representations of the postcolonial subject are a way of exerting hegemonic power. Further, the practice of capacity development was also problematized as an approach, which permitted hegemonic behaviors. Specifically, the perceived weakness of civil society and the methods for training partners conveyed Northern practices and minimized the opportunity for the partners to develop their own 'spontaneous philosophies'. Spontaneous philosophies referred to the lack of possibilities to develop own understandings - in this case of the development processes. In other words, spontaneous philosophies can be compared to achieving 'local ownership'. This leads to another overall paradox of development partnership: *The development understanding of partnership is based on the idea of achieving local ownership, yet, at the same time, hegemonic power relations are enabled by the development discourse on partnership.*

Thus, the discussion answered the second part of the research question and affirmed the hypotheses, which were presented in the introduction: Ibis' understanding of partnership evidences that it is highly problematic to apply the partnership concept universally, as it might contribute to perpetuating hegemonic power relations in North-South NGO relations. Hence, the case study shows that the role of partnership in development is not consistent with the aim of reducing unequal power relations between the North and the South. Rather, Ibis' discursive practice evidences that it is possible to maintain relations of hegemony in North-South NGO partnerships.

6.2 Perspectives and suggestions for further research

6.2.1 Theoretical considerations

The combination of development studies and postcolonial studies is currently receiving new attention from a range of scholars. Kothari speaks of a "historical trajectory that links colonialism to contemporary processes of globalization generally, and development more specifically" (Kothari 2005: 50). She also states that Development Studies is a largely 'unreflective discipline', the cause of which can be found in its 'imperative to achieve development goals and targets' (Ibid: 51). Hence, the inherent 'goodness' of the aid industry distances itself from the intrinsic 'bad' of the colonial experience. This study aims at problematizing the universal appliance of the development discourse in general, and the partnership principle in particular by placing it within a postcolonial context. However, there is still a great need to carry out studies that situate and study specific development practices in postcolonial frameworks.

Other theories could have been exciting to apply in this study, in order to achieve a broader perspective. New Institutionalism could have shed a different light upon the partnership insistence in development. Through theories of social identities, aspects such as stereotypification could have enriched the study in its combination of Development and Postcolonialism. Furthermore, It could have been interesting to extend the analysis to include the Mozambican partners understanding of partnership in the study.

6.2.2 Generalizability and Replicability

The case study offers an examination of partnership that emphasizes the Mozambican context and its postcolonial history as a key part of the discursive practice but with the last part of the research question, I intend to discover what the social consequences are of the discursive practice and the specific social practices it is embedded in. This means that I might also be able to offer an account of what contextual factors can be replicated to e.g. other African or postcolonial contexts.

In chapter 3, Ibis was described as a typical case, which increases the potential for replicating the study. Further, the fact that Ibis is one out of the six Danish NGOs that receives the frame grant from Danida also enhances the replicability of the study. It is very likely that similar discursive practices occur within other NGOs in the same position as Ibis.

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