



Kurskod: SKOM12
Termin: VT 2012
Handledare: Sara von Platen
Examinator: Åsa Thelander

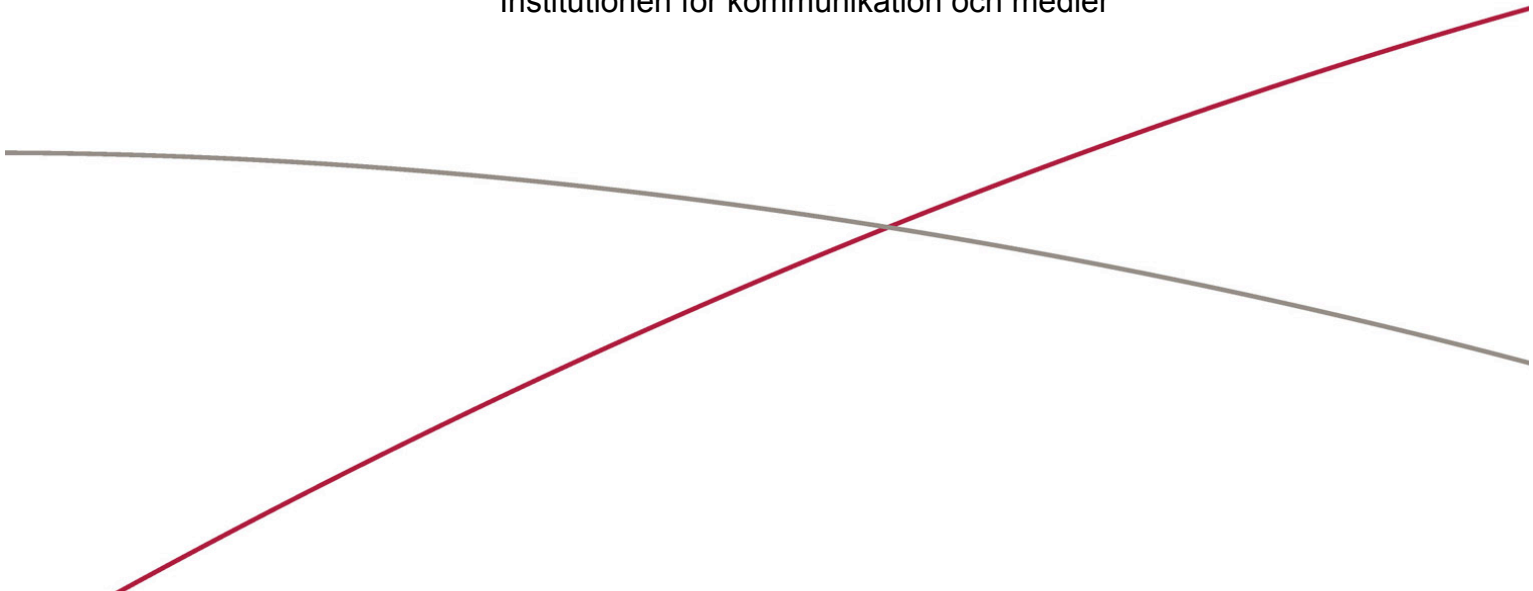
Examensarbete för masterexamen – strategisk kommunikation

A Civil Society Conundrum

*Gaining legitimacy with stakeholders as a Vietnamese NGO
working with gender and sexuality*

SAO-MAI DAU

Lunds universitet
Institutionen för kommunikation och medier



Acknowledgements

I would like to thank the members of iSEE for graciously taking the time to give me insight into the organization and their work there.

I would also like to thank ISDS for providing me with background knowledge for this thesis and for always giving me a warm welcome.

A big thank you to all who have encouraged and supported me through ups and downs along the way, and an enormous thank you to Gabriella who not only has put up with those ups and downs at close quarters but also been the best critic and discussion partner I could wish for.

Abstract

A Civil Society Conundrum: Gaining legitimacy with stakeholders as a Vietnamese NGO working with gender and sexuality

Questions concerning sexuality and gender have only recently become the focus of social research and advocacy in Vietnam. Sexuality and gender are taboo subjects and non-heterosexual and trans persons often face discrimination, stigmatization or invisibility and civil society is in certain respects restricted. The purpose of the following thesis is therefore to investigate how a Vietnamese non-governmental organization working to increase the rights of lesbians, gays, bisexuals and trans persons in Vietnam legitimizes itself in its communication with stakeholders. Interviews with the organization's staff and critical discourse analysis of written material have been used as methods of analysis. The analysis suggests that the organization's use of discourses prevalent in the mainstream of civil society and emphasis on its role as expert on its area of work contributes to its legitimacy with donors, while emphasis on scientific discourse might be a way of navigating taboo-laden subjects in relation to mass media.

Characters: 123, 783

Key words: organizational legitimacy, civil society, institutionalism, discourse, sexuality, gender, Minor Field Study

A Civil Society Conundrum: Gaining legitimacy with stakeholders as a Vietnamese NGO working with gender and sexuality

Frågor som behandlar sexualitet och genus har endast på senare tid hamnat i fokus för samhällsvetenskaplig forskning och advocacy i Vietnam. Sexualitet och genus är ämnen som är tabu och icke-heterosexuella personer och transpersoner möter ofta diskriminering, stigmatisering eller osynliggörande och civilsamhället är till viss del begränsat. Syftet med följande uppsats är därför att undersöka hur en vietnamesisk icke-statlig organisation som arbetar för lesbiskas, bögars, bisexuellas och transpersons rättigheter i Vietnam legitimerar sig i sin kommunikation med intressenter. Intervjuer med organisationens medarbetare och kritisk diskursanalys av skrivet material har

använts som metoder i analysen. Analysen pekar på att organisationens användning av förhärskande diskurser i "huvudfaran" av civilsamhället och vikt vid dess roll som expert i sitt verksamhetsområde bidrar till dess legitimitet hos givare, medan betoning på vetenskaplig diskurs kan vara ett sätt att navigera tabubelagda ämnen i relation till massmedia.

Tecken: 123 783

Nyckelord: organisationslegitimitet, civilsamhället, institutionalism, diskurs, sexualitet, genus, Minor Field Study

1. Introduction	1
1.1. Background.....	1
1.1.1. Sexuality and gender in Vietnam	1
1.1.2. Vietnam and civil society	4
1.2. Problem.....	6
1.3. Purpose and research questions	6
1.4. Delimitations	7
1.5. Structure	8
2. Theoretical framework	10
2.1. Legitimacy as a sociological concept.....	10
2.2. Institutions and dialectics	12
2.2.1. Organizations and dialectical institutional contexts.....	12
2.3. Civil society: contested concept and space for contestation	13
2.4. NGO legitimacy.....	15
2.5. Discourse – a moment in social practice	17
2.6. The discursive formation of gender and sexuality	18
2.7. Situating the research	21
2.8. Summary.....	21
3. Methods of data collection	23
3.1. First contact	23
3.2. Semi-structured interviews.....	23
3.2.1. Limitations.....	24
3.3. Collection of written material.....	25
3.3.1. Limitations.....	25
3.1. Who is the researcher?.....	25
4. Methods of analysis	27
4.1. Critical discourse analysis of written material	27
4.1.1. Discourse as text.....	28
4.1.2. Discourse practice	28
4.1.3. Discourse as an instance of social practice	29
4.2. Organizing the written material.....	29
4.2.1. Limitations – critical discourse analysis	30
4.3. Interview citations	30
4.3.1. Limitations – interview citations.....	30

5. Analysis.....	32
5.1. Donors	32
5.1.1. iSEE, the organization	32
5.1.2. LGBT.....	36
5.1.3. Gaining and maintaining legitimacy with donors	39
5.2. Mass media.....	42
5.2.1. iSEE, the organization.....	42
5.2.2. Sexuality and gender	45
5.2.3. Gaining and maintaining legitimacy with mass media	46
5.3. Discussion on the results of the analysis	48
6. Conclusion.....	50
7. Bibliography.....	51
8. Appendix 1. Written material	58
9. Appendix 2. Interview guide.....	59

1. Introduction

1.1. Background

During the autumn of 2010, when I began planning for this thesis, I had already decided that I would focus on a subject related to organizations working for the rights of lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer and/or intersexual (LGBTQI) persons, this being a matter of personal interest to me. However, it was only upon the encouragement of my girlfriend that I thought to investigate the existence of such organizations in Vietnam, the country where I spent my adolescence. To my surprise and excitement, I found that a small non-governmental organization (NGO) working to support the human rights of minority groups in Vietnam had been established three years prior, and that the founders of this organization – the Institute for Studies on Society, Economy and Environment, or iSEE – had chosen to focus the organization’s work on two groups, one of which was sexual minorities.

Issues of sexuality, sexual orientation, gender identity and gender expression are only just starting to enter the public domain in Vietnam, and as will be discussed in the section below, the topic of sexuality is highly taboo. As I already had an understanding of this situation during these initial investigations, I was intrigued as to how a small NGO such as iSEE might present and communicate questions on sexuality and gender with different sections of Vietnamese society in ways that contribute to acceptance of both the subject and the organization itself.

However, before I continue to the research problem and purpose of this thesis, I will in the sections below give an overview of the topic of sexuality and gender in Vietnam, as well as the question of civil society in Vietnam as this pertains to iSEE’s specific organizational form. The aim of providing these overviews is to describe the context in which iSEE’s work takes place and thereby contribute to the reader’s understanding of the research focus in this thesis.

1.1.1. Sexuality and gender in Vietnam

The subject of sexuality has long been, and still is, taboo-laden in Vietnam. In 2009, the Institute for Social Development Studies (ISDS) published a study with the telling title, *Sexuality in Contemporary Vietnam: Easy to Joke About But Hard to Talk About* (Khuat, Le, & Nguyen, 2009). According to the authors of this study, “the lack of research on sexuality is the product of

Vietnam's long cultural history in which sexuality is often considered a private matter, not fit for public discussion, let alone close examination" (Khuat, Le, & Nguyen, 2009, pp. 14-15). Furthermore, the research on sexuality that began in the 1990s has mainly focused on reproductive health aspects and often carried with it negative moral associations (Khuat, Le, & Nguyen, 2009, p. 16). The ISDS study is intended as a distinct approach to sexuality research, by examining the attitudes of Vietnamese people toward different aspects of sexuality. Referring to the title of the study, the authors write that:

People joke in hopes of breaking through the Confucian austerity, to ease the harsh memories of the war decades where personal desires and happiness must be suppressed, to escape from the poor life that still face many Vietnamese people, and to ridicule old beliefs about sex. Since they cannot talk openly yet about sex, people must choose to joke, to imply, to beat around the bush. [...] The whole society jokes and laughs heartily about sex, but when the time comes to discuss seriously about it, everybody is silent or uses morality and traditions to judge sex." (Khuat, Le, & Nguyen, 2009, pp. 363-364)

In tracing the social construction of sexuality in contemporary Vietnam, the study explores several factors: "ancient Confucian doctrines, socialist propaganda slogans, war-mobilizing campaigns, family planning movements, gender equality promotion, HIV/AIDS education, calls for national identity preservation, [and] an merging consumption society" (Khuat, Le, & Nguyen, 2009, p. 35), among others.

Confucianism is still an important philosophy in contemporary Vietnam (Khuat, Le, & Nguyen, 2009; Rydstrom, 2006; Rydstom, 2003), and perhaps especially in rural Vietnam (Rydstrom, 2006), that offers strict rules of conduct between different social relations. In the case of sexuality and gender, Confucianism places men in a superior position and women in a submissive position, and attaches these positions with related codes of conduct according to which men improve themselves in governing the family and others, and women improve themselves in serving the family (Khuat, Le, & Nguyen, 2009). According to Rydstrom (2003), this binary understanding of men and women is further supported by a Taoist conception of the universe consisting of opposite but complementary forces of *Am* (Yin), related to the female body, and *Duong* (Yang), related to the male body.

Following the declaration of independence from the French in 1945 and in light of the subsequent war against France and the civil war between north and south, which ended in 1975 and included war with the United States, the Vietnamese population underwent a period of extreme hardship. The communist government moved to rid Vietnamese society of feudal beliefs

and promote equality for all, but at the same time Confucian ideas about gender roles and sexuality were reinforced in the demands for sacrifices from the individual for the collective: the strong male soldiers fighting in the battlefields and the faithful women taking care of and feeding the family at home (Khuat, Le, & Nguyen, 2009). Love between women and men became a new ideal, but it was inevitably bound to the revolutionary and socialist cause, and austerity and personal sacrifice were the moral standards (Khuat, Le, & Nguyen, 2009).

Included in the Khuat, Le & Nguyen (2009) study is also research on peoples' attitudes concerning homosexuality. The authors write that until recently, Vietnamese people have not been aware of homosexuality. According to them, "the threat posed by HIV/AIDS epidemic had, for the first time, introduced homosexuality into the social discourse of Vietnam" and the topic only began to be examined in relation to HIV/AIDS in the 2000s (Khuat, Le, & Nguyen, 2009, p. 272). Health and prevention were the starting points for discussion and the focus lay on men who have sex with men (MSM) (Khuat, 2011); in other words, on behavior rather than identity. Furthermore a campaign against 'social evils' was initiated by the Vietnamese government 1995, with the goal of eradicating 'immoral; behavior, such as homosexuality, prostitution, drug use and gambling, further increasing stigmatization (Rydström, 2006). While invisibility and lack of space for existence and expression has contributed to stigmatization and discrimination of lesbians, gays, bisexuals and trans persons in Vietnam, Khuat (2011) argues that this is not as severely manifested as in many other countries, for example through violent hate crimes. However, in a 2008 online study conducted by iSEE about Vietnamese gay men, 4.5% of the 3,231 participants had been physically attacked due to their sexuality, 6.5% had lost their job due to the same reason and 86% of the participants felt that they hide their sexuality in order to be accepted by their surroundings (Institute for Studies of Society, Economy and Environment, 2009). In another iSEE study on the lives of 'women who love women', the researchers write about respondents' views of coming out to their parents:

Among the people we met, nobody said that their parents would happily accept it if they knew. [...] Being the children, they would disturb and torment their parents. They hide it, precisely to protect their parents. (Nguyen, Nguyen, Le & Le, 2010, p. 16, own translation)

While it may well be the case that open discrimination is less extreme in Vietnam compared to many other countries, invisibility clearly seems to be an important concern.

This lack of visibility is also evident in the legal area. At the moment, there are only two legal documents directly pertaining to same-sex relationships or gender identity. One of these is the Marriage and Family Law

from 2000, where Article 10, 5§ bans marriage between people of the same sex (United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific, 2001). The other is Decree No. 88/2008/ND-CP from 2008 which relates to sex reassignment surgery. While this decree allows sex reassignment for people clinically defined as intersexual, Article 4, 1§ of the decree bans such surgery for people not defined as intersexual (Civil Law Network, 2008). On one hand, there is little outright discrimination of lesbians, gays, bisexuals and trans persons in Vietnamese legislation, nor are lesbians', gay's, bisexuals' or trans persons' self-representation and self-understanding restricted by legal definitions. On the other hand, however, there are no laws protecting or guaranteeing the rights of lesbians, gays, bisexuals or trans persons either. Furthermore, Khuat, Le & Nguyen (2009) suggest that the article banning same-sex marriage might have been added in response to Vietnam's first same-sex wedding ceremonies in 1997 and 1998. Additionally, the article of Decree No. 88/2008/ND-CP that bans reassignment surgery for non-intersexual people may have been added as a negative reaction toward groups lobbying for the inclusion of transgender people during the formation of the decree (Le, 2011). Thus, while these laws can be seen as offering a kind of recognition of people who wish to marry others of the same sex and of people who wish to go through gender reassignment surgery despite not being defined as intersexual, the consequences of this recognition are deleterious in terms of non-discrimination. Although these two cases alone do not constitute a pattern, it is significant that they, as the only legal documents directly related to non-normative sexuality and gender identity, are restrictive rather than the opposite.

Sexuality is seen as a taboo subject in contemporary Vietnamese society, and consequently people that do not wish to conform to the heterosexual norm have little space for expression. Furthermore, the general silence on the topic contributes to understandings of sexual orientation and gender that are restrictive and at times harmful to non-heterosexual and transgender persons.

1.1.2. Vietnam and civil society

'Civil society' is a contested concept, and a discussion of it in relation to the context of Vietnam brings this contestation to the fore. Perhaps one of the most common understandings of civil society is as a 'third' sector of society, which compensates for the 'failures' of the other two sectors, the state and the market (Kaldor, 2003; Wells-Dang, 2011). The civil society sector, in this perspective, includes organizations such as non-profit organizations, charities and voluntary associations (Kaldor, 2003). However, a more detailed discussion of the concept will be carried out in 2. *Theoretical framework*.

The liberal understanding of civil society above can be challenging to use in an analysis of civil society in Vietnam, since the state exerts considerable influence on all parts of society. In order to overcome this problem, some analysts have endeavored to adapt the concept to fit these circumstances. Lux & Straussman (2004), for example, describe civil society in Vietnam as one which is “state-led” and which “falls into a grey zone of organisations that mediate between the state and the citizenry but are not fully independent of the state as found in liberal democracies” (p. 178). Similarly, Wells-Dang (2010) argues that “while open spaces for political expression may indeed be fewer or differently structured in authoritarian regimes, this does not preclude their existence. Political existence is not fully limited by the state nor always formally constituted in recognisable institutions” (p. 96). A report published by a group of organizations in 2006, investigating the nature of civil society in Vietnam, states that

The space for civil society in Vietnam is quite limited, but broadened in the 1990s in spite of the continuation of the political system. This points to the special political configuration in Vietnam, where the space for civil society is on the one hand dependent on what the Party-State grants civic organisations and, on the other hand, on organisations’ ability to shift the boundaries of their space within, as well as outside, of the state sphere. (Vietnam Institute of Development Studies, UNDP Vietnam, SNV Vietnam & CIVICUS Civil Society Index, 2006, pp. 78-79)

Furthermore, the authors of the report write that they, in developing the criteria to define civil society organizations, have chosen to focus on their “form and function” rather than “whether they are independent” (Vietnam Institute of Development Studies, UNDP Vietnam, SNV Vietnam & CIVICUS Civil Society Index, 2006, p. 113).

Whether or not one agrees with the above understandings of civil society, the use of these by scholars and organizations reflects the close interrelation between the Vietnamese state and other organizations that are not strictly part of the state. This potentially creates difficulties for organizations that aim to work with socioculturally sensitive issues not recognized by the state. Landau (2008) argues that “there is some evidence that the Party will tolerate organisations that operate outside the existing legal framework provided they limit their focus to economic and social affairs”, though “the Vietnamese leadership will not tolerate associations that express disagreement with Party policies” (p. 252).

What kind of organizations can then be said to belong to the area of civil society in Vietnam? The CIVICUS report mentioned earlier lists seven types of organizations: mass organizations, umbrella organizations, professional associations, Vietnamese NGOs, informal groups, faith-based organizations

and international NGOs (Vietnam Institute of Development Studies, UNDP Vietnam, SNV Vietnam & CIVICUS Civil Society Index, 2006, p. 32). iSEE falls quite clearly into the category of Vietnamese NGOs, which officially are called “Non-profit Science and Technology Organizations” and mainly focus on development issues.

A quick overview of civil society in Vietnam reveals a complex picture that can either be seen as a challenge to mainstream understandings of civil society, or as support for the view that Vietnam has no civil society as such, or at least a very restricted one. However, as the discussion of civil society in *2. Theoretical framework* will show, it is not a clear-cut concept and I believe that an understanding of this is essential in attempting to analyze the situation of iSEE.

1.2. Problem

As described in the previous section, questions concerning sexuality and gender have only recently become the focus of social research and advocacy in Vietnam. Sex and sexuality are taboo subjects and non-heterosexual and trans persons often face discrimination, stigmatization or invisibility. Meanwhile, the Vietnamese government enforces strict frameworks for civil society to act within, which is something that advocacy and research organizations in Vietnam in one way or another have to relate to while performing their work. Furthermore, the taboo connected to sexuality and the character of Vietnamese civil society affects the possibilities for lesbians, gays, bisexuals and trans persons to organize and work with visibility and anti-discrimination. Consequently, Vietnamese non-governmental organizations that currently work with issues related to the rights of lesbians, gays, bisexuals and trans persons need to be strategic in their communication with different parties in order that their work gain acceptance and support.

1.3. Purpose and research questions

The purpose of this thesis is therefore to investigate how a Vietnamese non-governmental organization working to increase the rights of lesbians, gays, bisexuals and trans persons in Vietnam legitimizes itself in its communication with key stakeholders. For the purposes of this thesis, stakeholders are simply understood as “those groups without whose support the organization would cease to exist” (Freeman, 1983). I aim to conduct an entirely qualitative study that focuses primarily on the organization’s actual communication with stakeholders, but also on the organization’s own members’ perceptions of the organization’s communication with these stakeholders.

In order to narrow down the scope of the project, I have decided to concentrate on the work of a single organization; namely the Institute for

Studies on Society, Economy and Environment (iSEE) mentioned in *1.1 Background*. Based in Hanoi, Vietnam's capital, iSEE works with research, advocacy, public information and empowerment with a focus on minority groups, the main ones being ethnic minority groups and lesbians, gays, bisexuals and trans persons (Insitute for Studies of Society, Economy and Environment). Since its fairly recent start in July 2007, the organization has implemented several prominent projects, such as the "Open" exhibition, which has toured several Vietnamese universities (Pham, 2009; Tan, 2010), and a qualitative study on the lives of 40 lesbian women in Vietnam (Hung & Godfrey, 2010).

The research questions for this thesis are divided into three different levels, the first one being the most general and the third the most specific. The first question is as follows:

- 1) *How does iSEE, as an NGO working with lesbians', gays', bisexuals' and trans persons' rights in Vietnam, communicate its work regarding these rights with different stakeholders in order to gain and maintain legitimacy?*

The second question considers the relation between organization and legitimacy:

- 2) *What types of organizational legitimacy does iSEE invoke in its communication with different stakeholders about its work in this field?*

In order to answer this, a third question needs to be asked:

- 3) *What discourses does iSEE use in relation to sexuality and gender when communicating with stakeholders about its work with lesbians', gays', bisexuals' and trans persons' rights?*

The third question is important to investigate because it will hopefully demonstrate how iSEE presents its field of work and its own relation to it. Consequently, in connection with the second question, the discourse used by iSEE will indicate the kind of organization it endeavors to present itself as, in relation to issues concerning sexuality, sexual orientation, gender identity, gender expression and lesbians, gays, bisexuals and trans persons. Thus, the discourse used by iSEE in its communication with stakeholders will illustrate how the organization in more general terms strives for legitimacy.

1.4. Delimitations

Determining whether to focus on a single organization working with the rights of lesbians, gays, bisexuals and trans persons in Vietnam, or on several such organizations, has been difficult. The decision has oscillated between concentrating solely on iSEE, and studying all four Vietnamese NGOs incorporated in a network of organizations working within this area.

The other organizations in the mentioned network do of course also carry out interesting activities related to the rights of lesbians, gays, bisexuals and trans persons. The Institute for Social Development Studies (ISDS), for example, carries out research, capacity-building training and advocacy in relation to gender, sexuality and sexual health (Insitute for Social Development Studies). Center for Studies and Applied Sciences in Gender – Family – Women and Adolescents (CSAGA) is working on a project to strengthen the lives of lesbians and also provides a counseling telephone line for lesbians (Center for Studies and Applied Sciences in Gender – Family – Women and Adolescents, 2010). Finally, the Consultation of Investment in Health Promotion (CIHP) also conducts research, training and other activities concerning gender, sexuality and sexual and reproductive health (The Consultation of Investment in Health Promotion, 2011).

However, my understanding is that these organizations work with these issues as part of wider foci, for example in the contexts of women and gender, sexuality in general and sexual and reproductive health. While these areas are highly relevant to the question of rights of lesbians, gays, bisexuals and trans persons, I find that iSEE has a more direct focus on this area, which I believe contributes to a clearer focus for this thesis.

Another delimitation that I think is important to mention is that as a consequence of my research purpose and research questions, I am only concerned with one side of the communication between iSEE and its stakeholders. In other words, within the frames of this study, I am not interested in how iSEE's stakeholders perceive the organization or in attempting to measure how well iSEE legitimizes its focus on the rights of lesbians, gays, bisexuals and trans persons toward these stakeholders. My interest lies instead on the perspectives on sexuality and gender communicated from within the organization, and how these can be explained in terms of a search for organizational legitimacy.

Finally, I initially set out to explore iSEE's communication with five stakeholder groups: donors, mass media, 'LGBT people', policy makers and 'the general public'. These were stakeholder groups that I, together with the iSEE director and communications officer, identified as iSEE's main ones. However, the final analysis is limited to only two of these groups – donors and mass media – with the main reason being that the method of analysis I used created more than enough substance to discuss just for those two groups. In section 4.2.1 *Limitations – critical discourse analysis*, I further explain the reasons for focusing particularly on these groups.

1.5. Structure

Following the introduction, chapter 2 of this thesis looks at the theoretical framework developed in order to answer the research questions, combining

theory on legitimacy, institutions, civil society, discourse and sexuality and gender. This is followed by a chapter on methods of data collection and a chapter on methods of analysis. Chapter 5 consists of an analysis of the gathered material and the last chapter of a concluding discussion on the results of the analysis in relation to the background, research questions and theoretical framework.

2. Theoretical framework

The following section will consist of discussions regarding the theory that is to underpin the analysis required to answer the research questions. It will begin with an exploration of the concept of legitimacy from a sociological perspective. Legitimacy will thereafter be discussed in terms of the relationship between organizations and institutions. Moving on from there, I will focus specifically on the context of civil society and different scholars' attempts to define factors affecting NGO legitimacy. Next, I will explore discourse and its dialectical relationship of production and reproduction with society as a whole, and investigate how this might relate to the earlier discussions on legitimacy, institutions and organizations. Here I will also look at theory concerning the relationship between discourse, sexuality and gender, as well as discourses informing claims to sexual rights. The final section of this chapter will discuss the scientific field in which this thesis can be placed.

Consequently, this chapter will begin with the general and slowly narrow down to the specific, in an attempt to follow the structure of the research questions. The theoretical framework thus provided will give an idea of how discourses communicated by NGOs can be related to their quests for organizational legitimacy.

2.1. Legitimacy as a sociological concept

Within sociology, legitimacy is a concept primarily used in relation to power, authority and rule. Max Weber (1978), for example, writes about the legitimacy of an order. He explains an order as the content of, or actions within, a social relationship that can be seen to move toward determinable maxims (Weber, 1978). While this determinacy can be due to different factors, a legitimate order is that which is the most stable and where the directions toward which actions move appear to be binding to actors within the order (Weber, 1978). Weber (1978) has also famously identified three "pure" types of authority, or legitimate domination: rational grounds, traditional grounds and charismatic grounds. Important for Weber's concept of legitimacy is that it is people's belief in the legitimacy of an order that gives it its legitimacy.

Beetham (1991), however, criticizes Weber's popular typology. According to him, a "power relationship is not legitimate because people believe in its legitimacy, but because it can be *justified in terms of* their beliefs" (Beetham, 1991, p. 11, emphasis in the original). In other words, legitimacy is about the congruence between the justifications of a power relationship and people's beliefs or values. Accordingly, power can be said to be legitimate to the extent that:

- i) *it conforms to established rules*
- ii) *the rules can be justified by reference to beliefs shared by both dominant and subordinate, and*
- iii) *there is evidence of consent by the subordinate to the particular power relation. (Beetham, 1991, p. 16).*

The first dimension considers both informal rules of convention as well as formal legal rules. The second dimension requires shared beliefs in three areas: about valid sources of authority, about the appropriate qualities of power-holders and about the power relations serving general interests of both dominant and subordinate. Finally, the third dimension concerns publicly symbolic actions carried out by the subordinate that confer legitimacy to the powerful (Beetham, 1991, pp. 17-18).

However, I would like to add an aspect to Beetham's third dimension: *Legitimately powerful actors can also confer legitimacy to the relationship of domination of a particular actor over a subordinate actor, through publicly symbolic actions* (Hybels, 1995). Additionally, I believe that the consent given by the subordinate or powerful actors 'external' to a specific power relationship¹ also needs to be justified in terms of beliefs shared by both dominant and subordinate; otherwise, actions that are brought about through coercion alone could also be said to confer legitimacy. Therefore I would like to propose a fourth dimension to Beetham's legitimacy framework: *Actions that confer legitimacy to the particular power relation can be justified by reference to beliefs shared by both dominant and subordinate.*

In the context of this thesis, the primary power relationship in focus is that between iSEE and lesbians, gays, bisexuals and trans persons. This is because iSEE, as an NGO working for the rights of these groups, has the power to define and represent them, and to decide how resources should be distributed in working for their rights. However, such power relationships also exist between iSEE and its stakeholders in that iSEE has resources, such as knowledge, that they also need. At the same time, in being actors without whose support iSEE would cease to exist, they also have power over iSEE, and influence in terms of potentially conferring legitimacy to iSEE.

¹ I describe them here as 'external' in order to make theoretical analysis easier, but it can be questioned

2.2. Institutions and dialectics

Berger & Luckmann (1966) describe institutionalization as a process that occurs “whenever there is a reciprocal typification of habitualized actions by types of actors” (p. 72), an idea similar to that of Weber’s social order mentioned above. This process leads to the accumulation of socially constructed, but objectivated, knowledge. An important way in which this happens is through the dissemination of knowledge via language (Berger & Luckmann, 1966). Consequently, the relationship between humans and the social world (including institutions) is dialectical; humans constitute the social world, but they are in turn also shaped by this social world (Berger & Luckmann, 1966). However, institutional orders do not tend to be understood as dialectically constructed by humans acting in them but are instead reified, or bestowed “an ontological status independent of human activity and signification” (Berger & Luckmann, 1966, p. 107). Legitimation is the next step in stabilizing institutions: it is the process of explaining and justifying the objectivations within an institution, to ascribe them “cognitive validity” and the institutional order “normative dignity” (Berger & Luckmann, 1966, p. 111), which can be related to Beetham’s (1991) second (and my added fourth) dimension of legitimacy above.

2.2.1. Organizations and dialectical institutional contexts

Much organizational theory that focuses on organizational legitimacy has explored its relationship with the institutional contexts in which organizations act. Scholars tend to focus on the congruence between organizational values and those of the larger social system, and the ways in which organizations can create legitimacy for themselves by conforming to societal values (see for example Parsons, 1960; Woodward, Edwards, & Birkin, 1996; Dowling & Pfeffer, 1975; Suchman, 1995; Powell & DiMaggio, 1991). Within the school of new institutionalism in particular, scholars have paid much attention to the processes of organizational isomorphism with the social environment, especially in terms of organizational structure and norms of rationality (see for example Meyer & Rowan, 1991; Jepperson & Meyer, 1991; Tolbert & Zucker, 1983).

I find that these authors have a strong focus on organizational structure, perhaps to the detriment of other aspects of the relationship between institutions and organizations. Additionally, I believe that further depth would be added to these accounts by exploring contradictions within institutional orders as well as between them, and the relationship these contradictions have with different organizational elements, of which structure is one. Individuals and organizations are not only shaped by different institutions, they can also manipulate and reinterpret the symbols and practices of these institutions to create new behaviors, practices and understandings of societies and

themselves (Friedland & Alford, 1991), not only through cognitive processes but also through coercion and violence (Finnemore, 1996).

Seo & Creed (2002) use a dialectical perspective to create a framework for analyzing the relationship between actors, institutions and institutional change that explores the contradictions within and between institutions, and which gives further nuance to the process of social construction explored earlier. Drawing on Benson (1977), they view individual social structures “as part of a larger whole composed of multiple, interpenetrating social structures operating at multiple levels and in multiple sectors” (Seo & Creed, 2002, p. 225). Increased institutional heterogeneity increases the likelihood of institutional change “because it increases the number of institutional logics and frames that exist in a particular historical moment and within a social boundary and, thus, affords change agents a greater repertoire or tool kit for developing alternative frames and models” (Seo & Creed, 2002, p. 237). Similarly, Friedland & Alford (1991) argue that shared understandings of symbols may simultaneously be contested, and that conflicts between and within institutions create new understandings and material practices.

Organizations acting within and between different institutional contexts are consequently also a part of the dialectical process discussed above. Rather than being isomorphic with single or few delineated environments, they are influenced by the varieties of both inter- and intrainstitutional factors that make up their environment. Furthermore, the environments and institutions are also constituted by the organizations themselves, in collaboration with other actors. Finally, as institutional transformations not only create “shifts in the structure of power and interests, but in the *definition* of power and interest” (Friedland & Alford, 1991, p. 246, emphasis added), legitimacy also becomes an area of contention. Organizations, moving between institutional contexts, have to conform to different rules that can be justified or criticized according to different institutional logics. Different and conflicting institutional logics also guide the actions of actors that confer legitimacy to or ‘withdraw’ legitimacy from organizations. Accordingly, organizational legitimacy is a decidedly contextual and highly contingent phenomenon, which is something that will be further illustrated below through a discussion concerning civil society and NGO legitimacy.

2.3. Civil society: contested concept and space for contestation

As was explored in *1.1 Background*, there is considerable disagreement among theoreticians about the concept of civil society. The liberal notion of the concept was mentioned in the same section, as one in which civil society is seen as a ‘third sector’ of society compensating for the failures of the state and the market. This idea has been advanced from the 1980s onwards and has

had a significant impact on international development strategies in which NGOs constitute an important mechanism for implementing an agenda of neo-liberal economic strategy and liberal democratic ideals (Kaldor, 2003; Edwards & Hulme, 1996; Marcussen, 1996).

However, modern conceptions of civil society also stem from two other contexts. The first comes from the experiences of social movements in different parts of the world, such as Latin America and Eastern Europe in the 1970s and 1980s, where the concept was used “as a way of describing the efforts to create autonomous public spaces in the context of authoritarian states” (Kaldor, 2003, p. 8). It was also taken up in other parts of the world as a public space for individuals, movements and organizations to redistribute power outside of party politics. The second conception of civil society is termed by Kaldor (2003) as post-modern, and it offers a critique of civil society as a concept dominated by Western European and North American ideas, to the exclusion of traditional and neo-traditional organizational patterns outside state and market spheres (Kaldor, 2003). Apart from these perceptions of civil society, there exist two others that are commonly invoked. According to one, civil society – or civilized society – is the result of the rule of law, guaranteed by the state’s monopoly on legitimate violence, and allows for non-violent means of solving conflict (Kaldor, 2004; Logister, 2007). The other was developed by Marx and Hegel and referred to the arena between the state and the family (Kaldor, 2004).

Also discussed in *1.1. Background* was civil society in the context of Vietnam, which presented difficulties in delineating a civil society space that could be said to constitute an independent third sector. However, the other understandings of civil society presented above cannot be said to be perfectly reflective of the circumstances in Vietnam either. In this situation, it is possible to either see civil society as nonexistent or extremely limited in Vietnam, see the context there as an exception, or to revise the criteria of the concept (Wells-Dang, 2011). The CIVICUS report referred to in *1.1. Background* has in a way chosen the latter option, by focusing on the form and function of the organizations studied rather than their independence from other sectors. Likewise, Wells-Dang (2011) in his explorations of Vietnamese civil society conceives of civil society in an alternative manner: as comprised of networks that cut across boundaries of society, family, state and market, and as a process that happens when these networks act. Wischermann (2010), also studying the Vietnamese context, defines civil society as “a particular mode and interaction within a given society and not a fixed entity” (p. 9).

While it is extremely important that opportunities exist for people as individuals, movements and organizations to critique and reshape structures that are blatantly or subtly oppressive, and the creation of these opportunities requires spaces for open contestation, the intention with the above discussion on civil society is primarily to show that the concept is a problematic one and

that many different normative and descriptive models of it exist. Moreover, although the Vietnamese state is certainly strong and exerts a lot of influence on civil society, state influence on civil society is probably a phenomenon that can be found in many places, as well as market influence on civil society – though of course to varying degrees – at the same time as civil society in its turn influences both the state and the market.

Using Berger & Luckmann's (1966) notion of institutionalization, civil society can be seen as an institution; the nature of which is widely contested, as the discussion above has shown, but it can nonetheless be seen as “a reciprocal typification of habitualized actions by types of actors” (Berger & Luckmann, 1966, p. 72) in an arena with specific kinds of knowledge related to it and sustaining it. Even in the context of Vietnam, where classic understandings of civil society seem to be of little use, theoreticians attempt to redefine the institution rather than cast the notion aside. The shaping and reshaping of the concept of civil society can be seen as part of a process of conflict between different institutional logics where the logic of liberal democracy has perhaps been the most dominant during the past decades. As a result of the conflicts of logics within the institution of civil society, the legitimacy of the actors operating within it, such as NGOs, similarly become a question of contestation.

2.4. NGO legitimacy

What organizations are considered to belong to the term ‘non-governmental organization’ is also something that is debated. However, for the purposes of this thesis they are defined as voluntary organizations that do not seek profit, and whose relations with external actors have a stronger emphasis on altruism or values than on coercion or monetary incentives (Kaldor, 2003; Kaldor, 2004). They are usually professional entities and include organizations such as voluntary organizations, charity organizations, foundations and professional associations (Kaldor, 2004).

Earlier scholarship on NGO legitimacy has mainly focused its attention on the types of legitimacy that NGOs can be seen to have, or on the types of legitimacy that NGOs should strive to attain. Authors present various reasons as to why the legitimacy of NGOs is an important area of study, with examples including that as organizations demanding accountability of other actors, NGOs themselves should also be accountable (Slim, 2002); that NGOs, while claiming to represent marginalized groups, are not obliged to function democratically (Collingwood & Logister, 2005); that NGOs need to be able to show that the work they are doing has the impact they claim that it has (Slim, 2002; Collingwood & Logister, 2005); and that NGOs, gaining political recognition as effective solutions to social problems, are in danger of focusing solely on service provision rather than long-term structural changes

and of compromising their autonomy (Edwards & Hulme, 1996; Atack, 1999). Common for all these critiques is the recognition that NGOs hold power – in receiving and distributing resources, voicing opinions and affecting material change – and therefore, either are, or should strive to be, *legitimate* holders of this power.

Some examples of different types of NGO legitimacy and different sources of NGO legitimacy as found in previous literature has been collected in Table 1. Whether focus lies on legitimacy types or legitimacy sources depends on the authors’ understandings of legitimacy, but they have been compiled in the same table in order to show what kinds of aspects have been brought up in relation to NGO legitimacy. Furthermore, these aspects have been grouped according to different institutional logics.

Table 1. Aspects of NGO legitimacy according to institutional logics

Legal	Bureaucratic-rational	Universal human rights/universal morals	Liberal democratic
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • National law • International law 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Procedures • Accountabiliy • Knowledge & expertise • Effectiveness 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Moral • International law 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Evidence of support (eg. broad membership) • Representation • Transparency • Independence • Make up for state failure
Participatory democratic	Scientific	Authoritarian	Managerial-rational
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Participation • Empowerment 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Knowledge & expertise 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Relationships with powerful actors 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Procedures • Outcomes/ performance • Accountability • Transparency • Effectiveness

Compiled from Atack, 1999; Collingwood, 2006; Collingwood & Logister, 2005; Edwards & Hulme, 1996; Lister, 2003; Logister, 2007; Slim, 2002; Ossewaarde, Nijhof, & Heyse, 2008; Thomas, Chhetri, & Hussaini, 2008.

As the discussion in *2.2 Institutions and dialectics* has shown, institutions and their logics are dynamic, contradicting and contested; consequently, the grouping above constitutes a substantial simplification, but is useful for the sake of analysis. Some of the aspects presented in the table reoccur under several categories of institutional logics, because those aspects can be seen to be congruent with a number of logics, possibly due to the dialectical

influences between institutions. However, there are also contradictions between these different aspects of NGO legitimacy: for example, a heavy focus on performance and effectiveness might not be compatible with the development of extensive representative processes within an organization, and measuring empowerment as a quantifiable outcome is also extremely difficult, if not impossible (Atack, 1999). Adding to the complexity of NGO legitimacy is that institutional contradictions are not only possibly present within the organizations themselves due to differing perspectives among organizational actors, but also due to external pressures, primarily from stakeholders. These might value different aspects of legitimacy differently, and in ways that may be incompatible with each other, meaning that NGOs have to prioritize between stakeholders and, consequently, also between aspects affecting legitimacy (Lister, 2003). Furthermore, as explored in 2.3 *Civil society: contested concept and space for contestation*, the institution of civil society in which NGOs operate is in itself contested due to the different institutional logics with which it has a dialectical relationship. Thus, NGOs legitimacy is subject to the relationships of institutional logics in society at large, and in the realm of civil society specifically.

2.5. Discourse – a moment in social practice

In a broad sense, discourse refers to the semiotic dimension of social life, as found in written texts, speech, body language and images, for example (Chouliaraki & Fairclough, 1999). However, discourse as a term can also be used to describe one of several moments of ‘social practices’: “habitualised ways, tied to particular times and places, in which people apply resources (material or symbolic) to act together in the world” (Chouliaraki & Fairclough, 1999, p. 21). The above definition of social practices is strikingly close to Berger & Luckmann’s (1966) explanation of institutions explored earlier.

Discourse has a dialectical relationship with other moments of social practice, thereby being both constituted by, and constitutive of, these other moments (Fairclough, 1993). The dialectical relationship between moments of social practices signifies that they are internalized within each other, though without being reducible to each other (Fairclough, 2005). Consequently, examination of moments such as discourse can give insight into the construction of other moments, as well as the social practices or institutions of which they are a part.

As the transmission of knowledge through language contributes to its objectivation (Berger & Luckmann, 1966), discourse can be seen as a tool of power, constituting meaning, knowledge, relationships, subjects and other aspects of society (Hardy & Phillips, 2004). Furthermore, discourse can reproduce power relations to the extent that they become temporarily fixed

(Hardy & Phillips, 2004; Mumby, 2004) or hegemonic. Drawing from Gramsci, Chouliaraki & Fairclough (1999) define hegemony as “relations of domination based upon consent rather than coercion, involving the naturalization of practices and their social relations as well as relations between practices, as matters of common sense” (p. 24). As a consensual power relationship, hegemony can thus be seen to be a part of legitimacy.

However, discourses within and between social practices or institutions tend to be contrasting and competing and can be both socially reproductive and transformative; discourse can reconstitute power relations as discussed above, or be used to subvert them and even create new ones (Fairclough, 1993; Hardy & Phillips, 2004). Mumby (2004) argues that hegemony itself should be seen as “a construct that frames power as a dialectical struggle between competing groups in the realm of civil society²”, and “involves complex articulations of discourses that represent and embody efforts to fix meanings in particular ways over other possible discursive articulations” (Mumby, 2004). However, while this dialectical process of domination and resistance is constant, it is important to recognize that it does not occur between equals in terms of relations and material resources.

Analyzing discourse, then, can reveal aspects of institutional logics that are not obvious without such an analysis. In terms of NGOs, for example, analysis of relevant semiotic products can uncover what discourses influence the understanding of NGO legitimacy, which in its turn indicates the types of institutional logics underpinning constructions of NGO legitimacy. Returning to the specific context of iSEE as an NGO working with sexual minority rights, analyzing the discourses they use in relation to gender and sexuality will also show something about the institutional logics supporting these. In that it strategically communicates with stakeholders about these issues for the purposes of specific organizational goals, the assumption is that iSEE’s use of discourses concerning gender and sexuality is deliberate to a certain extent, and that these might be related to the institutional logics surrounding the discussion on NGO legitimacy and the nature of civil society. Therefore, the next section will explore theory regarding discourses about sexuality and gender.

2.6. The discursive formation of gender and sexuality

The study of discourse has been highly influential in feminist and other critical analyses of the construction of sexuality and gender. Researchers have examined discourses related to sexuality and gender that can be understood as

² Gramsci defines civil society as “the public space between large-scale bureaucratic structures of state and economy on the one hand, and the private sphere of family, friendships, personality, and intimacy on the other” (quoted in Landau, 2008).

having been influenced by many varieties of institutional logics. Perhaps most famously, Foucault has traced the discursive structurings of understandings of sexuality and gender through, primarily, European history. In his first volume of *The History of Sexuality*, he writes of 18th and 19th century discourses about sexuality that “We are dealing less with a discourse on sex than with a multiplicity of discourses produced by a whole series of mechanisms operating in different institutions” (Foucault, 1990, p. 33). He argues that these discourses were related to areas such as demography, biology, medicine, psychiatry, psychology, ethics, pedagogy and political criticism (Foucault, 1990). At this time, sex and sexuality also became a subject of scrutiny in a way that it had not been previously:

Rather than the uniform concern to hide sex, rather than a general prudishness of language, what distinguishes these last three centuries is the variety, the wide dispersion of devices that were invented for speaking about it, for having it be spoken about, for inducing it to speak for itself, for listening, recording, transcribing and redistributing what is said about it: around sex, a whole network of varying, specific and coercive transpositions into discourse (Foucault, 1990, 34).

Same-sex practices between men, for example, at this time became understood as something more than behavior; it became an identity. Furthermore, Foucault’s work shows that even desire itself is not biologically determined, but constituted through historically specific social practices (Rubin, 1984).

Similarly, Butler (2007) has also examined the discursive construction of sexuality and gender. Through genealogical analyses of medical, legal, psychoanalytical and biological discourses (as Foucault, also within a ‘Western’ context’), she argues that ‘biological’ sex, ‘cultural’ gender and desire are all discursive constructions that contribute to a coercive heterosexuality that privileges certain representations and behaviors over others. She contends that the distinction between sex as biological and gender as cultural is false, as the body cannot be understood without social notions of what it is, thus making it impossible to conceive of a ‘pre-discursive’ body. She further argues that discourse imposes restrictions on how gender can be conceived. Butler (2007) also argues that gender can never be perfectly performed, precisely due to its performative nature. Gender has no essential core, but actions, desires and discourse contribute to the illusion that it does. Nonetheless, when gender is performed in the ‘wrong’ way, exaggerated or parodied, such as through drag performance, gender itself is revealed to be nothing more than performance. (Butler, 2007).

Rubin (1984) also writes about the political implications of sexuality, (though not of gender):

Like gender, sexuality is political. It is organized into systems of power, which reward and encourage some individuals and activities, while punishing and suppressing others. Like the capitalist organization of labour and its distribution of rewards and powers, the modern sexual system has been the object of political struggle since it emerged and as it has evolved. But if the disputes between labour and capital are mystified, sexual conflicts are completely camouflaged (Rubin, 1984, p. 171).

Though Rubin refers to a context specific to the United States and Europe, sexual stratification is found also in other societies, such as in Vietnam.

Sexuality is thus an area of political struggle and different approaches have been used to battle sexual stratification. Richardson (2000) has explored the ideas of sexual citizenship and sexual rights as ways of articulating demands and found that sexual rights discourse tends to center on three types of interpretations: conduct-based, identity-based and relationship-based. Within each of these types of interpretations, Richardson (2000) also identifies three categories of claims. She argues that discourses focusing on conduct-based rights can be seen to center around the right to participate in sexual activity, the right to pleasure and the right to sexual and reproductive self-determination. Among identity-based interpretations, she recognizes the following types of claims: the right to self-determination, the right to self-expression and the right to self-realization. (Richardson, 2000). Interestingly, in relation to identity, Rubin (1984) writes that in “modern, Western, industrial societies, homosexuality has acquired much of the institutional structure of an ethnic group” (p. 156). She further writes that other groups are also “in various states of community formation and identity acquisition [...]”. The perversions are not proliferating as much as they are attempting to acquire social space” (Rubin, 1984, p. 156). Finally, relationship-based claims include: the right of consent to sexual practice in personal relationships, the right to freely choose sexual partner and the right to publicly recognized sexual relationships. (Richardson, 2000).

Though the above discussion centers on sexuality and gender as they have been discursively constructed in the Europe and North America, there are several reasons as to why I believe that it is relevant to the context in which iSEE is working. Firstly, these perspectives provide a framework for understanding how sexuality, gender and discourse relate to one another. Secondly, iSEE uses the term ‘LGBT’, which can be seen as stemming from a European/North American context. Finally, iSEE explicitly claims to use a ‘human rights approach’ in its work and it is therefore useful to be able to relate this to the discourses identified by Richardson (2000) above.

2.7. Situating the research

Inspiration for this thesis originally came from Waeraas' (2007; 2009) exploration of legitimacy in public relations. He argues for the relevance of Weber's theory of legitimacy to public relations, especially in explaining the contemporary focus on endowing organizations with 'personality' (Waeraas 2007; Waeraas 2009). However, organizational legitimacy has been the subject of research within management studies since much earlier, for example in the work of Parsons (1956; 1960) and Dowling & Pfeffer (1975). As explored earlier, research within organizational theory has also focused on organizational legitimacy, especially within new institutionalism (Meyer & Rowan, 1991; Jepperson & Meyer, 1991; Tolbert & Zucker, 1983). Despite different starting points, the research has also had an emphasis on communication, as without it, legitimacy could not be conveyed.

However, this research has tended to focus on profit-seeking organizations and therefore this thesis has included research on civil society organizations which draws from areas such as political science (Kaldor 2003; Kaldor 2004), international studies (Collingwood, 2006; Collingwood & Logister, 2005; Edwards & Hulme, 1996), and public administration (Ossewaarde, Nijhof & Heyse, 2008) in order to provide a better understanding of the relevant social institutions, and what role legitimacy plays in the context of civil society.

With its focus on organizational legitimacy as an expression of power, the hope is also that this thesis will make a contribution to the area of critical organization studies, (see for example Alvesson 1985; Deetz, 1985; Clegg, 1989; Cooper & Burrell, 1988; Putnam, Bantz, Deetz et. al., 1993; Mumby 2004; Gordon, Kornberger & Clegg, 2009).

2.8. Summary

This chapter has explored theory from a broad range of areas and covered a wide array of topics. The aim was to build a theoretical base covering the areas related to each of the three formulated research questions. Like the research questions, this chapter has moved from the general to the specific, starting with an exploration of the concept of legitimacy and its role in institutional orders, as well as an investigation of how organizations can be understood within the framework of institutions. Following this, in order to gain an understanding of the context within which an organization like iSEE works, the chapter has narrowed down to focus specifically on civil society and NGOs working within this institution. Next, the chapter explores the communicative aspect of the research questions by concentrating on discourse as an instance of social practice or social institutions, with which it furthermore has a dialectic relationship. This part of the chapter relates

mainly to the second research question. The discussion then moves on to the discursive formation of gender and sexuality, which is related to the third and last research question. Finally, the chapter ends with a brief exploration on the field of research within which this thesis can be said to belong.

3. Methods of data collection

Two sources of data have been used in this thesis: semi-structured interviews and written material produced by iSEE aimed at different stakeholder groups. In the following section I will describe in more detail the methods of data collection that were used.

3.1. First contact

Several months prior to my arrival in Vietnam, contact was established with iSEE in order to inform the organization of the planned research and ask if it would be possible to conduct it with them. Upon arrival in Hanoi, a first visit was made to iSEE and I met with the director and communications officer to discuss the project further. At this meeting I was also provided with thorough background information about the organization and was given free hands to organize semi-structured interviews together with the staff. Furthermore, I also gained access to different written documents for analysis, of which I would also receive more, later in the process.

3.2. Semi-structured interviews

A total of seven people were interviewed in the first part of the data collection. Six of these worked regularly in the iSEE office at the time of my stay and are part of the group that works with questions regarding sexuality and gender. The seventh person has worked as a consultant to iSEE. The interviews were in-depth interviews, the lengths of which differed a great deal, with the shortest interview lasting for about 50 minutes while the longest interview was almost two hours long.

The interviews were semi-structured in the sense that an interview guide (see appendix) covering particular topics with related questions was used, at the same time as informants had the freedom to elaborate their answers in different directions (Kvale, 2007). Follow-up questions to their answers were also asked without having been specified in the interview guide. This type of interview allowed me to keep the interviews within the topics that I was interested in, while at the same time opening up for the possibilities to treat aspects of these topics that I had not foreseen but which were nonetheless important for the thesis (Widerberg, 2002; Ayres, 2008).

The interviews were recorded on a recording device and later transcribed on computer, and one of them was also translated from Vietnamese to English. For the sake of validation, citations from the transcribed interviews have then been sent to the informants in order to be commented on (Ekström & Larsson, 2010).

The first part of the interviews consisted of an introduction: firstly to the thesis project, and secondly to the structure of the interview. The informants were also asked to what extent they wished to remain anonymous and whether they preferred to carry out the interview in Vietnamese or English. The next part of the interviews consisted of questions regarding the background of the informants: what their work at iSEE involves, their background in relation to the work they do at iSEE and how they have come to work at the organization and with lesbians, gays, bisexuals and trans persons. They were also asked how they would identify themselves in terms of aspects such as socioeconomic context, educational background, sexuality, gender, age, etc., leaving it up to the informants to choose which of these to address. The purpose of this part of the interview was to be able to situate the informants in a context that may be relevant to the analysis.

The remaining part of the interview was divided according to the stakeholder groups that I, together with the iSEE director and communications officer, had identified as the most relevant to investigate. The stakeholder groups covered in the interviews were 'LGBT people', policy makers, donors, mass media and 'the general public'. Questions here centered mainly on the relationships between iSEE and these stakeholders, how iSEE communicates with the stakeholders and how the informants believe stakeholders perceive iSEE.

3.2.1. Limitations

There are several limitations to the interviews that have been made. One of these is that one of the informants had to be interviewed before an interview guide had been completed. A second interview was made with this informant that included the interview guide, but we did not have time to complete the session.

Something else that can be seen as a limitation was that I was only able to offer the informants partial anonymity (Ekström & Larsson, 2010) since the organization is specified in the thesis. Even without mentioning iSEE's name it would be simple to figure out which organization is being referred to through the descriptions of its working areas. However, as a few of the informants wish not to have their names or functions disclosed, I have let this be the rule for all the informants.

A third limitation with the interviews is the issue of language. As mentioned, the informants were free to choose whether to speak in

Vietnamese or English, and most of the informants had an excellent understanding of, and speaking ability in English. However, it is possible that misunderstandings have occurred that might not have done so if we had all had high proficiency in the same language. Furthermore, one of the interviews was conducted in a mix of Vietnamese and English, with the answers being told in Vietnamese and the questions posed in both Vietnamese and English, so here understanding might not have been complete either. On the other hand, I do not believe that there existed a language barrier to the extent that the interviews will not actually be useful for analysis.

3.3. Collection of written material

Being a relatively new organization at the time of my stay, iSEE did not have a systemized archive of texts that have been produced, making it slightly difficult to find and sort out relevant documents. Some documents have been given to me directly, and others I have found through searching on iSEE hard drives. Consequently, I have endeavored to collect all fully completed documents³ from these sources where the intended audience belongs to one of the mentioned stakeholder groups. How and which written material was selected for analysis will be described in more detail in the following chapters.

3.3.1. Limitations

The main limitation of the collection of written material is of course the difficulty in gaining an oversight of material available for analysis. However, as mentioned, with some aid from iSEE staff, I have attempted to collect all the relevant documents available for each stakeholder group.

3.1. Who is the researcher?

In this section I aim to briefly discuss my position as a researcher and the possible obstacles or advantages that this might bring.

The part of this research that is possibly primarily affected by my position is in the conduction of interviews. Being part Vietnamese and having grown up in Vietnam, I have a relatively good understanding of the context within which the subject of this thesis takes place, and as iSEE staff knew about my background, this could mean that they spoke to me in a way that they might not have had I not had this background. Similarly, being quite easily ‘read’ as a lesbian and also having mentioned it to them at first contact, this can also

³ By which I mean that I have not included documents that were in draft form.

have had an effect on what was said in the interviews. However, it is hard to say what role these factors actually have played.

All the informants identified as middle class and all had high educational backgrounds, which most probably means that references and concepts used during the interviews were easily understood both for them and for myself. However, a possible consequence is also that certain things are taken for granted or perspectives missed out on.

4. Methods of analysis

The analysis is executed with the use of two different methods. The main method used is discourse analysis, applied in a way here that chiefly has its base in the type of critical discourse analysis (CDA) developed by Norman Fairclough (Chouliaraki & Fairclough, 1999; Fairclough, 1993; Fairclough, 1995; Fairclough 2005; Fairclough & Thomas, 2004). Two reasons underlie this choice. Firstly, as discussed in chapter 2. *Theoretical framework*, the theoretical premises of Fairclough's CDA are relevant in understanding the connections between discourse, institutions and legitimacy. Consequently, the epistemological starting points of CDA as a method provide a link between the empirical material and the theory used to analyze it. Secondly, Fairclough's form of CDA is one of the more practical methods of discourse analysis, and therefore I have chosen to utilize it for the sake of clarity, both for myself as researcher as well as for the reader. CDA will be used to analyze the written material collected from iSEE.

The second method of analysis is much less complex and can be seen as complementary to the first. It is simply a method of thematically organizing citations from interviews (Widerberg, 2002). In other words, in parallel with analyzing the discourses found in texts, I will use citations from the interviews with iSEE staff in order to illustrate different aspects of the results of the critical discourse analysis.

The following section will consist of a more detailed exploration of critical discourse analysis and describe the steps performed in utilizing it. Following that, I will present the ways in which I have organized the written material for analysis and then discuss the limitations of the method. Next, the method of utilizing interview citations will be explored and also end with a discussion on its limitations.

4.1. Critical discourse analysis of written material

As mentioned, CDA is a method of discourse analysis that has been developed differently by different theorists. Wodak writes that the field "is bound together more by a research agenda and programme than by some common theory or methodology" (Wodak & Meyer, 2001, p. 4). As the name suggests, it is a method with its base in critical science, and can be seen to focus on "dominance, discrimination, power and control" (Wodak & Meyer,

2001, p. 2). The focus is relevant to this thesis in several ways, since institutional logics and legitimacy, as explored in chapter 2. *Theoretical framework*, are intimately related to issues of power and dominance.

The analytical framework that Fairclough uses in his version of CDA consists of three levels: analysis of discourse text, analysis of discourse practice and analysis of discourse as an instance of social practice. In the following sections I will describe each level of analysis and how I in practice have applied each to the empirical material.

4.1.1. Discourse as text

Fairclough uses the term *texts* to denote “social spaces in which two fundamental social processes simultaneously occur: cognition and representation of the world, and social interaction” (Fairclough, 1995, p. 6). Consequently, both the interviews and written materials from iSEE can be considered as texts in this view. Texts function *ideationally*, by constituting systems of knowledge and beliefs, and *interpersonally*, by constituting social subjects and the social relations between them (Fairclough, 1995). Text is also the site of the first level of analysis, concentrating on texture, or the form and organization of text, and content (Fairclough, 1995).

For the sake of this thesis, I have in this part of the analysis decided to focus on two questions in examining the written material:

1. How is iSEE written about as an organization?
2. How are lesbians, gays, bisexuals and trans persons described, and how is iSEE’s relation to them described or apparent in the texts?

These questions are posed in relation to discourses that can be linked to two different areas. One area is civil society, which I in section 2.3 *Civil society: contested concept and space for contestation* described as an institution. What interests me here are traces of discourses pertaining to civil society and non-governmental organizations. The second area is that of sexuality, gender identity and gender expression – here I am looking for traces of discourses that inform references to LGBT, homosexuality, trans persons, and so on. However, the second question is really a two-part question that not only has to do with this discursive area, but also with iSEE’s relation to lesbians, gays, bisexuals and trans persons.

4.1.2. Discourse practice

The second level of analysis has three foci: text production, text distribution and text consumption (Fairclough, 1995). In this thesis focus lies more on the first two aspects than text consumption. Three questions were used to guide the analysis on this level:

1. How and why have the texts been produced?

2. Who is ‘speaking’ in the text?
3. To whom are they speaking?

The third question has to do both with the intended recipients of the texts, but also what is assumed about these recipients – in terms of their knowledge about and relations to lesbians, gays, bisexuals and trans persons, and in terms of their relation to iSEE.

4.1.3. Discourse as an instance of social practice

Here the results of the other two levels of analysis are related to society at large. As explored in section 2.5 *Discourse – a moment in social practice*, discourse can be understood as one of several moments of social practice, and as it internalizes other moments of social practice, analysis of discourse can provide understandings of these other moments and the institutions of which they are a part. Fairclough (1993) writes that the “analysis of the discursive event as a social practice may refer to different levels of social organization – the context of situation, institutional context, and the wider societal context or ‘context of culture’” (p. 137). In the other two levels of analysis, this will already be done to some extent, but on this level, those results will also be related to the issue of legitimacy and, in other words, the first and overarching research question of this thesis.

4.2. Organizing the written material

For analysis, the written material has been organized according to stakeholder groups. As mentioned earlier, the interviews were also structured according to stakeholder groups of which five were mentioned. However, in the analysis, the stakeholders have been narrowed down to just two groups: donors and mass media. The type of discourse analysis used requires relatively close reading of texts, and as a consequence it is not only quite labor-intensive but also garners a lot of substance, and therefore I have chosen to narrow down the scope of the material. Which stakeholder groups were finally chosen for analysis depended on the amount of written material directed to the different groups that was available. For example, I found few documents directed specifically toward lesbians, gays, bisexuals or trans persons as individuals or groups. When it comes to policy makers, the interviews with iSEE staff showed that the organization is as of yet not targeting this group, as they are trying to first influence popular opinion towards the rights of lesbians, gays, bisexuals and trans persons before moving on to policy makers (Informants 1, 2 and 4, 2011). I also decided not to include ‘the general public’ as it is the most vaguely defined of the stakeholder groups.

4.2.1. Limitations – critical discourse analysis

Something that can be seen as a limitation is that which was just mentioned above, that the amount of empirical material analyzed is not very extensive. However, as critical discourse analysis involves such a close reading of texts, it garners a lot of substance that can provide useful insights into a particular case (Widerberg, 2002). Complemented with a comparison of other cases, it might also be possible to reach more generalizable conclusions, though the scope of this thesis does not allow for such a far-reaching project.

Another limitation of using critical discourse analysis here is related to my somewhat restricted vocabulary in Vietnamese, which is obviously problematic when using a method with a base in linguistics. However, I have chosen to focus more on thematic issues when it comes to examining the discourses in the texts rather than specifically linguistic elements. While this might mean that certain aspects are bypassed in the analysis, I do not believe that it affects the overall possibility of adequately answering the research questions, which also have thematic foci.

4.3. Interview citations

As previously mentioned, the interviews conducted with iSEE members were structured around five stakeholder groups: donors, mass media, policy makers, LGBT and ‘the general public’. However, as also remarked earlier, the stakeholder groups focused on in the analysis do not include policy makers, the general public or LGBT.

The informants were asked about each stakeholder and the questions centered on the relationships between iSEE and the stakeholder groups as well as the communication between iSEE and stakeholder groups when it comes to issues pertaining to lesbians, gays, bisexuals and trans persons.

Analysis of the interviews is not as deep as that of the written materials, though a certain measure of interpretation has been used. Citations have been organized thematically in order that they be used to illustrate and further support the analysis of the written materials, as well as to illustrate contradictions. Therefore, this part of the analysis can perhaps be called a thematic discourse analysis that acts as a complement to the critical discourse analysis (Widerberg, 2002).

4.3.1. Limitations – interview citations

The main limitation of this method is that the thematic placement of citations depends on the interpretations that I make as a researcher, based on perspectives that are not necessarily shared by the informants cited. Furthermore, as an ‘outsider’, there might be aspects of the interviews that I have not understood due to lack of knowledge about or experience working in

the context of an organization like iSEE, and which might also affect my interpretations of the interviews.

5. Analysis

This chapter is devoted to the analysis of the gathered material, both text material and interviews. It is divided into two sections, according to each stakeholder group: donors and mass media. Each of these sections is further separated into three parts, in parallel with the framework of Fairclough's critical discourse analysis discussed in *4.1 Critical discourse analysis of written material*: analysis of text as discourse, analysis of discourse practice and analysis of discourse as an instance of social practice, with analysis of discourse practice constituting the introduction of each section, so that the reader gains an overview of the material analyzed.

Analysis of text as discourse is organized thematically according to aspects of the material that are interesting in relation to the theory discussed in chapter 2. *Theoretical framework*. Thus, it is organized along different discursive themes that have been identified in the material. The discussion is related to research questions 2 and 3.

Analysis of discourse as an instance of social practice can be seen as constituting a discussion that relates the above analysis to the main research question of the thesis: *How does iSEE, as an NGO working with lesbians', gays', bisexuals' and trans persons' rights in Vietnam, communicate its work regarding these rights with different stakeholders in order to gain and maintain legitimacy?*

5.1. Donors

The written material analyzed in this section consists of five groups of documents. They have all been produced by iSEE and are presented as such, rather than as the work of individuals within the organization. All documents have donor organizations as their audience. They include four project proposals to three different donors and one group of narrative reports to one of those donors.

The format of all these documents can be said to be dictated by the donor organizations, which have provided the headings of the proposals.

5.1.1. *iSEE, the organization*

In terms of how iSEE is written about as an organization, several major themes run through the analyzed texts.

One noticeable theme is that iSEE is depicted as an organization with considerable *expertise* in its field of work. This is evident in several different ways. Firstly, all the projects include components where iSEE acts as expert in relation to certain groups. The organization offers training workshops for journalists, providing them with “knowledge of homosexuality, sexual identity, lesbian and gay communities in Vietnam, come out process, stigma and prejudice, and human rights of LGBT”, and which has given these journalists “very good understanding of homosexuality” (narrative report). That iSEE as experts hold this ‘correct’ knowledge is perhaps even more clearly illustrated in that iSEE also provides training for members of ICS – Information Connecting and Sharing – an organization run by and for lesbians, gays, bisexuals and trans persons that iSEE has initiated and subsequently supported. In one of the narrative reports, ICS members are described as not having “systematic knowledge of homosexuality” and that “this training has equipped them with good knowledge and confidence in helping their members to understand homosexuality and feel good and confident about themselves”. Similarly, in Project proposal 1, it is written in relation to this training that “many LGBT still have misconceptions about homosexuality and suffer self-stigma”.

Another way in which expertise is expressed is through the type of language used. In Proposal 3, for example, directed toward Family Health International, jargon and abbreviations are used that are very specific to the area of sexual and reproductive health. For example, the text includes words and phrases such as “high risk behaviors”, “interventions”, “VCT and STIs services”, “drop-in centers” and “community outreach”. Though sexual and reproductive health is not one of iSEE’s focus areas, the organization here shows the donor that it has an expertise in this field that makes it a competent partner and receiver of funds:

If we, iSEE is also involved in another group, I mean, maybe the majority of MSM is actually LGBT people [...]. So it's somehow like mutual benefits [...] of iSEE and of FHI. So that's why we conduct that study, and we have interventions and activities based on the study. (Informant 3b, 2011)

The discourse of expertise is also interrelated with several other discourses that relate to the types of organizations that iSEE is portrayed as: managerial, professional, scientific and advocacy organizations.

The *managerial* discourse in these texts is partly related to their predetermined structure. For example, the project proposals submitted to Ford Foundation both follow a structure according to the headings: “Name and address of the applying organization”; “Project rationale and strategy”; “The lack of work in this area and iSEE’s favorable position”/“iSEE favorable

conditions to conduct this project successfully”⁴; “Project goal, objective and immediate results”; “Monitoring of progress and learning”; “Project implementation”; and “About iSEE”⁵. There is consequently a focus on procedures, outcomes, performance and effectiveness: the project should be based on a particular rationale and strategy, and with clear goals and objectives, iSEE should be able to predict results and monitor the whole process. The narrative reports about these projects are instances of control and monitoring, also requested by the donor, and with a similarly rigid structure. The text under the headings has a correspondingly strong managerial streak in all the proposals and narrative reports, with clear objectives, concrete, often measurable, activities and results, GANTT charts summarizing these activities and ways of evaluating the projects, to name some examples. Expertise is what underlies iSEE’s possibilities of fulfilling these requirements.

In highlighting these managerial competencies, iSEE also shows that it is a *professional* organization with capabilities that answer to the demands set out by donors. This professional discourse is further emphasized in several of the proposals through the mentioning or listing of staff credentials, for example, Proposal 4 which, under the heading “iSEE capacity”, includes a table listing the names and educational backgrounds of all staff to be involved in the proposed project. All the listed staff have university backgrounds ranging from bachelor to doctorate degrees, displaying their expertise in areas relevant to iSEE’s work. The vast majority of the staff has acquired their degrees in Europe, Australia and the United States, places where the standard of higher education is generally considered higher than in Vietnam. The professionalism of the organization is further underscored by references to its legal status in proposals 1, 3 and 4; that it is “registered under the law of science and technology and decree 81/2002/ND-CP” and has a permit for establishment and operation from the Ministry of Science and Technology (Proposal 4).

iSEE is very much conceived of as a *scientific* organization in these texts. In the proposals, the organization is described as an “independent and not-for-profit research organization”. Furthermore, its mission “is to generate high quality knowledge and consolidate best practices in poverty reduction and human rights protection” (Proposal 4). Similarly, Proposal 1 states that “iSEE aims to become the leading think-tank in social inclusion and rights of minorities in Vietnam”. The proposals and narrative reports also refer to scientific studies that have been or are to be conducted by iSEE itself. Studies that have been conducted are referred to in background sections of the proposals, to set the contexts for the proposed projects. In Proposal 1, for

⁴ This heading was worded slightly differently in the different proposals.

⁵ Only included in Proposal 2.

example, an initial review of newspaper articles performed by iSEE is referred to, with quantitative results that show that reporting on homosexuals tends to be negative and thereby justifies the rationale of the project (the title of which is “For a Positive Image of Lesbians, Gays, Bisexuals and Transgenders (LGBT) in Viet Nam”). In Proposal 4, references are made to two studies conducted by iSEE among lesbians and gay men, in order to illustrate the ways in which they experience social stigma, and which provides a base for the project goal: “Human rights of LGBT people are protected and fulfilled thanks to the reduction of stigma against LGBT among society, elimination of discrimination in all forms and empowerment of LGBT communities”. Some of the project proposals also include future research, such as Proposal 3 which states the following as one of the activities to be carried out: “Conduct formative assessment using qualitative research method in Hanoi and HCMC to gain insight on stigma and discrimination among health-care workers”.

iSEE is also conceived of as an *advocacy* organization. All the proposed projects have as one of their objectives or goals to spread knowledge and/or change attitudes of different target groups, such as journalists (Proposals 1 and 2), health care workers (Proposal 3) or the general public (Proposal 4). The advocacy discourse is supported by the other discourses explored above, particularly the scientific discourse which depicts the knowledge generated and spread by iSEE as objective and ‘true’.

In relation to how iSEE is written about as an organization, there are two other major discourses that can be found in these texts. One of these is *participation*; iSEE emphasizes the role that lesbians, gays, bisexuals and trans persons play in the projects, and the close relationship between iSEE and these groups. For example, in writing about the LGBT organization, ICS, mentioned earlier, iSEE writes that “ICS belongs to the LGBT community and ICS members will decide how they want to develop. Based on their choice, iSEE will implement appropriate support to ICS” (Proposal 2). In Proposal 1, iSEE writes that it will “stay open to the inputs of LGBT groups, promote their ownership of the project and respect their initiatives”. The texts also often emphasize the close relationship that iSEE has to this stakeholder group, for example in Proposal 4: “iSEE has a unique relationship with LGBT communities and leaders. In other words, iSEE is embedded in LGBT communities thanks to its commitment, passion and work with LGBT communities”.

The final chief discourse regarding iSEE as an organization is a *human rights* discourse. This discourse is pervasive throughout all the texts, in descriptions of what iSEE stands for, as well as in the reasoning behind, and descriptions of, strategies and activities. For example, in Proposal 4, iSEE is described as having four core values: “embracing diversity”, “fighting for rights”, “celebrating all cultures” and “promoting freedom of expression”, all

of which are related to notions of universality, non-discrimination and human rights. iSEE is described as a “non-profit think-tank working exclusively on issues of human rights of minorities and the socially excluded” in Proposal 1 and as “one of the first organizations working on LGBT rights in Vietnam” in Proposal 3. In Proposal 2, two strategies for the project are outlined, one of which is to “empower LGBT to protect their rights” and Proposal 4 states that “In working with LGBT communities for years, iSEE recognizes that they have a great need: sexual and reproductive health and rights (SRHR)”. The latter proposal furthermore includes ‘rights’ in the title: “Protection of LGBT rights through development of representative organization of LGBT in Vietnam”. “LGBT rights”, “sexual rights”, “human rights” and “human rights approach” are terms that are used in several places in the texts.

5.1.2. LGBT

As regards descriptions of lesbians, gays, bisexuals and trans persons, and the relationships iSEE has to them, there are also several discursive themes that can be found in the texts. However, before discussing these, it is worth mentioning that terms like LGBT, sexual orientation, gender identity and related words are neither explained nor problematized in these texts, which indicates that the reader is presumed to have a prior understanding of them, and an understanding that is the same as that of iSEE.

The term LGBT is frequently used in the texts and often referred to as a *community*. For example, the achievements made within one project described in a narrative report were “widely shared among ICS members and LGBT community”. Furthermore, two of ICS’ strategies are to become “a formal representative body for LGBT communities” and to “consolidate LGBT communities as a united force” (narrative reports). Likewise, Proposal 4 states, “iSEE can provide rich knowledge of LGBT communities, [and] social and economic context”. In places, there are also references to a “gay men community” and “lesbian community” (Proposal 2). All the informants also refer to an LGBT community, though one informant problematizes this concept:

If you talk with the people in ICS, [...] of course they are representatives of the LGBT community. But they are in another group, in another, I can say, class, they are educated, they have their job in society. Like, they are ‘good people’. But, I mean, while the other people, like the lesbian couple who are working class, [...] at the moment, we don’t have their involvement or [...] participation in the community building activities. (Informant 3b, 2011)

Related to the conception of LGBT as comprising a community is the idea of sexuality as *identity*. As mentioned earlier, iSEE describes itself as an

organization working for the rights of minorities; ‘LGBT people’ and ethnic minorities. Here, we are reminded of the parallel Rubin (1984) makes between homosexual groups and ethnic groups and the relation this has to homosexuality being conceived as an identity. The texts in these documents moreover include the word identity in various places. Proposal 2, for example, states that according to an iSEE study, “86% of [gay men surveyed] have to hide their sexual identity to be accepted by others”. Proposal 3 makes a distinction between MSM (men who have sex with men) and gay men. MSM is a term that is often used in the context of HIV-prevention in order to pinpoint sexual practice rather than identity, something recognized by the following informant:

I used to work with HIV and with HIV they care more about sexual behavior. So sometimes if you work with HIV, then we have to care about sexual behavior, but here at iSEE, we mainly [...] care about their own identity, how they identify themselves. (Informant 5, 2011)

Interestingly, Proposal 3 states that “as the term MSM is associated with HIV and somehow has become an identity adopted by many men involved in male-male sexuality, many self-identified gay men are not very comfortable with this term, hence ignore HIV prevention messages targeting MSM”. Sexual identity is in places also written about as an essential part of the self. For example, in conveying the results of a study on lesbians and stigma, iSEE writes that “family members do not accept their *true* sexual orientation” (Proposal 2, emphasis added). This same formulation is also used in Proposal 4. Consequently, this discourse can be placed in the category of identity-based claims to sexual rights (Richardson, 2000).

The term ‘LGBT’ is mainly tied to a discourse centering on *sexual orientation* or *sexual identity*, but not to gender identity or expression. For example, the narrative report describing the outcomes of the project “For a Positive Image of Lesbians, Gays, Bisexuals and Transgenders (LGBT) in Viet Nam” states that the training of journalists provided them with “knowledge of homosexuality, sexual identity, lesbian and gay communities in Vietnam, come out process, stigma and prejudice, and human rights of LGBT”. Furthermore, the goal of this project, both in phase 1 and 2, is that “The public [...] are better informed about homosexuality, sexual diversity and are more tolerant of differences” (Proposals 1 and 2). One of the objectives in Proposal 2 is that “LGBT take a more active role in addressing stigma against homosexuals both on media and among society”, but not against those who do not see themselves as heterosexual nor homosexual, or against trans persons. Furthermore, ICS, which is described as a “representative organization of LGBT in Vietnam” (as the title of Proposal 4 states) or “a group of LGBT young leaders” (Proposal 3), is comprised of “admins and mods of three existing gay websites [...] and a lesbian website”

(Proposal 3), but no websites for trans persons. In other words, though ‘LGBT’ is frequently used, what seems to be the only focus is sexuality, while sex and gender very seldom is mentioned. Consequently, trans persons, though included in the acronym and supposedly part of the same community, tend to be left out of the equation, which is similar to the situation in many areas of the world. However, when asked how they would define ‘LGBT people’, some of the iSEE staff that were interviewed included trans persons, such as the informants below:

Okay, so we talk about the term, yeah? LGBT, lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender. So, very much about sexual orientation and gender identity. (Informant 2, 2011)

When we talk about ‘LGBT community’ we just mention about the people who have the love with the same sex. And including transsexual and transgender. (Informant 3a, 2011)

Others only mentioned sexual identity or sexual orientation in response to this question:

How do I define [LGBT people]? I don’t define them. They will define themselves. It’s they who describe their sexual identity. (Informant 5, 2011)

I don’t know how to define them. Except for that, sexual orientation, I don’t see anything different. (Informant 1, 2011)

This indicates that there are slightly contrasting understandings of, or at least perceived associations to, LGBT as a term, within the organization itself. Yet, in the analyzed texts, the dominant understanding of ‘LGBT’ is one that refers to sexuality, sexual orientation and sexual identity.

The way in which iSEE’s relation to lesbians, gays, bisexuals and trans persons is portrayed is related to two of the discourses explored in the previous section: *expertise* and *participation*. As discussed earlier, iSEE provides training on homosexuality and sexual rights to ICS, as well as assistance in turning it into a “capable and independent organization of LGBT and for LGBT in Vietnam” (one of the expected results of Project proposal 4). This includes support such as the “preparation of documents and registration for ICS to obtain a legal status”, “develop and implement a fund raising strategy targeting donors” and, together with RFSU, “develop its service provision plan as well as social changes strategies” (Proposal 4). Thus, iSEE has an expert relation to ICS in terms of knowledge about sexuality, human rights and the managerial/bureaucratic aspects of running a non-profit organization.

Also explored earlier is the strong emphasis on participation in these texts. ICS is said to belong to the LGBT community and iSEE is described as having a unique relationship with this community. Even so, there is a clear top-down power dynamic visible in this relationship; iSEE initiated the founding of ICS and, as expert, guides ICS through its development. While iSEE's human resource policy, as quoted in Proposal 1, states that "iSEE will make every effort to make its volunteer and employee workforce representative and reflective of the communities in which its services are provided", nowhere is iSEE explicitly portrayed as an organization that includes lesbian, gay, bisexual or trans members, or as an organization sprung from an LGBT movement. Instead, iSEE highlights its closeness to an LGBT community without describing the organization as being *of* the community, as for example in Proposal 3: "The workshops will be conducted by iSEE staff in partnership with LGBT leaders [...], with the view for LGBT leaders to become more active and take over this role for the long-term". This presents iSEE as a 'neutral' part to the donors, as a scientific, objective NGO. Interestingly, some of the informants present a different view:

We have people who are knowledgeable, who are capable of doing research and communicating with people within the community, and who are community members. (Informant 1, 2011)

Within the organization, I mean iSEE, we have [...] people of the community, LGBT community. While the other organizations, they are heterosexual people (laughs). (Informant 3a, 2011)

5.1.3. Gaining and maintaining legitimacy with donors

The above sections have shown the main discursive themes related to iSEE as an organization and its work with the rights of lesbians, gays, bisexuals and trans persons, in its communication with donors. In chapter 2. *Theoretical framework*, four dimensions of legitimate power were outlined. Three of these dimensions play out in this part of the analysis.

Firstly, in the project proposals and narrative reports, iSEE shows that it conforms to established rules. As mentioned, the structure of these documents are predetermined by the donors, establishing rules for what a legitimate project should involve, and iSEE follows these rules. Completing narrative reports is also an example of iSEE conforming to established rules. Lastly, emphasis on its legal status further emphasizes that iSEE conforms to established rules.

The second and fourth dimensions of legitimacy are those that are tightly interwoven with discourse in that they refer to the beliefs of the actors

involved. As discussed in 2.5 *Discourse – a moment in social practice*, discourse contributes to the objectivation of certain knowledge in society, and accordingly, dialectically constitutes systems of belief. The discursive themes found in the above analysis consequently point to beliefs shared by iSEE and the donors that are involved in conferring legitimacy to iSEE. The assumption that the actors share these beliefs is based on the fact that iSEE has been granted support for all the mentioned projects – an action of conferral of legitimacy on the part of the donors:

iSEE is looking for someone who is supportive, with their beliefs and what they want to do. That's something I really like from iSEE, because they are very firm about their target groups, their purpose, their values, and they persuade the donor about that thing, so they didn't change projects or their ideas because of the donor. (Informant 4, 2011)

The second dimension of legitimacy is based on the beliefs that can be used to justify the previously mentioned rules that iSEE conforms to. The discursive theme related to those rules is the managerial-rational theme, which has a focus on procedures, outcomes, effectiveness and accountability – things that are undoubtedly important for a donor that grants financial resources to organizations. In other words, the donors' and iSEE's beliefs in a managerial rationality justify the rules that iSEE conforms to in carrying out its projects, and thereby another dimension of legitimacy is satisfied. As one of the members of iSEE puts it:

We maintain the relationships [with donors] by doing our projects well, by regularly producing reports, so that the donors are informed of what we are doing. By keeping the finance very transparent. So creating a kind of trust between us and the donors. And also by producing new, interesting projects. With interesting proposals. [Laughs] Certainly, by the end of the project, we do have to produce some valuable outputs. (Informant 1)

The beliefs justifying the actions conferring legitimacy to iSEE carried out by the donors – or in other words, the beliefs justifying the support given by donors – can presumably be linked to the remaining discursive themes explored earlier. These are beliefs in expertise, professionalism, science, advocacy, participation/representation and human rights, though in the particular manner that they are conceived of in the analyzed texts. It is also the belief that an NGO worthy of support should embody and/or work along those beliefs. An example of a type of action conferring legitimacy to iSEE based on these beliefs is that donors consult the organization, not only on matters pertaining to sexuality and gender, but also other issues:

Because iSEE, as I told you, it is not just about LGBT, [but also] about minority rights and we engage a lot in dialogue with the banks, with the development agencies about the general development picture in Vietnam. And actually, iSEE is regularly consulted by different donors. So I think that's also good for us, because we can gain credibility, we can gain access to high-level policy dialogue and representation as well, so I hope when we're talking more about LGBT at policy level we have more leverage. (Informant 2, 2011)

It is perhaps not surprising that these discursive themes, all of which were explored in 2.4 *NGO legitimacy*, are so pervasive in the analyzed texts; after all, they are expressed by an actor working very much within the institution of civil society, and directed toward another actor within that same institution. Furthermore, donors, being keepers of significant financial resources and with a mandate to distribute them, have considerable power to define the rules of play. At the same time, they also have to relate to the discourses of procedures, accountability and effectiveness, perhaps even more so as they are more economic types of organization, and consequently also demand this of their fund recipients.

However, these donors have also had a specific interest in questions regarding sexuality and gender, as they are among few that have supported iSEE in this area of its work. Informants note that few donors are actually interested in the rights of lesbians, gays, bisexuals and trans persons:

It's a hidden group. People don't know very much about it. And it's not a priority of the government. So when people don't know about it, then [...] [the] government doesn't think it's important [...] to work with LGBT, then why donors give money to work with LGBT. (Informant 5, 2011)

This further indicates that the particular donors that have actually funded iSEE projects share the beliefs signified by the discourses found in the texts.

The descriptions of iSEE's relationship with the 'LGBT community' acts as a way of showing the donors that the subordinate actors also carry out actions conferring legitimacy to iSEE, and by doing so show consent to that particular power relation. Such actions include attending trainings on homosexuality or collaborating in the development of ICS. There is presumably also a shared belief between donors and iSEE in the representations of the 'LGBT community' found in the texts, about community and identity; in the primacy of questions sexuality over questions of gender, of homosexuals over bisexuals and trans persons; identity-based rights claims; and of the appropriateness of iSEE's expert role in relation to lesbians, gays, bisexuals and trans persons. The contradiction between some

of the informants' comments on there being iSEE members that are part of the LGBT community and the fact that this is never mentioned in any of the project proposals despite the emphasis on participation and representation indicates that iSEE does not see it as advantageous to do so. The exact reason for this is hard to surmise from the available empirical material, but one possibility that has been mentioned earlier is that it could be seen as compromising the perception of iSEE as scientific and objective.

5.2. Mass media

This section analyzes a variety of types of written material directed towards Vietnamese mass media. Four documents are associated with a presentation held by iSEE together with the Academy of Journalism and Communication about a study the two organizations have conducted together, on the way homosexuals are portrayed in Vietnamese print and online press. The first document is a letter of invitation to the presentation and the second is an introductory speech held by the iSEE director at this presentation. The third document is a PowerPoint presentation of the study. The fourth is a PowerPoint presentation on sexual orientation and homosexuality. The other documents are associated to a follow-up event; a workshop held for 20 journalists about gender and sexuality. These documents include a presentation of iSEE; an information leaflet about the event including a form that those interested in partaking in the workshop can fill out; a letter of invitation to the workshop; and several PowerPoint documents used during the workshop. All documents have Vietnamese journalists as their audience. The documents are written in Vietnamese, and the citations consist of my own translations of the texts.

5.2.1. iSEE, the organization

In the documents analyzed in this section, *science* and *expertise* are two extremely dominant discursive themes. The two events mentioned both involve the dissemination of specific knowledge by iSEE to journalists. As an event, the presentation on the portrayal of homosexuals in Vietnamese press establishes iSEE as an expert organization that has identified a problem with press reporting through scientific methods:

In order to understand how the press has constructed an image of homosexuals in Vietnam, the Academy of Journalism and Communication in cooperation with the Institute for Studies on Society, Economy and Environment (iSEE) have carried out research outlining how the press writes about homosexuals. (Letter of invitation to presentation of press study)

The names of both organizations immediately establish them as scientific and expert actors and the formal tone and disposition of the invitation further emphasize the serious subject. Likewise, in the introductory speech, there is also a strong presence of a discourse of expertise: “[One of iSEE’s members] will present a number of basic concepts about homosexuality as well as global trends on the way in which this matter is viewed”. Two of the informants interviewed explain the importance of being a scientific organization in relating to journalists:

iSEE is a unique organization to work within the field. And we also have the prestige of a [...] scientific organization. [...] We’re not only activists, we are scientists. (Informant 1)

We [...] portray ourselves as a research organization so they trust the data, they trust the field, they trust the knowledge. And many professors even say that, “Okay, we need to incorporate these things to our teaching.” (Informant 2)

It is in the PowerPoint presentations that the scientific discourse is most obviously manifested. Three of these are about iSEE’s own studies: the study on the image of homosexuals in the press, another on gay men in Vietnam, and one on lesbians in Vietnam. The remaining five presentations are about various aspects of sexuality and gender, mainly with references to English-language literature.

The study on the image of homosexuality in the press and the study on gay men are quantitative and the data is mainly presented in charts and diagrams, perhaps among ways of presenting information that most traditionally are associated with science. For example, one slide of the presentation on the study of the image of homosexuality in the media shows a line graph displaying the number of articles written with homosexuality as a subject over time, and a pie chart in the other presentation illustrates the educational backgrounds of the respondents. The study on the image of homosexuality in the press also includes citations from articles, illustrating different points made about the content. The study on lesbians is qualitative, and the presentation on this study is thematically organized with general outlines of responses to each theme, perhaps more ethnographically oriented.

The other presentations further establish iSEE’s position as an expert on the area of sexuality and gender in relation to the journalists and combine very varied scientific approaches that range from genetics to gender studies. For example, a presentation titled “A number of questions often encountered about homosexuality” is structured around questions such as “How many persons (how many %) are homosexual?”, “Is homosexuality a disorder?” and “Why are people homosexual?” The questions are then discussed with

reference to different kinds of research. For example, the first question is answered by displaying statistical studies undertaken in the USA, France and the UK, and the last by discussing studies on the brain, genetic markers and the prevalence of homosexuality among siblings. In another presentation, different theories on identity formation are discussed; in yet another, the terms sexuality, biological sex, gender, gender expression, gender identity, sexual orientation, sexual expression and sexual identity are distinguished and explored.

As mentioned, there is a great deal of references to research from other countries, particularly English-language research. This is most likely partly due to the fact that little research has previously been done in the area in Vietnam, but it also lends authority to what is presented to refer to studies performed in countries dominating much of the scientific world. Likewise, the listing of iSEE staff involved in the workshop in the invitations sent out to journalists also emphasizes iSEE's position as expert due to their international education and experience (at Harvard and Princeton, among other institutions).

Another discursive theme present in these texts is *discrimination*, closely related to *human rights*. In the presentations, stigma and discrimination of homosexuals is often brought up, for example in the presentation on the study of gay men in Vietnam where many of the questions asked of the respondents relate to how comfortable they are with their sexual orientation whether they feel stigmatized by society and if they are afraid of their sexual attraction being revealed to others. Another presentation explores research on stigma and discrimination of homosexuals, and the different forms this stigma and discrimination can take. Yet another presentation points out the negative effects of stigma and discrimination, such as the violation of the rights to education and work, not being accepted by one's family, self-stigma, stress and so on.

Another interesting aspect to note is that in the speech and in the letters of invitation, there is great *respect* expressed on the part of iSEE towards journalists and mass media: "We especially welcome the participation of journalists coming from different newspapers. Your presence here proves that this is an important topic and of interest to newspapers" (introductory speech, presentation of study on the image of homosexuality in the press). In the invitation to the journalist workshop, iSEE describes the prospective participants as "pioneers, helping the community to better understand and slowly become more accepting of difference". iSEE members also underscore this important role of mass media:

We are aware, fully aware that mass media is [...] a very important channel to people's attitudes and behavior. Of LGBT. Perhaps it is the, the most important channel if

*you want to do some kind of public education of this issue.
(Informant 1)*

Mass media in Vietnam has a strong influence not only on policy makers but also ordinary people. That's why, in order to make people understand correctly about and to reduce discrimination towards the LGBT group, first of all, you should impact the media. (Informant 7)

*Because media is very strong, powerful, and also because the people who work in media [are] lacking this knowledge [...], it's very dangerous, it's like you're putting a knife, very sharp knife in [the hands of] a young child.
(Informant 4)*

5.2.2. Sexuality and gender

Not surprisingly, these documents have a much stronger focus on sexuality and gender than those directed toward donors. This has also contributed to a much more complex discussion on these issues.

Scientific discourse is, as mentioned, strongly present in these texts, and the ways in which gender and sexuality are discussed is deeply characterized by this. Most of the material in the PowerPoint presentations includes references to previous research, whether it be produced by iSEE or others.

There is furthermore an emphasis on understanding, defining and delineating concepts. For example, there is one presentation that is devoted to discussing theory on identity and identity formation, another on categorizing different aspects of sexuality and gender and another theorizing stigma that also includes statistics on stigma toward homosexuals in the USA and Vietnam. In the discussion on gender in the second presentation, there is a separation made between biological sex, gender, gender expression and gender identity, and in the discussion on sexuality, a distinction between sexual orientation, sexual expression and sexual identity. These discussions bring up a wide variety of aspects of gender, such as its contextual contingency, varieties of gender expression, trans identities and so on, all of which can be said to originate from gender studies. Likewise, the exploration of sexuality in the same presentation can also be said to stem from gender studies, and gay and lesbian studies. However, despite the discussion on gender, there is in general still a significantly stronger emphasis on sexuality and homosexuality in the documents. Meanwhile, as discussed in the previous section, the presentation regarding frequently asked questions about homosexuality mainly makes use of biological research about sexuality. In its own research on lesbians and gay men, iSEE does not explore the *why's* of

homosexuality, but rather, the *who* and *what*: who are lesbians and gay men in terms of demographics? What do their lives look like? Here, there is more of a focus on critical social science:

We try to do research to understand what's their daily life resistance to the pressure of the society, and what's their agency. [...] I think that it's very important to balance the idea that that group of people, of course they are vulnerable in a way, because they haven't [been] recognized by the law. [...] I think that that's the balance we, we try to balance it. And [...] also try to let the society know that, okay, even though they're living in that situation, they have their own agency, they still have to react, and to, you know, to have own strategies to live their lives. (Informant 3)

There is also an emphasis on *identity*, especially sexual identity, in these texts demonstrated, for example, by one of the presentations focusing solely on the subject, as well as the focus on homosexuality. Furthermore, the presentations that include discussions on stigma and discrimination also mainly focus on homosexuality. However, it does not come across as though iSEE is making identity-based rights claims in the way that Richardson categorizes them, according to self-expression, self-determination or self-realization, but instead focuses on negative rights claims such as the right to not suffer discrimination and stigma. In this, the *human rights*-related discourse in relation to sexuality and gender is also illustrated.

Finally, iSEE is conceived of as separate in relation to lesbians, gays, bisexuals and trans persons also in these texts. iSEE speaks as expert, scientific organization about these groups, and as an organization struggling for their rights, but yet again it does not come across whether any of iSEE's members are lesbian, gay, bisexual or transgender. The following fragment from the invitation to the journalist workshop also illustrates this separation:

In this workshop, journalists will have the opportunity to interact with iSEE's researchers, the people currently carrying out research about gay men and lesbians in Vietnam [...]. Additionally, journalists will also have the opportunity to interact with representatives of ICS – an independent group protecting the rights of homosexuals, bisexuals and transgender persons in Vietnam.

5.2.3. Gaining and maintaining legitimacy with mass media

In gaining and maintaining legitimacy with mass media, establishing a position as an expert, scientific organization certainly appears to be an important aspect for iSEE. As a scientific organization, one of the most

obvious ways in which iSEE conforms to established rules, mentioned earlier, is by being registered under the law of science and technology and having a permit for establishment and operation from the Ministry of Science and Technology. Furthermore, mentioning the permit shows mass media that another legitimately powerful actor publicly has carried out a symbolic action conferring legitimacy to the iSEE.

In this case, the beliefs shared by both dominant and subordinate by which the established rules can be justified, partly have to do with how a scientific organization acts (related to the appropriate qualities of power-holders, as explored in *2.1 Legitimacy as a sociological concept*). An example of a belief in how a scientific organization should act, that might influence iSEE's legitimacy with mass media, could be that it remains 'objective' to its subject of study, which is the way that iSEE partly is portrayed in these texts. Another example is how the organization carries out its scientific activity, in terms of the way research is performed and if seemingly authoritative sources are used, such as English-language sources in this instance. There is arguably also a common belief in who carries out scientific activity; well-educated people, and even better if they have gained their knowledge and experience from abroad. Presumably, it is these factors that also affect journalists' beliefs in the knowledge generated by iSEE about sexuality and gender and which influence them to either carry out acts conferring legitimacy to iSEE or not.

However, something which is not obvious from an analysis of these texts, but which informants have discussed, is that the knowledge produced by iSEE is considered newsworthy by journalists:

We have some very good documentation to share with them. And they are extracting knowledge and stories to tell them about LGBT. (Informant 6)

Because homosexuality is still something 'hot'. Until very recently, it's taboo. But recently it became a 'hot' issue. [...] People are curious about homosexuals. They don't know how they look, how they live, how they act, how they behave. They're very curious. And also because [...] they think homosexuals are very different from them. [...] They want to know more about this community, this world, then whenever there is an event like that, such exhibition of a live homosexual or an announcement of study results, then it becomes an event. Many journalists will be attracted because this is a 'hot' issue and it can catch many readers. (Laughs) (Informant 1)

Consequently, it seems that there is a common belief, though from different perspectives, that iSEE produces knowledge that is interesting for readers,

and journalists' public acts of conferring legitimacy to iSEE consist of referring to this knowledge in the articles they write. In other words, there exists a common belief that the power relation is serving the general interests of both parts. This can also be seen as evidence of consent by the subordinate, in this case the journalists who are not experts, to the particular power relation where iSEE acts as expert and is a 'gate-keeper' of 'correct' knowledge and contact with lesbians, gays, bisexuals and trans persons.

5.3. Discussion on the results of the analysis

The analysis of the above texts has revealed different discursive themes around which iSEE's communication with donors and mass media revolve, and then related these themes to iSEE's quest for legitimacy. The discussion on iSEE's communication with donors suggested that the discursive themes expressed toward them embody beliefs which donors see as having in common with iSEE, and which thereby justify the rules that iSEE conforms to (i.e. writing project proposals according to predetermined headings, in the way it carries out its work, its area of focus and so on) and which gives them legitimacy, and also justifies the donors' conferral of legitimacy to them. That the main discursive themes identified were all touched upon in section 2.4 *NGO legitimacy* indicates that there exist strong institutional logics within the (international) institution of civil society regarding organizations working within it, and that the different logics are not so incompatible as to cause the actors investigated in this case to create any major ruptures in them. It might however also suggest the hegemonic position of donors within the institution of civil society in that they, as economic organizations, are perhaps the most interested in that their beneficiaries manage and report how they have spent their funds, and carry out the funded work in a professional, scientific manner.

In terms of the discursive themes related to gender and sexuality, more conflicts can be discerned. Firstly, the conflict between the community of LGBT persons, that tend to only be described as homosexuals. Secondly, the conflict between iSEE's position as expert and its close relationship to the community. As mentioned, the first is a common conflict in many similar movements around the world and might have to do with sexuality and gender being issues that are not seen as related enough to be included in the same struggle, with gender transgression being more controversial and therefore causes others to distance themselves from it, with the low status of trans persons, or a combination of these. The second conflict probably has less to do with the logics of civil society and more to do with the logics of science as an institution, in its more traditional, positivistic form.

With mass media, the clearly dominating discursive theme is science, and consequently this is where iSEE places most of its stakes in gaining

legitimacy with Vietnamese mass media. With the discussion in *1.1 Background* in mind, one of the reasons for this might be in order to downplay any controversy in iSEE's work. Though sexuality and gender is discussed more nowadays, they are not easy subjects to bring up in a society unused to the topics, but with legitimacy from a powerful actor such as mass media – legitimacy as an expert and objective research institution – it might be easier to approach them. Perhaps for this reason too, sexuality and gender are generally discussed more in terms of identity and community; by so doing, talking about behaviors that people still find provocative can be avoided, and focus is directed instead on the self and the individual's relationship with society. Furthermore, in mostly discussing rights in terms of equality and non-discrimination, iSEE steers away from more radical analyses of gender and sexuality that might upset the status quo more drastically. As one of iSEE's members stated:

I think that if we can raise people's knowledge and interest, it's just like a small issue in society, don't make it too big. Don't make it too, you know, too fast or critical, it's like... You declare a fight with people, then it's really difficult to get the results. But if you try to include some small, small, and gradually, and people just know, okay, take it gradually, day by day the language of the sexuality, of the sexual orientation and identity. So I think that's the way, like the more peaceful strategy, to get the outcome. (Informant 3)

6. Conclusion

The purpose of this thesis was to explore the ways in which a Vietnamese NGO working to increase the rights of lesbians, gays, bisexuals and trans persons in Vietnam legitimizes itself in its communication with key stakeholders. As gender and sexuality have until recently been taboo subjects in Vietnam, and non-normative sexualities and gender transgressions have been subject to stigma and discrimination, I wished to understand how such an NGO could navigate these problems in communicating with stakeholders and gain legitimacy. Another dimension to this problem is that the space for civil society can be understood as relatively limited in Vietnam, hence possibly further restricting opportunities for such an NGO to carry out its work.

The analysis suggests that in its communication with donors, iSEE's use of discourses prevalent in the mainstream of civil society and emphasis on its role as expert on its area of work contributes to its legitimacy with that stakeholder group. With Vietnamese mass media, the emphasis on scientific discourse is particularly strong and is perhaps a way of navigating taboo-laden subjects. Toward both stakeholder groups, the discourses used around gender and sexuality centered on identity and community, which perhaps also is an approach that avoids causing too much controversy.

The subject of this thesis is by no means exhausted; in the analysis I have only touched upon the major themes identified, but there have also been other themes that are interesting for the discussion but for which there was no room this time around. Obviously, analyzing the communication with all five original stakeholder groups would also produce more material for comparison. However, if a comparison were to be made, it would perhaps be more interesting to compare the situation of several different organizations in Vietnam working on the rights of lesbians, gays, bisexuals and trans persons, and also contrast the pursuit for legitimacy with the perceptions of legitimacy that stakeholders actually have of these organizations.

7. Bibliography

United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific. (den 30 May 2001). *The Marriage and Family Law*. Retrieved from Population and Family Planning:: http://www.unescap.org/esid/psis/population/database/poplaws/law_viet/vi_033.htm 17 March 2011

Waeraas, A. (2009). On Weber: Legitimacy and Legitimation in Public Relations. in Ø. Ihlen, B. van Ruler, & M. Fredriksson (Eds.), *Public Relations and Social Theory: Key Figures and Concepts* (pp. 301-322). London: Routledge.

Waeraas, A. (2007). The re-enchantment of social institutions: Max Weber and public relations. *Public Relations Review* , 33, 281-286.

Weber, M. (1978). *Economy and Society*. Berkeley: University of California Press.

Weeks, J. (1998). The Sexual Citizen. *Theory, Culture & Society* , 15 (3-4), 35-52.

Wells-Dang, A. (2011). *Informal Pathbreakers: Civil Society Networks in China and Vietnam* . Available from eThesis Repository.

Wells-Dang, A. (2010). Political space in Vietnam: a view from the 'rice-roots'. *The Pacific Review* , 32 (1), 93-112.

Vietnam Institute of Development Studies, UNDP Vietnam, SNV Vietnam & CIVICUS Civil Society Index. (2006). *The Emerging Civil Society: An Initial Assessment of Civil Society in Vietnam*. Hanoi: CIVICUS.

Widerberg, K. (2002). *Kvalitativ forskning i praktiken*. Lund: Studentlitteratur.

Wischermann, J. (2010). Civil Society Action and Governance in Vietnam: Selected Findings from an Empirical Survey. *Journal of Current Southesast Asian Affairs* , 29 (2), 3-40.

Woodward, D. G., Edwards, P., & Birkin, F. (1996). Organizational Legitimacy and Stakeholder Information Provision. *British Journal of Management* , 7, 329-347.

Ayres, L. (2008). Semi-Structured Interview. i *The Sage Encyclopedia of Qualitative Research Methods* (pp. 811-813). Thousand Oaks: SAGE.

Alvesson, M. (1985). A Critical Framework or Organizational Analysis. *Organization Studies* , 6 (2), 117-138.

Atack, I. (1999). Four Criteria of Development NGO Legitimacy. *World Development* , 27 (5), 855-864.

Butler, J. (2007). *Genustrubbel: Feminism och identitetens subversion*. Göteborg: Daidalos AB.

Beetham, D. (1991). *The Legitimation of Power*. Basingstoke: The Macmillan Press Ltd.

Berger, P., & Luckmann, T. (1966). *The Social Construction of Reality: A Treatise in the Sociology of Knowledge*. London: Penguin Books Ltd.

Center for Studies and Applied Sciences in Gender – Family – Women and Adolescents. (den 28 July 2010). *Workshop on "Lesbians - Information to be shared"*. Retrieved from Center for Studies and Applied Sciences in Gender – Family – Women and Adolescents Center for Studies and Applied Sciences in Gender – Family – Women and Adolescents (CSAGA): http://www.csaga.org.vn/Desktop.aspx/News/News-Events/Workshop_on_Lesbians-Information_to_be_shared/ 4 March 2011

Civil Law Network. (8 August 2008). *Nghi dinh so 88/2008/ND-CP Ngay 5/8/2008 cua Chinh phu ve xac dinh lai gioi tinh*. Retrieved from Thong tin phap luat dan su: <http://thongtinphapluatdansu.wordpress.com/2008/08/08/1504-2/> 17 March 2011

Charnovitz, S. (2006). Nongovernmental Organizations and International Law. *American Journal of International Law* , 100 (2), 348-372.

Chouliaraki, L., & Fairclough, N. (1999). *Discourse in Late Modernity: Rethinking Critical Discourse Analysis*. Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press.

Clegg, S. R. (1989). Radical Revisions: Power, Discipline and Organizations. *Organization Studies* , 10 (1), 97-115.

Collingwood, V. (2006). Non-governmental organisations, power and legitimacy in international society. *Review of International Studies* , 32, 439-454.

Collingwood, V., & Logister, L. (2005). State of the Art: Addressing the INGO 'Legitimacy Deficit'. *Political Studies Review* , 3, 175-192.

Cooper, R., & Burrell, G. (1988). Modernism, Postmodernism and Organizational Analysis: An Introduction. *Organization Studies* , 9 (1), 91-112.

Edwards, M., & Hulme, D. (Eds.). (1996). *Beyond the Magic Bullet: NGO Performance and Accountability in the Post-Cold War World*. West Hartford: Kumarian Press, Inc.

- Edwards, M., & Hulme, D. (1996). Introduction: NGO Performance and Accountability. in M. Edwards, & D. Hulme (Red.), *Beyond the Magic Bullet: NGO Performance and Accountability in the Post-Cold War World* (pp. 1-20). West Hartford: Kumarian Press, Inc.
- Ekström, M., & Larsson, L. (2010). *Metoder i kommunikationsvetenskap*. Lund: Studentlitteratur.
- Deetz, S. (1985). Critical-Cultural Research: New Sensibilities and Old Realities. *Journal of Management* , 11 (2), 121-136.
- DiMaggio, P. J., & Anheier, H. K. (1990). The Sociology of Nonprofit Organizations and Sectors. *Annual Review of Sociology* , 16, 137-159.
- Dowling, J., & Pfeffer, J. (1975). Organizational Legitimacy: Social Values and Organizational Behavior. *Pacific Sociological Review* , 18 (1), 122-136.
- Fairclough, N. (1993). Critical discourse analysis and the marketization of public discourse: the universities. *Discourse & Society* , 4 (2), 133-168.
- Fairclough, N. (2005). Discourse Analysis in Organizational Studies: The Case for Critical Realism. *Organization Studies* , 26 (6), 915-939.
- Fairclough, N., & Thomas, P. (2004). The Discourse of Globalization and the Globalization of Discourse. *The SAGE Handbook of Organizational Discourse* . (D. Grant, C. Hardy, C. Oswick, & L. L. Putnam, Eds.) London: SAGE Publications Ltd.
- Finnemore, M. (1996). Norms, Culture, and World Politics: Insights from Sociology's Institutionalism. *International Organization* , 50 (2), 325-347.
- Foucault, M. (2002). *Sexualitetens historia: Band 1, Viljan att veta*. Göteborg: Daidalos.
- Foucault, M. (1990). *The Will to Knowledge*. Hammondsworth: Penguin.
- Freeman, E. &. (1983). Stockholders and Stakeholders: A New Perspective on Corporate Governance. *California Management Review* , 25 (3), 88-106.
- Friedland, R., & Alford, R. R. (1991). Bringing Society Back In: Symbols, Practices and Institutional Contradictions. in W. W. Powell, & P. J. DiMaggio (Eds.), *The New Institutionalism in Organizational Analysis* (pp. 232-266). Chicago: The University of Chicago Press.
- Gordon, R., Kornberger, M., & Clegg, S. (2009). Power, Rationality and Legitimacy in Public Organizations. *Public Administration* , 87 (1), 15-34.

Grant, D., Hardy, C., Oswick, C., & Putnam, L. L. (Eds.). (2004). *The SAGE Handbook of Organizational Discourse*. London: SAGE Publications.

Ihlen, Ø., van Ruler, B., & Fredriksson, M. (Eds.). (2009). *Public Relations and Social Theory: Key Figures and Concepts*. London: Routledge.

Informant 1, (1 March 2011). Interview with iSEE staff. (S.-M. Dau, Interviewer)

Informant 2, (12 March 2011). Interview with iSEE staff. (S.-M. Dau, Interviewer)

Informant 3a, (24 February 2011). Interview with iSEE staff. (S.-M. Dau, Interviewer)

Informant 3b, (2 March 2011). Interview with iSEE staff. (S.-M. Dau, Interviewer)

Informant 4, (11 March 2011). Interview with iSEE staff. (S.-M. Dau, Interviewer)

Informant 5, (3 March 2011). Interview with iSEE staff. (S.-M. Dau, Interviewer)

Informant 6, (2 March 2011). Interview with iSEE staff. (S.-M. Dau, Interviewer)

Informant 7, (12 March 2011). Interview with iSEE staff. (S.-M. Dau, Interviewer)

Institute for Social Development Studies. (u.d.). *Gender, Sexuality & Sexual Health*.

Retrieved from Institute for Social Development Studies:

http://www.isds.org.vn/index.php?option=com_content&view=category&id=55&Itemid=59&lang=en 4 March 2011

Institute for Studies of Society, Economy and Environment. (u.d.). *Introduction*. Retrieved from iSEE - Institute for Studies on Society, Economy and Environment:

<http://isee.org.vn/isee-en/?do=pages&id=43> den 28 February 2011

Institute for Studies of Society, Economy and Environment. (February 2009). Ket qua so bo qua nghien cuu truc tuyen: Dac diem kinh te xa hoi qua nam gioi co quan he tinh duc dong gioi tai Viet Nam. *Preliminary results through online research: Socio-economic characteristics of men who have sex with men in Viet Nam*. Hanoi, Vietnam.

Hung, M., & Godfrey, C. (den 13 August 2010). *Lesbian Lamentation*. Retrieved from Thanh Nien News: <http://www.thanhniennews.com/2010/Pages/20100815152656.aspx> 28 February 2011

Hybels, R. C. (1995). On Legitimacy, Legitimation, and Organizations: A Critical Review and Integrative Theoretical Model. (ss. 241-245). *Acadamey of Management Best Papers Proceedings*.

Hasselbladh, H. K. (2000). The Project of Rationalizatoin: A Critique and Reappraisal of Neo-Institutionalism in Organization Studies. *Organization Studies*, 21 (4), 697-720.

- Hardy, C., & Phillips, N. (2004). Discourse and Power. *The SAGE Handbook of Organizational Discourse*. (D. Grant, C. Hardy, C. Osseck, & L. L. Putnam, Eds.) London: SAGE Publications Ltd.
- Jepperson, R. L., & Meyer, J. W. (1991). The Public Order and the Construction of Formal Organizations. i W. W. Powell, & P. J. DiMaggio (Eds.), *The New Institutionalism in Organizational Analysis*. Chicago: The University of Chicago Press.
- Kvale, S. (2007). *Doing Interviews*. London: SAGE Publications, Ltd.
- Kaldor, M. (2003). Civil Society and Accountability. *Journal of Human Development*, 4 (1), 5-27.
- Kaldor, M. (2004). *Det globala civilsamhället*. Göteborg: Bokförlaget Daidalos AB.
- Khuat, T. H. (14 March 2011). (S.-M. Dau, Interviewer)
- Khuat, T. H., Le, B. D., & Nguyen, N. H. (2009). *Sexuality in Contemporary Vietnam: Easy to Joke About But Hard to Talk About*. Hanoi: Knowledge Publishing House.
- Lux, S. J., & Straussman, J. D. (2004). Searching for Balance: Vietnamese NGOs Operating in a State-Led Civil Society. *Public Administration and Development*, 24, 173-181.
- Landau, I. (2008). Law and Civil Society in Cambodia and Vietnam: A Gramscian Perspective. *Journal of Contemporary Asia*, 38 (2), 244-258.
- Le, Q. B. (4 March 2011). (S.-M. Dau, Interviewer)
- Lister, S. (2003). NGO Legitimacy: Technical Issue or Social Construct? *Critique of Anthropology*, 23 (2), 175-192.
- Logister, L. (2007). Global Governance and Civil Society. Some Reflections on NGO Legitimacy. *Journal of Global Ethics*, 3 (2), 165-179.
- Nguyen, Q. T., Nguyen, T. T., Le, N. T., & Le, Q. B. (2010). *Song trong mot xa hoi di tinh: Cau chuyen tu 40 nguoi nu yeu nu. Quan he voi cha me*. Hanoi: Institute for Studies of Society, Economy and Environment.
- Mumby, D. K. (2004). Discourse, Power and Ideology: Unpacking the Critical Approach. *The SAGE Handbook of Organizational Discourse*. (D. Grant, C. Hardy, C. Osseck, & L. L. Putnam, Eds.) London: SAGE Publications Ltd.
- Marcussen, H. S. (1996). NGOs, the state and civil society. *Review of African Political Economy*, 23 (69), 405-423.

Meyer, J. W., & Rowan, B. (1991). Institutionalized Organizations: Formal Structure as Myth and Ceremony. in W. W. Powell, & P. J. DiMaggio (Eds.), *The New Institutionalism in Organizational Analysis*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

Ossewaarde, R., Nijhof, A., & Heyse, L. (2008). Dynamics of NGO Legitimacy: How Organising Betrays Core Missions of INGOs. *Public Administration and Development*, 28, 42-53.

Putnam, L., Bantz, C., Deetz, S., Mumby, D., & Van Maanan, J. (1993). Ethnography versus Critical Theory: Debating Organizational Research. *Journal of Management Inquiry*, 2 (3), 221-235.

Parsons, T. (1956). Suggestions for a Sociological Approach to the Theory of Organizations - I. *Administrative Science Quarterly*, 1 (1), 63-85.

Parsons, T. (1960). *Structure and Process in Modern Societies*. New York: Free Press.
Pham, T. N. (5 December 2009). 'Open' exhibit targets closed hearts and minds. Retrieved from Thanh Nien News: <http://www.thanhniennews.com/2009/Pages/2009125183251054074.aspx> 28 February 2011

Powell, W. W., & DiMaggio, P. J. (Eds.). (1991). *The New Institutionalism in Organizational Analysis*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

Suchman, M. C. (1995). Managing Legitimacy: Strategic and Institutional Approaches. *The Academy of Management Review*, 20 (3), 571-610.

Seo, M.-G., & Creed, D. G. (2002). Institutional Contradictions, Praxis, and Institutional Change: A Dialectical Perspective. *The Academy of Management Review*, 27 (2), 222-247.

Slim, H. (2002). By What Authority? The Legitimacy and Accountability of Non-governmental Organisations. Geneva: International Council on Human Rights Policy.

Rubin, G. S. (1984). Thinking sex: Notes for a Radical Theory of the Politics of Sexuality. i C. S. Vance (Ed.), *Pleasure and Danger: Exploring Female Sexuality* (pp. 143-178). Boston: Routledge & Kegan Paul.

Rydstøm, H. (2003). Encountering "Hot" Anger: Domestic Violence in Contemporary Vietnam. *Violence Against Women*, 9 (6), 676-697.

Rydstøm, H. (2006). Masculinity and Punishment: Men's upbringing of boys in rural Vietnam. *Childhood*, 13 (3), 329-348.

Rydstøm, H. (2006). Sexual Desires and 'Social Evils': Young women in rural Vietnam. *Gender, Place and Culture*, 13 (3), 283-301.

RFSU. (u.d.). *International work*. Retrieved from RFSU:
<http://www.rfsu.se/en/Engelska/International-Programmes/> 10 May 2012

Richardson, D. (2000). Constructing sexual citizenship: theorizing sexual rights. *Critical Social Policy* , 20 (1), 105-135.

Tan, S. (den 13 April 2010). *Gay art exhibition tours universities in Hanoi, Vietnam*. Retrieved from Fridae: <http://www.fridae.com/newsfeatures/printable.php?articleid=9816>
28 February 2011

The Consultation of Investment in Health Promotion. (9 February 2011). *CIHP Introduction*. Retrieved from CIHP Portal: Consultation of Investment in Health Promotion: The Consultation of Investment in Health Promotion (CIHP) 4 Marh 2011

Thomas, G. M., Chhetri, N., & Hussaini, K. (2008). Legitimacy and the Rise of NGOs: the Global and Local in South Asia. *Journal of Civil Society* , 4 (1), 31-42.

Tolbert, P. S., & Zucker, L. G. (1983). Institutional Sources of Change in the Formal Structure of Organizations: The Diffusion of Civil Service Reform, 1880-1935. *Administrative Science Quarterly* , 28 (1), 22-39.

Trondal, J. (2001). Is there any social constructivist-institutionalist divide? Unpacking social mechanisms affecting representational roles among EU decision-makers. *Journal of European Public Policy* , 8 (1), 1-23.

8. Appendix 1. Written material

1. Project proposal 1. Submitted to the Ford Foundation in May 2008 for a project called “For a Positive Image of Lesbians, Gays, Bisexuals and Transgenders (LGBT) in Viet Nam”. It covers the period between October 2008-September 2009.
2. Project proposal 2. Submitted to the same donor organization for a follow-up project to the previous one. It was submitted in June 2009 with the same title and the addition “phase II”. It regards the period between July 2009-June 2010.
3. A group of narrative reports to the Ford Foundation. These are reports that detail the progress made within the above projects. Three narrative reports are included here: one reporting the period between January-December 2009, one reporting the period between January 2010 and June 2010, and the finally one reporting the period between July 2010 and December 2010.
4. Project proposal 3. An untitled project proposal, submitted to Family Health International in August 2010. It covers the period between August 2010-July 2011.
5. Project proposal 4. Submitted to the Swedish embassy in Hanoi in September 2010. The project consists of a partnership between iSEE and RFSU, a Swedish NGO working for sexual and reproductive rights both in Sweden and in other countries through partnerships with local organizations (RFSU). The title of the proposed project is “Protection of LGBT rights through development of representative organization of LGBT in Vietnam” and covers the period between October 2010-December 2012.

9. Appendix 2. Interview guide

Introduction

- Introduce study
- Summarize structure of interview
- Anonymity: interviewee may be anonymous if they wish and can choose to be so to different extents
- Language: interviewee may speak English or Vietnamese depending on level of comfort

Background

- What is your function at iSEE? What does your work involve?
- Can you tell me about your earlier work experience and/or other experience relevant to what you do with iSEE?
- Can you tell me a little bit about how you started working with iSEE/LGBT issues?
- Would you mind if I ask you about how you identify yourself in terms of socio/economic context/social position/gender/sexuality/ethnicity/educational level/ability/age/etc., in order to understand the context in which you perceive yourself?

iSEE & Stakeholders

1. LGBT people

- How would you define LGBT people?
- Who are the LGBT people that iSEE has relationships with? Why these in particular?
- Can you tell me about how iSEE has created and maintained relationships with LGBT people? Why have they been created and maintained in these ways?
- In what other ways does iSEE communicate with LGBT people? Why does iSEE communicate with them in these ways?
- How do you think that different LGBT people perceive iSEE?
- Why do you think that iSEE is an appropriate organization to work with anti-discrimination of LGBT people, LGBT research, LGBT rights advocacy and empowerment?
 - What kind of competence, related to LGBT people in particular, do you think that iSEE brings?

- Why do you believe that it is important to work with anti-discrimination of LGBT people, LGBT research, LGBT rights advocacy and empowerment, and particularly in Vietnam?
- Do you have any questions or further comments about this stakeholder group?

2. *Policy makers*

- Who are the policy makers that iSEE has targeted when it comes to the work with LGBT issues? Why have these policy makers been targeted?
- Can you tell me about how iSEE has created and maintained relationships with different policy makers? Why have they been created and maintained in these ways?
- How does iSEE communicate with these policy makers? Why does iSEE communicate with policy makers in these ways?
- What are the reasons for trying to influence/have contact with policy makers?
- What kind of influence do you believe iSEE to have on policy makers when it comes to LGBT issues? Where do you believe this influence comes from?
- How do you think that different policy makers perceive LGBT people and issues?
- How do you think that different policy makers perceive
 - iSEE as an organization?
 - the messages that iSEE tries to communicate and the ways in which these are communicated?
- Why do you think that iSEE is an appropriate organization to work with policy makers when it comes to LGBT issues?
- Do you have any questions or further comments about this stakeholder group?

3. *Donors*

- What kind of donors has iSEE targeted/is iSEE targeting in terms of its LGBT work? Why have these donors been targeted?
- Can you tell me about how iSEE has created and maintained relationships with different donors? Why have they been created and maintained in these ways?
- How does iSEE communicate with these donors? Why does iSEE communicate with donors in these ways?
- How do you think that donors perceive LGBT issues and people in Vietnam?
- How do you think that donors perceive iSEE, especially as an organization working with LGBT issues in Vietnam?

- Do you have any questions or further comments about this stakeholder group?

4. *Vietnamese mass media*

- Why does iSEE work with mass media when it comes to LGBT issues?
- Can you tell me about how iSEE has created and maintained relationships with mass media? Why have they been created and maintained in these ways?
- How does iSEE communicate with mass media? Why does iSEE communicate with mass media in these ways?
- What influence do you believe that iSEE has on mass media when it comes to LGBT issues? Where do you believe this influence comes from?
- Can you make some generalizations about how you understand that
 - mass media actors that have been in contact with iSEE perceive and portray LGBT people and issues?
 - mass media actors that have not been in contact with iSEE perceive and portray LGBT people and issues?
- How do you believe that mass media representatives perceive
 - iSEE as an organization?
 - the messages that iSEE tries to communicate and the ways in which these are communicated?
- Why do you think that iSEE is an appropriate organization to work with mass media and LGBT issues?
- Do you have any questions or further comments about this stakeholder group?

5. *The 'general public'*

- What sections of the 'general public' does iSEE target and why?
- In what ways does iSEE reach out to these sections of the 'general public', and why have these ways been chosen?
- How does iSEE communicate with these sections of the 'general public'? Why does iSEE communicate with them in these ways?
- How do you think that the 'general public' and the sections of the 'general public' targeted by iSEE perceive LGBT people and LGBT issues, both in terms of those that have actually been in contact with iSEE and those that haven't?
- What kind of influence do you believe iSEE to have on these sections of the 'general public' and why?
- Why is iSEE an appropriate organization to communicate with these sections of the 'general public' about LGBT people and issues?
- Do you have any questions or further comments about this stakeholder group?