

# With Great Power Comes Great Responsibility

Discourse Analysis of the 'Responsibility Discourse' through  
the Public and Private Distinction

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# Abstract

The purpose of the study is to further understand how the 'Responsibility Discourse' is constructed through the articulation of the Public and Private distinction in presently operated Public Private Development Partnerships (PPDP). By understanding the discourse in terms of accountability, role division and responsibility, the ambition is to map how the construction is made through the public and private sector. The study will answer the following research questions: *How do the different authorships construct the 'Responsibility Discourse' through the articulation of the 'Public' and 'Private' distinction?* With sub-questions: *Which are the main antagonisms in the authorships' construction of the discourse? Which hegemonies and hegemonic interventions may be identified?* The study approaches the research questions using the theory and method of discourse analysis created by Laclau & Mouffe, adapted by Winther-Jørgensen & Phillips. The material of the study contains of Sida's currently running PPDP-projects all produced by three different authorships of Public sector, Private sector and International Organizations. The results establish that the public is generally perceived as having main responsibility while the private is recognised possessing greater relevant knowledge. Furthermore the distinctive line between the public and the private sector is clearly drawn by all authorships.

*Key words:* discourse analysis, public sector, private sector, responsibility, PPDP

Words: 10860

# Table of Contents

<b>1 Introduction.....</b>	<b>1</b>
1.1 Purpose and Research Question.....	2
1.1.1 Research questions.....	2
1.2 Outline of the Study.....	3
1.3 Delimitations.....	3
<b>2 Background .....</b>	<b>4</b>
2.1 Boundaries of Politics: the Public Private Distinction.....	4
2.2 Corporate Social Responsibility .....	5
2.3 PPP and PPDP .....	5
2.4 Public Management .....	7
<b>3 Theoretical framework.....</b>	<b>8</b>
3.1 Laclau and Mouffe’s Discourse Theory .....	8
3.1.1 Core concepts.....	9
3.1.2 Discursive Conflict Analysis .....	9
3.2 Previous Research.....	10
3.2.1 Public and Private Distinction .....	10
3.2.2 ‘Responsibility Discourse’.....	11
3.3 The Study’s Approach .....	14
<b>4 Methodology .....</b>	<b>16</b>
4.1 Ontology and Epistemology .....	16
4.2 Methodological approach .....	17
4.3 Material.....	18
4.3.1 Coding Authorship.....	18
4.3.2 Concerns regarding Coding .....	18
4.4 Methodological and Theoretical Considerations .....	19
<b>5 Results.....</b>	<b>21</b>
5.1 Public Sector Authorship.....	21
5.1.1 Construction of Public Responsibility Discourse .....	21
5.1.2 Construction of Private Responsibility Discourse .....	22
5.1.3 Antagonism and Hegemony.....	24
5.2 Private Sector Authorship.....	25
5.2.1 Construction of Public Responsibility Discourse .....	25
5.2.2 Construction of Private Responsibility Discourse .....	25
5.2.3 Antagonism and Hegemony.....	26
5.3 International Organizations Authorship.....	27
5.3.1 Construction of Public Responsibility Discourse .....	27

5.3.2	Construction of Private Responsibility Discourse .....	28
5.3.3	Antagonism and Hegemony.....	30
5.4	Summary .....	30
<b>6</b>	<b>Conclusions.....</b>	<b>32</b>
<b>7</b>	<b>References.....</b>	<b>33</b>
7.1	Online Resources .....	35
<b>8</b>	<b>Appendix: Material.....</b>	<b>36</b>

# 1 Introduction

In 1953 Bowen queried the noteworthy question, “What responsibilities to society may businessmen reasonably be expected to assume?”<sup>1</sup>. The research’s conclusions included the idea of businessmen pursuing the policies, decisions and follow the lines of action desirable of the objectives and values of our society. The theory of the state having exclusive responsibility for governmental issues has for long dominated the academic field thus affirming the public and private sectors in a dichotomy. The ever-static nature of a dichotomy is its well-defined dividing line, constantly separating the two spheres from interfering. However, in recent years, new types of public management are challenging the dichotomy’s perception and new collaborations of overlapping the two have emerged. The research on Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) has developed to become an important academic field, intersecting the social, political and economical. In this new political sphere with CSR at the centre, different societal actors, containing state and non-state, have gained new roles in public management, taking responsibility for tasks traditionally belonging exclusively to the public sector.<sup>2</sup>

The phenomenon of Public-Private Partnerships (PPP) elucidates a modern CSR practice. The collaboration between different societal actors fundamentally challenging questions and concerns regarding responsibility, accountability and role division are evident, making the arising phenomenon of PPP principally interesting. Subsequently, the study will focus on the how the public and private distinction manifests itself by studying the ‘Responsibility Discourse’. Using the theoretical framework, the bricks of the discourse are the key concepts of responsibility, accountability and role division.

The study’s philosophical outlook is the perception of discourse analysis’s ability to study all social phenomena, as it sees social phenomena as discursive constructions. The theory rationalizes how language may turn into social phenomena and then into an object for discourse analysis. By analysing the discourse, possible conclusions regarding key perceptions of the phenomenon may be made and hence presently used views of the responsibility discourse.

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<sup>1</sup> Carroll, Archie B “Corporate Social Responsibility – Evolution of a Definitional Construct”, *Business Society* September, vol. 38 no. 3, 1999 p. 270

<sup>2</sup> Bexell, Magdalena, Mörth, Ulrika “Introduction: Partnerships, Democracy, and Governance “ Bexell, Magdalena, Mörth, Ulrika (red.), *Democracy and public-private partnerships in global governance*, Palgrave Macmillan, Basingstoke, 2010, p. 3

## 1.1 Purpose and Research Question

In all dimensions of the political central elements are the relations of power and antagonism, as well as un-decidability of what can be considered legitimate or not legitimate. Bexell highlights the importance of studying the public-private distinction in view of power “as residing in social practices, institutions and dominant conceptions of, for example, what the “natural” characteristics and responsibilities of public and private spheres are”.<sup>3</sup> Furthermore, she constitutes that constructivist assumptions are good tools for guiding analyses of “boundary-drawing processes and power relations involved in institutional arrangements developed and naturalized through history”.<sup>4</sup>

The study’s purpose is designed around this notion, namely to contribute to understand how the ‘Responsibility discourse’ is constructed and perceived in current PPDP-projects, through the establishment of the Public and Private distinction. Applying discourse theory, and its understanding of language as the construction of the social world, significant antagonistic struggles between the public and private could be identified.<sup>5</sup>

Mapping and analysing the material’s construction of the ‘Responsibility discourse’ will provide the research a complex picture, drawing from different subjective perceptions of reality. Who should have responsibility and be hold accountable in society is a constant discussion and the purpose of the study is to establish a pattern for how the projects construct the discourse and therefor give further understanding to certain actors’ view of reality. With these thoughts in mind, the study builds its main purpose as discursively describing the construction of the “Responsibility Discourse” through the articulation of the Public and Private distinction.

### 1.1.1 Research questions

How do the different authorships construct the ‘Responsibility Discourse’ through the articulation of the Public and Private distinction?

- Which are the main antagonisms in the authorships’ construction of the discourse?
- Which hegemonies and hegemonic interventions may be identified?

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<sup>3</sup> *ibid* p. 49

<sup>4</sup> Bexell, Magdalena ”Exploring Responsibility: Public and Private in Human Rights Protection”, PhD Dissertation, Lund University, 2005, p. 52

<sup>5</sup> Winther-Jørgensen, Marianne & Phillips, Louise, *Discourse analysis as theory and method*, Sage Publications Ltd., London, 2002 p. 1

## 1.2 Outline of the Study

The study begins with a presentation of the purpose and research questions. Chapter two provides a background to central terms and concepts used in the study in order to make reasoning for certain theoretical claims comprehensible. The concepts introduced are Boundaries of the Political: the Public and the Private; Corporate Social Responsibility and Conceptualization of PPP/PPDP and Public Management. Chapter three presents the theoretical framework and the decision to firstly introduce Discourse Theory is made due to the epistemological and ontological assumptions it provides the study, in turn affecting the understanding of Previous Research. Chapter four introduces the study's methodological approach of Discourse Analysis and the material. Due to the methodological and theoretical approach of Discourse Analysis, providing certain assumptions about reality, the methodological chapter will end with an extensive discussion regarding Methodological and Theoretical Considerations. In chapter five the Results of the research will be presented in accordance with the authorship coding. Because the results within the authorships were considered unified, the presentation is collectively presented. Finally, chapter six presents the conclusions made from the results.

## 1.3 Delimitations

The study's foundation is not based on a normative ambition where conclusions regarding the advantages or disadvantages of certain constructions will be made. The main objective is descriptive and to recognize certain authorships' construction of responsibility by analysing language and identifying possible antagonisms, hegemonies and hegemonic interventions. There exists no objective to prove the legitimacy of certain constructions or the advantage of having a specific perception of responsibility. Hence, there is no problem that the projects are unfinished, a discussion more thoroughly conducted in the Methodology chapter.

Regarding the material, an analysis of, not discussion concerning project efficiency, goal aspirations, project targets nor anything regarding the projects ambitions will be made. It is not in line with the study's objective to enable more knowledge regarding projects' outcomes.

## 2 Background

### 2.1 Boundaries of Politics: the Public Private Distinction

This section mainly serves as an introductory section to the distinction as it presents the historical development of the binary relation between the Public and Private. Please note the purpose of the presented section is not to be part of the study's theoretical framework but merely to supply the study with a general background on the emerging dichotomy of public and private.

Concepts concerning boundaries between public and private are well-established within the studies of politics and it constitutes as one of the “grand dichotomies” in Western thinking.<sup>6</sup> The notion of public and private has throughout history been institutionalized through the organization of the societal life.<sup>7</sup> In the 15<sup>th</sup> century, the dominating distinction was for the public to be viewed as in some way representing the common in society. By the 17<sup>th</sup> century, the dominating thought could be associated to our current ideas considering the public to be under greater scrutiny and the private coming to mean a more sheltered part of life. In our context of modern European state building, the development of the private has begun to all things not labelled political.<sup>8</sup> The basis of the construction was “disembedding, isolating, and insulating certain aspects of commercial activity from social and political controls”. In the European context the construction of private has encompassed all attributes contrasting political and as a result creating a broad spectrum of understandings of the different spheres, often overlapping.<sup>9</sup>

This introductory section brings understanding to the different public and private distinctions emerging from different theoretical languages and universes of discourse, each one containing certain assumptions and connotations, consequently providing more arguments for the study's purpose.

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<sup>6</sup> Weintraub, Jeff “The Theory and Politics of the Public/Private Distinction”, Jeff Weintraub & Krishan Kumar (eds.), *Public and Private in Thought and Practice. Perspectives on a Grand Dichotomy*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1997 p. 1

<sup>7</sup> Bexell, 2005, p. 44

<sup>8</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>9</sup> *ibid.* p. 45



## 2.2 Corporate Social Responsibility

As businesses involvement in PPPs may be understood as an expression of CSR and some corporations getting involved in PPP projects with references to the idea of CSR a presentation of the concept of Responsibility through Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) is necessary.

The concept of CSR dates back to the early 20<sup>th</sup> century and has over the years been revised and developed multiple times. Due to the concept's changing nature it has seen trends throughout its development, with academic research highlighting different aspects. The focus of early writing's is social responsibility, concentrating on the businessmen and their willingness and obligation to pursue certain issues desirable in term of the objectives and values by the society. The concept was discussed from various angles throughout the 60s and 70s with a dominating theory of Davis, recounting the relation between social responsibility and business profitability.<sup>10</sup> In the 80s the angles included focus on corporate social responsiveness, stakeholders theory/management, business ethics, and corporate social performance.<sup>11</sup> In the 90s the concept developed further taking on alternative fields including business ethics theory, a revised corporate social performance model<sup>12</sup>, corporate citizenship, stakeholder theory.<sup>13</sup> As a result of the many different approaches and definitions of CSR, several different scholars calls for a unified interpretation of CSR.

## 2.3 PPP and PPDP

The partnerships of PPP and PPDP may be explained as consisting of a hybrid type of governance, in which non-state actors and state actors co-govern for the provision of certain collective goals and aspirations. Schäferhoff et al explain PPPs is an expression of the on-going reconfiguration of authority and is evidence that non-state actors, such as multinational companies and international

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<sup>10</sup> Carroll, 1999,p. 270-284, and Davis, K. "Can Business Afford to Ignore Corporate Social Responsibilities" California Management Review. 1960 p. 70; Frederick, W.C "The growing concern over business responsibility", California Management Review 2 1960; Friedman, Milton The Social Responsibility of Business is to Increase its Profits" New York Times Magazine. September 13, 1970

<sup>11</sup> Carroll, 1999 p. 284 and Jones, T.M. "Corporate social responsibility revisited, redefined." California Management Review 22(22) 1980

<sup>12</sup> See Wood, D.J. "Corporate Social Performance Revisited" Academy of Management Review. 16, 1991, p. 695

<sup>13</sup> Carroll, 1999, p. 288-291

organizations, are increasingly engaged in authoritative decision-making.<sup>14</sup> The definition of partnerships is “institutionalized transboundary interactions between public and private actors, which aim at the provision of collective goods”.<sup>15</sup>

One of the most frequently used definitions of PPP includes three criteria: participating actors, the goals and the sharing of risk and responsibility.<sup>16</sup> The bottom line of all partnerships is presented as, by using non-hierarchical decision-making, being voluntary cooperative arrangements on public policy between actors from two or more societal spheres (public, private, civil society) aiming at the provision of public goods.<sup>17</sup>

In this study, the emphasis is on the third criteria, the sharing of risks and responsibilities. For that reason we will expand on the presentation regarding criteria three. Nelson stresses the element of sharing of risks, responsibilities, resources, competence and benefits among the participating actors in PPPs and the World Bank further underlines the importance of clear division of responsibilities and distinct accountability.<sup>18</sup> However, Schäferhoff points out the normative presumption in the assertion that responsibilities and contributions should be shared among the partners and therefore sees a problem including such a criteria in a working definition. For that reason he excludes the criteria in his definition. This important comment by Schäferhoff give further relevance to this study as it provides arguments to the normative nature of responsibilities and accountability in PPPs. The subjective normative nature of different interpretation regarding who holds responsibility in the projects is evidently current.<sup>19</sup>

In Swedish aid the PPPs expand from involving issues like infrastructure to being defined as a modality for cooperation regarding development between the Swedish International Development Agency (Sida) and private sector actors. As a result Sida uses the well-established concept of Private Public Development Partnerships (PPDP). PPDP role is the encouragement of the private sector, through development projects, to pro-actively use business ventures and improve living conditions for people in poverty.<sup>20</sup>

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<sup>14</sup> Schäferhoff, Marco, Campe Sabine, and Kaan, Christopher ”Transnational Public-Private Partnerships in International Relations: Making Sense of Concepts, Research Frameworks, and Results” *International Studies Review* 11:2009 p. 451f

<sup>15</sup> *Ibid* p. 455

<sup>16</sup> *ibid*.

<sup>17</sup> Bexell, Magdalena, Mörth, Ulrika “Introduction: Partnerships, Democracy, and Governance“, 2010, p. 6

<sup>18</sup> Nelson, Jane *Building Partnerships: Cooperation between the United Nations system and the private sector* New York: United Nations Department of Public Information, 2002 p. 46 and Tenser, Sandrine *The United Nations and Business: A Partnership Recovered* New York: St. Martin’s Press, 2002 p. 71

<sup>19</sup> Schäferhoff et al. 2009 p. 455

<sup>20</sup> Sida “Public Private Development Partnerships – Collaboration with the private sector” Available at: [http://www.sida.se/contentassets/5d059c1ba3534dbfb09347b95db60140/public-private-development-partnerships---collaboration-with-the-private-sector1\\_3487.pdf](http://www.sida.se/contentassets/5d059c1ba3534dbfb09347b95db60140/public-private-development-partnerships---collaboration-with-the-private-sector1_3487.pdf) Accessed 20/11-2015

## 2.4 Public Management

Since the subject of the study falls within the political field of public management it is necessary to introduce its dominating theories.

The first theory of Principal Agent, also called the Traditional Public Administration theory, is based on the central role of politicians and government. The officials have a responsibility to decide the public policies that will be applied by public management who have little to none autonomy. This is often criticized as being highly bureaucratic making public service ineffective.<sup>21</sup>

New Public Management (NPM) is instead more focused on the technical efficiency of public management. By the constant focus on efficiency, the theory has received extensive critique that the pursuit of efficiency affects the “expenses of democratic processes and of the social values”.<sup>22</sup>

The third theory, the Public Value aims at compensating for the imperfections of previously mentioned theories and argues the important role of project managers that are seeking the legitimacy of their organisation. The full responsibility of the managers and their organisation towards the citizens and the politicians responsible to formulate the public policy is at the centre of the theory.<sup>23</sup>

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<sup>21</sup> Agheorghiesei, Daniela Tatiana “Ethics and Responsibility in Public Management” *Revista de Asistență Socială*, anul XIV, nr. 2, 2015, p. 105

<sup>22</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>23</sup> *Ibid.*

# 3 Theoretical framework

## 3.1 Laclau and Mouffe's Discourse Theory

This section on theoretical framework will introduce the theory of discourse by Laclau and Mouffe. The basis for the theory is their work *Hegemony and Socialist Strategies*<sup>24</sup>, each writer's work individually,<sup>25</sup> plus the work of Winther-Jørgensen and Phillips<sup>26</sup>. The presentation also includes commentaries by Torfing<sup>27</sup> and Howath<sup>28</sup>. The aim is to outline the basic structure of the complex discursive work by Laclau and Mouffe.

Winther-Jørgensen and Phillips explain Laclau and Mouffe's discourse theory as an understanding of the social as a discursive construction. Therefore, in principle, all social phenomenon may be analysed using the discursive analytical tools.<sup>29</sup> At the centre of the theory is language, which is believed to not just describe the reality but also help shape it. Using Saussure's structural linguistics and the poststructuralist critique of the Saussurian tradition, the conclusion is drawn that language is used as social phenomena.<sup>30</sup>

Since the basis for the theory is an understanding of reality as unfinished social phenomena, with meanings can never being fixed, it opens up for "constant social struggles about definitions of society and identity with resulting social effects".<sup>31</sup> Vital for the theory is the existence of hegemonic struggle between different discourses. Hence, the aim of using the discourse theory is to create a map of

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<sup>24</sup> Laclau, Ernesto & Mouffe, Chantal, *Hegemony and socialist strategy: towards a radical democratic politics*, 2. ed., Verso: London, 2001

<sup>25</sup> Laclau, Ernesto: *New reflections on the Revolution of our Time* London: Verso, 1990; "Discourse" in Goodin, R and Pettit, P (ed.) *The Blackwell companion to Contemporary Political Philosophy* Oxford: Blackwell, 1993a; "Power and representation" in Poster, M (ed.) *Politics, Theory and Contemporary Culture*, New York: Columbia University Press, 1993b; "Universalism, particularism and the question of identity" in Laclau, E *Emancipation* Mouffe, Chantal: *The return of the political*, Verso, London, 1993; *On the political*, Routledge, London, 2005

<sup>26</sup> Winther-Jørgensen, Marianne & Phillips, Louise, 2002

<sup>27</sup> Torfing, Jacob, *New theories of discourse: Laclau, Mouffe and Žižek*, Blackwell, Oxford, 1999

<sup>28</sup> Howarth, David "Discourse Theory and Political analysis" *Research Strategies in the Social Sciences – A guide to new Approaches* Scarborough Elinor & Tanenbaum Eric (ed) Oxford University Press: Oxford, 1998, p. 291

<sup>29</sup> Bergström, Göran & Boréus, Kristina, *Textens mening och makt: metodbok i samhällsvetenskaplig textanalys*, Studentlitteratur, Lund, 2012, p. 354

<sup>30</sup> Winther-Jørgensen, Marianne & Phillips, Louise, 2002 p. 25

<sup>31</sup> Ibid p.24

these discourses, antagonisms and hegemonies to fix meaning at all levels of the social.<sup>32</sup>

### 3.1.1 Core concepts

Discourse is understood as the fixation of meaning within a particular domain, with all signs being identified as *moments*. The differential positions are the main reason for their meaning being fixed. In discourse, all signs are *moments* in a system and the relation to the other *sign* determines each sign's meaning.<sup>33</sup> Laclau and Mouffe describe the partial fixation of meaning forms the discourse around so-called *nodal points*.<sup>34</sup> They describe the nodal point as the privileged discursive points in which the other signs are ordered and the relationship between the other signs and the nodal point determines their meaning.<sup>35</sup> *Master signifiers* describe how different discourses offer different content to fill the signifier, in other words how to fill identities. Through the linking of signifiers in *chains of equivalence* identity is established relationally.<sup>36</sup> In line with the discourse theory's ontological approach the understanding is that the society is a result of our production and act as if exists in totality. The verbalisation, like 'the medical team' and 'the hospital' we demarcate a totality by ascribing it an objective content. For this phenomenon the term *myth* is devised. The structure, which myth describes, is explained as only temporary organization of the social with no aim of being final or total. Laclau and Mouffe use *floating signifier* to describe the terms that are invested with a different content by different articulations for society as totality.<sup>37</sup>

Discourse theory explains that by creating meaning as a social process one makes a fixation of meaning, as we strive to "fix the meaning of signs by placing them in particular relations to other signs". This explains the aim of discourse analysis, being a tool, mapping the processes to establish how we struggle to understand the way in which the fixation's meaning of signs. Winther-Jørgensen and Phillips indicate that the process of some fixation, meanings have become so conventional that we think of them as natural.<sup>38</sup>

### 3.1.2 Discursive Conflict Analysis

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<sup>32</sup> Winther-Jørgensen, Marianne & Phillips, Louise, 2002 p. 25

<sup>33</sup> *ibid* p. 26

<sup>34</sup> Laclau, Ernesto & Mouffe, Chantal, *Hegemony and socialist strategy: towards a radical democratic politics*, 2. ed., Verso, London, 2001 p. 112f

<sup>35</sup> Winther-Jørgensen, Marianne & Phillips, Louise, 2002 p.26

<sup>36</sup> *ibid* p. 42f

<sup>37</sup> *ibid* p. 39

<sup>38</sup> *ibid* p. 25f

The constant struggle over the creation of the meaning is evident in all parts of the discourse theory. This section will present how to theorize antagonistic conflicts within a discursive theoretical framework. Antagonism and hegemony are at the very centre of this thesis and therefore been credited a separate chapter.

Antagonism is understood as the struggle between different discourses. Since no discourse is ever completely set, or finished, but an on-going struggle for fixation, it is important to identify and describe the struggle, antagonism.<sup>39</sup> The identities do not necessary have to contradict each other but work simultaneously. However, in cases where the identities compete against each other, an antagonistic relation arises, each making claims on dominance.<sup>40</sup> Laclau explains the social antagonist as occurring when different identities mutually exclude one and another. By constituting each of the identities, the individual discourses are part of each other's field of discursivity and, the occurrence of antagonism affects everything the individual discourse has excluded in turn threatens to undermine the discourse existence and fixity of meaning.<sup>41</sup>

The hegemonic intervention occurs and succeeds if, where before there existed an antagonism, one discourse comes to dominate alone and the antagonism is dissolved.<sup>42</sup> A phenomenon Gramsci conceptualize as hegemony.<sup>43</sup> Laclau and Mouffe describe it as a collection of discourses put in a dominant position in the constructed social reality and all actions are “by mean of articulating unfixed elements into partially fixed moments in in a context crisscrossed by antagonistic forces”.<sup>44</sup>

## 3.2 Previous Research

### 3.2.1 Public and Private Distinction

The main basis for the components of the Public and Private distinction is the work by Bexell and Mörth<sup>45</sup> and the individual work by Bexell<sup>46</sup>.

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<sup>39</sup> Winther-Jørgensen, Marianne & Phillips, Louise, 2002 p. 47

<sup>40</sup> *ibid*

<sup>41</sup> Laclau, Ernesto, *New reflections on the revolution of our time*, Verso, London, 1990 p. 17 and Winther-Jørgensen, Marianne & Phillips, Louise, 2002 p. 47

<sup>42</sup> *ibid* p. 48

<sup>43</sup> Gramsci, Antonio, *Further selections from the prison notebooks*, International Publisher: New York, 1971 p. 245f

<sup>44</sup> Torfing, Jacob, 1999, p. 101

<sup>45</sup> Bexell, Magdalena, Mörth, Ulrika “Introduction: Partnerships, Democracy, and Governance”, 2010

<sup>46</sup> Bexell, 2005

The Public and Private distinction is often accused of being reproduced in a superficial manner. In many instances the distinction is based on a static legacy of the discipline where the state is equated with the public and companies and international organisations are categorised as private.<sup>47</sup> Bexell points out that the public and private are almost always defined in relation to each other, in many ways creating an identity in relation of being in opposition of the others' attributes and in its nature existing a struggle. Furthermore she denotes the importance of studying the public-private distinction in a view of power and not just being a property of actors. Drawing the boundaries of the division, Bexell explains, influences what is included in, and accepted as belonging to, the political sphere.<sup>48</sup> Bexell and Mörth believe that such a division ignores alternate implications to the concept.<sup>49</sup> Bexell and Mörth further emphasises the distinction's constantly shifting nature, where all boundaries are signs of struggle and conflict and is constantly redefined through social interaction and changing practices.<sup>50</sup>

Weintraub and Kumar divide the political theories concerning the spheres into five different categories where the first four represent traditional liberal theories and the fifth representing opinions presented in feminist and Marxist political theories.<sup>51</sup> In the liberal theories, the distinction between the two spheres is substantially important and John Locke, to mention a significant liberal thinker, associates the public with rationality, order and authority, reason, knowledge and mind and the private with subjectivity, desire, passion and body.<sup>52</sup> Liberal thinkers have in many ways shaped our modern understanding of the distinction, where the private is associated with a sphere of non-political processes and interaction, for example the economy and family, and the public is associated with a sphere of politics.<sup>53</sup> When the private is understood as family, the public encompasses even more attributes such as the political (government), the social (civil society) and the economic (market). However in theories where the social and the market are absent from the public's discourse, the public is only ascribed as political, or state and they are deemed private and depoliticized. In the fifth category of Weintraub and Kumar's division brings forth Marxist and feminist theories concluding the non-existence of a dividing line between the public and the private.

### 3.2.2 'Responsibility Discourse'

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<sup>47</sup> Bexell, Magdalena, Mörth, Ulrika, 2010, p. 3

<sup>48</sup> *ibid* p. 49

<sup>49</sup> *ibid* p. 10

<sup>50</sup> Bexell, Magdalena, Mörth, Ulrika, 2010, p. 11 and Bexell, Magdalena, 2005, p. 48

<sup>51</sup> Weintraub, Jeff A. & Kumar, Krishan, 1997, p.1

<sup>52</sup> Bexell, 2005 p. 45

<sup>53</sup> *ibid*.

The components of the ‘Responsibility discourse’ are based on the work of by Bexell<sup>54</sup>, with comments from Hart<sup>55</sup> and Svedberg Helgesson<sup>56</sup>.

### Morality and Legality

The understanding of responsibility and the distribution may be based on legal, moral or customary social principles. Bexell also points out the close relationship between legality and morality when understanding rights and how the two are part of “the rich tapestry of responsibility.”<sup>57</sup>

Moral ideas on responsibility are absorbed into law, and laws affect how people reflect upon responsibility in the moral sphere.<sup>58</sup>

Further, she notes that the relationship is symbiotic and complex when understanding it in terms of responsibility.<sup>59</sup>

### Pro- and Retrospectivity

Responsibility may be distinctive in its formulation of being either prospective or retrospective. By bearing prospective responsibility one has a duty or obligation in reflection of the certain role that one fills in part of ensuring that something occurs or obtains. This can further be distinguished by productive responsibilities (production of good outcomes); preventative responsibilities (preventing other actors from producing bad outcomes); protective responsibilities (avoiding doing harm). Within the proactive responsibility field core concepts like obligations, duties, roles and tasks may be identified.<sup>60</sup>

Retrospective responsibility is the opposite, taking responsibility for events happening in the past. It includes both aspects of having failed at a duty, or having done something positive, good. Within the retrospective responsibility, core concepts such as accountability, answerability and liability may be distinguished.<sup>61</sup>

### Role- Casual- Liability- Capacity-responsibility

Hart identifies the concept responsibility articulated in four terms; Role- Casual- Liability- Capacity-responsibility. Role-responsibility entails that a person operating in a social organization possessing a specific position, to which certain duties are attached. Casual-responsibility often refers to past happening, for

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<sup>54</sup> Bexell, 2005

<sup>55</sup> Hart, H.L.A, *Punishment and Responsibility. Essays in the Philosophy of Law* Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1968

<sup>56</sup> Svedberg Helgesson “Partnerships, Boundary Blurring, and Accountable Actorhood“ Bexell, Magdalena, Mörth, Ulrika (red.), *Democracy and public-private partnerships in global governance*, Palgrave Macmillan, Basingstoke, 2010

<sup>57</sup> Bexell 2005, p. 69

<sup>58</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>59</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>60</sup> *Ibid* p. 66

<sup>61</sup> *ibid.*



example x was responsible for y, one taking responsibility for certain outcomes.<sup>62</sup> Bexell formulates liability-responsibility, as being responsible in terms of legality, for an act/harm is to have sufficient connection with the laws of liability.<sup>63</sup> Capacity-responsibility asserts that a person possesses certain capacities in order to be identified as responsible for his/her actions.<sup>64</sup>

### Accountability

Important note, connecting to the previous description of responsibility, is that of retrospectivity and accountability often being understood as a retrospective mechanism involving a presumption of monitoring and sanctioning instruments. Generally accountability entails the person being answerable for ones actions.<sup>65</sup>

The person A is accountable to the person B if there is an understanding that person A is obliged to act in some way on behalf of person B, and B is empowered by formal institutional or informal rules to sanction or reward A for A's performance in this capacity.<sup>66</sup>

The distinction between explicit and implicit accountability is identified as key components. Explicit means having to answer for the way someone is carrying out his/her tasks and the person knows in advance him/her being accountable for outcomes relating to those tasks. Implicit accountability represents the opposite where the person is unaware of the extent of the decisions and actions for which the person has to render account.<sup>67</sup>

Regarding accountability within the political systems Bexell explains the central purpose being to check the arbitrary exercise of political power. The democratic aspect of the political sphere serves as a major accountability mechanism in order for the citizen to make the politicians accountable for certain political decisions and reforms.<sup>68</sup> Contributions to the change of the distinction between public and private can be found in NPM, reforming a stronger emphasis of market-like systems of control and production and private actors taking part in financing and collaborating with the public sector. Accountability has become central in this political transformation with CSR at the centre. Businesses are being held accountable for a more extensive list of issues, and are acquired to take on new roles, often of a more political character.<sup>69</sup> Svedberg Helgesson identifies that the new forms of political practices calls for new accountable actorhood. The

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<sup>62</sup> Hart, H.L.A., , 1968 p. 213-216

<sup>63</sup> Bexell, 2005 p. 67 and Hart, 1968 p. 216-223

<sup>64</sup> Hart, 1968 p. 228-230

<sup>65</sup> Bexell, 2005 p. 73

<sup>66</sup> Bexell, 2005 p.73 With reference to: Fearon, James D., "Electoral Accountability and the Control of Politicians" pp. 55-97 in Adam Przeworski, Susan C. Stokes & Bernard Manin (eds.), *Democracy, Accountability and Representation*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press 1999, p. 55

<sup>67</sup> Bexell 2005, p. 74

<sup>68</sup> *ibid* p. 76

<sup>69</sup> Svedberg Helgesson "Partnerships, Boundary Blurring, and Accountable Actorhood", 2010, p. 24

conclusion of her study is that even within the context of blurring the lines, the existence of separation of the two spheres of public and private is still present.<sup>70</sup>

Accountability “for what” is by Svedberg Helgesson identified as a major concern in the PPP’s. The private sector’s main concern, as being part of the corporate governance system, is to protect the interest of the companies’ owners and investors. As a consequence of this, businesses have an ability to design and redesign their operations based on the market, establishing management flexibility. This level of flexibility in turn leads to qualities such as efficiency and improved problem solving, all adding up to create output legitimacy<sup>71</sup>, a characteristic most desired by private sector actors. In contrast, the public sector’s “for what” is more limited. Public sector has requirements of input legitimacy<sup>72</sup>, relating to the specific accountability of “to whom”. This in turn creates a dilemma in PPP’s. The slogan “win-win” is jeopardized and a conflict arising between actions believed admirable can rarely be considered optimal in terms of economic interests. The conclusion may be drawn that there exists a struggle where the outlines of accountability differs pending on the actor, as the interests of principle collides.<sup>73</sup> The conclusion has been drawn that PPP involves parties with different diverse sets of interests, including varying notions of having to, or striving to, be socially accountable.<sup>74</sup> Thus formulating the claim that the intervening of the public and private spheres of responsibility in turn makes the chains of internal and external accountability more complex.<sup>75</sup>

### 3.3 The Study’s Approach

In regards to previous research, the study’s approach is to understand the different components constituting the responsibility discourse as bricks that the authorships might or might not use when constructing the discourse. Hence, all bricks are not set to appear in the different discursive constructions.

The recognized close relationship between morality and legality provides further reasons for conducting the study, since there might exists a struggle between

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<sup>70</sup> *ibid* p. 35

<sup>71</sup> “Output legitimacy” is defined as “government for the people”, identified as actors would gain legitimacy through problem-solving, by achieving the collectively considered goals. From Bexell, Magdalena, Mörth, Ulrika “Introduction: Partnerships, Democracy, and Governance“, 2010, p. 15

<sup>72</sup> “Input legitimacy” is defined as “government by the people”, identified as an expression with strong emphasis on the active participation of those constituting the demos. From Bexell, Magdalena, Mörth, Ulrika “Introduction: Partnerships, Democracy, and Governance“, 2010, p. 12

<sup>73</sup> Svedberg Helgesson “Partnerships, Boundary Blurring, and Accountable Actorhood“, 2010, p. 29f

<sup>74</sup> *ibid*.

<sup>75</sup> *ibid* p. 36

morality and legality. What might be perceived as the moral responsibility, in line with the theoretical framework, can turn into legal claims and vice versa.

As identified by Bexell and Mörth, the division of public and private is of constant change and the aim of this study is to identify the current construction of the terms.<sup>76</sup> Reflecting on the ever-changing nature of the public and private concepts, and with regards to previously introduced theories, the study will approach the relation by using wording like divide, distinction and division. Please notice the exclusion of using the term dichotomy when describing the relationship, a decision based on the argumentation of not excluding overlap between the public and private.<sup>77</sup>

The study will use the core concepts, like obligation, accountability, tasks, duties, roles etc., presented in the theoretical framework as moments and the aim is to understand how the moments are connected to responsibility through the articulation of public/private.

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<sup>76</sup> Bexell, Magdalena, Mörth, Ulrika 2010, p. 3

<sup>77</sup> Bexell, 2005 p. 48

## 4 Methodology

The methodological approach to this study is to large extent based on the discursive theoretical framework. When using the theory of Laclau and Mouffe's Discourse Theory, an important annotation is critique by Howarth of the theory's lack of methodological guidelines, and lacking a set of questions and hypothesis for clarifications and development.<sup>78</sup> To fill in these gaps, the theoretical and methodological discursive work by Winther-Jørgensen and Phillips<sup>79</sup> will be used to further explain the methodological and theoretical designs behind the study.

### 4.1 Ontology and Epistemology

Starting from a Marxist point when thinking about the social and using structuralism as providing the theory with a meaning, we have the main basis for the discourse theory. By fusing these approached together into a poststructuralist where the dominant understanding for social field is a web of processes in which meaning is created.<sup>80</sup>

Howarth states that, in line with the heuristic approach, Laclau and Mouffe do not believe in an objective material reality that may create divides between groups of people but these categorizations are result from the existing discourse and cannot comprehend a domain outside this created discourse. Ergo, the external reality has no independent existence. The epistemological stance recognised by Howarth as being in line with previous researchers such as Canguilhem, Bachelard, and Foucault, sets against essentialist theory of knowledge. Objects do not pre-exist themselves and questions of truth and falsity are relative to the standards set by system of knowledge.<sup>81</sup> This is however a common misinterpretation of the epistemological stance of Laclau and Mouffe's approach. Instead the belief that dominates is that social and physical objects exist but our access to them is always mediated by systems of meaning in the form of discourse.<sup>82</sup>

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<sup>78</sup> Howarth, David "Discourse Theory and Political analysis" 1998, p. 291

<sup>79</sup> Winther-Jørgensen, Marianne & Phillips, Louise, 2002

<sup>80</sup> *ibid* p. 2

<sup>81</sup> Howarth, David "Discourse Theory and Political analysis", 1998, p. 14

<sup>82</sup> Winther-Jørgensen, Marianne & Phillips, Louise, 2002 p. 35

## 4.2 Methodological approach

In sum, three methodological tools will be used for the empirical analysis: *key signifiers and chains of equivalence*; concepts concerning *identity*; concepts for *conflict analysis*. The following section will provide a more in depth description of the methodological tools.

Key signifiers are a collective label for major elements of the discourse theory including nodal points, master signifier and myths. Summarizing the key signifiers we present the central concepts: the nodal point is organizing the discourses; master signifiers is organizing identity; and myths as organizing the social space. These central concepts in turn refer to the collective label of key signifiers in the social organisation of meaning.<sup>83</sup> The researcher has to identify the key signifiers in the empiric material before beginning to understand the organization of discourses, looking at discourses, identity and the social space. This may only be accomplished by the correlation between key signifiers and other signs. However, key signifiers are empty on their own if they are not connected through a chain of equivalence. Through the combination with other signs they are filled with meaning.<sup>84</sup>

Concepts concerning identity, individual respectively collective, and maps of the social space may be subject of analysis by following the combinations of meaning in chains of equivalence. A social sphere such as ‘The West’ typically links a geographical part of the world or place to with certain meanings for instance, ‘civilisation’, ‘White people’, ‘the Christian church’ and ‘liberal democratic institutions’. This is an example describing that the elements in the chain of equivalence are both linguistic and non-linguistic. It is established through reasoning in relation to what it is not. The Us-Other analysis provides an idea of what a given discourse includes and excludes what consequences this decision has.<sup>85</sup> This is where the term myth comes in as concepts for conflict analysis. As the understanding of ‘the West’ just described is not uncontested. Instead ‘the West’ is a floating signifier having different discourses struggle to fill it with different meanings. By analysing the different understandings of knowledge and reality, identities and social relations, antagonistic oppositions against each other, which hegemonic intervention is striving to override the conflict the social consequences are all components in investigating functioning discourses in empirical material.<sup>86</sup>

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<sup>83</sup> *ibid* p. 50

<sup>84</sup> *ibid*.

<sup>85</sup> *Ibid* p. 50f

<sup>86</sup> *ibid* p. 51

## 4.3 Material

The object of study is the material consisting of nine PPDP projects currently run by The Swedish International Development Agency (Sida). The projects have been chosen based on being PPDP and hence having evident elements of mixing of spheres between the public and private in regards to responsibility. Partnership involving solely the public sector and international non-governmental organization is not part of the study material.

An important note is that none of the projects have ended but are, as this study is executed, still in operations. This is an active choice made due to the projects' discourse thus representing the presently understood discourse.

### 4.3.1 Coding Authorship

The study itself injects an element of its own construction when coding the authorship of the study. The fact that the authors are categorised into three different categories is of course a social construction itself and important to underline is the fact that different categorical construction may be made.<sup>87</sup> In the study the coding of authorship is based upon the following requirements.

1. Public actor is categorised as being a state actor
2. Private actor is categorised as being part of a for-profit actor
3. International Organizations as being non-profit actor

With this categorisation in mind the following authorships will be studied.

Name for Study	Project Subject	Writer	Coding Authorship
Project 1.1	Industrial skills	Sida	Public
Project 1.2	Business support	Sida	Public
Project 1.3	Garment	Sida	Public
Project 2.1	Coffee&Climate	Hans Neumann Stiftung	Private
Project 2.2 a	IT-sector	HUB 387	Private
Project 2.2 b	IT-sector	HUB 387	Private
Project 3.1	Garment	ILO	International Organization
Project 3.2	Education	UNIDO	International Organization
Project 3.3	Resources	World Resources Institute	International Organization

Matrix 1.1

### 4.3.2 Concerns regarding Coding

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<sup>87</sup> See further discussion in 4.4

When understanding authorship of projects involving several actors, one always has to bring forth the possibility of co-authorship. This concern has been present during the coding and understanding of who authored the report, and therefore constructed the discourse. However, the study's belief is that even though several authors from different sectors might have been involved in the creation of the text, the author whose name is considered the main author.

Furthermore, in line with the theoretical framework of discourse theory, even if there exists a risk of co-authorship, the "main author" still has major part in the construction of the discourses since the actor "signed off" on the used language and discourses presented in the reports. The study has therefore chosen to understand the constructed discourses presented in the reports as a reflection of the authors' construction of reality.

## 4.4 Methodological and Theoretical Considerations

Due to the close connection between the methodology and theory, both having the discourse theory as the basis, the following section has been merged between the two.

An important critique when analysing discourse is how a researcher may understand and decide where one discourse stops and another begins. As explained previously, discourses are understood as being seen as fixations of meaning having unstoppable relations with one and another. When analysing a discourse it might become evident that a landscape of smaller discourses and the discourses keep deconstructing themselves.<sup>88</sup> One should not forget the active role of the text receiver, who might fill the fixations with certain meaning, then actively take part of the assumption of "what is unambiguous for one reader might be considered by another as contradictory".<sup>89</sup>

As this study analyses empirical material and in some way creates boundaries between public and private and the creation of the Responsibility discourse, this becomes an evident problem. Winther-Jørgensen and Phillips suggest that we view discourse as an analytic concept and an entity of which the researcher projects onto the reality in order to create a framework for the study. Hence, the delimitation is determined strategically through the study's aim. In relation to the material, the researcher of the study determines the distance and to what can be considered as a single discourse. By understanding this kind of delimitation as an analytic tool, it requires the discourses to be viewed as objects that the researcher

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<sup>88</sup> Winther-Jørgensen, Marianne & Phillips, Louise, 2002 p. 143

<sup>89</sup> *ibid.*

constructs instead of “objects that exist in a delimited form in reality, ready to be identified and mapped”.<sup>90</sup> With this said, Winther-Jørgensen and Phillips states that researchers have to motivate why their type of delimitation is reasonable, often by using secondary literature identifying particular discourses.<sup>91</sup>

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<sup>90</sup> Ibid p. 144

<sup>91</sup> Ibid.



## 5 Results

In this following analysis the study will describe how the ‘Responsibility discourses’ constructed, which antagonism, hegemonies and hegemonic intervention may be identified. Important to note is that the material mainly constructs the roles and identities of the public and private, rarely directly speaking about certain responsibilities. However, as the theoretical framework demonstrates, the roles of the public and private respectively lead to certain understandings of responsibilities. For this reason the results represented are mainly focusing on how the roles of the public and private was constructed. Generally speaking, the results show unified constructions between the different authors within the coding of authorship presented in 4.3.1, hence the presentation of the results and the sub-categorisation are in line with the theoretical framework making the distinction between public and private, antagonism and hegemony.

### 5.1 Public Sector Authorship

#### 5.1.1 Construction of Public Responsibility Discourse

The construction of Public responsibility is, in many ways in the Public sector authorships, synonymous with mainly attributing the Public as having *main responsibility* because of being “in a position to guide the projects delivery based on their expertise, knowledge and overall strategic objectives”.<sup>92</sup> However, the public is never clarified as the sole responsible actor while the overall responsibility is identified as belonging to the governmental actor. Several times in project 1.1, Sida is said to be responsible for the *funding* and *overall supervision* of the project.<sup>93</sup>

In line with having overall responsibility, the public sector is closely connected, through chains of equivalence with moments like “*risk*” and “*risk management*”, and hence constructs the public responsibility in regards of risk evaluation and management. An understanding of this may be drawn from the theoretical framework of accountability, a concept closely relating to risk. Interpreting it as part of being responsible for the risk and risk management, the public is

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<sup>92</sup> Project 1.1 p. 15

<sup>93</sup> Project 1.1 p. 15

constructed to be hold accountable for certain outcomes, as presented in the casual-responsibility theory.

Significant signs closely linked with the public is their responsibility of upholding the “*the public good*” or “*the greater good*”, in some ways having a moral responsibility. Through the chains of equivalence, one may conclude that the authorship constructs the Public as representing the *public’s best interest*. Being responsible for the “public good” or “the greater public good” is a recurrent responsibility for the public sector. Hence, the public sector is believed to represent an entity with knowledge of the best for the public. Placing the subject of “greater good” in the hands of the Public is never contested but rather proudly connected to the identity of the public, connecting it with the aspect of democracy and as an argument for legitimizing the claim.

The report 1.1 presents the identity of Public as having a *negative view on private businesses*, stating that the Public portrays the private sector as “rents or as vicious, corrupt profit seekers bent on exploiting the nation’s resources”. To state the stance of a certain discourse is certainly controversial and the honesty of the authorship is remarkable. Noteworthy is to analyze what this statement implies. By stating the Public’s general opinion of the private sector in negative terms, in some sense, the author itself takes a stand against the previously presented citation and instead stating a will of “bridging the gap”.<sup>94</sup>

Even though the public holds main responsibility, the construction of public responsibility still faces internal critique. The Public is believed to not be able to, in a way as the private sector, to “strengthen the labor market linkages and upgrade the quality of their vocational training system in general”.<sup>95</sup> Rarely is the public connected to moments like “growing economy”, “economic growth” or “employee”. As presented in the theoretical framework, the claim of Locke that the public sector is often described as having knowledge and a certain authority is absent in this authorship’s construction.

### 5.1.2 Construction of Private Responsibility Discourse

In the project descriptions the Private responsibility discourse is mainly produced as describing the Private sector as *experts* within several important fields of conduct. In the project 1.1 private companies are described as *significant*, more so than national governmental forces, in reaching the projects aim, improving the vocational training, in developing countries. They are identified as possessing *strong* and *useful qualities* such as “professional know-how and technical

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<sup>94</sup> Project 1.1 p. 15

<sup>95</sup> Project 1.1 p. 5

knowledge, and strengthen the labour market linkages”.<sup>96</sup> Notable is this construction of the private is more resembling to Locke’s presentation of the public. In many cases during the project descriptions the private is closely related to having more specified knowledge about core aspects of the projects and is often linked with moments like “knowledge”, “expertise” and “know-how”.<sup>97</sup>

Multinational support to the project will deliver required and appropriate level of technical expertise to assure the best and most appropriate approach to delivering the objectives.<sup>98</sup>

While being described as an expert, the private is additionally constructed as being an *assistant*. When describing the private sector’s responsibilities words like “assist”, “inform” and “help” are frequently used.<sup>99</sup> Furthermore, since the private’s responsibility is closely linked with project creation and development, it is virtually rendered as if the project would come to a halt if the private sector was not involved. The conclusion may be drawn that the private sector is not seen as the main responsibility holders but instead viewed as an indispensable expert, creator and assistant to the public sector.

The private sector is closely linked with *possessing a vast network of contacts* and material that could help the project. It is continuously mentioned the reasons for the private sector to invest in development countries, motivating it as being beneficial for the company, for example through the education of young workforce later being employed by the company.<sup>100</sup>

An important remark is the declaration of the corporations’ responsibility to “*adhere to all strict regulations* in terms of working conditions, safety, etc. for people involved either with the project or their own production”.<sup>101</sup> Here for some reason the Public authorship is eager to show the legal responsibility for which the companies assume, providing contra-arguments regarding companies eagerness (or lack thereof) to obey the law.<sup>102</sup> Such a comment or remark was made when speaking of the Public sector’s responsibilities and it appears that the author constantly has to emphasise the involved private sector is highly regulated and that Sida’s control over them, in some way justify the private sector’s involvement.

A general belief of the private sector involvement in the PPDPin is it being the *future* of a “new generation of development assistance”. A strong belief in the

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<sup>96</sup> Project 1.1 p. 5

<sup>97</sup> Project 1.1, 1.2, 1.3

<sup>98</sup> Project 1.1 p. 15

<sup>99</sup> Project 1.1 p. 11

<sup>100</sup> Project 1.1 p.13

<sup>101</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>102</sup> Project 1.1 p.13

future and a trust in the companies involved are strongly emphasised.<sup>103</sup> Further more, when speaking of multinational companies, generally positive wording is used like “modern”<sup>104</sup>, “opportunities”<sup>105</sup>, and “gainful”<sup>106</sup>. National companies are often portrayed as main economic benefactors and employers, constantly boosting the economy. This is exemplified in Project 1.3 where the collaboration with H&M is motivated by the fact that H&M “contributes to the employment of up to 500 000 people”.<sup>107</sup>

### 5.1.3 Antagonism and Hegemony

One of the prevailing antagonisms in the construction of the Responsibility discourse is the construction of the Public sector as the actor with main responsibility and not having qualified knowledge. This is a constant discursive struggle since the Public is also portrayed as not having sufficient knowledge about the projects’ specific topics, hence seeking help from the private sector. A possible explanation of why the Public constructs its own responsibility in this way that through chains of equivalence, the master signifier as protector of the greater good is closely linked with the Public. The Public may justify its claim of the identity as protector of the greater good due to its typical democratic establishment. By being a democratically elected representative, in some way the public establishes itself the suitable representative.

The private sector’s responsibility is mainly built on its identity as an expert, a consequence of a hegemonic intervention where the two identities of being a knowledgeable company leader or an expert assistant struggles to fixate the meaning with the latter prevailing. This hegemonic intervention is of significant importance when describing how the Public constructs responsibility and in may be derived from the myth of which the Public constructs the discourse. The myth constructed in the discourse is the liberal society where lines between the responsibilities of public-private are clearly drawn.

A notable hegemony established within the responsibility discourse is the clear division between the Public and the Private. Using the theoretical framework one may understand the division of public and private as common within the traditional liberal theories, where the private represents the market and the public still solely represents the state. Even though the project itself may be argued is an attempt at blurring the dividing lines, no struggle of fixation of meaning may be found in the constructed discourse but through consensus the discourse is established as a particularly dominant and undisputed.

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<sup>103</sup> Project 1.1 p. 13

<sup>104</sup> Project 1.1 p. 13

<sup>105</sup> Project 1.1 p. 13

<sup>106</sup> Project 1.1 p. 13

<sup>107</sup> Project 1.3 p. 2

## 5.2 Private Sector Authorship

### 5.2.1 Construction of Public Responsibility Discourse

Prominent is how the private sector views the public, describing it in rather negative terms. A prime example of this is made in project 1.2:

The government sector is, in general, fairly weak and unstable, while the private sector and farmer organizations seem to be more promising in terms of sustainable knowledge management.<sup>108</sup>

This quote is sufficient in demonstrating how the private sector constructs the public. By viewing the public sector as *weak* and *unstable*, the private in many ways motivates its own involvement in the project as necessary. By establishing the public sector's inability to possess qualities like "sustainable knowledge management", the private sector in one remark illegitimacies the public and in its empty position places itself as a legitimate actor of responsibility. The construction of the public's master signifier is here of notable value for how the discourse is constructed with portraying the government as "weak and unstable".

In project 2.2, it is difficult to distinguish the Public as anything else than a financier. Generally, throughout the projects, the public is portrayed as the main benefactor and financier. Instead on emphasising on how the public possesses valuable knowledge and skills, the construction of the public responsibility discourse is mainly focused on their financial involvement. Using signs like "distribution", "funding" and "financing", the identity of the Public is constructed in a way that is perceived as being either a bank or an investment firm. Creating a master signifier as a financier is interesting as it might stand in contrast to the previously constructed identity of being "weak and unstable", a conclusion to be further discussed in the following chapter.

In some cases however is the public connected with positive signs. Labelling it as "an asset" and "an added value" to the project.<sup>109</sup> The authors, through chains of equivalence, connects these signs with their identity as master signifier, which in turn legitimizes their claim on the nodal point, responsibility.

### 5.2.2 Construction of Private Responsibility Discourse

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<sup>108</sup> Project 2.1 p. 2

<sup>109</sup> Project 2.1 p. 2

The private is constructed as having close relations to the farmers and is concluded only giving *positive effects* such as “achieving better prices and reduced product losses along the value chains.”<sup>110</sup> By describing these consequences as a result of the relationship between the private sector and the farmers, the author is able to construct a discourse where the private sector is believed to have *closer relationship with the people*, the farmers. An arising question is if this construction in turn affects the construction of the public sector giving it qualities contrasting to the private, ergo producing not appreciated consequences.<sup>111</sup> This theorization might be traced back to the theory of the private being identified as both including private in the form of economy (market), as well as private describes as family (civil society). As a consequence of ascribing the private as both representative of market and civil society, the two in turn might appear closer linked and standing in opposition to the public.

The author of project 2.1 emphasises the importance of their own role in the project, a discursive construction not identified as happening the Public’s construction of the discourse. This is notable due to the fact that the author feels it necessary to bring out the positive aspects of them being involved in the project. This is one of many examples where the private sector feels a need to *justify* and *motivate* their involvement.<sup>112</sup>

The private sector is additionally closely linked with having a positive impact on the economic market. By using optimistic and convincing language like “*improve*”, “*develop*” and “*support*”, the private sector is identified as absolutely necessary for the projects having any connection to the market economy. The constructed myth of the projects being a part of a world with liberal market economy has to be underlined.

When the private sector is authoring the project, a significant characteristic stands out: the *eagerness to demonstrate themselves with the right values*. Throughout the projects, the private authorship repeatedly underlines its own vision, aim and purpose for the project. Whereas in previous results has shown a more unified construction of project aim and vision, the private sector is more than willing to take full ownership of the visions. It appears as an attempt to establish themselves as good ambassadors for the cause.<sup>113</sup>

### 5.2.3 Antagonism and Hegemony

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<sup>110</sup> Project 2.1 p. 2

<sup>111</sup> Project 2.2 p. 126ff

<sup>112</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>113</sup> Note that a possible explanation to this is fact that authors are more eager to bring out their own role in self-made documents.

An important antagonism is the construction of the public sector being weak and unstable as well as a crucial financier. This discursive struggle is of major significance to how the responsibility discourse is constructed. The importance of finding this antagonism is that it establishes the ambiguous perception of a central colleague actor. This ambiguity generates on the one hand that any claims on giving the public further responsibility are unenforceable but on the other hand the public is responsible enough to be in charge of the main financing.

An interesting part of the construction of the private responsibility is the aspect of the private representing the farmers, the people. In a way, the author makes a hegemonic intervention, claiming dominance of the identity of the private in favour of the public. Previously we have seen the construction of the public as representing “the public good”. Here we see a similar example, due to the fact that they operate and work in close relations to the society, the private is believed having closer contact with the people. This might be a consequence of the way the authorship views private and having the theoretical tradition where the private consists of both the market and the civil society attributes. Furthermore one might wonder what consequences this ascription has for the identity of the public. If the public represents the state, which in democratically built societies, meaning the public represents the people. One may here conclude a significant antagonism.

## 5.3 International Organizations Authorship

### 5.3.1 Construction of Public Responsibility Discourse

In contrast to previous constructions of the Public responsibility discourse, where the public has not been constructed: as *a source of knowledge* and expertise, the author ILO in project 3.1 underlines the responsibility of the Ministry of Labour and Vocational training is “ [...] to improve conciliation skills, support legal and regulatory reform, clarify rules and procedures concerning industrial relations, and continue to build a database on union registration [...]”.<sup>114</sup> In previously mentioned cases this characteristics has mainly been ascribed to actors from the Private sector. Furthermore, the Public’s *experience running development projects* is emphasised continuously throughout the projects. The Public appears to be portrayed as a knowledgeable supervisor, constantly overseeing the operations and possessing main control.<sup>115</sup>

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<sup>114</sup> Project 3.1 p. 2

<sup>115</sup> Exemplified in Project 3.2 p. 2

In project 3.2 the authorship stresses the efforts previously made by the public in order to secure employment opportunities for young adults in Ethiopia.<sup>116</sup> However, it is concluded that the efforts have *not fully achieved the desirable goals* and the projects therefore include the private sector. What one may conclude from this statement is that the reforms made by the government are, in some cases, *not satisfying*, and that the efforts made by the Public has to be complemented by other actors. Reading into this, the statement reflects thoughts of mistrust of the Public's capability to handle certain governmental problems, such as employment. Furthermore, is the following statement is made:

[...] TVET programs currently run by the Government of Ethiopia (GoE) have not thus-far kept pace with the rapidly increasing demand for trained manpower in such sectors as maintenance of agricultural and construction machinery and equipment as well as commercial vehicles.<sup>117</sup>

The Public is not able to see to the demand of the market economy in the same way as the Private sector. However, the public is praised for its fast response to the problem and efforts to address it.<sup>118</sup>

The construction of the public responsibility is similar to previously presented results by the public authors where an identification of the public having *main responsibility* is made. In project 3.2 the public's responsibility discourse is fixated with moments like "*oversee*", "*monitoring*" and "*funding*". The identity of the public sector is generally constructed as having the *overall responsibility*. In contrast to the construction of the private with fixations presented below.<sup>119</sup>

The institutions are closely monitored and looked after by the highest authorities of the government. This has resulted in the institutions becoming characterized by good governance including effective management and organization.<sup>120</sup>

The quote above points out the overall responsibility of the Public and in doing so the conduct of the project is fixated with the strong meaning of "good governance". It is a notable claim that by having the government monitoring the projects institutions, the project may be characterised as having good and effective management. In a sense the government is praised for their involvement in the project.<sup>121</sup>

### 5.3.2 Construction of Private Responsibility Discourse

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<sup>116</sup> Project 3.2 p. 1

<sup>117</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>118</sup> Project 3.2 p. 1 and 6f

<sup>119</sup> Project 3.2 p. 22

<sup>120</sup> Project 3.2 p. 30

<sup>121</sup> Project 3.2 p. 30



The need for Private sector involvement is in project 3.2 emphasized, referencing to incapability of the Public sector to satisfy the demands made by the project initiators. The author stresses, in a manner that could be interpreted as an attempt to *justify the involvement* of the private sector, the necessity of business involvement in the project. The author almost paints up a picture where the Public is unable to complete the project without the *support* of the private sector.

An interesting remark is the constructed master signifier of the private sector's identity. In project 3.2, the involved private sector actor, Volvo group, is recognised as the *victim*, a remarkably strong use of language.

As one of the global companies actively operating in Africa, the VOLVO Group has been one of the victims of the severe shortage of skilled technicians needed to maintain and operate its products in many African countries including Ethiopia. It can, therefore, be imagined that the company would find the idea of getting involved in an effort to address the problem of business interest to it, in addition to contributing to its corporate image-building in the countries it does business in.<sup>122</sup>

Observe how the private sector is depicted as “the victim”. By linking the word victim with the private sector, they are understood as being in need or being the object of terrible reforms. When portraying the private sector as this object in need, the author successfully justifies its involvement in the project, validating it as completely necessary in order for the object to come into power again and mitigate these risks. Even the author claims this being enough reason to make Volvo getting involved in the project.

The private sector is throughout the projects identified as being the *expert* in its certain field and in turn possesses remarkable knowledge about the project topics.<sup>123</sup> In project 3.1, ILO motivates the involvement of H&M by referring by stating the necessity of having sector *knowledgeable* partners understanding the certain brand the project falls under.<sup>124</sup>

Critique is brought forward towards the companies' failure to conduct certain necessary administrative tasks as part of the projects.

[...] some of the companies do not fill out the forms properly, discuss the result among concerned parties, including the trainees and get them signed before delivered to the academy.<sup>125</sup>

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<sup>122</sup> Project 3.1 p. 9

<sup>123</sup> Project 3.2 p. 8

<sup>124</sup> Project 3.1 p. 9

<sup>125</sup> Project 3.2 p. 20

However, the critique is quickly explained, claiming it as a consequence of *insufficient consulting* by the academy. This is an important remark in regards to responsibility.<sup>126</sup> Even if the author recognises the involved actor from the private sector is incapable of fulfilling the assigned tasks, the author feels a need to justify this by instead blaming the academy, shifting the responsibility to them. In this instance the private's responsibility is recognised as insignificant.

The Private sector is in Project 3.2 fixated with meaning like “*supply*”, “*providing technical advise*”, “*providing trainers*” and like previously constructed discourses identifies the Private as an expert assistant providing knowledge and support to the actor with main responsibility.

### 5.3.3 Antagonism and Hegemony

There exist an antagonism in the construction of the public's responsibility discourse. Throughout the projects, the public is portrayed as a well-informed supervisor, having relevant knowledge about the situation. However, regarding some areas of politics, the Public is portrayed as providing not always satisfying outcomes.

A significant antagonistic struggle is describing the private as a victim, while still giving the discourse far more active, positive, attributes such as knowledge and possessing technical skills. The two contrasting pictures struggle to become dominant but none has reached a state of hegemonic. In the previous literature the phenomenon of describing the private as a victim is rare, but if one understands the private as being included in the family, or civil society, one might understand the phenomenon better. If the private is constructed around being part of family, or family being part of the construction of private, it is easier to understand the construction. By viewing private as social, and not just part of the market (often objectified without a subjective conscious), the private has the ability to become appear or be constructed as a victim of certain systematic constructions.

A presented hegemony is that of the private sector's knowledge of the economic market and the public sectors lack or it. The construction is that the private sector is the sole knowledge provider in this field of expertise, a skill unchallenged by the public sector.

## 5.4 Summary

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<sup>126</sup> Project 3.2 p. 20

To summarize the results regarding the constructed discourses the following matrix has been made demonstrating the similarities and differences between the constructed discourses by the authorships. In the following chapter the conclusions regarding these results will be presented and further discussion.

<u>Discourse</u>	<u>Moments</u>	<u>Public Au.</u>	<u>Private Au.</u>	<u>IntOrg. Au</u>
<b>Public</b>	Main Responsibility	X	X	X
	Risk Management	X		
	Knowledgeable			X
	Disability on eco. Market	X	X	X
	Weak/Unstable		X	
	Lack of certain Knowledge		X	
	Funding/benefactor/financier		X	X
	Knowing the public good	X		X
	Supervisor	X	X	X
Not always satisfying outcomes			X	
<b>Private</b>	Expert	X		
	Assistant	X		
	Possessing useful skills, ex. tech.	X	X	X
	The future	X		
	Providing pos. Societal affects		X	
	Close relationship to the people		X	
	Justification of private involvement	X	X	X
	Positive impact on eco. Market		X	
	Knowledgeable	X	X	X
	Funding/benefactor/financier	X		
	Victimized			X
	Failure at administrative work			X

Abbreviations:

Au - Authorship

IntOrg. - International Organizations

eco. - economic

tech. - technical

pos. - positive

Matrix 1.2

## 6 Conclusions

The purpose of this study was to describe the construction of the ‘Responsibility discourse’ as well as identify the antagonism, hegemonies and hegemonic interventions constructed by various authorships in currently operated PPDP-projects. With the research questions in mind the conclusion is the existence of differences in the construction depending on authorships and the identification of antagonisms and hegemonic interventions.

One may conclude that all of the authorships construct clear dividing lines between the private and public and their roles within the responsibility discourse. The public and private are never fused into one actor but are throughout the material explicitly separated. The conclusion is that the authorships construct the ‘Responsibility discourse’ quite differently where the public and the private take on new roles depending on the authorship. Further similarities can be detected where the public is by all authorships recognised as having main responsibility while also being recognised as lacking sufficient knowledge of the economic market. The authorships are unanimous in constructing the private as possessing useful skills and being knowledgeable of, for example the economic market. With this said the conclusion the similarity of all constructions is the belief the public having main responsibility but lacking significant knowledge, being compensated by the private sector, thus creating a symbiotic relationship.

Furthermore, there is a clear line in who is perceived as representing the public good, the civil society. The public authorship determines itself as the legitimate actor responsible for the public good, whereas the private authorship portrays another picture. This is of course interesting from several points of view since the theoretical framework provides basis for both aspects. The public may be understood as the representative of the public good in terms of being a democratic representative of the civil society, on the other hand one might understand the private as including both the civil society and the market, which makes the private the ultimate representative of the public good. It is interesting how this antagonism occurs if the responsibility discourse is viewed from a broader picture. Since the aim of the study is of descriptive rather than normative ambition a further discussion regarding the right construction will not be made.

Finally one may conclude that the results demonstrate quite a scattered picture of the content of the ‘Responsibility discourse’. A suggestion for further research is to investigate either the normative nature of these results, in term of if a certain construction is correct, or study which outcomes these constructions lead to.

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## 7.1 Online Resources

Sida “Public Private Development Partnerships – Collaboration with the private sector” Available at:

[http://www.sida.se/contentassets/5d059c1ba3534dbfb09347b95db60140/public-private-development-partnerships---collaboration-with-the-private-sector1\\_3487.pdf](http://www.sida.se/contentassets/5d059c1ba3534dbfb09347b95db60140/public-private-development-partnerships---collaboration-with-the-private-sector1_3487.pdf) Accessed 20/11-2015

World Business Council for Sustainable Development “Corporate Social Responsibility” Available at:

<http://www.wbcsd.org/pages/edocument/edocumentdetails.aspx?id=82&nosearchcontextkey=true>

# 8 Appendix: Material

## 1. Public Sector

### Project 1.1:

*Learning and knowledge development (LKD) facility: A Sida-UNIDO industrial skills development resource*

Author: Sida

Involved actors: Sida, UNIDO, Volvo, Scania

Revised: 15 June 2015

### Project 1.2

*ZBIDF – Zambia Business in Development Facility- 2014 Annual Review Report*

Author: Sida

Involved actors: Sida, The African Training and Management Services (ATMS), Partnering Initiative (TPI)

Revise: 2015

### Project 1.3

*Centre of Excellence for the RMG industry in Bangladesh (H&M-ILO)*

Author: Sida

Involved actors: Sida, H&M, ILO,

Revised: 2015

## 2. Private Sector

### Project 2.1

*Coffee and Climate Initiative, Project evaluation*

Author: Hanns R. Neumann Stiftung (HRNS)

Involved actors: Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit (GIZ), stakeholders in coffee industry, Sida, the Sustainable Trade Initiative (IDH), Hanns R. Neumann Stiftung (HRNS)

Revised: 31/3-2015

### Project 2.2

a)

*HUB 387 – Annual Report June 2014-June 2015*

Author: HUB 387

Involved actors: Sida, HUB 387, Swedish Embassy in Sarajevo

Revised: June 2015



b)

*HUB 387 – Quarterly Progress Report no 2*

Author: HUB 387,

Involved actors: HUB 387, Sida, Swedish Embassy in Sarajevo

Revised: February 2<sup>nd</sup>, 2015

### **3. International Organizations**

#### Project 3.1

*Improving industrial relations in Cambodia's garment industry 2014 Project Annual Report*

Author: International Labour Organization (ILO)

Involved actors: ILO, Sida, H&M

Revised: April 2015

#### Project 3.2

*Training Academy for the Maintenance of Heavy Duty Equipment and Commercial Vehicles in Ethiopia – Mid term Report*

Author: United Nations Industrial Development Organization (UNIDO)

Involved actors: UNIDO, Sida, Volvo, Selam Children's Village (SCV)

Swedish Embassy in Addis Ababa, Government of Ethiopia

Revised: March 2015

#### Project 3.3

*Annual Review FY2014 – World Resources Institute*

Author: World Resources Institute

Involved actors: World Resources Institute, Sida, 60 multinational companies and organizations such as Pepsi, Unilever and Nestle.