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Talking About Participation

A Study of Participatory Development Discourse in
Sweden's International Support to Civil Society

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Abstract

This thesis focuses on participatory development discourse in Sweden's support to civil society in developing countries, channelled through Swedish civil society organisations with which Sida has framework agreements. The thesis uses a modified version of Norman Fairclough's critical discourse analysis, with an operationalisation of participatory development discourse that defines it as either formal or transformative. The analysis focuses on documents from the Swedish government, Sida, and two framework organisations, We Effect and the Swedish Mission Council. The analysis indicates that the government and Sida use a discourse that is in between formal and transformative discourse, while the Swedish Mission Council and We Effect's discourse are closer to the transformative. These discursive differences between different levels within the Swedish development community had been predicted based on earlier research. The Swedish Mission Council and We Effect were also found to have embraced the rights-based approach to development, something that contradicts earlier studies of faith-based and political organisations. It seems likely that the differing results stem from the nature of the Swedish development community. A suggestion for future research might therefore be comparative studies of different national development communities, focusing on participatory and rights-based development.

Key words: participatory development, development discourse, Sida, civil society organisation, rights-based approach

Words: 19689

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List of abbreviations

CDA – Critical Discourse Analysis

CIDA – Canadian International Development Agency

CSO – Civil Society Organisation

DFID – Department for International Development (UK)

HRBA - Human Rights Based Approach

HRP – Human Rights Perspective

IDS – International Development Studies

NGO – Non-Governmental Organisation

RBA – Rights-Based Approach

Sida – Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency

SIDA – Swedish International Development Authority (precursor to Sida)

SMC – Swedish Mission Council

UNDP – United Nations Development Programme

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1. Introduction

How we speak about development affects our understanding and implementation of development projects. This is an assumption underpinning this thesis, which focuses on participatory development discourse on different levels of Sweden's international support to civil society. Sweden supports civil society in developing countries through Swedish CSOs (Civil Society Organisations), with which Sida, the Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency, has framework agreements. My study is a discourse analysis of documents from the Swedish government, Sida, and two framework CSOs, the Swedish Mission Council (SMC) and We Effect. The analysis is inspired by Norman Fairclough's approach to critical discourse analysis, but with an operationalisation based on earlier research, showing that participatory development discourse can range from *formal* to *transformative*. There seem to be discursive differences between different organisational levels, which was predicted based on earlier research, with SMC and We Effect documents being closer to transformative discourse compared to the government and Sida. An additional finding is that SMC and We Effect seem to have embraced the rights based approach to development, which contradicts the results of earlier research on faith-based and political NGOs. This could potentially be explained by the special nature of the Swedish development community. A general suggestion for future studies is therefore to compare Sweden and other countries on these issues.

The thesis starts with an outline of the method, critical discourse analysis inspired by Fairclough's version, and my modifications to it. The method section is placed early, as it influences the research question and how the theory section is presented. The third chapter outlines my research question and my case and which documents that have been chosen for analysis. The fourth chapter is the theory chapter. It expands on background and earlier research, and contains an overview of discourse in development, followed by some arguments that are of importance to my case. This is in turn followed by a discussion on participatory development discourse, and human rights based approaches' effects on said discourse. The fifth

chapter contains my framework and operationalisation, where I argue that participatory development discourse can range from *formal* to *transformative*. The operationalisation is based on different aspects, for example the view on the *role of participation*, which in formal discourse is identified as letting local people give some input in development projects. In transformative discourse, it is instead presented as a way to mobilise people in order to transform unequal power structures. The sixth chapter constitutes my analysis of the documents, while the seventh chapter contains my conclusions.

2. Method

The method of this study is based on Norman Fairclough's version of critical discourse analysis (CDA). However, I used a modified version of Fairclough's model. The purpose of these modifications was to allow the study of a fairly large number of documents, within the limitations of a master thesis. This follows Marianne Jørgensen and Louise Phillips' (2002) suggestion, in their overview of discourse analysis, that researchers should synthesise their own coherent framework for analysis (Jørgensen and Phillips 2002, pp. 3-4). The chapter begins with an outline of critical discourse analysis, per Fairclough. This is followed by a section that explains how the method of my study draws on, and modifies Fairclough's approach.

2.1 Critical discourse analysis, per Fairclough

Jørgensen and Phillips identify five features that are shared by the different approaches within CDA. The first is a belief that societal phenomena are partly linguistic-discursive, and that it both constitutes social structures and is shaped by non-discursive practices. They also share a belief that language should be empirically studied in its social context. Discursive practices are seen as helping in creating and reproducing unequal power structures, effects that are seen as ideological. Following this, the research conducted is not politically neutral but critical, with the goal of achieving social change. (Jørgensen & Phillips 2002, pp. 61-64)

When turning to Fairclough's specific version of critical discourse analysis, we can see that two dimensions of discourse are especially important: the communicative event and the order of discourse. The communicative event is an instant of language such as a speech, article, interview, or video. The order of discourse is made up by the combination of all discourse types which are used in an institution or within a field. Discourse types are in turn made up by discourses and genres. A genre is language use that constitutes a social practice, for example

interview genre or advertising genre. (ibid, p. 67) This analysis focuses on how the producer of a text draws from different existing genres and discourses, and how receivers utilise different discourses in their reading of the text (ibid, p. 69). Fairclough states that a communicative event does not only reproduce a discourse, it also has the potential to change it (ibid, p. 71). When different discourses are used together it is called interdiscursivity, and Fairclough argues that the creative use of new combinations of discourses is a driving force behind discursive change (ibid, p. 73). Ideologies are, per Fairclough, everyday practices that reproduce structures of domination. Fairclough argues that discourses might be more or less ideological (ibid, p. 75). Fairclough sees that CDA is a critical research of contemporary capitalism, and how it limits or enables human wellbeing, and that this entails engaging with the dominant neoliberal discourse of today (Fairclough 2010, pp. 11-14). How discourse types are made up of discourses and genres, and orders of discourse from different discourse types, are outlined in the figure below.

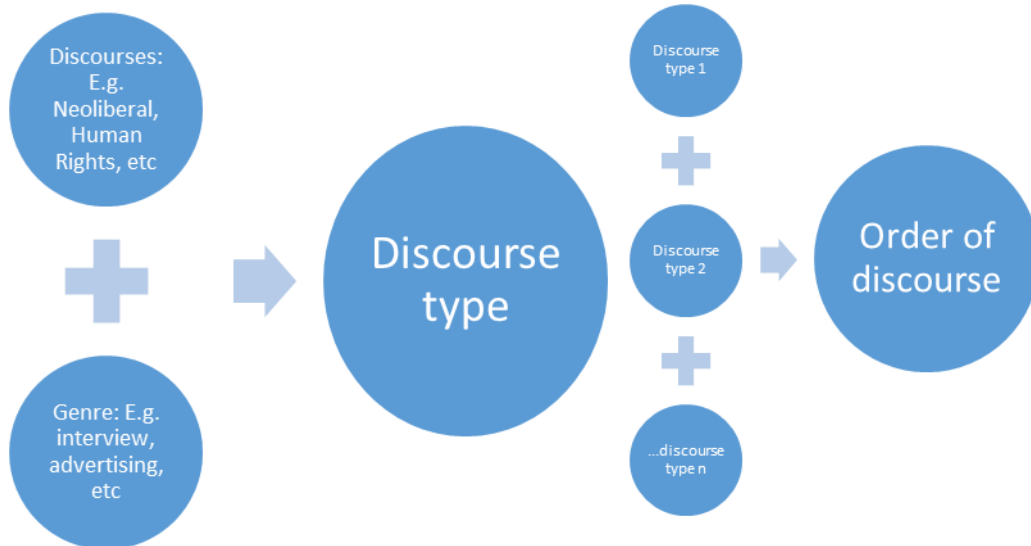


Fig. 2.1 A discourse type is made up of different discourses and genres. An order of discourse is a combination of all discourse types within a field.

The analysis of a communicative event is concerned with three different levels: the “level of discursive practice”, the “level of the text”, and the “level of social

practice”. The level of discursive practice focuses on the discourses and genres used in the production and consumption of the text. The level of the text has the linguistic structure of the text as its focus. The level of social practice focuses on if the discursive practice of the text reproduces or changes the current order of discourse, and how it affects social practice. (Jørgensen & Phillips 2002, p. 69)

When it comes to more specific methods of analysis, the analysis of the discursive practice might entail a study of the process a text goes through before it is published. It might be possible to discover intertextual chains where one text can be found in a lot of different versions. However, Fairclough does most often focus on a text’s “interdiscursivity” and how it “intertextually” draws on other texts. (ibid, pp. 81-82)

Regarding the level of the text, Fairclough suggests several tools such as: ethos, hedging, wording and grammar. Two important grammatical elements for the analysis are “transitivity” and “modality”. (ibid, pp. 83-84) While wording and grammar should be quite self-explanatory, the other tools are outlined in the chart on the following page.

Tool	Explanation (Jørgensen & Phillips 2002, pp. 83-84).
<i>Transitivity</i>	Transitivity is about how the texts are connecting, or not connecting, events or processes with different actors, thereby placing or removing agency or responsibility from the actors.
<i>Modality</i>	Modality concerns the speaker's level of commitment to the given statement. An example of modality is stating something as "truth". Another example of modality is "permission" (for example when a doctor speaks to a patient). Different modalities are used to a different extent by different discourses.
<i>Hedging</i>	It is possible for a speaker to "hedge", making a statement more moderate, by adding words such as "a bit" or "somewhat".
<i>Ethos</i>	"How identities are constructed through language and aspects of the body" (Jørgensen & Phillips 2002, pp. 83).

Fig. 2.2 Different tools for analysing "the level of the text", explained

The analysis of the level of social practice entails both looking at the network of discourses to which the discursive practice belongs, and the wider social, non-discursive practices and relations in which the discursive practice forms part. This entails that the researcher works transdisciplinary and utilises theories outside of discourse analysis. (ibid, pp. 86-87)

2.2 My study and modifications

My study shares most of its theoretical background with Fairclough, such as an understanding of discourses as more or less ideological depending on their engagement with power relations, and that texts are shaped by, but also shape discourses, and can draw from many different discourses. My study is critical in

that it is a critical examination of discursive practices that might hinder or enable the dismantling of power structures that is necessary to fulfil the promise of participatory development. As for engaging with the dominant neoliberal discourse, my study has not done that directly, as it focuses on *formal* or *transformative* discourse on participatory development. However, many previous scholars argue that technical/formal discourse will be captured by neoliberalism, as it is in a position of hegemony (Kothari 2005, pp. 443-444; Miraftab 2004, p. 254; Kamat 2004, p. 171; Briant Carant 2017, p. 34; Cornwall 2010; pp. 5-6).

When it comes to the different levels of analysis, the “level of discursive practice”, the “level of the text”, and the “level of social practice”, my study is somewhat limited as it only involves the study of texts, and not, for example, interviews with the people producing and consuming the texts. However, it does involve texts on different institutional levels, that to an extent “speak to each other”. It should be noted that Fairclough himself has conducted CDA studies where he has focused solely on text documents, for example by showing the marketization of academic discourse by using text documents from different universities and eras (Fairclough 2010, pp. 96-126). Regarding the discursive practice, my study will therefore mostly consist of noticing how the texts might draw intertextually from each other. Regarding the level of social practice, later sections include a historical overview of participatory development, human rights in development, and Sida’s historical engagement with participatory development. I would argue that this is sufficient to ground my discourse analysis and discussion in the larger world of social practices.

As can be understood from the discussion above, my analysis will mainly focus on the level of the text. However, there are some additional differences in my approach compared to Fairclough’s, as I have chosen to operationalise participatory development discourse, from *formal* to *transformative*, depending on how different aspects are presented (see chapter five). A large part of my theory section is utilised to explore these differences in discourse. This kind of operationalisation is not something that Fairclough does. His analysis is often more open-ended, creating vast amounts of analytical text concerning quite short

communicative events, such as a job advertisement or a political talk show (see for example Fairclough 2010, pp. 96-126; 146-159). My reason for creating this kind of operationalisation is the number of documents to be analysed. If I were to follow Fairclough's example, the analysis would be outside the scope of a master thesis. While my operationalisation could be seen as a simplification of the analysis, it should still enable us to detect discursive differences between the organisations. I would argue that these potential results are of greater interest than a "complete" analysis of one or two documents.

I would also argue that my analysis should still be classified as discourse analysis and not content analysis, despite my operationalisation's resemblance of the latter. I am interested in how different aspects are described, whereas content analysis concerns itself with the absence or existence of certain themes, or to which degree a speaker exhibits certain characteristics (Hermann 2008, p. 156). In content analysis, words, phrases or whole documents are coded. For example, Margaret G. Hermann (2008) conducted a study of speeches given by some politicians, counting how many times certain action verbs met a specific criterion (ibid, pp. 157-158). My operationalisation does not allow for this kind of coding and counting. When looking at how the different aspects are presented, I have utilised similar tools as Fairclough, such as ethos, wording and grammar (including hedging, transitivity and modality).

3. Research question and case

This chapter starts with an outline of my research questions, followed by a background section explaining why Sweden is an interesting case when it comes to participatory development discourse. The third section explains my chosen case, Sweden's support to civil society in developing nations, and the fourth and final section describes the documents selected for analysis.

3.1 Research question

As can be understood from the discussion in the method section, the focus of the study is discursive practices that might hinder or enable the dismantling of power structures that is necessary to fulfil the promise of participatory development. My interest in the question arose when I was working as an intern with a small development NGO in Kibera, Nairobi, Kenya, which was owned and run by local youths. The main tasks for interns were applying for projects grants, and reporting to donors. While donors talked positively of participation, the language used in documents still did not seem to fully support the participatory based way in which the NGO was run.

As mentioned in the introduction, my reading of earlier studies of discourse in development led to a framework which outlines how participatory discourse can be seen as ranging from *formal* to *transformative* (see chapter five). As will be outlined in the next section, Swedish development aid seems to be one of the most likely places to find transformative discourse (Cornwall 2009; Esser & Williams, 2014), making it an interesting case. However, discourse seems to be something quite fluid, and might differ between different levels of the development community (Nelson & Wright 1995; Kaufmann 1997; Holzscheiter 2005). I therefore chose to study discursive practices on different levels within Swedish development aid, by focusing on Sweden's "CSO-strategy". This strategy entails support to civil society in developing countries, by channelling funds through some major Swedish CSOs with which Sida, the Swedish

International Development Cooperation Agency, has framework agreement (Sida 2017-03-16). This allows for a study on the government, government agency (Sida) and NGO/CSO level. The research question became:

How are conflicting discourses on participatory development made visible in documents from the Swedish government, Sida and major framework CSOs¹?

3.2 Participatory development and Sida

Why is the Swedish government's support to civil society an interesting case for a study focusing on participatory development discourse? One reason is the long history of its governments agencies' support for participatory development. SIDA (the forerunner of today's Sida) had a policy on participatory development in 1980, which, as we shall see in later sections, was early compared to other actors. SIDA also influenced the World Bank's involvement in participatory development, paying for the research studies commissioned by a research group on participation that had been established within the World Bank in 1990 (Nelson & Wright 1995, pp. 4-5). Sida also financed, together with the UK Department for International Development, the journal *Participatory Learning and Action*, founded in 1987 (Pedwell 2012, p. 169). Sida's engagement with participatory development is even longer and more complicated however, as shown by a study by Andrea Cornwall (2009).

Cornwall's study is based on interviews with (older) Sida officers. It reveals that SIDA had been conducting participatory development since its founding in 1965, without using the terminology. In the 1970s, *popular participation* (folkligt deltagande) was a common practice within SIDA, focusing on cooperative methods and social mobilisation, similar to how the Swedish poor had been politically mobilised, with solidarity being a keyword. An additional keyword that gained traction during the late 1970s was *beneficiaries*, meaning that

¹ The "major framework CSOs" chosen were We Effect and The Swedish Mission Council

those who benefited from development efforts should take part in shaping it. The term beneficiary proved more ambiguous than popular participation however. During the 1980s, a more instrumental approach to participation was adopted. Popular participation was transformed into *community participation*, which was more in line with neoliberal reforms of the 1980s. (Cornwall 2009, pp. 8-12) While SIDA's upper management was more concerned with the macroeconomic agenda than participation, the organisation was still pivotal in getting the World Bank on board with participation in the early 1990s (ibid, pp. 12-14).

In 1995, SIDA merged with some supporting organisations, becoming Sida, and solidarity disappeared from the organisation's mission. Two new approaches to participatory development was introduced during this period, the first being *stakeholder participation*. The stakeholder approach entailed some political analysis of participants, thereby helping to differentiate between them. The second approach was *civil society participation*, which Cornell notes is a very ill-defined term. Sida pressured receiving governments to allow civil society organisations to have influence. However, these organisations were often far from exemplary when it came to participation. (ibid, pp. 14-16) In a radical white paper from 1996, the Swedish government argued for participation as a right, and for increasing poor people's political capabilities. The concept of participation as a right was put forward in another white paper in 1997, that Cornwall argues has been influential internationally. By 2002 Sida had adopted a broader view of development, with participation as a core concept, closely tied to the main goal of poverty reduction. However, Cornwall notes how the language of Sida documents is often vague. (ibid, pp. 17-19)

In 2002, a new government bill strengthened the right-focus of Swedish development aid, stating that it should be based on poor people's experiences and views. Since 2002, the trend has been towards a growing coordination between donors, which worried some of Cornwall's interviewees. They felt that popular participation had gone from being about mobilisation to aid efficiency, and that while poor people was put in the centre of policies, Sida personnel almost never met them anymore. (ibid, pp. 20-22) When Cornwall spoke with Sida desk

officers in 2006, many expressed concerns over what the Paris Declaration on Aid Effectiveness meant for Sida's participatory work. Cornwall argues that while donor harmonisation has positive effects, too much streamlining among donors might hamper institutional innovation. Respondents mentioned how the efficiency focus had made aid more business-like, adding that participation takes time, time that they were no longer taking. (ibid, pp. 22-24)

Cornwall argues that Sida texts often can accommodate different agendas. One of her respondents noted how you can almost always find a policy to support you, whatever you want to do. Cornwall notes however, as do many of her respondents, that Sweden has occupied a special position on the international arena as a defender of human rights, and that poor people's perspective and the right perspective lies at the core of Swedish development policy. Some interviewees feared that this might be lost in donor harmonisation. (ibid, pp. 25-27)

In her conclusion, Cornwall argues that it is more important than ever to talk about participation. The type of social movements that used to be supported by Swedish aid now organise trans-nationally, with participation taking the meaning of social mobilisation against measures taken by harmonised donor groups. She asks how Sida, and other bilateral agencies, might support mobilisation for social justice, often undermined by today's development measures. She argues that Sida might accomplish this by efficiently combining the two main pillars of Swedish development aid; the rights perspective and poor people's own experiences. This includes putting participation forward as a right of citizens that government and donors must enable, connecting human rights and participation in such a way that poor people gain not only a "voice" but entitlements. While there is tension between human rights and country ownership, Cornwall argues that Swedish aid has always put human rights first. (ibid, pp. 27-28) If Sida goes down this path, she argues that "it may again become the beacon for progressive approaches to development" (ibid, p. 28).

From Cornwall's outline of Sida's history, one can draw that conclusion that Sida and Swedish development aid constitutes one of the most likely cases to

still find a “transformative approach” to participatory development and human rights. This conclusion is strengthened by a study by Daniel E. Esser and Benjamin J. Williams (2014). They used datamining software to study documents from the World Bank, the UNDP, and some bilateral organisations. The focus was on their use of “poverty” or the more politically charged “inequality”. Their results indicate that Sida, along with some other bilateral organisations (DFID, CIDA), are furthering the progressive, “inequality” agenda. (Esser & Williams, 2014, pp. 196-197)

However, as mentioned, and as will be described more in the theory section, discourse is fluid and might not be the same of different levels of the development aid community. Cornwall has also noted that Sida policies allow for a range of different interpretations, and it might be interesting how to see how different framework organisations understand these policies. I chose to focus on Sweden’s support to civil society in developing countries through major Swedish CSOs, to capture government, Sida, and CSO level.

3.3 Swedish support to civil society in developing countries

Some of Sweden’s support to civil societies in developing countries, 1,78 billion kronor in 2017, is channelled by Sida through 19 larger Swedish CSOs, with which they have long-term framework agreements (Sida 2017b). It should be noted that this constitutes a small part of Swedish development aid. In 2015 (for which all figures are in) 20,2 billion kronor of the development aid budget went to receiving asylum seekers in Sweden, 18,9 billion to multilateral organisations through the foreign affairs department and 10,8 billion in bilateral aid through Sida (Sida, 2017a). While the support to the Sida “framework CSOs” make up only a small part of the total aid, this support is earmarked for civil society. We should therefore expect to find an engagement with participatory development here. As mentioned, studying some of the larger framework CSOs would also

enable us to see discursive differences between different institutional levels of the Swedish development aid community, as well as between the CSOs.

The four largest receivers of Sida's framework grants are, in order, Forum Syd, We Effect, Save the Children and The Swedish Mission Council (Sida 2017b). I have chosen to not include Save the Children, as they are part of Save the Children International, and an analysis of their development aid discourse would constitute a master thesis in its own. As it turned out, because of constraints in writing space and time, only two CSOs could be studied. The CSO that was deselected was Forum Syd, for reasons outlined below. Forum Syd believes that poverty has structural causes, and that fighting poverty is not solely, or mostly, about achieving economic growth, but rather redistribution (Forum Syd 2012, p. 4). One might therefore label them a "left-wing" organisation. It should however be noted that Forum Syd has been chosen so provide a special function, as small Swedish development NGOs that are not member of any framework CSOs can apply for project grants from Forum Syd (Sida 2016, p. 16). We Effect was founded in 1958, and much of their work is based on cooperative organisation. They argue that cooperatives were a fundamental part of the modernisation of Sweden, and they therefore support cooperatives and other democratic membership organisations in developing countries (We Effect1). This could be likened to Cornell's description of the early, "left-wing" SIDA. The Swedish Mission Council describes themselves as a forum for churches and Christian organisations, and they have 35 member organisations (SMC 2017). They can, unsurprisingly, be described as a faith-based NGO.

Forum Syd might, owing to its special function within the framework agreement system, be expected to have discursive practices more in line with Sida's, which renders them somewhat less interesting as a study case. We Effect and SMC seem more representative for the 19 framework CSOs. It should also be noted that while SMC is a faith-based CSO, while Forum Syd and We Effect could be described as left-wing. As we shall see in the theory chapter, based on the results of earlier research, it would be interesting to study both a left-wing and a faith-based organisation. When choosing between Forum Syd and We Effect, I

deemed it more interesting to study We Effect. My main reason for this choice was that I had obtained documents from them that are not publicly available. However, my previous experience of applying and reporting to Forum Syd helped guide the selection of documents from SMC and We Effect.

As will be discussed in the theory section, faith-based and left-wing NGOs tend to reject rights-based approaches (Miller 2017). It was therefore interesting to see if these organisations proved to be an exception, since, as Cornell notes, Swedish development aid has traditionally been deeply concerned with human rights.

3.4 Documents used

The following section describes which document were chosen from the government, Sida and the framework CSOs, and the reasons for choosing them. It should be noted that with the framework CSOs I chose to focus on documents regarding the application and planning process for projects by smaller development CSOs, member organisations in the cases of the Swedish Mission Council and We Effect. This kind of documents were chosen to come closer to the ground level of the Swedish development support.

3.4.1 Government documents

I have chosen two government documents that seems to be the most important in guiding the CSO strategy. These are the current government's decision on the form for Swedish support to civil society in developing countries through Swedish CSOs in 2016-2022 (UD2016/10135/IU), and the general policy document support to civil society in developing countries (UD 09.061). The policy document is from 2009 but is still in use.

3.4.2 Sida documents

Two documents from Sida has been chosen. The first is Sida's current guideline for framework CSOs (Sida 2016). The second one is Sida's suggestions to government about the CSO-strategy (the framework agreement policies) for 2016-2019 (Sida 2015). An analysis of these two documents allows the study of two different aspects of Sida's discourse. In one document Sida gives suggestions to government about their directives, and in the other they interpret these directives and give guidance to the framework CSOs.

3.4.3 The Swedish Mission Council documents

The Swedish Mission Council (SMC) has a similar application process to Forum Syd, but only its member organisations can apply for project grants (SMC 2016c). I tried to select similar documents as the ones used when applying and reporting to Forum Syd, with five documents ended up being chosen. Three are documents used during the applications process. The first is an outline to SMC's view on development cooperation (SMC 2008), the second one is criteria for fund allocations (SMC 2012b), and the third is the instructions for application (SMC 2016b). I also chose to include the instructions for final reports (SMC 2012a). Finally, I included SMC's policy for a human rights perspective (SMC 2015), as it is presented as the starting point for SMC's "toolbox" for development projects (SMC 2016a).

3.4.4 We Effect documents

We Effect does not have the same open application process on their website as Forum Syd and SMC. However, after contacting them, I was allowed access to some documents, of which five where found suitable for my analysis. The first is We Effect's *Programme Development Instructions 2018-2021* (We Effect 2017b), and the second one is the *Guidelines for We Effect's application of The Human Rights-Based Approach* (We Effect, 2016). The third is the *Partner Organisation Scanning Format* (We Effect 2017c). Finally, two supporting documents were

chosen; an annex to the programme development instructions outlining an analytical tool for multi-dimensional poverty (We Effect, 2017a), and the *Risk Management Guidelines* (We Effect 2014).

4. Theory and background

This chapter serves three different purposes: introducing development discourse as a field, providing justification for the relevance of my study, and outlining arguments to help discern conflicting discourses on participatory development (*formal* or *transformative*). As noted earlier, Cornwall argues that Sida could support mobilisation for social justice by combining the human rights and participatory perspectives, putting participation forward as a right and using participation in a way to let poor people gain entitlements, and not merely a “voice”. I have therefore included a section on human rights in development, and how it might affect participatory development discourse.

The first section introduces the reader to some key thoughts and scholars on development discourse. The second section outlines arguments that are of importance as justification for my study. The third and fourth sections start with outlining the history of participatory development and human rights, while their second parts contain a discussion on arguments in order to discern aspects of formal and transformative discourse.

4.1 Development discourse

Why is it important to focus on discourse in international development studies (IDS)? This section presents the arguments of some influential scholars in IDS, to hopefully answer this question. A strong argument for development as discourse is put forward by Arturo Escobar. In his influential book from 1995, *Encountering Development: The Making and Unmaking of the Third World*, Escobar argues that development should be seen as a discourse, making some things natural and other unthinkable. It controls who can talk about poverty and “development” issues and how, and the criteria used (Escobar 1995, pp. 39-41). It makes the population of some countries view themselves as “underdeveloped”, thereby accepting interventions that can be seen as a continuation of colonialism (ibid, pp. 6-9). A somewhat similar argument is made by James Ferguson. In his 1994 book *The*

Anti-Politics Machine: ‘Development,’ Depoliticization, and Bureaucratic Power in Lesotho, Fergusson argues that development functions as an “anti-politics machine”, and that development studies, while seemingly scientific, actually live in a fantasy world and do not represent reality truthfully. This is done to justify the spending of resources provided by governments (della Faille 2011, pp. 229-230).

How is that development discourse still seems so influential, despite failures to fulfil its promises, and critics like Escobar and Fergusson? Gilbert Rist tries to explain this staying power of development. In his 1996 book *The History of Development: from Western Origins to Global Faith* Rist describes development as an element in “the religion of modernity”. This is a kind of modern “secular” religiosity, set apart from ideology by not being open for debate, and which compels its believers to act in certain ways. Development becomes a belief in certain practices that comes together despite their contradictions and meagre results (Rist 2014, pp. 21-24). However, discourse in development seems not to only serve the powerful, as James C. Scott notices. In his studies of peasants, he has shown how their resistance to governments and local elites often has taken the form a “war of words”, a day-to-day struggle using metaphors, folk-lore and symbolic inversions. This resistance is subtler and disguised, therefore making it safer than open subordination. (della Faille 2011, pp. 227-229)

Another important part of development discourse, and discourse studies in general, is how the “other” is presented. Chandra Mohanty, drawing from a feminist perspective, has been influential in IDS. In her oft-cited article *Under Western Eyes: Feminist Scholarship and Colonial Discourses* (1984), she argues that development focused feminist scholars have produced a homogenous, oppressed and objectified “Third World Woman”, based on an ahistorical and clichéd understanding of the third world. This separates the “Third World Woman” from the much more nuanced understanding of western women (Mohanty 1984, pp. 338; 353). Another influential scholar is Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak. In her 1988 article, *Can the Subaltern Speak?* she discusses how western

discourse present the Third World subject, and concludes, in the end, that the subaltern cannot speak (Spivak 1988, pp. 271; 308). This discussion is taken up by, among others, studies that focus on how NGOs' marketing represent the people they aim to help (see for example Rideout 2011; Tschirhart 2015).

4.2 Fluidity of discourse

Why is it interesting to analyse discourse on different levels among the “upper levels” of the Swedish development aid community? As outlined below, there seem to be discursive differences between different levels of the development hierarchy, and a lack of research “studying up”.

From Scott's findings of peasants' resistance in the form a “war of words”, one might conclude that development discourse is not static, and that there are many different discourses within development. This argument is made by several authors. An example is Anna Robinson-Pant (2001), who argues that Escobar and others have spent most of their time attacking the dominant discourse instead of exploring alternative discourses (Robinson-Pant 2001, p. 323). Felix Banda and Omondi Oketch (2009) presents an example of this fluidity of discourse, drawing on a more localised study of rural areas in Kenya. Their findings indicate that Western development discourse has not colonised local discourse. Instead, the local discourse has appropriated part of the global discourse. This leads to an important role for “new special activists” who understand both local and global discourse, and changing power relations between development practitioners and less educated local people (Banda & Oketch 2009, pp. 178-179). Another example is provided by an article by Claire Mercer (2002) on women participation among the Chagga people in Tanzania. She argues that local Chagga development discourse has appropriated parts of national and global discourse (Mercer 2002, pp. 124-125).

This fluidity of discourse seems to be present not only on the “ground level” of development projects. Nici Nelson and Susan Wright (1995) draw on a PhD thesis by Turbyne on organisations in Guatemala, and state that even within a

single organisation “participation” is understood to have different meanings on different levels of the organisational hierarchy (Nelson & Wright 1995, p. 7). One of the few examples of a scholar “researching up”, focusing on the top levels of a development aid community, is Georgia Kaufmann’s (1997) study of British developers in politics, government agencies and NGOs. She studied the different developers’ personal reasons to get involved in development (Kaufmann 1997, pp. 108-109). She found a difference in motivation between those driven by professional goals as opposed to those driven by political reasons, with those driven by politics most often found in NGOs. She also found that the interviewees used different discourses depending on their position within the development community (ibid, pp. 116-117). We can also see differences in discourse based on how different development “buzzwords”, that sustain development discourse, are used, as outlined by a 2010 book edited by Andrea Cornwall and Deborah Eade (Cornwall 2010, p. 1). While many buzzwords have radical origins, seeking to transform development relationships, Cornwall argues that they have been captured by dominant discourse and served political processes such as neoliberalism (ibid, pp. 5-6). Some buzzwords also reinforce the technical nature of development, for example the idea of “best practice”, which mostly disregards localised situations and dynamics (ibid, p. 9). However, Cornwall notes that it might be possible to view the incorporation of these words into the dominant discourse as the first step towards more transformative changes (ibid, pp. 12-16).

As mentioned, Kaufmann’s study seems to be one of the few studies that entailed “studying up” at the upper levels of the development community. This lack of research is noted by other scholars. Giles Mohan (2001), focusing on studies of participatory development, notes that most of them have “studied down” on the local level. He argues that more transformative approaches would also entail “studying up”, on the global system and transnational organisations (Mohan 2001, pp. 164-167). This critique is shared by Glyn Williams (2004), who argues that participation entails studying the practices of development institutions (Williams 2004, p. 571). Anna Holzscheiter (2005) argues that non-material, discursive power is NGOs’ main asset in global governance discussions. She calls

for future research on NGOs' discursive practices that focuses on particular social situations, such as inside a specific organisation (Holzscheiter 2005, pp. 723; 744-746).

My study of the Swedish government policies, Sida and major framework CSOs is clearly "studying up". While it is not focusing on a single organisation, the chain of Swedish support to civil society through the framework CSOs might be seen as a particular social situation. Based on Nelson and Wright's arguments, it is likely that different understandings of participation and human rights will be found. Per Kauffman, we might expect these potential differences to stem from actors' different backgrounds and positions within the chain of development support. If Holzscheiter is to be believed, the main assets of the CSOs, when dealing with the more resource rich Sida, are non-material and discursive. Potential resistance to some of Sida's policies might therefore take on a discursive character, like the peasants of Scott's studies. However, while it seems clear that discourse within development is fluid, one might still follow Escobar and Rist and focus on dominant development discourse, and how it interacts with dominant social practices.

4.3 Participatory development discourse

Participatory development, per Samuel Hickey and Giles Mohan (2004), "essentially concerns the exercise of popular agency in relation to development" (Hickey & Mohan 2004, p. 3). Discussions on participatory development have often focused on its mainstreaming in the 1990s, and the spread of "Participatory Rural Appraisal" techniques, but Hickey and Mohan argue that it has a much longer history. They trace its origin to community development in the British colonies in the 1940s and 50s, which continued after independence in the 1960s and 70s. This was followed by the North American focus on political participation in the 1960s, and the "emancipatory participation" proposed by radical Southern scholars in the 1960s and 70s, as well as Catholic "liberation theology" during the same era. During the 1970s until the 1990s, proponents of "alternative

development” argued that participation was a citizenship right. From the 1980s up until the time of their writing, “populist/participation in development” was mainstreamed, going from being put forward by NGOs, to the World Bank and UN agencies. Here the focus was on participation in specific projects, rather than citizen and community participation. From the mid-1990s onwards, the World Bank has been promoting the “social capital” approach, where participation is seen as a right and obligation of citizenship. (ibid, pp. 5-9) Some authors trace participatory development to the radical roots of alternative development. Pablo Alejandro Leal (2010) points to the Marxist roots of Participatory Action Research, and how its goal was not development but radical transformation of the economic, social and cultural structure that reproduced poverty. Development was not necessarily excluded, but should come from, and facilitate, social transformation (Alejandro Leal 2010, p. 91). With the different understandings of participatory development origins, it should come as no surprise that there exist conflicting discourses of the approach. This is discussed below.

What conflicting discourses can be found in participatory development? The following section outlines critiques of the dominant, formal approach to participatory development, and suggestions for a more transformative approach. While not all of these studies have been focusing on discourse, they might still be used to discern how formal or transformative discourse represents different aspects of participatory development.

As mentioned, Fairclough argues that a discourse is more or less ideological depending on how it affects power relations. A common critique of participatory development is that it simplifies the situation for project interventions, hiding power relations, thereby limiting transformative changes or even strengthening existing inequality (Kothari 2001, pp. 151-152; Cooke & Kothari 2001, pp. 3-8; Alejandro Leal 2010, p. 95; Davis 2009, p. 183). An example of this is the aforementioned study by Claire Mercer on participation among the Chagga people. She shows how high-status women are overrepresented in women groups, which helps them to present themselves as perfect development subjects, thereby strengthening their own position (Mercer

2002, pp. 124-125). Uma Kothari (2001) argues that dominant participatory discourse's view on power is based on binaries such as North and South, uppers and lowers, professional knowledge and local knowledge. These dichotomies facilitate the hiding of local power relations (Kothari 2001, pp. 140-141). Several scholars argue that local power relations must be recognised and engaged with (Cornwall 2003, p. 1338; Mohan 2001, pp. 164-167; Mercer 2002, p. 125).

Another critique on participatory development's simplification of complex issues regards its focus on the local. Giles Mohan and Kristian Stokke (2000) argue that participatory development has focused too much on the local, simplifying the local situation, disconnecting it from national and global forces (Mohan & Stokke, 2000, pp. 263-264). Claire Mercer and Glyn Williams reference them and agree with their critique (Mercer 2002, p. 125; Williams 2004, p. 570). Williams focuses on the critique by Ferguson that development is an "anti-politics machine". He suggests that participation can be re-politicised if empowerment is seen as ongoing and engaging political issues on many different scales (Williams 2004, pp. 570-573). J.P. Singh and Mikkel Flyverbom (2016) identify a "mobilization discourse" within participatory development, that emphasises the importance of transnational advocacy networks (Singh & Flyverbom 2016, pp. 695-696). The difference between formal and transformative approaches does not only concern space, but also time. As some of Andrea Cornwall's respondents at Side noticed, successful participation takes time, but today's (formal) business like and efficiency focused discourse does not allow for this (Cornwall 2009, pp. 22-24). Williams argue, as mentioned, that empowerment must instead be seen as an ongoing process, and not limited to one specific movement in time (Williams 2004, p. 572).

After the discussion of different representations of power relations, localism and time, we now turn to discourse on the role of participation itself. As Singh and Flyverbom note, issues such as participation are not pre-existing, but shaped by discourse (Singh & Flyverbom 2016, p. 693). So, what is the purpose of participation? In a more formal approach, such as that of the World Bank, development actors are encouraged to understand the needs and subjectivities of

poor people, to see how it might influence development projects (Alejandro Leal 2010, p. 93; Singh & Flyverbom 2016, pp. 694-695). Harry Taylor (2001) likens participatory development to participatory management, and notices how participatory management discourse closes the door to more fundamental participation by presenting conservative measurers as radical (Taylor 2001, pp. 130-131). Many scholars argue that a more transformative approach would entail using participation for popular mobilisation and capacity building to change unequal power structures (Mohan 2001, pp. 164-167; Williams 2004, pp. 570-573; Alejandro Leal 2010, p. 98). From this follows different views on the nature of participatory methods. Kothari argues that dominant (formal) development discourse, technicalises participation and professionalises participatory development methods, a streamlining that limits emancipatory approaches (Kothari 2005, pp. 437-438; Cleaver 1999, p. 608). Alejandro Leal mentions the World Bank's 1996 "Participation Source Book" as one such simplified guide to participation (Alejandro Leal 2010, p. 93). A more transformative approach would entail adapting methods to local political and social circumstances (Mohan 2001, pp. 164-167; Cornwall 2003, pp. 1337-1338; Cleaver, 1999, p. 609; Williams 2004, p. 572).

An additional discursive difference is how local people are presented. Formal discourse might talk about local people in terms of beneficiaries, who should participate to share the burden of development (Cornwall 2009, p. 11), or to give their input to development practitioners (Alejandro Leal 2010, p. 93). It is argued that a more transformative approach would entail viewing local people as the enablers and driving force behind mobilisation and projects (Cornwall 2009, pp. 27-28; Syokau Mwanzia & Craig Strathdee 2010, p. 167). The view on local people connects to the role of development practitioners. In formal approaches, they are often assumed to be the initiator and driving force behind projects (Williams 2004, p. 571; Alejandro Leal 2010, p. 93; Cooke & Kothari 2001, pp. 3-8; Kothari 2005, pp. 437-438). A more transformative vision for development practitioners' role can be borrowed from Tanya Murray Li (2007). She calls for an approach that she calls "ethnographic engagement", where development

practitioners constantly re-evaluate their own position, giving their suggestions for improvement based on the local population's ideas (Murray Li 2007, pp. 275-288).

4.4 Connections with the rights-based approach

Peter Uvin (2010) notes that human rights incorporation into mainstream development is a quite recent phenomenon, occurring in the 1990s after the end of the cold war (Uvin 2010, p. 163). He sees the first real connection between development and human rights to be the discussion of “right to development”, initiated by Third World countries in the 1970s, in an attempt to go beyond the First World's narrow focus on political and civil human rights. In 1986 the right to development was adopted as (non-binding) UN general assembly resolution, but Uvin argues that this has had barely any impact on real-life practices. (ibid, pp. 164-165)

From the 1990s onwards, bilateral agencies and international organisations such as the World Bank and the UNDP started talking about development in connection with human rights. While this change of rhetoric might be seen as positive first step, Uvin notes how (economic) development is equated with the fulfilment of human rights. This rhetoric hides potential conflicts between human rights and economic development projects, and therefore it might just serve to preserve the status quo. (ibid, pp. 165-167) Uvin is more hopeful about the “right-based approach” (RBA), mostly put forward by NGOs. He points out that rights require accountability, which entails political struggle. It also entails looking at how development work respects the human rights, which includes working participatory. While Uvin notes that some NGOs take the implications of the approach seriously, he still points to the risk that it might, for the most part, simply result in only “nice statements”. (ibid, 170-171) The different level of commitment should not come as a surprise since, as Hannah Miller (2017) points out, there is a myriad of approaches that are labelled RBA (Miller 2017, p. 63). With a large number of different approaches labelled RBA, it

should come as no surprise that there are different discourses on human rights in development. Some of these discursive differences, which are relevant to participatory development discourse, are brought up below.

A key issue human rights discourse, which can be connected to participatory development, is accountability. In a formal approach accountability is mostly brought up to put pressure on receiving governments (Cornwall & Nyamu-Musembi 2005, p. 9). In a more transformative approach it is recognised that accountability would require political mobilisation of right-holders (Uvin 2010, pp. 171-173; Fukuda-Parr 2012, pp. 856-858), and working towards accountability for non-state actors, something that is lacking today (Cornwall & Nyamu-Musembi 2005, pp. 9-10; 14-15). This brings up the aspect of development organisations. In formal discourse they are either hidden, or viewed as simply benevolent for helping people fulfil their rights (Uvin 2010, pp. 165-167; Cornwall & Nyamu-Musembi 2005, p. 9). In a transformative approach, there should be a focus on human rights in all their actions, and not just specific projects, and an understanding that they should be held accountable if they fail to respect the human rights of local people (Uvin 2010, pp. 171-173; Cornwall & Nyamu-Musembi 2005, pp. 14-15).

The human rights perspective might also influence the view on local people's and development practitioners' roles. In a more formal approach, local people are basically viewed as people who have rights, without going further (Uvin 2010, p. 166; Davis 2009, p. 176). However, as Uvin argues, if rights will have any meaning there must be way to ensure accountability. A transformative approach would therefore entail viewing local people as in need of mobilisation to claim their rights (Uvin 2010, pp. 171-173; Fukuda-Parr 2012, pp. 856-858). In formal human rights discourse, development practitioners' role would mostly entail informing poor people of their rights vis-à-vis their governments (Uvin 2010, p. 166; Cornwall & Nyamu-Musembi 2005, p. 9). It is argued that they instead should be the enablers of local discussions about rights, and helping people mobilise to claim their rights (Uvin 2010, pp. 171-173; Cornwall 2009, pp. 27-28).

The human rights perspective also affects the how the role of participation is viewed. As noted in the earlier section, in formal discourse participation might be seen as a tool to help development practitioners gain access to poor people's views on projects. In a more transformative discourse, participation is instead seen as an absolute right in development work (Uvin 2010, pp. 171-173; Cornwall 2009, pp. 27-28; Markus 2014, pp. 369-370; 378; 389; Davis 2009, p. 181).

Something that is of special interest for my study, as I will be looking at some different NGOs and their discursive practices in relation to human rights, is a study by Hannah Miller. She has conducted a study where she has compared some RBA embracing NGOs with some which have rejected RBA (Miller 2017, pp. 61-62). She looked at faith-based NGOs, where earlier studies had found that of the 40% of the world's top 30 development NGOs that had religious affiliation, none had adopted RBA. She also looked at some (left-wing) political NGOs, something that had not been studied at all before in this context (ibid, p. 65-66). She found that the rejection of RBA among the faith-based NGOs stemmed from differences in values, including promotion of western individualism, and putting rights above duties. Among the political NGOs, rejection stemmed from an understanding that RBA promoted a normative liberal discourse. However, both groups sometimes used right talk in campaigning. The faith-based NGOs used them when their *values* coincided with human rights, while the political NGOs used it when human rights could regulate the *power* of financial elites and global institutions. (ibid, pp. 73-75)

5. Theoretical framework and operationalisation

From the discussion in the “earlier research” section it could be argued that participatory development discourse can range from *formal* to *transformative*. While many of the authors covered in earlier sections would argue that formal discourse allows itself to be captured by neoliberal discourse, I have chosen to not call it neoliberal, as it is not neoliberal per se. This chapter will outline my operationalisation, explaining how different *aspects*, that is to say actors and processes, might be represented by formal or transformative discourse. It should be noted that these are extreme cases, and most discursive practices will fall somewhere in between. However, they will help illuminate what I am looking for in the texts.

In participatory development discourse, one central aspect is the *role of participation*. In the more formal discourse development actors are encouraged to understand the needs and subjectivities of poor people as input for projects (Alejandro Leal 2010, p. 93; Singh & Flyverbom 2016, pp. 694-695). In a transformative approach participation is used for popular mobilisation in order to change unequal power structures (Mohan 2001, pp. 164-167; Williams 2004, pp. 570-573; Alejandro Leal 2010, p. 98), and to claim rights and demand accountability (Uvin 2010, pp. 171-173; Fukuda-Parr 2012, pp. 856-858). From this follows different views on the nature of participatory methods. In formal development discourse, participation is technicalised, its methods simplified and professionalised (Kothari 2005, pp. 437-438; Cleaver 1999, p. 608; Alejandro Leal 2010, p. 93; Davis 2009, p. 181). In a more transformative approach methods are adapted to local political and social circumstances (Mohan 2001, pp. 164-167; Cornwall 2003, pp. 1337-1338; Cleaver, 1999, p. 609; Williams 2004, p. 572). A more transformative discourse also presents participation as an absolute right in development (Uvin 2010, pp. 171-173; Cornwall 2009, pp. 27-28; Markus 2014, pp. 369-370; 378; 389; Davis 2009, p. 181).

Another aspect is the view on the roles of *development practitioners and local people*. In formal discourse, development practitioners are often assumed to be the initiator and driving force behind projects (Williams 2004, p. 571; Alejandro Leal 2010, p. 93; Cooke & Kothari 2001, pp. 3-8; Kothari 2005, pp. 437-438). In formal discourse, local people are seen as beneficiaries, participating to share the burden of development (Cornwall 2009, p. 11), to give their input to development practitioners (Alejandro Leal 2010, p. 93), or be informed of their rights vis-à-vis their governments by development practitioners (Uvin 2010, p. 166; Cornwall & Nyamu-Musembi 2005, p. 9). A more transformative discourse would present local people as the enablers and driving force behind mobilisation and projects (Cornwall 2009, pp. 27-28; Syokau Mwanzia & Craig Strathdee 2010, p. 167). Here development practitioners are seen more as advisors, constantly re-evaluating their own position and giving their suggestions based on the local population's ideas (Murray Li 2007, pp. 275-288). They would also be seen as enablers of local discussions about rights, and helping people mobilise to claim their rights (Uvin 2010, pp. 171-173; Cornwall 2009, pp. 27-28).

Another aspect is the *view on power structures*. As Kothari argues, (formal) participatory discourse views power in terms of binaries such as North and South, (Kothari 2001, pp. 140-141), which hides local power relations (Kothari 2001, pp. 151-152; Mercer 2002, pp. 124-125; Cooke & Kothari 2001, pp. 3-8; Alejandro Leal 2010, p. 95). In transformative discourse, differences among local and poor people would be recognised and seen as something that should be engaged with (Cornwall 2003, p. 1338; Mohan 2001, pp. 164-167; Mercer 2002, p. 125). The view on power structures also depends on localisation. Formal participatory discourse is criticised for focusing too much on the local situation, simplifying it and disconnecting it from national and global forces (Mohan & Stokke, 2000, pp. 263-264; Mercer 2002, p. 125; Williams 2004, p. 570). More transformative discourse would recognise the effects of national and global forces, seeing it as something to be engaged with (Williams 2004, pp. 570-573). A combined view of these two aspects gives us an understanding of the view on global structures, were in formal discourse it would either be disregarded

or treated as something “God-given”, while in transformative discourse it would be acknowledged and seen as something to be engaged with.

An additional aspect, that connects to power structures, is *accountability*, brought up in formal discourse to put pressure on receiving governments (Cornwall & Nyamu-Musembi 2005, p. 9). As we just noted however, this often would entail political mobilisation to make accountability a reality. A more transformative approach would also entail working towards accountability for non-state actors (ibid, pp. 9-10). An example of such actors is development organisations, which are hidden in formal discourse, or viewed as benevolent for helping people fulfil their rights (Uvin 2010, pp. 165-167; Cornwall & Nyamu-Musembi 2005, p. 9). In a transformative discourse, there is a focus on human rights in all the organisations’ actions, with an understanding that they should be held accountable for failure to respect the human rights (Uvin 2010, pp. 171-173; Cornwall & Nyamu-Musembi 2005, pp. 14-15).

A final important aspect is the *time perspective* when discussing participatory projects. It has been argued that successful participation takes time, something that today’s efficiency focused discourse does not allow for (Cornwall 2009, pp. 22-24). Transformative discourse presents empowerment as an ongoing process, spanning over a longer time (Williams 2004, p. 572). The different aspects are outlined in the chart below.

Aspect	Formal	Transformative
<i>The role of participation</i>	-A way to let local people give their input on development projects. -Methods static, presented as a toolkit to be used similarly everywhere.	-Mobilisation and capacity building to transform unequal power structures. -Methods adaptable to local circumstances. -A fundamental right in development.

<i>Development practitioners and local people</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Development practitioners as initiators and driving force behind projects. -Local people seen as beneficiaries, that made to participate to give their opinion, and share the burden of development, and be informed of their rights. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -The local people as initiators and driving force behind projects. -Development practitioners' role is as advisors to local people's projects, and enabling local discussion about rights.
<i>View on power structures</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Binary: "uppers and lowers", "North and South". Local power structures hidden. -Global power structures hidden, a project's location is presented as disconnected from national and global forces. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Stratified, different power levels within groups such as "the poor". Should be explored and engaged with. - Encouraged to explore how national and global forces interact with the local, and how they be engaged with.
<i>Accountability</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Seen as applying to states, used to pressure receiving states. -Development organisations are often made invisible, presented as benevolent in helping people become aware of their rights. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Something that must be demanded, often requiring political mobilisation. Involving more than just states. - Development organisations should respect human rights in all their actions, not only in a specific project setting, and be held accountable.
<i>Time perspective</i>	Short-term.	Long-term.

Fig. 5.1 Chart outlining how different aspects are represented in formal and transformative participatory development discourse

6. Analysis

This chapter is divided into five parts. The first four parts contains analyses of documents from the government, Sida, The Swedish Mission Council, and We Effect. The last part is a summarised analysis of all the documents.

6.1 Analysis of government texts

This chapter starts with an analysis of the Swedish government's more general "Policy for support to civil society in developing countries" from 2009, followed by the current "Government decision on the CSO strategy 2016-2022" from 2016. The chapter ends with a short concluding discussion of the two documents.

6.1.1 Policy for support to civil society in developing countries

It should be noted that the policy is for Swedish support to civil society in developing countries overall, and not the CSO-strategy specifically. As such, the text is less concerned with the level of individual projects. The text serves both to outline the policy and explain the reasoning for it. We can observe this argumentation in the modality of the text, where it finds support in an implicit consensus, such as in the introductory statement "Civil society organisations are now recognized as self-evident players in development cooperation" [My translation] (UD 09.061, p. 9).

When turning to the text's discourse on participation, it should be noted that the text does not bring up participatory methods as such. However, we can still discern a proposed *role of participation*, here in the shape of cooperation with civil society in developing countries. Civil society's ability to mobilise poor people to claim their rights and achieve democratic reforms is mentioned as something important (ibid, pp. 11; 17; 19). It is mentioned once that support should be given to civil society actors that confront lingering undemocratic power structures (ibid, p. 21). It is also mentioned that civil society can help put pressure on undemocratic governments (ibid, p. 18). However, power structures are not

discussed in terms of inequality, and the mobilising power of CSOs are mostly discussed in less confrontational terms. Examples of this includes presenting them as “voice bearers” (ibid, pp. 7; 12-13; 24), acting as proposer, counterweight and democratizing power towards government (ibid, pp. 14; 17-18), being a “school in democracy” (ibid, p. 18), opinion formers and inspector of those in power (ibid, p. 20). Participation is put forward as something central (ibid, pp. 11; 16-17), but not as an absolute right in development.

As can be seen in the above paragraph, there is an emphasis on civil society as a counterweight to government power. However, the *view on power structures* is not binary as in “government” and “poor people”. Power differences among “poor people” are acknowledged, as when it is emphasised that special support should be given to organise groups that are discriminated based on ethnicity, gender, religion or sexuality (ibid, p. 17). It is mentioned that traditional power structures might be problematic (ibid, p. 21), and that analyses of social and political power structures should be conducted before giving support (ibid, p. 22). There is less discussion of potential new unequal power structures however, as can be seen when it is argued that trust between different groups in civil society should be supported, as this helps enabling economic growth (ibid, p. 16). Here economic growth is seen as implicitly good, and there is no discussion in the text of its positive or negative effect on unequal power structures. There is also a lack of discussion on global power structures, even if it is mentioned that support to civil society is focused on the global or regional level (ibid, pp. 9-10; 24). However, it seems clear that local projects are not seen as disconnected from the national or global level.

The text is clearer when it comes to the roles of *the local people and development practitioners*. While the text does not discuss in detail how individual projects should be run, it is stated in the overall target of the policy that Swedish support should “create conditions for poor people to improve their living conditions” [My translation] (ibid, p. 12). This seems to indicate a view on local people as people with agency, and they also seem to be viewed as the initiators and driving force, if we accept that the local CSOs represent the people. This

interpretation of the local CSOs seems to be valid, as it is emphasized that the organisations should be representative and anchored among local people (ibid, pp. 7; 12; 19-21; 23). Local ownership is mentioned as important (ibid, pp. 20; 24-25), and the general discussion seems to focus on which (pre-existing) organisations that should be supported. The independence of the CSOs is emphasized, and micromanagement by donors is brought up as something detrimental to this goal (ibid, p. 24). From this, one might draw the conclusion that local people are presented as the initiators and driving force behind projects. This picture is reinforced when we turn to development practitioners from Swedish CSOs. The CSO-strategy is only explicitly mentioned once (ibid, p. 26), and the text generally focuses on CSOs in developing countries (the “local partners” in the CSO-strategy). However, it is mentioned that Swedish CSOs have a special potential to help develop the capacity of CSOs in developing countries, and that they should do so based on the local CSOs’ priorities (ibid, p. 17). This seems to indicate an advisory role. However, the sparse mentioning of Swedish CSOs has consequences for the aspect of accountability, as outlined below.

As mentioned when discussing the role of participation, there is a focus throughout the text on states’ *accountability* (ibid, pp. 12; 14; 16; 20), and we have seen that it is understood that this accountability might require mobilization. While the focus is on states’ accountability, it also mentioned that Swedish aid should have accountability as a guiding principle (ibid, p. 11), and the accountability of local CSOs to their target groups is mentioned (ibid, p. 24). While it seems clear that accountability is viewed as applying to more than just states, this is not discussed in relation to Swedish CSOs. Swedish CSOs, when mentioned, are presented as having as a special potential to help with capacity building in local partner CSOs (ibid, p. 17). The sparse mentioning of Swedish CSO seems to present them as benevolent, which can be contrasted with the longer and more nuanced discussion on local CSOs. For example, it is mentioned that a local CSO might be representative and with a larger membership base, but still hold less legitimate values (ibid, p. 22). There is no similar discussion of Swedish CSOs.

The final aspect, the text's *time perspective*, is also somewhat ambiguous, and not clearly discussed in the text. It is mentioned that support to civil society should focus on program support rather than individual projects (ibid, p. 24), which might indicate an understanding of the long-term nature of participatory projects. We have also seen how the text mentions mobilisation among the poor, which is a longer-term commitment. However, it also emphasised that Swedish support should be "efficient" (ibid, pp. 7; 12; 14; 20; 24). It is not explained what this efficiency entails, and if it should be based on short or long-term measurements.

6.1.2 Government decision on the CSO strategy 2016-2022

The nature of this text seems to be mostly concise instructions regarding the CSO strategy, as can be noted in the frequent use of "will" (ska) regarding the strategy and actors. However, parts of the text also provide arguments for the strategy, in a similar vein as the policy studied in the previous section, with some sentences being identical.

The abovementioned double nature of the text becomes most visible in the division between the strategy's "focus", presented in bullet form, and its "function", presented in running text. The two main goals presented in the "focus section" are "Strengthened capacity of civil society actors in developing countries to contribute to poverty reduction in developing countries" [My translation] (UD2016//IU, p. 3), and "Promotion of a favorable social climate for civil society organizations in developing countries" [My translation] (ibid). *The role of participation* is not discussed in detail in the bullet points, but it is mentioned that an important aspect of civil societies' is their ability to "represent and act in close consultation with people living in poverty" [My translation] (ibid). While this might seem as participation in order to get input from local people, it is also mentioned that poor people should be helped in getting organised to claim their rights (ibid). Mobilisation to demand rights is mentioned in the running text about the function of the strategy (ibid, pp. 3-6). While participatory methods are not discussed, flexibility is mentioned as something important (ibid, p. 4).

Participation is clearly presented as something desirable, and it is mentioned that it should pervade the strategy (ibid, p. 4), but is not stated as an absolute right in development. That is not an absolute right becomes clear when it is stated that local CSOs should “represent and/or act in favor of” different target groups [My translation] (ibid, p. 3). While mobilisation is presented as important, the goal of mobilisation is always stated to be the demanding of rights. Power structures or inequalities are not mentioned in the text, something that will be discussed more in the following paragraph.

As mentioned, the text does not discuss power structures directly, but it is still possible to discern the *view on power structures*. The aforementioned talk about mobilisation focuses on the demanding of rights from the state, thereby presenting a somewhat binary view on power, “government vs poor people”. There is a mentioning of discriminated people (ibid, p. 4), which point to a more stratified view on power structures among poor people. The state is still the only visible “perpetrator” of this discrimination however. The text talks about poor and/or discriminated people as target groups (ibid), with no discussion on discrimination between the poor themselves. As for global power structures, it is mentioned that local CSOs should gain more knowledge about the international system, and that local and Swedish CSOs’ advocacy work should be strengthened on the local, national, regional and global level (ibid, p. 6). This seems to indicate an understanding that local projects are not separated from national and global forces. However, there is no discussion on global (unequal) power structures.

The view on the roles of *development practitioners and local people* is also somewhat ambiguous. The CSOs are presented as the initiators of projects, and as we have seen, it is not stated as an absolute requirement that they should be representative, if they act in the interest of poor people (ibid, p. 3). However, as aforementioned, it is stated that participation should pervade the strategy, and it is argued that CSOs have a special potential to work closely with local people and help them influence their own lives (ibid, p. 4). As for the Swedish CSOs, it is said that they should have great freedom in organising their work with local partners (ibid). It seems that practitioners from local or Swedish CSOs are seen as

the ignitors of projects, and that local people preferably, but not necessarily, should become the driving force behind them. It is interesting to note that local ownership is mentioned when potential support to international CSOs are discussed, but not when discussing Swedish CSOs (ibid, p. 6). This brings us to the aspect of accountability, outlined in the following paragraph.

Regarding *accountability*, we have seen how the text has mentioned the accountability of states, and that this should be demanded by mobilisation. Accountability is mentioned as another aspect that should pervade the CSOs' work, and it is said that they should act in accordance with the human rights and with legitimacy towards discriminated and/or poor people (ibid, p. 4). It can be concluded that accountability is presented as something that might require mobilisation, and that it could apply to more actors besides states. However, accountability between Swedish CSOs and their local partners are not discussed, and states are still the only "perpetrators" made visible.

The *time perspective* on development projects is also less visible in the text. Efficiency is mentioned several times as something important (ibid, pp. 3-6). There is a potential risk that a focus on efficiency might lead to a focus on short-term results. However, it is mentioned in the end of the text that there should be a balance between long- and short-term results in CSO strategy (ibid, p. 7), which indicates an understanding that some projects will require more time. However, what this balance means is not further discussed.

6.1.3 Discussion

As we can see, both texts put participation forward as something important, but not an absolute right in development. There is a focus on mobilisation of the poor, to demand their rights. There also seem to be an acknowledgement that the local, national and global are connected. However, there is less of a discussion on unequal power structures, even though discussions on discrimination reveal an understanding of differences in power between "the poor". This discussion is, interestingly, somewhat less visible in the strategy document. There are also some differences in how the texts talk about development practitioners and local people.

In the policy document, it seems that local CSOs are viewed as the initiators and driving force behind projects, while the (sparsely mentioned) Swedish CSOs have more of an advisory role. In the strategy document, both local and Swedish CSOs are presented as potential initiators. It is also interesting to note that the representativeness of local CSOs of the local people is presented as less essential in the strategy document compared to the policy document. As for accountability, the focus is mostly on states in both texts, but there is a discussion about accountability of local CSOs in the policy text, and in the strategy text it is mentioned as something that should pervade the work of Swedish and local CSOs. However, there is no discussion on Swedish CSOs' accountability towards local partners. The time perspective of both texts is somewhat unclear. While there seems to be an understanding that some projects will require more time, it is not outlined how this affects the efficiency focus that both texts bring up as important.

6.2 Analysis of Sida texts

This section starts with an analysis of Sida's guidelines for the framework CSOs, followed by an analysis of Sida's suggestions to the Swedish government about the CSO-strategy for 2016-2019. It concludes with a discussion of both documents.

6.2.1 Sida's guidelines for framework CSOs

An overall comment on the document is that it indeed seems to belong to the "guideline genre". While it is stated that the guidelines are only advisory (Sida 2016, p. 3), it seems clear that the framework CSOs are expected to generally follow the given advice. This is illustrated by the text's modality; the word "should" (bör) is mentioned 51 times in the document's 18 pages of main text.

While participatory development is not mentioned directly, it is still possible to discern the different aspects from my framework in the text. The text does not discuss the *role of participation*, but it is stated that the purpose of the framework support is to strengthen civil society actors in developing countries,

and create a more enabling societal climate for CSOs (ibid, p. 4). This strengthening is supposed to lead to a civil society that “acts from a rights perspective for improved living conditions for people in poverty in all its dimensions, for greater respect for human rights, and for global sustainable development” [My translation] (ibid). It should be noted that while unequal power structures might be part of the “dimensions of poverty”, it is not brought up here, nor anywhere else in the text. Participatory methods are not mentioned in the text, meaning that the text does not put forward a “participatory toolkit”. While participation, through the local partner, is presented as something crucial, it is not put forward as an absolute right.

It does however seem to be an expectation that participation should go further than local people giving some input to projects, if we look at how the text presents *local people and development practitioners*. It is stated that the local partner organisation, that should be representative and legitimate, is crucial. The framework organisations should let the partner organisations define priorities and be responsible for carrying out the projects and handle the financial support given by Sida through the framework CSO (ibid). Sida asks for motivations if this is not the case (ibid, p. 8). This would put development practitioners of the framework CSOs in a more advisory role. However, in some parts of the texts it is clear that the practitioners of the framework CSOs are still viewed as the initiators, as in the sentence: “Sida also assesses conclusions from completed evaluations and any actions resulting from them, including how local partners and target groups have been affected and involved” [My translation] (ibid, p. 13). The local people are identified as right-bearers (ibid, p. 8), and it is said that the CSO-strategy should lead to increased respect for human rights (ibid, p. 4), but it is not discussed how. Development practitioners’ role in connection to human rights is not openly outlined, but as the right-bearers are considered the primary target group (ibid, p. 8), and projects within the CSO-strategy are supposed to strengthen the capacity of civil society (ibid, p. 4), it seems that practitioners are expected to go beyond informing the bearers of their rights.

As abovementioned, it is stated that the local partner should be representative, but this is not explained further. This brings us to the text's *view on power structures*. As mentioned, the text does not talk about power structures directly, but it can be glimpsed in the part where the framework CSO is asked to identify "right-bearers" (the primary target group), "duty-holders" and "other stakeholders". This indicates that the view on power structures is not binary in the sense of "North and South", local power differences are acknowledged. It does still seem to a simplified picture however. The term "duty-holders" is more indicative of the power of local authorities that should be made to support their citizens, rather than, for example, power based on differences in class. As for localisation, Sida suggest that individual projects be organised within overarching programs, based on a theme or geographical area (ibid, pp. 8; 21). When talking about local projects, the text states that Sida is interested in their geographical delimitation and/or thematical orientation (ibid, p. 8). This structuring could potentially help connect local projects with global forces, but this is not discussed. Global structures are not explicitly discussed in the text, with the exception of mentions that support can be given to global advocacy work (ibid, pp. 4; 11).

As for *accountability*, we have noticed how the text talks about "right-bearers" and "duty-holders", but it is not discussed how the duty-holders are supposed to be made to fulfil their duty. It also remains unclear who might count as a duty-holder. As for the view on development organisations, in this case the framework CSOs, they are held accountable towards Sida, which is made quite clear in the section on deviations such as corruption, where the modality changes from more advisory to more demanding (ibid, pp. 18-20). There is no discussion on how the local people or partner organisation might hold the framework organisation responsible. While it said that the rights perspective is a guiding principle, rights are not mentioned in the section about reporting to Sida (ibid, pp. 13-15), nor in the discussion of what Sida looks at in the internal workings of the NGO (ibid, p. 6).

As for the *time perspective*, it is stated that the length of the agreement is decided by dialogue between Sida and the framework CSO, in accordance with

the CSO's strategic planning (ibid, p. 3). The time perspective for individual projects is not touched upon directly, but it is stated that the length of agreements should be based on the local partner's capacity (ibid, p. 8), and sustainability of the results is emphasised (ibid, pp. 4; 6; 7). However, the efficiency of projects is also emphasised (ibid, pp. 3; 6; 8; 9; 13; 15).

6.2.2 Sida's suggestions to the Swedish government about the CSO-strategy for 2016-2019

This document is a response to the Swedish government's first draft of what would become "Swedish support to civil society in developing countries through Swedish CSOs in 2016-2022" (UD2016/10135/IU), and as such it has a different role from the previously analysed guidelines, having the nature of expert advice. This is evident in the text's modality, as it contains more truth statements such as in the introductory sentence: "Civil society has a key role in poverty reduction and a special relevance and potential to contribute to the democratic development and greater respect for human rights in developing countries" [My translation] (Sida 2015, p. 1).

When it comes to the *role of participation*, it is mentioned throughout the text that CSOs might help in mobilising and building capacity among people (ibid, pp. 1; 2; 5; 7; 9; 13). When any purpose for the mobilisation is mentioned, it is always for demanding rights or influence decision-makers (ibid, pp. 1; 2; 5). However, participation is not discussed as something that is an absolute right of the target group. Unequal power structures are not discussed, and inequality is not mentioned in the document. It should be noted that local power structures are mentioned once, among other aspects of the local context, as something that is important to consider, but it is not discussed if and how these power structures should be engaged with (ibid, p. 20). Participatory methods are not explicitly discussed, but it is mentioned that development cooperation between CSOs must be based on an in-depth context analysis (ibid, p 20).

As aforementioned, local power structures is mentioned once as something to consider when engaging in projects. While it is not discussed how

these structures should be engaged with, the *view on power structures* does not seem to be binary. Localisation is not discussed in detail in relation to individual projects, but it is mentioned throughout the text that a goal of the CSO-strategy is to put pressure on states to fulfil human rights, and create an enabling societal climate for civil society, which suggests an engagement with national forces. A strengthening of the advocacy role of CSOs on a global level is also mentioned (ibid, 7). However, there is no mentioning of power structures. Global structures are mentioned in the goal of “Increased understanding and commitment to global development and sustainability issues affecting people living in poverty and strengthening their influence towards decision makers” [My translation] (ibid, p. 5), which Sida argues will be fulfilled by supporting Swedish CSOs. There is no discussion about the (power) structures behind these issues, and the solution is seen to be advocacy work.

As for how *local people and development practitioners* are presented, there is some ambiguity. While the target group for the CSO-strategy, that should be involved and mobilised, is identified as poor people (ibid, pp. 2; 9), Swedish and local CSOs are still presented as the main actors (ibid, p. 3). It is stated as a truth that “In order to participate in society and influence their own lives, people need both access to basic social services and knowledge of their rights.” [My translation], something that CSOs are seen as able to provide (ibid). It is stated as something obvious that the support should be faded out after the target group’s knowledge and capacity have been strengthened (ibid, pp. 4; 9). From these parts of the text emerges a picture of local people as in need of receiving knowledge and capacity building from CSOs, after which they can participate (but not in projects funded by the CSO-strategy). However, it is also mentioned that the organizational capacity of local CSOs should be strengthened to not only create, but also capture local engagement, and increase poor people’s involvement (ibid, pp. 4-5). Here it seems to be acknowledged that local people engage in society even before receiving knowledge and capacity strengthening. How the text’s presentation of local people should be judged depends on if the local CSOs can be seen as included in “local people”. It is stated that civil society in many countries

is dominated by un-democratic organisations that only strengthens the positions of some groups, and that the CSO-strategy should strengthen representative CSOs (ibid, pp. 3-4; 6). While the CSOs are presented as the initiators, it is less obvious who is seen to be taken this role between development practitioners of the Swedish CSOs and members of the local CSOs. However, it is stated at something obvious that the framework CSOs will transfer knowledge to their local partners, such as in "...central part of the knowledge and learning that the framework organizations provide to their local partners" [My translation] (ibid, p. 11). This could be seen as a more advisory role. After it has been stated that a framework CSO must be able to motivate what it contributes to a local context, an interesting sentence follows: "Sida argues that there is no contradiction between this analysis and the starting point of seeing civil society as independent actors in their own right." [My translation] (ibid, p. 19). This sentence adds to the ambiguity, as it can be interpreted in two different ways. Either it indicates an understanding of local civil society as the driving force behind projects, and that even pointing out the benefits of Swedish CSOs has to be defended. The other interpretation is that Swedish CSOs are seen as such competent, independent actors that asking for their motivations has to be defended. As the text generally does not provide clear demarcations between civil society in Sweden and in developing countries, the latter interpretations seems to be the most likely.

When it comes to *accountability*, we have seen how the text talks about how it must be demanded through mobilisation. However, this accountability seems to be understood as applying to states, as in the statement "The ultimate responsibility for the realization of human rights lies with the state" [My translation] (ibid, p. 2). It is stated that the CSOs can only work with advocacy, and only be judged by results within their control, and their analysis of potential effects (ibid, pp. 3-4). It seems that development organisations, in this case Swedish CSOs, are presented as being accountable for how well they inform and mobilise people to claim their rights, but not for how they respect these rights themselves. However, it is emphasised throughout the text that the CSOs work should be right-based (ibid, pp. 1-4; 7-8; 11-12; 20-21), and is mentioned that new

civil society actors, such as activist networks, have been excluded because of their lack of internal democracy (ibid, p. 21). However, it is still significant that development work as a potential hindrance of rights fulfilment is never brought up.

As for the *time perspective*, it becomes clearly visible in the suggested length of the strategy period (2016-2019). Sida argues against a four year period, suggesting a seven year period is more suitable. In the argumentation, some sentences are hedged: “It is usually not relevant to measure the results of rights-based impact work and capacity development in the short term” [My translation and underlining] (ibid, p. 20). Others are stated as truths: “Long-term support is required to achieve results at an overall level” (ibid). While efficiency is emphasized throughout the document, it is also stated that to achieve this efficiency, Sida bases the length of the agreements on the CSOs’ strategic planning.

6.2.3 Discussion

When looking at the two texts together, they do seem to use a similar mix of discourses. Participation, through local, representative CSOs, is put forward as something important, but not an absolute right. There also seems to be acknowledged that participatory projects take time, and need to be adapted to local circumstances. While the view on power structures is not binary, local unequal power structures are not explicitly engaged with, and the view on global power structures seems to be that they can be engaged with by advocacy work towards decision makers. An interesting aspect is accountability, where accountability concerning human rights violations is put forward as something only concerning states, while the framework CSOs are accountable to Sida in regarding how well they help build capacity of local people to claim accountability.

It is interesting to note that some aspects are discussed in more detail in the suggestions to the government compared to the guidelines. In the suggestions, it is explained that claiming rights requires mobilisation of local people,

something that is not discussed in the guidelines. There is also a greater problematisation of local CSOs. This unclearness might leave the framework CSOs free to different interpretations of their mission in regards to the CSO strategy. These interpretations will be revealed in the discourse analyses that follow.

6.3 Analysis of the Swedish Mission Council documents

This chapter is divided into three sections. The first section is a joint analysis of documents that guide projects based on grants by the SMC, namely the instructions for application and final reports, along with the supporting documents explaining the criteria for fund allocation and SMC's view on development cooperation. The second section analyses SMC's policy for a human rights perspective, and the third section contains a concluding discussion.

6.3.1 Application, reporting, and supporting documents

The texts that are under analysis here have different roles, which can be seen in the dominant modalities in the different texts. The instructions for application and final reports are dominated by "orders", things that the applicants should do (SMC 2016b; SMC 2012a), while the criteria for fund allocations contains statements of what the organisations and project should be (SMC 2012b). The text outlining SMC's view on development cooperation provides the reasoning behind these orders and statements, and the modalities of this text varies more (SMC 2008).

In the text on SMC's views on development cooperation, their Christian values, that influences the organisation's understanding of different aspects, becomes most visible. For example, it is mentioned that SMC's work should be pervaded by a human rights perspective, as every human has an inviolable value based on God's love, and that every violation of the human rights is a violation of God's will (SMC 2008, p. 2). It is also stated as a truth that "The driving force for lasting change always comes from within" [My translation] (ibid, p. 1), which

brings us to *the role of participation*. It is stated that the rights perspective entails viewing people that are affected by development efforts as actors rather than receivers (ibid, p. 3), and inclusion and participation is mentioned as two of four areas where civil society has a role to play in development efforts (ibid, p. 4). In the criteria for fund allocation, it is mentioned that the human rights perspective means that the participation of the target group is very important (SMC 2012b, p. 3). The applying organisations are also asked to describe how the target group has been involved in the planning (SMC 2016b, 1). This seems to indicate a view on participation as an absolute right in development. As for participatory methods, they are not discussed in detail, but it is mentioned that they should be based on local people's perspectives and analyses of local conditions (SMC 2012b, p. 3; SMC 2008, pp. 3-4; SMC 2016b, pp. 2-3). While not dominating the perspectives of the texts, it is mentioned as important that local people can organise and mobilise to influence their own lives and claim their rights (SMC 2008, p. 4; SMC 2016b, p. 4; SMC 2012a, p. 2). However, mobilisation is not mentioned in relation to unequal power relations. Inequality is not brought up at all, but power relations are discussed elsewhere in the texts, as outlined below.

The texts present a quite nuanced *view on power structures*. It is mentioned that discrimination happens within all levels of society and, while not explicitly mentioning inequality or power structures, that life patterns and political decisions have consequences globally. It is stated that SMC's development efforts must identify other responsible actors, besides local governments (SMC 2008, p. 3). While global connections are not brought up in the instructions for projects, it is asked that power relations within the target group be considered in the application (SMC 2016b, 3). This nuanced view on power relations affect the view on accountability, outlined in the next paragraph.

When it comes to *accountability*, it is mentioned that in the human rights perspective, accountability lies mostly with the state, but local discrimination or effects of global forces means that other actors also have a responsibility (SMC 2008, p. 2-3). In the application instructions, the duty bearers are described as the authorities, from the national government to local chiefs. However, as

aforementioned, the applying organisation is also asked to consider power structures within the target group (SMC 2016b, 3-4). As we have seen, it is recognised that mobilisation might be required to demand rights. Local or Swedish CSOs are not discussed in the role of potential perpetrators, but their accountability becomes visible in the emphasis that non-discrimination should guide development efforts (SMC 2008, p. 2;7, SMC 2016b, p. 7; SMC 2012b, p. 3). It is also mentioned in the criteria for fund allocation that a risk analysis of potential negative effects of the development effort should be conducted and an avoidance plan be created (SMC 2012b, p. 3).

We have seen how participation seems to be presented as a right in development, and this affects the view on *development practitioners and local people*. It is stated as a truth that “In development cooperation, all parties are joint owners and co-players” [My translation] (SMC 2008, p. 5). Statements such as this, combined with the emphasis on participation, seem to indicate that both local people and practitioners from the CSOs are seen as the driving force behind projects. However, local ownership is also emphasised (SMC 2012b, p. 2; SMC 2008, p. 5). As for who is seen as the initiator, the application instructions contain a question on who took the initiative (SMC 2016b, p. 1), indicating that both the Swedish or local CSO are seen as legitimate initiators. Questions about how the target group can influence the project (SMC 2016b, p. 7), or how the organisations have reported back to the target group (SMC 2012a, p. 1), seems to indicate that the practitioners of the CSOs are seen as the initiators. It should be noted that it is stated that the local CSO should be legitimate in relation to its target groups (SMC 2012b, p. 2), not that it necessarily must consist of local people.

As for the *time perspective*, it is emphasised that development cooperation is based on long-term relationships (SMC 2008, p. 5). This is reflected in the criteria for fund allocation, where multiannual agreements are stated as preferable (SMC 2012b, p. 2).

6.3.2 The SMC policy for a human rights perspective

The document consists of a main text and an appendix. The main text is divided in the three sections focusing on SMC's understanding of the Human Rights Perspective (HRP), their theory of change from HRP, and how SMC applies HRP. The appendix contains tools for assessing HRP in development projects. Once again SMC's support of the HRP is supported by faith based arguments, such in the sentence: "Living in God's calling means discerning and combating unrighteous power structures and systems hostile to life, such as discrimination, inequality and other forms of oppression" (SMC 2015, p. 3).

While the focus of the text is on HRP and not participatory development, it is still quite easy to discern a presented view on *the role of participation*. Participation is presented as one of the central principles of HRP, and it is stated that the right-holders should be involved in all stages of a project, and that organisations should strive to increase participation within themselves (ibid, p. 6). The right-holders' involvement is also stated as a requirement in the assessing check list (ibid, p. 21). Participation could therefore be said to be presented as a right in (HRP-based) development. While participatory methods are not specifically discussed, it is stated that SMC does not provide its member organisations with a template on how to apply HRP, but encourages the members to adjust it to local circumstances (ibid, p. 10). The mobilisation and organisation of right-bearers to claim their rights, and accountability from the state, is emphasised as important components of the approach (ibid, pp. 4-5; 15-16). Specific components of the project should be dedicated towards this mobilisation, as stated in the requirements check list (ibid, p. 22). The focus on mobilisation is on demanding rights, and unequal power structures are not mentioned in connection with it. However, the discourse on power structures nevertheless seems to be of a transformative nature, as outlined below.

When it comes to the *view on power structures*, it is mentioned that human rights based development work is based on analyses that "focuses on power relations and power structures and on how to change them when they are unequal and unjust." (ibid, p. 4). It is emphasised that an intersectional power

analysis of the right-holders should be conducted (ibid, pp. 16-18), answering questions such as “How do different factors such as age, gender, educational level, disability, health and sexual orientation affect the access to power and the social status of people?” (ibid, p. 18). It is also mentioned that local CSOs might not necessarily be legitimate even if they are owned by the right-holders, and that this must be determined by analysing power structures within the group (ibid, p. 15). While not discussed together with power structures, it is stated that in the human rights based approach, legal and moral duty-bearers should be identified and engaged with on the local, national and international level (ibid, p. 5). Power structures are not mentioned when talking about transnational aspects, but it still seems that the discourse on power structures is mostly transformative. As might be discerned from the above mentioning, SMC does not demand that local CSO must be owned by the right-holders, which affect the discussion on development practitioners and local people, outlined below.

Regarding how the text presents *development practitioners and local people*, it should first be noted how the text states that the local CSO might derive its legitimacy from being owned by the right-holders, and that otherwise the legitimacy is measured by the participation of the right-holders, and that projects must start from a stated need by the right-holders (ibid, pp. 14-15). In the outline of SMC’s theory of change from HRP, it is mentioned how the local CSO helps in increasing knowledge about human rights among the right-holders, and assisting in mobilising them. The right-holders participates with the local CSO, thereby strengthening it, and demand their rights from the duty-bearers (ibid, p. 8). We can see that the local people are viewed as the driving force behind projects, with CSOs giving their assistance. While it is stated that projects should be initiated based on the right-holders’ stated needs, the CSO, in spreading knowledge about human rights, seems to be the initiator of early projects.

As mentioned above, the right-holders is seen to be in need of mobilisation do demand *accountability* from duty-holders. The state is mentioned to be ultimately responsible for the fulfilment of human rights, and is therefore the legal duty-bearer (ibid, p. 4). However, based on its Christian values, SMC argues

that everyone has a moral responsibility towards other human beings (ibid, p. 3). SMC therefore also recognises moral duty-bearers, such as parents or church leaders (ibid, p. 5). The accountability of CSOs becomes visible in the discussion of non-discrimination and transparency as two of the four main principles of HRP (ibid, pp. 5-6). Accountability is also explicitly mentioned as one of the four principles, but is only discussed as something to be demanded from duty-bearers (ibid, p. 6). However, the accountability of the CSOs are mentioned directly in the discussion on SMC's theory of change from HRP: "conditions are also created for the right-holders to demand accountability from the organisations" (ibid, p. 8).

The *time perspective* of the text is not as clear as the other aspects, but it is stated that the goal of HRP is long-term sustainable change of society (ibid, p. 4), and that this is a gradual process (ibid, p. 10).

6.3.3 Discussion

We can see that all documents present a similar mix of discourses. Participation is presented as a right, and mobilisation is presented as important, but to claim rights, not to change unequal power structures. As for power structures, differences in power among the local people are acknowledged, and connection to national and global forces are discussed, but not in terms of power structures. Interestingly, the document outlining SMC's policy for HRP does mention "unequal power structures" throughout the text, a formulation that is missing in the other documents. When it comes to the roles of local people and development practitioners, the HRP policy stands out. In the other documents, it seems that local people and the CSOs share the role of driving force, but in the HRP policy text, CSOs take on a more advisory role. The other documents seem to present the CSOs as initiators, while the HRP policy indicates that this role might belong to either the CSO or local people. Accountability is seen to lie mostly with the state, often requiring the mobilisation of right-holders to claim it. However, other duty-bearers are recognised, and the accountability of CSOs are discussed, most clearly so in the HRP policy. The time perspective is less clear, but it seems to be an understanding that participatory projects requires time.

6.4 Analysis of We Effect documents

This chapter is divided into three sections. The first section is a joint analysis of documents concerning the planning of projects, namely the *Programme Development Instructions 2018-2021*, the *Partner Organisation Scanning Format*, an annex to the programme development instructions which provides an analytical tool for multi-dimensional poverty, and the *Risk Management Guidelines*. The second section is an analysis of the *Guidelines for We Effect's application of The Human Rights-Based Approach*, and the final section contains a concluding discussion of all documents.

6.4.1 Programming instructions and supporting documents

An overall comment on the documents is that they are clearly meant for internal use by We Effect personnel. As such, they are in the form of instructions, stating what personnel and local partners should or must do, and how to do it. The “main text”, the programme development instructions, give many references to the three supporting documents also analysed here, as well as the guidelines for the human rights-based approach, analysed in the next section. It should also be mentioned that We Effect have chosen to have an extra focus on gender equality in the current strategy (We Effect 2017b, pp. 2-3). We Effects work has two thematic themes, sustainable rural development and adequate housing (ibid, p. 4).

While *the role of participation* is not explicitly discussed, participation is still mentioned throughout some of the texts. It is mentioned as a principle of the human rights based approach (HRBA), that all projects should follow (We Effect 2017b, pp. 11; 13; We Effect 2017c, pp. 1-2; We Effect, 2017a, p. 6). In the checklist for projects following the HRBA it is stated that the projects should have been planned in a participatory manner, and the planned activities should be participatory (We Effect 2017b, p. 12). The texts seem to present a view on participation as a right in development. While participatory methods are not explicitly discussed, it is mentioned that the local partner should own the projects, and that We Effect adapts its methods to the local partner (ibid, p. 5). The view of

participation as a right will reasonable entail an understanding of participation as more than a way for local people to give input to ready-made projects. As for participation for mobilisation, it is not mentioned in the documents. However, advocacy towards duty-bearers is mentioned (ibid, pp. 4; 7; 11), and it is stated that a desired change of projects is the right-bearers should take the lead in their own movements (ibid, p. 12). There is however no discussion of unequal power structures in connection with this. The presented view on power structures is discussed below.

As for the *view on power structures*, we have seen that We Effect has an overall strategy that give extra focus to gender inequality issues, and power differences from gender hierarchies are mentioned throughout the texts as something to engage with. However, other forms of power structures among the poor are also discussed. Discrimination is brought up as an important issue, and it is stated that the most discriminated among the right-holder must be identified, and a power analysis conducted (ibid, pp. 11-12). It is also mentioned that the attitudes of right-holders might have to change in order for all persons' rights to be respected (ibid, p. 7). In the document on multi-dimensional poverty, it is stated that "Power is a relational concept that allows us to better understand socio-cultural hierarchies and relations of which gender is one, others include for example age, caste, class, religion, ethnicity, race/skin colour, ability/disability and sexual identity" (We Effect, 2017a, p. 2). As for localisation, it is mentioned that We Effect works with three types of programmes: regional programmes, multi-country programmes, and country programmes. It is stated that knowledge sharing on the regional level might be part of a country programme (We Effect 2017b, p. 4), and local project objectives should connect to regional/country goals, which in turn should be connected to overall strategic objectives (ibid, p.6). While there is no talk about power structures, this shows an understanding of local projects as connected to national or global forces. However, connections to the global or international arena are not mentioned elsewhere in the texts.

As for the view on the roles of *development practitioners and local people*, the emphasis on participation indicates a view on local people as the

driving force behind projects. It is mentioned that support should go to farmers' own organisations, and to cooperative housing organisations (ibid, p. 4). As for the initiating role, it seems to be viewed as shared between We Effect and the local partner, as evidence in formulations such as "...issues within sustainable rural development and adequate housing that We Effect and the partner organisations plan to address through the programme" (ibid, p. 10). However, the main role seems to be played by the local partner, as it is mentioned that it should own the project, with We Effect overseeing the overall programme (ibid, p. 5). It might seem that the local partners could be seen as part of the local people, as it is stated that programmes must have a focus on democratic member based cooperation or organisations (ibid, p. 2). However, in the criteria stated in the Partner Organisation Scanning Format, it is stated that the partner should either be member based or striving to become member based (We Effect 2017c, p. 1). They must not necessarily be part of the local people at the beginning of projects.

As for actors in relation to *accountability*, other duty-bearers than governments are discussed. Duty-bearers are defined as "those who need to change so that the rights of others can be respected" (We Effect 2017b, p. 9). Apart from governments, the text mentions religious and traditional formal and informal leaders as duty-bearers (ibid, p. 11). While We Effect and partners are not discussed in terms of potential violators of human rights, it is stated that all programmes must show how the principles of HRBA have been implemented (ibid, p. 5), and it is stated that all planned activities must be accountable, transparent and just (ibid, p. 12). Non-discrimination is also mentioned as a principle (We Effect 2017b, p. 13; We Effect 2017c, p. 2). However, when internal risks are mentioned in the risk analysis document, the only examples given are risks connected to administration and handling of funds (We Effect 2014, p. 2)

The final aspect is the *time perspective*, which is not discussed for individual projects. However, the view on cooperation with local partners seems to be long-term, as it is mentioned that We Effect hope to fulfil the 2018-2021 goals with local partners (We Effect 2017b, p. 3), and it is mentioned that

organisational assessments of local partners that are older than two years need to be redone (ibid, p. 13).

6.4.2 Guidelines for We Effect's application of The Human Rights-Based Approach

The guidelines consist of a main body of text and two appendixes. The main body of text is divided into three parts, an overview, a guidance to long term strategic work, and a review of the different stages in the programme cycles. The appendixes consist of examples from We Effect programmes, and HRBA tools (We Effect 2016, p. 5).

While the focus of the text is on the human rights-based approach, it is still relatively easy to discern a view of *the role of participation*. It is mentioned that in good programming, participation is seen as both means and a goal (ibid, p. 17), and it is stated that every step of a programme cycle should strive to involve the active participation of key actors (ibid, p. 18). It is also stated embracing HRBA means that: "We need to leave practices behind that exclude rights-holders" (ibid, p. 21). In the HRBA tools, the Declaration on the Right to Development is brought up as an important framework and approach, and it is stated that it "requires active, free and meaningful participation" (ibid, p. 35). The text seems to present an understanding of HRBA as entailing a view on participation as a right in development work. It is also mentioned that the methods should be adaptable to local contexts and actors (ibid, p. 8). Mobilisation is not mentioned in the main text, but is brought up in the section of abbreviations, and in the appendix (ibid, pp. 3; 27; 47). In the main text, it is however mentioned that We Effect's work has helped local people get the capacity to organise and defend their rights as smallholder farmers (ibid, p. 6). While the discussion on mobilisation and organisation focuses on right claims, it is mentioned in other sections that human rights offer tools to analyse inequalities and unjust power relations (ibid, p. 8). The presentation of power structures is discussed in the next paragraph.

The text presents a stratified *view on power structures*. It is mentioned that early stages of a programme cycle should involve looking at power relations

within and between rights-holder groups (ibid, p. 20), and the importance of reaching discriminated groups are emphasised (ibid, p. 23). There is also an inward gaze, as seen when it is stated that HRBA entails a “thorough power analysis and look at how different actors, including ourselves, reproduce biased power relations” (ibid, p. 21). Formal and informal power relations within We Effect and its local partners are brought up, and it is stated that sexist, racist or homophobic language has no place in the organisations’ work (ibid, p. 15). Global or international power structures are not discussed explicitly, it is mentioned that We Effect can strengthen the efforts of local partners by European and global advocacy work (ibid, p. 11-12). Multinational companies and global investors are also mentioned as powerful actors (ibid, p. 8).

The view on the roles of *development practitioners and local people* is shaped by the aforementioned focus on participation. It is stated that people should be recognised as key actors in their own development, rather than passive recipients (ibid, p. 17). It is stated that the HRBA means that local people, together with We Effect and the local partner, should partake in the planning of programmes (ibid, p. 18). The presented view seems to be that local people are the driving force behind projects, with development practitioners and local people sharing the initiating role. As for We Effect’s role, it is stated that they rarely implement activities, which is the role of the local partner, instead they have an indirect role in supporting the capacity development of the partner (ibid, p. 23), and providing technical support to the local partner’s rights based work (ibid, p. 19).

As for *accountability*, we have seen that there is a recognition that it must be demanded by organisation/mobilisation of right-bearers, and it is mentioned that holding duty-bearers to account is one of the most important aspects of HRBA (ibid, p. 6). It is mentioned in the list of abbreviations that the main duty-bearers in HRBA are states and their institutions (ibid, p. 3). The document mentions other powerful actors such as multinational companies. It is however stated that they are not bound by human rights, and that this is one of the limitations of HRBA, even if some companies have felt the need to develop

policies on human rights compliance (ibid, p. 8). There is however a clear inward gaze when it comes to accountability. As aforementioned, it is stated that HRBA entails a power analysis of how different actors, including We Effect, reproduce biased power relations (ibid, p. 21). This is also emphasised in the very first sentence of the introduction: “guard that your own work respects the human rights principles” (ibid, p. 5). It also stated that by using a HRBA perspective, the dynamics of the relations between We Effect and other actors might need to change (ibid, p. 13), and that “It should be possible to hold programme management, coordinators and administrators to account for a rights-based programme process” (ibid, p. 14). It is stated that “HRBA is about walking the talk” (ibid), a formulation that returns in a little box as a reminder when programme implementation is discussed (ibid, p. 23). Lastly it is mentioned, when discussing the monitoring of projects, that: “Monitoring is to be accountable to the promises made to rights-holders, communities, partners and donors” (ibid, p. 24).

The *time perspective* regarding projects are not discussed in detail, but it is stated as a truth that “There is no quick fix to HRBA” (ibid, p. 21), and that advocacy work concerns medium to long-term changes (ibid, p. 16).

6.4.3 Discussion

We have seen how the documents present participation as a right, that project methods should be flexible, and that the organization of right-bearers might be necessary to claim rights. There is a stratified view on power structures regarding local people, but unequal global power structures are not discussed, with the possible exception of the mentioning of multinational corporations. However, the presented way of how We Effect works still seem to connect the local with the national and international. As for development practitioners and local people, it seems that We Effect, the local CSO and local people share the initiating role. The local CSO and local people are later the driving force during the project, where We Effect take an advisory role. As for accountability, the focus is mostly on states, but traditional formal and informal duty-bearers are also mentioned. There is a clear inward gaze, especially in the HRBA guidelines, discussing the

accountability of We Effect and its partners. The time perspective is not clearly presented, but seems to be long-term.

6.5 Summary analysis

In the summary discussion of the Sida documents, it was noted that Sida was more clear about its views on participatory and rights based development in their suggestions to the government, compared to their guidelines for the framework CSOs. This unclarity seemed to leave the CSOs with a greater freedom of interpretation regarding their role in the CSO-strategy. After the analysis of the SMC and We Effect documents, it seems that this is somewhat less of a cause for concern. As predicted based on earlier research, there do seem to be differences in discourse on different levels of the Swedish development community, with SMC and We Effect generally being somewhat closer to a transformative discourse than the Swedish government and Sida. This will be shown by the following comparative discussion of the presentations of the different aspects of my operationalisation.

If we look at how the different texts discuss the *role of participation*, we see that no actor presents any “toolkit” for participation, and flexibility seems to be encouraged. We can also see that all actors bring up mobilisation, even if Sida does not mention it in the guidelines to the CSOs. However, mobilisation is mentioned in connection with the claiming of rights, not to overthrow unequal power structures. Unequal power structures are explicitly mentioned only by SMC. While all actors present participation as important, SMC and We Effect seem to present it as a right in development, whereas the government and Sida do not. The *view on power structures* is more similar in all documents, all actors acknowledge power differences among local people, and all make connection between the local and international level, but without connecting it to power structures. The presented view on the *time perspective* is also similar. While it is rarely explicitly discussed, the view on projects seems to be mostly long term,

with the possible exception being the government texts' efficiency focus, which is not discussed from a time perspective.

There are more differences in discourse regarding the views on *development practitioners and local people*. The Sida documents are a bit unclear, but seem to present the CSOs as initiators of projects, while the government documents seem to present the local CSOs as the driving force behind projects, with local and Swedish CSOs sharing the initiator role. For the SMC, different documents seem to present different views, with the HRP policy presenting both CSOs and the local people as initiators, and local people as the driving force, whereas their other documents presents the CSOs as initiators and sharing the role as driving force with local people. The picture is more consistent in the We Effect documents, where the view seems to be that the CSOs and local people share the initiating role, with the local CSO and local people being the driving force later on, with We Effect as advisors.

Discursive differences are also visible when it comes to the views on *accountability*. Documents from all actors present the state as the most important duty-holder, but also mention that accountability might have to be demanded by mobilisation. The Sida documents do not go further than this, while the government documents discuss the accountability of local CSOs, and mention that accountability should pervade the work of both local and Swedish CSOs. SMC recognises other, moral duty-bearers, something that seems to stem partly from their Christian beliefs. They also discuss the accountability of CSOs. The We Effect documents mention traditional formal and informal duty bearers, and there is a focus on the accountability of We Effects and its partners. SMC's and We Effect's discourse on accountability seems to be shaped by their embrace of the human rights based approach, something that is discussed more in the following, concluding chapter.

7. Conclusions

In conclusion, it seems that the differences in discourse that were, based on earlier research, predicted to exist between different levels of the Swedish development community, are there. While the government and Sida documents present a quite even mix of formal and transformative participatory development discourse, SMC and We Effect seem to be closer to transformative discourse. The differences are not that large however, and we can observe that the Swedish government and Sida still seem to have a somewhat transformative approach, as Cornwall's and other's studies indicated. An idea for future studies would be to conduct interviews similar to Kaufmann's study of developers on different levels within the British development community, to see if the differences are smaller within the Swedish community. It is, for example, possible that the British colonial legacy creates larger differences in incentives and discourse between British government agencies and NGOs, compared to Sida and Swedish NGOs. On a less academic note, the observed differences in discourse, with the CSOs being closer to transformative discourse, seem to constitute an argument in favour of the CSO-strategy, for those who would like to see more progressive approaches to development. The more transformative discourse of SMC and We Effect seems to stem partly from their embrace of the human rights approach. This is discussed further in the following paragraph.

Based on Miller's study of faith-based and political (left-wing) NGOs, it should be expected that the faith-based SMC and left-leaning We Effect would be sceptical of the rights based approach. However, it seems like both organisations have fully embraced it. Miller notes that faith-based NGOs might use RBA in campaigning when it aligned with the NGO's values. We can also see that SMC connects human rights overall to their Christian values, arguing that violating them is a violation of God's will, thereby providing an explanation for their embracement of RBA. Miller also found that political NGOs use RBA in campaigning when it can be used to regulate the power of financial elites and global institutions. This is not something that can be observed in the We Effect

documents, which explicitly state that one of the limitations of RBA is that multinational corporations are not accountable in regards to human rights. While We Effect's reasons for embracing RBA remain hidden, RBA is utilised to push participation to the forefront and initiate a discussion of the organisation's own accountability. It is possible that these somewhat surprising results, compared to Miller's study, stem from the nature of the Swedish development community. As Cornwall notes, human rights have always been a focus in Swedish development aid. An additional suggestion for future studies might therefore be to compare to what extent, and why, Swedish development NGOs have embraced RBA compared to NGOs in other countries.

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