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Cooperative or compliant

- A study of partnerships between development actors in Bulawayo, Zimbabwe

Master's Thesis in Geography

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Abstract

In today's aid system, "partnership" has become a guiding principle for the desired relationships between actors working with development. By partnering the assumption is that the organisations can be part of a relationship based on mutual accountability and equality, and increase the efficiency in their work.

The purpose of this study was to analyse partnerships and aims to understand how the different organisations understand their role and position, and whether it is possible to achieve an equal partnership in today's aid system. Theories applied are mainly obtained from theories about scale and power. Relations between partners are also analysed by using a framework that includes dimensions of discourse, interdependence, function and performance.

Qualitative data were collected through interviews and observation during a fieldwork in Bulawayo, Zimbabwe in September and October 2010. 27 interviews were conducted from people representing different organisations; international, national and local and/or community based. Zimbabwe has a complex history and is influenced by political and economical challenges and an oppressed civil society. This has an effect on the work of the development actors operating in the country.

I found that organisations partner and manoeuvre across different geographical scales, and are influenced by the power that exists and are exercised between the partners. How organisations partner and the processes behind initiating projects differ. Organisations have through their explanations on how projects are initiated and the process behind writing proposals, expressed some of the challenges behind choosing type of project, who should be the recipients, the reports that needs to be written and the criteria that follow in these stages. The understanding of these criteria and concepts used, are understood differently among the actors, and influence the implementation of a project. The challenge with flow of information between the actors also becomes evident in Zimbabwe that is trapped between the basic need of the people and the development agenda. The small community based organisations are underestimating the power they have.

Keywords: Partnership, power, scale, civil society, organisations, aid system, Zimbabwe

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Table of contents

Abstract.....	iii
Acknowledgment.....	iv
List of figures.....	ix
List of Acronyms.....	x
1 Introduction.....	1
1.1 Understanding civil society and the development actors.....	3
1.1.1 Civil Society.....	3
1.1.2 Non-Governmental Organisations.....	4
1.2 Research question: Understanding partnerships.....	6
1.3 Structure of this thesis.....	8
2 Zimbabwe.....	10
2.1 The geography of Zimbabwe.....	10
2.1.1 Resources.....	11
2.1.2 Demography.....	12
2.1.3 Ethnicity.....	12
2.2 Political and economic history.....	13
2.2.1 Under colonial rule.....	13
2.2.2 Independence.....	13
2.2.3 A new start - Southern Africa's success story.....	14
2.3 Political turmoil.....	15
2.4 Turning point in the political history.....	16
2.4.1 Fast-track land reform and economic deterioration.....	17
2.5 The political environment post 2000.....	18
2.5.1 The need for assistance.....	19
2.6 The rise of civil society and its obstacles in Zimbabwe.....	19
2.6.1 Status of civil society post 2000.....	20
2.7 International aid and Zimbabwe.....	21
2.7.1 The humanitarian situation today.....	22
3 Theoretical framework.....	24
3.1 Scale.....	25
3.1.1 Idealist and materialist framework.....	25

3.1.2	The local and the global.....	27
3.2	Power.....	29
3.2.1	Dimensions of power.....	30
3.2.2	Power relations in partnerships.....	31
3.3	Components in partnership	32
3.3.1	Discourse	34
3.3.2	Interdependence.....	34
3.3.3	Function/Performance	35
3.3.4	Studying partnerships across scales.....	36
4	Methodology.....	37
4.1	Selection and choices.....	37
4.2	Access to the field – why choosing Bulawayo in Zimbabwe?	39
4.2.1	Safety in the field.....	39
4.2.2	Language	40
4.2.3	Gatekeeper	41
4.3	Choice of samples.....	42
4.4	My position and personality	44
4.4.1	Power relations and co-production of knowledge	45
4.5	Interviews	46
4.5.1	Interview situation	47
4.5.2	Notes or recorder	48
4.5.3	Transcription	49
4.6	Observation	50
4.6.1	Informal interviews.....	51
4.7	Analysis.....	51
4.7.1	Coding and categorising.....	52
4.8	Ethical considerations.....	52
4.8.1	Confidentiality and anonymity.....	53
5	Understanding partnerships – actors, procedures and roles.....	56
5.1	Categorising and registration of organisations operating in Bulawayo	57
5.2	Being local or global.....	58
5.2.1	Office makes a difference.....	61
5.2.2	Challenge being small – the size creates limits not opportunities.....	63
5.3	Donor or a partner – to give and receive, or to share.....	65
5.3.1	Descriptions of donors and partners.....	66

5.4 Defining partnership	69
5.4.1 Can a partnership be equal?	70
6 The need - aid diversity, priority and decision making	73
6.1 Where to start up the intended project	73
6.1.1 Decision making.....	75
6.2 Becoming partners	77
6.2.1 Call for proposals.....	78
6.2.2 Different funders - different criteria	80
6.3 To choose from the menu	82
6.3.1 Popularity leading the way	85
6.4 Manoeuvring power relations across scales	87
7 Obstacles and possibilities; forms and reports	89
7.1 Reporting and evaluation	90
7.1.1 Reports better written than what the project is well done?.....	90
7.2 Participatory work for sustainability	94
7.2.1 Project ending - what happens when a partner lose their funds	96
7.3 Communication through cooperation horizontally and vertically	97
7.4 Flow of information and understanding of concepts	100
7.4.1 Quest for a common understanding.....	101
7.5 Aid efficiency – do more harm than good?	104
7.5.1 From humanitarian aid to development aid.....	105
7.5.2 Still a need for basic needs	107
8 Concluding remarks	110
8.1 Summary of findings	111
8.1.1 Structure behind partnerships; the development actors different roles.....	112
8.1.2 Priorities and choices	113
8.1.3 Deceptive or indicative – how to relate to the criteria and agendas	115
8.2 Recommendation for further inquiry	117
References	119
Appendices	123
Appendix A: Respondents	123
Appendix B: Interview guides	125

List of figures

Figure 1: Map of Zimbabwe (Nations-Online, 2011). 11

List of Acronyms

CAMPFIRE	Communal Areas Management Programme for Indigenous Resources
CAP	Consolidated Appeal
CBO	Community-Based Organisation
CIO	Central Intelligence Organisation
CSO	Civil Society Organisation
EU	European Union
FBO	Faith Based Organisation
GoZ	Government of Zimbabwe
GPA	Global Political Agreement
HDI	Humanitarian Development Index
INGO	International Non-Governmental Organisation
LNGO	Local Non-Governmental Organisation
MDC	Movement for Democratic Change
MoU	Memorandum of Understanding
NANGO	National Association of Non-Governmental Organisations
NCA	National Constitutional Assembly
NDN	Norwegian Development Network
NGO	Non-Governmental Organisation
NNGO	National Non-Governmental Organisation
NOK	Norwegian Krone
NORAD	Norwegian Agency for Development Cooperation
NTNU	Norwegian University for Science and Technology
OCHA	Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs
PVO Act	Private Voluntary Organisations Act
SAP	Structural Adjustment Programme
UANC	United Africa National Congress
UN	United Nations
UNDP	United Nations Development Program
US	United States
USD	United States Dollar

WB	World Bank
WFP	World Food Programme
ZANU	Zimbabwe African National Union
ZANU-PF	Zimbabwe African National Union- Patriotic Front
ZAPU	Zimbabwe African People's Union
ZCC	Zimbabwe Council of Churches
ZCTU	Zimbabwe congress of Trade Unions
ZimRights	Zimbabwean Human Rights Association
ZMD	Zimbabwean Dollar
ZUJ	Zimbabwe Union of Journalists

1 Introduction

“Today rule of thumb in international development is that everybody wants to be partner with everyone else on everything, everywhere” (Fowler, 2000, p. 3).

Working in partnerships has become a popular way of working with development and development actors in the civil society in the South. It has been seen as a path to achieve more efficient aid and empower the Southern civil society by contributing to foster dialogue and shared responsibility between the different actors. By partnering the actors can get a deeper insight to the context in which the aid is given and the recipient country’s development policies and process. The assumption is that if many actors and forces cooperate they can manage it together (Fowler, 2000). Partnerships are regarded as vital for the functioning of the development chain where Non-Governmental Organisations (NGOs) have had an increased position as important players, especially in terms of implementing projects in the developing world (Morse & McNamara, 2006). Calls for partnerships are now an important and regular part of the development debate with a focus on building partnerships between rich and poor countries and development actors from North and South, and then again with governments or business companies (Lewis, 2001).

This thesis examines how relationships between development actors are functioning, the existing power relations and how these actors relate to each other in the process of working together across different scales. In order to explain and organise the world the use of scale has become a core concept in geography. Two important approaches to the term is scale as a social product or a tool for describing the world. Use of scale in describing people’s life has been questioned and especially with the binary “the local” and “the global”. This is because such notions privilege views of the world in a hierarchical perspective seeing one scale over the other (Herod, 2009; Marston, Iii, & Woodward, 2005). Power differentials have been evident in the aid system in many decades for example between donors and recipients and have dominated the relations between the North and the South. In the mid 1960s partnership was used to describe these relationships between Northern and Southern NGOs, but it was not until the 1990s that the term emerged as “a new idea” in the development discourse. It was

then an emphasise on the developing countries responsibility for their own development through their own strategies made together with local government, the civil society and external partners. To contribute in reformulating these relationships between the donor agencies and the recipients the language of partnership was adopted in an increasingly ubiquitous manner (Crawford, 2003).

There are different explanations for why partnership became such a popular concept. One presented by Lister (2000, p. 228) states that the use of the term partnership will “enable more efficient use of scarce resources, increased sustainability and improved beneficiary participation in development activities.” Here efficiency in the aid performance is a key element in why introducing partnership. Another explanation for introducing partnership is about the motivation of the donor. It is discussed that partnership has been used as an excuse for the donors to get a deeper and more effective penetration into a country’s development plans, and that partnership is used as an instrument for influencing the country in a far more encompassing way instead of resulting in a modified conditionality (Crawford, 2003).

There have been many discussions on partnerships and their function and the reasons for entering partnerships. In principle the idea of partnership is good. By partnering the donor and the NGOs can learn from each other, gain access to new resources like information and technical skills, and be able to improve and increase the efficiency of the projects (D. W. Brinkerhoff & Brinkerhoff, 2004). But there are quite some parts that are divergent and not clear with the term partnership. There are different opinions of the meaning of the term, who wins and who loses, and what are the power relations that unfold between the parties. At the same time use of the term partnership is struggling with important internal contradictions between respecting the sovereignty of the government they are providing aid and reinforcing local ownership in states where there often is mistrust between the rulers of the state and the civil society (Fowler, 2000).

The research is conducted in Zimbabwe, a country in southern Africa that has received aid from the affluent world and development actors for many years. The political and economic situation in the country is complex and the humanitarian situation is according to the United Nations (UN) serious with a lack of basic needs and food shortage amongst around 1.7 million Zimbabweans (OCHA, 2011b). Many organisations, both national and international are involved in the humanitarian and development work in the country and the majority works

through partners. In a country with such a complex environment and an oppressed civil society it is interesting to see the function of partnership and how these partners are working together.

The aim with this thesis is to understand the role and impact power has in these relationships, and how it occurs on the different geographical scales. This are done by looking at the basis on which the actors are becoming partners, what controls which projects that are initiated and how the partners relate to each other, and the given agendas and criteria.

1.1 Understanding civil society and the development actors

When studying partnership there is a need to clarify the distinction between the different development actors and the context they operate in. Before the research question is presented I will define the use of the concept of civil society, and give an introduction to the role of NGOs in development work.

1.1.1 Civil Society

The role of civil society has grown since mid 1980s and is a disputed concept that has contributed in shaping how the international relations manifest themselves today (Van Rooy, 2008). The general definition of civil society refers, according to Riddell (2007) to all activities, relationships and informal and formal groups that are not part of a process under the government. But the concept has a variety of connotations and many are questioning the use and the meaning of the term. Historically, civil society has been used to denote the sphere of social enclaves, that exist in addition to, and often is in opposition to the structured social systems in a territorial unity like the state, the monarchy or the church (Moyo, 1993). Seen from a Western theoretical view, civil society is about the power relations between the citizens and the State, where its most important task is to limit the government's tendency to expand its influence, which sometime resort to violence or civil misconduct (Fowler, 2000).

Van Rooy (2008) presents in her discussion six different elements of the meaning of civil society. The most common definition is civil society as a collective noun, a description of a group of individuals that is seen as synonymous with the voluntary sector and actors explicitly involved in change work. Another element is civil society as values and norms that form the

ideal society that we want to live in. A third element is to use the term civil society in describing the arena where civil organisations can prosper and carry out their work. Here the civil society is a space for action and is seen as a third sector in addition to the state and the market. The three other elements Van Rooy (2008) mentions is that some have seen civil society as a historical moment, which means that it is a society that exists because the conditions for its foundation was existence, or civil society as an anti-hegemony because it is not conducive to modern liberalism. The last meaning of civil society is to see it as working in opposition to the state, as an antidote to the state. The existing power between the three sectors is here redistributed giving more to the civil society and limiting the power of the state.

The civil society is often referred to as the *third sector* after the state and the market, and has become an important actor in the society and a recognised player in development. The rise of civil society was valuable to the aid system because it contributed to consolidate democracy as the political agenda and the privatisation of governmental services. This resulted in complex arenas of interaction across the three sectors; the state, the market and the civil society (Fowler, 2000).

When it comes to viewing civil society in developing countries it has according to Moyo (1993, p. 2) been seen as “that part of society which is outside the control of the state apparatus or the part outside the state sphere.” In this perspective the state and the civil society is seen as two different entities. The tendency in many developing countries is that the ruling party wants to eliminate this duality because it prevents the achievement of a party-controlled state. In these cases the civil society is suppressed by the state and is deprived in acting decisively in political matters. This makes the civil society often hidden in these one-party states, remaining latent waiting to be freed. I will return to this in chapter 2 when the role of the civil society in Zimbabwe is discussed

1.1.2 Non-Governmental Organisations

Since the 1950s NGOs have played an important part in the political economy of development and the implementation of development policy. NGOs work mainly on a non-profit basis and have become an important and vocal platform for the involvement of civil society in public issues (Desai, 2008). In many parts of the Global South these NGOs have become the key

service providers for large sectors of the population who cannot afford the user fees charged by the governments or the cost of private services (Willis, 2009). “NGO” is a broad and general term and is used to cover different types of organisations and agencies from global and local, and from the largest to the smallest with an aim to improve the quality of life of disadvantaged people (Desai, 2008; Riddell, 2007).

The largest have operating budgets greater than those of some developing countries, whereas the smallest struggle on with little official encouragement or funding, blending almost imperceptibly with social movements (Potter, Binns, Elliott, & Smith, 2004, p. 15).

NGOs can work directly or indirectly with development in poor countries. Often they are directly involved in implementing projects or they operate as an intermediary organisation being the one providing or passing on the funds. Many choose not to be the direct implementer but work through partners instead as an intermediary organisation (Riddell, 2007). NGO is often used about organisations that are international, national or regional in scope. To make distinctions between the different types of NGOs, both Northern and Southern NGOs, Riddell (2007) uses the term International NGO (INGO) and National NGO (NNGO). INGO refers to organisations that work across borders and have projects in different countries; NNGOs have their projects and activities predominately in one country. Further he describes the NNGO as “extremely small related to a province or an even smaller locality in a particular country” (Riddell, 2007, p. 260). Unlike Riddell that uses national NGO to cover all organisations even the smaller ones, Mercer (2006) states that NGO is referred to organisations which operate on a scale that is larger than a village or community and make a distinction between NGOs and Community-Based Organisations (CBOs). Her definition of a CBO is that they operate in only one village or two, and therefore work on a smaller scale than the NGO.

Since the 1980s there have been an expansion of bigger international organisations moving into poorer countries, but there have also been an increase of local organisation working with development and humanitarian issues in countries with long histories of civic engagement in development. Some of the less developed countries have hundreds of local organisations registered. There is no accurate statistics of the total number of NGOs operating in the development and humanitarian field but there is an estimate that NGO in the broad term,

including the CBOs and other smaller agencies, will count for around one million. In year 2000, the UN estimated that there were around 35 000 identifiable and larger NGOs, but the exact number is difficult to count and it also depends on how the organisations are defined (Riddell, 2007).

Through participatory approaches NGOs have been active in the process of wanting to empower the poor through community-level projects, but they have been criticised for being more involved in large-scale planning projects and becoming an extension of the state (Potter, et al., 2004). Willis (2009) emphasises that since the NGOs are in the position of being able to work directly with the local recipients and provide the appropriate needs, they should be able to provide the social services more effectively and correctly. The relations between the state and the NGOs have also become more complicated. There are many discussions around the political role of the NGOs and their role as service providers, taking over the role of the state or being given the responsibility by the state. According to Mercer (2006, p. 94) it has been “given way to concerns that NGOs are simply becoming surrogate arms of government”.

Aid has in many countries been important components for change and the NGOs are seen as major contributors in achieving this. The NGOs are prominent in development work and have had an influence in shaping the civil society. Since the 1990s NGOs working with development and humanitarian issues have been viewed as a part of the civil society and a subgroup under the term civil society organisations (CSOs) (Riddell, 2007). In many contexts, like Zimbabwe, these NGOs are an important part of the civil society. The development actors studied in this thesis operate, manoeuvre and enter partnerships within the civil society that is influenced by the challenges that exist within this context.

1.2 Research question: Understanding partnerships

When the NGOs became more prominent in the 1980s, it was optimism around their involvement in the development context. The NGOs were seen as “magic bullets” that had the strength and capability to reach down to the forgotten and poorest communities because of their local knowledge and small size. An expansion of relationship between Southern and Northern NGOs evolved, which had a focus on that these relationships should be based on equality and mutual accountability (Mercer, 2006). This emerging relational complexity resulted in the use of the term partnership to describe these relationships. Since the 1980s the

popularity of the concept has had a huge growth as the key in the agenda of international aid (Fowler, 2000; Lewis, 2001), and has become a buzzword in the NGO and “development world” (Ahmad, 2006).

With the introduction of partnership there was a change in how to refer to the developing world. From being called recipients the developing countries should now be referred to as *partners*. They were seeking to give the recipient countries *ownership* and be active creators of their own development (Abrahamsen, 2004). There is a question about whether the language of *partnership* has contributed to a change in the aid relations away from the power-based relations or if the power relations continue to operate; just disguised (Crawford, 2003).

The term “partnership” has been so popular within the discourse of development that there is a tendency of overuse of the term. The original idea of partnership has been interpreted and stretched in so many directions that there is an uncertainty of the use and meaning of the term. It has lost some of its function because it is used uncritically about every relationship between two actors in international aid (Fowler, 2000; Morse & McNamara, 2006). Crawford (2003) therefore discusses whether partnership is just a new way of formulating the already existing patterns in the development system by just being a new way of the conditionality of the 80s with the Structural Adjustment Programmes (SAP). There has also been an important accountability problem concerning the unequal relationships between them. This made me ask questions around the relationship between organisations working on a local level and between national and international actors involved in these partnerships, and how the actors understand and define their partners.

International organisations and donor countries promote development from the grassroots and the importance of strengthens the Southern civil society through partnerships (NORAD, 2009). In this thesis I want to explore how this works in practice. Is it the grassroots that set the agenda or do the actors with the funding dominate the system? By analysing the stages in partnerships between development actors at the different scales and the processes behind starting and maintaining a project, I will seek to evolve the power relations existing between development actors.

In order to analyse these relations I ask the following questions:

How are partnerships between development actors practiced and understood in Bulawayo, Zimbabwe?

How do the different actors understand their role and what are the structures behind becoming partners?

How does partnership influence the choice of a program or project?

In what ways do partner-organisations relate to the given agendas and criteria?

By answering these questions I aim to develop an understanding of the processes involved in partnership between development actors, by focusing in particular on how power and scale are important elements in the partner discussion. From different reasons that I will describe later, I chose to conduct my fieldwork in Bulawayo, Zimbabwe.

1.3 Structure of this thesis

Chapter 2, *Zimbabwe*, is a presentation of the context where the fieldwork was conducted. Historical and political events that are relevant for understanding the complexity the organisations are working under is presented, along with a discussion of the role of civil society in Zimbabwe. This chapter also gives an overview of the humanitarian situation and the need for assistance.

In chapter 3, *Theoretical framework*, theories relevant for understanding and analysing the dynamics and processes in partnerships, are presented. Focus is on discussions around scale and power and their contribution in shaping the relations between the actors. In addition components and dimensions in theories about partnership that is useful for the analysis, are introduced.

In chapter 4, *Methodology*, the research process is discussed. The aim with this chapter is to describe the challenges experienced and the choices made during the fieldwork and writing of this thesis.

Chapter 5, *Understanding partnerships – actors, procedures and roles*, is the first chapter of the analysis. Every organisation has an understanding of the terms applied to the organisation, like NGO, where they placed themselves on the chain, and the roles of the different organisations. This depended on how they positioned themselves according to the other organisations. This chapter examines the basis of the platform that partnerships are formed.

Chapter 6; *The need - aid diversity, priority and decision making*, analyses the challenges behind making choices in the partnership. When organisations want to partner, they initiate projects and call for proposals. These processes are influenced by criteria and change of values. In this chapter the effect this has on choosing a project will be examined.

Chapter 7, *Obstacles and possibilities; forms and reports*, analyses the evaluation and outcome of partnerships by looking at the process of reporting and evaluation of projects. When operating across scale there are different criteria and agendas that the organisations have to relate to. At the end of this chapter flow of information and change of agenda is discussed as external factors that have an influence on partnerships.

Chapter 8, *Concluding remarks*, summarises the findings in the material seen according to the research questions. This chapter draws a line between the chapters in this thesis and gives suggestions for further inquiry.

2 Zimbabwe

Zimbabwe became an independent state on 18 April 1980 under the leadership of Robert Gabriel Mugabe. After 30 years Mugabe is still the president. During his period, Zimbabwe has been facing different political, social and economic challenges that have contributed in shaping the civil society in Zimbabwe today (Farley, 2008; Lemon & Rogerson, 2002). These factors have also had an impact on international involvement with for example difficulties concerning aid distribution and implementation of projects. From being a self-sufficient granary Zimbabwe has now become dependent on international aid.

Zimbabwe's history is complex. This chapter will give a brief introduction of Zimbabwe's geography, politics and history, and highlight the main events to give a picture under what context the development organisations are working. In the last section the historical and political events will be seen in relation to the rise of civil society and the need for international assistance in Zimbabwe. It is important to know the background of today's political environment in Zimbabwe to understand the position of civil society and the challenges the organisations operating in Bulawayo are facing and issues that can have influenced my fieldwork. This will be discussed further in the methodology chapter.

2.1 The geography of Zimbabwe

Zimbabwe is situated in southern Africa with borders to South Africa, Mozambique, Zambia and Botswana. It is a landlocked country rich on resources like surface- and groundwater, tropical fauna and flora, wildlife, and a rich and diverse mineral base with minerals like gold, asbestos, nickel, coal, copper, chrome and tin. The country has ten administrative zones called provinces, Matabeleland North, Matabeleland South, Masvingo, Manicaland, Mashonaland East, Mashonaland Central, Mashonaland West, Midlands, Harare and Bulawayo. The two latter are referred to as metropolitan provinces, with Harare being the capital of Zimbabwe and the centre of Mashonaland and Bulawayo referred to as the main seat of the Ndebele people. These provinces are again divided into different districts (Holm, 1995).



Figure 1: Map of Zimbabwe (Nations-Online, 2011).

2.1.1 Resources

The resources have been valuable for the country's economy. Zimbabwe has a diverse agriculture that at times have kept the country self-sufficient of basic food requirements, and on aggregate they could have adequate water resources. But rainfall is highly variable from year to year and it is also unevenly distributed geographically. The central and eastern parts of the country, Mashonaland, receive higher rainfall than the southern and western regions, Matabeleland. Water for irrigation is the biggest consumer of water, especially in the commercial farming sector in the southern and western areas. Even though the country appears to have adequate water resources they don't meet the demand during the dry season and droughts are a recurrent phenomenon. A reason for this is that the resources are not fully exploited and not fairly distributed between the areas or the people. Zimbabwe's rich mineral base contribute to around 40 per cent of the country export earnings, and wildlife is the major tourist attraction that also contributes to earnings of foreign currency (Lemon & Rogerson, 2002). This has unfortunately experienced a decline the past years due to the political situation in the country, and has had a noticeable effect on the economic situation.

2.1.2 Demography

Zimbabwe is sparsely populated with approximately 30 persons per km² on a national scale, and the population is unevenly distributed. Most of the people live in the rural areas consisting of the communal lands, the large-scale commercial farms and the resettlement areas implemented by the government. Since independence there have also been an increased migration to the urban areas resulting in high-density areas outside the cities (Lemon & Rogerson, 2002).

There has been a high population growth since the early 1960s in Zimbabwe, but in recent years the population growth has declined due to both internal and international migrations and HIV/AIDS (Lemon & Rogerson, 2002). In 2010 the population in Zimbabwe was about 12million people whereby an estimated 8 million people were categorized as vulnerable and 1.7 million Zimbabweans were facing food insecurity (OCHA, 2011b). HIV/AIDS is the main public health and development challenge, and has imposed severe social and economic pressure on the population, lowered labour productivity and placed a major strain on the country's health delivery system (Lemon & Rogerson, 2002).

2.1.3 Ethnicity

The two dominant tribes in Zimbabwe are Shona around 70 per cent and Ndebele around 20 per cent. The remaining 10 per cent consists of smaller tribes like Tonga, Venda and Shangaan and also people with European or Asian origin. Today the official language in Zimbabwe is English, but English is the first language for only around 2 per cent of the population. The rest have native languages as their first language. The two most prominent are Shona and Ndebele, with Shona being the most spoken (Dashwood, 2000; Holm, 1995). Almost everyone knows how to speak either Ndebele or Shona, and most of the Shona people know Ndebele and vice versa. Especially if they live or work in parts of the country where the other language is most spoken.

There have been tribal clashes between Shona and Ndebele long before the colonial period and this have continued up until today. During the colonial period an effort was made to achieve a balance between the Ndebele and the Shona with the two leaders Nkomo and Mugabe, but during the fight for liberation these two made a greater division between the two tribes (Ndlovo-Gatsheni, 2008).

2.2 Political and economic history

2.2.1 Under colonial rule

Compared to most of the other countries in Africa where the Europeans were administrators on contracts, Southern Africa was dominated by settlers during the colonial period. These settlers owned or farmed vast tracks of land and regarded the country as their own (Farley, 2008). The land alienation for European settlement that started in 1890 has left a persistent effect on the political, economic and social geography of Zimbabwe (Lemon & Rogerson, 2002).

Zimbabwe was called Rhodesia and was a territory of the British South Africa Company up until 1923 when they became a part of the British Empire and was granted self-governing status as Southern Rhodesia under the rule of Ian Smith. Under white rule an economic and social system that was in favour of the white minority developed, and the African influence was regulated. The system was discriminating especially when it came to distribution of land. Discrimination also existed in other parts of the system, and it was intentionally constructed to enable the whites (Farley, 2008).

Even though the white population never exceeded more than 5 per cent, the Europeans had exclusive rights to more than 50 per cent of the most productive and fertile land, and the areas closest to the communication systems. The indigenous people were resettled from their traditional lands into sparsely populated and drier areas less suitable for agriculture. The land distribution and legislation to restrict access by Africans to half of the land in the country was the major rallying point for the liberation movements (Farley, 2008; Lemon & Rogerson, 2002).

2.2.2 Independence

The war for independence that started in 1970 was a war between the African liberation movements on one side and the settler government on the other. Two of the many important liberation fighters represented the two largest tribes in Zimbabwe. Joshua Nkomo was an Ndebele and Robert Gabriel Mugabe a Shona. Nkomo and Mugabe were both imprisoned

under the Smith regime. After they were released they led the nationalist struggle against the white, Nkomo from Zambia and Mugabe from Mozambique (Farley, 2008).

In 1979, after almost 90 years of colonial rule and a long liberation war, the country's principal political actors met in London in what is called the Lancaster House Conference, to discuss the Zimbabwe-Rhodesia's political future. Here they agreed on having elections with secret ballot and where the votes of the people would be free. The election in February 1980 was successful and Robert Mugabe's Zimbabwe African National Union (ZANU) polled 57 seats and Joshua Nkomo's Zimbabwe African People's Union (ZAPU) 20 seats¹. Mugabe was first appointed prime minister under President Canaan Banana but in 1987 he took over as the president. After the election Mugabe was told to form a government and decided to go into coalition with Nkomo's ZAPU to minimise the friction between Zimbabwe's two principal tribes (Farley, 2008; Lemon & Rogerson, 2002).

2.2.3 A new start - Southern Africa's success story

The new government was influenced by socialistic philosophy and aimed to transform the economy and society in order to redress the socio-political and racial disparities that were inherited from the colonial area. They embarked on programmes so that the poor serviced population easier got access to economic and social services with a focus on education and health. The government did rehabilitation work on the infrastructure that was destroyed during the liberation war and aimed at improving the health status of the population through water and sanitation programs, child health care and health care free of charge for low-income and unemployed groups (Dashwood, 2000; Lemon & Rogerson, 2002).

Mugabe and his government used millions of dollars on the education system. They built new schools and children up to 14 years were given free primary education. At that time Zimbabwe had the best-educated population in Africa, but a challenge that rose the next decades was a new well educated workforce searching for jobs, especially in the towns (Hill, 2005).

¹ The rest of the polled seats went to two other parties, the Rhodesian Front with Ian Smith and United Africa National Congress (UANC) of Bishop Muzorewa (Farley, 2008).

In the agricultural sector the government supported communal area farmers by providing equipment, inputs marketing and transportation for their products. This was so successful that Zimbabwe became self-sufficient with basic food requirements. At its first ten years of independence Mugabe and his government was acclaimed by the international community for its provision of social services. After independence they had the most developed and diverse economy in sub-Saharan Africa (Dashwood, 2000).

2.3 Political turmoil

At the same time the coalition between Mugabe and Nkomo did not turn out the way Mugabe had anticipated and these two leaders tended to clash in cabinet discussions. This resulted in Mugabe demoting Nkomo from vice-presidency and later expelling him from the cabinet in 1982 (Farley, 2008).

Mugabe was running a Shona-dominated government. He nationalized the press and worked pro-Shona campaigns. Towards the elections in 1985 an army called the Fifth Brigade (Gukurahundi) trained in North Korea was ordered into Matabeleland with a mission to stamp out dissidents of the Shona. An estimated 8000 to 40 000 Ndebele or Nkomo supporters perished and many were tortured (Farley, 2008; Hill, 2005; Ndlovo-Gatsheni, 2008).

Nkomo fled to Europe and the turmoil between the tribes in Zimbabwe continued through the 1980's. In 1987 Nkomo dissolved his party ZAPU and the two parties was united into Zimbabwe African National Union- Patriotic Front (ZANU-PF), which has been the ruling party up until today. The merger into ZANU-PF diminished the size, strength and variety of opposition groups and Mugabe continued to win the elections during the 90's, even though many showed their disenchantment by staying away from the polls and opposition parties boycotted the elections (Farley, 2008). Physical and psychological violence was used to spread fear, and ethnicity became weapon in achieving monopoly of the state. There was a lack of Ndebele supporters involved in the new party and according to sources in Ndlovo-Gatsheni (2008, p. 189) they were told to “ make no key decisions and above all not raise questions about the development of the other half of the country”.

Because of the improved access to education there was a massive labour migration to the bigger cities, but no jobs. Little provision was made by the state resulting in increasing

unemployment. At the same time little had happened on transferring the resources like land areas from the white to the black. The population was frustrated and during the election in 1996 only 31% of the electorate voted (Farley, 2008; Hill, 2005).

Even though ZANU-PF achieved significant gains in the social sector during its first ten years, major economic constraints remained unresolved and the economy was deteriorating. Many of the strategies implemented in the 1980s were removed, like health subsidies and free education, and also the communal farmers' access to agricultural inputs was limited and the inflation was growing (Lemon & Rogerson, 2002). By 2004 Zimbabwe had the fastest shrinking economy and the highest inflation rate in the world. People fled the country, especially well educated people like doctor and nurses seeking employment overseas. This resulted in a collapse of the health system that contributed to an increase of people with HIV developing AIDS because of poor healthcare (Hill, 2005).

2.4 Turning point in the political history

Even though Mugabe was still winning the elections he had to find other strategies to win the people's support. One attempt was a renewal of the constitution that was determined in 1979 in the Lancaster House agreement. The people did not approve this constitution and pressure of change was growing both within the government and amongst the people. The civil society was mobilizing and came together and formed the National Constitutional Assembly (NCA)². They wanted to challenge the structure of state power and make the constitution more democratic. This was a threat to Mugabe and his government, and Mugabe decided to launch his own constitutional initiative. He offered dialogue with all interested parties, including the NCA, but they were put under legalistic constraints. It was made sure that there were no loopholes where people could challenge the government, and ensured that the president was allowed to amend the constitution if he saw the need for it (Farley, 2008).

The NCA and other civil organisations worked against ZANU-PF's constitution and by the end of 1999 an opposition party, the Movement for Democratic Change (MDC) entered the

² NCA was organised by the Zimbabwe Council of Churches (ZCC) and many other groups joined in, amongst them the Zimbabwe congress of Trade Unions (ZCTU), the Zimbabwe Union of Journalists (ZUJ) and the Zimbabwean Human Rights Association (ZimRights). Morgan Tsvangirai, the secretary-general of ZCTU, chaired the NCA secretariat (Farley, 2008).

political arena led by Morgan Tsvangirai. A month later the government published the new constitution and the referendum was held in the beginning of year 2000. This referendum was the first big setback for Mugabe and a turning point in Mugabe's political history. 54 per cent of the electorate voted to reject it, and marked ZANU-PF's first defeat at the polls. People within the party were now starting to lose confidence in Mugabe as a leader (Farley, 2008). The election was coming up in June and in desperation to stay in power Mugabe made tactical changes that would keep him in power, for example to the state's expropriation of land. In turn for their vote the black population were promised land (Hill, 2005).

2.4.1 Fast-track land reform and economic deterioration

This turning point was the beginning of a land reform that has been named the "Fast-track land reform". After independence the government's intention was to resettle around 200,000 African families on land owned by the white population on a "willing seller - willing buyer" approach agreed in the Lancaster House Conference. This meant that the white could choose if they wanted to sell all their land, share it with black Zimbabweans or work together with them. The progress was slow and only about 50-70,000 families were resettled, out of them mostly people fighting for ZANU-PF during the liberation war. After the defeat in 2000 Mugabe stepped up the reallocation process by allowing war veterans to occupy White-owned land without intervening from the government. This led to a massive attack on white farmers where many lost their lives or their livelihood (Farley, 2008; Lemon & Rogerson, 2002).

The land reform had a huge effect on Zimbabwe's economic situation. When the white farmers were running the agricultural sector, it was efficient enough for both domestic consumption and export earnings. The takeover resulted in a massive decline in commodities such as maize and tobacco and land became a political totem. Most of those taking over all the commercial farms didn't have the knowledge of running a farm, and the government had no policy on how to remain productive (Farley, 2008).

The country experienced a huge shortfall in basic food requirements that they used to be self-sufficient on, and there was drastic fall in export earnings and the tourism sector, which affected the foreign currency earnings. The land reform also led to loss of employment and migration and resettlement of thousands of former farm workers and their families (Lemon & Rogerson, 2002).

2.5 The political environment post 2000

During the House of Assembly election in 2000 ZANU-PF lost many of its votes and achieved only five more seats than the opposition MDC. Election monitors sent to observe the polling was refused to grant entry visas and the pressure on Mugabe was huge. He responded by increasing the hostile takeover of the white-owned farms and carrying out hidden violence towards MDC and its headquarters. This continued during the first years of the 21st century and Mugabe and his party performed many acts in their favour. For example he banned publication of provoking documents and public gatherings to avoid rioting and through the Supreme Court he changed the General Law Amendment Act prohibiting foreign monitoring of the elections. The newspapers were also taken control over and accused for defamation (Farley, 2008).

The harassment of MDC and Morgan Tsvangirai and disruption of their activities and campaigns continued and accelerated, especially before up-coming elections. The election in June 2002 was marked by intimidation and violence between the army, police and Central Intelligence Organisation (CIO) against the opposition. Mugabe barely won the election, and according to Western observers the elections had been rigged. Mugabe's mandate was therefore not recognised by the European Union (EU) or the United States (US) (Farley, 2008; Hill, 2005).

During the elections in 2008 the political violence continued, but the year after the two parties, ZANU-PF with Robert Mugabe and MDC with Morgan Tsvangirai formed an inclusive government. They signed a Global Political Agreement (GPA) to address the economic and political challenges, but the promises in the agreement have not been fulfilled, and in the beginning of 2010 the process of a political unity between the two parties have stagnated. ZANU-PF have announced that during 2011 there might be a new election coming up that can be a turning point in Zimbabwe's history if the coalition government manage to cooperate and have a free election with no violence (OCHA, 2011b; Olsen, 2010).

2.5.1 The need for assistance

The past decades, Zimbabwe that used to be Africa's second largest food producer and the third largest exporter of tobacco in the world, was deteriorating and the country was no longer capable of supplying food for its own basic needs. In 2001 the World Food Programme (WFP) warned that there would be a food shortage in Zimbabwe and the year after they indicated that around half a million people were in need of food aid (Hill, 2005).

The economic situation deteriorated. This resulted in a widespread famine and in 2003 the government was compelled to accept food aid, but on the condition that the government was responsible of distributing it. The food aid was used as a political weapon where only ZANU-PF supporters were receiving the food. MDC supporters and the former workers of the white-owned farms received little or no food (Farley, 2008). It will take time for the country to raise the food production. This will not happen before the new settlers are skilled and experienced producers (Lemon & Rogerson, 2002). Around 75 per cent of the country's population are dependent on food hand-outs or imports. Some of this is also due to the high inflation in the country (Hill, 2005).

2.6 The rise of civil society and its obstacles in Zimbabwe

There are two main historical explanations for the underdevelopment of civil society in Zimbabwe. One is related to the pre-independence period and the second to a Zimbabwe under the rule of Robert G. Mugabe and his ruling party ZANU-PF. When Zimbabwe was a British colony and later under the rule of Ian Smith the colonial policy essence was to criminalize politics in the black communities. The white colonisers believed that the native people was better governed as a tribal entity, and through this they forced the black people to hide their organisation of political activity. What happened after independence when ZANU-PF became the ruling party is that they claimed they were an umbrella organisation being the sole legitimate representative of the people and wanted to unite the people under the slogan "one state, one society, one nation, one leader" (Moyo, 1993, p. 7).

Mugabe took advantage of the already oppressed civil society from the colonial times when he created a one-party state and continued through his rhetorical skills to under-develop the civil society groups. He used traditional values and gave cultural legitimacy to his one-party state under the cover of creating a national unity with the traditional system of one chief and

one clan. The groups waiting to attain legitimacy after independence became a victim of the ruling party's tactics and continued to be oppressed. Mugabe and his party ZANU-PF prevented the civil society of finding any political space by using strong political means. Many of them violent and with socio-psychological impacts that have been used to oppose the civil society, resulting in a fear among the general population in involving with the civil society and stand up against the state (Moyo, 1993).

State power is centralised with the president and the ruling party, who controls the associational life. It is regarded as a threat to national security if someone tries to oppose the state, and civil society groups can be labelled "enemies of the state" if they want to be independent from the state. This has contributed to make the political process in Zimbabwe dominated by violence and fear, and resulted in an under-developed and oppressed civil society (Cornelias, 2008; Van Rooy, 2008).

2.6.1 Status of civil society post 2000

Mugabe and his government have used all political means to hold back the civil society and many have been killed in the clashes between the civil society and the state. There have also been attempts to prevent the international society and civil organisations to work in Zimbabwe. After the entrance of the opposition party MDC in 1999 there was an increased turbulence in the political environment resulting in many reforms and means by the ruling government trying to prevent the civil society to rise, but the civil society started to gain a focus in the international community.

During the elections in 2008 there were raids of the civil society and many cases of politically motivated violence and human rights violations between supporters of both the ZANU-PF and the MDC. There was a request for humanitarian assistance but the aid agencies experienced limited access to the affected people. Workers in the aid industry, election monitors and other representatives of the civil society were also exposed to violence and threats. Many organisations had to scale down their work, and food distribution to certain areas had to stop because of the political violence, which resulted in exacerbating the humanitarian situation (Cornelias, 2008; UN, 2008).

ZANU-PF and Robert Mugabe has continued the crackdown on the civil society and the opposition, and denies the rise of multi-party politics and participatory governance in Zimbabwe. Using his rhetoric skills the civil society and the opposition has been accused for being pro-neocolonialism and on the Western side wanting to overthrow the country back in to British rule, and the raids against the civil society continues (Cornelias, 2008). The NGOs and human rights groups have also been victims of legislation in Zimbabwe. They have been banned from political work including voter education and limiting their funds placing many restrictions on how they can work (Hill, 2005).

2.7 International aid and Zimbabwe

After Zimbabwe gained independence a number of Northern NGOs poured into the country. The assumption was that the poor lacked the starting capital and the expertise they needed to respond to the market demands. The NGOs stepped in with providing training, seeds and money to initiate projects. As a result, many NGOs became involved in income-generating projects. Another popular activity was supporting peasant farmers by distributing concessional credits. This was successful as long as they received the support from the NGOs, however, without the support they collapsed. It also excluded the poorest households because of the risks involved. To support the peasant farmers, NGOs were also involved in nature conservation. A famous development project is the Communal Areas Management Programme for Indigenous Resources (CAMPFIRE) that was constructed to associate the population in the former reserves with the management of wildlife resources. The local community was involved in the wildlife management and also benefitted from money through the safari operators and foreign hunters paying for hunting (Nugent, 2004).

In the 1990s with the economic downturn, money became a complicated issue, and the government could no longer pass down what was needed to the Rural City Council who was distributing it down to the ward level (Nugent, 2004). The economic situation with the high inflation also had an affect on the organisations operating in Zimbabwe because of the decrease on value of the funds. An example presented in a report done by Scanteam (2007) for Norwegian Agency for Development Cooperation, NORAD shows that the official exchange rate could be USD³ 1 = ZMD⁴ 250, whilst on the parallel market USD 1 = ZMD 52

³ United States Dollar (US\$)

⁴ Zimbabwean Dollar (Z\$)

000. The official exchange rate was severely undervalued in 2007 and for those who were not able to deal on the parallel market, their money was worth nothing.

2.7.1 The humanitarian situation today

After the Global Political Agreement (GPA) there have been some increased cooperation between the humanitarian community and the Government of Zimbabwe, but the state-to-state aid is still limited due to the political situation. The economic situation has improved since 2008, and by removing the local currency and using foreign currency like the USD, the inflation has stabilised and eased some of the challenges with doing humanitarian work (OCHA, 2011b; Olsen, 2010).

Even though Zimbabwe is heading in the right direction, the country continues to face considerable obstacles. The history with its political and economic challenges has influenced the humanitarian crisis and the people of Zimbabwe are among the poorest and most vulnerable on the African continent and are ranked lowest on the UNDP's Human Development Index (HDI). There has been an improvement in food security and basic social services, but there are still an estimated 1,7 million out of the population on 12.3 million Zimbabweans that will face severe food insecurity in 2011. There are a large number of organisations operating in Zimbabwe but it will take time for Zimbabwe to recover. In order to meet their objectives United Nation's (UN) Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA) has requested a total of US\$ 425million (OCHA, 2011a, 2011b). Norway is one of the countries that have responded to the humanitarian crisis in Zimbabwe and the lack of food security. In May 2010 they increased the aid provided from the government of Norway to Zimbabwe with 10 million NOK⁵ to a total amount of 30 million NOK. Besides the 30 million NOK, Norway also contributes with approximately 100million NOK channelled through the civil society organisations and the UN-system (Utenriksdepartementet, 2010).

A challenge the country and the development actors now are facing is that the Government of Zimbabwe have decided that the country is transitioned from a humanitarian crisis to recovery, meaning that they should now work with a development agenda. This influences the work of the actors operating in Zimbabwe because the Government and donor priorities are

⁵ Norwegian Krone

shifting. The government want to go away from seeing Zimbabwe as a country in humanitarian crisis and are saying that what is now needed is to look long term, while the international community still recognise Zimbabwe as a humanitarian crisis (OCHA, 2011a). A challenge is that before the population can address the social needs and think long term they have to be sure that their basic needs for living are covered (Hill, 2005). The situation in Zimbabwe today will be further addressed in the analysis.

3 Theoretical framework

Most research on partnership is conducted by analysing the relationship between a few organisations, but one organisation often has many different partners. It is necessary to see the complexity and identify the different components in the relationships. One field agency can have different donors who might have different constraints, and there may be lack of coordination between them in terms of funds and procedures. A donor might also have relationships with many field agencies in different programs and projects. Usually research is focusing on relationships over short periods, but there might be important changes over time that has affects on the relationship. The timescale is therefore an element when studying partnership (Morse & McNamara, 2006).

This chapter will examine theories that are relevant with the questions and the findings, and constitute the fundament of the analysis. My plan for the fieldwork, to try to find some answers to the research question included several steps. Most of them will be described and discussed in the methodology chapter. I started however to work with the interview guide before I left for Zimbabwe. I wanted to interview different persons representing different organisations on different levels. The challenge was to imagine how to make an interview guide that would be useful in many different settings. It became clear during this process that especially scale and power would be central elements that would affect the question about partnership.

This chapter will present different perspectives of the theoretical elements scale and power, and explain various components in the partnership debate. Morse and McNamara (2006) have combined analytical approaches reported in the literature for partnership into a single multi-analytical framework. They identify four main concepts in analysing institutional partnerships in development: *discourse, interdependence, function/performance and power*. In addition to equate these four and see them as independent features they also focus on the overlap between the four.

These dimensions are tools that contribute in analysing my own findings, but there will be a highlighted focus on the dimension power that I see more as a crosscutting issue. In Morse and McNamara (2006) they do discuss the overlapping that exists between the dimensions,

but what I see is lacking in their discussion is the emphasis on the context that power is exercised and its relation to scale. I want to take the power discussion one-step further and look at different dimensions of power but also see power as a cross-sectoral dimension that exist on many scales. Scale and power are two important and complex concepts in geography that contribute to an understanding on how social life and relations among various actors are understood and lived.

Power is a fundamental issue in my findings as with the issue of scale, that is an important concept in understanding geographical levels and discusses the relations in partnerships. The last section of this chapter will address some of the components in partnership that is fundamental for understanding the relationship between the organisations. Here the other three dimensions in Morse and McNamara's (2006) framework, discourse, interdependence and function/performance are essential.

3.1 Scale

Scale is a fundamental dimension of how social life is structured and played out, but the way we think about scale also has an impact on how we understand social life (Herod, 2009; Herod & Wright, 2002). Before the 1980s scale was a taken-for-granted concept in geography, used as a frame for discussing "the regional" or "the national", but not defined and theorised (Herod, 2009). The interest in theorizing scale has grown the last decades due to the transformations the world has experienced, for example with the easier and improved communication systems. More recent studies and central discussions of scale are about the ontological status, whether it is a material thing or if it is more of a mental appliance for ordering the world. The first way of thinking about scale, as a material thing is called materialistic understanding, where scale exists as a social product. The second is an idealist understanding where scale is a tool in categorizing and understanding the world (Herod, 2009; Herod & Wright, 2002).

3.1.1 Idealist and materialist framework

Scale can be seen as being a conceptual mechanism for ordering the world. This relates to scale as an *idealist thought* that sees the global and the local as an already existing matrix of scale, a framework within which the social life is lived. The global and local are created to

organise and divide processes and social practices. Geologically given limits of the Earth is what defines global in this framework, whilst local on the other hand is seen as a term describing processes that happens on a smaller geographical level, seen in contrast to the regional scale. This view has a hierarchy aspect where the local is seen as smaller than the regional, which is smaller than the national, and the national again being smaller than the global (Herod, 2009).

The *materialist thought* of scale on the other hand sees scales as something that is socially produced and brought into being, not something that exists waiting to be utilized. Materialist scale is actively created through processes and the practice of various social actors, and needs to be worked for in order to achieve. Unlike the idealist thought where scale exists in logical hierarchy, scale is here actively created through economic and political processes. For the materialist it is not just the focus on the global scale as the geographically given limits of the Earth, but it is also possible to produce scales and become global. For example with transnational companies, they have to actively build their own global scale. This can also be related to international organisations that have their foundation in one country but have expanded to many countries establishing local offices and emphasise that they work locally. Some materialist has argued that the local is more natural and less socially produced. The argument builds on that everyone starts as local actors and then you can evolve to become national or global. By having this view local is seen as a foundation upon where all the scales have evolved. This approach has been criticised for privileging the local compared to the other scales. Other have therefore argued that social actors also have to work to become locally and that the local scale, as with the global, is produced (Herod, 2009).

How geographical scales have been represented and considered brings up important issues in how the geographer understands the world and the social life that is lived. There have been different approaches in theorizing scale due to the ontological status, but another important issue is how the relationship between the scales is conceptualized. This contributes in determining how processes that structure the world are understood. Here the emphasis have mainly been given to the binary local-global (Herod, 2009).

3.1.2 The local and the global

In addition to how scale is viewed ontologically it is according to Herod (2009, p. 223) “important to understand that the ways in which the global and the local – and especially the relationship between them – are presented rhetorically can fundamentally shape how we conceptualize the world and its social processes.” One critique of the materialistic way of theorising scale is how they see the global as an active process and the local as something more natural and less produced. Local and global has been viewed as binary where global and local are being two ends of the scale, one being seen as a contrast of the other. This way of conceptualising local and global has also been seen in relation to global as something abstract and local as concrete, especially in much of the Western way of thinking about scale (Herod, 2009).

Gibson-Graham (2002) identifies different ways in how this binary is viewed and looks closer at how they can challenge the relationship between the global and the local. The global is often represented as powerful whilst the local is seen as weak, especially in a Western view where greater extensiveness means more power. Based on the assumption that the local/global binary is positioned as hierarchical where global and local derives from the meaning of the other they want to challenge the power of this relationship. This they have done by dividing the view of local-global into three categories, those who see the global-local as different perspectives (1-3), as the same (4-5) or as a process (6).

- 1) The local and global are not actual things but interpretive frames that can be used in analysing situations. This opposes the tendency of concretise the binary. What is seen at a global perspective might be understood differently from a local perspective.
- 2) The local and global are understood by what they are not. For example global is seen as anything but the local, and more than the national and regional. On the other hand the local is seen as the opposite of the global, which makes the view of the global more powerful.
- 3) The third way of seeing scale is not through fixed arenas or hierarchical terms but through networks. Instead of the social life being played out in fixed arenas this way of thinking scale sees the world as constituted through a series of social networks. Both the global and the local is a part of the same universe of networks.
- 4) The global *is* local meaning that if you analyse the global you will find locality because everything that is global has a local foundation somehow. For example multinational cooperation has their locality somewhere.

- 5) The local *is* global, meaning that the local belongs in a bigger social network. The local is an entry point where the global processes meet the ground.
- 6) The last way of seeing local/global presented by Gibson-Graham (2002) is scale as a process instead of locations. It means that the global and local is not fixed entities but are produced and can be remade through different processes. All spaces are *glocal*, being hybrids of the local and the global.

The binary global-local is seen as existing within structured formations being in contradiction to each other and where there is a focus on the differentially distribution of power. As mentioned above there is a general assumption that power is more present and easier to mobilize in the global than in the local. As Marston, et al. (2005) clarify, there is a tendency of thinking hierarchal in the theory. Gibson-Graham have been criticised for their focus of the local in that the power relations in the community and the way the local is linked to the other scales is excluded (Herod, 2009).

It is then interesting to see how actors define or make themselves locally or globally. Manufacturers and organisations often have to link with local suppliers when operating in another country than their origin or work in communities through a local workforce. By doing this they are becoming local. The other way around organisations and companies can become global by networking and make relations with companies or institutions in other countries than their own and throughout the world (Herod, 2009). The development actors relate and manoeuvre across what they think of as a pre-existing scale when explaining their role and position as an organisation, but at the same time they contribute in shaping the scale they are working across. What happens on the local level is produced through the global and the local. Swyngedouw (2004) sees the configurations of scale as the outcome of different processes. He emphasise that the scale as a geographical construction, becomes an arena where sociospatial power is enacted and performed. He suggests that we should think of local and global more as a network.

To describe relations between the global and the local, geographers have used different metaphors. I have chosen two metaphors presented by Herod (2009) that I see illustrate my findings and are useful in the analysis. This is scale as a ladder and scale as concentric circles. The ladder is presented as hierarchical where the rungs represent the various scales with one being above and distinct from the other. There is progression between the rungs, and one has

to climb up the ladder from local to regional to national to the global that is presented as the highest rung. With the concentric circle the scales are also seen as separate entities but they encompass each other instead of being seen as above. The local is here conceived as relatively small being the circle in the middle with the regional as a larger circle encompassing until the global that is the outer circle.

In my material you find both of these ways of theorizing the relations between the global and the local, in the way 1) scale is used by the informants and 2) produced through the process of partnership. For some, global and local is something that exist that they have to relate to. The local is on the bottom- that's jut the way it is. Whilst others see these concepts of being local or global as created by the west in order to categorize the world, and contributes in shaping it by manoeuvre across scales.

3.2 Power

The concept of power is one of the most crucial and broadest concepts in geography. There are many theories of power and in the sub-disciplines of human geography it is a key notion. Dahl (1957) define power as a relation that exist among various actors from individuals to groups and organisations to government and nation-states. His idea of power is that "A has power over B to the extent that he can get B to do something that B would not otherwise do" (Dahl, 1957, p. 203). In this thesis I will follow up on this definition and understand power as something that can be passed on, or shared. It is a product to achieve goals or results, and in understanding the differences and unevenness that occur between groups (Panelli, 2004). Power is also a way of understanding how relations are being formed and the underlying features of a partnership between two or more actors.

Power is in this thesis studied in relations between partners and the dynamics in the partnership. It is seen in connection with scale and how the partners relate to each other across the different scales. I will in this section discuss the concept and different dimensions of power. There are different types of power that contributes in giving an explanation of what power is and how it can be used. Under the last section of this chapter I will use these understandings of power to explain power relations between actors across different scales, and how power is played out between the actors.

3.2.1 Dimensions of power

Allen's (1997) three dimensions of power is highlighted in Panelli (2004) as important ways to classify power. Allen divides power into power as capacity, a resource or as technology. Power as a *capacity* relates to power that is inherent through the social relations that constitute the institution. It is located, meaning that it is something that individual or groups possess or own. Power need not to be exercised to be visible, but it is here something that can be used to influence or decide how things should be or are organised. Literally it means that you have the ability to have power *over* someone.

Power as a *resource* is more about power *to* than power *over*. Power is in this case not something that is owned by someone, but something that can be produced. It is here about the means or the resources that one has or can mobilize in order to achieve certain outcomes.

The third description is power as *technology*. Power is in this case nothing that is owned, whereby the focus is on how the power is exercised and practised. It is more like a flow, and works *on* subjects, not *over* or *to* them. It is not a property that can be used to achieve something centred in a group but something that is exercised through individuals and groups. It is not centralised but circulates between relations.

Dahl (1957) distinguished four key elements that have been adopted as a basic framework of power used by Lister (2000) to examine the power relations between partners. These four elements are the base, means, scope and amount of power. The *base* of power is passive. This is because power consists of resources that one has and can use to affect others. The resources are exploited in order to influence someone's behaviour. These resources can for example be objects, opportunities and acts. The *means* of power is the actions that one can do by making use of the resources. The means of power or also called instruments can be promises or threats to use the base or actual use of the base. If one organisation has money, they can use this to make another organisation change behaviour by giving or not giving the money. The money is then the resource, and the decision of giving or not is the means.

The *mean* is between the *base* that A has and B's response that is referred to as the *scope* of power. The other part, B, will response to A's action, so the *scope* or the extent of power, will be the actions that A can get B to perform by using its *means*. The *amount* of power is the extent of the influence that A has on B. This seeks to find the probability of B actually performing what A wanted it to do (Dahl, 1957).

3.2.2 Power relations in partnerships

Power has become a common approach in analysing partnership where the logical thought is that the partner with the resources, often referred to as donor, is dominant because it has what is needed by the field offices in order to serve the beneficiaries (Morse & McNamara, 2006). Lister (2000) discusses power in partnership by using Dahl's (1957) four components of power, which is the way Morse and McNamara (2006) discuss power in their multi-analytical framework. These theories of power are behavioural, meaning that it focuses on how actions from one partner or person can impact others behaviour. Power is expressed through individual actors and relationships, which makes it critical in a partnership (Lister, 2000).

Partnership is often formed between partners where one has resources that are of interest of the other partner. Lister (2000, p. 5) defines in her study resources as "anything of value, tangible or intangible, that can be exchanged between organisations." This is similar to Allen's (1997) way of describing power as capacity whilst Dahl (1957) would apply the term base of power. It is something that the donor has or own that can be used in influencing the field office or beneficiaries. Often there are stipulated conditions and terms given by the one with the resource that the field office has to follow in order to partner. These criteria by the donors are defended with words like accountability and value for money (Morse & McNamara, 2006). This falls into Dahl's category "means of power" and go together with Allen's "power as a resource". It is something that can be used to achieve something or to make use of the resource described above. Criteria can be used as a mean in achieving what the partner wants.

The field partner can choose not to agree on the conditions but because of the hard competitions in getting funding partners, most will be pleased to comply or stretch a little extra to meet the requirements (Morse & McNamara, 2006). This can be seen as Allen's (1997) "power as technology" which is about how power is exercised. Here the partner can use constraints in forcing the other partner to go into a partnership with them. This relates to Dahl's (1957) "scope of power" that is about what is being carried out, but "power as technology" also go a bit further by analysing the power that is being exercised.

Analysis of power in partnership has been criticised for being one sided with concluding that the donor has the power. But the southern NGOs are not powerless (Morse & McNamara, 2006). Forbes (1999) talks of how the localness can be used as power to influence the donors behaviour. Local agencies can use their knowledge of the local to influence the donors. Because most probably will the donors know far less than the local actors about the environment they are operating in.

It is also important to emphasise that the donors prefer to work with reliable and good local agencies in order to maintain their own reputation and *raison d'être* (Morse & McNamara, 2006). The conception of power as domination is a classic formulation and is found in much of the discussions on partnership. Abrahamsen (2004) means the classical formulation of power as domination comes from Dahl (1957) and his definition of power as presented earlier. This is about getting someone to do what he or she usually would not have done and is a pluralistic way of thinking, because power is being employed over someone. This definition of power is according to Abrahamsen (2004), coercive and intentional because of the changes that is observable.

3.3 Components in partnership

The intention behind introducing partnership was that it would contribute as a practical solution to the aid system's failings. It was supposed to fill gaps like the lack of ownership by the locals, inappropriate donor behaviour and the underlying environment (Fowler, 2000). A reason for creating partnership is that it can contribute to mutual learning and sharing of ideas between the organisations at different levels, and ease the distribution of funds coming from multilateral donors. For the donors, establishing a partnership will be an easier way of reaching the targeted beneficiaries and limit the needs of establishing field offices. Instead they can work through local partners and use local staff (Morse & McNamara, 2006).

In order to reach core Norwegian development goals, such as strengthening local ownership, increasing development actors' accountability to their target groups and reaching farther out and deeper down to new recipients, it will remain crucial to achieve reciprocal partnerships while simultaneously exploring and implementing alternative support forms to Southern civil society (NORAD, 2009, p. 6).

As mentioned in chapter 1, partnership has turned out to be an important method to achieve efficient development assistance. One definition of partnership is “an arrangement existing between two or more organisations (or individuals or institutions) in working towards a commonly defined goal” (Morse & McNamara, 2006, p. 322). Partnership is a type of relationship that is complex, subtle and diverse. The term is often used to describe the desired relationship between two or more actors at different scales, and is a key policy concept in development to address the relations between NGOs and other institutional actors (Lewis, 2001; Morse & McNamara, 2006). When evaluating the impact of partnership on the development projects there is an assumption that the organisations will be able to use the different resources more efficient and maximize the probability of success in a project (Morse & McNamara, 2006).

Efficiency and effectiveness are two reasons why organisations want to partner. This can be achieved through reliance of comparative advantages and a rational division of labour. It is also a wish to reach a win-win situation and operationalize the public good through an open decision-making process. Partnership is used as an element in programs to improve the delivery of key goods and services in developing countries. It represents a chance to getting hold of and reaching the scope of the problems that need to be addressed through partnering (D. W. Brinkerhoff & Brinkerhoff, 2004). But according to D. W. Brinkerhoff & Brinkerhoff (2004, p. 255) there is in practice “probably more cynicism than hope when it comes to donor-NGDO⁶ partnerships”.

Partnership is used as a common denominator of bringing together actors from different preconditions and historical paths instead of using terms like sponsor, donor, client or patron, contractor, collaborator and counterpart (Fowler, 2000). The Southern and Northern NGOs were now instead supposed to apply the term “partner” when referring to each other. A challenge with this is that partnerships are characterized by being formed between unequal partners (Lewis, 2001). It is for example used to describe the relationship between the actors funding the programs and the one implementing them, like partnerships between the donors and the field agencies (D. W. Brinkerhoff & Brinkerhoff, 2004; Morse & McNamara, 2006). For the Southern NGOs this relationship is viewed more as a transfer of resources. The

⁶ In their text D.W. Brinkerhoff & Brinkerhoff (2004) uses the concept Non-Governmental Development Organisations when talking of NGOs doing development work.

Southern NGOs referred to as the field agencies or local partners therefore still prefer to call the Northern NGOs as their funders or donors (Ahmad, 2006).

Fowler (2000) states that solidarity and cooperation are two guiding ideas to a preferred relationships in the aid system. Cooperation depends on the issue and interest, the power and capacity of the involved parts, and the surrounding context. Cooperation has for a long time been an important factor of aid, but there is a challenge to make it work and at the same time take into account the interest of the South and the interest of the North. Solidarity is about preserving and recognising the need for mutual understanding, shared action and empathy and is taking care of the morality that underpins the international aid. One of the problems is that the aid often is based on time-bound programmes or projects. Since the aid system is a chain of relationships that provoke dependency instead of a system that acts independently it is difficult to choose solidarity and cooperation as the main guiding idea.

3.3.1 Discourse

Discourse is used to understand the power differentials that can exist in multisectoral partnerships and is useful to identify the processes in a partnership (Hastings, 1999). The aspect of discourse in Morse and McNamara (2006) refers to influence that is between the donor and the partner and if they share the same understanding of the process. Emphasis is on sharing knowledge and the different assumptions actors bring into the collaboration. Discourse can be used to analyse in what way the partners communicate with each other and share knowledge, and how this is understood at the different levels. Morse and McNamara (2006) relate this to the process of choosing programmes and projects, assumptions on what is important to address in this manner and how it is done in the practice.

3.3.2 Interdependence

Interdependence is relevant when talking about the relationship between the actors and can be used to explore partnership's prerequisites and practice. In every partnership there are oppositional relations. Interdependence focuses on the importance of personal relationships and how the partners influence and affect each other in order to make awareness of the tension that is in the relationship, and the willingness to address them. Looking at interdependence contributes in understanding how partners influence one another, and their dependence of each other (Bantham, Celuch, & Kasouf, 2003; Morse & McNamara, 2006).

Interdependence can be seen in relation to performance and the power relations between organisations across scales.

Important concepts to analyse social relationships are the degree of dependence and level of satisfaction. Satisfaction is related to the concerns about obtaining the expected outcomes in the relationship and the feelings associated with this. Hence the expectations of achieving the goals and the way the organisations are satisfied with each other. Dependence is a contrast to satisfaction relating to the comparison level of the lowest level of outcome the partner is willing to accept. If the relationship is not equated, for example if there is a difference between the input and the expected outcome the satisfaction can be weakened (Bantham, et al., 2003).

Bantham, et al. (2003) states that there are few organisations that are independent, self sufficient organisations. Most organisations are part of a bigger network relying on other in order actors to achieve their goal, and most of the organisations are intermediaries being the one implementing or in the middle between giving out funds and receiving the finished project. The organisations are a part of a bigger chain that is an interdependent system. If the organisations are able to network they will increase their efficiency and be a bigger competitor on the market.

3.3.3 Function/Performance

Partnership has been promoted as a solution to challenges faced by the public services. There is an assumption that partnership enhances outcomes, and that this outcome can be perceived as greater than what the individual partners have contributed with (J. M. Brinkerhoff, 2002). Performance is primarily designed to be used in development context and to provide a checklist of characteristics that can help in evaluating the performance in the partnership (Morse & McNamara, 2006). This dimension can be used to analyse the outcome of the partnership, if the partners meet their objectives and how the partnership is presented.

For J. M. Brinkerhoff (2002) partnership differs from other relationships in the way mutuality and organisational identity are being addressed. Focusing on these two dimensions can contribute in defining partnership and their function. *Organisation identity* is about the strength that each organisation can bring in to a partnership. It is the foundation of partnership

and the driving force for initiating a partnership strategy. Every organisation has something that makes them unique that makes them attractive to partner with. This can be resources, skills or important networks. By maintaining the organisations identity there is a greater chance for long-term success. *Mutuality* is an important component in a partnership that encompasses the meaning of the principle in partnership and is a factor that can strengthen organisational identity. Mutuality seeks to highlight the strength in each partner and the organisational identity that can help in assisting the weaker partner. It is not about power relations but about mutual dependence and that there is a share of mutual trust and respect.

3.3.4 Studying partnerships across scales

When studying partnership both scale and power is essential in the way it contributes in understanding the dynamics and relations between development actors. These relations are performed across different scales and are influenced by the power that different actors exercise or receive through the partnership relations. In addition to power, Morse and McNamara's (2006) three other dimensions are also evident in the material and contribute in analysing the relationship between the actors, and in understanding production of different scales. While the components may be understood separately, they also overlap. For example when studying cooperation between partners, elements from the organisations' identity will be relevant, together with interdependence. The theories presented in this chapter are important for analysing the relations and processes in partnership, and are used interchangeably in the discussion and the analyses of the findings.

4 Methodology

To gain a deeper insight about the processes shaping our social worlds and how people, in their everyday-life experience and understand parts of the world they live in, geographers use qualitative methodology. This way of thinking about research developed in the 1970s with the humanist geographers that were seeking to have a subjective understanding of the social world and how it is constructed through the intersection of cultural, social and political processes. They also wanted to understand how knowledge is produced and the subjective values that can appear in the research (Dwyer & Limb, 2001).

Instead of having an assumption that there is a pre-existing world that can be known and can be measured, qualitative methodology understands the social world as something that is dynamic and changing (Crang & Cook, 2007; Dwyer & Limb, 2001). Qualitative methodology is characterized by using in-depth and intensive approaches that include methods such as interviews, focus groups and discussions and participant observation (Clifford & Valentine, 2003).

In this chapter the methodology used when conducting the fieldwork is presented. Choices and methods used to get an understanding of the topic and how the analysis is conducted is accounted for. Ethical considerations about doing fieldwork and research are an important issue throughout the work with the thesis and are discussed at the end of this chapter.

4.1 Selection and choices

Smith (2001) argues that choosing qualitative research is not only about philosophical or theoretical issues, but also about having made an important set of choices. This is more about political, methodical and ethical practicalities than philosophical or theoretical. When doing research on NGOs in a development country, Mercer (2006) highlights that it is important to make decisions at an early stage about what you intend to research and whether to follow one or many NGOs, because of the diversity of organisations operating. She also emphasises the importance of collecting some background information on the context the organisations are working in and the local issues they are working on, before conducting the research.

I decided at an early stage that I wanted to work with Zimbabwe and take advantage of the background knowledge about the country and the contacts already established. In conjunction with developing the research questions, the most appropriate methods for the research was discussed. In order to answer the questions and collect information about the topic I wanted to talk to people involved in these processes and be in the environment where these processes are played out. Qualitative method was chosen to get a deeper insight on the processes shaping the civil society and partnerships between local and international development actors. In the field the focus was on using interviews and observation as the main methods for gaining knowledge.

The intention was to be able to get close to peoples everyday lives and how it is constructed through the social, cultural and political processes in Zimbabwe. For me to get answer to my research question I had to get in touch with the different organisations I wanted to interview and an insight in the context they are operating in. Both before and during my fieldwork I made choices on which organisations I wanted to interview and how they would fit into my research question. I intended to gather information on the relationships between different organisations on different levels and did therefore wish to interview a group of organisations with connection to Bulawayo.

My initial plan was to select some Norwegian organisations working in Bulawayo. A month before leaving I attended a meeting called “Country meeting about Zimbabwe” organised by Norwegian agency for development cooperation, NORAD. The intention was to get some relevant information about Norwegian development work in Zimbabwe and hopefully get some contacts for the fieldwork. This opportunity both gave a short briefing on the humanitarian situation; the issues organisations were working on in Zimbabwe, and helped to find a firmer direction to my research question. Many of the Norwegian organisations involved in Zimbabwe were represented. I talked to some of them after the meeting and hoped they could be gatekeepers and assist in getting in contact with their representatives in Zimbabwe. Many said they were very interested in the thesis. The response on the email however in which they were asked to give a name or address to persons or their partner organisations working in Zimbabwe and Bulawayo was limited. What might could have been a gatekeeper proved not to be appropriate. I therefore had to change some of my tactic and try to get in touch with organisations working in Bulawayo when I arrived in the country.

4.2 Access to the field – why choosing Bulawayo in Zimbabwe?

The fieldwork was conducted in Matabeleland and in some of the high-density areas around the second largest city in Zimbabwe, Bulawayo. There are three main reasons why Zimbabwe and Bulawayo was chosen to be the field of the research. One was the personal relationship to the city and country developed through different visits, both on holiday and on work through a Norwegian trust. The other was a term spent at the University of Zimbabwe in Harare, the capital, in connection with a bachelor's degree. All of this contributed to the interest in the country and city. A third important reason for choosing Zimbabwe was the situation the country is facing and has been facing the last decade when it comes to the political, economic, social and humanitarian situation, as explained in chapter 2. The situation in the country made it even more interesting and relevant to study the changing conditions for humanitarian and aid-organisations in the second largest city.

4.2.1 Safety in the field

Before conducting fieldwork it is advisable to think through different safety and health risks. If the fieldwork is done individually it can be smart to include a close friend or have a field assistant, or have access to contacts in case of emergency. The researcher should have an overview or collect background information of the place where the fieldwork is conducted in order to know some of the social codes and local conditions (Bullard, 2003).

Travelling all alone in a foreign country that is politically unstable and with a health system nearly broken down was a risk factor. Especially the political situation made it insecure to do research in the country, and considerations about my safety in the field was raised. I was also aware that it might be difficult to get hold of relevant informants. My advantage was that since I had visited the country before I was prepared for most of the local conditions like weather and climate, language, and some of the social and economic issues. The Norwegian embassy in Zimbabwe was informed about the fieldwork and I was very open both to them and to my contacts, when I started communicating with them, on what I was preparing to do in Zimbabwe. Because of my knowledge of Bulawayo and the contacts I had from before, I decided that it was safe for me to travel and an advantage that I had close contacts to help me and guide me.

4.2.2 Language

Language is an important issue to consider when doing fieldwork in a foreign country. Even though the official language is familiar to the researcher, the local version might be different or have a slang that can create misunderstandings and awkward discussions. When having interviews, conversations or discussions, there will be a chance that language and understanding of abbreviations and technical terms can influence how the information provided is perceived. This is not only from the researchers perspective in understanding the local dialect, but also from the local informants perspective and their understanding of the foreign dialect. There is also a difference of the language that is used in the field compared to the language used when presenting the findings. This might vary even though the fieldwork and writing is done in the same language. If the material is collected on another language there will be an even bigger challenge when translating the findings (Crang & Cook, 2007).

The historical-geographical circumstances had an influence on the fieldwork. As explained in chapter 2, Zimbabwe was colonised by the British, and today the official language is still English. Even though English is the official language they have their own way of speaking English. This can be referred to as Zimbabwe English or a type of dialect. Besides English, the main local languages that are spoken are Ndebele and Shona. Bulawayo is the capital of Matabeleland so the main language spoken there is Ndebele.

Zimbabwe is the country where I have been practicing most of my English, which means that I have learnt their way of speaking English and their dialect. I have also many of the same gestures as the Zimbabweans when I am having a conversation, and I know some of the local languages. This was valuable and made it easier to follow conversations and mingle with the local people. The challenge with the language was therefore not the English dialect, but the English vocabulary and use of technical terms. This it was important to be open about when conducting the interviews. The informants were also asked if there was something that was difficult to understand during the questioning. The thesis was initially supposed to be written in Norwegian since that is my first language. After the fieldwork new consideration was made about which language the thesis should be written in. I chose to write in English because all the collected material was in English, and since that was the language used during fieldwork it became more natural writing the findings out in English.

4.2.3 Gatekeeper

A challenge in the field is to get hold of contacts or “gatekeepers” that can help with the research. Gatekeepers may be defined as persons who have the authority to open or block the access to an informant. Because of their influence they can help the researcher to get access to the field and the situations to study and contact relevant informants, but it is also important that the researcher establish trust in the environment they are in, to avoid only to be connected to the gatekeeper (Thagaard, 2003). If a researcher is being denied access to the field this can show different views on what is open for research and not. You can also find an environment that can be viewed as a close environment, but when the researcher start asking questions or ask for permission, you will find that the informants can be opening up (Hammersley & Atkinson, 1996).

Zimbabwe is more or less a closed environment meaning that the political situation have an influence on the openness to people on some issues, and in the beginning I was worried that it might be difficult to get peoples permission to do interviews. After arriving Zimbabwe I spent a couple of weeks to settle and catch up with contacts and friends. In the beginning of my stay I found it very difficult to explain to people why I was there and what I was doing, so when people asked I just told them I was a student on holiday. At that point it felt very uncomfortable to openly tell about the reason for being in Zimbabwe and explain my research question. It was also uncomfortable to ask people for an interview. The first week was instead used to find out what attitudes people had to researchers and the topic before I felt comfortable talking about my project. After reasoning with contacts and gatekeeper I soon became more confident and open about my stay and conducting the research. Having an introduction letter from Norwegian University of Science and Technology (NTNU) was also very helpful because it was documentation that I was a student, and not a journalist. It was important that I didn't have any political motives. It turned out that when I started approaching the organisations and having my interviews people were very friendly and willing to talk. This made the situation more comfortable and I became more confident on my fieldwork.

Since the Norwegian organisations did not turn out to be the gatekeeper there was uncertainty of who would be the main gatekeeper to get access to the field before I travelled to Zimbabwe. I expected though that I had an advantage of knowing different people in different social ranks in Bulawayo that would help to get in touch with relevant contacts. In particular

it appeared that one of the contacts became a critical stepping-stone. This main gatekeeper was local and had experience from some aid-organisations in Zimbabwe and knowledge about the humanitarian situation. After a briefing about my topic and field of interest this person had suggestions on where to start to get in contact with the right people to talk to. This created a snowball effect. Because of the gatekeeper's local knowledge, the ability to meet the contacts, and the knowledge and contacts within the field of development, this gatekeeper became an important and fundamental factor for fulfilling the fieldwork.

The gatekeeper had the ability to drive me around to some of the different NGOs offices, so instead of having to walk around in town looking for the organisations offices this person knew where to find them and accompanied me there. This proved to be very efficient and helped keeping the time schedule of the fieldwork. After approaching organisations and introducing me, I had the chance to introduce myself, why I was in Zimbabwe and ask for a meeting or interview. The gatekeeper then stepped back and let me manage the meeting and any further contact. This was a key in my fieldwork and contributed to the sample I ended up with, discussed further in next section.

There were also two other important gatekeepers that had an influence in the conduct of the fieldwork. One is a close friend that in addition to introducing me to important contacts also became a field assistant. This person took care of me and helped to find the sites for the meetings, answered questions about culture and behaviour, and was always at my disposal. The other was one I got to know through the snowball effect from some of the first meetings. This person contributed to reflection, analysis and understanding, through many productive discussions around the topic and research question. This gatekeeper also introduced me to important informants and took me for a fieldtrip that opened up my mind.

4.3 Choice of samples

Some of the strategic choices in qualitative research are about selecting informants that have qualities and qualifications, which makes them able to give information to answer the research topic or questions. Since qualitative studies often go into subjects that are sensitive, it can be a challenge to find informants who can talk about the topic or agrees on being interviewed. A consideration to make when choosing who to take part in the study and the

sample is the quality and positionality of the information the informant can offer (Cragg & Cook, 2007).

To make sure to cover what is needed for the research there are different selection methods. One is called convenience sample. Here the researcher has to find who is relevant for the research and who wants to be interviewed and then people are selected after their qualities and availability. Another method is called the snowball effect, as mentioned above. This is characterized by first doing a small selection and then asks them to refer to other contacts. A challenge with this method is to end up talking to people within the same network. To avoid this the researcher can combine this type of selection with the convenience sample or selectively chose the first informants from different networks (Thagaard, 2003). After having some interviews the researcher might meet the point of theoretical saturation. This means that in the interest group there is a chance that the information is repeated or goes in circle, meaning that there is the same stories or answers to the questions. When making the sample it is relevant to consider if the informants is representative (Cragg & Cook, 2007).

My primary gatekeeper played an important role in introducing me to different organisations working in Bulawayo. Because of the uncertainty related to get hold of informants I accepted all the interviews I could get in the beginning. When I understood that most of the organisations agreed on being interviewed I started to be more selective. These choices were made after how relevant the organisation was for the fieldwork and study, based on the information I got about the specific organisation. A strategic selection was made by choosing informants with qualifications or properties on the field that could be important for answering the research question.

After having completed some interviews, it was also easier to see what kind of organisations I needed to talk to to complement the interviews I already had. I was looking for organisations working through partners, and especially local organisations. To do this I used the snowball effect. After an informative interview I often asked if they could refer me to some of their partners. In many cases this was a good way of getting relevant contacts. Towards the end of the fieldwork I also had to turn down organisations approaching me that had heard about the research and wanted to be interviewed.

27 interviews were completed in Zimbabwe of organisations working on different scales, included representatives from the government and the UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA). Out of these 27 a selection of 14 interviews were chosen that are the main basis for the analysis. This includes representatives from 12 different organisations and representative from the government and OCHA. These interviews were chosen based on the information given in the interview and the relevance to the research question. The criteria used for choosing the selection of organisations were that they:

- Operated in areas around Bulawayo
- They had at least one partner
- Had partners across different scales
- The informants answered supplementary

I had to make some choices because of the scope of the thesis, but the remaining 13 interviews have had an influence on the outcome of this thesis in the way they inspired me and made me reflect around the topic during and after the fieldwork.

4.4 My position and personality

A mix of race, gender, class, nationality sexuality and other identifiers shape the positionality and is a part of how the researcher interprets and sees the world. Researchers knowledge is therefore always partial (Mullings, 1999). Moser (2008) on the other hand also emphasises that a researchers personality is important for entering the field and gaining knowledge. Personality like openness and willingness to learn, social skills, way of being in the society and interest play a significant role to get information.

A researcher is often positioned as an insider or an outsider. Being an insider can be to study a group where the researcher belongs. This can be an advantage because the researcher can use the knowledge they already have to gain deeper and intimate insight to the field. At the same time, being an insider can prevent the researcher from not being considered neutral. If the researcher on the other hand is considered as an outsider people may more easily see him/her as neutral and be able to give information that an insider will not get (Mullings, 1999).

A feeling of being an outsider influenced the first part of the fieldwork. I was worried of talking openly about the research mostly due to the context explained in chapter 2, and for being a researcher and not an ordinary visitor. My position and my external and visible

characters being a Norwegian, blond and white female and a postgraduate student in the middle class, may have had an influence. Being a white blond girl could influence the respect I was given in meetings with others, but I experienced that I gained much respect for my research and that I was trusted. This is also because I dared to position my self as a student and had a letter from NTNU that proved I was a master student and not a journalist. I also experienced that my personality and way of being was very important and that the interview situations and information given were characterized by who I am and how they saw me.

My personal relationship to the field and knowledge of the culture and the city definitely made a difference to the fieldwork. Being familiar with the culture and the social codes made it easier to get in contact with people and since I speak some of the local languages I could greet and understand some of what people were saying. I also knew my way around in town, and was familiar with places so I didn't have to use the first weeks to get to know the city. Another aspect is that I have been involved in a trust in Zimbabwe before and therefore have an assumption of how organisations can operate, challenges they might meet and how the aid system is working in Zimbabwe. This did not have a negative influence on my work. The knowledge was a strength in the sense that I could use that when preparing for the fieldwork, and it was very important when it came to get in contact with people that could help to find informants.

4.4.1 Power relations and co-production of knowledge

The boundary between an insider and an outsider can be articulated by how researchers are involved in negotiations with their informants about their own positioning (Dwyer & Limb, 2001). This binary is a boundary that is unstable and ignores the dynamism of positionality in time and space, and it is rare that you for example can remain a complete outsider (Mullings, 1999). It is important not make an easy binary between insider/outsider. How the respondents position the researcher and how the researcher choose to position himself can influence the information that are given and how the truths are being presented (Dwyer & Limb, 2001).

Interviews are in addition to being an instrumental tool for gaining information also an interpersonal process between two persons, the interviewer and the informant, meaning that the information that comes out of the interview is shaped by how they perceive each other (Thagaard, 2003). The researcher and the researched consist of their own meanings and

values that have an influence on encounters between the two. When doing the research there will be an issue of power relations, which is often unequal (Crang & Cook, 2007). In addition to co-production of knowledge there is an issue of transferability, meaning that the information produced in one study can be relevant in other studies or areas (Thagaard, 2003).

During encounters with other people and having in-depth interviews I several times experienced the underlying power relations. These relations could change from interview to interview and from person to person. Sometimes it was I as an interviewer that was given the power, while other times I experienced that the person interviewed took control of the situation and steered the interview. This was a challenge especially if the informant was talking of something else than the information I wanted. The power relation also became clear if the informant had a high position in the organisation.

While talking to people or having interviews there was a co-production of knowledge. This can be very intense. If there was a good chemistry between the informant and me, the interview could be very informative and I could experience that it was more a discussion than an interview. Also when I managed to ask the right questions and trigger some dilemmas I could find that the informant opened up. In some cases during the discussions we were also positioning ourselves for each other and the informant also felt empowered. This depended on the situation around the interview and if the informant felt confident. With the position I was in, with being able to get in contact with the type of informants that I did, contributed to a production of knowledge. This made me capable to discuss the debates and topics around partnership. Even though Zimbabwe is the case in this thesis, the information collected on the organisations understanding about partnership and their challenges can be transferred to other countries or cases where partnership between development actors occurs.

4.5 Interviews

Interviewing is a verbal exchange of knowledge where one person wants to get information from another person by asking questions. It is used in qualitative research to get an understanding of the different people's everyday lives. The search for key informants and interviewees, and design good questions is a challenge with using interview as a research method, so the choices should be thought through and well considered. A semi-structured interview is about talking to people in ways that are self-conscious, orderly and partially

structured. They are more conversational and informal than the structured interview and more formal than the unstructured (Crang & Cook, 2007; Longhurst, 2003).

I chose to use semi-structured interviews to collect information⁷. With semi-structured interviews the participant have the chance to use own words and talk freely around questions that I ask. At the same time I have the ability to steer the participant into topics that I want to talk about by using prepared questions. This also helped to guide the informant with questions if it was difficult to make the informant talk freely and it also helped to make sure to get all the questions answered. I always checked with my guide that I had asked all the questions. Using semi-structured interviews worked very well in my setting. As I became more secure on the interview guides the interviews became more like discussions and conversations where the co-production of knowledge became evident.

The interview guide was almost completed before leaving Norway based on the background information on the field and topic, and the formulated research questions. After having the first meetings and interviews some adjustment were made; some of the questions and order were changed. Later in the process when conducting a second interview of some of my informants in order to ask some follow up questions, a supplementary interview guide was made.

4.5.1 Interview situation

Before conducting the interview the researcher has to select participants for the interview. One way of doing this is calling on people and ask them if they could consider joining in the research. It is important to establish a good contact with the informant from the start. If the researcher does not have a reference, he or she should let the informant choose the time, place and length of the interview (Crang & Cook, 2007; Longhurst, 2003). Longhurst (2003) informs that if doing interviews of officials or business people from organisations or institutions the most common is to do the interview in their office, unless they have another preference.

After approaching the organisations, explaining the topic and asking for an interview, the organisation directed me to who they thought would be most appropriate for the interview,

⁷ See Appendix B for the interview guides.

often this was the director or project manager. In some cases I had an influence on whom to interview, but it happened that the informant was out of town on the day of the interview and that I was directed to someone else. It is difficult to say how this affected my research because I did not get the chance to talk to the other person. Sometimes the interviews with the second choice was very informative, and other times I felt I was talking to the wrong person because of their position in the organisation and the information they were able to give. But all a long I tried to get in contact with informants that had experience related to my topic.

When making appointment for the interviews it was the informants that decided the place where they wanted to be interviewed. Before starting the interview I was aware of establishing a good setting and tried to sense if the informant was uncomfortable or not. Sometimes we started by talking about something else to loosen up, and I always tried to ask questions in the beginning that they were likely to be comfortable talking about. It was very clear that all the informants knew what they could say, in order to not cross any lines of talking about political related issues. This was also something that I had to be aware of during the interviews and when I asked questions. Staying away from politics was also in my favour, because it could destroy the interview situation with making the informant uncomfortable and also have a negative influence on my fieldwork and capability of getting hold of new informants.

Almost everyone wanted to meet me at his or her workplace. This was a safe setting for them, but it also allowed me to get closer to the organisations work and observe. In some cases, depending on the position of the informant in the organisation, I found a few being restricted by their organisation, or influenced of not being able to talk freely in the setting. In other cases I felt that the informants wanting to be anonymous spoke more freely. This might have something to do with the context that these organisations are working under, as explained in chapter 2. How much this affected the information given is difficult to say.

4.5.2 Notes or recorder

Common tools for gathering information in qualitative research are notes and recorder, and these are used throughout the fieldwork. When conducting semi-structured interviews recorder is a useful tool if the informant allows the use. By recording the interviewer can concentrate fully on the interaction instead of having to write everything down. Longhurst

(2003) recommends to take notes after the interview to document the setting, important behaviour and key themes or thoughts.

In the beginning of the fieldwork there were some uncertainty around using recorder. I did not wanted to be associated with a reporter or journalist and was uncomfortable to ask my informants if they allowed to be recorded. I therefore used notes during the first interviews. After discussing with my contacts and friends they encouraged me to ask the informants that I was interviewing and let them decide if it was ok for them. It appeared to work very well and all the informants asked allowed the use of recorder.

Using the recorder made the situation as an interviewer easier because I could concentrate on my questions and what they said and not the writing. At the same time in those interviews where I used notes I felt I sometimes listened better because I had to write it down, which also made it easier to come with follow-up questions. But it was very stressful to make sure to write down everything they said that was important. Another aspect with using recorder is that the setting might be more formal. In some cases this had an effect on the informants and they became more careful on the information they gave. This was noticeable in the way they answered the questions and the need for more follow up questions. Some were also concerned in the beginning about what the recorded material was going to be used for, but overall the informants seemed very comfortable.

4.5.3 Transcription

Another disadvantage with using the recorder is the transcription that has to be done back home. This is time consuming, but at the same time the interview will be in its full text. There is an advantage to transcribe the interview while it is still fresh because it makes the process easier (Longhurst, 2003).

During the fieldwork it was no time to transcribe all the interviews recorded, but I made sure that I wrote something down after every interview about the setting, experience or information given. When returning to Norway I tried to find someone that could help me transcribe a selection of interviews. Four interviews was sent to one working with transcribing but all four came in return because he found it to difficult because of the English accent and the way of gesticulate and use of terminology. I therefore had to transcribe the selection

myself. A positive aspect with this is to work through the material by both listening and writing it down. This was helpful when doing the analysis.

4.6 Observation

Observation is about being where the informants are and systematically watch how they act. Observation is a good method to use to gain information about relations between people and how they behave in the social setting. Observing smaller objects can give information of a larger setting and general connections. By getting involved in the rhythms and routines of the everyday life the researcher can get close to people that can show and tell what is going on. This can enable the researcher to understand world-views and ways of life of actual people in the context of their everyday lives (Cook, 2005; Crang & Cook, 2007; Thagaard, 2003).

Observation was central in the fieldwork in addition to interviews. I lived in the field where the research was conducted and had accommodation in a local organisations office. This organisation is not a part of the sample, but staying there gave inspiration in addition to making me able to see how they were operating on a daily basis and discuss interesting topics. When walking around in Bulawayo city there were also experiences and observations related to the topic that was noted and inspired the fieldwork. In addition to stay and live in the field during my fieldwork I was given a chance to come and see some of the organisations projects and how it was functioning. Only a few organisations agreed on this. Going together with representatives from the organisations out in the field to do observation was for some informants a closed environment, meaning that the field was not open for research. Some saw coming to the field as more problematic than being interviewed, and came with thin explanations on why they could not involve me in the programme or show the project. I could therefore not choose which organisations to follow out in the field. Living and being in the field had an impact on my fieldwork and enabled me to do both everyday observations watching from the outside and have the chance to visit some of the organisations and their projects to see how they were working.

A notebook was used to write down different observations. Some of these notes were transcribed during the fieldwork in Zimbabwe, but most were transcribed back home. I experienced that it was difficult to take notes straight away after visiting a project or observing something in town, which meant that I had to wait until the situation was right. This

made it difficult to remember everything that was said, but the essence and my understanding were documented.

4.6.1 Informal interviews

Some of the qualitative methods can be combined, and often during observations there will be situations where the observation is turning in to informal interviews. This is often not planned but is often very informative and can give information that won't be given in a formal interview. The informal interview is more a conversation without any predetermined focus and can help the researcher to see the connection between the observation and the conversation. It is therefore important to do documentation during the observation and conversations as much as possible (Crang & Cook, 2007).

Informal interviews happened all the time during my fieldwork and have enriched the study and the questions asked in the formal interviews. I had people around me to talk to or ask questions about the field or the topic every day. Sometimes the discussions and conversations led the interest to other topics that made it challenging to stay focused, but all along did these discussions and conversations contribute in reflection and understanding of the topic, both during and after the fieldwork.

4.7 Analysis

Analysing is an on-going process that follows the research from the beginning to the finished product. It contains different stages shifting between reflection and formal data analysis (Hammersley & Atkinson, 1996). Analysis is in addition to being mechanic, a creative process and is overlapping with collecting, interpreting and presentation of the data. The aim of analysing is finding the meaning and understanding of the material that is collected and interpreted (Mikkelsen, 2005). It is a process of making sense and produce order of the collected data, and turn the information into an informative text that reflects the findings combined with theory. Writing and analysing is inseparable and is done interchangeably throughout the research process (Crang & Cook, 2007).

4.7.1 Coding and categorising

To be able to organise the qualitative data that has been collected, coding is seen as a useful method. With coding the researcher create and use conceptual categories and concept in order to organise the raw material. The aim with coding is to see and create good thematic codes that capture the meaning in the material and that can be used in the analysis (Crang & Cook, 2007; Mikkelsen, 2005). Categorising and coding is an iterative process with several stages and has to be seen in connection with research question, method and theory (Crang & Cook, 2007).

While transcribing the interviews I searched for categories in the material. These were categories that were relevant according to my research questions and I used these to organise the material and see connections. After that a matrix over the material was made that helped to get an overall view of the content. The organisations were placed under different categories and during this process, new categories evolved. After reading through the material and interpret the information several times, there were also other connections and categories that evolved, also connections that I did not see during the fieldwork.

I continued with coding and interpreted the material and did this in parallel with working with theory. During this process I was writing out the material using my own words, and using quotation to substantiate my findings. This process was iterative and continued while I started to involve the theory and analytical components. This was useful to see connections and elements in the material. The structure of the thesis and analyses became more and more evident as I worked with the findings and categorised and interpreted the material.

4.8 Ethical considerations

Qualitative research is part of a reciprocal relationship between researchers and researched, where the researcher interact and get involved in other peoples lives or cultures (Dwyer & Limb, 2001). To protect the rights of individuals, and those involved in the research it is important to behave ethically, and be aware of the actions done as a researcher and the influence it has on the context surrounding it. Behaving ethically is about acting in accordance with what is right and wrong in a moral way. By behaving ethically and morally it will also be easier for other researchers to come back to the same area in a later occasion (Hay, 2003; Longhurst, 2003).

The research was conducted in a cross-cultural setting, which means that it is necessary to be aware and sensitive to cultural codes of conduct (Hay, 2003). An advantage was that the background knowledge and former visits contributed to an awareness of the culture. This made it easier to meet people and behave respectfully according to Zimbabwean culture. At the same time my external visible character of being a white and blond girl, showed that I was an outsider. As mentioned earlier, the position as an outsider influenced how the relations were built in the beginning and the openness about the purpose of visit. Openness is according to Hammersley & Atkinson (1996) an important ethical issue. The participants have the right to know what they are involved in and give their consent. This is based on that the researcher is being open and gives the right information. A challenge of openness is that the study often is interchangeable and develops during the process, which means it can be difficult to predict the outcome.

As explained in chapter 2 the context was also historical and political complex, which might have an influence on my informants and their ability to be open. After the arrival in Zimbabwe and the first week there was uncertainty concerning openness about the research seen from my position. This changed early in the process after discussions with contacts and gatekeeper. Before meeting with the first informant safety was deliberated and it was considered safe to be open about the position as a researcher, the topic and research question. This also enabled the informants to be more open when they could trust that I was no journalist or involved in politics. When introducing the topic to the informants they were informed that there was a possibility that changes might be made during the work period. Throughout the fieldwork it was important to make sure to “do no harm”, meaning to ensure that it will not have any consequences for the informants participating in the study. Safety was therefore an important issue to consider, in addition to confidentiality and anonymity that will be discussed in the next section. Consequences for the gatekeepers to be involved were also considered to avoid any problems in the aftermath.

4.8.1 Confidentiality and anonymity

Participants involved in research need to be assured that all the data collected will be confidential and only used for its purpose. They should also be informed that they have the

right to choose to be anonymous and withdraw from the research at anytime without any further explanation (Longhurst, 2003).

Before starting the interviews the informants was informed about what the information was for and that they could decide whether or not they wanted to be anonymous. They were also asked about using recorder during the interview and given an option of receiving a copy of the thesis. Some of the informants decided that they wanted to be anonymous, including the name of the organisation. Other informants agreed on using the organisations name but not their personal name, and others agreed on both. The civil society in Zimbabwe is under pressure from the state, which has an influence on the people working in the different organisations operating within the civil society. The context the fieldwork was conducted in reflects the informant's willingness to have both their name and organisation anonymous, and some was also sceptical about where the information would end up. By choosing to be anonymous seemed to give the informants an opportunity to remove the shield and be able to speak more freely and relieve frustration. While those who wanted not to be anonymous expressed that they saw it as an opportunity to tell their story and as good advertising for their organisation in terms of receiving funds.

A dilemma that came up a couple of times were information that was given during an interview or a conversation where the informant first gives information and then states that it is important not to mention that the conversation was taking place. This puts me in a difficult position in how I should deal with confidences both when talking to other informants in Zimbabwe and writing the analysis. The participants are more vulnerable in a situation like in Zimbabwe and their protection is therefore important. I decided to make the material confidential and keep all the informants anonymous, even though some agreed on using their name. The main reason for this is that it can easier be tracked down which organisations that wanted to be anonymous if I mention some informants with full name. In the analysis the informants will therefore be referred to according to the table in appendix A.

The research can be produced in a form that is accessible to the respondents during and after the research, but it is important to consider how involved the participants should be in the process and product. The expectation of how the material is presented or how their views should have been emphasised can vary between the different informants. It is therefore important to consider the effects the research can have on the participants and to recognize

that the researcher have responsibilities for the people involved in the research (Dwyer & Limb, 2001).

The involvement of the informants was considered throughout the fieldwork and after arriving Norway, especially in terms of the expectation of how their information would be presented. There might be some of the informants that would feel that some of their aspects and meanings are not presented, but because of the scope of the thesis there will be information that is excluded. Many also showed their interest in receiving the final product and some have followed the process via email and phone. Mostly this contact has been based on the relation that was built during the stay, rather than the content of the thesis.

5 Understanding partnerships – actors, procedures and roles

As explained in chapter 2 Zimbabwe has been marked by political turmoil and economic deterioration with one of the highest inflations in the world the last decade. The international community have several times declared Zimbabwe under humanitarian crisis, like food insecurity and cholera outbreaks, but Zimbabwe is now trapped between a humanitarian and a development agenda. Historical events have influenced and dominated the civil society in Zimbabwe. The civil society has been suppressed and is regarded as a contender instead of a cooperating sector by the state. This has an influence on the movement of aid organisations that in spite of economic and political challenges have been and are involved with relief and development projects in Zimbabwe. It is therefore important to consider the context in which these organisations are operating.

My interviews were conducted with organisations on various levels from international to community level. To categorize their organisation all the informants used these concepts and categories; International Non-Governmental Organisations (INGOs), Local Non-Governmental Organisations (LNGOs), Faith-Based organisations (FBOs) and Community-Based Organisations (CBOs). These are also the concepts used by the representative from the government. You find all these types of organisations operating at various levels in Zimbabwe, but the assumption on what these categories includes and the role the organisations are playing in the development process varied based on who was asked and where they placed themselves on the scale. These assumptions also had an influence in the process of becoming partner with other organisations.

This chapter shows the connections between the importance of understanding the context, the positions of the organisations and how they become partners. In order to explain this I will analyse how organisations working in partnerships define and characterise the different organisations and their understanding of the concepts. I will also show how they labelled themselves according to other organisations based on the concept of scale. Scale contributes in understanding the position of the organisation and the relationship between the actors. In addition to relate to a pre-existing scale the organisations contributes in shaping it, by moving and manoeuvring across scales (Herod, 2009). Power is an evident feature in this chapter in

how the organisations position themselves. The power relations also contribute in shaping the scale and how the organisations moves and operates. In addition to scale and power, the dimensions of discourse and function are used to analyse the organisations understanding of their role and the principle of partnering (Morse & McNamara, 2006). Different components of partnership will lay the foundation for analysing how “partnership” is identified by the various organisations. The organisations understanding of themselves and their role, for example as partner or donor are fundamental for the discussion of the dynamics in partnership (D. W. Brinkerhoff & Brinkerhoff, 2004; Fowler, 2000; Lewis, 2001).

5.1 Categorising and registration of organisations operating in Bulawayo

An interesting aspect in categorising the development actors was to see how the understanding of these terms varied depending on where on the scale the organisations found themselves and the relationship they had to others. The scales considered are from local to global. Scale seen as hierarchical, where the global is the highest, is pervasive in most organisations’ description, but it is also interesting to see how the organisations actively create the scale they operate within (Herod, 2009). The informants were asked how to describe their organisation and how they defined it compared to other organisations. There were a general use of the labels NGO, CBO and FBO, but how these categories were defined varied. In this thesis the term CBO, LNGO and INGO will be used as main categories.

It will also be necessary to distinguish the organisations after what level they operate on. This is divided after how the informants talked about the different levels; so *local organisations* will be used when applying to Zimbabwean organisations and *international organisations* about all organisations from outside Zimbabwe. When applying the general term NGO it includes both the INGO and the LNGO, but not the CBO.

All international humanitarian and development organisations that are coming to work in Zimbabwe have to register with the Ministry of Public Service, Labour and Social Welfare, under the Department of Social Welfare, in Harare in order to get a work-permit. Here they have a list of all the organisations working in Zimbabwe where both international and local organisations are listed. The representative from the government highlighted that the government want to control all the organisations coming to work in the country. To get the work permit the organisations have to be registered according to the law of Zimbabwe, and

fulfil the requirements made by the state. This can be a challenge for organisations that are working against the political agenda or in areas where the aid is limited due to political issues. In order to get a certificate of registration as an organisation in Zimbabwe the organisation has to have a constitution, objectives and area of work. The registration process is described in the Private Voluntary Organisations Act (PVO Act).

In the recent years there have been a difficult and cumbersome process for the local organisations to register with the government as an NGO. With the CBOs it is different. “The CBOs are not registered, but recognized” (N, GoZ). They exist and operate within their communities and do not have to be registered with the government. One informant states that the registration process for an NGO is the reason why many organisations register as trusts in Zimbabwe, even though they would qualify for being, or in fact are NGOs.

[...] registering the organisation as an NGO with the government was difficult, because it could take you a lot of years to do that, because the procedure was too long. So people would register their organisation under a trust or foundation” (I, LNGO).

The problems and resistance the organisations meet in this process, result in that it could take years to get the organisation registered as a NGO. This is one way that the government can use the power to control the rise and mobilisation of civil organisations in Zimbabwe. Moyo (1993) claims that this is a way that the government can control some of the actions in the civil society and avoid them to be empowered in order to keep a one-party state.

It is only when the organisation is registered with the government that it can be called an NGO (I, LNGO).

5.2 Being local or global

A pattern in the organisations’ description of each other was that the definitions could be related to the organisations’ location and the size or scope of the organisation. Most of the organisations made a distinction between the NGOs operating in many different countries, labelled International NGOs, and NGOs operating on a national level within the borders of a country. This relates to how Riddell (2007) divide the NGOs into categories as described in chapter 1. In addition most of the informants divided organisations on the national level in

LNGOs and CBOs, with the last one working within communities as with how Mercer (2006) divides the organisations. This can be seen as done after a pre-existing hierarchical scale with CBOs being the smallest. These organisations operate on different scales and enter partnerships across geographical scales from local to global. Thinking about the development chain as an idealistic scale exists as a backdrop in the informants understanding of the chain and their role (Herod, 2009). Many of the informants used NGO as an umbrella term, but the meaning of the term varied. A pattern was that the meaning varied after where on the scale the organisation was.

Mostly when the CBOs are talking of NGOs they are talking of both the local NGO and the NGOs working on an international level, while the local NGOs separates between CBO, local and international (C, CBO).

This tells something about how important scale is when discussing the role of the organisations, because each level has an opinion on where on the scale they are. Informant I, an LNGO described the local perspective of a NGO where it was seen more as an autonomous term. This informant meant that there were three ways to run an NGO in Zimbabwe:

You can run it as a church, and you call it FBO, you can run it as a community initiative, a CBO, where it's just the people from the same community with their councillor or MP doing something together. It is not registered because they are helping people from their own communities, but then you can register through the social welfare and then you are an NGO (I, LNGO).

In the way this organisation defined NGO it seemed like it could include the CBO and the FBO. Here "local" is emphasised, meaning that a common feature is that all work is locally based. The only difference is the name applied when the organisation register with the state. The label FBO is often used to characterize organisations that have a religious outlook. Many of the organisations interviewed were Christian or had religious values, but it was only two that named themselves an FBO. One of them was also registered in the Department of Social Welfare, and was therefore formally an NGO.

We are faith-based because we are Christian in our outlook, and we work with churches (L, LNGO).

Professionally we are an NGO, but in principle we are a faith based organisation (I, LNGO).

They defined themselves as a FBO because of their origin in churches, but when describing the organisations they both used LNGO interchangeably with FBO. They wished to be acknowledged as an NGO but use FBO to easier appeal to the people and be legitimised in religious contexts. These two organisations are in fact local NGOs working according to religious values, and will therefore go under the category LNGO in this thesis.

LNGOs equated themselves more with the CBO than with the INGO emphasising that they were working closer with the grassroots and regarded themselves as an implementing partner. Implementation is defined by one INGO as activity, doing the work. Many organisations saw themselves as implementers because they were the one receiving the funds and doing the project. This was especially evident with those being intermediary organisations, but organisations on all scales, from international to community claimed to be implementing partners. The LNGOs also stressed that they had a strength being a Zimbabwean organisation having a good connection with the communities. One LNGO explains the difference between them and a CBO like this:

There is probably a difference between a NGO and a CBO. They might have a slight difference. But at the same time you find that you are almost the same. Maybe what is changing is just the name. You can find that those CBOs fall under the NGO category (H, LNGO).

This was said by a LNGO who emphasised their position to the field as being on the ground, even though they were working through the local communities. This organisation was described as an implementing partner by one of the INGOs, and by the community seen as the one handling the funds. One reason for this is that the LNGOs often are in the middle, being intermediary, between the INGO and the CBO playing both roles. Compared to the INGO they are closer to the grassroots and know the context of the field better, but not if they are compared with the CBO. The intermediary organisations were the one having most problems defining and placing themselves on the scale, and also the organisations that were

manoeuvring most across different scales. It was easier for the informants to describe INGOs. Here the description was that they were not locally rooted, but they could be locally based, meaning that they had a main office in Zimbabwe. Instead of listening to the people on the ground the INGO was described as imposing programs on to the people.

Now these international NGOs they think maybe if they hear there was drought in Zimbabwe, they say; no these guys, they need aid (H, LNGO).

On the other hand when talking to the INGOs operating in Bulawayo they equated themselves with the LNGO claiming they were also working on the local level.

We are an INGO, but working on a local level (A, INGO).

5.2.1 Office makes a difference

An interesting observation was how important my informants regarded the location when describing the organisation. Working close to the people and the field was regarded as important for all the organisations, local and international. An interesting aspect was how important *locality* was.

The informants interviewed from the INGOs distinguished between the office based locally and the head office that they described more as the international part of the organisation. In this description the global is local meaning that they have a local foundation (Gibson-Graham, 2002). When the INGOs said they were local they equated themselves with the LNGOs. The explanation is that the organisations head office is international, while the office in Zimbabwe is registered within the laws of Zimbabwe and therefore is local. Even though it follows the structure and objectives from the international level. Here the informant distinguishes between the organisation as an INGO and a local NGO saying they are both. Informants from the INGOs argued that they did work on the ground-level because they worked together with people with local knowledge, had employees in the field or had contact with the local leaders. The smaller organisations, like the CBOs, defined these INGOs on a higher rung on the scale and regarded them as international representatives.

Where the office was situated played an important role when promoting the contact with the field. For many of the organisations, especially the CBOs, locality and office on the site were regarded as a unique element, compared to an NGO. The CBOs disliked when other organisations, that had their offices in town, defined themselves as being on the ground.

[...] we are within the communities that's why they are saying we are Community based organisation, because WE are operating WITHIN the community, you see? Instead of having offices in the towns, we are saying; we are supposed to be with the people (C, CBO).

They stressed that in addition to the size and scope the location of the office can be used as an indicator for what kind of organisation they are. Instead of having offices in town the CBOs had their office in the community and lived together with the people.

NGOs have a nice office somewhere, where they can run away. In that sense that when you are working in your community the people from the community will come to you more and talk and seek for help. When you have your office away from where you have your projects then you can leave the field and go to your office. Less people will be able to come to you (F, CBO).

On the question of why one INGO had their office in town the INGO-staff answered:

Our offices are here just for security reasons so that it's safer for the office, for the equipment and the assets, because we couldn't identify a safer place within the ADP [Area where they have their programs]. The other challenge is that there is no electricity for us to be able to use communications, like to use the computers in most parts of the ADP. That's why we are actually out of the ADP. But we go to the ADP on a daily basis (A, INGO).

These arguments are also the reasons why some of the CBOs made a point out of the distinction between having the office in the community and the office in town. The CBOs were also facing these challenges resulting in struggling with administration and efforts to make the work efficient and accountable.

5.2.2 Challenge being small – the size creates limits not opportunities

In addition to location the size also determines the role of the organisation in the system. A small organisation is small in size and scope and includes the CBOs and some of the LNGOs. The size and scope is measured by number of employees, projects and area of work, some with only one to five employees whilst the rest was based on voluntary work. The power relations can here be seen as deterrent out of the organisations inscribed capacity, it is something that is possessed according to the social relations which constitute the organisation (Allen, 1997). These organisations emphasised the challenge of being small in the process of partnering and that they are struggling to be heard in a development context by the bigger actors.

Some of these people wont listen to you, to whatever you will be saying. That's why we are saying we need a different approach (C, CBO).

By being a local organisation they have a major advantage in understanding how the community is structured and they are familiar with the culture and the context. These are important issues to consider when organisations want to start a project. CBOs were questioning why the donors could not come direct to the ground and network or partner with the CBOs. It is them who are the one being in the field, sees what is needed and know the context they are working in. Being a small organisation working on a local level is strength in the way that they can identify the needs in the community better and know the culture (M, LNGO).

Whereby these donors, those who are willing, to see us [a CBO] growing, to see areas being developed they are supposed to come on the ground. We are a part of the community, then those people now at national level, who are they accountable to? Even if you go there you try to collect data information, you wont get much information that you want, because they don't even know the people (C, CBO).

The CBOs feel there is a focus on the bigger NGOs and that they are being empowered. Most of the donors want to associate themselves with the already established organisations, so if the CBOs are new on the market they always face challenges. The donors have an assumption on how the general CBOs were working, and that the CBOs ends up abusing the funds. The

CBOs feel this is wrong and that you find the CBOs eager to work, but are put on strings by the donor community or the bigger actors in the development discourse.

There is an issue of mistrust, and also how they perceive these small organisations. I think that's really a challenge. You know they are not putting into consideration the issue that these small organisations are far much better than the INGOs sometimes. In terms of maybe programming and what. There is a misperception (C, CBO).

During the observations I saw a big difference between the CBO and the LNGO when it came to being in the community, the resources and availability. By being located in the field they had first hand information on what was happening in the community, and the opportunity to follow up the projects more closely. The LNGOs had their offices in town just visiting the field on regularly basis, which resulted in the LNGOs often working through the CBOs to get in contact with the grassroots or collect information.

We [a CBO] are [collecting information] on a voluntary basis for someone to get paid there. Can you see now? [The partner will ask:] we would like you to tell us how many children need abcd or how many children you would like us to support on abcd. Then I [the director of the CBO] will do the junk work walking here in the afternoon, from distances, not using any car, we'll be using our damn legs, in torn tennis shoes (D, CBO).

When collecting data from the field it was the people in the communities that often were the one collecting data of what was needed and then it was the organisations on the upper levels that decided where to distribute the funds.

Instead to be using us they tell us to give them the information, once you give them the information, there are funders there you will never see them again, they don't even give you anything, even a single cent to help you. But the information they get it from us, because we are on the ground (C, CBO).

The CBOs highlighted that the donors should come to the ground. As it is now, the CBOs see themselves at the bottom of the development chain, and whilst the bigger organisations are being empowered, they are being marginalised. CBOs work directly with the people, but as

Mercer (2006) also emphasise they are being worked through by other organisations and receive little remuneration for their efforts in the organisation.

5.3 Donor or a partner – to give and receive, or to share

With introduction of partnership in the development context there was also a change in how the organisations should label each other. From talking of donor and recipient, they should now refer to each other as “partners” (Ahmad, 2006; Fowler, 2000). How the informants defined the organisations they cooperated with or received funding from, was connected to how they defined themselves; as a partner or a donor. When using the term donor in this thesis it includes private donors, companies or a government that provide funds, and also INGOs that distribute funds from their main office to the partners (Riddell, 2007). These funds are as I will explain closer in the next chapter directed to certain projects or areas of work, and are usually followed by specific criteria.

Every one of the informants explained that their organisation were working together with other organisations. Each organisation received funds from one or several actors. Their descriptions of the organisation they were working in differed from how the organisation was described by the other actor. An informant could present their role as a partner, but could be defined as a donor by other informants. This was especially the case with the LNGOs and some of the INGOs operating as intermediary organisations. They are playing both roles, being the one receiving the funds and the one distributing it further. The CBOs feel that they are on the bottom of the chain and that the INGOs are on the top. The descriptions indicate that they are defining their role according to the ladder metaphor presented in chapter 3 (Herod, 2009). The CBOs are in the bottom rung and the LNGOs are either placed on the bottom rung or the rung above. The informants from the INGO had a tendency to both regard themselves and being defined on a higher rung, even though they emphasised the importance of them working with the ground. In this way of regarding the different organisations the labels changes during the process of decisions about spending money. This relates to the organisations base of power, meaning the resources they have that can influence the other organisations behaviour (Dahl, 1957). A LNGO can receive money from a donor, but turns into a donor when the organisation decides to give or have to distribute the money to a CBO.

5.3.1 Descriptions of donors and partners

The general categorisation by the informants of a “donor” was that they just give the funding and don’t get involved in the projects. Only a few meant the donors could get involved in addition to give funding. A study undertaken for Norwegian Development Network (Chapman & Wendoh, 2007) on Norwegian CSO partnerships with organisations in Tanzania also reviews that local partners in Tanzania referred to organisations funding them as donors. A key for entering partnership was for the local organisations, their access to funds. One of my informants from a CBO had a clear description of a donor as the one bringing in the money and not coming to see what was going on in the community or with the project.

The donors just assist to pump money, donate donate donate. They don’t evaluate (C, CBO).

“Partner” was also used on organisations that gave funding and were involved in the work. The term was also applied to organisations that did not give funds but were involved in projects. Implementing partner was by some informants used when they talked about the difference between a partner and a donor. Implementing partner is applied to the organisation doing the work or implementing the project. Both NGOs and CBOs can be an implementing partner to someone, but there was a difference in what they called the implementing partner. A common assumption was that when referring to a partner downwards on the scale the partner was called implementer, while upward they used the term donor. When talking about a partner and donor from the local organisations perspective, they saw the ones working directly with them on their projects as their partners, while the organisations coming from abroad was called the donors. The CBOs made a clear distinction between these two relationships.

The donor is not a partner; it is not equal (F, CBO).

If you talk of a donor you are talking of someone who is out there just donating money or what ever. They don’t really care much about what happens as long as I get my reports and they are seeing the money we’ve used it for that (L, LNGO).

If one partner represents “the global” and the other “the local”, it is understandable that it is difficult to see themselves or the others as equals. These quotes illuminate the clear distinction between a partner and a donor. “Donor” is the one that will mobilize the resources,

bring in the money, while a “partner” on the other hand is seen as the one working together with them.

A partner, we are saying, they are working together, you get your share. We get our share and they get their shares. But a donor will give you the money and say; go and do this abcd. We sort of take instructions from the donor, but the partners we share ideas (H, LNGO).

One important factor is that with a partner they are looking for cooperation and that partners should be on equal terms (Fowler, 2000). One informant from a LNGO refer to the partner giving the funds as stakeholders. This means that they are seen as someone who takes part and involves themselves in the projects by sitting together and share ideas (H, LNGO). The international organisations and the bigger local organisations were often referred to as a donor and not a partner. The reason was that they gave the money or operated as the link between those who provided the money and the people doing the work.

INGOs are between the funder and us [LNGO] most of the time. At times we get funding directly ourselves, but at times there are INGOs who are not implementers, but who get funding directly from the funders and then are in between the funder and us (M, LNGO).

LNGOs saw most of the INGOs as their donor, and not partner. They admitted that when they talked about or with the INGOs they did name them partners and not donors because that was what the INGOs wanted to hear. This explains some of the power that lies in the term. Using “partner” is more related to equality than when talking of a “donor”. This is way many local partners still refer to their INGOs as donors (Ahmad, 2006; Lewis, 2001). Amongst the INGOs there were another view on defining a donor and a partner. Most of the INGOs worked through different partners on the local level when they were doing projects.

A donor can also be a partner –also in partnership. [The LNGO they are working through] will view us as a donor in many ways. But we are also looking up to our donors (B, INGO).

This INGO saw themselves more as an intermediary organisation being in the middle of receiving funds and distributing it further down to their partners whom is implementing the programs. They saw themselves as partners to the LNGOs, not donors, and refer to institutions in the western world as donors, for example the EU, World Bank (WB) or governmental institutions like NORAD.

A partner and a donor can be different. You can have a donor without being a partner. Here you can find no collaboration. With a partner you define (J, INGO).

The informants also made distinction between small and big donors, like they did with small and big organisations. The small donors could be churches, small associations and individuals that wanted to contribute and support. This is often more informal and relaxed and often demand less proposal writing and reporting.

Usually what they require from us is just stories from the families that they are helping (L, LNGO).

With the bigger donors the process is more bureaucratic. These donors are more demanding in the way they want their proposals and reports. This is also more time consuming and the application processing time is longer.

With the big donors, obviously you write a project proposal that will probably take six months to be approved, and when its approved they have this demands on reporting that sometimes don't rely with the field work at such time, but obviously, they [the donors] are out there, they don't know (L, LNGO).

The relationship between the donor and the receiver in this case is very distant. The receiver see the bureaucracy as very stressful, and even though the money is needed and appreciated, they feel that the donor do not get involved in what is happening. The local organisations call for more attention on what is happening on the ground and that they could be willing to fund what the community says is relevant for them.

This explains some of the roles the organisations are playing, from being the funder, the intermediary part between the money and the project, or the implementer. What I see from the

interviews is that when we move up or down the system the perception changes. With this I mean that the perception the CBO have of a LNGO is partly similar to what the LNGO have of an INGO. Many of the international institutions may also refer to the INGOs as their partners. The way the informants talk about the donors is very different from talking about partner. The donor is underestimated and given less value than the partner because they are there just with the money and not the passion for the project. Applying “partner” also gives associations to an equal relationship. This might be the reason for the INGOs wanting to be referred to as partner and not donor.

5.4 Defining partnership

When registered with the state or becoming partner with an organisation they form a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU). A MoU is a contract between the involved parts that contains operational principles. It is a formalized agreement that will cover the motives, expectations, the process and the responsibilities to the parties involved. The MoU can be bilateral between two organisations or the government and an organisation, or three lateral for example between the government and two organisations doing a project together in a partnership. They have one MoU to each partner because every organisation has their own specific objective that the MoU have to be in line with.

A general explanation of “partnership” by the informants is that it should be based on equality and be a two-way relationship. One definition used by most of the informants is that partnerships develop when two or more organisations go together and sign a MoU. This is an agreement on how the partnership should be, where they define and allocate the different tasks for the organisations. It is something that should benefit both parts, based on a set of goals or ground rules. Becoming partners is based on the different strengths the organisations have that they can bring into the partnership (J. M. Brinkerhoff, 2002). By drawing on strengths from both parts, the informants mean they can achieve more together.

One of the informants from an INGO (B, INGO) distinguishes between a formalized partnership and partnership that is not formalized. This is exemplified by comparing the relationship they have with a local partner an LNGO (H, LNGO), and the relationship they have with the community that this LNGO is working in with the given funds. The partnership with the LNGO is the formalized one, because they are partners via a MoU that both have

signed. The INGO refers to the LNGO as their implementing partner because it is them who are in connection with the ground. The INGO describes it with explaining that they only work behind the scenes whilst it is the IP that identify people with needs, run the field offices and does the actual work. The INGO still considers the community as their partner, by appreciating their concerns and visiting the field, but this is not a formalized partnership. The community has a formalized partnership with the LNGO, and it is the LNGO that have the contact with the community, interact and give feedback. When the INGO want to visit the field they go together with the LNGO to avoid undermining their role (B, INGO).

When the international organisations are coming to work they often search for local partners to operate through. One of the INGOs said that when they want to find a partner, they partner via the government. To avoid duplication the authorities finds CBOs working in the field that fits into the INGOs strategies and field of work. Other times the organisation can be given certain geographical areas or certain fields that they can be working in. Before they partner, the INGOs often put out a call for proposal if they want to sponsor or approach the different local organisations. This is what the local organisations are searching for in order to get funding for their projects. Many of the local organisations emphasised that they are striving to get in contact with funders and to evolve partnership because of the competition of partnering with INGOs. Some of the local organisations form consortiums or go together on a project to write proposals. Most of the partners my informants have had, or have now were made through networking and contacts, and by approaching the NGOs working in Bulawayo.

5.4.1 Can a partnership be equal?

When entering a partnership the organisations identity is an important aspect meaning that each organisation has their strength that makes them attractive to partner with (J. M. Brinkerhoff, 2002). By partnering the organisations will have a chance to empower each other, and use the resources more efficiently, but a challenge is to achieve an equal relationship (Lewis, 2001; Morse & McNamara, 2006). A few of the LNGOs, being intermediary organisations, said that partnerships could be equal because one part is bringing in the money and the other is doing the work. By doing this they are taking advantage of the organisations' different strengths (J. M. Brinkerhoff, 2002).

We [an LNGO] look at it as a partnership because we are saying at the same time you might have the money but if you don't do the job your money doesn't work. And then at the same time if we don't do the job and get the money from you it doesn't work. So we look at it as we all are coming in to contribute. We all have a role to play (E, LNGO).

This organisation meant that it was possible to achieve an equal partnership if everyone strives for being honest, communicate and be good stewards of the resources available. The donor would here be a partner one-way or the other. But at the same time the informant from this LNGO said:

With INGOs we would work with them in the sense that they provide funding for us (E, LNGO).

This organisation is an intermediary local organisation that both have partners up on the scale and down, meaning that with the first explanation it is a view of how they wish the community see them as a partner, being the one providing funds, but also cooperating with them on the projects. This should be the way they are looking up to their funding partner, but as shown in the previous quote they have another assumption of an INGO.

I think partnership is very tricky, especially the relation between the west and Africa really. We talk of partnership, but I think in the real terms its very tricky, because usually the one with the cash has the final say (L, LNGO).

Here they emphasise that the western organisations bringing in the money have the power to make decisions in the partnership that will affect the work. They decide what the proposals are for and how the money should be used, as I will present further in the next chapter. The organisations on the ground are dependent on the institutional funding; so they have to bend down for the sake of the community and the organisation in addition to receive funds. The CBOs therefore mean you can never be on a 50-50 situation with your donor.

You are always in the bottom, because he is your boss, he is your master. For example you can't be equal to your father. Even to your employer, you can't say you are at the same level (C, CBO).

There was a general agreement with the informants that as the system is now a partnership could never be equal. This view is especially shared between informants from the organisations that see themselves as smaller and lower on the development chain. I also had an interview with a representative from UN's Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA) that shared this view. OCHA's basic principles are on partnership, but when it comes to those on the ground the representative from OCHA meant that you find that the partnership is unequal.

Partnership between the CBO and NGO is one-sided. Not a partnership after the definition. One has the money, the other doesn't (G, OCHA).

This again strengthens the view of the INGO or the partner upwards, as a donor and not a partner. The smaller organisations rely on their funding. Without the funding they will not be able to do their job. Being partner with an INGO can therefore be seen mostly as a mean to get funds. This is the fundamental thought of most organisations working on the lower levels. They see the INGOs as loopholes to get funding for their organisation and maybe not so much for the cooperation, and strive to find partners on the upper levels in order to have their organisation functioning.

6 The need - aid diversity, priority and decision making

In the process of partnering with organisations and institutions, funding and writing proposals are an important issue. When studying the relations between the different actors an aspect is therefore to look at what determines who receives the funding and what type of projects is being initiated. The funding process is interchangeably connected with the choice of project. Criteria on how projects are supposed to be implemented are spelt out in the proposals. Every organisation has their own values, strategies, logical framework and other elements that shape the organisations identity. These elements are influenced by culture, religion, and political and social factors. The organisations identity affects how the organisations are willing to partner, what type of project they want to cooperate on, implement or fund (J. M. Brinkerhoff, 2002).

Partnership involves different processes and stages. In this chapter I will analyse the process behind starting up a project and what decides where and who is the recipient. I will start by presenting how the state and the organisations are operating in order to choose where to start up projects, before I analyse the processes of calling for and writing proposals. When discussing these processes between the different partners, scale and power are two of the main theoretical frameworks, together with dimension discourse. The proposals are often stipulated with terms and criteria decided by the one with the resources, and this is passed on from partner to partner (Morse & McNamara, 2006). In addition interdependence is a dimension that contributes to understand how the partners influence each other and explore the prerequisites of partnering. Here the surrounding features of initiating a project is in focus together with how they partner based on their dependence of each other (Bantham, et al., 2003). When partnering organisations have to fit into each other's criteria in order to make the aid operative. By looking at how the organisations are dependent on each other gives an insight in why they enter partnerships (Morse & McNamara, 2006).

6.1 Where to start up the intended project

Development actors in Zimbabwe are involved in helping the country with the social challenges they are facing and assist the government where they are incapable of improving

the humanitarian situation. The government's role is to have an overview of what is needed in the districts, but as explained in chapter 2 the humanitarian situation is affected by the political situation in the country, meaning that it is not necessarily the needs of people that influence which area that should be given aid or the type of project. As presented in chapter 5, all international organisations have to register with the Government of Zimbabwe. It is the authorities that are supposed to regulate the activities of the organisations and have the overall control of what the international organisations are doing. At the same time the representative from the government highlighted that even though they put the standard they did not have much influence because it was the donors that were bringing in the money. What the state did was to control that the organisations operated according to the registration and the law of Zimbabwe.

The government does not have big influence but put a standard and make sure that organisations do what they said they would do and not just whatever they want (N, GoZ).

When registering with the state the organisation have to declare all the funds they are bringing in, but almost everything is channelled directly to the organisations and not through the government. The money goes from the donor country to the INGOs to the LNGOs. This is also presented in the report done by Scanteam (2007) for NORAD. The donor support goes either through, or to, the organisations operating within the civil society.

Most of the donor money doesn't go through the government, but straight to [this INGO], and then we have to report to the government (A, INGO).

The government has a system to register the funds coming in to the provinces so all organisations have to declare their funds with the government. This is a way of controlling all the foreign currency that comes in to the country, but also a way of controlling the organisations working there and prevent them from doing something that is against the governmental agenda. Since the money is going past the government, the state has lost the power of dealing with the funds and it is the international community that put the development agenda.

It is the donors who are putting the priorities – not the local government. The money is given with restrictions on what they shall be used on and conditions on how it should be used (N, GoZ).

The representative from the government meant that they should be the one giving out the funds. The government has a responsibility for their people but for the government to be able to carry out its tasks they are also dependent on finances and resources. When the aid money is going past the government and instead from the international community directly down to the ground, the international actors empower the people instead of the government. The people lose their faith in the government being able to help them and instead turn to the international agencies for help. From this informant's point of view there was too much influence by the donor countries. This might be the reason why the government creates rules on how the international organisations are operating and want to avoid empowering the local organisations and the civil society (Van Rooy, 2008). Usually when the organisations are given permission to operate the authorities will allocate the geographical area for the organisation to work in and decide what activities they should support in these areas.

The donors say what they have and then we show them the place to work.

When the local organisations are registered they are controlled by the constitution – and we check if they are operating with what they say they are doing (N, GoZ).

6.1.1 Decision making

Most of the organisations interviewed were in communication with the local authorities. When they wanted to start a project they introduced themselves to the district administrator and said what the organisation had to offer, and then the districts directed them where to work to avoid duplication amongst the organisations.

When we got the funds we go to the local leadership, which are from the rural district council and the district administrator there, and go there and say we got these funds for this area. We know there are some NGOs that are already here, which wards can we actually work with (H, LNGO).

One INGO came with an example on the process of when they wanted to introduce a peri-urban program. They approached the local authorities through the city council in order to not just choose an area. The city council went through different areas with needs and identified an area that needed assistance. When the INGO came to that area there were already one or two organisations working there. Since they were having different programmes they decided to write a MoU with the city council (A, INGO).

[...] when we then started the program we consulted with the community, and they came up with what they felt were their needs, that also were in line with our strategy. Ok? Its not just to shoot a basket, it has to fit into, that the strategy focus is in line with our thinking as an organisation. We realised that they came up with issues to do with HIV/AIDS, something that we as an organisation also are interested in. [...] It is peri-urban and you realise that what such communities need is some that can give them a quicker livelihood, projects that can make them generate money. So macro enterprise development was identified as one of the projects that we could do to meet their challenges as a community (A, INGO).

As seen in this example, the way it is presented, is that at the end it is the INGO that decides what is actually needed, based on their observations and conversations with the community. There are here some crossing power relations between the funder that has the money, the government that gives the work-permit and the community that have an interest in the proposed project. The parts have each a resource that they can use to influence the other actors which relates to what Dahl (1957) calls the base of power, that can be used as a mean to influence others behaviour. Even though the area is decided by the city council and the community expresses the need it is the INGO that have the final say. As emphasised by the INGO, it is important that the project fits into the organisations criteria. They explained further how they entered the community and explained the bases of the INGO and the conditions for being their partner.

[...] we are not saying they are supposed to be Christian because we are Christian, but we are saying we are Christian and this is how we are going to do our work. And if they are willing now to partner with us, based on what our convictions are, and what our values are, then we now start to operate together with the community (A, INGO).

The way this INGO explained the process exemplifies that the community have to accept how this organisation is and partner based on the criteria set by the organisation. In this statement it seems that the community has nothing to say. If they want help from that organisation then they have to deal with how this INGO are working. In principle the community should control the process of starting up a project, but this is usually not the case. The assumption by the CBOs was that funders of the project were the one choosing how the money should be used. The INGOs are often the one sitting on the funds, which make them more in the power to decide what the money should be used on. On the other hand there is a balance of what the international organisations assume that the communities need and what is really needed.

When they [the INGOs] are implementing these projects they've got different ideas. Because some they call they saying; a no, we know how best to implement and tell people what to do. Whilst others are saying; ah, we know how best to do, let people tell us what to do (H, INGO).

From the local organisations point of view there were a general discontent on the process of implementing programs. Too often there were examples of projects that had been implemented, but not needed or wanted in the community:

The projects and the criteria are put on the donor level, and is not always what is needed on the ground (C, CBO).

6.2 Becoming partners

In the process of partnering and choosing where to start up projects, the organisations are using their resources and capacities to influence each other's behaviour (Lister, 2000). The different actors each have their identity or strength that makes them dependent on each other and appropriate to partner with (J. M. Brinkerhoff, 2002). To have the organisations functioning and being able to run projects, the organisations rely on funding and donations. This can be bilateral or multilateral and collected in different ways. The most usual ways of collecting funds is applying for money from other organisations or institutions (Riddell, 2007). When two organisations form a partnership they write and sign a MoU. The ground elements of what this contract will contain, is usually formulated in the call for proposal.

6.2.1 Call for proposals

The donors and international institutions or organisations that are able to give out funds often call for proposals through the Internet, newspapers or through lobbying. These calls are supposed to reach down to the local level. A challenge for the local organisations was that these calls often did not reach down to the local organisations. The bigger organisations have a bigger network and easier access to information. They also often hear the call for proposals first and are better skilled and trained in writing good proposals. This is agreed on by the INGOs saying that it is easier for them to meet the requirements to the donor than it is for the smaller organisations because they have the system in place, like the finance policies. When it comes to applying for funds the smaller organisations had a disadvantage. The donors want accountability, and that is assumed to be easier to find with an INGO than CBO.

Most of these donors they now want to associate themselves with the already established organisations, you see. So if you are new on the market you know, you always face challenges (H, LNGO).

The search of a sponsor demands resources in order to find donors or organisations that can help. The donors would rather fund CBOs through other organisations. Some local organisations emphasised that they did go together with other CBOs or through NGOs to complement each other's work and make the process easier. The CBOs felt it was unfair that the international donors or bigger organisations could not come directly to the ground instead of working through other organisations to reach down to the CBOs. They wished that these donors could change their mentality when calling for proposals and seek local partners working on the ground. The CBOs wanted the international actors to come the ground because that was where the important issues were to be found. Instead the bigger organisations acted on the basis of their interest of project and area. Another challenge with the calls for proposals was that the projects or field sponsored were predetermined. Open proposals were rare. An informant from a CBO showed a sample from a proposal from the French embassy that calls for proposal from NGOs in Zimbabwe on the Internet. Here it was written that: "[the embassy] will prioritise projects dedicated to supporting good governance, defending human rights and protect vulnerable communities" (C, CBO). When the local organisations was looking for funders they therefore had to both search for the announcement but also find the proposals that fit their project.

We apply! We seek calls for proposals and we send in proposals as well. How we choose where to send the proposal is based on what the particular organisation is funding. Like someone will say maybe a call for proposals for home based care, then if we have something for home based care then we'll send our proposals to that particular organisation (E, LNGO).

When the international actors call for proposals they prioritise projects and have a limitation of what they will support. These priorities are often related to what the donors think is needed or programs they know can be easy to get sponsored in the country they are collecting money. This was also found in the study of Norwegian CSO partnerships in Tanzania where it is written that “it is currently relatively easy to find funding for hot topics” (Chapman & Wendoh, 2007, p. 28). These topics might be projects that are popular in the donor community, so called mainstream projects that are easy to initiate. In the call for proposal they will write that they sponsor projects like abcd and have a certain amount that is given out.

The international donors dictate what they have money for. Like I have money for boreholes but not food (G, OCHA).

We do have donors that sponsor certain parts of programs. You've got a donor that says I'll support the skills aspect of your program. So you can go to the workshop and it's got everything, but you might go to the kitchen and find no food (I, LNGO).

There are therefore experiences that the donors are saying that: “this is what we want the money should go to”, but when the local organisation get to the community they see that the approach should have been done differently (E, LNGO). An aspect here is that the funds that are given have strings, meaning that you cannot transfer money from one project to another. If they are sponsoring the workshop, you cannot just take the money and use it for food. If the money is used for another purpose they have to ask the funder for permission. It means that the local organisations do not have autonomy over the money. This was the assumption by all the local informants. They were frustrated because the call for proposals did not always reflect what was needed on the ground. The local organisations also highlighted that to get funding for administrative purposes was very difficult. Most of the donors were willing to sponsor a program, but the local organisations experienced that it could be difficult to get funding for salaries for staff. In contradiction the cost of the car standing outside most of the

INGOs offices in Bulawayo, or the cost of the car's fuel consumption, would have been enough to finance a year budget for a CBO.

6.2.2 Different funders - different criteria

Already in the initial phase of partnering, the criteria are already set through the writing of proposals. In addition to priorities of projects there is usually specific ways the proposal should be. It means that for every donor there may be specific format for the proposal and different funders may ask for different criteria.

You know what these donors do in time, they advertise we've got such such a fund, looking at such such a project then they will be calling for proposals. Then there will be actually guidelines on what will they actually need and so forth. Then we'll also write a proposal in line with that (H, LNGO).

In order to get the application granted the applying organisation have to meet those criteria. For the INGOs these criteria are based on values and strategies that are made on an international level and then adopted to the local conditions. The strategy is based on the local context and addresses specific challenges within that context. Every country office's local strategy has to fit into the organisations overall strategy made on the global level by a committee representing the countries that the INGO are involved in. The INGO states they do choose to join or implement projects that they do see fits into the global strategy. For a local organisation to be able to partner with an INGO they felt they had to adjust to the INGOs strategy in order to be their partner. The smaller organisations emphasised that when they write the proposal and sign an agreement with the donor they often felt they compelled to comply on their own values in order to fit into the criteria of the donor.

We have to relate to their values, that's why we have to allocate the specific objectives with them, because we have looked at their mission statement their values, and so forth (H, LNGO).

Donors can stipulate what the money is for, so when the local organisations are doing their needs assessment they have to try to suit the donor. It is therefore a chance that people in the

communities and the local actors will change their needs after what they know the funding organisation, through the donors, are willing to sponsor.

Some of our communities will get to know that those donors they have money for “this”. Then suddenly they have those needs in order to fit into those criteria. So in the end it is not the real needs that are being matched really, but, you know, it is better than nothing (L, LNGO).

The proposal process has an influence on what type of projects the local organisation was doing. If there were a project that no one wants to sponsor, it would be difficult to keep it running. In order to get funding, the organisations have to follow the mainstream projects. The donor therefore has the power to decide where the money should go. A response to the donor’s criteria is that the local organisations write proposals on what they think the donor want to hear. So instead of applying for programmes that are meeting the actual need in the community, the local organisations instead end up choosing mainstream projects and answer in order to fulfil the donor’s criteria to have a chance to receive fund.

“Yea, at times we have calls for proposals that will demand you to twist one or two things. [...] generally in the NGO world people change their values for the circumstances (I, LNGO).

There was a pressure and demand for good project proposals and a competition in writing the best proposal. The better proposal they wrote the bigger was the chance of receiving funding. After submitting the proposal the organisations had to wait for reply. There was always an uncertainty about the outcome of the proposal and if it would be granted. To get an answer on the proposal could take some time dependent on how many links it had to pass in the system. Some of the informants therefore emphasised that they had learned to forget about the proposal after handing it in and instead be surprised if they get an answer.

It is a long chain from when you come with a proposal until you have the funding. It is lopsided. Those with the money have the power. That goes with both the [international donor] to [this INGO], and most probably from [this INGO] and down to [the CBO]. So you can ask; is it really bottom-up? (J, INGO).

The assumptions amongst the CBOs are that they are in the bottom of the chain, and because each link will take a percentage of the fund granted, there will be less funding before it reaches the ground. To apply for money can constitute a long chain from handing in the application until the funds get to the applicant. If there is a CBO for example that applies for money to a project, they often first apply to a LINGO that goes to an INGO that goes to the INGOs main office that apply for money from their government or international institution. Then it has to go all the steps back before it finally meet the needs on the ground. When it reaches the CBO there is less funding and more criteria.

The local organisations found the process of proposals very tricky and time consuming and felt they were not given a chance to develop and receive funds to build up their organisation and prove their accountability. When everything is going through other partners they will remain small. It is a challenge for the local organisations to find those funders or INGOs that would suit the local organisation and the project on the ground, and not the other way around. The CBOs felt they were not being seen and that they had to adapt to the requirements of the donor, and many of the informants had strong reactions to this way of partnering. They meant the criteria was characterized by a one-way slide and requested the donors to appreciate what was happening on the ground. The donors come with vigorous criteria and the NGOs are trying to fit into that. It goes to the extent that it is the donor's criteria that decide the project and not the people receiving it. There is a fight for the NGOs to survive, and in order to get financial support they have to fit into someone's criteria.

6.3 To choose from the menu

During one of my observations with a CBO in the peri-urban area outside Bulawayo I became an accidental witness to a meeting held by one of the INGOs that I had interviewed. The INGO were visiting this community to talk about projects they intended to implement. People had walked far and gathered in a church hall waiting to hear what the INGO had to offer. They had a reputation for helping and giving out hand-outs, which may explain the packed church hall. An issue emphasised by the CBO already operating in the community was that since that INGO was coming today, there might not be any point for me observing the CBOs project, because most probably no one would come to the community kitchen.

When the meeting started it turned out not to be a representative from the INGO talking, but a councillor from the city council that was holding the meeting. He was talking on behalf of the INGO and telling the people three types of projects that the INGO intended to implement in this community; cash-transfer, microfinance and an awareness program for disabled people. After a short description of the projects the councillor started explaining who could benefit. The engagement rose in the hall and many was frustrated and angry. One old man stood up from the floor and asked: “Why don’t you screen people before you have this meeting.” The attendants were complaining because many had walked a long distance just to come here to hear they did not fit into the criteria. They felt they were being used. The councillor explained that it was because of transparency and to include all, that everyone was invited. He explained further that next week representatives from the INGO would come to the community. Then everyone who meant they fit into the criteria could come, and then the INGO would decide if they were qualified.

This example has three interesting aspects. One is the way the INGO enters the community to explain their projects without approaching the already existing CBOs in the area. Second are the criteria that comes with the project and who can benefit, and third is how the participants understand the meaning and introduction of the programs. When the councillor explained the projects he used development related concepts. When asking some of the attendants none of the persons had heard of microfinance or cash transfer before or understood what it meant, even after the explanation from the councillor. This aspect of understanding concepts will be discussed further in the next chapter, while the two other issues will be discussed below.

When this INGO wanted to visit the community they came first through a councillor. The CBO used to be sponsored by this INGO so they were aware that this CBO was in the area. The INGO had already three types of programmes they wanted to implement. Neither the CBO nor the attendants in the church hall was told about these projects until they were in the meeting. It means that the programmes have not been discussed with the people. All the CBOs interviewed emphasised that if the donors came direct to them they could talk direct with the people and identify the needs.

They [the INGOs] are supposed to ask you what is the food that you enjoy instead of giving you water or buying you a coke, we need to ask you what you need to eat (C, CBO).

When the projects are imposed on the community it can end up doing more harm than good, especially if the projects are not needed. One LNGO came with an example on projects being implemented without taking into account the cultural context. It was in an area where the women were walking around 5 km to fetch water. An organisation came into this area, saw this and was thinking that these people were suffering and wanted to put some piped water to each household.

[...] when they did that the people didn't really like the water, they started making excuses and saying we want to fetch water from 5km. But the issue was socialisation time for women. They enjoyed walking those 5km, chatting, talking about their problems (M, LNGO).

This is a clear example on what might happen if projects are being imposed on the community and shows the importance of knowing the context that the organisations are operating in (Mercer, 2006). When operating across scales a study done by Meentemeyer (1989) also emphasises that a value of a project usually is driven by different processes and changes over scales. Implementing a project on a national scale will probably involve different needs than on a village level.

The second issue with the previous example is how the INGO intended to choose who would fit into their criteria. The director of the CBO I was visiting that day expressed that when these INGOs come to screen the people they do it based on the wrong permits, many influenced by their office in the country of origin.

As soon as they come in to your house and they see things, they can say you are not qualified. So it means if you have an ok house and maybe a TV, you can end up not receiving (F, CBO).

The director came with a self-experienced example with this CBO, that for a long time used to serve the homeless people and people in need in the local community with food from the community kitchen. This was run on a voluntary basis with people from the community coming to cook food and serve to the people that needed help. They had some problems in getting enough finances to buy food for the kitchen and were applying to different

organisations for help. An INGO, the same as mentioned above and interviewed, partnered with them and helped with food donations through a donor. When the INGO entered the field they brought in their own criteria of who should benefit, in this case it was the homeless. Their definition of a homeless person differed from what the CBO categorised as a homeless. The CBO felt they knew the needs of the people better than the INGO, but since they now were given the food they had to follow the INGOs criteria for who was suppose to benefit from the community kitchen.

What happened was that many of the former recipients were taken off the program. Not because they didn't need it, but because they didn't fit into the category of homeless that was decided by the INGO. This was very frustrating for the director of the CBO that felt helpless when faced by the INGO. The CBO wished they had more power in order to take the lead and tell the INGO that the category they were using did not correspond with the reality in the field. The director felt the INGO had decided the category homeless based on what a homeless was in their home country and that they didn't look at the context in that particular community. She and the organisation felt they were abandoning their own people throwing them into someone else's hands. Some of the informants did emphasise that this was a challenge when they where deciding who should benefit from the programmes they were implementing.

When you are giving aid to people it is a bit difficult because you have to come up with criteria of how to distribute it on to whom to give, and whom not to give. You might be surprised you find the whole community within those criteria because they all want to benefit (H, LNGO).

6.3.1 Popularity leading the way

There are projects that are more popular than others and will attract more organisations. You find that the distributions and activities not always are in relation to the need in the community and that the NGOs are following the mainstream. The number of NGOs working in areas close to communication centres and areas that are easily accessible can be higher, even though there might be other areas that have bigger needs. Reason for this might be the socio-economic conditions, political situation and the voice of the local people (Willis, 2009).

There is a trend and popular programs. If you mention them, the donor will come (J, INGO).

The informants agreed that there are some places that are more popular than others, and I found that it often was a connection between the project imposed or implemented and the organisation giving, due to what they get funds for, and not necessarily what the community needs the most.

Yea there are some places that are a bit more popular. When you go there you find maybe there are five, six NGOs, then when you go to another area you find there is only one. Actually at times you might find that if you go to the same district or go to the same ward other people benefit twice while there will be other not getting anything at all (H, LINGO).

There is a challenge having many organisations working in the same area and it is important to coordinate the projects and also work horizontal between organisations on a local level. If an organisation is already distributing food in one area, then the assumption by most of the informants is that the organisation should move to another area where there is also need. As seen in the example above the INGO did not cooperate with the CBO when they intended to implement a programme in their community. This was despite that they have had a former partnership with the CBO, meaning that the INGO should have been aware of them operating in the area. One challenge Zimbabwe is facing when there are so many different actors operating, is that in the popular areas people receiving aid can be able to choose which organisation they want to get help from.

They [the recipients] don't really care who they are, what they are, whatever, as long as help is coming (L, LINGO).

One of the organisations gave an example of a project they are running in Harare, the capital of Zimbabwe. Here they, along with other organisations work on projects with street children, but the organisations had different ways of doing their projects and used different models. The children could therefore choose which organisations they wanted to go to based on what the organisation was offering of help.

[...] so you get to have a child that comes to your organisation and they discover that in your meals there is no chicken, so they will leave you and come to someone's organisation, and then chicken is there but maybe there is no TV, so they don't like it. They will go to another one where there's chicken and TV but there is church every day, but they don't like church. So you see they are trafficking the whole area (I, LNKO).

6.4 Manoeuvring power relations across scales

The local government does have a saying in what and where the funding should go, and the organisations are obliged to follow the structures put by the government. When the donors and organisations are coming to Zimbabwe to work they have to relate to the strategies and structures made by the government. If not they can be in the position of being expelled from the country. This means that even though the international organisations are bringing with them their own strategies and structures from their home country, they are also required to follow the national laws in Zimbabwe. This is a chain going from the government to the NGOs and again trickles down to the local partners.

The local actors are also under governmental rule in Zimbabwe. Even though they are named non-governmental organisations, they do have to register with the government and act according to the law and the Private Voluntary Organisations Act. This does put some restrictions on the local organisations. In addition to the already existing structures laid by the government the local organisations have to relate to the international organisations and the donor agencies, and the strategies and structures that they are bringing in with them. Here the local organisations are operating with the people on the ground, the communities. They are supposed to have their saying in accordance with what they see is needed in their community, but we also find the community leadership who are talking on behalf of the community. These leaders have an influence on the organisations implementing but you can also find that in some cases they are giving their own opinion of what is needed, and not the community's opinion.

So you find that the actors are circulating and manoeuvring across the different scales bringing with them both their strength, and criteria when going into partnership with other organisations. In addition to relate to the scale as something hierarchical the processes, with

for example writing proposals contributes in shaping the scale by the way they relate to each other. Here the scales can also be seen as encompassing each other like with the concentric circle, and not only seen as above one another (Herod, 2009). The organisations that are facing most challenges with this manoeuvring are the organisations operating as intermediaries that both have to relate to the criteria and pass it further. In these relations, both Allen (1997) and Dahl's (1957) way of thinking about power is essential. The criteria are the organisations means of power that can be used to utilize the capacity or base of power, which is the money, to make the partner perform the way they want. In this way power is exercised and makes the other part respond.

An organisation working both with international donors and local churches, explain that this are two different ways of working in partnership. They emphasise the difference of power structures between the one being the partner and the other the donor, and explain that there is a difference of equality between the two. It is difficult to be on an equal basis with the donor agencies something that also trickles down to the relationship they have with the churches. They are already given directions on how this money should be used by the donor. So when they want to do a project with the churches with money from the donor, they meet the churches with already specified guidelines and structures to follow. How they partner or get involved with the community or the church is therefore decided before they actually enter the community or the church.

Because they [INGO] have their criteria, their reporting guidelines, and how and what and all those on how their money should be used, so obviously we are already influenced on the partnership we can make with the churches, because we are not independent if you like. Because we are stewards of what; the donor agencies. We cannot be as free as we would love to (L, LNGO).

7 Obstacles and possibilities; forms and reports

As explained in the previous chapter there are several criteria that influence the work of the organisations in terms of choosing and implementing projects. When working across different scales there will be different understandings because of their location. The organisations are working from a global level and down to the local level and also manoeuvre within this system. Even though there are a lot of approaches and theories on how to do development work, it is often easier in the theory than in practice. What I experienced was that the lower I came in the system the less the informants knew of concepts and theories about development. This had to do with use of language, the flow of information and a common understanding of the theories and knowledge.

In this chapter I will analyse how information flows in the aid system and how different understandings can affect the work of the organisations and the outcome of partnership. I will start by explaining the different aspects in reporting and evaluation of projects and the achievement of objectives. From the organisations giving funding, demanding reports are actions that they can use to make the other organisation perform (Lister, 2000). In order to analyse the outcome of the partnership and their evaluation I will use the dimension on performance to see if partnership enhances performance and creates efficiency with the projects (J. M. Brinkerhoff, 2002; Morse & McNamara, 2006). Here the issue of sustainability when a project ends will be discussed followed by how the informants see the cooperating between the partners (Fowler, 2000).

In the last section I will look closer at the impact flow of information and agendas have on the organisations operating within this system, and how they relate to the concepts given on a higher level than where they are operating. Power relations on the different scales influence this process, but also Morse and McNamara's (2006) dimension of discourse is here relevant. The organisations influence each other, but might not have the same understanding of the different criteria or agenda. By studying discourse in this context I will analyse how organisations understand the criteria and agendas on the different levels and how change of agenda can influence the people being recipients of aid.

7.1 Reporting and evaluation

All the organisations interviewed undertake various forms of reporting of their projects. The organisations registered with the government have to do the reporting direct to Harare. Here they report about what programs they are doing and where they operate, how much money they have brought in and other elements stated in their registration. Organisations being in partnership report to each other. Some are making a distinction between plans and reports where plan is what the organisation intended to do and the reports is what had happened and the outcome. The plan can here be seen in connection with the MoU that is written when entering a partnership or starting up a project. Organisations were working in order to achieve the projects aims and goals stated in the plan or MoU. When they write the reports they usually report against the outputs and objectives stated in the MoU. These reports were supposed to be about the organisation, the project they are running, and how far they have gone according to them and any challenges they encounter. In this section I will present how partners communicate through writing reports and evaluate the projects to explore the performance of the partnership (Morse & McNamara, 2006). What is expected from the reports is often predetermined already in the writing of proposals. An interesting aspect is therefore how the partner's manoeuvre to write a report or do an evaluation that reflects the partnership.

7.1.1 Reports better written than what the project is well done?

Most of the organisations differ between two types of reports, the formal and the informal. With informal the organisation describes reports that are more similar to update letters. These are sent to people that have been or are involved in the organisation to update them on what the organisation are doing. A CBO agrees on this and also includes reports written to the smaller donors as informal because they will be able to have a more personal relationship with this type of donor.

They [referring to smaller donors] don't demand lots of reports because they have this personal interaction; they know almost first hand what is happening (L, LNGO).

The formal reports are on the other hand reports sent to funders and bigger donors and will not go to everyone. In these reports it is often reported on aspects the donor are demanding. They often have specific topics that they want to have the partner to explain. This is usually

stated in the MoU or the contract with the funding part. The organisations receiving any funds are instructed to report on how the funds have been used and how the projects are going. These reports are handed in to the funder on the agreed date.

Once they fund you, what they expect from you is reports. To show operability (C, CBO).

Informant H, an LNGO meant there was a difference of reporting to partners and donors because the donors would tell you or give a structure on how the report should be written, while the partner will have more insight in what is happening. With the donors it was much more bureaucracy and more paperwork that was demanded. A challenge was to write reports that would make the funder satisfied and at the same time contain the correct information on what was happening. There was also a fine balance between what was possible to document and what the funder needed to come and see. Not everything was possible to put into writing.

The big donors seem to appreciate more when you produce nice project proposals and nice reports with flawless English. They are out there so, you know you just make your documents look nice, and then they really like it. But it might not be exactly what's on the ground, it is probably a totally different thing on the ground, you see (L, LNGO).

An INGO stated that the meaning of the reports was that they were written in order to show that the money had been used the way it was supposed to, according to the MoU. Reporting is a way of showing accountability where the report is a proof of receipts on that the funding has been used correct. Once the organisation is cleared, they can be given additional funding. It means that in addition to write good proposals, the organisations depending on funding have to write good reports.

How often the funder wanted they reports varied. Some wanted periodicals for example once a month or quarterly, while others wanted annually. With my informants a pattern was that this depended on the donor or the partner, and varied after where on the scale the organisations were. The community level wrote reports more often than the international level. This was due to the demand of reports from the national level. For the organisations in the middle, being the implementing partner for the donor and the one distributing the funds

for the community, they both received reports and had to write them. They were handing reports in from the community, rewriting it, evaluate and going through the reports and then they sent it to funders on a higher level. They also had to report to agencies and state organisations. Most of the implementing organisations therefore had an on-going process of monitoring and evaluation.

Reporting is, as with writing proposals time-consuming for the organisations. For those able to have specific employees dealing with the reporting this process was much easier. In the study conducted in Tanzania they also found that the respondents saw the process of reporting as cumbersome. Especially because of the reporting formats and that every donor demanded separate reports (Chapman & Wendoh, 2007). The organisations with resources had employees that worked specific on monitoring and evaluation. Working like this made it easier when the annual report was supposed to be handed in. By collecting information throughout the process it was easier to evaluate what had been done. For those who could not afford having a writing-proposal team or reporting team, the administration was very taxing. Org A, an INGO, said that the community leadership were together with them responsible for monitoring the projects on the local level. So even though they had quarterly meeting with the community leadership there was somebody within the leadership that monitored.

[This person was] responsible to check and inspect, if things are happening, and then they are the ones that now link up with us. But we also go to the community to do those monitoring activities. So we meet with the community leadership once a quarter because we realise that if we are saying every month they have other things that they need to do so we don't want to compromise on their time and their commitment because its voluntary (A, INGO).

From the view of the intermediary organisation's they saw that the CBOs had a huge influence when it came to reporting. With the reports, the community could explain the problems that are being faced in the area, and have the power to influence. Here they could write what was happening on the ground, what was successful and not, what was the needs and so on.

There is need for us to craft reports that will help us as well (C, CBO).

A challenge is that the CBOs highlighted that there was a tendency to write what the donor wanted to hear, instead of what was happening to have a chance to receive more funding. If the organisations had been able to use that strength, they could influence the higher levels, but a challenge is to get the correct information from the ground. Even the local organisations might experience problems in receiving the correct information from the ground. There was a trend that people tend to tell them what they thought the organisation wanted to hear, which could result in a misconnection between what was reported and what was actually happening on the ground.

When we [an INGO] are there [in the field] the villagers don't tell you the truth. They tell us what we want to hear (J, INGO).

So even if it was a local organisation working through leaderships in the community, they could find that the community was not telling the exact truth, but instead embellish the truth. A challenge was therefore which voices that was being told when the organisations came to the communities.

At times I don't know whether these community leaders at times they might be a bit harsh or they might have their own saying; no guys when these people come we are telling them this abcd, you see, then people will tell you the leaders idea, not their ideas, you know, because they will be afraid. You oppose the village head or the senior you might even be punished, or chased from the community at times (H, LNGO).

Being a long chain also influences the process of reporting. The report undertaken for NDN also present that the chain of communication is long, and that usually the partners will be at the end (Chapman & Wendoh, 2007). Even within the different levels it was many stages before the report reach the final step, and is sent upwards or downwards as exemplified by the LNGO and INGO under.

The monitors write to the field officer, the field officer consolidates to me, then I [the director] consolidate upwards (M, LNGO).

We get reports from the community leadership, then we will report to the regional office, and then report to our support office which is [the organisation in] Australia (A, INGO).

There were meetings with the partners on different levels. The local implementers went to the field regularly, and once in a while the funding partner or bigger organisations or agencies joined in on field trips. These vary according to if they were stationed within the country or had their offices abroad. The organisations emphasised that if they were more personally involved with the donor then there was a bigger chance that the donor would be able to see the transformation on the ground. Even though they did come to check if the projects were going and the money was used as stated in the reports. The projects were also evaluated towards the end or after the project were finished. Evaluation is a way of seeing the impact that is made in the community that the organisations are working in and evaluate the outcome of the partnership. Evaluation of the programs is done both during and at the end of a program to draw lessons from the past. The reason for doing evaluation is to see how the organisation is doing, were it is not doing ok and what could need to be improved, in order to look at the performance of partnership.

We are not evaluating for the good only, but also trying to see what is there (H, LNGO). We do an evaluation, to see are we on track, what did we achieve, what were our challenges, and then we redesign, we redesign our program based on the recommendations of the evaluation, and then plan for another 5 years or so (A, INGO).

7.2 Participatory work for sustainability

A successful project is a project that continues when the donor or implementing organisations withdraws from the project. This was especially the view of the INGOs. When they withdraw the community or people receiving assistance should be able to keep it running and keep it sustainable. A key to make this happen is to let the people in the community feel ownership to the projects through participatory work. One of the local organisations defined participatory work like this:

I think everybody is involved; participating is playing a specific role. Has a key role to play there (H, LNGO).

In order to be able to work participatory the community have to be given knowledge and contribute in the projects. Many NGOs therefore work through local partners like CBOs in order to get the correct information on the demand in the community. It is often easier to be granted funding for projects that are done participatory. In these projects the aim is that the community itself can contribute in filling the gaps and work on the projects. By doing this the people will own the project. If projects are imposed on the community there is a greater challenge of making it sustainable. Participatory work is therefore seen as one path to achieve sustainability.

Together we came up with areas where we thought we could address some of their gaps, not all of them but to help them to solve their gaps in an effort to bring about transformational development (A, INGO).

There is a wish to have projects that are both implemented from the ground and succeeded through the ground. The community is the important player and the projects should be coming from them. A challenge is that most of the NGOs are not based in the communities where they have the projects. They will go to the village or community on inspections, do what they can and then leave.

During one of the fieldtrips visiting an organisation projects we found that neither the community nor the rural council had done their part. The result was that the project had stagnated. The intention with the project was that it should be implemented and fulfilled by the people in the villages together with the rural councils. Everyone had excuses of why the project had stagnated and not reached the targeted goal. I found that it was the local organisation operating as an intermediary that had to push to get the project started up again. This was in order to finish the project they were sponsored to do and work according to the MoU signed with their sponsoring partner. We also visited projects where it was clear that the project was not taken care of by the community with maintaining the standards. These projects were based on participation from the local communities and had a focus on basic needs, which should be in the favour of the community. The community was instead waiting for the organisations to come and fix it. One of the informants from a CBO meant that there is a need of changing the approach and meant the explanation with the lack of sustainability lies with the implementation. Too often the organisations are coming to implement or give out

packages that do not suit the needs in the community, which results in the example explained above

The donors are supposed to link with the people on the ground (C, CBO).

Another challenge is that the NGOs usually are pressed on a time schedule that makes it difficult for them to achieve community participation. The funders or other partners that want the projects to be finished within the contract time are pushing them. This limits the chances of empowering and giving the local community the knowledge of doing the project because of limited time. It seemed to me that the organisations that believed in sustainability were the local organisations, and few of the INGOs. Most of the INGOs meant that as the system are now and with the situation in the country, it is almost impossible to achieve sustainability. Sustainability is a popular concept, but like one of the INGOs expressed is that the term is dysfunctional because the community does not own the project. In most of the cases they have not spent anything on the project. Even though there is an imagination that the projects should be implemented from the ground, there is a challenge to succeed with that.

I am yet to see a project that is sustainable. [...] The challenge is that we don't address the priorities of the people. We come with what we think the local wants. We start the planning at wrong level (J, INGO).

In some cases you do find that the community feel ownership, but the general outcome is that the hand-over strategy is not good. A project can be well intentioned, but you can find that project collapses because of the exit strategies or the lack of interest in the community.

7.2.1 Project ending - what happens when a partner lose their funds

When asking questions about what happens after the funding stops, many of the organisations were in the beginning reluctant in talking about their own projects stopping due to stop in funding. It seemed like they did not want to tell if some of their projects did not fill the requirements of being sustainable or had stopped with the funding. Instead they made excuses on what might have happened with those organisations where the project had stagnated.

Ends? I think they won't have taken care of their sustainability part (M, LINGO).

Someone somewhere would have not played his role (H, LNGO).

The representative from the government on the other hand was quite clear in his speech and meant that when the INGOs withdraw, the project also stops. After discussing during the interviews many of the organisations shared this assumption.

When funding stops the project often stops. There are projects that you see should have been kept on going even though the sponsor program is over and the funding stops (J, INGO).

The informants expressed that the donors rarely stop the funding during a contract period. If the contract is signed for three years, then you are guaranteed funding for those years, unless you break some significant point in the contract. Some INGOs also highlighted that when the organisation is granted an application and they are signing the MoU, it is stated a timeframe for the funding and when the project is supposed to be finished, or run by it self. There is a chance that they wont receive funding after the contract period even though the projects still need to be maintained. The local NGOs here emphasise the importance of having more than one donor in case one of them is loosing their funds, and explained it with that it is not always the organisations fault that the funding stops. This can be regulated from the state or the donors collecting or giving out funds. It can also be affected by things happening in the world like emergencies and crises that will attract many of the organisations and donor countries attention.

7.3 Communication through cooperation horizontally and vertically

In the context of working with aid the organisations are dependent on each other to be able to have successful outcome and achieve their goals in the partnership. There are many organisations involved doing different types of aid work. Most of the local organisations interviewed meant they were good on cooperating horizontal on the local level between each other and the government and that they cooperated vertically with international actors to avoid duplication. Every organisation has their strength that they bring with them into collaboration. The environment the organisations are working in and their partner organisations or donor's quality influences this. Every organisation have their specific way of operating that might be different from other organisations working in the same area (J. M.

Brinkerhoff, 2002; Fowler, 2000). The organisations therefore found that cooperation across these aspects and the different organisations could be a challenge. One organisation said they had regular meetings where they shared the plans and notes with other organisations operating in the same area.

One thing we have realised is that if we don't share our plans we can have a commitment to day for this organisation and maybe tomorrow other organisation comes and then we end up like we own the community but we don't own the community. We want to make sure that whatever we are doing we are actually helping the community and not strangling them. Like making them our own. So at times we do share platforms (A, INGO).

By cooperating with the other organisations in the area they could strengthen the projects and meet different needs in the community. If one organisation had a plan for a project and that activity was the same as another organisation, they could try to reallocate the funds instead of putting all that funding into the same project. Some emphasised that how good the cooperation was depended on the project implementer. It was important that the different organisations were not rivals but work together to help the people.

We cooperate with them, because what we have seen, in the past we used not to cooperate with those guys, so you'll see times you'll be rival between these organisations, so now we are saying it's best we share the ideas. [...] You find some organisations just looking for prestige (H, LNGO).

For the local organisation to talk about cooperation on the international level was more difficult since they were not quite sure how it was working, but many had an assumption that their donor organisations did talk and communicate.

I think there is amongst some, not all. It depends. It's difficult for me to speak for them, but I think they do cooperate amongst themselves (E, LNGO).

As far as I'm concerned at the present moment the different partners or donors are very cooperating. On a global level, that much I'm not quite sure. But you see this EU, UN guys they are the ones that might want to see himself more masculine than the

other. There might be that challenge, but I'm not saying that there's a challenge which is like that (H, LNGO).

The representative from the government meant that the international community was being forced to cooperate. An assumption with the local organisations was therefore that it was important they had a good reputation amongst the international organisations. Because when they apply for funds from the INGOs or international actors they talked amongst themselves to guarantee accountability.

They do network. This is why when you write a proposal they will ask you to find out the last five years who has been your major funding partners (I, LNGO).

There are different forums that contribute to cooperation between aid organisations. I attended one of them, the NGO-forum for Matabeleland, which is a forum for all organisations operating in Matabeleland, both local and international. There are also other types of forums working on the national level, one called the National Association of Non-Governmental Organisations (NANGO), and you also find forums that operate from an international level like OCHA. These forums exist to help the organisations in cooperating and avoiding duplication.

We do share information, like this NGO forum that you were talking about, of course at times we go to the internet, we got their email addresses (H, LNGO).

The forums that were available were trying to keep the organisations updated on what was happening, but from the local organisation interviewed there was limited enthusiasm for that forum. One challenge highlighted was that this forum for Matabeleland was situated in the city Bulawayo. This limited the chances for organisations having their offices out of town in the communities to come in for a meeting. Because of the long distances in Matabeleland the CBOs did not spend money on travelling to a meeting when it could be used to help the projects they were running. Another challenge was that even though it was open for everyone there was a lack of interest to attend from the INGOs and the bigger local organisations.

They already get their funding and don't see the same value of meetings like this (G, OCHA).

Few organisations were represented in the meeting I attended and there were a low attendance of most of the implementing organisations and no INGOs were represented. This limit the chance for cooperation vertically and sharing of challenges in the field.

7.4 Flow of information and understanding of concepts

The local organisations are of the assumption that they have to do the research themselves in order to follow up in what is happening at the international level. This is not seen as something that comes with the partnership. If the local organisations do not do any research themselves, they will not be updated on what is happening, but it was not always easy to get hold of the documents and agendas published on an international level.

You just have to research on our own. You have to surf the Internet, go to the UN-Websites, and get the current issues. Sometimes our donors do let us know that there is this current thing (L, LNGO).

We hear about them through research. We do our own research. But at times you don't get hold of them. But what we use a lot is the standards, the international standards (M, LNGO).

The NGO forum of Matabeleland's purpose was to be a place where organisations could meet and discuss issues concerning their work and also be updated on the different agendas on working with development. OCHA was present in this meeting with a representative, to introduce the Consolidated Appeals Process (CAP) and their objectives for humanitarian and development work in Zimbabwe. In addition to inform the forum, OCHA searched for a committee that could assist in evaluating the challenges faced in Matabeleland for the next edition of CAP. The organisations attending the forum were given out copies of the CAP and some volunteered for the committee. A challenge with these documents, also emphasised by the representative from OCHA, is that most are in English. Even though the official language in Zimbabwe is English many of the smaller organisations and their beneficiaries only speak the local languages or find the academic English often used in these documents too difficult.

That is where issues get lost. Those on the ground do not understand (G, OCHA).

There is a need of simplification for them to understand. This is time demanding and the easiest solution is often skip to the explanation and just do the implementation instead. Also many of the INGOs say it is not their job to describe these concepts but the government's. There is therefore a case of who is responsible for the training.

They spend time on workshops to make them understand, but most of the time they don't. To apply concepts on the grassroots is a big challenge (G, OCHA).

7.4.1 Quest for a common understanding

You find that people on the ground have a different understanding of a concept or have not heard of it. The understanding of the different contexts and concepts therefore varies (Morse & McNamara, 2006). With one organisation I was talking of bilateral and multilateral support when the director asked me to explain what this meant. When asking questions about whether the informants could explain some concepts, most of the CBOs and LNGOs did not know the meaning. Definitions of concepts can also have different meanings from a Zimbabwean perspective to another country's perspective. This can be culturally determined something that was exemplified by one of the LNGOs working with street children. They said they do relate to the UNICEF definition of a child, but they go beyond the definition of a child being between 0-18 years. Instead they say they are working with street children over the age of 18, girls up to 27 years and boys up to 24. This is because of the local conditions and the need of the street children even past 18 years. Another issue was with what they meant was a definitional problem where culture played an important role. This is exemplified with defining how to discipline a child.

I think this has been a huge debate, should we cane the children we are working with. How do we discipline the children? You cane a child. UNICEF will give you a lot of problems with that, but in the African tradition, there is nothing wrong to spank a child (I, LNGO).

This is an example of understanding of a concept across scales and that culture are involved in how concepts are defined. Zimbabwe's way of defining a child can be different from how other countries define the child and their rights. As local organisations they do have to specify

and explain what their views are or how they see the concepts in order to be able to influence the partners abroad.

Lets say I, [the director of the organisation] just take a concept from Norway as it is and want to apply it here, it may not work. I need to appreciate my context and how the rest of the nation will define civil society for instance (A, INGO).

The local organisations emphasise that it is the international organisations duty to work according to their definitions, that are in relation to the Zimbabwean government definitions. Also when you are working with English concepts they need to be adjusted to suit the local context or be explained so that the local people understand it.

You know capacity building is an English word, so maybe when you talk of building they [referring to the people in the community] will think of a structure. It is therefore important to adjust or explain the concepts in order to be clear on what you mean (A, INGO).

This is a challenge when you are partnering with many different organisations. Each country or organisation has their definition or understanding of projects. As explained in the previous chapter one of the CBOs experienced that in cooperation with an INGO. Here there was an issue of definition of the category “homeless”. It appeared that the INGO had another assumption than the CBO about what a homeless person was. This resulted in a conflict between the people in the community and the CBO, where the CBO felt they were abandoning the people that they meant where qualified for being homeless and receive help.

Another example presented in the previous chapter was with the INGO that entered a community to explain what type of projects they intended to implement. Three different programmes were mentioned and given a brief description. After the meeting I asked some of the attendants if they could explain two of the projects, microfinance or cash transfer. None of the participants asked had an understanding of what these projects meant or what they could benefit from it. Instead the ladies were more concerned of explaining me their worries with not being able to feed their children, and their needs of just to get a blanket or my shoes, pointing down on their own torn tennis shoes. In addition to visualise the participants understanding of the project this example also give an insight in the peoples focus on basic

needs in the community. Hearing that they can borrow an amount of money in order to start up a small business is not something they can identify themselves with, when what is actually missing is food for tomorrow. This will be discussed further in the next section.

Some of the organisations did think it was possible to be able to think global and act locally with bringing the principles down to the local level and adapt them there. These organisations meant that there was a need of a common understanding, if not the organisations would end up having strife and confusion.

For us we use those international standards as a guideline, and then we get to the community, the community tells us what is relevant to them. Because some of the things which are written “up there” they don’t apply to the communities (M, LNGO).

There is a challenge implementing the international standards on the ground. As showed in the quote, one of the local organisation use the description “up there” to refer to the international community. This reflects the assumption of someone being over you making decisions of how it is supposed to be where you are. For the international organisations there is a need to adapt to the local context. At the same time they are influenced and guided by their head office that most probably exist in another context. One of the INGOs emphasised that the agendas on the global level does affect the work they are doing in Zimbabwe.

Most is done on an international level – and we have to meet with them – no time for negotiation. We are not equal. You find yourself in a weaker position (B, INGO).

This is the point of view of an international organisations country office. So it is not only the local organisations that feel it can be difficult to relate to the international agendas but also the international organisations. In the way this organisation formulated the issue, they also highlighted that they were under control by someone else and not able to act freely in the local context. They argued that the criteria and strategies formulated on the global level do not always fit into the local context and that the standard put globally is not always what is needed locally. The same goes with the aspect of how to achieve development and the outcome of the projects. It is important to understand the local dynamics and implementing from the ground, but it can be a challenge for the international community to be able to adjust to the local context.

I think what we just need to say is to appreciate that development is not static it's evolving. It's important that when we talk development, let's talk the language of the local community. Let's not prescribe from the different offices that we come from but let's get to the ground and hear it from where the final results of funding goes to so we are not implementing things [...] from Norwegian perspective and you are doing it in Bulawayo, let's understand the dynamics of the community and let's understand the way they perceive development. Not from the way I perceive it, but the way they perceive it. And then together let's marry our concepts, our definitions for the common good of where we want to see the change in development (A, INGO).

Some of the informants highlighted the millennium goals as examples on these agendas and that they often see that the funding that is given is based on strategies like the millennium goals. This organisation focused more on using these goals as a guide instead of seeing them as dictating them what to do. In so way it is easier to adjust the goal to fit into the local agenda and not the other way around.

7.5 Aid efficiency – do more harm than good?

One of the major development approaches, the bottom-up approach, is about empowering the people and actors on the ground in order to give them a feeling of helping themselves. Bottom-up is a way of thinking hierarchical and operate after scale as something that exists. It is also refers to thinking of scale as a ladder where the local s on the bottom and global is on the top (Herod, 2009). All the informants had a focus that the projects were supposed to come from the people on the ground, and then climb up to the international or global where the decisions are made. From a local perspective, working with people on the ground was their solution to an efficient partnership that would result in more efficient aid (D. W. Brinkerhoff & Brinkerhoff, 2004). They meant they were doing everything to work through the communities, involving them in the planning and implementing of the projects, but there was a tendency that the projects was implemented by the bigger organisations or the international organisations. It is not always the doing of the project that is the problem, but the process of deciding which projects to do. This is more controlled by what to get funding for and not what is needed. So if the people receiving are not involved from the beginning it will be difficult to feel the ownership to the projects. In order to achieve sustainability the people receiving aid

are the one who should feel ownership to the projects in order to maintain them when the aid organisations are pulling out.

People always talk about using the bottom-up approach, but it is not easy. I think in practically it, when we read all these development books it all sounds so nice and you know participatory approach and whatever, but I think in reality it's very difficult. Because always the one who is supplying the funds, dictates (L, LNGO).

Through the proposal process and reporting the communities have a chance to influence the international community, but then they also have to tell the truth and not what they think the donor community will hear. A strength emphasised by the local organisations was that it might be easier for them to get the right information from the ground. One of the LNGO states that a way of trying to empower the community could be done through lobbying and advocates, but it was important not to assume when talking to the community. An organisation emphasised that you have to ensure that the information collected, is the right one.

We work with leadership, but we also enjoy working with communities, all of them, because we know in communities there are people who are more clever than others. If you go to leadership at times you get priorities for the leadership, but you don't get priorities for everyone [...] aware of people not being able to go to the meetings. [...] we don't use one source and we conclude (M, LNGO).

7.5.1 From humanitarian aid to development aid

As seen in chapter 2, Zimbabwe is now trapped between a humanitarian and development agenda. This has an influence on the organisations working with aid in Zimbabwe, both with what projects to implement and the partnerships they are involved in. There has been a change from giving out hand-outs to focusing more on food for assets. Some of the former biggest international organisations on food distribution have stopped their programmes in some areas.

[...] been a major shift from humanitarian to sustainability, especially with [mentioned an INGO]. They gave out food before, but now they have changed totally to food for

assets. [...] But then you have those with needs, so how do you distinguish between those who have needs and those that can work for food (J, INGO).

This INGO mention is well known for being one of the biggest actors in Zimbabwe, and one of the leading organisations responding to crisis with food distribution. This is the same organisation mentioned in the previous chapter that presented the projects in the church hall. The people I talked to who attended this meeting came with a presumption that they would get hand-outs because of the reputation this organisation had. The CBO also assumed that, and expressed that most probably none would come to their community kitchen that day. When interviewing this INGO they were determent that they now worked with development not humanitarian issues, and that there was a difference between organisations that were working with hand-outs and organisations working with development. They meant that the challenge of defining and understanding concepts occurs more in organisations working with hand-outs.

We don't distribute food. We are into development. And development is about capacity building, connecting partners, at times just to give them our awareness. We are not doing things for the community, we are doing things with the community [...] If you are development focused, you actually saying I am working together with the community to achieve a community agenda, not a global agenda (A, INGO).

The thought behind it is basically good, but a challenge emphasised was that the organisations are not coordinated when it comes to changing approach. If one organisation wants to change from free hand-outs to food for assets, you might find another organisations working in the same area giving out hand-outs. The CBOs said that this change of approach happened without any warning given to the people on the ground. This makes it very confusing for the people receiving aid or is a part of the programme. A challenge revealed is then about who can actually work for the food and who falls under the criteria of not being able to work.

Some of the informants highlighted that there is a conflict between the government and the needs of the people and the organisations. There is still a humanitarian need in the country and one informant expressed that the policymakers do not see the needs. While the debate is going on a governmental level, the people on the ground are facing the reality, most of them suffering from lack of food or bad health conditions. The organisations are therefore facing a

situation where they are trapped between the needs of the people and the governmental agenda. The risk is that if they do not work in line with the government they might end up being banished from the country (N, GoZ).

There are humanitarian needs wherever we go, but the government has put a development agenda – which stops us (G, OCHA).

This quotation shows that the country still face acute vulnerability. The change of agenda has an influence on the humanitarian programmes that is under pressure from the local government. This influences the partnerships between the actors, what projects are initiated and the outcome of the partnership.

7.5.2 Still a need for basic needs

If the aid system is not properly managed, many of the informants stated that aid would do more harm than good. In a country like Zimbabwe the crisis have been more or less characterized as being humanitarian for the last decade. This has influenced the aid that has been given to Zimbabwe and been a challenge for a country going from being a granary to being dependent on food aid. People in Zimbabwe are used to live on a day-to-day basis, not thinking of what will happen tomorrow. They are born into a country where there is a thought in some areas that if you get in line you will receive food.

People look for instant cash – not sustainability (G, OCHA).

This is something that has been implemented the last decade because of the socio-economic and political situation and is not something that can be changed over night. People are concerned how they can get food for their children today or tomorrow, and not how to benefit from a project in five year time. The philosophy is not long-term with the people.

People live day to day. Not next week. People grow up under these contexts. Most have been messed up with donors (J, INGO).

The local organisation had an assumption that when the food aid started the communities were open for receiving help. Not just hand-outs, but help to continue their work or

production, but they were not given the chance. Even now, some of the local organisation feels that the community is not seen and are not empowered to get things back on their feet by they own. Instead there are people coming from the outside telling them what to do and how to do it.

What I've seen is that, as much as the aid has been so appreciated and alleviated suffering, I think most recipient view it as a permanent thing, they don't think they actually can do something on their own. This generation for example in Zimbabwe the past ten years, the kids have grown up within this space of time all they knew is that you have to go on an aid list in order to get food (L, LNGO).

A challenge here is that there are cases where you can find people double tipping, meaning they get funding from more than one organisation (B, INGO).

Because you find you can go into some ones house in the rural areas and you find maize bags; this one came from [an INGO], this one came from [an INGO], this one came from; so why should I go and work (L, LNGO).

Many informants were determent that they did not become aid recipient over night. They used to be self-sufficient and people were brought up knowing they had to work to live. They had to go to the field and plant and harvest in order to get food.

Organisations have led to laciness and poverty. And you will also find that you can get the wrong information where people will pretend that they are poor like the others to fit into the criteria. The aid creates dependency (J, INGO).

Hand-outs are fine when it is critical, but when it becomes a way of life that every single year whether rain or no rain people get lacy and it creates dependency. That combination of relief and development is critical (L, LNGO).

Some organisations did mean that the system was now going in the right direction with focusing more on development. They meant it was positive that people had to do something for the community or household in order to be given aid, but the challenge still is that the system is unfair. There are different needs and amounts in a household, and they experience that households are cheating in order to receive more aid. One local organisations meant that

it was important to look beyond what they saw was happening. For example if you go to a school and see children fainting, go to their homes and see what is eaten at home, and link it up with food insecurity and contribute to farming at home.

If you succeed on the household level, no aid is needed (M, LNGO).

8 Concluding remarks

Partnership has been a guiding idea of the perfect relationship between organisations and actors involved in third world development. The ideas behind introducing partnership was that it should be based on equality and mutual accountability, and signal an alliance instead of dependence between development actors. By partnering the organisations was supposed to increase the efficiency of performance of the aid projects and programmes and limit the power-based relations (J. M. Brinkerhoff, 2002; Crawford, 2003; Fowler, 2000).

Partnership between development actors exists inside and across different geographical scales. This study is about how the development actors work in partnerships and how they operate and manoeuvre across the different scales in order to become partners and start up projects. A focus has been on the influence power has on the process of partnering and choices made. This thesis is based on fieldwork conducted in Bulawayo, Zimbabwe in September and October 2010. Zimbabwe has been influenced by political and economical crises the last decade that have had an influence on the civil society and NGOs operating in Zimbabwe. The civil society is an important actor in the society and a recognised player in development, but in the political environment in Zimbabwe the civil society is seen as a threat to the state by the president and the government.

Qualitative methods were used to gain information about the topic and answers to my questions. During the fieldwork interviews were the main method for collecting data. The organisations interviewed were asked questions about their organisation and how they worked in regarded partnerships. More deeper they were talking about their partners and donors, how they become partners, how they chose projects, write proposals and reports, and the challenges they are experiencing.

This chapter draws a line between the chapters in this thesis, and summarises the main findings and presents concluding remarks to the research questions. My main research question for this thesis was:

How are partnerships between development actors practiced and understood in Bulawayo, Zimbabwe?

In order to answer this I asked three questions:

How do the different actors understand their role and what are the structures behind becoming partners?

How does partnership influence the choice of a program or project?

In what ways do partner-organisations relate to the given agendas and criteria?

In the following sections I will present my findings according to these questions. After a summary of my findings this chapter will end with suggestions to further research.

8.1 Summary of findings

In this thesis I have discussed some of the processes that shape partnerships between development actors working in Bulawayo. An aim was to look at the processes behind implementation of projects through different stages and how criteria influenced the organisations choices. Spread over different scales there is a choice of menu.

My starting point for the analysis of data was Morse and McNamara's (2006) four dimensions of power, discourse, interdependence and function/performance. Throughout the analysis of the data material power, together with scale, emerged as the main dimension and cross-cutting issues. Morse and McNamara's three other dimensions were evident in many aspects in the material and were used interchangeably in the analysis, together with other components of studying partnerships.

As I have shown in this thesis, a main finding is that the four dimensions of Morse and McNamara manifest themselves with varying force depending on the scale the organisations are on. For example the higher you climb on the rung the more important is performance that contributes in shaping the organisation's position and influence. But what I saw was lacking in Morse and McNamara's analytical framework was the importance of context and scale and how this influenced the partnerships. Morse and McNamara have used their analytical framework to study organisations over time. My fieldwork was time limited, which gave me another basis point. I am therefore not in a position to focus on the longer-term relationships other than what the information my informants gave me. My privilege with the fieldwork was that I was given a chance to interview 27 representatives from different

organisations on different scales, which demanded another perspective on the complex picture.

8.1.1 Structure behind partnerships; the development actors different roles

In chapter 6 I gave a presentation on how the organisations understood and described their role and position. The main focus in this chapter was to see how the development actors placed themselves in relations to others and what influence this had when entering partnership. To describe their role, location was an important factor. If the organisations had their offices in the community or field where they worked, then they were a CBO. In addition to location, whether they were registered with the state and the organisations' size and scope contributed to the understanding of how they were defined. The definition of the organisations was an important aspect because this is the basis on how they become partners and the fundament for the dynamics in the partnerships.

An interesting aspect was how the organisations placed themselves within a hierarchy at the same time as they all were striving to be local. The organisations interviewed related to an idealist way of thinking scale as something that exists and defined them as being a local organisation or an international (Herod, 2009). The intermediary organisations had often difficulties placing themselves in the chain since they could have many different roles, for example both being a donor and a receiver on the same project. So by partnering and changing roles the organisations also contributes in shaping the scale. What happens on the ground is produced through the global and national. Do they become partners based on equality or mutuality? Here power is an important aspect, and is also related to where on the scale the organisations mean they are or the size and scope. The bigger organisation, the more power and the higher up the rungs on the ladder, the more power. The organisations on all scales agreed that it was difficult to achieve fully mutual and cooperative relations in partnerships, especially between a community based organisation and a donor, because it is the one with the money that will be in control and has the power.

When introducing partnership the term “partner” was applied to organisations and was meant to replace terms like donor and beneficiaries and diminish the inequality that lies in these terms. What I experienced was that even though they wanted a change of approach to limit the feeling of being unequal, this was more for the international actors cause than the local

partners. Especially from the INGOs there was a wish to be called partner and not a donor. This indicates that the use of donor is negatively loaded. If one is referred to as donor it means someone that is above looking down. But for the local organisations they still feel that there has been no change and still apply the name donor to the partner that is above – they still feel the need to be compliant. This indicates how much power there is in these concepts that are applied. By using partner there is a view that the existing power diminish.

The CBOs feel they are being used by the bigger organisations that are asking them to do the work with mapping of what is needed in the area. They are told to do the dirty work on the ground and then the bigger organisations located in the cities can use that information in writing their proposals and get funding, not the CBOs. The LINGO for example get funding to start up projects through the CBO and get the entire acknowledgement by the donor or INGO. The CBOs also emphasise the bigger organisations, especially the INGOs use of money. They stay in luxury hotels and are driving fancy cars that would be enough to help a whole community.

8.1.2 Priorities and choices

Partnership was introduced as a more efficient way of doing development by using local partners. The assumption was that it is easier to work efficiently and reach the targets and objectives by working through partners. But who really decides what projects to be implemented?

When international actors are searching for partners there is a process of writing proposals or approaching organisations. The international actors present the aspects they are searching for and their aims in order to see if the local organisations fit into these criteria. Aid comes with a string of administrative procedures and requirements for appraising, monitoring and reporting that most of the time tends to be different from donor to donor.

One of the biggest challenges with these partnerships is related to the criteria that follow when partnering. When wanting to start up a project, the organisations call for proposals. Already on this stage the type of project is set by the one giving out the fund. The one calling for proposals have predetermined projects or areas to fund and have certain criteria on what

the proposal should include. The greater the contribution is, the more influence the donor has on how the funds are allocated and on the conditions that are given.

That means that some organisations are changing their values, strategies, objectives or project outline to fit into the proposal. There is a key for writing a good proposal, and when you find it, you will get funded. Some organisations therefore have people just working on writing good proposals. This is frustrating for the smaller organisations that don't have the capacity or the money to write good proposals, and ends up in a bad circle never receiving anything.

This previous chapter ends with a discussion whether the partnership can be equal, but, as the system is now, that is a challenge. Whether it is about type of project, the extent of the project, how to write proposals, what to write for and also who is benefitting, those with the money decide. While the LNGOs and INGOs are talking about how they are working with the ground-level and how important it is that the projects and initiatives come from the community itself to be able to achieve sustainability, they are still controlled by criteria on how it should be done. The organisations are tied up by agendas put on a higher scale, and are not free to choose what type of projects they want to initiate. This implicates a tendency of implementing mainstream projects, because those are the projects easy to get funding for. The power here lies with the one with the funds and not the recipient.

As discussed in this section the power lies with the money. The one with the money decides what should be on the agenda. But when partnering, each organisation has their strength and have a role to play in the partnership. If there were no needs in the community or if the local organisations don't have a project, the INGOs or donors won't have anything to do. So they are dependent on projects coming from the ground. Looked at it that way the local organisations could have had more power if they came together and decided; "we only receive money for this because this is what is needed". Instead they are changing their projects to fit into the donor's criteria. If the local organisations don't accept the money then the donor would have to change their approaches because they need to sponsor projects to keep their business running.

The scale metaphors (Herod, 2009) introduced in chapter 3 helps to visualise the scales that the organisations are operating on. The assumption amongst most of the informants was that there is a hierarchical system where the global is over the national, as with the ladder

metaphor. The other metaphor, the concentric circle, has a different basis where the scales encompass each other. When thinking of the ladder metaphor there is more power the higher you get when climbing the rungs. With the circles the power can be found in the inner circle. Through the process of partnering and when the organisations are cooperating the power relations that exist between them influence them. Almost all organisations highlighted that it was the bigger organisations that had the most power, whilst the local was the smallest inner circle. But it can also be looked at in a different way; by thinking that without the local it would not be any global. I will visualise this with thinking of throwing a rock, which will represent the money, into the water. In order to create the other circles, the rock has to hit the water. Where the rock hits will be the inner circle, representing the local. If the inner circle does not exist there will not be any outer circle. The local is the inner circle and has the opportunity to influence the global. The international organisations are dependent on that the local will receive the money in order to start up the project. Power is therefore not only going from the global to the local, the local has the power to influence the international organisation. A problem is that the local organisations seem to consider themselves as small and incapable to change the system, even though that is what they strive for.

8.1.3 Deceptive or indicative – how to relate to the criteria and agendas

When it came to reporting and evaluation the different organisations on the different scales had almost the same perception on how it was done. They report from the field and upwards to the implementing partner and funder. How often they reported depended on the receiving part. In general the reporting was done more frequent lower in the system than higher. When it came to the field, they reported almost every month, while the international donor just wanted an annual report. This indicates that there is an assumption of the organisations higher up in the system being more accountable. As with the proposals also the reports come with guidelines on how it is supposed to be done. Therefore it seems like it is predetermined what should be written in these reports, rather than reporting what was actually happening. For the local organisations the aim was to produce reports that the partner or funder would appreciate, even though this meant that it might not be exactly what had happened in the field. Writing good reports increases the chances of receiving additional funding.

Working through local partners is also seen as a contribution to work participatory with the communities, and then easier achieve sustainability. For many of the informants it seemed

that a goal with their projects was that it should be sustainable, so when an organisation stop a project, the community should take over. When the project time ends and the organisation loose its funds, the question of what would happen with the project occurs. It was difficult to get clear answers the direct impact this had on the organisations, but their assumption were that when the funding stops the projects stops, and as expressed by one of the INGOs: “I am yet to see a project that is sustainable” (J).

A challenge when operating across different scales, like these organisations do, is the different understanding of concepts and flow of information. There are many steps before the information reaches it targets, and on the way, assumptions might have changed. But the informants did not agree on who was responsible for the training. Some meant it was the government, other the international actors like the UN or the INGOs working direct with the local organisations or that the local organisations should do their own research. It was difficult for the CBOs and the people in the communities to follow the agendas and principles on the higher levels. Here the choice of language on the report also implicates the power relations. Not all the local organisations are fluent in English, even though it is the official language. For the population being a part of the project, use of bureaucratic concepts can be misleading. This is a challenge for the organisations wanting to implement a project. An assumption of what a homeless person is can be different from the people in the communities and the international donor giving. Some of the projects implemented might because of this, not be suitable for the community but for the donor.

There has been a change from humanitarian aid to development work in Zimbabwe, introduced by the government. This sudden change of agenda has influenced the projects initiated by the organisations, but as experienced during one of my field visits, the people in the communities are not ready for it. Their main concern was how to get food on the table tomorrow, not how to benefit from a project in two years time. “Why talk of microfinance when I need food for my kids today?” A challenge though, emphasised by the local organisations, are that the communities and the people have been spoiled after receiving too much hand-outs over the years. The generation growing up now are being lacy just living on free hand-outs from different organisations. This indicates that the situation in Zimbabwe is complex, and that there is a need for changing approach. What might be the challenge is to still contribute with basic needs together with implementing more long term projects. Here cooperation between the different actors will be of importance.

8.2 Recommendation for further inquiry

The aid system was by most of the informants characterised as an industry and it is not always easy to see who is benefitting most. Is it the donor agencies, the international organisations, the local actors or is it the recipients? Some of the informants emphasise that there was a tendency that the organisations did their own things and thought about their programmes. Coordination was therefore highlighted as an important step for improving the system. A challenge is to avoid dependency and create sustainability, and that the local actors are empowered - not the offices in the western world who has the money. Some of my informants say the system is too self-centred and that there is a need of networking to make the system more efficient.

Because of the limited time and scope of this thesis, there are still many questions concerning the relations between the development actors that can be asked. Some of these are highlighted under as suggestions for further research:

- In this thesis international institutions and funding governments have been represented through the INGOs, and representatives of the Zimbabwean government and OCHA. It could be interesting to look at what role the funding governments and international institutions are playing in the partnership.
- What is the role of the people in the communities that are involved in the projects and receive assistance? Some were represented through the CBOs and field visits, but it could have been interesting to do research on what power they have to influence the projects that are implemented in their community, and how they see the organisations working.
- Another interesting aspect with these partnerships is the contracts, the MoUs, which they sign when becoming partners. It could have been interesting to study the different MoUs between the different organisations operating, to see if there is a pattern on what is stated in them, and if the criteria changes or are sustainable.
- In this thesis I have been studying the processes behind the implementation of projects initiated through partnerships. It could have been interesting to study how these projects actually are implemented and what decides the division of work and process. Who is involved in the implementation?
- One of the last issues I want to highlight for further research is about who is empowered by working through partners. Some of my informants meant that the aid

system was more like an industry for earning money and become bigger as organisations. So who is really benefitting; is it the local communities that are empowered or are the big organisations becoming even more powerful.

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Appendices

Appendix A: Respondents

Letter applied to the informant in the text	Type of organisation	In partnership with
A	INGO	International donors and partners, and local partners
B	INGO	International donors and partners, and local partners
C	CBO	One donor / partner
D	CBO	Local partner
E	LNGO	Donors and partners
F	CBO	Have had an international partner, now a local partner
G	OCHA	Representative from UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs
H	LNGO	International donors and partners, and communities
I	LNGO	International donors and partners, and communities
J	INGO	International donors and partners, and local partners
K	INGO	International donors and partners, and local partners
L	LNGO	International donors and partners, and communities

M	LNGO	International donors and partners, and communities
N	GoZ	Representative from Government of Zimbabwe

Total of respondents: 14

Divided in: INGO = 4

LNGO = 5

CBO = 3

Other = 2

Appendix B: Interview guides

Appendix I

Interview guide for international organisations and local organisations large in scope and size.

Background information:

Name?

Email?

Phone?

What is the name of the organisation?

When was this organisation established?

Who established it?

Why was the organisation established?

Is this a big organisation?

How is your organisation organized?

How many employees are there?

Of them, how many volunteers?

What do you use as a concept to describe your organisation?

NGO, CBO, CSO etc.

How do you define it? What does it include?

What do you see as a difference between an INGO-NGO-CBO?

How do you get funding for your organisation?

Do you write applications for money?

To whom do you apply for money?

The state? UN – multilaterals? Embassies? Norad, Cida, DFID – bilateral? National NGOs? Other?

Can you describe the process of calling for proposals?

How do you choose which topics or fields you are writing proposals for?

Are some projects more popular than others?

How do you distribute the funds coming in to your field offices?

What are your organisations values? Strategies? Objectives? Constitution?

Have you made them yourselves?

Influenced by what?

What is the background for these values?

What does your organisation work with?

Do you have projects in other countries than Zimbabwe?

What are your projects in Zimbabwe?

What type of projects?

What is the aim or goal with your projects?

How do you define the main concepts related to your type of work?

Where do you have your projects?

Can you describe the area that your field office is working in?

Is there a connection between the area and type of projects?

Do you know of other organisations having the same type of projects in the same area?

What do you use to describe your projects or field of work you are doing related to the field office?

What does that involve?

For example if you are working on HIV/AIDS, food security?

About partnership:

How do you describe your relationship to the field office/local partner in Bulawayo?

Is there a difference between a partner and a donor?

Does your field office/local partner have other partners than your organisation?

From which countries are they? Are they from more than one country?

What kind of organisations are they?

Do you work with in the same field/ with related projects as the other organisations?

Does that affect your relationship?

How would you define your partner(s)?

Are they a NGO, INGO etc.

How did you become partners?

Have you been partners for a long time?

How do you communicate with your partner?

Workshops, talk over the phone, capacity building?

How often do you meet with your partners?

How is those meetings organized?

What is your meeting point?

How do you see the cooperation between the different donors? Do you cooperate?

What do you see as the important resource of your partner? Field office?

In what ways do you think the field office/local partner can influence your organisation?

For example in terms of making priorities, planning the projects?

Telling them what is important to emphasise in the area, what the local needs are?

What are the best ways to implement a project in this area? What the aims of a project should be?

How can you influence your field office?

How do you archive the same understanding of the various concepts? Planning projects? Prioritizing what is important in the project?

What type of reporting do you need from your field office/partner?

How often do you receive reports?

Do you write reports?

How do you evaluate the projects?

During? Or/ And when it is finalized?

What would you see as the main success factors of a project?

What do you mean involves in the word participation?

What do you see is needed to archive efficient aid assistance, in terms of the organisation of how aid is given?

What is needed from the local level? From the international community?

Cooperation between partner organisations? Flow of information?

Appendix II
Additional interview guide for follow-up interviews of international organisations

How do you define partnership?

Is there a difference between partner and donor?

What involves in the concept partnership?

Do you think your understanding is the same on a higher level?

Local level?

What about other concepts + agendas?

How do you relate to them? Like livestock, microfinance?

How do you see your beneficiaries relate to them?

Does the information reach to the ground?

Can you say something about the process from a idea of a project is born till you write the application, get the funding and it is put into real life?

Who decides which projects to write proposals for?

Are some programs more popular than others?

Who decides?

Do you see it is difficult to work participatory?

And archive sustainability?

Is there a difference between humanitarian and development agenda?

What do you think is needed in Zimbabwe?

Appendix III
**Interview guide for community-based organisations, and local
organisations small in scope and size.**

Background information:

What is your name?

Contact details?

What is your job/title in this organisation?

What is the name of the field office/organisation?

When was this office/organisation established?

Who established it?

Why was the organisation established?

Is this a big organisation?

How is your organisation organized?

How many employees are there?

Of them, how many volunteers?

What do you use as a concept to describe your organisation?

NGO, CBO etc.

How do you define it? What does it include?

What do you see as a difference between an INGO – NGO – CBO – Faith based organisation?

What are your organisations values? Strategies? Objectives? Constitution?

Have you made them yourselves?

Influenced by what?

What is the background for these values?

What does this organisation work with?

What are your projects?

What type of projects?

What is the aim or goal with your projects?

How do you define the main concepts related to your type of work?

Where do you have your projects?

Can you describe the area you are working in?

Is there a connection between the area and type of projects?

Do you know of other organisations working with the same? In the same area?

What do you use to describe your projects or field of work?

What type of definitions do you use? For example if you are working with children – how do you define a child? Food Security etc?

What does that involve?

About partnership:

Do you have any partners? Who are they?

Are they the same as your donor organisation?

If no – what is the difference? How do you separate between a donor and a partner?

From which countries are they? Are they from more than one country?

What kind of organisations/institutions are they?

Do you work with in the same field/ with related projects as your partner?

Does that affect your relationship? The way of getting funds, knowledge?

How would you define your partner(s)?

Are they a NGO, INGO, CSO etc.

How did you become partners?

Have you been partners for a long time?

How would you define a partnership? What is a partnership for you?

Is it equal? Bottom-up?

How do you get funding for your organisation?

Do you write applications for money? Proposals?

Who is writing the proposal? Do you get help with the application?

To whom do you apply for money?

The state? UN – multilaterals? Embassies? Norad, Cida, DFID – bilateral? National NGOs? Other?

Can you describe the process?

How do you find out who you can apply for money too?

How do you choose which topics or fields you are writing proposals for?

Which methods do you use to chose?

Is most of the funding for different projects? Or can you choose?

Do you sometimes see that some projects are more popular than other?

Is there more difficult to get funding when you are a small organisations compared to a bigger one?

If yes, what do you think is the reason?

How do you communicate with your partner?

Workshops, talk over the phone, capacity building?

How often do you meet with your partners?

How is those meetings organised?

What is your meeting point?

How do you see the cooperation between the different donors? Do your donors cooperate?

What do you see as the important resource of your partner? Donor?

In what ways do you think you as a local organisation can influence your donor/partner organisation?

For example in terms of making priorities, planning the projects?

Telling them what is important to emphasise in the area, what the local needs are?

What are the best ways to implement a project in this area? What the aims of a project should be?

How do you archive the same understanding of the various concepts?

Planning projects?

Prioritizing what is important in the project?

How do you report to your partner? Donor?

Is there a difference between these two in terms of reporting?

How often do you report?

Can you describe the process?

Are there any criteria you need to follow in order to receive the funding?

How do you evaluate your projects?

During? Or/ And when it is finalized?

Do you do it together with the beneficiaries? Or Donors?

What would you see as the main success factors of a project?

What do you mean involves in the word participation?

What would you say is some of the biggest challenges by being a small organisation?

In terms of working on the ground and relate to the international community?

What do you see is needed to archive efficient aid assistance, in terms of the organisation of how aid is given?

What is needed from the local level? From the international community?

Cooperation between partner organisations? Flow of information?

Appendix IV

Interview guide for the representative from the Government of Zimbabwe and Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs.

Name?

What is your position?

What does your job consist of?

Have you been working in this job for a long time?

Which areas do you cover?

How is this department/office organised? Is it a big office?

What does this department consist of in Zimbabwe?

What are the main objectives for this department/office?

In Zimbabwe as general

In Bulawayo specific

Can you tell me some about the system of aid actors in Bulawayo?

How do you define/categorize the different actors? As INGO – NGO – CBO etc.

At this time, what are the main factors that organisations in Bulawayo are working with?

What are the government priorities when it comes to aid and NGOs?

Are there many INGOs/NGOs working in Bulawayo?

How do you control the number of NGOs coming to work?

How do you control so that the NGOs are not working on the same in the same area?

To start up a project in Bulawayo area, what do you need to do?

Who chose which projects to implement where? Who decide the needs in the community?

What is the memorandum of understanding? What does it include?

How do you communicate with the organisations?

Do you meet with them?

Do they report to you?

How? About what?

What do you see involves in the concept of partnership?

Are you cooperating with international actors? Like UN? Other states? WB? INGOs?

Do you receive development aid from the international community?

Or does most of the aid go through the different NGOs?

If so: are there any principles or agendas you need to follow in order to receive aid from international actors?

Do you have an overview of all donors involved in Zimbabwe?

Do you give out funding to the organisations working in your area?

If yes, what do they need to do in order to get funding?

Do you think the aid that is given is efficient enough?

What do you think are the biggest challenges for organisations operating today?

What do you think should be the organisations main objectives?

Do you think the donors/partners are cooperating together?

What are the main discussions between the local organisations and the donors/partners?