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IN PROPER ORGANIZATION WE TRUST – TRUST IN INTERORGANIZATIONAL AID RELATIONS

Susanna Alexius and Janet Vähämäki

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Innehåll

Foreword by the EBA

Development cooperation is a highly complex endeavour. Policies, strategies and financial allocations are made and decided far from the implementation of programs and activities. A vast number of stakeholders are involved at many nodes in the networks that constitute this cooperation over long distances. Unequal power relations is another common characteristic of this interplay. Governance and steering of development cooperation are, and has for long been, challenging.

Following the recent trend in Swedish public governance, development policy moves along with other policy areas in the direction towards increased 'trust based' management. Based on the idea that professionalism ought to be encouraged, more leeway should be given to staff closer to implementation. If brought to bear, such management may produce better and more relevant results.

However, less is known about how such ideals play out in reality in the field of development cooperation. In particular, how are actors dealing with the high levels of uncertainty that characterise most kinds of development cooperation?

Such questions require wide and in-depth studies. As a first step, this report deals with the early nodes on the cooperation web – those who are mainly placed at the Swedish side. For trust-based management to work in development cooperation, it has to start with trusting relations between the donor and the primary recipients of funding. Hence, the study dwells on the character of relations and interaction between Sida and four kinds of Swedish intermediary organisations whose development cooperation activities are funded by Sida.

The primary intended readers of this study are aid managers at the MFA and Sida. However, I believe the report may be of interest also to a wider audience of actors in the development cooperation field, as well as those interested in the management also of other policy areas and public sectors.

The authors work has been conducted in dialogue with a reference group chaired by Kim Forss, members of the EBA. However, the authors are solely responsible for the content of the report.

Göteborg i september 2020,

Helena Lindholm

List of Abbreviations

AIMS	Associates for International Management Services
DAC	Development Assistance Committee
EBA	Expert Group on Aid Studies
IUL	Internationella Unionen för Livsmedels, - Njutningsmedels- och Lantarbetarförbund
ISP	International Science Programme
KPI	Key Performance Indicators
LFA	Logical Framework Approach
MOPAN	Multilateral Organizational Assessment
NGO	Non Governmental Organization
NPM	New Public Management
OECD	The Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development
RFSU	Riksförbundet för Sexuell Upplysning (The Swedish Federation for Sexual Education)
RBM	Results Based Management
Saco	Sveriges Akademikers Centralorganisation
Sida	Swedish International Development Agency
SEPA	Swedish Environmental Protection Agency
SCB	Statistical Central Bureau
SLU	Sveriges Lantbruksuniversitet
SLSD	Swedish Leadership for Sustainable Development
SPO	Strategic Partner Organization
Unido	United Nations Industrial Development Organization
VIP	Very Important Person

Sammanfattning

Den här studien syftar till att öka vår kunskap om hur biståndsgivare och biståndsmottagare hanterar den osäkra omvärld som det internationella biståndet verkar i. Vilken roll spelar tillit? Vem litar på vem eller vad? Vad kan förklara de tillitsmönster vi ser och vilka konsekvenser har de för organiseringen av bistånd?

New Public Management (NPM) och reformer relaterade till NPM har under senare tid kritiserats allt mer. Som ett svar på denna kritik tillsatte regeringen 2016 en "Tillitsdelegation" som bidragit till att utveckla så kallad tillitsstyrning ämnad för offentlig sektor. Även om biståndssektorn inte varit föremål för Tillitsdelegationens arbete, är det tydligt att idéer om tillitsstyrning och alternativa styrformer röner ett stort intresse även inom biståndssektorn. Denna rapport rymmer empiriska exempel och teoretiska argument som kan bidra till att nyansera den aktuella diskussionen om tillit och tillitsstyrning av biståndet.

Relationer inom biståndssektorn karaktäriseras av tre särskilda omständigheter: distans, ojämlikhet och komplexitet. Samtliga bidrar till upplevd osäkerhet. Tillit kan ses som ett substitut till den förvissning som många aktörer inom det internationella biståndet önskar sig. Det är därför inte förvånande att tillit länge har ansetts vara en framgångsfaktor för biståndsprojekt och en grundläggande förutsättning för goda biståndsrelationer och aktiviteter. Tittar vi närmare på praktiken upptäcker vi dock en paradox: samtidigt som distans, ojämlikhet och komplexitet ökar behovet av tillit, medför dessa förhållanden också utmaningar - inte minst när det gäller mellanmänsklig tillit.

Rapporten visar att aktörer som är involverade i biståndsrelationer försöker lösa eller åtminstone hantera sin upplevda osäkerhet och utmaningar som relaterar till distans, ojämlikhet och komplexitet i relationerna genom att överföra tillit från olika "tillitskällor". I rapporten framhålls att en framträdande tillitskälla är formell organisering. Våra empiriska studier visar att det finns ett inflytelserikt ideal för hur en "riktig organisation" ska se ut och bete sig. Detta ideal om formell organisering tar sig t ex uttryck i

förväntningar om att olika typer av biståndsaktörer ska organisera sig på ett likartat sätt och använda likartade styrverktyg och kontrollstrukturer.

Vår analys antyder också att när distansen, ojämlikheten och komplexiteten är större är möjligheterna till att uppnå förvissning mindre – och behovet av tillit följaktligen större. Men – och här märks paradoxen - när distansen, ojämlikheten och komplexiteten är stor är sannolikheten samtidigt större att aktörer förlitar sig på opersonliga tillitskällor, såsom styrteknologier, organisations-generella strukturer eller processer.

Vilka generella tillitsmönster kan vi se och hur kan dessa förklaras? I rapporten diskuterar vi vilka tillitskällor som föredras av vem och hur dessa tillitskällor används för att föra över tillit till aktörer och deras projekt. Vi undersöker följande nyckelfrågor:

1. Vad är avgörande för om en givare litar, eller inte litar på en mottagare?
2. Vad är avgörande för om en mottagare litar, eller inte litar på en givare?

I vårt empiriska underlag har vi intresserat oss särskilt för organisationers intermediära relationer i så kallade biståndskedjor (något som vi kommer fram till egentligen borde kallas biståndsnät). Vi menar att den klassiska föreställningen om intermediärer som "bara" vidareförmedlar är något missvisande. Många organisationer som vidareförmedlar visar sig snarare spela dubbla roller i sina biståndsnät genom att de både är givare och mottagare av bistånd, både regelsättare och regelföljare, både granskare och granskade. En organisation kan således i ena stunden ha rollen som biståndsgivare och i nästa, rollen som en mottagare. Som mottagare tolkar organisationen vad den behöver göra för att få vidare finansiering. Som givare sätter den regler för nästa aktör i kedjan, fattar beslut om finansiering och följer upp hur det går. Såväl teori som empiri indikerar att dessa sociala roller och hur organisationerna växlar mellan dem, har betydelse för tillitsmönstren i biståndet. Vi behöver därför ägna dem ännu mer forskning och reflektion.

I vår forskningsdesign har vi utgått från Sidas egen kategorisering av aktörsgrupper som förmedlar svenskt bistånd: a) organisationer inom det civila samhället, b) näringslivet, c) svenska myndigheter, d) forskningssamarbete (se www.sida.se). I första ledet befinner sig dessa organisationer alltid i Sverige vilket gjort det lättare att jämföra (vi har hållit avsändarlandet konstant - Sverige, ett högtillitsland. Dessutom är de studerade organisationerna väletablerade). På detta vis har vi kunnat fokusera vår analys på andra tänkbara förklaringar till eventuella skillnader i upplevd tillit. De olika aktörsgrupperna representerar olika institutionella kontexter i samhället; offentlig sektor, marknad, och det civila samhället; alla med olika organisationsformer, ägare, syfte, intressenter och finansiärer.

Vår empiriska ansats tar således sin utgångspunkt i de svenska organisationerna. De flesta av våra illustrativa exempel är också hämtade från organisationer i Sverige. Som ett vidare steg har vi emellertid studerat det vidare biståndsnätet och undersökt givar – mottagarrelationen även hos organisationer längre ut i biståndsnätet. Vårt empiriska underlag omfattar således en rad olika intermediära organisationer, från svenska utrikesdepartementet till slutmottagare i utvecklingsländer. De flesta agerar i såväl givarrollen som mottagarrollen men trots skillnader i härkomst, storlek etc har vi sett stora likheter i hur organisationerna agerar som givare respektive mottagare.

Studien erbjuder ett rikt diskussionsunderlag med såväl teori som illustrativa exempel från en rad fallstudier (även pågående fallstudier) i de fyra aktörsgruppenar. Rapporten avser dock inte till att ge en heltäckande bild av tillitsmönster inom biståndssektorn (då studien är explorativ och vi dessutom avgränsat oss från det bilaterala och multilaterala biståndet). Att studien har en explorativ ansats innebär att den inte bygger på ett stort och representativt urval från varje aktörsgrupp, men att den ändå rymmer rikligt med illustrerande exempel som har ett värde i sig. Att generera lovande hypoteser, vilket är vår främsta ambition med denna rapport, kräver en annan forskningsdesign än den som passar vid hypotestestning. Det säger sig emellertid självt att utan explorativa studier av detta slag skulle finnas långt färre intressanta hypoteser att testa och utveckla.

Empiriska slutsatser om tillitskällor

I rapporten diskuterar vi sju olika tillitskällor som nämnts av intervjupersonerna i de fallstudier som vi genomfört: kontrollsystem och managementteknologier; externa experter och expertis; en exklusiv "VIP-status" som en särskild utvald partner; den institutionella kontexten; tematisk/domänspecifik kunskap; resultat och interpersonella relationer. Våra huvudsakliga slutsatser om dessa tillitskällor är:

Kontrollsystem och managementteknologier

Vi har funnit att biståndsgivare gärna använder sig av kontrollsystem och managementteknologier som the *Logical Framework* som en källa till tillit för att givaren ska kunna lita på mottagare och deras projektetresultat.

För det första har vi sett att det för biståndsmottagare upplevs svårt att vara *utan* en sådan managementteknologi, eftersom det upplevs kunna påverka mottagarens tillitsvärdighet negativt. Att ha och använda sig av en managementteknologi som the *Logical Framework* eller andra kontrollteknologier verkar således bidra till att mottagaren uppfattas som en rationell beslutsfattare, vilket är ett av kännetecknen på att vara en "riktig" formell organisation (se inledningen).

För det andra har vi noterat att det i flera fall funnits en motsägelse mellan ett formellt beslut som en organisation fattar om att lita på (eller att inte lita på) en annan organisation och den informella bedömningen av tillitsvärdigheten som görs av en individuell organisationsrepresentant (t ex en enskild handläggare).

För det tredje, har vi sett att givare och mottagare kan ha olika uppfattningar om värdet av särskilda managementteknologier. Trots att det finns en trend mot mer förenkling och mindre kontroll i förvaltningspolitiken, så har detta visat sig vara svårt att omsätta i praktiken. Vår tentativa förklaring till det är att organisationerna agerar i enlighet med sociala förväntningar som hänger samman med de två sociala rollerna givare respektive mottagare av

biståndsmedel. I sin roll som mottagare kan organisationen ofta kritisera kontrollverktyg medan samma organisation, i sin roll som givare, istället kan uppfatta samma kontrollverktyg som fullt rimligt, nödvändigt och till och med förväntat. Vi menar att detta hjälper till att förklara spridningen av denna typ av teknologier genom biståndsnätet.

För det fjärde har vi i några av fall sett att tillit till ett kontrollsystem eller en managementteknologi har utvecklas över tid. En mottagare kan således lära sig att använda ett system och uppleva nyttan med det, inte minst dess roll i att ge mottagaren legitimitet och högre tillitsvärdighet i givarens ögon.

Externa experter och expertis

Experter och expertkunskap är en viktig komponent i många biståndsrelationer. Att inneha expertis inom ett särskilt område är ett sätt för en mottagare att visa sig duglig. Frågan är bara vilken typ av kunskap som "räknas" och som ger "tillitspoäng"?

För det första, har vi sett att mottagare och givare kan ha olika uppfattningar om värdet av externa experter. Medan givare kan se det som nödvändigt och tillitshöjande att anlita en tredje part, (t ex en konsult) kan mottagarna se dessa tredje parter som ett tecken på misstro.

För det andra, har vi sett att i och med att externa experter ofta bär på historisk information om organisationen och dess relationer och projekt, kan de få ett stort inflytande över verksamheten. Vi har till exempel sett fall då experter drivit agendan om "riktiga" organisationer hårdare än vad givaren kanske annars skulle ha gjort.

För det tredje har vi sett att organisationer i sin roll som mottagare ofta uppskattar analyser av experter som behärskar deras kontext och deras domänspecifika kunskapsområden. Men, flera av mottagarna vi studerat har varit bekymrade då de upplever att sådana lokala och domänspecifika kompetenser kommit att ersattas eller åtminstone värderas lägre än generell managementexpertis. Vi vill dock betona att detta är upplevelser som inte behöver ha saklig

grund. Givare talar oftare om behovet av att kombinera olika typer av kunskaper och kompetenser. Den empiriska frågan är dock om någon typ ändå är överordnad och ger fler "tillitspoäng"?

Särskilt utvalda partners ("VIP-partner")

Givare tenderar att minska riskerna och osäkerheten i sina relationer genom att välja ut och "forma" partners som – då de uppfyllt vissa formella kriterier – vinner en högre tillitsvärdighet i givarens ögon. Organisationer som uppnår denna "VIP-status" uppnås av organisationer som lyckas tillägna sig och uppvisa samtliga av de rationella strukturer, processer etc. som givare önskar se hos en mottagare. Motiven bakom urvalsprodu.ren för utvalda VIP-partners kan vara integritet hos givaren som gärna vill behandla samtliga aktörer lika. En annan förklaring kan vara att givaren vill att marknadsmekanismer ska råda, där givaren är som en avlägsen köpare som inte inte ingår i några närmare, eventuellt problematiska, kontakter med mottagare. En tredje förklaring kan vara att detta görs av effektivitetskäl, och pga utbetalningstrycket inom biståndet, d v s att man vill kanalisera stora mängder biståndsmedel snabbare och mer effektivt. En fjärde förklaring kan vara att det finns ett upplevt behov av att flytta över risker i biståndet, till särskilt betrodda, och i konkurrens utvalda partners.

För det första, har vi sett tecken på att de höga kraven för att uppnå VIP-status verkar gynna stora och finansiellt starka organisationer. Detta innebär i så fall omvänt att mindre organisationer som inte har samma resurser att använda i processen riskeras att slås ut.

För det andra, har vi sett att urvalet av VIP-partner ser olika ut för de fyra studerade aktörsgrupperna. Exempelvis är det UD som direkt väljer ut myndigheter som kan få biståndsmedel genom statsbudgeten medan aktörer inom civilsamhället behöver konkurrera om att få bli så kallade strategiska partner organisationer (SPO).

För det tredje har vi sett indikationer på att skapandet av VIP-partner för olika organisationstyper bidrar till likriktning mellan dem. Med hänsyn till ambitionen om att bevara och främja särarter inom

biståndet är detta en möjlig nackdel. Likriktningen skapas dels genom själva kriterierna för urvalet, dels genom att de som blir utvalda sedan fungerar som förebilder för övriga och därmed utgör en norm för önskade strukturer, beslut m.m.

Den institutionella kontexten

Det talas ofta om att en nyckel till ett framgångsrikt bistånd är samverkan mellan olika typer av aktörer. Genom våra studier av de fyra aktörsgrupperna (myndigheter, näringsliv, civila samhället och universitet) ser vi dock en konflikt inom biståndsfältet med avseende på hur långtgående denna mångfald respekteras och hur.

För det första, trots att vi ser en likriktning mellan aktörerna, genom starka förväntningar om att använda samma typer av kontroll-system, managementteknologier, strukturer och processer, ser vi att det finns olika syn på hur olika aktörer ska eller bör hantera biståndsmedel. Skillnaderna tycks ha sin grund i de olika målen för aktörsgrupperna. Medan svenska civilsamhällsorganisationer ses som vidareförmedlare av biståndsmedel, där medlen i största mån ska hamna hos mottagaren, är målet inom myndighetssamarbetet export av svensk expertkompetens, vilket innebär att medlen ofta stannar hos den svenska myndigheten.

För det andra finns det skillnader mellan aktörsgrupperna när det gäller graden av beroende i relationen till givare. Civilsamhällets aktörer är till exempel ofta mer beroende av biståndsmedel än näringslivets aktörer. Detta kan få implikationer för tilliten. Beroende tenderar att öka osäkerheten, vilket i sin tur ökar behovet av tillit. Men vi har också sett att beroendet i sig ibland kan missförstås som tillit. Mottagare som i hög grad är beroende av biståndsmedel kan, trots att de eventuellt misstror givaren, visa upp en "glättig fasad" av rädsla att förlora biståndsmedlen.

Tematisk/domänspecifik kunskap

Inom biståndet och dess organisering finns ett antagande om att den tematiska kunskapen som innehas av olika mottagardomäner (som

universitet, myndigheter, föreningar eller företag), ska respekteras och skyddas för sitt unika bidrag till biståndet. Men, i motsats till detta antagande, har vi sett indikationer på att givare inte uppskattar eller litar på den domänspecifika kunskapen, åtminstone inte i samma utsträckning som de litar på generell managagement-kunskap.

Resultat

Det talas ofta om att resultat och hur biståndsmedel bidrar till långsiktiga effekter, är det som styr vad biståndsmedel ska allokeras till och vilka aktiviteter som ska genomföras.

Vi har dock, *för det första,* sett exempel på att information om effekter, särskilt de mer komplexa, tonas ner eller till och med ignoreras i bedömningen av tillitsvärdighet. Komplex resultatinformation verkar i dessa fall förvirra snarare än berättiga till en högre legitimitet och tillitsvärdighet.

För det andra, i linje med nyinstitutionell teori har vi sett att verktyg som används för att mäta resultat används som en "proxy" (approximation) eller indikation på verkliga resultat och effekter som man antar kommer att falla ut längre fram. Detta innebär att själva uppvisandet och användandet av resultatverktyget räknas som ett resultat *i sig* och kan bidra till att ge organisationen en högre tillitsvärdighet.

För det tredje, har vi sett en skillnad i "resultatkulturer" mellan de olika institutionella kontexterna vilket kan ge upphov till missförstånd mellan givare och mottagare. Ett exempel på detta är att medan aktörer i näringslivet inte ser ett enskilt möte som ett resultat i sig kan ett möte mycket väl ses som ett resultat *i sig* av aktörer inom civilsamhället.

Interpersonella relationer

I biståndspraktiken fungerar interpersonella relationer ofta som en bidragande tillitskälla, men vi har sett att dessa inte alltid värderas så högt som många kanske antar.

För det första, har vi sett att det finns en tendens hos biståndsaktörer att "gömma" eller tona ner värdet av interpersonella relationer, trots att dessa ofta hjälper till att lösa konflikter och är en nyckel i de interorganisatoriska relationerna.

För det andra har vi sett att givare sällan nämner interpersonella relationer och nyckelindivider som tillitskällor. Detta kan bero på en rädsla för att anses bidra till korruption eller nepotism.

För det tredje verkar det som att närheten till slutmottagaren har betydelse. Ju närmare relation en givare är sin slutmottagare, desto större betydelse tillmäts de interpersonella relationerna.

För det fjärde verkar långvariga relationer mellan individer stödja kontinuitet i tilliten mellan två organisationer.

I vår jämförelse av hur givare och mottagare bedömer tillit ser vi två olika tillitsmönster för de sociala rollerna givare och mottagare som samtliga organisationer i våra fallstudier pendlar emellan. Medan organisationer i givarrollen gärna överför tillit från kontrollsystem och managamentteknologier, externa experter (särskilt med managementkompetens) och utvalda parterorganisationer med särskild VIP-status, ses dessa i mindre grad som viktiga tillitskällor av organisationer i mottagarrollen.

I mottagarrollen förväntar sig organisationer vanligen att deras tillitsvärdighet ska bedömas efter institutionell hemvist och deras tematisk/domänspecifika kompetens samt förståelse av deras komplexa resultat. Men dessa tillitskällor ses generellt som mindre viktiga av organisationer i givarrollen.

Både givare och mottagare är överens om att interpersonella relationer är en otillräcklig tillitskälla som behöver kompletteras med andra källor.

Huvudslutsatser

De två sociala rollerna, givare och mottagare, är avgörande för uppfattningar om styrning som kontroll eller tillit. Vi menar att det inte går att säga att en viss managementteknologi alltid ökar eller

minskar tilliten, utan att detta avgörs av vems perspektiv man ser det ifrån. Vi har sett att organisationer i mottagarrollen ofta anser att det behövs färre kontrollverktyg och mindre tillsyn medan de, när de agerar som givare, gärna vill lägga till fler kontrollverktyg och mer tillsyn. Detta innebär att kontroll och tillsyn tycks öka i biståndskedjorna, från avsändargivaren i Sverige till slutmottagaren i utvecklingsländerna. Kontroll tycks då leda till ännu mer kontroll.

Men, eftersom organisationerna i sina olika roller upplever kontrollen olika, har vi också sett att ökad tillsyn, kontroll och mätning inte alltid leder till mindre tillit, som ofta föreslagits i den populära debatten. Beroende på rollen (givare eller mottagare) men även på den specifika upplevelsen av tillit hos organisationens företrädare, kan samma typ och samma mängd av kontroll eller mätning uppfattas som välkommen eller ovälkommen, nödvändig eller onödig, tillitsskapande eller tillitsminskande.

Medan organisationer i mottagarrollen ofta uppfattar att kontrollen hindrar deras arbete, ser organisationer i givarrollen ofta dessa kontroller som stödjande och ett fullföljande av ansvaret som ligger i rollen. Mottagare som är mer beroende av biståndsmedel, och som inte har resurser att hantera alltför många kontrollverktyg, tycks ha svårare att se kontrollverktygen som tillitsskapande och stödjande.

Avgörande för hur managementteknologier uppfattas är om de introduceras med eller utan förklaring och syfte. En dialog där både givare och mottagare reflekterar över sin respektive roll föreslås i syfte att öka lärandet.

Tillit kan inte beordras; tillit måste förtjänas. Om idén om tillitsstyrning förstås ordagrant, som ett påbud uppifrån om tillit, kommer det inte att fungera. Våra fallstudier visar att tillit är något som upplevs starkt på individnivå. När individens tillitsbedömning går emot organisationens beslut har vi sett att individen ändå gärna försöker tillämpa sin egen bedömning, och därav fortsätter att sätta sin tillit till de tillitskällor som hen själv tror på. Detta betyder att, när en givare till exempel fattar ett formellt beslut att lita på en mottagare, kommer det troligtvis att finnas nyckelindivider hos givaren som ändå inte känner tillit. Dessa individer kan komma att

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forma agerandet gentemot mottagaren och ibland gå på tvärs mot organisationens formella beslut (s k *double agency*).

Vi hävdar att biståndsorganisationer skulle gynnas av att erkänna och värdera betydelsen av interpersonella relationer (även informella sådana) för tillitsbedömningar inom biståndsfältet.

Mångfalds- och likriktningsideal kan komma i konflikt med varandra. Vi har sett att det finns en potentiell konflikt mellan idealet som säger att vi behöver en mångfald av aktörer för att uppnå goda biståndsresultat och idealet som säger att aktörerna behöver likriktas genom att exempelvis ha liknande system som möjliggör jämförelser. Vi hävdar att biståndsorganisationer skulle gynnas av att erkänna och diskutera konflikter mellan dessa två ideal. Detta är viktigt för vår förståelse av de olika typer av resultat som faktiskt produceras inom biståndet.

Vår övergripande slutsats är att den överordnande starka tilliten till "riktiga" organisationer i många fall alltför okritiskt används som indikator (*proxy*) för framtida resultat. En ökad tonvikt vid domänspecifika villkor och kunskaper tror vi är en fruktbar väg framåt.

Summary

The aim of this study is to contribute to our knowledge of how donors and recipients of aid cope with the uncertain world in which development aid takes place. When and how does trust become a substitute for certainty and what makes donors and recipients of aid actually trust one another? What may explain current trust patterns and what are their implications for the organization of aid?

In recent years, management trends associated with New Public Management have been increasingly criticized. As a response to this criticism, in 2016, the Swedish government launched a "Trust Delegation" (Tillitsdelegationen) with interest in "trust based management", which has partly been seen as a response to the NPM criticism. Even though the development aid sector has not formally been targeted by the Trust commission, it is clear that ideas on trust and alternative management styles have spurred a lot of interest and discussion, also in the aid sector. One of the intentions for this study is to bring empirical input and theoretical nuances to this discussion.

Relations in the aid field are characterized by three particular coordination conditions: *distance, inequality and complexity*, which all contribute to perceptions of uncertainty. In an uncertain setting such as that of development aid, trust becomes a precious substitute for the much sought after certainty. Therefore, it is not surprising to find that trust has long been regarded a key component for successful aid projects and a fundamental component for all aid relations, and actions. However, somewhat paradoxically, distance, inequality and complexity also present challenges to interpersonal trust.

In this report we show that actors involved in aid relations attempt to solve or at least handle their uncertainty by *transferring* trust from a range of different *sources of trust*. We argue that a prominent such source is formal organizing following ideal-typical characteristics of what we here call the "proper organization". Our empirical studies indicate that there is a prominent general ideal for how an actor involved in an aid project should be organized. This ideal emphasizes formal organizing and conformity among different

types of organizations and projects, for example in using similar control systems and management technologies.

We conclude that most often actors involved in aid relations try to solve the paradox of distance, inequality and complexity by putting their faith in a range of different sources of trust, where a strong – and dare we say – dominating source of trust is trust in formal organizing and organizations, or structures and processes of "proper" organizations, such as certain management technologies or control structures.

The three field conditions; distance, inequality and complexity, help to determine not only the need for trust to coordinate aid relations, but also *how* trust is assessed, maintained, at times lost and then hopefully restored. Our analysis suggests that the *greater* the distance, inequality and complexity – the *lower* the chances are to achieving certainty, which in turn implies a *greater* need for trust to bridge this gap. However – and somewhat paradoxically: our data also suggests that the *greater* the distance, inequality and complexity, the more likely is trust transference from an *impersonal* source of trust, such as a management technology or a particular legitimate organizational structure or process.

The core of our analysis concerns who trusts whom on what grounds, that is "What makes a certain trustor in the aid field trust a certain trustee?" What are preferred sources of trust and how are they used to transfer trust onto trustees? What general patterns of trust can we identify and how may these be explained? We examine the following key questions:

1. What makes a donor trust a recipient? What makes a donor *not* trust a recipient?
2. What makes a recipient trust a donor? What makes a recipient *not* trust a donor?

In our empirical study we are interested in intermediary organizations in so called aid chains (or as we will later claim: aid nets). In these nets of relations, organizations often play dual roles, being *both* a donor *and* a recipient of aid, *both* a rule-follower *and* a rule-setter, *both* an auditor *and* an auditee. In one situation, the

organization will play the role of the donor, in another, the role of the recipient of aid. As a recipient, the organization interprets what its needs to do in order to receive further financing. As a donor, it regulates what the next actor in line needs to do in order to obtain financing. Theory as well as empirical data suggest that these social roles and how actors switch between them have an impact on trust patterns in aid. We therefore call for more studies as well as practitioner reflection on these issues.

Our research design departs from Sida's categorization of different actor groups who receive Swedish public aid funding; a) civil society organizations b) private sector actors, c) Swedish authorities in the public sector and d) research cooperation (see www.sida.se). The first intermediary in the case organizations studied are thus always located in Sweden, which means that we have been able to keep the aid providing country a constant variable (Sweden, a high trust country). Thereby we have also been able to study whether there are any differences in how trust is experienced inbetween the different actor groups, since the four groups formally have the same amount of rules and requirements. The actor groups represent different *institutional contexts* in society; public sector, market and civil society, all with different organisational forms, owners, purpose, stakeholders and sources of financing.

In our empirical study we have thus departed from the organizations based in Sweden, implying that the majority of our illustrative examples are taken from such Sweden based organisations. As a second step however, we have also studied whether and how the empirical findings are applicable in a few intermediary organizations acting as both donors and recipients in the aid net, i.e. the empirical material covers intermediary organizations from the Ministry of Forein Affairs to final recipients of aid. Interestingly, despite differences in origin, size etc. we have found the social role scipts of the donor and recipient to apply and to be interepreted in a similar fashion by the organizations studied.

Providing "food for thought" on how trust influences aid, the study draws upon theory as well as illustrative examples from case studies (including ongoing case studies) in the four actor groups. However, the report makes no claims to give a fully representative picture of

every donor and recipient involved in the aid nets in development aid. However, we do earnestly believe that the propositions and tentative findings put forth here are well-worth considering. We also welcome further testing and elaboration of our tentative findings by both researchers and practitioners in the field. The reader should bear in mind that exploring to generate promising hypotheses, as we do in this report, is not the same as designing exloratory studies to test such hypotheses on a larger sample. Needless to say though, without exploratory research of this kind, there would be far less interesting hypotheses around to test and elaborate further.

Empirical findings on sources of trust

We discuss seven sources of trust in aid relations: control systems and management technologies; external experts and expertise; the VIP-partner status; the institutional context; thematic and domain specific knowledge; results and interpersonal relations. The sources of trust have been mentioned by the interviewees in our case studies. Our main findings concerning these are listed below:

Control systems and management technologies

Our empirical cases demonstrate that control systems such as the management technology The Logical Framework, is a prominent source of trust from which donors frequently transfer trust onto recipients of aid.

First, we have found that being *without* such a system or technology is generally not a viable option for a recipient, since *not* having one would affect the recipient's assessed trustworthiness negatively. Having and using a management technology is generally seen as a sign that the recipient is a rational decision maker, a core characteristic of a 'proper' organization.

Second, we have noted that there has in several cases been a discrepancy between an organization's formal decision to trust (or not) and the informal trustworthiness assessments made by individual employees of the same organization.

Third, we have found that different social roles (donor or recipient) may explain differences in the perception of a certain control technology. Despite recent calls for simplification and less of control exercise, the tendency seems to be that this is not happening, since the intermediary organizations act according to different scripts in their roles as donors and recipients. While happy to drop and criticize control measures in the role of the recipient, the same organization may perceive the same control measures as very reasonable, necessary and also expected in the role of the donors.

Fourth, in some of the case studies, we have seen that trust in a control system or a management technology has developed over time. A recipient organization might thus both learn to use the technology and find it beneficial, for example to gain legitimacy and trustworthiness from the donor.

External experts and expertise

Experts and expert knowledge play a crucial part in many aid relations and to demonstrate expertise is a means for the recipient organization to demonstrate its ability.

First, we have found that recipients and donors have different perceptions in regard to the value of third parties. While hiring of third parties may be considered necessary and trust enhancing by the donor, the recipients of aid may consider these third party involvements as signs of distrust.

Second, we have seen indications that since external experts are carriers of historical data this may give them influence over the agenda. This means that, with expert involvement, the agenda of the proper organization might have been driven tighter than donors perhaps otherwise would have called for.

Third, we have found that recipients appreciate analyses from experts that are knowledgeable about the recipients' local context and domain specificities. However, a perception among several of the recipients studied is that such more specialized experts are being outnumbered by more general management experts.

Selected partners ("VIP-partners")

Organizations that act in the donor role may attempt to reduce the risks and uncertainties involved in assessing recipients by selecting and "shaping" some so called "VIP partners" into having certain (often similar) qualities, structures, processes etc. An acquired VIP-status often implies less control from the donor. The rationale for creating VIP partners may be *integrity* on the part of the donor – treating all potential recipients *equally*. Another interpretation is the donor's wish to draw on the market mechanism of competition and take on the role of the independent and distant buyer that is not embedded in any problematically close relationships with the recipient representatives. A third interpretation could be that this is done due to the large number of actors in the development aid field, the disbursement pressure, and that VIP-partners are considered as able to channel aid funds quicker and more effectively. A fourth is that this is done with the rationale or the felt need to transfer risks to selected trusted intermediary partners.

First, we have found that the requirements for a VIP-status tend to benefit large and already financially strong organisations. Smaller organizations who do not have resources to invest in this process tend to fall out.

Second, despite ambitions to treat organizations equally, we have found that the VIP *selection* process looks a bit different depending on the actor group. For example, while "VIPs" among public agencies are mainly selected by the MFA, and where a VIP status signifies to receive aid funds directly in their budget, civil society organizations are to *compete* to become so called Strategic Partner Organisation's.

Third, we find that a potential downside of the VIP partner status is that it may contribute further to *isomorphism* (taking on similar form) on the part of recipient organizations. This contradicts with the ambitions that different institutional specificities should be supported and and maintained.

The institutional context

The diversity amongst the four actor groups studied (the agency, the company, the association and the university) is commonly described as a key to successful aid. However, our overarching finding on this theme is an underlying conflict in the field concerning the degree to which this diversity should be respected, and how.

First, despite general control systems, management technologies, structures and processes spreading across the wider aid field, different money norms (still) apply to recipients of different legal forms. The different money norms are based on different aims for the actor groups. For instance, the norm for civil society organisations is that aid money should leave the Swedish organization and to the extent possible be handed over to the final recipients. For support through Swedish agencies the money norm is different. Money should to a large extent stay in Sweden as it is used for exporting Swedish competence or domain specific knowledge to developing countries.

Second, there exists differences inbetween the actor groups' terms of dependency towards the donor. Civil society organizations are for example often more dependent on aid funds than private companies. This has implications for trust patterns. Dependency may call for trust due to the increased uncertainty. But dependency may also be misinterpreted as trust by the counterparty. Highly dependent recipients may distrust donors and still keep up the relation as best they can, for fear of going "out of business".

Thematic and domain specific knowledge

Underlying the official organization of the aid field are assumptions that that specific recipient domains (such as those of universities, agencies, unions and car companies) should be respected and protected for their different kinds of thematic or domain specific knowledge and the value these bring to aid in general. However, on the contrary from what this assumption suggests, we have found indications on that organizations acting in the donor role tend *not* to appreciate and trust in domain specific expertise, at least not to the same degree as general management expertise.

Results

Results, and how aid funds contribute to long term outcomes and impact, are frequently talked about as being the primary factor that determines and steers actions.

First, we have found that *outcome* information, which tends to be more complex, may be toned down or even ignored in processes of trustworthiness assessment. *Complex* results information may then confuse rather than qualify and hence will not result in a higher trust assessment from a donor.

Second, in line with neoinstitial theory, results technologies are often used as "approximations" for actual outcomes and effects. Having the technology in place is then interpreted as a result *in itself* and simply having the technology in place may then grant the organization legitimacy as well as a higher trustworthiness assessment.

Third, there are difference in "results cultures" between the institutional contexts that may give rise to misunderstandings and a lower level of trust in the relation (for example, a meeting may not be considered a result in a corporate context, but may well be a prominent result in a civil society context).

Interpersonal relations

Interpersonal relations often function as sources of trust in aid practice, however, they are officially seen as insufficient and not looked upon as "prominent" enough.

First, we have found a tendency to officially 'hide' or downplay interpersonal relations as sources of trust despite the fact that in parallel with the interorganizational relationships, there are typically several interpersonal relationships between key employees at the donor and recipient organization.

Second, we have seen that donors seldom mention interpersonal relations and key individuals as sources of trust. The reason for this

could be a fear of individual sources contributing to corruption or nepotism.

Third, it seems that the closer a donor gets is to the final recipient, the more value is placed in key individuals and interpersonal relationships as prominent sources of trust.

Fourth, long lasting personal relations may be more likely to create conditions for continued trust-building and trust maintenance.

When comparing how organizations in the donor and recipient roles assess trust, we find that the trust patterns are different for the two main roles (that all of our case organizations alternate between). Whilst donors willingly transfer trust from control systems and management technologies, external experts (in general management) and the VIP status, these are also seen as sources of trust by the recipients, but not to the same degree.

In contrast, whilst recipients expect their trustworthiness to be largely based on their institutional context and domain specific knowledge experience and more complex results, donors do not see these as prominent (enough) sources of trust. Both parties find interpersonal relations to be an insufficient source of trust that needs to be complemented with other sources.

General conclusions

The social roles of donor or recipient contribute to define perceptions of control or trust. We argue that it is *not* the case that a certain control technology *per se* always increases or decreases trust in the relation, but that its perception depends on from who's perspective one looks. In our studied cases, we have found that organizations, in their role as recipient, often perceive that they need less control technologies and oversight, while when they act in the role of a donor, they wish to add on more control measures and oversight. This means that control measures and oversight tend to increase in the aid chains, from the donor on the top of the aid chain to the final recipients. Control may then give rise to even more control.

However, since the organizations, in their different roles experience control differently, **increasing oversight, control technologies and measurements do not always lead to a decrease in trust, as often suggested in popular debate.**

Depending on the role (donor or a recipient) but also the specific experience within the organization the same kind and amount of control technologies may be perceived as welcome or unwelcome, necessary or unnecessary, trust enhancing or as trust deteriorating – depending on the social role (donor or recipient) the organization acts out in a given project or situation. Whereas an organization in the recipient role might experience it as hindering work, organizations in the donor role might experience that the control technologies support work and role-fulfillment. Recipients who are more dependent on aid funds and who don't have resources to handle too many control technologies seem to find it more difficult to see control techonologies as trust enhancing and supporting.

What contributes greatly to explaining how control technologies are experienced is whether they are introduced with or without explanation on the purpose they serve. In addition, a self-reflexive dialogue and understanding of how the donor and recipient roles influence decision making is suggested to add valuable learning.

Trust cannot be mandated; trust has to be earned. The idea of "Trust Based Management", if applied and understood in narrow terms as a mandate coming from the top, is not feasible. Our cases show clearly that trust is something experienced at the individual level, and when the individual trust assessment goes against that made at an organizational or systems level – the individual will likely hang on to its own assessment, hence the sources of trust he/she believes in. For example, whenever a donor takes a formal decision to trust a certatin recipient, we must therefore expect and look out for possible deviation where individual representatives of the donor do not in fact *feel* trust and hence take their chances at *double agency* – that is letting their own decisions and actions depart from a hierarchical decision or order.

We suggest that organizations in the aid field would benefit from acknowledging the actual impact interpersonal relations (including more informal) have on trust assessments in the field.

Watch out for conflicting ideals – diversity and conformity ideals may collide. We have found a potential conflict between the ideal of good results stemming from encouraging a *diversity* amongst actors (actors from different institutional domains, operating in domain specific ways) and the ideal of good results stemming from conformity (actors from different institutional domains, operating in a similar way, shaped by general management knowledge). We suggest that recognising and discussing the conflict that the diversity and conformity ideals may create is important to get an understanding of all the different kinds of results that are being produced. As a core finding – trust in proper organization characteristics is found to act as an uncritical yet prominent approximation of future results. We suggest that putting more emphasis on domain-specific conditions and expertise is a fruitful path forward.

Authors Foreword: Beyond NPM, more emphasis on trust?

Although not always explicitly mentioned by its term, trust has long been an important dimension in Swedish policy documents on development cooperation, ever since the inception of public aid in the 1960's. As shown by Vähämäki (2017), management reforms focusing on trust seem to continuously return, although they might be re-labeled and re-packaged with other concepts. At the time of conducting this study, the Swedish public administration is smitten with "post-New Public Management (NPM)" excitement. Although trust as a core component of social interaction is ever present at different degrees, at the moment, "trust based management" is becoming a new management fashion in public administration, post NPM that has been the dominant regime since the late 1980s (Bringselius, 2018; Hood, 1991; Lapsley & Knutsson, 2016).

In recent years, management trends associated with NPM have been increasingly criticized (Forssell & Westerberg, 2014; Lapsley & Knutsson, 2016; Reuter et al., 2012; Van de Walle, 2010b). It has been claimed that NPM-inspired reforms have had consequences such as an increased focus on short term measurable targets and outputs, increased audit and control practices and too much time allocated to administration. As a consequence, professionals have complained about having less time for their ordinary work practices (Agevall et al., 2017; Bringselius, 2018; Forssell & Westerberg, 2014).

As a response to this criticism and following the Danish example, in 2016, the Swedish government launched a "Trust Delegation" (Tillitsdelegationen), a public commission that presented its main report, interim report and research edited research volume in June 2018 (SOU 2018:47, SOU 2018:48 and Bringselius ed. 2018). Hopes were high that, what many had perceived as an era of "obsessive measurement disorder" (a concept coined by Andrew Natsios, a former Director at USAID, to indicate a situation when organisations become too preoccupied with measurements) would finally come to an end. That now, there would be less rules, less check points and audits, and less emphasis placed on quantitative measurements.

In December 2017, the commission received a second mandate in which it is now commissioned to work together with Swedish agencies that want to implement trust based management and related projects. The definition of Trust based management as specified by the Swedish Trust Delegation is a broad one: "management, culture and ways of working that focus on the purpose of the service and the needs of the citizen, in which every decision-making level takes active steps to stimulate collaboration and a holistic perspective, build trusting relationships and ensure that the employee is able to – and wants and dares to – help the citizen" (Tillitsdelegationen, 2018).

Even though the development aid sector is not formally targeted by the Trust commission[1], it is clear that ideas on trust and alternative management styles (to the criticized NPM regime) are becoming increasingly popular, also within the development aid sector (Group, 2017; Honig, 2018; Shutt, 2016; Vähämäki & Verger, 2019). Initiatives such as Doing Development Differently, The Global Learning for Adaptive Management (GLAM) or Monitoring and Evaluation for Adaptive Management (MEL4AM) have for some years now promoted alternative ways of managing aid. Sida and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs have since 2016 worked on a simplification agenda, aiming to reduce oversight and administrative regulations. As an outcome, in 2017, Sida launched new regulations for aid management in its internal TRAC system, implying that rigid compulsory regulations for standardized formats for performance measurement and control have been removed. In their place, personal judgement on the extent to which an organization can be trusted, is a criterion that is supposed to determine whether and to what degree control measures should be taken (Sida, 2017).

The idea behind this study emerged from the authors involvement in another study funded by the Swedish Research Council, where the purpose is to elaborate on when and how "obsessive measurement disorder" occurs in aid operations. However, when starting out our empirical studies, we found that although some

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[1] The Trust Delegation has limited its work to welfare services in health care, social care and schools, in Sweden (Bringselius, ed. 2018, see also SOU 2018:47).

complained about obsessive measurements, many interviewees preferred to talk to us about what trust and learning means to them. The Trust Delegation has spurred a lot of interest and discussion, also in the aid sector, and our intention was to bring further input and nuances to this continued discussion.

In this report, we do not take sides but rather aim for a holistic view that encourages learning on how different governance mechanisms interact. Both NPM inspired reforms, that often come with results based management (RBM) and trust based management have their pros and cons. Our approach as independent researchers interested in organization and governance is that there are no simple "turn-key-solutions". For example, trust cannot replace RBM – or vice versa. Rather, actual practices (including those in the field of development aid) are characterized by a combination of governance mechanisms and an intricate interplay between trust and control that the empirical cases in this report contribute to shed light on.

With this said, we wish to thank all of our interviewees and other informants for taking the time to reflect and share your experiences with us. Thank you for having the courage to tell it like it is by exploring the gaps between politically correct ideals and actual practices which are typically less clear cut. Thank you for sharing examples from your everyday work life and thereby contributing to our understanding on how trust and control interact in development aid relations. Our hope is that this report will contribute to more pragmatic management reforms, where we do not fully go from one extreme to the next, only because the fashion winds blow in that direction at the moment. We also hope what this report can contribute to an increased understanding and thereby to increased trust between donors and recipients of aid.

Following the Ethical guidelines of the Swedish Research Council, we have kindly asked cited interviewees to read and clarify any misunderstandings on our part. We are utterly thankful to all of you who have taken the time to read drafts and give us valuable feedback that have improved the report. Needless to say, the analyses remain our own.

Last but not least, we wish to thank the EBA for enabling us to write this report. A special thanks goes to the members of the study's reference group – Elliot Stern, Dan Honig, Louise Bringselius and Karin Metell – for your wise and constructive comments that have helped us develop and clarify our arguments. Thanks also to Kim Forss who has chaired the reference group and Lena Johansson de Chateau for coordinating the study at the EBA Secretariat.

PS. A friendly warning may be due. The content of this report may trigger existential concerns. We know that with many readers, the findings and final discussion will instill a sense of relief and recognition. But for others, the very idea that social roles and their taken-for-granted scripts would influence their decision-making – or for that matter – that general management technologies would play a decisive role in determining whether others trust in your organization, may rock the world. Such propositions, although far from new to this report but firmly anchored in the social sciences, may still stir an existential worry and self-reflection, for example related to the meaning of managerial work and one's own agency.

1 Research questions and points of departure

1.1 Constructing proper organizations

Human beings are organizers. We have a unique ability to construct, envision, spread and unite behind very abstract concepts such as "the market" or "the nation". This ability helps us to coordinate a multitude of individuals and resources across vast distances and across time. It also enables us to treat abstract legal constructions of different organizations, such as a company, a university, an association or an agency as real actors of flesh and blood (Harari, 2014). These organizations may be seen as our fictive friends; constructed by us. But at the same time, these organizations also shape us, since we allow them to. We learn and accept to see and act according to their boundaries, wishes and agendas.

Some scholars claim that we now live in a "hyper-organized" world where little is left unorganized (Bromley & Meyer, 2015). And what more; despite the great variety of issues that we organize around (the climate, arts, religion, development aid, sports, health care etc), and the variety of legal forms available (company, public agency, association etc), there are common denominators to be seen. There seems to be a general "standard" when it comes to organizing. In this report, we argue that this standard proves highly relevant, also to understand how organizations come to trust one another in the development aid sector.

So what does this general "standard" for organizing look like? As pointed out by previous research, key components are: clear boundaries and autonomy. Researchers also point out that the ideal is for organizations to not only be clearly separated from others and autonomous in their decisionmaking but also special in some respect. A "proper organization" ought to have a unique identity that is different from others. However, as we will see in this report, this ideal is particularly difficult to turn into practice. The "standard" for organizing also includes formal hierarchy where action is

orchestrated and responsibility concentrated to top management, as well as rational decision making (Brunsson & Sahlin-Andersson, 2000; see figure 1.1 below, adapted from Brunsson & Sahlin-Andersson, 2000 and Bromley & Meyer, 2015).

Figure 1.1 Key characteristics of the "Proper Organization"

- ➢ Clear boundaries
- ➢ Autonomy
- ➢ Sense of uniqueness (unique identity)
- ➢ Hierarchy (concentrates responsibility to top management)
- ➢ Rationality

This general model seems to be robust over time, as a prominent ideal. Despite what we may think of it, it still makes up the core of what is commonly seen as a "Proper Organization", a status which allows our fictive friends, the organizations, to take part center stage as competent actors of the modern world.

The ideal of the Proper Organization dictates that organizations that are part of larger nets or systems, and tightly interwowen and interdependent, must nevertheless at least pretend that there are clear organizational boundaries to be seen, that each contributing actor has a chance of autonomous decision making and that these, including a sense of uniqueness are important for operations. Clearly, these idealized expectations may, for example, prove contra-intuitive and counterproductive (in the sense of suboptimizing) for federations or more loosely organized networks, where legal boundaries may depart from what is perceived as relevant boundaries of every-day work.

Similarly, the ideal of the Proper Organization calls for hierarchical decision making, which, for example, risks to overplay the chances to govern complex intermediary "aid chains" top down. In terms of rationality, different management technologies that call for rationality come and go. The rationality ideal may thus take on different empirical shapes and names, following management and governance fashions (Røvik, 2011). Looking closer, field specific tools such as the Logical Framework used in development aid, express the same kind of general rationalistic ideal (Brunsson, 2006).

Following globalization, the ideal-typical model of the Proper Organization has spread across the globe (Bromley & Meyer, 2015). As will be exemplified in this report, this has resulted in a shift of mind-set and practice, where local domain-specific management technologies and ways of organizing have become less trusted (at least by those at a distance). Despite the still outspoken ideal of uniqueness, this shift has implied that local models have been increasingly exchanged for or complemented with more generally known rationalistic management technologies, which in turn has implied that domain specific knowledge today faces the risk of being valued less than general management knowledge.

This trend is very unfortunate, since both policy-makers (see for e.g. Gov 2002/2003:122[2]) and research (Banks & Hulme, 2014; Richey & Ponte, 2014) have made calls for the need and necessity of domain-specific knowledge for solving complex global problems, i.e. exactly those problems that development aid tries to tackle. A typical example of this trend can be found in chapter 4 of this report, where a locally acknowledged, domain-specific "Stick-man model", used for a long time in development aid through research collaboration, has had to be complemented with more globally known and general ways of governing such as RBM and management technologies such as the Logical Framework.

This does not have to be the end of the world of course, but research shows that there is indeed a risk of so called *mission drift*, where ambitions to balance the general and the domain-specific knowledge and ways of organizing may fail and where general schemes may come to dominate and affect the local core operations in fundamental ways (e g Alexius & Cisneros Örnberg, 2015). When working on this report we have identified a need to acknowledge and discuss the meso-level implications, that is the impact on the

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[2] The Swedish Policy for Global Development (Gov 2002/03:122) states that Global development only can be achieved with a "broad participation of a variety of different actors" (Gov 2002/2003:122 p.54). The policy mentions the need for public sector actors, NGOs, popular movements, private sector actors, local authorities, the education sector and trade union movements, and that all of these have important knowledge and experience to share and an important role to play to achieve equitable and sustainable global development.

variety of institutional contexts and knowledge domains that is not addressed by the ideal of the Proper Organization (which focuses on individual organizations and their characteristics).

1.2   Uncertainty requires trust

It is a well-established fact that complex coordination across distances in time, space and cultural dimensions, involves a great deal of work, and a great deal of uncertainty. However, as is generally the case in complex settings such as that of development aid, uncertainty is seldom embraced and accepted as a condition for operations. Uncertainty is more often collectively frowned upon and treated as a problem to be "solved" (Cyert & March, 1963; Meyer & Rowan, 1977; Pfeffer & Salancik, 2003). A common approach to uncertainty is, of course, to attempt to reduce it in various ways. But when a gap remains between what we wish we knew and what we actually know and are able to predict and control, trust is commonly used to attempt to *bridge* this gap.

In short: in an uncertain setting, such as that of development aid, trust becomes a precious substitute for the much sought after certainty. This is a theoretical point of departure for this study and a motivation for why the uncertain context of development aid is an excellent source for an exploratory study on trust and trust patterns such as this one.

Trust is a necessity for social interaction (Gambetta, 1988). Trust enables relations between individuals and organizations and is a fundamental condition for a well-functioning society with low transaction costs and a strong sense of community (Rothstein, 2003; Trägårdh et al., 2013). In the development aid literature, trust has long been regarded a key component for successful aid projects (see for example Mc Gillivray et al., 2012) and a fundamental component for all aid relations, and actions (Eyben, 2010; Pomerantz, 2004; Swedlund, 2017). Mc Gillivray et al. (2012) argues that trust in the relation between Sweden and the recipient countries is *the* factor that determines whether aid is successful or not. Trust and how to work towards trust has also been part of many aid governing documents and concepts, such as partnership, ownership and mutual

accountability (see Annex 1, see also Kruise (2016), Keijzner (2018) and McGillivray et al. (2016)).

However, there are challenges. In part these stem from the fact that relations in the aid field are characterized by three particular coordination conditions: *distance, inequality and complexity*, which all contribute to perceptions of uncertainty. Actually reaching a state of certainty while facing these conditions is difficult and what more: previous trust research (Korsgaard et al., 2015) has found that it is typically more difficult for individuals to trust one another in situations of perceived distance and inequality (situations characterized by a perceived lack of closeness and mutuality/reciprocity). This presents us with what could be seen as a paradox: a great need for trust in a situation where the conditions for interpersonal trust are poor.

Our argument here is that governance and management of aid projects is a lot about *assessing the trustworthiness* of others. We will show how actors involved in aid relations handle their need for trust by *transferring* trust from a range of different *sources of trust*, where a prominent - and dare we say - dominating source of trust is trust in formal organizing as follows ideal-typical characteristics of the "proper organization" (see figure 1.1 above).

Furthermore, we will show and discuss that donors and recipients of aid tend to relate *differently* to the ideal-typical characteristics of the proper organization.

1.3 Trust under conditions of distance, inequality and complexity: a paradox?

As mentioned above, relations in the aid field are typically characterized by three particular coordination challenges: distance, inequality and complexity. Let us elaborate a little more on these.

DISTANCE. Hewitt et al, (2002) found that it is generally easier to create and maintain a trustful relation with a person or organization based *close* to you than with those at a distance (i.e. persons and organizational representatives with whom you only have

written/telephone contact). Likewise, Farh et al., (1998) notes that the degree of similarity between two persons is likely to support trust. Along these lines, many aid relations involve geographical and cultural distance (Rose-Ackerman, 2001).

In addition, aid relations also typically involve distance over time when aiming for results in the uncertain future, often several decades down the road. The so called "broken feedback loop" in aid further implies that the people for whose benefit aid agencies work are not the same as those from whom their revenues are obtained since they live in different countries with different political constituencies (Martens, 2005).

We find the above perspectives on distance (geographical distance, distance over time) to be the most prominent in the aid literature and its popular discourse. However, distance may be *perceived* even by those at close geographical proximity, since there are many different reasons why we may feel close or distant to others. Examples include perceptions of distance in a personal relationship or family context. Feelings of distance even when seated around the same kitchen table. Or in our case: the same project meeting.

In this study, cultural and social distance in terms of not understanding one another's particular institutional context, social role and domain-specific expertise, prove to have an influence on trust patterns in aid. In this case, even among donors and recipients that are placed in the Swedish context. Hence, simply assuming that intermediary relations in the *same* country or geographical region are characterized by closeness would mean jumping to conclusions that may not hold. Therefore, just as modern anthropology studies tribes and cultures in the context of big companies and cities we must pay more attention to the qualities of intermediary aid relations in our own western countries or geographical region, as these in turn will affect the entire net of relations stretching out to reach final recipients of aid.

INEQUALITY. With its ultimate objective of reducing poverty and inequality in the world, balancing power relations is yet another core challenge. In development aid, one party is typically considered more powerful (often the financier) and the other is considered less

powerful (often the recipient). However, as argued by Swedlund (2017) who has studied the so called development dance and the aid bargaining process between donors and recipients "it takes two to tango". In order for aid delivery to happen, both donors and recipients, are needed.

While the power of the donor may lie in decisions about the funds, the power of the aid recipient lies in that it generally has more knowledge and information about the local context (Pomerantz, 2004). That donors and recipients are dependent on each another, and that every action relies on interpersonal and interorganizational trust is seldom talked about. As will be discussed in this report, the dependency patterns differ. Some recipients are more dependent on their donors than others and some donors are very dependent on their recipients. We therefore cannot simply assume that recipients are always the more vulnerable. Trusting implies risk-taking (see chapter 3), and as our empirical illustrations indicate, there are risks associated with both the donor and recipient roles. In addition, it is worth mentioning that, even when only considering a single country context, recipients vary greatly in terms of how wealthy they are or how they in other ways are more or less dependent on aid funds. Aspects such as race, class, gender, sexual identity may further contribute to perceptions of inequality.

COMPLEXITY. Last but not least, there is ample complexity in the field, both in terms of the kinds of profound problems it aims to amend and the intricate conditioning involved, but also in terms of the large numbers of diverse organizations involved. Many aid projects involve several intermediaries and different types of actors who may not share cultural codes and understanding. They may work together, however, all within their own constituencies, ever-changing value imperatives of aid including own sub-goals and different needs to show organizational performance and to disburse. In aid literature and in discussions, the intermediaries are however often criticized for increasing transaction costs (see for e.g. Sida, 2014). Some argue for an ideal of zero transaction costs, where all aid funds should end up in the hands of the final recipients (Martens, 2005). In this report, we also bring attention to the complexity that derives from horizontal relations, many of them market relations in

the field. Although further studies on this topic are due, our theoretical reasoning and tentative findings clearly indicate that these relations and their added complexity influence trust patterns in aid (see figure 1.3-1.5 below).

1.4 What do donors and recipients trust to bridge the uncertainty gap?

In this report, our primary research interest is to better understand the practical implications of the quest for certainty that is a given agenda for the many individuals and organizations involved in development aid work across the globe. Our point of departure as critical management scholars has been that actually *reaching* a state of certainty in this setting is as unrealistic as it is attractive. We hence treat certainty as a *powerful myth* that greatly influences how aid is organized. We have set out to study how actors involved attempt to close or bridge the gap between this idealized myth of certainty and the practices of aid which, for the most part, are characterized by uncertainty.

Drawing on so called neo-institutional organization theory, we have occupied ourselves with mapping out the ongoing organizing, the constructions and manifestations of the quest for certainty. Hence, this report is partly about the structures and processes set up - often in ceremonial ways – to protect the myth of certainty. But in essence it is even more about a powerful substitute for certainty: trust.

This report consists of two parts. A literature review on trust (chapter 3) and an empirical study (chapter 4). The literature review may very well be read separately. However, it may also be treated as an appendix to the empirical study that makes up the main part of the report.

The aim of this study is to contribute to our knowledge of how donors and recipients of aid cope with the uncertain world in which development aid takes place. What makes donors and recipients of aid trust one another?

As we will argue and empirically illustrate, the three field conditions; distance, inequality and complexity, help to determine not only the need for trust to coordinate aid relations, but also *how* trust is assessed, maintained, at times lost and then hopefully restored. Our analysis suggests that the *greater* the distance, inequality and complexity – the *lower* the chances are to achieve certainty, which in turn implies a *greater* need for trust to bridge this gap. Our data also suggests that the *greater* the distance, inequality and complexity, the more likely is trust transference from an *impersonal* source of trust, such as a management technology or a particular legitimate organizational structure or process.

1.5 Two key roles influence trust patterns: the donor and the recipient

Since language shapes our mind and our thoughts, the words we use to describe our world are crucial (Wittgenstein, 2012). For example, when we hear that an organization is a "donor", this shapes different expectations from when we hear it is a "recipient". In the literature as well as in everyday conversation, organizations involved in aid work are commonly characterized as *either* donors (typically located in so called rich countries in the North) *or* recipients of aid funds (typically located in poor countries in the South). We argue here that this is an unfortunate use of language that risks to confuse us since, in fact, the "donor" and the "recipient" are *social roles* that are taken on by most of the organizations in the aid field. We will come to that in a minute.

The role of the donor has been widely researched and discussed (Gulrajani, 2015; Lancaster, 2008; Martens, 2005). Donors have been argued to operate in environments where they need legitimacy from both international and domestic constituencies, and where their role mainly is to provide aid to poorer countries (Lancaster, 2008). Due to the current aid landscape with donor failure to achieve internationally agreed goals such as the goals in the Paris Declaration and the Millennium Development Goals, shrinking mandates due to shrinking aid budgets and discussions on aid failure, competition from other actors such as commercial organizations, it has been

argued that there is an emerging need for a donor reform and better governance of aid (Gulrajani, 2015).

Compared to the donor role, there is less research on the recipient role. In aid politics and international agreements such as the Paris Declaration on Aid Effectiveness (2005) there is a prominent ideal of "ownership", which in some results-based approaches have been translated to a "hands-off" approach suggesting that it is the recipient who ideally should implement and have the capacities and competencies to implement results agreed upon (Vähämäki and Verger, 2019). Local knowledge and mutual trust are seen as the ideal ways by donors to support recipients, hence it has been argued that donors should delegate authority to so called "front-line workers" (Honig, 2018).

Some scholars have studied the reciprocal relations, and argued that in the so called "development dance", the two main actors have different preferences, and according to Swedlund (2017) they are the following (see figure 1.2 below):

Table 1.2 Preferences of donor/financiers and recipients of aid (from Swedlund, 2017)

	Amount of aid	Technical control	Policy influence
Recipient	Prefers to maximise the amount of aid received	Prefers to maximise the amount of discretionary spending at its disposal	Prefers to minimize donors influence over domestic policy/reforms
Donor/Financier	Prefers to distribute the maximum amount of aid it is authorised to allocate	Prefers to maximise its say over how aid funds are spent (and the ability to involve third parties)	Prefers to maximise its influence over domestic policy/reforms

Hence, in previous research on aid relations, donor and recipients are typically treated as *different* organizations who have different interests, preferences and ways of maximizing their intentions and where the "first level" donor in an "aid chain" has a dominating influence on the rest. A common assumption is thus a *principal-agent relation*, where the donor is seen as the principal that decides what needs to be done and the recipient is seen as the agents who follows and conforms to the decisions made by the principal (donor).

There is also a common conceptualization of a third party, the *intermediary*, as something quite different from donors and recipients. This is for example seen in how Martens (2005) explains that the donors remain the main decision-makers in foreign aid, and that mediation by the intermediaries is necessary because virtually all aid programmes require some agreement from the recipients as well. Likewise, Swedlund (2017) explains that the reason why intermediaries exist in aid is that governments in aid providing countries have different ideas of what goals are than governments in aid recipient countries. The donors are thus often seen as having a separate perception, and often holding a more powerful position than recipients of aid, while the intermediaries are seen as mediators between these two. However, in reality, these common assumptions are too simplified. We will elaborate on this important point in the section below.

1.6   The aid chain and its intermediaries

A point of departure for our research has been an interest in intermediary roles and relations in what is commonly conceptualized as "aid chains" (Wallace et al., 2007), consisting of the numerous organizations involved in funding, coordinating and carrying out aid projects together. Aid is typically delivered in these larger systems with multiple organizations who transfer funds and requirements forward, from one to the next organization, from an initial source of funding to the targeted beneficiaries in the recipient area/s (see figure 1.3 The aid chain).

Figure 1.3 The aid chain: a common, but misleading conceptualization
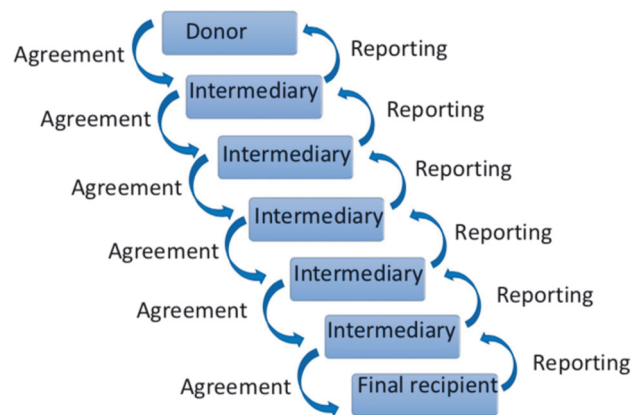
As noted by Boellstorff (2003), the *intermediary*, sometimes called broker (Geertz, 1960; Lewis & Mosse, 2006) or mediator (Martens, 2005) is a fruitful analytical entry-point when aiming to understand relationships between and within larger systems such as that of the aid net and its wider institutional environment. There are many different ways of conceptualizing what an intermediary is and does.

A common understanding is to view the intermediary role as a rather passive one or to treat all intermediaries with suspicion as unnecessary drivers of transaction costs[3], which often is argued for in the growing amount of literature on the ineffectiveness of aid (Burnside & Dollar, 2000; Easterly, 2007; Moyo, 2009). This view implies that intermediaries mainly would have the role of transferring funds from one actor to the next in the aid chain.

In contrast, another perspective is taken by Martens (2005) who argues that transaction costs in aid are necessary since donors and recipients have different preferences on what aid money should

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[3] As an illustration, in 2014, Sida was requested in its appropriation letter to analyze transaction costs in Swedish aid. Sida then conducted a pre-study, where on page 14, a typical formulation is found: "Since funds are usually forwarded from Swedish organizations to partner organizations in other countries the existence of intermediary organizations are usually identified. Estimating the number and layers of such intermediary organizations could be used as a proxy for gross transaction costs".

contribute to, which in turn is caused by the broken feedback loop, i.e. that only donors have political leverage over the decision-making process. According to Martens (2005), intermediaries are thus not only transferring funds but they are constantly mediating between donors' and recipients' interests, or preferences. Martens (2005) argues that the intermediaries act as financial mediators, by channeling funds to the recipients, collecting information on and selecting potential recipients and monitoring the implementation of aid projects.

Similarly, other empirical studies show that the intermediary can take on a rather active role in interpreting, translating and editing information (Czarniawska & Sevón, 1996) before they pass on information, funding or rules. As concluded in the literature on *double agency* (Child and Rodriques, 2003), the intermediary makes a judgement of its own and may act as a filter between a principal and agent, rather than a funnel.

1.7 Plural actorhood: the intermediary is *both* a donor *and* a recipient

The so called intermediaries in aid, are not just mediating in fact. Their position allows for a more diverse and flexible role which is still an under-researched feature that merits further studies (Wallace et al., 2006). To contribute to this end, we here introduce a more complex notion of the intermediary organization as an organization with *plural actorhood* (Lahire, 2011). We propose that the concept of plural actorhood has the potential to update the notion of intermediaries as brokers or mediators by shedding light on an intermediary's ability to perform *several* equally genuine roles (Lahire, 2011).

Aspers (2011) writes about markets and finds that in the stock market, the *same* actor frequently switches between the two roles of the seller and the buyer (Aspers, 2011). In similar terms, we suggest that organizations involved in aid projects frequently switch between the two main roles of the donor and the recipient.

Each organization is thus characterized by a duality, of being *both* a donor *and* a recipient of aid, *both* a rule-follower *and* a rule-setter, *both* an auditor *and* an auditee. In one situation, the organization will play the role of the donor, in another, the role of the recipient of aid. As recipients, they interpret what they need to do in order to receive further financing. As donors they regulate what the next actor in line needs to do in order to obtain financing. What seems unreasonable from the perspective of the rule-following recipient of funds may then seem perfectly reasonable when taking on the position of the rule-setting funder (see empirical findings in chapter 4).

Figure 1.4 The intermediary as a plural actor that switches roles
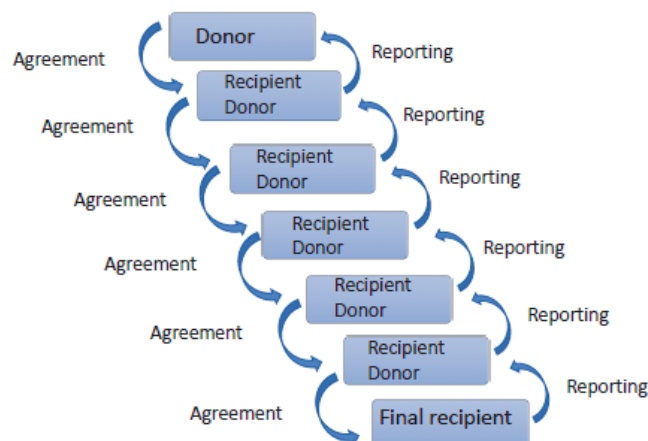
In essence, we believe that the existence of multiple institutionalized "scrips" for appropriate behavior (one for recipients of aid, another for donors), needs to be explored further, both empirically and theoretically. Analyzing the messiness and dynamics of how different sets of intermediary roles play out in large systems, opens up for a more nuanced understanding, not only of intermediaries but also of how complex systems are coordinated – including the role of trust in these systems.

1.8   It is a *net,* not a chain

An important point that has been strengthened by our empirical analysis, is that the aid chain is *not* a chain in fact, but a *net*. As we will go on to demonstrate in more detail, conceptualizing the system as a chain is unfortunate because it is misleading and may hinder us from noticing both vital actors and governance mechanisms at play. While the metaphor of the chain may be an ideal (as seen from a principal-agent point of view), the metaphor of the net offers a better representation of reality.

In our case, the *vertical* relations of the net involve the public aid agency Sida (Swedish International Development Agency), that receives its funds from the Swedish government budget and finances a range of organizations including associations, public agencies, business actors and research institutions. These organizations, typically, do not operate alone but rather collaborate with a range of domestic and foreign organizations (Wallace et al., 2007). And as for the *horizontal* relations of the net; consultants, auditors, evaluators etc. play vital parts, as do researchers and the media (Grafström, 2019).

Figure 1.5 It is a net, not a chain
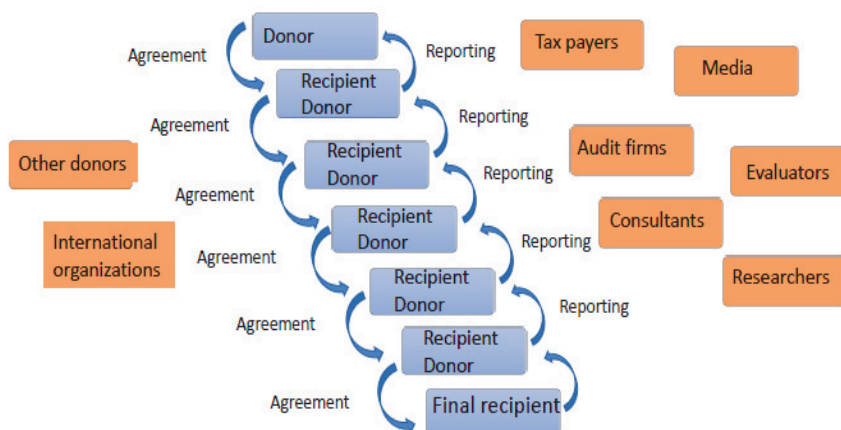
1.9 Sources of Trust - and our research questions

The academic study of trust operates on different levels of analysis, is carried out in different scholarly disciplines and concerns very different types of relations in different conditions. Trust may be analyzed at an interpersonal level (an individual trusting another individual), a systems or institutional level (an individual trusting a generalized system) or an interorganizational level (an organization trusting another organization).

In this study, we are mainly interested in *interorganizational* trust, however, there are also individuals involved. Thus the trustor (the one who trust) and trustee (the one who is trusted by the trustor) may be individuals working for an organization in the aid net.

In order to do full justice to our findings, we use the concept of *sources of trust*. A source is "a place from which something originates or can be obtained". In our study the sources of trust can be things or artefacts such as management technologies, evaluations, organizational structures and processes, or third parties/persons such as management consultants or auditors. Typically, as discussed further in the theory chapter (chapter 3), trust may be transferred from these sources to increase the assessed trustworthiness of a certain trustee. This is illustrated in figure 1.6 below:

Figure 1.6 The role of trust transfers/Sources of trust
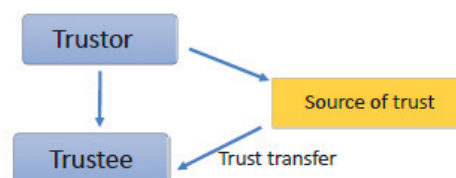
The figure 1.6 illustrates that different sources of trust can support the trust building or trust maintenance process between the trustor and the trustee, which in our case is the donor and/or the recipient organizations in the aid net. Under certain conditions, trust may be

transferred from one or more source of trust to the trustee, to enhance its trustworthiness. This *trust transference* (Bachmann et al., 2015) is based on the premise that trust can be transferred from certain sources of trust to make a discredited (or less credible) party more trustworthy.

A core condition for this to happen is of course that the source of trust is perceived to be valuable by the donor, for example that a control system or some external consultant is thought to strengthen the ability, benevolence or integrity of the trustee organization (see more about these concepts core to the assessments of trustworthiness in chapter 3). The following picture (figure 1.7) illustrates different sources of trust that organizations involved in aid projects may find valuable and use in processes of trust assessment and trust building.

Figure 1.7 Examples of potential sources of trust in the aid net
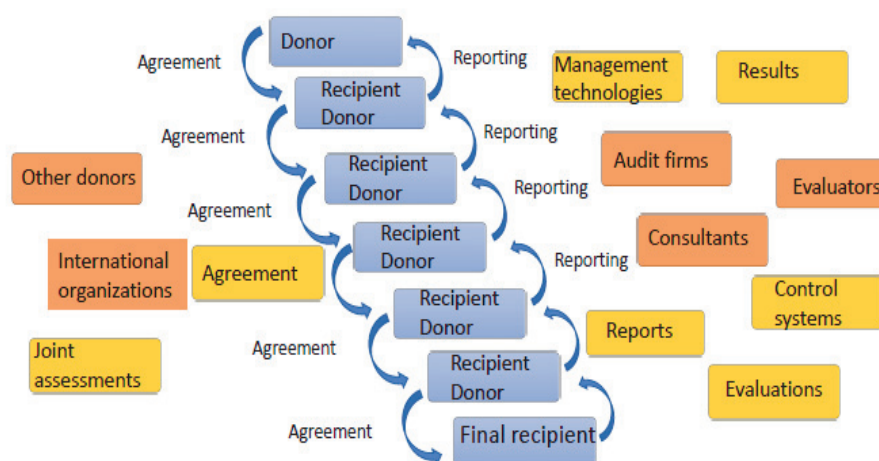
The core of our analysis concerns who trusts whom on what grounds, that is "What makes a certain trustor in the aid field trust a certain trustee?" What are preferred sources of trust and how are they used to transfer trust onto trustees? What general patterns of trust can we identify and how may these be explained?

We will thus examine the following key questions:

- What makes a donor trust a recipient? What makes a donor *not* trust a recipient?
- What makes a recipient trust a donor? What makes a recipient *not* trust a donor?

The rest of this report is organized as follows: In chapter 2 we present the methodology used for the literature review as well as for the empirical case studies on aid relations and trust in selected aid chains. In chapter 3 we present and discuss literature on the predominant theories on the trust building process as well as literature on when and what it is that causes distrust or low trust. We also discuss literature on how trust can be recovered. In chapter 4 we present findings from our case studies. This is followed by a discussion and conclusions in chapter 5.

2 Methodology

2.1 A literature review and insights from empirical case studies

As stated in the introduction, this report consists of two parts that are related but that may also be read separately. In chapter 3 you find a literature review on trust that focuses on trust in interpersonal and interorganizational settings, including how trust has been discussed in the aid literature. We have specifically analyzed how these theories relate to the specific characteristics and challenges in aid work as described in the introduction. We have also paid attention to theories that can shed light on how trust is created, maintained and repaired and the role of trust and distrust in aid nets from the Swedish government and onwards via Sida.

In addition to the literature review, the report also draws on case data collected in related research projects of ours on the management and governance of development aid. Foremost, the report benefits from insights gathered in a number of mainly qualitative case studies, most of which are still ongoing at the time of writing up this report in August 2020. Findings presented and discussed in the report are thus both deducted from theoretical insights, and inducted from empirical data on the governance and management of development aid.

Case studies are generally a well suited methodology to capture the dynamics of organizational life (Eisenhardt, 1989) and tend to be most valuable when the researchers are clear about their initial theoretical position and at the same time remain open for theoretical modifications, based on tentative rounds of case analysis (Otley and Berry, 1994). In explanatory case studies, theory is useful insofar as it enables the researcher to provide convincing explanations to the case practices. If however available theories do not provide adequate explanations, it will be necessary to modify such theory or develop new theory, in explorative modes of analysis (Scapens, 2004).

This report makes no claims to give a fully representative picture of the operations of every donor and recipient involved in the aid nets in development aid. However, we do earnestly believe that the propositions and tentative findings put forth here are well-worth considering. We also welcome further testing and elaborating by both researchers and practitioners in the field. At the time of writing up this report we recently submitted several research applications for further funding that we hope will enable us to test the tentative findings brought forth in this report on a large and representative sample. Meanwhile, readers should bear in mind that the findings presented here, although valid representations of the individual cases, may not be fully representative in every respect of a larger population.

Of course, each empirical excerpts has value in its own right and the views expressed by individual interviewees must be respected. However, the reader should bear in mind that exploring to generate promising hypotheses as we do in this report, is not the same as designing explanatory studies to test such hypotheses on a larger sample. Needless to say though, without exploratory research such as this, there would be far less interesting hypotheses to test and elaborate at the next stage.

2.2 Comparisons between actor groups and their respective aid nets

Empirically, this study draws its main findings from a larger comparative study of the wider relations in the aid nets (financed by the Swedish Research Council), where we departed from four so called "actor groups", as defined by Sida. Empirically, our research design thus departs from Sida's own categorization of the different actor groups who receive Swedish public aid funding; a) civil society organizations b) private sector actors, c) Swedish authorities in the public sector and d) research cooperation (see www.sida.se).

On a macro level, we have studied and compared: the overall governance mechanisms for these four actor groups, i.e. whether they have separate aid allocations, strategies, formal and informal

organization structures, etc. We have also participated in more general events, debates and discussions applicable to all actor group. Moreover, we have interviewed representatives both at Sida and the Ministry for Foreign Affairs working as representatives or responsible managers for the respective actor group.

Although the four actor groups are to follow the same rules and requirements, in Sidas TRAC system the actor groups are somewhat differently governed from the Swedish Government and Sida's point of view. Whereas support to civil society and research cooperation is steered with own strategies and own budget allocations, aid through Swedish agencies and the private sector is governed via other bilateral strategies. However, whereas the strategy governing civil society targets Swedish organizations, the strategy for research cooperation foremost targets research organizations in the global south. For civil society and research cooperation, there exist separate units within Sida that handle this support, whereas the support through the private sector and the Swedish agencies have dedicated Programme Officers and networks of Sida staff.

For each of the actor groups there exist different financing mechanisms and criteria for how to apply for funding. So, although the agreement templates, including performance measurement and other control requirements are formally the same, in practice, each actor group may be given different types of guidance on, for example, how to fill out performance measurement requirements in an application to Sida. There is an ongoing debate amongst the actor groups on whether one or the other is more or less regulated and hence more or less trusted (Carleson, 2017; Resare, 2016).

In addition to more general macro studies of how the different actor groups are governed, we also draw illustrative examples from the following case organizations and their respective aid nets: *The International Science Programme* (ISP) – an example of support through universities, *Union to Union* – examples of support through civil society organizations, *RFSU (The Swedish Foundation for Sexual Education)* – an example of support through civil society organizations, *The Swedish Environmental Protection Agency (SEPA)* – an example of support through Swedish authorities in the public

sector[4], *Volvo* – an example of support through private sector actors. The first intermediary in the case organizations studied is thus located in Sweden, which means that we have been able to keep the aid providing country a constant variable (Sweden, a high trust country). How this condition (a high trust country) affects the aid relations and trust patterns of aid is an interesting topic, however not one that has been the scope of this particular report since such a design would require international comparisons, hence studies of Sida equivalent agencies in other countries and the relations and trust patterns they are involved in.

In our empirical study we have thus departed from the organizations based in Sweden, implying that the majority of our illustrative examples are taken from such Sweden based organisations. As a second step however, we have also studied whether and how the empirical findings are applicable in a few intermediary organizations acting as both donors and recipients in the aid net, i.e. the empirical material covers intermediary organizations from the Ministry of Forein Affairs to final recipients of aid. Interestingly, despite differences in origin, size etc. we have found the social role scipts of the donor and recipient to apply and to be interepreted in a similar fashion by the organizations studied.

As is the case in most research products, having to restrict the number of pages in this report, not all interesting and relevant excerpts from these case studies have been included here, only a selection. However, this selection still provides a substantial number of empirical illustrations of the points made and propositons put forth. Also due to reasons of delimitation, the study does not cover direct bilateral nor multilateral aid, although the case organizations do operate in both bilateral and multilateral aid portfolios. However, the macro studies of the actor groups, combined with the illustrative examples from the case studies have allowed us to get indications on how differences in how trust is experienced inbetween the different actor groups, since the four groups formally have the same amount of rules and requirements.

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[4] In addition, we have studied support through Swedish Chemicals Agency, however there are no examples in this report from this study.

Theoretically, a comparison between actor groups is an interesting point of departure since they represent different *institutional contexts* in society (see figure 2.1 below). The table below depicts a number of differences that we initially expected would have a bearing also on relations and trust patterns.

Table 2.1 Framework with institutional contexts and their organizational ideal-types. Adapted from Sjöstrand (1992), Brunsson (1994), Thornton & Ocasio (2008).

Institutional context	Public sector	Market	Civil society
Organizational form	The public agency	The joint-stock company	The association
Owners/Principals	State (including counties and municipalities)	Shareholders	Members
Purpose	Administration and service of public benefits	Profits and dividends to shareholders	Facilitate actions to reach shared goals
Main stakeholders	Citizens	Customers	Members
Main source of financing	Taxes	Sales	Fees

Table 2.1 draws on Thornton et al.'s (2012) definitions of different institutional orders in society that are associated with the ideal-typical institutional contexts of the public sector, the market, and the civil society. The table also lists a number of core characteristics associated with the institutional logics of the public organization, the joint-stock company, and the association (cf. Sjöstrand 1992, Brunsson 1994). More specifically, the table introduces six dimensions.

The *first dimension* is the institutional order where organizations ideal-typically belong to *either* the public-, the market- or the civil society sector. In reality, however, many organizations blend and combine the logics and structures of two or more sectors (they are hybrid organizations, like our case organization RFSU, see (Alexius & Furusten, 2019).

The *second dimension*, organizational form, refers to the typical institutional logics for – the public agency, the joint-stock company and the association (e.g. Thornton et al. 2012). In its pure form, each institutional logic is expected to represent the kind of organization expected to operate under the respective institutional order in terms of the *logic of appropriateness* (Who am I? What situation am I in? What should a person like me do in a situation like this? (March & Olsen, 1995).

In the *third dimension,* the ownership structures are in focus. In associations members are the owners, whereas shareholders are the owners of private enterprises, and public organizations are owned by the citizens of a nation, municipality or other jurisdiction.

The *fourth dimension*, concerns the ideal-typical organizational purposes. This is highly interesting for the purposes of this report. Are public agencies, companies and civil society organizations honored and trusted for contributing differently to aid?

The *fifth dimension* in the table concerns the main stakeholders. In public organizations, it is expected that citizens are the main stakeholders, while companies are expected to be focused on satisfying their shareholders, and associations their members. In practice, however, many organizations claim that their main stakeholder is the citizenry, that what they do is to serve society at large with ideas, services and products.

Finally, the *sixth dimension* concerns ideal-typical differences in terms of sources of financing, another factor of high relevance for our present study (compare section 4.3.3 on different money norms for recipients from different institutional contexts).The actor groups and the extent to which they are trusted to remain within their institutional context is also interesting since there has, over the past decades, been an increased emphasis on involving a wider range of societal actors (public sector actors, NGOs, popular movements, private sector actors, local authorities, the education sector and trade union movements) in Swedish public aid (Gov 2002/03:122). In the government policy it is argued that the specific competence and knowledge of these actors is necessary and needed to combat development problems. Our empirical question when comparing

the actor groups is thus; in what ways they are trusted for their uniqueness and different competencies, or are they rather trusted when they become similar?

Initially, we chose our cases as examples of organizations from the different empirical domains and institutional contexts, because we thought that we would find a more outspoken variation in trust patterns between the cases that in turn could be explained with reference to these contextual differences. Another motivation for selecting the cases this way was the different political policies that seemed to create different conditions for trust. However, as demonstrated in our findings section (chapter 4) and the following discussion (chapter 5), we found more similarities than differences between the different empirical domains and institutional contexts and hence has to make sense of these findings instead.

2.3   Comparisons between the social roles of donor and recipient

In addition to our interest comparing between actor groups, mainly derived from studies of the first level intermediaries, we have also been keen to capture any differences between donors and recipients of aid.

In our case studies, we initially departed from the first intermediary case organization, with the intention to follow the aid chain all the way to the end recipient (see chapter 1), located in a developing country. In our analysis and our interviews we studied the amount and type of rules and regulations, and how the intermediaries experienced and switched roles in being a recipient, and a donor. In cases when the organizations/interview persons, told us of other actors such as evaluators or consultants as having had a influencial role in the trust relation between their donor or recipient, we followed how trust was posed to these actors, reports, evaluators etc. coming from the side, i.e. the aid net (see chapter 1). This means that we have studied entire aid nets – which often get diversified and more complex the closer to the end recipient they come. Whilst an actor such as Volvo by Sida for example is classified within the actor

group "private sector development", the next intermediary in the Volvo aid chain is Unido (a UN-organization), followed by local municipalities in partner countries such as Uganda.

As stated in the introductory chapter, we departed from a theoretical perspective that led us to be more interested in the *social roles* of "the donor" and "the recipient" than in the organizations "playing" the roles.

We cannot stress it enough: although, for practical reasons, we treat the Swedish government as mainly a "donor", most other actors in the aid net, including Sida and for example Unido, in the Volvo-aid chain, has *dual* roles, acting both as a recipient (from the government/The Ministry for Foreign Affairs) and as a donor. In relation to the Swedish government, Sida is an aid recipient that follows rules and regulations stipulated in its instruction and letter of appropriation. In relation to the next actor in one of the four actor groups however, Sida is a donor who sets the rules and regulations. Focusing on relations in the context of a wider aid net (rather than single case organizations, as described in the introductory chapter) offers an important contribution to the literature.

Following this theoretical insight with its clear empirical relevance, we have also been interested in studying actors in the aid net as *plural actors* (Lahire, 2011) who "switch roles" (Aspers, 2011). We have hence been particularly interested in the so called "role based trust" (Kramer, 1999), i.e. the expectations that lie in the taken-for-granted social scripts that define expected behavior within the roles of a "donor" and "recipient" of aid funding. We are thus interested in the general question of whether the trust patterns differ between the role of a donor or a recipient. But we are also interested in whether the conditions or social scripts for these roles play out differently in different institutional contexts (such as academia or the union movement).

When making the selection of aid chains to study, an important criterion has been that at least two, but preferably more, intermediaries are involved in a certain project and that we are able to gain good access to all or most of the relevant agreements,

contracts and performance reports. In our selection on which actors/artefacts to study in the aid net, we have followed what our interviewees have said they trust (or not) and looked for similar information in the documents.

Our main level of analysis in the report is the *interorganizational level*, i.e. we are interested in the conditions for an organization that takes on the donor role to put trust in an organization that takes on a recipient role, or vice versa. That is, we have been interested in how the organization in its legal person status has decided to trust (or not) and thus establish or continue (or not) a collaboration with another organization.

We have also been interested in studying the relation between the rules, regulations and policies guiding how a certain organization *should* trust, and how the level of individual trust (of for example a program officer) is affected and formed by this formal decision. We thus also offer findings on what the individual employee of an aid organization does when its own trust deviates from the stipulated organizational trust.

2.4   Empirical material and data analysis

In gathering the data, we used a combination of methodological techniques (Schatzman & Strauss, 1973) aiming for a rich so called thick description (Geertz, 1973) of the trust patterns and their underlying conditions. We have analyzed both formal documentation and transcriptions from interviews with key interviewees representing the different organizations of the aid nets.

We have looked at documentation such as contractual requirements including management technologies such as the so called Logical Framework, but also at additional requirements (such as random checks), and we have searched for situations where these artefacts or decisions (for example a decision to contract a third party, such as a consultant), have played a key role for a continued collaboration.

Written documents such as agreements, contracts, e-mail conversations and other project-related texts are valuable to the study as they offer chances to follow and compare how formulations, stipulated conditions and sanctions etc. from Sida are passed on unchanged; or, rather, changed, or perhaps extended, by intermediaries in the aid chain and its wider net. We have conducted 51 interviews with key representatives of the intermediary organizations, foremost with managers who have as their working task to be so called "boundary spanners" (Schilke and Cook, 2013) i.e. who work with the relations to the next intermediary in the aid net. Typically for longer periods of time.

The following table represents categories and number of interviews held. Group interviews are stated separately.

Actor group/ Type of analysis	Public sector	Research cooperation	Civil society	Private sector
Actor group analysis	Sida (1)	Sida (1)	Sida (1)	Sida (3)
Empirical examples	Sida (2) SEPA (2) Group interview: SCB, Boverket, SLU, SEPA (1) Climate Change Department, Uganda (1) University of Harare, Zimbabwe (1) Swedish Chemicals Agency (see Smith &Ringqvist, 2019)	Sida (1) ISP (5) Group interview ISP staff, Uppsala University (1) Makerere University, Uganda (2) National University of Science and Technology, Zimbabwe (2) Uppsala University (1) Consultancy company AIMS (1)	Union to Union (3) Saco (1) Kommunal (1) IUL (2) RFSU (11)	Volvo (1) Representatives for SLSD (2) This is an ongoing case study Secondary recent sources such as Lernborg (2019) has added to our tentative understanding of this sector.
Other interviews	Group interview with officials at MFA (1) Staff at Sida responsible for rules and regulations at Sida (3)			

These semi-structured interviews have all lasted from 1-2 hours. We used a rather broad and open thematic interview guide where our focus was to let the interviewee speak as freely as possible about key topics related to governance and mangement of aid. We asked about perceptions of control and trust and learning and also more generally about the nature of the relations to other organizations, both in the donor and the recipient role. There were questions about the specificities of the actor group to which the organization in question belong, about the intermediary role as such, about popular management technologies, evaluations, contracts and other governance mechanisms. As the study progressed, the interview guide was refined, for example to follow up early findings that indicated that a "switch roles identity" of the intermediaries and a more intricate, interwoven relation between trust and control, but the general topics and focus remained the same.

The over 75 hours of interview time have been transcribed verbatim by a certified transcription firm. We have then coded conditions and keys to understanding how and in which situations sources of trust have functioned as a trust transfer in the intermediary relations. Our core interest has been to understand who trusts whom on what grounds and what general patterns of trust we can we identify as well as how these may be explained. In terms of data validation strategies, access to both interviewees and other sources of verbatim accounts (such as contracts and info on websites) means that the case narrative to a large extent is based on so called low inference descriptors, i.e., verbatim accounts of the interviewees' own views (Johnson, 1997).

The documents, the field notes, and the verbatim transcriptions, along with our own reflections noted after each interview session, were analyzed in several rounds. The data was coded in an abductive mode, that is combining insights from theory and the data at hand (Alvesson & Sköldberg, 2008).

Since the project is a collaboration between two authors, all coding and analyses were first conducted individually by the two authors, after which another round of re-coding and analysis was conducted jointly. In an interpretative mode, a cross-reading of all of the interview transcriptions and field notes was performed by the

authors to tease out analytical patterns and relevant themes. Allowing time between the rounds of analysis provided an opportunity for further reflection, enabling the discovery of new meaningful patterns (Davies & Harré, 1990). Although all of the data collected has been considered in our coding and analyses, only a few sources are referred to in the narrative of the case, to illustrate patterns interpreted as representative for the material as a whole.

Translating this into triangulation strategies to validate our data (Johnson, 1997), we thus used (a) *data triangulation* where we analyzed verbatim transcripts of interviews, written documents, website data, and field notes from participant observations, (b) *methods triangulation* (document studies, interviews, participant observations), and (c) *investigator triangulation*, in the sense of teamwork between two authors in collecting and interpreting the data, and last but not least (d) *theory triangulation*, where we have used multiple theories and perspectives to help interpret and make sense of the data (i.e., such as institutional theory on social roles and scripts, theory on trust formation and theory of governance under conditions of uncertainty and at a distance).

None of the interviewees requested anonymity, and all gave their oral consent to use the interview data in academic publications prior to having the chance to read and comment and citations from their interview. Following the Ethical guidelines of the Swedish Research Council, all cited interviewees have been given the change to read and comment a late draft of the text. These interactions have resulted in a number of minor revisions and valuable clarifications. This *participant feedback* represents another validity-promoting strategy to verify interpretations and extended insight (Johnson 1997). In addition, it goes without saying that the analysis has benefited from *peer review*, where tentative analyses have been presented and discussed with colleagues and in the reference group at EBA. A number of informal, non-recorded but informative conversations, face-to-face or via Zoom, have added further insight and nuance to the findings.

Throughout the research process, the authors have aimed for *reflexivity* in the form of critical self-reflection on our potential biases and predispositions, where having two researchers gather and

analyze the data adds an extra dimension (Otley & Berry, 1994). Employing these kinds of validating strategies in data generation and analysis has been argued to push the exploratory research towards both methodological and theoretical rigor (Eisenhardt, 1989; Stebbins, 2001).

The list of sources of trust that we present in chapter 4 is largely inductively derived, hence based on input from our exploratory (and still ongoing) empirical studies. The list may thus not be complete but at least it covers the sources most frequently referred to by our interviewees (and those mentioned in their project documents that we have studied). Of course there is always the risk that the list of sources of trust suffers from some bias, for example as concerns "ritual content", meaning that interviewees may feel some kind of social pressure or expectations that shape their responses in the interviews. However, if this is the case, the social pressure seems to be evenly distributed across the different local domains and institutional contexts studied – since responses where highly similar across the contexts and cases.

Since we are primarily interested in organizations and institutionalized roles rather than persons, we have deliberately chosen not to publish the names of those interviewed. Stating this clearly to interviewees, we believe that this has further contributed to the open and frank accounts received. Although we have decided to publish the names of the organizations, we hope that the readers will note that the findings indicate that similarities are more pronounced than differences across cases, which makes the individual cases less interesting.

3 Literature on trust

This chapter offers a literature review on trust which can be read separately from the empirical study presented in chapter 4. We have reviewed literature on trust in interpersonal and interorganizational settings, including how trust has been discussed in the aid literature. We have specifically analyzed how the theories relate to the specific characteristics and challenges in aid as described in the introduction.

Some of the main findings in this chapter are:

- A trustor considers three factors in order to assess the trustworthiness of the trustee: the *ability*, the *benevolence* and the *integrity* of the trustee. Levels of trust also depend on the trustor's "*propensity to trust*", i.e. the general willingness or ability to trust others.
- Engaging in a trusting action always implies taking a risk and also being vulnerable. When there is no uncertainty and risk, trust is not needed.
- Both general and more specific conditions in the aid context contribute to determine the role of trust as well as the sources of trust. For example, while management technologies and control systems can enhance trust, they do not always do so.
- Trust is not only a *means* to achieve other ends (for example lower transaction costs). Trust is also an *end* which may be achieved by different means.
- In aid relationships, both the donor and the recipient are dependent on each other. The donor depends on the recipient's knowledge and information on the local context, whereas the recipient depends on financing from the donor. Previous studies have shown that organizations acting in a donor role have greater trust in the recipients than organizations acting in the recipient role have in donors.
- Trust is difficult to re-build if relations have been hampered or betrayed. A trust breach happening at an organisational level typically concerns and affects legitimacy. Trust repair requires consistent positive acts.

3.1   Defining trust

Although there is no universally accepted definition of trust, many scholars depart from Mayer et. al 1995:712 who define trust as:

> The willingness of a party to be vulnerable to the actions of another party based on the expectation that the other party will perform a particular action important to the trustor, irrespective of the ability to monitor or control the party.

Mayer et al.'s (1995) definition stems from studies of interpersonal relations but components of positive expectations as well as the willingness to accept vulnerability, are components in trust definitions also at the interorganizational level. This means that the term "party" may refer to both individuals and organizations. This also implies that another individual (at the individual-individual level) or another organization (at the organization-organization level) will not take advantage of the counterparty's vulnerabilities (Schilke & Cook, 2013).

A well established and accepted model (see figure 1 below) of the trust building process has been developed by Mayer et al. (1995). In this model, trust is built in a relation between a trustor and a trustee, where the trustor assesses the trustworthiness of the trustee.

Figure 2.1 Model of trust. From Mayer et al. 1995.
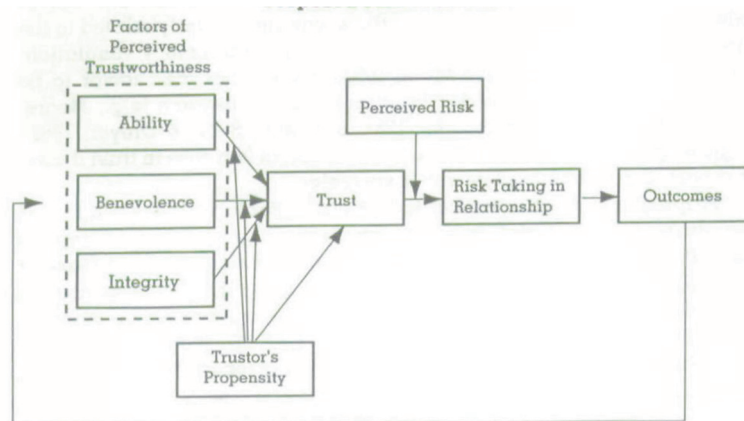
According to Mayer et al. (1995) the trustor considers three factors in order to assess the trustworthiness of the trustee: the ability, the benevolence and the integrity of the trustee.

Ability. Ability is the group of skills, competencies, and characteristics that enable a party to have influence in a certain domain. Trust is however domain specific, meaning that trust only is built on the domain where the trustor assesses positive outcomes of the other party's ability. This means that the trustor could trust a person's ability to, for example, perform analytic tasks but not the same person's ability to interpersonal communication.

Benevolence. Benevolence is the extent to which a trustee is believed to want to do good to the trustor. Benevolence suggests that the trustee has some specific attachment to the trustor, and that the trustee wants to be helpful even though there is not extrinsic reward for being so. In an organisation this could for example mean that an employee/trustee puts organisational goals ahead of individual goals, since he/she believes that the organisation does him/her good.

Integrity. The relationship between integrity and trust involves the trustor's perception that the trustee adheres to a set of principles that the trustor finds acceptable. Assessing integrity involves an assessment of the consistency of the party's past actions, credible communications about the trustee from other parties, belief that the trustee has a strong sense of justice, and the extent to which the party's actions are congruent with his or her words. Integrity could be viewed as the character of the trustee. In an assessment of an organisations integrity one could for example assess whether the organisations treat employees in equal terms.

If a trustee is assessed as high on all three factors (ability, benevolence, integrity), its trustworthiness is perceived as high. However, trustworthiness should be thought of as a continuum, rather than the trustee being either trustworthy or not trustworthy.

Whereas the definition of trust by Mayer et al. (1995) is unidirectional, underscoring the point that trust is a psychological state that originates within the individual, both interpersonal trust

(as well as interorganizational trust) always occurs within a dyadic context, where parties voluntarily interact in ways that mutually benefit each other. Both parties in a relationship thus simultaneously 1) gauge the degree to which they can trust the other party to take risks in the relationship and 2) demonstrate their trustworthiness by being a reliable and beneficent partner. Trust is thus a complex reciprocal phenomenon wherein each party is mutually influenced by the other's cooperation and trust (Krasikova & LeBreton, 2012).

We believe that Mayer's model and the assessment of Ability, Benevolence and Integrity can well be applied also to the development aid context, both when the donor assesses the trustworthiness of a recipient and when the recipient assesses the trustworthiness of the donor.

3.2 Trusting means taking on risk and being vulnerable

Trust implies that there is uncertainty about the trustee's future behaviour. Since we never achieve complete certainty about the trusted party's future actions and therefore, trust inevitably involves a so called "leap of faith" in which the "irreducible social vulnerability and uncertainty [are suspended] as if they were favourably resolved" Mollering (2006). This means that engaging in a trusting action always implies taking a risk and also being vulnerable. However, there is a fundamental difference between only trusting (without doing an action) and engaging in a trusting behavior (actually doing the action) since the first only implies a "willingness" to assume risk and vulnerability and the second actually "assuming" risk and being vulnerable. In an aid relation this could for example mean that a donor might trust an aid recipient organisation but it is only when signing off a contract that the donor actually assumes the risk. Other examples of risk-taking acts could be sharing of sensitive information and/or actually reducing monitoring (Dietz & Den Hartog, 2006). Thus, any potential trustor is confronted with the problem that he or she needs to accept "some" level of risk. Therefore, when there is no uncertainty and risk, trust is not needed.

Mayer et al. (1995) argue that the concepts of *cooperation* and *predictability* should be viewed as separate from trust. Although trust can frequently lead to cooperative behavior, trust is not a necessary condition for cooperation to occur, one reason being that cooperation does not necessarily put a party at risk. Both prediction and trust are means of uncertainty reduction. However, Mayer et al. (1995) argue that predictability is insufficient to trust since it does not involve the willingness to take a risk in the relationship and to be vulnerable. This is interesting, since in development aid, predictability is typically viewed as a remedy contributing to for example aid effectiveness (see for e.g. Paris Declaration; Swedlund, 2017). Following Mayer et al.'s (1995) argument, a reason for why predictability is not sufficient is that it does not actually imply a risk taking, and is thus not supporting trust in the relation. Only informing about coming disbursement figures might thus not be sufficient for the creation of trust.

Vulnerability, defined as "uncertainty, risk and emotional exposure" (Brown, 2013), is a concept that lies at the core of academic trust definitions. It has been argued that relationships with highest level of trust (close relationships) often are characterized by high levels of vulnerability (Scandura & Pellegrini, 2008). In the development aid sector, the word vulnerability is typically used to for example define community's or a country's level of vulnerability in macroeconomic terms. However, Sida has used the concept of vulnerability in its so called "vision" where the word vulnerability is used six times, in contexts such as the following: "We should seek trustworthy relations with local and international partners which results in concrete and value based interventions for poor and vulnerable people" (Sida, 2018a). The term vulnerability is thus used to defining the people, or the recipients of aid that Sida supports, but it is not used as something Sida as a donor itself needs to show to be considered trustworthy. According to literature however, both parties need to show vulnerability for a trustful relation to occur.

3.3　Sources of trust

The term sources of trust used in this study has not been previously used in the trust literature. Most previous research has been conducted on the interpersonal level, with many studies focusing on antecedents for trust between two individuals. We will here elaborate on some other trust concepts; systems or institutional level (an individual trusting a generalized system), interorganizational trust, role-based trust, and discuss previous literature on what could be sources of trust in development aid relations.

Institutional trust or trust in generalized systems builds upon trust that people have in each other against the background of institutional safeguards influencing their decision making and actions (Six, 2018). In the aid context, the general trust Swedish tax payers have in public aid is a form of a generalized systems trust. Tax payers might not fully know how tax money is spent but they trust the institutional set up. Trust in institutions can build on a potential trustor's experiences but it is also deeply cushioned into political and ideological worldviews.

Systems trust research may in turn be divided into sub categories such as studies on social trust (Rothstein, 2003), institutional trust (Bachmann & Brattström, 2018), trust in public professionals (Six, 2018) and trust in technologies or accounting systems (Wennblom, 2012) or numbers (Porter, 1996).

Individual representatives of abstract social systems, however, do have a function with regard to creating and reproducing trust in institutions. It has been argued that human faces need to appear to assure trustors that there are well-trained and responsible real actors in control of the social processes by which they are affected. Giddens' (1990) calls this "face-work" and argues that all subsystems of modern societies, which build on highly abstract expert knowledge, e.g. public health care systems, the federal reserve bank, etc. depend on human faces which at least occasionally have to become visible. For the development aid context, this could for example mean a need for some visibility through media, for maintaining institutional trust in the aid system (Grafström, 2019).

It has been argued that as a consequence of globalization, trust based on personal relations is increasingly becoming replaced by trust in abstract, faceless systems, such as organizations, technologies, numbers or labels (Giddens, 1990). Näslund & Hallström (2017) argues that this trend can be seen in the increasing amount of certification and accreditation bodies who form networks of intermediaries. This development has implied that interpersonal trust changes to impersonal system trust where actors increasingly put their faith in the controlling ability of intermediaries (Näslund & Hallström, 2017). Specifically, in environments of distrust and distance relations, trust building can require intermediaries or middle-men (Näslund & Hallström, 2017).

The term *interorganizational trust* refers to trust in the relation between two organizations. When used, the legal person status of the organization is referred to, which may be seen as giving an organization agency and decision-making potential to trust in others. Hedgecoe (2012) argues that trust in another organization often is defined from trust in the other organization's systems of regulation and control. Legal norms, similar management technologies used, or similar processes such as results based management are examples of institutional arrangements which can facilitate interorganizational relationships and assure actors that they are sharing an understanding of what is "common practice" and what is "right" or "wrong" behavior in specific situations. One could say that interorganizational trust is an effective form of developing trust and relations in between two actors. Without this trust, one would need to build the trust at face-to face level, which of course is far costlier. The field of development aid is highly influenced by interorganizational trust relations. As stated by Keijzner et al. (2018) that, it is persons who trust but – in aid – because of high turn- over of staff – we rely considerably on interorganizational trust.

Interorganizational research has pointed to the importance of establishing a foundation of mutual trust or a tie between organizations as important for a successful interorganizational relation. Schilke and Cook (2013) argue that in the context of establishing new interorganizational relationships, so called

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"boundary spanner" i.e. individuals who are responsible for creating the relations, start the trust development process by gathering clues about the trustworthiness of the potential partner organization. Typically, they look at (1) the organizations' relevant prior interactions, (2) public information (general reputation), and/or (3) institutional categories to which the partner organization belongs.

The concept of *role-based trust* (Kramer, 1999) has been used to signify the trust towards a person having a certain role in an organization, for example a Manager or a Programme Officer within a donor organization. The role-based trust constitutes a form of depersonalized trust because it is predicated on knowledge that this person occupies a particular role in the organization rather than specific knowledge about the person's capabilities, dispositions, motives, and intentions. Roles thus often serve as proxies for personalized knowledge about other organizational members (Kramer, 1999). The role-based trust develops and is sustained by people's common knowledge regarding the barriers to entry into organizational roles, their presumptions of the training and socialization processes that role occupants undergo, and their perceptions of various accountability mechanisms intended to ensure role compliance. A Programme Officer at Sida is for example assumed to take responsibility for assessments, disbursements and supporting aid recipients within his/her portfolio. It has been noted that often, it is not the person in the role that is trusted so much as the system of expertise that produces and maintains role-appropriate behavior of role occupants (Kramer, 1999).

Following the same line of thought, we tend to trust in professionals not because of their autonomous decision-making, but because they follow professional rules and standards and are organized as members in professional associations (Abbott, 2014). Trust in professions goes beyond mere interpersonal trust to also include trust in the system of professional social control that guides the behaviour of individual professional workers.

Trust in public professionals, such as employees at Sida, is hence inherently linked to their expert knowledge and their commitment to public service and societal values (Freidson, 2001).

In the very few contexts and situations where such professional institutional features are not present to a sufficient degree, interpersonal trust becomes crucial and typically creates great transaction costs such as information costs, for example numerous meetings face to face for informal coordination between clients and management consultants (Alexius, 2007, 2016; Furusten & Werr, 2005).

3.4 Are management technologies and control systems sources of trust?

When reviewing previous research on some sources of trust, such as management technologies, numbers and control systems, we find a disparate picture. While some studies claim that *management technologies* such as the Logical Framework used in aid, contribute to reduce the perception of distance, complexity and inequality which are common obstacles to trust building (Giddens, 1990; Sztompka, 1999), other literature has argued that they may hamper trust in a relation (Hoey, 2015; Honig, 2018; Vähämäki, 2017).

Management technologies typically consist of *rules* which can provide guidelines for appropriate behaviour that reduce risk and uncertainty regarding interactions and exchanges. Rules can thus provide an environment conducive to trust (Verburg et al., 2018), and result in a higher trustworthiness assessment on behalf of the rule-follower – who is seen as an able, benevolent actor with integrity (integrity as in following the same rules or principles for all similar situations). Cooper (1992) argues that through the use of technologies, administrators may work with representations made in the technologies – such as maps and numbers – but they do not need to involve themselves with the complex environment and the complex problems per se. Using the technologies and their representations may hence offer approximations that simplify decision making and everyday judgment and administration.

Similarly, in long-distance relations, such as the aid setting, *numbers, measurements* and *quantifiable information* can be seen as solutions to the problem of how to achieve long-distance control (Robson, 1992).

Measurements and quantifiable information of a context are often supported by the idea that numbers (in contrast to qualitative information) provide "precision", "rigor" and "objectivity" beyond our perception (Robson, 1992). Therefore, our trust in management technologies and numbers can reduce a perceived insecurity caused by a long distance relation. Not least at a distance, formal control and measurement may foster trust. Similarly, governance methods such as *results-based management* are often supported by arguments that goal setting and associated rational ceremonies are needed to create performance incentives and for employees to trust in the system being a just system, which in turn should increase organizational effectiveness (Kusek & Rist, 2004; Mayne, 2007).

However, when reviewing literature on management technologies and control systems it is clear that while these sources of trust in theory can enhance trust, in practice they do not always do so. A substantial amount of research has argued the opposite, i.e. that control systems can signal that employees are not trusted, which in turn may lower performance (Pollitt & Bouckaert, 2011; Van de Walle, 2010a). What is it then that determines if a management technology/control system is trust enhancing or not? In our review of literature we have found different answers to this question.

Schepker et al., (2014) argue that whether trust and control system and rules are mutually reinforcing depends on various factors, such as the relation between the two parties, when they are negotiating a contract and how contracts are structured (Schepker et al., 2014). Similarly, Poppo (2002) has argued that formal contracts often are complemented by high levels of relational governance and trust. Therefore, one cannot either choose between trust in formal control systems or informal trust in people. The creation of trust requires a combination of both.

Scholars, like Wiemann (2018) who has studied when RBM systems are seen as supportive and when not in organizations, argues that output control does not per se lower trust, but that the effect of RBM like systems is always dependent on the design of the performance evaluation system applied. If it is designed in a participatory and flexible manner, it is more likely to be trust enhancing.

In development aid, there are only a few studies that have addressed the relationship between governance mechanisms such as RBM and trust. In a recent study, Honig (2018) has examined when "navigation by judgement", i.e. trusting one's own judgement instead of measurements and control systems in a management relation, may be an alternative to top-down management in aid. Honig suggests that different kinds of projects and environments require different management strategies. Honig's argument is that top-down controls, and technologies such as the Logical Framework, only are effective in contexts that are predictable. However, in contexts where one cannot foresee if actions will lead to the predicted outcomes, one needs instead to Navigate by Judgement, i.e. use more soft information, such as one's own judgement and knowledge about a certain context, i.e. things that agents can see and learn but can't easily verify with numbers.

Similarly, Hoey (2015), who studied the effects of performance measures in an end-beneficiary organization, found that some of the reporting requirements on measured indicators created burdensome paperwork, blinded managers to emerging innovations and distracted staff from the real work they were intended to do, which in turn weakened the intended implementation.

However, it was simultaneously found that in another part of the organization, which used another set of measurement schemes, managers used the information in ways that helped them to build practical judgment about how to improve intended implementation. They created an environment conducive to learning – building motivation and trust– and engaged more diverse actors and types of knowledge in analyzing problems and negotiating solutions. These findings indicate that both general and more specific conditions in the aid context contribute to determine the role of trust as well as the sources of trust, that is who or what is considered trustworthy.

3.5 Trust presented as a third governance principle

When reading the literature on trust, trust or trust like governing is often treated as a third governance principle in governance theories. Trust is thus often treated an alternative to other forms of coordination/governance principles. In Adler's (2001) model on market/price, hierarchy/authority, and community/trust, it is argued that most governing today is done either by competition or authority and regulation, despite that trust has been found to be a much more effective way of dealing with the knowledge-based operations that dominate today. Adler argues that we should expect and also focus more on building high-trust cooperation forms. According to this view of trust as an *alternative* to other forms of coordination, trust is seen as most likely to have an impact in situations with weak organizational structures (low levels of bureaucracy) and where risk, uncertainty and complexity are prevalent (Dirks & Ferrin, 2001). Dirks and Ferrin (2001) found that trust played a greater role in organizations that for example were downsizing and where staff felt uncertain about their future employment. This example supports the proposition that trust is important in uncertain settings.

In Ouchi's model (1979) on market, bureaucracy and clan; interpersonal and informal trust relations are seen as the core coordinating mechanisms. The basic idea with the informal trust based coordination is that if employees in an organisation are committed to the organisation's objectives, and if they can be supported to maintain a deep commitment to these objectives; the need for explicit surveillance and control is reduced. According to Ouchi, if there is trust, one can thus reduce auditing and control.

Freidson (2001) instead, calls professionalism the third principle, next to hierarchy and market. Just like concepts like network and clan, professionalism is a concept closely associated with interpersonal trust, but also trust in a certain profession. According to Freidson (2001), professionalism is a governance mechanism which is particularly appropriate for tasks and task environments that are characterized as factually complex, i.e. when there is

uncertainty about what and how things work. Freidson (ibid) argues that professionalism is about handling knowledge and expertise that is special because it takes effort, training and time to acquire it. This in turn makes it legitimate for professionals to be sheltered from market regulation and other forms of bureaucracy.

However, as noted by Hardin (2002), having more knowledge about how authorities (like professionals) actually operate may also lead to a decrease in trust *if* there is a *gap* between high-held professional ideals and actual practice. An additional obstacle to trusting professionals is that is has become increasingly difficult to tell who is a 'proper' expert and not due to the broadening concept of expertise in the contemporary "expert society" where, in contrast to more traditional experts, most of the new experts lack generally accepted mechanisms for the certification and legitimation of their expertise (Furusten, 2016).

Important to note, these principles should be seen as ideal types of governance. In actual managerial practice, cultural and structural measures are typically combined and interrelated. "Trust based management" as emphasized by the Swedish government may thus similarly be interpreted as to call for less emphasis on structures and formality. Less attention to competition, incentives, formal regulation and control and more to the intrinsic motivation to collaborate, learn, build relationships and help fellow human beings (Bringselius, ed. 2018). This is however a simplified assumption, which reads that: When you trust you cannot/do not have to control; and when you control you cannot/ do not have to trust. According to this view, controls are typically seen as signs of distrust and that New Public Management implied the introduction of "distrust-based control and compliance mechanisms" (Van de Walle, 2010).

In contrast to this adversarial pattern between trust and control, a more collaborative approach has been suggested to meet the two ends of trust and control in relations, for example between public professionals and their managers (Sitkin & Weingart, 1995). Similarly, Poppo (2002) has argued that control measures should be seen as complements to trust. According to Poppo (2002) managers couple contracts with high levels or relational governance, i.e.

simultaneously as they use formal contracts they also informally relate with their partners. Therefore, one cannot throw out one of them to achieve the other.

Furthermore, ambitious empirical studies on the organization of professionals (Abbott, 2014; Furusten, 2016) and the organization of markets (Nils Brunsson & Jutterstrom, 2018) offer conclusive evidence to the fact that, in practice, coordination forms such as the market, bureaucracy and the professional system are closely interrelated and trust is not only a *means* to achieve other ends (for example lower transaction costs). Trust is also an *end* which may be achieved by different means. A functioning bureaucracy or market may for example foster trust as when in the case of a clear and solid contract in cases of ambiguity or previous nepotism. Rather paradoxically, the perception of a free market turns out to rely on a high degree of organization, not least rules (but also "organizational elements" such as membership, hierarchy, monitoring and sanctions, c f (Ahrne, 2019).

3.6 Developing trust over time – propensity to trust and other factors

A well-known saying goes: "it takes two to tango". Likewise, building trust is a process in which each party is *both* a trustor *and* a trustee. A general principle is that cooperative behaviour, begets trust and that trust is built or dissolved as cooperation escalates or de-escalates. One party's trust will typically influence the other's and vice versa (Donald L Ferrin et al., 2008). Ferrin et al. (2008) argue that the development of mutual trust and cooperation involves an intricate dance that spirals over time and is fundamentally affected by partners' initial moves. If the initial move by both one of the actors is cooperation, this is typically reflected positively by the other since positive actions and intentions typically are transmitted from one to another.

It is generally recognized that trust does not start at zero and build slowly over time, but that it often is relatively high at the start of a relationship. In general, people thus start the relationship by trusting

one another (Wicks et al., 1999). The assessment as well as the perceived importance of the three factors (ability, benevolence and integrity) may however change over time, at times quickly. According to Mayer et al. (1995) integrity is the most important factor in the beginning of a relationship. The trustor can obtain data on the trustee's integrity through third-party sources and observation, with little direct interaction. Later on in the relationship, information is gained on the trustee's benevolence which also is a factor that increases over time as the relationship between the parties develop.

Whether trust is created also depends on the trustor's "propensity to trust". Propensity might be thought of as the general willingness or ability to trust others. Propensity will influence how much trust one has for a trustee *already prior to data* on that particular party being available. People's propensity to trust varies depending on their developmental experiences, personality types, and cultural backgrounds. Research has for example found that that people who are grateful are more trusting than people who feel anger (Gino & Schweitzer, 2008). Some individuals can be observed to repeatedly trust in situations where most people would not. Conversely, others are unwilling to trust in most situations, regardless of circumstances that would support doing so. Some people are simply more likely to trust than others.

Moreover, it has been argued that in interpersonal relations we tend to assess cooperation and monitoring differently depending on whether I am monitoring or being monitored (compare our introductory chapter on social roles). This means that we might think monitoring is a sign of distrust if the other monitors us, whereas if tend to believe that it increases trust and cooperation if we monitor the other (Donald L. Ferrin et al., 2007). This finding indicates that sources of trust are perceived differently depending on the actor's position and social role.

Other factors that can influence the development of trust are:

a) the *degree of similarity between trustor and trustee* (Farh et al., 1998); this means that people from similar cultural or social backgrounds might find it easier to trust others from the same background than people from different backgrounds.

b) the *communication processes* between the trustor and trustee. Face-to-face negotiations have for example been found to support trust the most whereas online negotiations were found to be related to lower levels of trust (Lu et al., 2017; Naquin & Paulson, 2003). Research has also identified that certain types of behavior support an assessments of trustworthiness, such as the trustee being open, discrete, receptive, and available (Levin et al., 2006).

c) the *network characteristics* i.e., the extent to which trustor and trustee share a common trusted third party, for example if they are in a joint network (Ferrin et al., 2007),

d) the *organizational context* and specifically the reward structures within the organization. A cooperative reward structure has been found to encourage teamwork and promote trust, while a competitive reward structure encourages individual efforts. For example, it has been found that in workplace, trust judgments, positive affective reactions to the departure of a prior leader had a significant positive effect on trust toward the successive leader (Ballinger et al., 2009). For organizations, it has been found that easy-to-understand language and a legitimating decision-making label, as well as a participative decision making give increased perceptions of trustworthiness (Dirks & Ferrin, 2001). However, organizations must watch out for portraying ambiguities or sending contradictory messages. O'neill (2002) and Skinner et al. (2014) uses the metaphor of a "poisoned chalice" to describe a common tension point for trust, namely when an employer may say it trusts its employees, but the organization's legal and compliance procedures suggest otherwise.

3.7 Trust and asymmetric relations

It has been argued that a relation in which one party is more powerful and/or holds more information, which often is the case in aid relations, are likely to end up in an asymmetric trust relation (Korsgaard et al., 2015). However, Korsgaard et. al (2015) argue that because information reduces uncertainty, actors with more information may have greater trust. Similarly, actors with greater power and hence greater ability to sanction and reward exchanges, may have greater trust than their counterpart has in them.

Pomerantz (2004) is one of few scholars who has studied trust between donors and recipients in aid relationships. Pomerantz (2004) argues that even though an aid relationship from an outset might be considered as unequal, where the donor has more power than the recipient since it makes the financial decisions, the aid recipient most often has another asset – such as much more knowledge and information about the local context, which of course is something that the donor needs.

According to Pomerantz (ibid), this implies that there is an unequal relation when it comes to knowledge and information needed to solve the problems that aid tries to solve. In aid relationships both the donor and the recipient are thus dependent on each other - which diminishes the perceived unequal relationship. Pomerantz (2004) argues that aid recipients often are well aware about the fact that donors "know almost nothing" about their context, and that they therefore can use this asset in the negotiations. However, Pomerantz (2004) also found that when comparing the perceived trust between recipient governments and donors, the donors stated that they had greater trust in the recipients than the recipients had in the donors. This would imply that in terms of the two factors supporting trust in unequal relations by Korsgaard et al.'s (2015) information and knowledge is a more important factor for trust than being powerful and able to conduct sanctions.

It has also been argued that persons with greater power tend to feel entitled to greater benefits (De Cremer & Van Dijk, 2005) and as a result may perceive exchanges to be fair when the less empowered party may feel the exchange was unfair. Information and power

asymmetries are apt to weaken feedback loops such that each party's trust may develop at different rates and stabilize at different levels. It has been found that asymmetries in trust can have negative consequences for the performance of individuals and groups (Carter & Mossholder, 2015; De Jong & Dirks, 2012). However, most studies on power asymmetries have so far been conducted at an interpersonal level in organisations, for example in between managers and team members.

In aid work the so called "broken feedback loop" (Martens, 2005), i.e that the tax payers who's funds are used for public aid are not the actual beneficiaries of the same funds, implies that aid agencies are both to create trust to citizens in the aid giving countries (for e.g. Sweden) simultaneously as they need to create trust towards the beneficiaries of aid in the recipient countries. Public aid is dependent on the fact that citizens in aid giving countries trust aid. In other public sectors, going to court could be a way of showing distrust from a citizen or a beneficiary of aid. This option is however not viable within aid work. This implies that an aid donor withholds a power position which is uncommon in other public sectors. We believe that knowledge and a self-assessment on how the unequal power position influences the aid relation is crucial for maintaining a trustful relation.

3.8   Distrust and low trust

Distrust is generally defined in terms of negative expectations towards people's intentions or behaviours (Van De Walle & Six, 2014). It has been argued that distrust occurs when there is a perceived *value incongruence*, i.e. that there is a belief that the other adheres to values that are perceived as incompatible with the actor's core values (Bijlsma-Frankema et al., 2015). Distrust arises as others come to be characterized as unpredictable and threatening, thus fostering a sense of uncertainty and vulnerability (Sitkin & Roth, 1993). We believe that we have little in common with the other and that the other is a committed adversary who is out to harm us.

Some scholars argue that unless distrust has been eliminated, there is "no room for trust" because the presence of distrust leads the

foundations of trustworthiness (shared values, ability, benevolence, integrity, etc.) to be implicitly or explicitly undermined (Robinson & Wolfe Morrison, 2000). However, others in turn argue that trust and distrust can co-exist such that both trust and distrust can be simultaneously high or low (Lewicki et al., 1998).

In the trust literature, it is common to talk about "the spiral of distrust" (Sitkin & Roth, 1993; Zand, 1972). In aid relationships, misuse of funds or corruption are typical situations when aid providers and other parties involved in the aid project lose trust. The almost institutionalized "general distrust" for development aid (the ever going question of "does aid work?") also helps to explain the perceived need to continuously show results and/or progress of aid projects to those at a distance (Rose-Ackerman, 2001). This is particularly probable in situations where there are indications or past experiences of corruption or fraud which could be seen as a betrayal of trust. In these situations, parties could easily increase the formal control requirements, in a so called "control spiral" (Vähämäki, 2017), aiming to regain trust and a sense of control.

According to the trust literature, there are certain tipping points in the spiral of distrust, at which individuals start revising their assessment of their partner's trustworthiness in the opposite direction to the previous trend. Research has shown that individuals are apt to react more strongly to negative cues and experiences (Baumeister et al., 2001), therefore once trust has been broken, one might quickly enter a downward spiral which is difficult to break. Moreover, it is commonly argued that when distrust is present, factors that typically help to build trust will have no (or less) effect. This means that the distrusted party first needs to address what has caused the distrust before starting to re-build trust again. Further, reversing a downward spiral is apt to be especially challenging if the prior untrustworthy behaviour is believed to be a result of character/integrity as opposed to ability (Kim et al., 2004).

Research suggests that if individuals enter into a relationship with low trust, they are likely to experience a downward spiral of low cooperation and trust (Zand, 1972). Thus, the course of trust or distrust may be set already by the mindset of individual at the initiation of the relationship. It has been found that people who are

cynical and hostile (Vranceanu et al., 2006), self-protective and have an avoidant behaviour (Stavrova & Ehlebracht, 2016) are more likely to have a low trust or distrust at the beginning of a relationship. Similarly, suspicion or excessive control may lead to a downward spiral of distrust. Marr et al. (2012) for example argue that individuals who are prone to seek information that threatens the relationship (for example that their partner is cheating) are more likely to infer malicious intent to their partner, which is a hallmark of distrust. Moreover, a relation where there is a trust assymetry, i.e. where one trusts and the other distrusts, is likely to end up in a downward spiral of low cooperation and trust.

3.9   How can trust be recovered?

Trust is difficult to re-build if relations have been hampered or betrayed. As stated in Lewicki et al. (2000): "recovering lost trust at best is difficult and time consuming, at worst impossible". The challenge of trust repair is more difficult when parties lack relational closeness, such as the case in many organizational relations.

According to the trust literature, the timing of the distrusting event is relevant to shifts in the direction of spirals. In later stages of relationships, actors are apt to give greater latitude to their partner's behavior (Sitkin & Bijlsma-Frankema, 2018). Thus, in previous research it has been argued that the quality and history of the relationship also influence reactions to behavioural deviations (Fulmer & Gelfand, 2013). Another factor in the reversal of trust spirals is the "shadow of the future", that is, knowing that a relationship may soon end. This finding suggests that the anticipation of the termination of a relationship can unleash a degree of selfish behaviour that is greater than what would be observed in the absence of a long-term relationship (Poppo et al., 2008). Poppo, et al. (2008) for example found that the length of the relationship was positively related to trust, but only in cases when the parties had expectations of continuity. When parties feared that the relationship would end, trust decreased.

Trust repair in interorganizational contexts is considerably more complex since organizational often have a multitude of different

relationships that can influence and inform the judgements of potential trustors (Gillespie & Dietz, 2009). A trust breach happening at an organizational level is typically a questioning of the organization's legitimacy i.e. its capacity to fulfil its essential responsibilities or adhere to commonly endorsed values and standards. The confident positive expectations about the organization's capacity are replaced with negative expectations in respect to the organisation's ability, benevolence and/or integrity in its conduct towards stakeholders. A breakdown of trust may result from a single incident (such as a corruption case) or be a results of accumulation of trust breaches that erode trust over time (e.g. continuous negative media reporting on the organisation).

Bachmann, Gillespie and Priem (2015) has suggested that organisations can repair trust in six different ways:

Through sense making: It is suggested that a shared understanding or accepted account of the trust violation, including an explanation of what went wrong and why, is required for effective trust repair.

Through creating relations: It is suggested that social rituals and symbolic acts are needed to resolve negative emotions caused by the violation and re-establish the social order and norms in the relationship. There is a need of using a combination of relational repair tactics (e.g. apologies and compensation, penance (e.g. punishment, compensation, 'paying a price'), redistribution of power and resetting expectations that collectively 'settle the accounts', and re-establish the expectations in the damaged relationship).

Through regulation and formal control: It is suggested that regulation, formal rules and controls such as sanctions and/or code of conducts are theorized to facilitate trust repair by constraining untrustworthy behaviour and thereby preventing future organizational trust violations (Gillespie & Dietz, 2009).

Through informal cultural controls: Organizational culture and informal controls represents another mechanism for constraining untrustworthy behaviour and promoting trustworthy behaviour in

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organizations. In order to repair trust it is suggested that implementing cultural reforms that identify and challenge the values, norms and beliefs that enabled the trust, as well as HR processes (e.g. induction, socialization, training, mentoring and performance management) are necessary.

Transparency and accountability: This mechanism suggests that principles of accountability, transparency and disclosure lay the foundation for trust. Whilst some research have, found some support that self-disclosure of negative information can lessen the damaging impact compared to if a third party discloses the same information (Fennis and Stroebe, 2014), other research has found that transparency has a subdued, and sometimes negative effect, on trust in organisations (see Gillespie, 2018). Making the public sector or citizens transparent may also give rise to more reasons to distrust each other. Within development aid, transparency systems have been seen as an increasingly important way to withhold public support for aid (Hedlin, 2018). Although these initiatives have met with little public interest, their proliferation and development show no sign of diminishing.

Trust transference: This mechanism is based on the premise that trust can be transferred from a credible third party who can act as the "go-betweens" in new relationships that enable new parties to "roll over" their expectations from the well-established relationship to the newly formed relationship where there is little knowledge or history (Bachmann et al., 2015). In development aid, third parties could be for example the OECD/DAC Peer reviews of different donor agencies, the MOPAN (Multilateral Organisational Assessment) system of the multilaterals, or the different donor rankings (Knack et al., 2010) which are used to name and shame donor organisations. The rankings and assessment could thus transfer further trust to an organisation, however, they might also do the opposite. Third parties could also be consultants or groups of consultants who contracted to address a specific need or attempt to solve a problem.

Also the trustor, the party whose trust has been violated, can actively influence the trust repair process in ways that can meaningfully influence whether the repair of trust will occur (Petriglieri, 2015).

Petriglieri (2015) argues that in case both parties wish to repair trust this requires an active co-creation between the parties. In aid, a common situation of distrust is a situation of fraud or corruption. Many donor organisations therefore have strategies for how to act in cases of corruption, which may imply that a certain procedure is applied irrespective of whether the individual feels trust or not. Common consequences are to withdraw funding and increase monitoring for some time. Sometimes, a solution may be to break up the relation. This means that donor organisations often actively want to repair trust and to co-create the trust repair process, often with the argument that aid ultimately is for the end beneficiaries, who suffer in case an organisation is corrupt.

4 Empirical case findings

In this chapter we present some of our empirical findings drawn from the comparative studies made on the four actor groups (civil society organization, private sector actors, Swedish authorities in the public sector and research cooperation). Illustrations and examples are taken from case organizations and their respective aid nets (see chapter 1 for an explanation on aid nets and chapter 3 for a more thorough explanation on the method and the case organizations).

To remind the reader; as we are interested in how intermediary organizations act and switch between their roles of donor and recipient of aid all illustrative examples in this chapter are taken from organization who act <u>both</u> as recipients and donors of aid funds or related resources. The analysis focuses on how they alternate between and act in the two different roles. When we write "donors" we thus refer to an acting pattern that we have seen among many different organisations, no matter where they are situated in the aid net. The same goes for "recipients" who can also be found in the Swedish context. Organisations such as Sida, Unido or ISP are thus sometimes referred to as donors and sometimes as recipients, all depending on the role they take in the specific illustrated situation.

Faced with uncertainty, what do organizations in the donor and recipient roles trust? From whom or what can trust be transferred onto the *trustee* (the trusted one), to strengthen its perceived ability, benevolence and integrity? (see theory in chapter 3). In this chapter we will take a closer look at a number of potential sources of trust and exemplify and discuss how some organizations involved in aid projects have perceived and related to them. What trust patterns can we identify and how may these be explained?

4.1 Sources of trust

Based on our case studies, we find that donors and recipients rely on a *combination* of different sources of trust such as: 1) control systems and management technologies, 2) external experts and

expertise, 3) VIP partner status, 4) the institutional context, 5) domain specific knowledge, 6) results and 7) personal relations (see table 4.1 in the summary chapter 4.2).

Some of these sources of trust are generally seen as prominent (i.e. a higher impact on trust assessments made). These are control systems and management technologies, external experts and expertise and the VIP partner status. We have also identified sources of trust that are less prominent: institutional context, domain specific knowledge, results and personal relations.

Based on our case studies, which all concern intermediary organizations (i.e. the organizations act in both a role as a donor and a recipient), we have interestingly found that the organizations have different trust patterns depending on whether they act as a donor or as a recipient. Hence they rely on and perceive the different sources of trust differently depending on the role they take. This implies that the same organization may show a different trust pattern as it shifts from one of the roles to the next.

4.1.1 Control systems and Management technologies

Starting with the donor's perspective, when assessing a potential recipient's trustworthiness, our cases demonstrate that management technologies such as the The Logical Framework, is a prominent source of trust from which trust is frequently transferred onto recipients of aid.

Our first finding, is that *being without such a technology is generally not a viable option for a recipient*, since *not* having one would affect the recipient's assessed trustworthiness negatively. Having and using a management technology is generally seen as a sign that the recipient is a rational decision maker, a core characteristic of a 'proper' organization (see figure 1.1 in the introduction). The Logical Framework, similar technologies or other control systems promote rationality in the sense that, when applying and using them, actors are assumed to become more rational in both their decision making processes and in the actions carried out.

As an example, the so called *Stick-man model* was developed in 1967 by International Science Program (ISP) in discussions on how to develop an efficient means of implementing and following-up the international seminars organized at Uppsala University. The model was based on the classic means of coordination in academia – collegiality which relies heavily on long-term personal relationships between scholars of the same discipline. Such collegiality was the basic idea behind the Stick-man model (which later on was developed and renamed the Sandwich model). Research capacity in developing countries would best be developed in a long-term collaboration between research groups in Sweden and developing countries in the same field. Staff members and students would take turns going back and forth between the host- and the home institution for research training, with the support to improve the local research environment (Andersson & Marta, 2017).

ISP has long used and is still today referring to its own Stick-man model as its core model for organizing its operations. However, over the years, in its role as recipient of aid, ISP has been suggested by its donor Sida to manage its operations also with other management technologies. The Stick-man model was not perceived by the donor as sufficient for documenting effectiveness of the programs.

Due to a perceived lack of visible results in research aid in general (compare section 4.2.6 on results below, the Swedish Alliance government (2006 – 2014) urged Sida to apply measures for a more results oriented aid (see Vähämäki, 2017). Sida, in turn, suggested Results Based Management (RBM) as the governance method to be used for *all* research aid. RBM reintroduced technologies such as the Logical Framework and Key Performance Indicators (KPIs). The aim was a standardization. This implied that ISP, with support from the consultancy firm AIMS, introduced the more general and well-known technology of the Logical Framework and developed 32 KPIs to be used to follow up their projects. The Logical Framework consists of a matrix that allows users to map out how resources and activities will contribute to achieving objectives and results using quantifiable indicators to measure progress (Binnedjikt, 2001; Coleman, 1987).

Before introducing the Logical Framework, the KPIs and other measures to improve the the organizations RBM capacity, IPS had been close to dismiss several of its staff members as it lacked funding to cover the next month's salaries. During this critical period, ISP staff recall a hostile attitude and being rhetorically questioned by Sida about why the donor should have to support ISP at all. In this situation, ISP decided to adapt to what their funder requested and what was recommended by the external management experts. In this case external general management expertise was provided by the consultancy firm AIMS, which was contracted by Sida in a trust transfer role, to provide advice both to Sida and to recipients of research aid.

Our second finding about control systems and management technologies concerns *differences between formal decisions and informal trust assessments*. In the fall of 2017, Union to Union decided to follow Sida's new TRAC instructions, which were influenced by a "facilitation agenda" at Sida and a wave of "Trust Based Management" at the time in Sweden. In the new instructions, it was stated that the recipient organization no longer needed to submit a specific results matrix to Sida. Union to Union was informed about this new rule at Sida's official Development Dialogue with the title "Reclaim the Results" on the 14th February 2017. At this seminar, Sida's Director General declared that the seminar was organized because partners had expressed a perceived unclarity concerning Sida's view on RBM and Sida's requirements. The Director General declared that:

> Partners need to apply their own methods in RBM. RBM is for your own sake, to maximize your results. Therefore, Sida does not have a specific requirement for a certain results matrix. Sida is pro the method that helps us see the results achieved.

Union to Union was one of the around 250 organizations at the seminar that received this message. But when the organization decided to follow Sida's recommendation in its coming application, Union to Union's representatives experienced that they were met with suspicion and correction. As recalled by the Union to Union program manager:

> It was stated in the new guidelines that we did not have to submit a results matrix at the aggregate level. So we chose not to do that ... But then, our Sida officer called and said "No, but that won't do!" [I replied]: "But the guidelines say we don't need to ..?" [The officer again]: "Yes, but I don't know how to evaluate then. Oh no." So then we got until November 11 to produce a results matrix and we got to know it on October 20 or so. But actually, it was not that difficult in the sense that… we had already demanded result matrices from our applicants. So that in each application we had received, there was already a LFA [Log Frame] matrix…

When speaking to the Sida officer in charge to get her version of what happened, she concludes that there clearly must have been an unfortunate misunderstanding. Although the guidelines had indeed been changed in some respects, this did not mean that Union to Union could refrain from handing in any form of accounts on set targets and expected results. As commented by the Sida officer in charge:

> We cannot give blank cheques. There must be some substantial accounts. We have a major responsibility you know.

Having perceived that Sida had communicated a new decision on less strict regulation, first in the message by the Director General and then in Sida's formal guidelines, Union to Union's astonishment and disappointment is easy to understand. Yet, so is the position of the senior highly experienced officer who only wants to do her job well and to honor and respect the taxpayers whose money she feels utterly responsible for. Another interpretation is however made by a head of unit at Sida in the following comment:

> We [Sida as an organization] have been open to letting our partners design their own management technologies. However, I believe that there are many program officers here who have been so used to talking about indicators and there being baselines and

> how to assess matrices… You are simply used to
> talking in these terms, output and all that.

In terms of analysis, there are at least two scenarios here. In the first, there is a substantial discrepancy between an organization's formal decision to trust (or not) and the informal trustworthiness assessments made by individual employees of the same organization. In the second scenario – illustrated by the Union to Union case - there is a misunderstanding on what the new policy and guidelines actually state. However, in both scenarios and no matter what the actual facts are, the recipient *perceives* the same discepancy between policy decisions and local assessment decisions. For trust, this perception may be equally devastating, at least before the misunderstanding is put straight.

In general theoretical terms then, there are typically *several trustors* linked to one organization and they may not all have the same trust patterns (may not trust to the same degree nor trust the same trustees via the same sources of trust). A donor organization may for example take a formal decision to increase its trust more in the context and domain specific *ability* of the recipient organizations (to choose and use technologies as the recipient thought best, compare sections 4.1.4-4.1.5). An individual donor officer may then be directly affected by this greater uncertainty since s/he is the one responsible for the actual assessment. It may also be the case that an individual officer with long experience and in-depth knowledge of the track record and historical relation to a certain recipient, has good reasons to ask for more reports when s/he perceives that the uncertainty and risks are higher than average.

Moving on next to Sida in its *recipient* role (in its relation to the Swedish Ministry for Foreign Affairs), the same discrepancy is once again accentuated, as illustrated by the same head of Unit at Sida:

> I sometimes get quite clear instructions… about the
> kind of results reporting the Ministry for Foreign
> Affairs wants. At times, there are not that many
> comments. It may be that there is no entirely clear
> policy as concerns, well, the Ministry's expectations
> on results reporting. It is more the case that the

responsible officer… it is she that demands concrete results and an understanding of our operations. While I would say that the general decisions and policies, strategy matrixes etc, may turn out to be less important.

Our third finding concerning control systems and management technologies is that *different roles (donor or recipient) may explain differences in the perception of a certain management technology.* This finding is well illustrated by the final part of the Union to Union quote above, repeated here:

But actually, it was not that difficult [to suddenly produce a results matrix for Sida] in the sense that… we had already demanded result matrices from our applicants. So that in each application we had received, there was already an LFA [Log Frame] matrix…

What this clarifies is the importance of *not* treating intermediaries in aid nets as *either* donors or recipients. In fact, most are *both*. In this case, we see a difference in how Union to Union related to a management technology (a results matrix) that stems from its switching of roles. While happy to skip it, from a recipient point of view, from a donor perspective, the Union to Union program manager makes the exact same decision – *not* to drop the management technology – as did the Sida officer in his/her donor role. What was perceived by Union to Union in its *recipient* role as a sign of mistrust or lack of benevolence and thus increased control on Sida's part (hence lowering Union to Unions assessed trust in Sida), was thus perceived as a very reasonable or even necessary condition for assessing the trustworthiness of Union to Union's own recipients.

Similarly, ISP found the Logical Framework and KPI-technologies useful in its role as donor, for an increased visibility of the work done by ISP's recipients. *These and other similar findings suggest that despite calls for simplification and less control, there seems to be a tendency that this is not taking place in the aid nets.*

Our fourth finding concerning control systems and management technologies concerns trust development over time (compare section 3.6). Possibly thanks to their plural actorhood and the learning that comes from switching between roles, *many recipients of aid do – eventually – come to put their trust in the management technologies. This is because they learn that using them grants them trustworthiness from the donor.* A project coordinator at the union Kommunal had the following view on formal governing, i.e. use of control systems, of aid.

> Of course it is [formally] governed. But I only experience it as something positive, because I do not want taxpayers' money to be used incorrectly anywhere, or that our own membership money, almost worse, would be used incorrectly. After all, it is a trust industry we operate in. Having these control systems is a security for me in my job. I don't see them as a disadvantage or any restriction for the projects, I appreciate them, it feels good.

The citation shows that the coordinator felt that the control systems functioned as a security on the job. This finding is in line with literature on how formal control systems support trust (see Busco, 2006; Verburg, 2019; Poppo, 2002).

From the cases, we have seen that one's approach to the control systems is important and often requires familiarization over time and knowledge of both *why* the control system is needed and what it can be used for. This may explain why the very first introduction of any control system can be perceived as a sign of distrust or lack of trust. One of the Directors at ISP stated the following about the request by Sida to introduce RBM:

> This is a typical distrust in ISP's activities, when you start with something like this. It is not only a distrust for the recipient countries, but it is also a distrust in Swedish researchers and others who take part in the projects, that they don't actually know what it implies to build up an institution. But that they want…what should we say? That they have an interest in getting the money as quickly as possible.

The quote exemplifies a perspective towards RBM and ideas related to new public management from professions, such as academia. It is perceived that RBM comes with an economic perspective, that everything needs to provide value in monetary terms and that this perspective comes in conflict with other values, in this case with producing high quality research.

For about a decade, ISP struggled with adopting the Logical Framework and the KPIs to its particular domain context of research aid. However, after some years of adoption work where ISP set up a new function and hired staff specifically devoted to RBM, ISP found that the management technologies (including the organizational structures developed and devoted staff hired) provided the organization with much needed legitimacy – which in turn helped ISP to retain and increase its funding. Thus, the formal structures and management technologies had granted the organization legitimacy, which in turn had increased its chances of obtaining critical resources from the funder (compare Meyer & Rowan, 1977). Moreover, when the organization had the time to familiarize with the control systems, they did turn into prominent sources of trust.

One of the country coordinators in the ISP program for example stated that following:

> I got the opportunity a number of times of being trained in results based management. Yeah, with AIMS people from the US, and so on. At first, it was not something for me to comprehend quickly. But later, I actually appreciated the work I've done. And of course, since not many people got the chance to be trained in this kind of knowledge, I got the opportunity to really understand and even teach others … I've given presentations on Results Based Management. Yeah, which I did. But I really appreciate it, because this is the kind of planning I think one needs. You need to see where you're going.

The citation illustrates that the coordinator felt that, after having learnt RBM, which took a while, he felt that the approach was beneficial for the planning of the program (and another example of the shared ideal of rational decision makers, compare figure 1.1). However, the same interviewee also stated that it was the learning opportunities and *informal* relations related to the formal system that were the most valuable outcomes.

After having submitted reports according to the RBM system to ISP, he perceived that these would actually be read and used and come to benefit the system. He stated that: "I think our reports in this particular project, they are really, really being appreciated" (compare chapter 3).

Our fifth finding is hence that the ideal of rational operations and the introduction of formal management technologies may create new and regular slots for valuable informal feedback and personal contacts that enhance in turn may increase or sustain trust. One of the final recipients within the ISP program, for example, first met a monthly reporting format with a high level of skepticism but after a while felt that "I'm loving it", since he experiences that it gave him a push, feed-back and visibility for his PhD work.

Our sixth indicative finding is that, when seen as supportive for the program, control systems and management technologies can be perceived as valuable for creating trust at a distance. In our discussions, we have for example been told by some interviewees, that they in their recipient role want to know what an application should look like and what is required from them. This indicates that *it might not be the formal requirements as such that create "obsessive measurement disorder". It may rather be a lack of communication or other sources of ambiguity on what is expected.* As stated in the theory section (3), for organizations, it has been found that easy-to-understand language and a legitimating decision-making label, as well as a participative decision making give increased perceptions of trustworthiness (Dirks & Ferrin, 2001). Thus, organizations must watch out for portraying ambiguities or sending contradictory messages.

4.1.2 External experts and expertise

We live in an "expert society" (Furusten, 2016) where experts and expertise play crucial parts in most professional relations. *Our first finding,* based on our case studies, is that *recipients may perceive external experts as a sign of distrust or lower trust on the donor's behalf.* Whilst hiring of third parties, at times called trust transferers in the literature (Bachmann et al., 2015) is often considered necessary and trust enhancing by the donor, we have found that the recipients of aid more often consider these third party involvements as signs of distrust. A representative for an intermediary organization in a developing country in the SEPA case, in his recipient role, for example stated that:

> Say we're supposed to have a certain output and then the donor wants to hire a certain kind of consultant or contractor and then that consultant or contractor does not follow our Terms of Reference (TORs), or when donors deliberately change the TORs that we agreed on as partners. And of course, if the hiring entity and the donor change the TORs and hire someone else to do something, that is not what was agreed upon, or what the ultimate objective is, or output: (then we don't trust the donor).

We have found that specifically in the area of making recipients more results oriented (compare figure 1.1), Sida, in its donor role, has made efforts to hire third parties who are to support the recipient organizations with becoming more results oriented[5]. This could be seen as situation where the trustor/donor actively tries to influence the trustworthiness of the trustee, and thus co-creates the trust process by transferring trust from external experts and expertise as sources of trust (Petriglieri, 2015).

We have found that it has sometimes required a quite specific push from the donor, in order for recipients to accept the "offer" (compare later section, in discussion, on the collision between the norms of conformity and diversity in the field). In the case of ISP for example, when Sida's research unit brought up the "offer" for ISP to receive support from the consultancy company AIMS, it required a second meeting and a formal request from Sida, for ISP to take on support from the consultancy company. The meeting minutes stated that "ISP **should** as soon as possible arrange a RBM-workshop with John Mathiason (Syracuse University, USA) as a leader" (Sida, 2009:1), (bold emphasis added by the authors of this report).

It is clear that while Sida in this case perceived of AIMS as a prominent source of trust, ISP did not - at least not in the beginning. A story that has circulated within ISP is about an ISP-official, during the first training, who asked whether the consultants could show *their* Log Frame, and then, the consultants answered that they do not have one in fact. By ISP, it was seen as somewhat strange that the consultants promoted a management approach that they did not themselves use. This example could explain why ISP in the beginning found it difficult to trust the management technology; if the technology was not used (and trusted) by the consultancy company itselves, why should ISP then find it a prominent source

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[5] Since the mid 2000's, Sida has had frame agreements with external consultants who are hired by the donor to support recipients of aid in writing better aid proposals, doing Logical Frameworks for their proposals, providing training on RBM and supporting the recipients to become more results oriented in general. Support from the external consultants have been offered to the recipient organizations "for free", i.e. they have not had to take on additional costs for the consultancy support from their own budgets.

of trust? (compare Alexius, 2007 on this general characteristics of management consultants: escaping professional regulation while imposing rules on others).

Our second finding concerns the role of external experts as carriers of historical data – which at times may give them a lot of influence, also over the future. In development cooperation people often change positions (compare section 4.1.7 on personal relations). Staff don't typically work with project's more than a couple of years. Therefore, and in line with Uzzi (1997), third parties, such as management consultants, often play an important role in the aid nets as carriers of institutional knowledge of the relation and assessments previously done. However, our cases indicate that external experts sometimes are driven by a certain agenda (that of the proper organization) and at times more so than the donors. In the case of the consultancy firm AIMS for example, it is clear that AIMS, in its multiple roles, acted not only as a go-between but that they drove their own devoted RBM agenda. The main consultant of AIMS stated in an interview that:

> It is easy to show whether your research worked or not. However, if you are not able to specify how you think it is supposed to be used, how your research is supposed to be used, if you can't do that, you shouldn't get any money. At least not from Sida.

AIMS thus promoted a perspective that knowledge of how research results were going to be used should be a strict criterion for receiving funding from Sida. In this case AIMS themselves thus took a more active role in influencing who should receive funding from Sida. And again, for our purposes, it is interesting to note that the ideal promoted by AIMS, i.e. was in line with the rational ideal of the proper organization (figure 1.1)

Our third finding on external experts and expertise is that *recipients appreciate analyses from experts that are knowledgeable about the recipients' own local context and domain specificities*. However, as stated in the quote below, a general perception among recipients is that such more specialized experts are being outnumbered by more *general* management experts. An interviewee from the Union to Union case,

with very long experience from the net of international union collaboration, recalls some specialized experts she particularly liked, and how they became replaced:

> There was actually one [consulting firm] who had a really deep understanding for and insight into union matters. […] And it was a bit odd… see they came to these really good conclusions, in my view. I mean, even if of course, they did have a few critical opinions, which I think is terrific because you need to get some new perspectives on what you do… But then, [what was odd was that] only a few years later, Sida called for a new assessment report. This time with a brand new team that started off from scratch. And while the first team understood us… [the second didn't (interviewee makes point clear by tone of voice)].

Our cases thus indicate that experts in general management knowledge often are seen as valuable to secure properness of recipients, recipients are more positive to context and domain related expertise, at least as an important complement.

As stated in chapter 1, domain specific knowledge and a variety of actors are called for and seen as a necessity for combatting development problems. It is also a common assumption among recipients of aid that their specific thematic or *domain specific knowledge* accounts for a large part of their ability (see chapter 3). However, in this study, our findings suggest that *the recipients typically perceive their specific domain expertise has having a lower status in the donors' trust assessment of them, compared to the perceived higher status of general management expertise.* It seems that, in order to be assessed as able (and hence trustworthy), internal domain expertise must at least be complemented with (and at times dominated by) externally sourced general management expertise (such as organizational and RBM expertise).

A telling example is found in the actor group "cooperation with Swedish agencies" that is specifically built on the idea that Sweden should export domain expertise to development countries through

its aid interventions. Therefore, in its instruction, Sida has been requested to "specifically cooperate with state authorities and other public authorities with the aim to collect and utilize thematic knowledge and public administration competence in implementation of international development cooperation"(Gov, 2010:1080). According to a memo written by Sida, this expertise "is requested by cooperation partners in partner countries" (Sida, 2018b). However, in our research, we have found that although trust is put in Swedish expertise at the level of daring to make a funding decision based on the idea that Swedish agencies *should* be trusted (based on their specific domain expertise), this competence is then not seen as sufficient for trust.

Our case stems from a discussion at Sida's Director General forum where Director Generals of Swedish public agencies meet regularly to discuss the implementation of the 2030 Agenda and to share experiences (Sida, 2019[6]). In 2017, SEPA and six other public agencies approached Sida with a project idea on how to strengthen climate reporting in development countries. When the project idea entered Sida and the deciding head of unit, was faced with a dilemma which concerned the agencies project expertise. The head of unit at Sida states that:

> We got some kind of letter of intent about this where they [the agencies] thought that ... well, what they said basically was "give us…" Well, I think it was 65 million SEK in that application. "… give us money and trust that we can do this well". And then, when this ball lands in my court, I have to say it felt really troubling because contrary to my intentions and willingness to trust, I found it difficult to do so in practice.

The initial reaction implied that Sida only decided on so called design support to the agencies, for them to elaborate a full proposal. Throughout the design support process, the agencies' ability and expertise was questioned. The agency representatives felt that they

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[6] https://www.sida.se/English/partners/Resources-for-specific-partner-groups/public-sector/swedish-public-agencies-and-the-2030-agenda/

were the ones having expert knowledge, that they were both well anchored in climate research and methods, and had knowledge and practical experience in calculating climate emissions. Sida's representative however felt that the agencies had limited experience and expertise in the local development country context and limited expertise in complex project management.

After one year, and approval of the inception report, the project eventually received a full project support of 40 MSEK. However, although the Swedish agencies had developed their proposal, and had now built a relation with Sida, trust in the agencies capacity to manage a complex aid projects had not been fully gained. The head of unit at Sida stated in an interview that:

> I have no difficulties trusting their knowledge and competence in their thematic areas. But, what matters [most] is the partners' capacity to actually manage capacity development, and also [having and knowing] the systems to actually manage by results...

The citation exemplifies that the Sida representative felt uncertain regarding the agencies' ability to manage the aid project (including general management knowledge as grounds for ability and trust assessment). Although the agencies were seen as strong in their domain specific expertise, their lack of management knowledge of aid projects implied that the Sida representative felt uncertain.

The citation *exemplifies a general finding of ours, that donors are put under multiple pressures to ensure that aid projects are properly handled*, that aid money is properly used, as well as to ensure that the recipients have competencies in multiple fields (thematic, project management, the local context, capacity development etc). *It is thus a combination of competencies they seek with a recipient. However, we have found that general expertise on how to manage aid projects tends to become higher prioritized by donors, than domain specific expertise,* probably due to high accountability pressure and expectations that aid funds should be properly handled. The recipient's ability is thus to a large extent based on management skills, knowledge in the project modality, expertise in RBM etc. In practice, domain or thematic expertise becomes less sought after and valued. As both a driver and a consequence,

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external experts are hired to support both donors and the aid recipients with fulfilling their (formal and informal) requirements for their respective roles.

The SEPA example however also exemplifies that <u>trust cannot be mandated</u>, despite that there is a demand for including partners with domain specific knowledge, the demands and pressure for proper organization is larger, implying that trust on domain specific knowledge cannot be mandated.

4.1.3   Selected partners ("VIP-partners")

Another way for donors to attempt to reduce the risks and uncertainties involved in assessing and selecting recipients is to set up criteria for the qualities, structures, processes etc. that donors wish for in a recipient. Using market inspired means of coordination, potential recipients may then *compete* to conform to this standardized ideal form, i.e. donors organise a process for selecting what we have chosen to call "VIP partners".

Setting up standardized criteria for what donors wish for in a recipient organization, *a first interpretation* of this may be to see it as a *sign of integrity on the part of the donor – treating all potential recipients equally.* This is particularly interesting in the case of public agencies like Sida as donors (compare table 2.1 in the methods chapter om institutional contexts and their ideal-typical characteristics). Public agencies, especially in the Nordic context, are expected to hold principles of equality very dear and high.

A second interpretation is that the donor (in this case Sida) wishes to draw on the market mechanism of competition and take on the role of the independent and distant buyer that is not embedded in any problematically close personal relationships with the recipient staff. The selected recipient organizations should therefore 'rise' from their particular features and domain specificities to become proper organizations in the sense that they meet the general expectations on organizational features (structures, processes etc) that signal how *similar* they are to a general standard for good recipients. For example that the recipient is capable of handling aid money – in a

way that can be controlled and comprehended at a distance by those far from the peculiarities of the local context and its domain specificities which are typically difficult to understand by 'outsiders'. *A third interpretation could be that this is done due to the large number of actors* in the development aid field, the disbursement pressure, and that VIP-partners are considered as being able to channel aid funds quicker and more effectively. A fourth is that this is done with the rationale or the felt need by the donor to move out risks, a preferred choice is to move the risks to a selected intermediary.

However, whilst it may be benefial from the donor's perspective to channel aid funds to certain VIP-partners, a consequence from the recipients side is that it is enourmously costly to invest in becoming a VIP-partner, and having all structures required in place. Therefore, the process tends to benefit large and already financially strong organizations. Smaller organizations who do not have resources to invest in theis process tend to fall out.

Despite ambitions to treat organizations equally, we have found that the VIP *selection* process looks a bit different depending on the actor group. For example, while "VIPs" among public agencies are mainly selected by the MFA, and where a VIP status signifies to receive aid funds directly in their budget, civil society organizations are to *compete* to become so called Strategic Partner Organisation's. Thus, *a downside of the donor's selecting partners is isomorphism and conformity on the part of recipients: expectations that the recipients particular institutional and domain specificities and expertise should be downplayed as these are seen as less important when donors judge recipients' abilities (and trustworthiness) – and hence less likely to grant recipients funding.*

As an example of a VIP-selection process, in its donor role, for civil society organizations, Sida uses different procedures for choosing their selected partners, depending on the domain specificity of the recipient in question. For civil society organizations, Sida has long had a list of so called frame organizations. The name frame

organizations has however recently (in May 2019) been changed to Strategic Partner Organizations[7] (SPO).

In order to become an SPO, certain formal criteria apply; 1) the organization must be engaged with poverty reduction in developing countries, 2) the organization is a so called "forward transferor" (vidareförmedlare) of aid funds to developing countries, 3) the organization is actively developing its methods, and integrates different perspectives and values in its work, 4) the organization has a capacity to, based on own experience and competence, hold a dialogue with Sida on current issues regarding the role of civil society in development cooperation, 5) the organization is based in Sweden and has solid financed that allows it to allocate at least 10% of co-funding (egeninsats), 6) the organization is anchored in the Swedish civil society (www.sida.se).

Once the organization has met these six criteria, it may be selected as an SPO. Becoming an SPO – by conforming to these six criteria - means less control requirements and gaining a higher recipient status. From the donor's perspective (Sida), it seems to us that it is the formal rules (criteria) themselves – the formal construction of an SPO – that is the source of trust and that this formal SPO construction is then transferred onto the recipients who gain this status (compare Chapter 3.8 about *trust transfers*).

Decisions about all Swedish civil society organizations who are not eligible as SPOs (typically the smaller NGOs) are delegated from Sida to one of two particular organizations. These two, ForumCiv and Swedish Mission Council, have, in turn, their own funding requirements.

It is apparent that SPOs have a sort of "VIP position" in aid to civil society organizations and that it is highly regarded to gain this status. In one of our cases, RFSU (the Swedish Federation for Sexual Education) used a fair amount of the profit gained from its fully-owned business (condom factory) to make investments in the organization's ability to conform to the many detailed requirements

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[7] https://www.sida.se/Svenska/aktuellt-och-press/nyheter/2019/maj-2019/intresseanmalan-for-strategiskt-partnerskap-med-sida/

in order to become an SPO (Alexius & Segnestam Larsson, 2019). The Federation has gone to great lengths and accepted much additional administration from 2007 onward when starting the application process to eventually reaching the attractive status as a Sida SPO (at that time called a frame organization) in 2009, with first funded projects starting in 2010. For this to happen, two controllers had to be employed, consultants and auditors had to be consulted and several number of hours of administrative work was put into the application process. As commented by the Secretary General of RFSU:

> We ran like scalded rats the first year. We feel that it was audits upon audits, so many new systems and processes ... a big leap for us indeed.

No less than 29 appendices and over 60 application documents later, as requested by the application guide line (Sida, 2007), the Secretary General and Controller manager at RFSU both concluded that the federation would never have been able to follow through this process, had it not had access to its own company revenue.

To drop out from the list and no any longer have the status of a selected partner among the recipients is a scary thought for most of the SPOs. In 2018, two of the previous SPOs, My Right and PMU, lost their SPO status. According to our interviewee at Union to Union who feared for a while that the same was going to happen to Union to Union as well: "it is known by the whole frame-circuit, that this is how they (Sida) do when they want to get rid of an organization". The interviewee was of the opinion that Sida tends to "focus on some Internal Control System issues and say "you have a bad ICS" rather than having a dialogue. "And then it is *fait accompli*". This indicates that when one of the organizations looses its selected partner status this also creates turbulence among the other selected partners and raise questions whether other selected partners are indeed trusted or not by the donor (Sida). In this way, group socialization among the selected partners in a certain institutional context takes place and contributes to shaping the actors according to the ideal of the proper organization (compare figure 1.1).

4.1.4 The Institutional context

A core assumption behind this study has been that it is a political objective to safeguard *diversity* in honouring the distinction between aid organized in different institutional contexts - the general context of the different "actor groups" as defined by Sida: public sector/agencies, private/market sector/ companies, civil society/associations and academia/universities (see methods chapter and table 2.1). Embedded in this political objective is the idea that these different institutional contexts and their ideal-typical types of organizations (the agency, the company, the association and the university) have particular conditions and capabilities that enable them to contribute to aid in *different* ways.

The core idea is to, on a grand scale, reach more valuable results and effects, by allowing and encouraging a multitude of diverse actors from different institutional contexts to join forces against poverty. The basic assumption is that an agency cannot do for the poor what a company can – and vice versa. Similarly, an NGO/association cannot do for the poor what a university can – and vice versa. *The diversity amongst the actors in the aid net is commonly described as a key to successful aid. We have however found an underlying conflict in the field concerning the degree to which this diversity is indeed respected and encouraged, and if so, how.*

Our second observation is that, despite the isomorphic tendencies seen in how general control systems, management technologies, structures and processes are spread across the wider aid field by way of both bureaucracy (donors demanding conformity), market mechanisms (competing for VIP status) and professionalism (the spread of certain general management expertise, largely via external consultants), *different money norms apply to recipients of different legal forms* (figure 2.1). The money norms can be understood as have evolved due to the different aims with the cooperation with different actor groups.

Money does not only come with a nominal value. There is also a *social meaning* of money to consider (Zelizer, 1994). This concept – of the *social* meaning of money - acknowledges that society has certain norms about the appropriate generation and proper use of

money, particularly for larger sums (Cowan & Rizzo, 1995). The normative or moral underpinning of money may change with a change of context. For example, surplus from an NGO may have a different moral status than does profits from a private firm. *Large* nominal sums may be more morally sensitive then smaller sums and the same nominal amount is will be differently perceived depending on its *generation* and *use* (where shared norms influence our view on, for example whether the money has been "wasted" or "well spent").

In this study, the generation of the aid money is the same: Swedish tax money channeled via the public agency Sida. However, we have found interesting differences in terms of the use of this money. These findings are relevant here as they influence donors' trustworthiness assessments of different recipients. In short: there are norms (codified in rules) that assume that different recipients should handle aid money differently. Although we unfortunately do not have the space to elaborate on this issue to any great extent in this report, the different money norms found in our data are presented and exemplified briefly below.

A general principle or money norm for civil society support is that aid money should leave the Swedish organization and the ideal use is seen to be to hand over as much as possible to the final recipients.

As for Swedish agencies, the overall objective of the support is to export Swedish competence and domain specific knowledge to developing countries. This implies also a quite different money norm stating that money should instead stay with the Swedish agency and be used for exporting Swedish competence or domain specific knowledge to developing countries. This kind of support assumes that that Swedish agencies knowledge is known and demanded by recipient collaborators abroad. To illustrate the implications, the partners collaborating with SEPA (Naturvårdsverket) are assumed to already have their projects financed, which turns out to not always be the case. Thus, our interviewee at SEPA told us that, since the partners sometimes do not have funding for their projects, the Swedish agencies have, instead of supporting their counterparts with their domain specific knowledge, they have used their time in the projects to supporting their counterparts in their fundraising ambitions, which again, implies a lot of management related

competence in how to become a proper organization, eligible for donor funding.

As for the private sector, the rationale behind the support to private sector actors is that funding should be catalytic, that is that *small* amounts of aid money (Cowan & Rizzo, 1995) should catalyse larger funding from private sector investors to objectives which are believed to support poverty reduction in the end, such as the SDGs (see Johansson de Silva et al. 2015). In contrast to civil society, where the goal could be civil society organization as such, private sector actors are thus the means to achieving development results. *The money norm for how public aid money is used in relation to companies in the private/market sector, states thus – to the contrary of the one for agencies – that no money should stay with the company.*

Despite that private companies typically have a good reputation in handling money flows (consider for example that accounting systems and development in accounting mainly is driven by private sector actors), companies are thus not trusted to handle public aid funds. The reason why this is so is that private sector actors should not gain competitive advantages in the market when participating in aid projects, a principle which has been contested, since it is argued that they have it anyway (Johansson de Silva, 2015; Kwakkenbos, 2012; Resare, 2011).

For Sida, to involve private sector actors in aid, but still keep them at a distance by not providing any financing since this could disturb the market, has proven to be troublesome and foremost, to require a lot of relation building and building of trust for the aid form. Our respondent at Volvo for example told us that he needed to spend a lot of time on relation building within the Volvo concern to get a buy-in for the Sida-Unido project which he says has been very "complicated" and "messy". The interviewee told us at that the collaboration might not be worthwhile in the end, due to all these complications. Also, from the donors' side, our interviewees have told us that the involvement of the private sector as an actor in aid has been difficult and has required a lot of trust building for the aid form as such (compare section 4.3.1). One of the ways in which this has been done is through creating a specific network, the Swedish

Leadership for Sustainable Development, a network chaired by Sida and to which some large companies are invited.

Finally, within research aid, and similar to civil society organizations, the main money norm is that financing should foremost go to the university partners in the South. However, we were told by our interviewees at Sida that since aid typically is provided to organizations, they have needed to struggle to find acceptance for research aid going to individual researchers, during for example a doctoral program, in developing countries. According to our interviewee at Sidas Research Unit, this type of aid has been seen as a "luxury" compared aid to the other actor groups. However, it seems that research organizations are, more than the other domains, trusted as partners who *can* and *should* handle aid money.

In informal discussions with representatives for the four actor groups, it is obvious that the representatives themselves find that different norms apply to the different actor groups. A representative for cooperation with the private sector for example argued that more risk taking was allowed in the cooperation with civil society than in cooperation with the private sector and that civil society organizing (for democracy etc) could be seen as a goal itself for development aid.

All actor groups seem to be aware of the fact that too much rules and regulations can cause harm and be counterproductive to the objective of maintaining and supporting the specificities in the different institutional context. All thus have strategies in how to "safeguard" the final recipient/or the goal from too much oversight and rules. A common approach is then to create new intermediaries, or mini-Sidas, who handle the administrative requirements. Within the private sector the African Enterprice Challenge Fund (AECF) is one of these.

Leaving the money norms behind, *the different needs for trust may also be explained with reference to differences in dependency and vulnerability. Some recipients are simply more dependent and vulnerable than others.* Civil society organizations and research organizations are for examply often highly dependent on donor funds whereas public agencies and private sector actors are less dependent. It seems to us that at the

centre of discussions on trust in the aid field is the *donor's* trust in the recipient. This is quite reasonable since the donor is ultimately responsible for the decision to finance a certain aid intervention. In addition, many recipients are highly dependent on funding from a single donor. We have seen that recipients worry quite a bit that the donor will lose trust or even come to distrust them. If such an assessment influences the donor's funding decision, and the recipient in question is depending on the single donor's funding, this may even mean the end of the recipient organization (or at least the end of its aid operations).

However, depending on their institutional context recipients are different. One difference concerns the degree of dependency/inequality visavi the donor. Whereas civil society organizations in general are highly dependent on donor funds, there exist variances. Some recipients have a very diverse portfolio of income, like RFSU (The Swedish Federation for Sexual Education), a civil society organization that has substantial amounts of income from its own condom factory (Alexius & Segnestam Larsson, 2019) and a unique competence in sexual education that makes the organization less dependent and vulnerable in relation to the donor.

Concerning the institutional differences, private companies, like Volvo, are generally less dependent on the donor since they are market actors and not allowed to handle aid funds. The same goes for public agencies where foreign aid is typically only a very small part of their operations. Following this reasoning, recipients that are civil society organizations (like Union to Union) or research organizations (like ISP) are most likely to be highly dependent on the donor (and its trust). Such *highly dependent recipients may distrust donors and still keep up the relation as best they can, for fear of going "out of business".*

As argued by Pomerantz (2004), both parties, donors and recipients, are (always) needed and hence are mutually dependent in an aid relation. Pomerantz (2004) argues that the aid recipient's power lies in that they have much more knowledge and information about the local context. However, we argue that at times, donors are the ones more dependent and hence more vulnerable. In such cases, recipient's may "afford" to let their trustworthiness assessment of

the donor influence the decision to stay or make an exit from the relation. *Moreover, while Pomerantz (ibid) goes on to assume that this domain specific knowledge will be needed and highly assessed by the donor, our studies have raised the question to what degree this is actually the case.*

A third general observation concerning institutional context concerns a deteected suspicion of what we call "unorthodox organizing". In short, we have found reason to argue that organized action that does not fulfill the requirements for being considered a formal organization, (let alone a "proper" one) *is met with either confusion, distrust or outspoken expectations to conform to the ideal* – from both donors and recipients of aid[8]. *Partial organizations* (Ahrne & Brunsson eds 2019) common among private companies (see also Lernborg, 2019) and *meta-organizations* (Ahrne & Brunsson, 2008) are examples of such unorthodox organizations that are less trusted than "proper" organizations.

Union to Union is an example of a meta-meta organization that has long struggled to defend its un-orthodox way of organizing. With 30 years of experience, a representative the union organizations PSI (Public Service International) and IUL (United food, farm and hotel workers worldwide), as part of our Union to Union-case, defends the particular democratic structures of the union movement and claims that this meta-organization is fundamental to long-term relations and results:

> Transnational union organizing carries costs. It cannot be avoided… But they [funders] don't realize … what is completely lost [in their view and assessment], is the coordination aspect. For there to be effective project… the decisions about them and

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[8] However, the topic on how and when to support "informal" organizations is not new in aid. During the 80's and 90's aid was for e.g. provided to informal organizations, such as the African National Congress during apartheid. It seems however that the NPM trends have implied that aid processes during the past decades have been more formalised, and that proper organizations are favoured. At the time of writing up this report in early summer of 2020, we have learnt that there are re-newed discussions underway at Sida on this issue, for example on how to assess what they call "informal" organizations, which, in theoretical terms seems to translate fairly well in partial organization or network.

prioritizing are key. Decisions are taken at the congresses where the Swedish member unions participate and have great influence. This is where the priorities are set. This is where one also sees who need additional support in the form of projects. In order for projects not to stand alone, they must concern something really central to union operations. We do not want to see ad hoc project that don't serve any core union purpose. This coordination... is really important if you are to achieve results.

The disappointment towards the donor in this case comes from a questioned ability (to organize as a meta-organization) as well as a difference in what counts as a result (compare section 4.1.6 below).

4.1.5 Domain specific knowledge

Another assumption (related to the institutional context), underlying the official organization of the aid field, states that *specific recipient domains*, such as a union work, sexual education, car manufacturing or repair, environmental protection or chemistry research, should be respected and protected for their different kinds of thematic or *domain specific knowledge* and the value these bring to aid in general. As discussed in a previous section, recipients of aid often assume that their specific domain specific knowledge makes up a prominent part of their ability – a critical factor when any donor assesses the recipient organization's trustworthiness.

However, *we have found that general management expertise tends to become prioritized when a donor assesses the trustworthiness of a recipient.* Why then, is this?

When analyzing our data, *we find that donors often are expected to demonstrate (full) control* of very many fields. As said previously, donors are both to demonstrate that projects are properly handled and that aid money is properly used but also to ensure that the recipients have competencies in multiple fields (thematic, project management, the local context, capacity development etc). Many donors handle more money today but with less administrative

resources, and this has perhaps led to that the 'how' (doing things right) has taken over the 'what' (doing the right things) i.e. mastering both domain specific and thematic knowledge. *We have found that general expertise in how to manage aid projects tends to be more prioritized and higher valued by donors, than domain specific expertise.* This view is supported by an experienced union representative:

> What I have discovered is that there is absolutely no… or, very little, knowledge about the unions today within Sida. Frankly, I am chocked!

A consequence of this view might be that a donor who accepts and communicates vulnerability (which is a prerequisite for trust, see chapter 3) or even dependence in relation to its recipients has departed from its ideal-typical role because it is no longer in control. A consequence might be that trust is not created between the parties. Demonstrating vulnerability is a risky and uncomfortable option for the donor who opts instead for general management expertise (such as organizational and RBM expertise), which, according our argument here, is easier to comprehend and control. In addition, the same body of knowledge may be used across different institutional contexts and domains.

Thus, *rather than valuing and trusting in universities, agencies, unions and car companies, the ideal of the "proper organization" is often used as a prominent source of trust, one which donors transfer onto recipients.*

As noted in the literature, the basis of managing and coordinating universities is collegiality rather than management by results (Engwall, 2016; Sahlin & Eriksson-Zetterquist, 2016). But how should a donor like Sida handle the fact that successful results from research funding typically cannot be predicted? *We have found that in rhetoric, the benefits of other forms of coordination (such as collegiality) can indeed be valued by a donor. But this may shift the power balance over to the recipient, where the donor – not in full control – becomes less confident about fulfilling its role.*

As an illustration, one program officer at Sida expressed that he felt frustrated when working with Swedish agencies since Sida and the Swedish agencies legally were "agencies at the same level", both of

them expected to carry out government decisions. The head of unit responsible for the Swedish agencies stated that:

> I experience it, that other Swedish agencies don't understand Sida's core competence. They think that they know this stuff, know how to work in developing countries, more or less like we do. They don't see that Sida contributes with anything special. We are just a hurdle they must overcome to get the money. Preferably they would want the aid money directly, and the fact that Sida sits on it makes them frustrated.

The Sida regulations have sometimes been seen as a sign of distrust towards the agencies. A program officer at one of the Swedish agencies for example stated that:

> We are actually public agencies; we don't have our own interest in this. We do not make money on this […] Sometimes we feel that Sida should perhaps trust us more than they do.

The case exemplifies that in practice, both the donor and the recipient of aid may experience a lack of respect and understanding from their counterpart, concerning specific contributions and expertise.

Another telling example of the frustration felt by recipients when their domain specificities (and unorthodox ways of organizing) are not acknowledged, comes from Union to Union that proudly presents and defends the democratic coordination of the global union movement on its webpage[9]:

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[9] https://www.uniontounion.org/en/about, 190308.

> The work is carried out in existing independent trade union organizations. It is precisely the large international network of free, democratic trade unions and their global federations that makes trade development cooperation possible.

Union to Union tells us how they had experienced, over time, the Sida's propensity to trust in the specific domain of the union movement had drifted to a propensity to trust in "proper" organizations with a clear mandate and responsibility. This in turn had turned the complex intermediary (meta-organization) structure of the global unions into an obstacle, or in fact a threat to the legitimacy of aid projects carried out in this specific domain.

The Sida archive on Union to Union shows a lengthy discussion between the parties based on a difficulty to grasp complexity and to assess risks and results stemming from "deviating features" of Union to Union (deviating as compared to the rational principal-agent ideal of the 'proper organization'), has required a very large number of controls, such as spot check reports, organizational assessments, audits and evaluations over the years.

Although some of these additional controls may be explained by actual mishaps, we suggest that, for the most part, the increased control may be referred to *isomorphic* pressure (Meyer & Rowan, 1977) that is confusion concerning on the donors part concerning the recipient's deliberate and defended deviation from the ideal-typical expectations on what a recipient organization should be like. And these differences make Sida extra cautious in its relation and assessment of Union to Union. As stated by the former Secretary General (about to leave when interviewed):

> They [staff at Sida] have come to the conclusion that we do not fit in as a frame organization... our rules and our movement are not ... well ... we are an odd bird.

In the Sida appraisal report on Union to Union (Sida, 2018c), Union to Union is for example asked to "decrease the number of links in the contract chain to ensure that most of the funds get as far as

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possible, and to reduce transaction costs". Sida calls for a "clear structure" of contracting parties where the roles of principals and agents are accentuated, rather than the role of the intermediary, which throughout the same appraisal report is treated with some suspicion as a potential driver of "unnecessary" transaction costs (p. 17). For Union to Union, this is difficult since they see their success factor as being that they actually are organized the way they are. The former Secretary General stated that:

> I mean, one would think that a union… representative democracy must be the most important aspect. Making sure it is in place. But that is not what is most important, it is the administrative processes and routines. It is the ticking of the boxes… The perfect systems. […] And for me who is in the midst of this, it is incredibly painful.

The former secretary general feels that too much time is devoted to organizational structures and potential administrative risks when the really alarming problems at stake are neither weak ownership and coordination nor money that could disappear.

Where Union to Union saw a single union movement aid chain, Sida saw different organizations, contracting parties, with unclear legal status (compare figure 1.1 on the expectations on clear boundaries, autonomy and hierarchy). The unions could not be trusted per se. From the recipient's perspective, the informal coordination was not mutually respectful but rather characterized by a power demonstration on the part of the donor.

Sida refers to previous consultant reports that call for clarity and simplification of the organization. In the Sida appraisal report on Union to Union (Sida, 2018), this advice is repeated in numerous places (such as these on p. 9, p. 14) and we get the impression of a deteriorating trustor-trustee relation:

> Union to Union has long had difficulties in providing a clear picture of the structure, governance and control of the operations. In addition, roles and responsibilities have been unclear. Finally, the

management of the own contribution has differentiated from other frameworks' handling and caused the lack of clarity in accounting and follow-up of the operations.

When looking at the situation from the donor's (in this case Sida) side we hence ones again find the perceived necessity for the donor to create and support "proper organizations" and how this practice conflicts with the ideal of diversity.

4.1.6 Results

As stated in chapter 3.4. results and performance are often talked about as *the* factors that should determine whether a recipient organization receives further funding. Management technologies and measures can often function as mediators for reducing complexity and distance (Czarniawska & Mouritsen, 2009; Cooper, 1992; Robson, 1992). In addition, there is a common idea in many uncertain contexts that measurements and quantifiable information provide "precision", "rigor" and "objectivity", beyond our perception (ibid).

Our case data indicates that outcome information which tends to be more complex sometimes may at times be toned down or even ignored in processes of trustworthiness assessment. We have seen that *complex results information may even confuse rather than qualify and hence does not always result in a higher trust assessment from a donor.* Considering the frequent talk about the importance of aid funds contributing to long term outcomes and impact, we have become interested in digging deeper into why this is so.

We found this scenario to be true both within the ISP case and the Union to Union case.

In the ISP case, evaluation findings reviewing ISPs program have all found that the approach has been highly supportive in achieving the programs results 1977, 1994, 2001, 2002, 2011 and 2018 (see Leide, Edqvist & Karlén, 1977; Edqvist, Abegaz, Sing & Noller, 1994; Wield, 2001; Selin Lindgren & Wendiga, 2002; GHD Pty Ltd, 2011;

Pain & Carneiro, 2018). However, despite that ISP received highly successful evaluation results the organization did not feel that that its provision of positive evaluation results was what mattered the most in further assessments of future support.

Similarly, the former Secretary General for Union to Union stated that:

> I think that the results evaluations speak very much for our cause. But that seems unimportant. They [the donor Sida] are like "well, well, you have reached results…. but is it really cost efficient to organize in this or that way…

The citation exemplifies that despite that the evaluations found that Union to Union in this case reached positive results, they were questioned as regards to *how they organize* operations, for example concerning their cost effectiveness in achieving the results.

Except for trust transfer from the results technologies themselves, our findings suggest that what tends to add to the up-side of a recipient's ability assessment is information on outputs and results that is simplified and hence easy to understand. Our cases show that the organizations have learnt to pass on such simplified results information. If one does not provide results information in a format fully understood by the donor (as when ISP was criticized in an evaluation in 2011 see GHD Pty Ltd, 2011), the evaluator and the funder may react negatively.

The former Sida Program Officer for ISP tells us that Sida uses the simplified results from ISP as input when the donor, in turn, reports back to the Ministry for Foreign Affairs (in Sida's role as a recipient of aid). According to our interviewee at Sida, the Ministry for Foreign Affairs has not shown any reaction to the numbers, the Program Officer's perception is that no reaction should be seen as a sign of satisfaction, or at least having fulfilled a hygiene factor. The example shows that the numbers are seldom used for direct governing purposes but they are more of a ritual, a hygiene factor which is necessary but not sufficient for sustained trust in the relation.

From a classic efficiency perspective, it is commonly assumed that the actual results will grant the organization legitimacy, and trust thanks to the proven ability as a producer of results. However, *our cases indicate that sometimes, giving too complex results information, even when the information is accurate and positive, could have a negative outcome for the recipient*, since it could confuse rather than clarify matters if the donor does not have enough context or domain specific knowledge to assess this information.

Our second finding on results concerns results technologies as approximations for actual outcomes and effects. As discussed in 4.1.1 the management technologies are often considered as a must have for the donors and recipients in the field. This indicates that the form sometimes is considered to be more important than the content. This implies a danger, since having a legitimate form for one's results management can then be interpreted as a valid approximation (proxy) for actual results.

This could of course be a problem, but more often it seems to be a pragmatic solution to the uncertainty of the field and its operations. This means that *having the technology in place is often interpreted as a result in itself and having the technology in place seems to give the organization a higher trustworthiness assessment in terms of benevolence* (the recipient demonstrates a willingness to adhere to the technological standard to make life easier for the donor) and ability (in terms of general management skills). *Moreover, this has the implication that future outcomes are often extrapolated from today's legitimate technology and general management skills.* What this means is that a proper form (legitimate technology) today is assumed to be linked to good outcomes in the future. In both the ISP and Union to Union cases we found a comparative lack of interest from the donor (Sida) to actually learn and follow up how these different management technologies were later used by the recipient and if/how they affected the results achieved. As a head of unit at Sida puts it: "it had been much more difficult if we had focused more on the assessments of what they [the recipients] actually do."

Our third finding on results picks up on a difference in "results cultures" and what counts as results among institutional contexts and their ideal-typical types of organizations. In the institutional context of the market and

the company case of Volvo, Sida for example considered that organizing a meeting with different recipients counted as a project result, whereas the recipient companies (among them Volvo) were puzzled by this – after all it was "only" a meeting, not a result. This finding goes in line with a lot of literature where it has been discussed that donors and recipients have different understandings of what is a result (see for example Brolin, 2017; Vähämäki et al., 2011; Vähämäki, 2017; Eyben, 2010).

4.1.7   Interpersonal relations

In the introduction to this report, we discussed a number of reasons why trust in interpersonal relations would seldom be sufficient as a source of trust, in a field of distances, inequality and complexity. It turns out that *insufficient* is the key word here. Our cases indicate that interpersonal relations often indeed are sources of trust, but they are not prominent ones. Or at least, not officially so.

Our first finding considers the tendency to officially 'hide' or downplay interpersonal relations as sources of trust despite the fact in parallel with the interorganizational relationships, there are typically several interpersonal relationships between key employees at the donor and recipient organization (see Eyben, 2010).

In line with Naquin & Paulson, 2003; Lu et al., 2017 and others who argue that face-to-face contacts often support trust building the most, we have found that *good interpersonal relationships make up a fundamental cornerstone for maintaining trust in the aid nets.*

All of our cases, including Sida itself in its relation to the Ministry for Foreign Affairs, have illustrated that what recipients consider to be success factors for aid projects include good personal relations. However*, we have found that that donors seldom mention the role of interpersonal trust and key individuals as sources of trust. This hesitation may be due to risks of scams such as corruption or favoritism. Donor representatives must not be naïve and 'over trusting' (Laroche et al., 2019). Admitting *vulnerability* is not easily done when the idealized role of the donor speaks of rationality and control.

The hesitation to admit and accept key individuals as sources of trust may also spring from critique concerning *transaction costs* in the aid net. It is not a secret, yet seldom proudly announced, that informal face-to-face coordination requires quite a bit of time – and travel costs, if the recipient organization is abroad and Skype meetings are deemed to be insufficient (see section below on what is trusted by recipients).

Our third finding on interpersonal relations concerns a difference between donors at a distance and donors closer to the specific domain context. According to our tentative analysis: *the closer a donor gets to the final recipient or "action", the more value is placed in key individuals and interpersonal relationships as prominent sources of trust.* Let us illustrate this point with a longer example.

One of our interviewees is a boundary spanner who alternates daily between the recipient and donor roles. She tells us that she has around 115 travel days a year. She is continuously in contact with other key individuals and engaged in building and maintaining the different relations in the network. We find that a common outlook among these more experienced individuals in the midst of the web of aid relations is to navigate by judgment (Honig, 2018) between formal and informal ways of coordinating aid projects.

To these individuals, responding to the complexity of the global union movement or decades of research institution building in academia is not a question of trust or control but one of trust transferred from impersonal and personal sources of trust. These key individuals handle the three dilemmas of distance, inequality and complexity and generate new paths forward by active use of their multivocal ability to bridge interests and potentially colliding worlds (Alexius & Furusten, 2019). They manage to reduce the geographical distance by traveling hundreds of days a year and they shrink the cultural distance by embedding themselves in the local cultures, its logics and "results languages". In addition, they are often deeply rooted in the particular norms and core values, both of the institutional context and the particular geographical areas they operate in.

Our interviewees tell us that being close, nurturing long relations and taking the time and effort to understanding and respecting the local domain particularities are keys to interpersonal trust which, in turn, they believe is a key to good results. As a case in point, they tell us that the "Logframe language" has to be translated into local results language to be contextualized and made sense of. As described by a representative with over 30 years in union aid coordination, currently working at the global and regional levels with the GUFs IUL and PSI:

> It [the Logframe] is so far from their [local domain] reality. I think of one of our fantastic regional representatives of Domestic Workers in Africa. She has tried to explain [the Logframe] to members. […] And she takes the example, when it comes to planning and control, that "Every day when you are cooking you need to plan. And then, you go shopping in the market. What do you do then?" And then the members start to think "Yes, we have to know how much we should have and what food we should cook and how much we should have of each ingredient". She takes these really concrete examples and then they get it. [···] Translation is key, you just have to translate. Because these bureaucratic forms, they are not democratic. You can't put them into the hands of our member organizations… It is like "the emperor's new clothes".

The program coordinator at Kommunal tells us about her solid union background and how knowing the union logics inside and out gives her an advantage as the recipients of funds come to respect her and find her trustworthy and knowledgeable in general union operations. From her perspective, general NGO-knowledge or knowledge in RBM is not enough, deep knowledge on the union logic is crucial to understanding the project context. In this regard, she mentions that a year-long and very thorough introduction to her current position by her predecessor has been fundamental:

She was legitimate to these organizations, she had great trust, and when she was the one to introduce me, I felt that I got a head start in these relationships and contacts.

A core theme in the interviews with union representatives in the field is there strong belief, based on own experiences, in the added value of intermediaries in coordinating for good results.

Similarly, one of the key success factors of ISP's Stick-man model is the identification of a strong and charismatic leader in the aid context who supports the relationship and acts as a boundary spanner between the organizations. Several evaluations done on the ISP program and the ISP Stick-man model have found the program to be highly successful, where one of the key factors is the continuous and planned trust building relations in between few key persons. In fact, the Stick-man model was later on mimicked by the rest of the official Swedish research cooperation with developing countries (Kjellqvist, 2013).

Our fourth finding on interpersonal relations (which was mentioned briefly in section 4.1.3 on external experts and expertise) is that *long lasting personal relations seems to be more likely to create conditions for trust-building and trust maintenance.* If, by experience, one learns that trusted key individuals tend to leave the relation (change jobs or positions), there will be less propensity to use interpersonal relations as a prominent source of trust.

For example, all of our cases show that the relations with the Program Officer and line manager at Sida are of utmost importance to the recipients of aid. The recipients continuously analyze and discuss how they should relate to these individuals and try to keep as close ties with them as possible. Directly when a program officer is changed, the recipients act and set up meetings and want to start relation building with the new person on the job.

As explained by a Union to Union interviewee:

It has changed a lot during my time, since the union development programs begun in the end of the 70s. The main change is that there is a huge turnover of staff at Sida which has consequences… I know that Union to Union has complained and explained how much time it takes to educate and inform new program officers at Sida… There is constant change so it takes enormous amounts of time. You have to start over from scratch each time. And it takes a really long time before the person learns how things work, what the ambitions are etc. And then, the person quits or changes position.

4.2 A comparative analysis of donor and recipient views on sources of trust

When summarizing our findings on the sources of trust, based on the case studies, we conclude tentatively that the trust patterns are different for the two main roles – the donor and the recipient – that all of our case organizations alternate between. Our cases show the following idea-typical views:

Table 4.1 The roles of the donor and the recipient have different trust patterns

Sources of trust	Donor view	Recipient view
Control systems and Management technologies	"We trust in general technologies as proxies and extrapolate results from these structures and processes"	"We trust in these to grant us legitimacy and resources. We learn to translate local knowledge and results into these general systems"
External experts and expertise (in general management)	"We trust in general and independent experts and their knowledge"	"We do not trust in external experts that do not know our core operations"
VIP status	"We need organization standards to facilitate our handling of actors"	"We trade our unique form for more funds and potentially freedom of content"

Sources of trust	Donor view	Recipient view
Institutional context	"Institutional context is important. However, we need conformity to be able to compare and control and to be efficient"	"The context must be respected for the sake of democracy/diversity and good results"
Domain specificities	"Domain specificities are important, however we do not have capacity and resources to create full understanding of them"	"This is our DNA, what we know, the core of the project"
Results	"We cannot verify their locally embedded results. We need simplified, standardized results"	"We know that our actions contribute to outcomes and effects, however this is not what counts in the assessment of us"
Interpersonal relations	"Interpersonal relations are important but risky to acknowledge as prominent source of trust"	"Interpersonal relations are important but risky and time-consuming, for example due to high donor staff turnover"

In short, table 4.1 suggests that while donors willingly transfer trust from control systems and management technologies, external experts (in general management) and the VIP status, these are also seen as sources of trust by the recipients, but not to the same degree.

In contrast, while organizations in the recipient role expect their trustworthiness to be largely based on their institutional context and domain specific knowledge experience and more complex results, organizations in the donor role do not see these as prominent (enough) sources of trust. Parties in both roles find interpersonal relations to be important but an insufficient source of trust that needs to be complemented with other sources.

We suggest that the less prominent status of the latter sources of trust may be due to conflicting views between donors and recipients on how to assess them, that is, conflicting views on whether these sources of trust enhance the ability, benevolence and integrity of the trustee or not. These conflicting views, in turn, may be traced back to differences in the institutionalized social scripts for donors and recipients, hence society's different expectations on organizations who take on these roles.

5   Discussion and conclusions

The aim of this study has been to learn more about when and how trust becomes a substitute for certainty and what makes organizations in the donor and recipient roles of aid actually trust one another.

In chapter 1, we discussed that uncertainty requires trust and that in an uncertain setting such as that of development aid, trust becomes a precious substitute for the much sought after certainty. While trust could be seen as a necessity for all actions and all relations, the three particular coordination conditions: distance, inequality and complexity present challenges to building and sustaining trust. In our case studies we have therefore sought to understand who trusts whom on what grounds. We have focused on the two main roles in aid; the one of the donor and the one of the recipient. In this final chapter we discuss our main findings in relation to the literature presented in chapter 1 and 3.

The three field conditions; distance, inequality and complexity, help to determine not only the need for trust to coordinate aid relations, but also *how* trust is assessed, maintained, at times lost and then hopefully restored. Our analysis indicates that the *greater* the perceived distance, inequality and complexity – the *lower* the chances are to achieve certainty, which in turn implies a *greater* need for trust to bridge this gap. Our data also suggests that the *greater* the perceived distance, inequality and complexity, the more likely is trust transference from an *impersonal* source of trust, such as a management technology, a particular legitimate organizational structure or process. However, we welcome further research to test and elaborate these tentative results on larger samples of data.

As stated in the introductory chapter, we would like to remind the readers that, perhaps counterintuitive to many, perceptions of distance, inequality and complexity may also arise between partners in the *same* geographical context or even the same city in fact. It is our impression that unfortunately yet understandably, geographical and cultural differences are overemphasized in development aid literarure while there is less nuanced understandings of differences

that derive from social roles (such as those of donor and recipients discussed here) or other sources. In addition, smaller and less wealthy organizations, or in other terms less powerful and more dependent recipients, are present in every context. Such conditions are hence likely to affect trust patterns also among partners in a "high-trust nation" like Sweden.

5.1 The role defines perceptions of control or trust

As discussed in chapter 1 and 3, previous literature has shown that measures such as formal contracts and control technologies, which typically are associated with control, may foster trust but also create distrust (Poppo, 2002; Verburg et al., 2019). Previous literature has argued that the nature of the control technology (Schepker et al., 2014) or its design (Verburg et al., 2019) can determine whether a specific control technology is perceived as supporting trust or distrust (see chapter 3 for details).

Our argument, based on our empirical case studies discussed in chapter 4, is that the *institutionalized expectations and social scripts* embedded in different roles – in this case the roles of donor and recipient – contribute to explain differences in what is trusted or not trusted by a trustor. This implies, for example, that the very same control technology can be seen as a prominent source of trust by the donor, whereas the recipient may perceive the decision to implement it as a sign of distrust.

However, our cases have also interestingly indicated that the *same* organization may perceive the *same* control technology *differently*, depending on the role it is presently in. Institutionalized (taken-for granted) expectations and social scrips on how to be and act as a donor or recipient thus influence whether a technology will be seen as a source of trust or a sign of distrust. Based on these insights, we contribute to previous findings by Schepker et al., (2014) and Verburg et al., (2019) by concluding that *it is not the case that certain control technologies per se always increase or decrease trust, but that its impact on trust depends on the perspective/role.*

The constant switching of roles may explain a general finding of ours that organizations in their role as recipient, often perceive that they need less control technologies and oversight, while when they act in the role of a donor, they wish to add on more control measures and oversight. This means that we have found a reason why control measures and oversight may increase in the aid chains, from the first donor to the final recipients. Control may thus lead to more control (see Laurén, 2019).

However, since the organizations, in their different roles experience control differently, *increasing oversight, control technologies and measurements do not always lead to a decrease in trust, as often suggested* (Forssell & Westerberg, 2014; Natsios, 2010). Since trust often is transferred from the control technologies, a donor's trustworthiness assessment of the recipient may for example instead increase when the amount of oversight increases, as trust is then transferred from the control technologies onto the recipient. From a recipients perspective this may be confusing, and the added technology may indeed affect the recipient's perceived trust in the donor negatively. But as the added technology simultaneously increases the donor's trust in the recipient, this may, in turn and in time, create a positive trust spiral where the recipient learns to see the technology from the perspective of the donor: not as a sign of distrust, but as a prominent source of trust.

The same amount of control technologies may thus be perceived as welcome or unwelcome, necessary or unnecessary, trust enhancing or trust deteriorating – depending on the role. Whereas the recipient might experience it as hindering work, the donor might experience that the control technologies support work and role-fulfillment. *We thus do not see that there is a clear answer to the question of whether one in general should reduce oversight instruments to support a more trust based approach in aid.* However, recipients who are more dependent on aid funds, and who lack resources to handle too many control technologies, seem to find it more difficult to see control techonologies as trust enhancing and supporting. We believe that a continuous consideration and reflection on how the control requirements affect and are experienced by the organization could support aid management. Moreover, what likely contributes greatly

to explaining how control technologies are experienced is if they come with or without explanation on what purpose they are supposed to serve. Therefore, a reciprocal dialogue and mutual understanding of how the donor and recipient roles influence decision making would be advised.

During recent years, donors have become more of risk-minimisers (Gulrajani, 2019) since development aid in general has been increasingly questioned due to heavy accountability obligations. Our study findings confirm the findings by Gulrajani (2019) that there in general is a large focus on institutional risk. In our study we have however found indications that institutional risks may be passed onwards in the aid net, to the intermediaries, or to consultants for example. For the overall aid architecture, this implies that more and more intermediaries, or as we call them here "mini-Sidas" are created. We argue that the *focus on institutional risks leads to negative consequences when it comes to trust and also aid effectiveness. The heavy focus on the recipients' structures and the agenda of turning them into "proper organizations" implies that less focus might be put on aspects of operations that the recipients are most proud of, i.e. the content of their work and their actual actions in the field.* When this happens, recipients of aid may feel that they are distrusted or less trusted by the donors if they do not fit the mold for a proper organization. And this in turn may imply mission drift in the relation, a situation in which the recipient loses interest in discussing with the donor what actually happens in their local operations.

Since aid projects operate in a highly uncertain world where it is difficult to attribute actions to development outcomes and impacts, we argue *that conforming to the expected role as a donor and/or recipient of aid is a "proxy" for certainty in aid and a proxy for results.* Both donors and recipients hence seem to operate according to the *logic of appropriateness* March and Olsen (2019): "Who am I? What situation am I in? What should a person/organization like I do in a situation like this?" but also, What is appropriate to trust in the role and this situation?

As shown in chapter 4, we have from our previous and ongoing case studies seen many examples that together indicate that *different sources of trust are perceived differently by donors and recipients. Whilst donors find that*

management technologies, external experts and general management knowledge and the VIP partner status are prominent sources of trust, recipients rely more on domain specific knowledge and knowledge on what happens on the ground. This means that some of the tensions in the aid system could stem from the two roles in aid.

Since trust is such an important cornerstone for any action in the aid system, we believe that it is of utmost importance to raise the awareness about the influence of these roles and to dig deeper into the potential conflicts created by the different experiences of trust – stemming from these roles.

5.2   Trust cannot be mandated

As the literature review in this report shows (chapter 3), there is reason to remain sceptical about the feasibility in actively managing and governing for increased trust, top-down. Trust cannot be mandated; trust has to be earned in a mutual relationship.

Government reforms typically come in waves and previous research has identified two typical antipodes in reforms; one related to *trust or ownership* - a perspective which is relational and which takes an embedded view and which favors informal coordination (see Vähämäki, 2017). In the aid literature this would imply a perspective on solidarity with recipients of aid and their ownership of projects. The other antipode is related to *control or donorship* – a perspective which implies that governing mainly takes the form of formal coordination, a perspective which often employs a principal agent perspective and is more market-inspired (Brolin, 2017; Edgren, 2003; Eyben, 2010). Based on findings from in this study, we have however seen these two antipodes existing simultaneously. Our cases indicate that whilst there could be a change in political rhetoric on how governing is to be performed, many diverse practices still prevail.

Eyben (2010) argues that despite a change in rhetoric in favor of aid governed through a control and donorship perspective, aid practitioners continue to govern with informal relations. In line with Eyben (2010) we have found that personal relations are typically

more or less "hidden", or not talked about as much in the aid system. As shown in chapter 4, personal relations are typically, at least officially, considered as a less prominent source of trust, despite that it is the relations, the 115 travel days yearly (by one of our intermediary interviewees) and all the face-work done that enable the different perspectives and interests in the aid net to align for the good cause. Informal trust relations thus, to a large extent, form the fundamental basis of aid work. *We argue that actors in the aid system would benefit from acknowledging the impact of these informal relations and investing more in understanding how trust is built and maintained through these informal relations, as well as how these relate to the officially more prominent sources of trust.*

As stated above, at the time of writing up this report, many put their hopes into trust or ownership and interpret this to imply *a decrease* of rules, check points and audits and quantitative measurements and the setting up of seminar series on alternative approaches. *The aid administration has thus made several attempts to change the culture towards more trust and informal coordination. However, our exploratory case findings indicate that despite these reforms and changes, formal control technologies as continuously valued as prominent sources of trust, implying that NPM management in practice keeps lingering on.* This confirms findings from other aid organizations on the fact that changing the dominant ways of managing aid is difficult, since aid operates in an accountability regime where there is a constant pressure to demonstrate short term results and create legitimacy for continuous existence of aid (Vähämäki & Verger, 2019).

Moreover, when looking at actual cases, we find that despite that control measures have officially been lifted from formal systems, in practice, a range of control measures have also been added. As a case in point, in its new TRAC system, Sida has taken decisions to ease requirements and now formally allows more flexibility and judgment by the individual program officer. Our findings show however, that this freedom is handled with caution or even hesitation by program officers who's individual decisions may deviate from the official Sida decision or recommendation. This is fully understandable when the task of a program officer is to both be "brave in action", "seek trustworthy relationships" (Sida, 2018a),

rely on one's own judgment - but also to have a zero-tolerance against corruption and see to it that funds are only disbursed to proper organizations who can handle them. The governance signals are stacked up in layers, much like sediments. In their everyday work, actors in the field of development aid must therefore cope and interact with several, at times contradictory signals and norms. Some find this utterly frustrating, time-consuming and irrelevant, while others accept and treat the many layers of steering as "belt and suspenders" for their operations. "Better safe than sorry", seems to be a common approach among this latter group.

As explained in chapter 3, the trust process implies that when the trustor assesses the trustworthiness of the trustee, it makes a judgement of the trustee's ability, benevolence and integrity (Mayer, et. al, 1995). We have found this to apply also to interorganizational relations in the aid field. In the relation when the donor is the trustor and assesses the trustworthiness of the recipient, the donor typically follows certain rules, regulations and handbooks on how to assess the trustworthiness of a recipient organization. A complication here, mentioned several times in this report, is that while the donor organization might take certain formal decisions on what trustworthiness means for the organization, the actual assessment of trustworthiness is performed by the individual program officer, employed by the donor organization. *Double agency* is hence frequently seen and *our conclusion, in line with previous literature, is that it is very difficult, if not possible to mandate trust* (Alexius, 2017). And again, *an explanation may be found in the plural actorhood of the individual program officer* who alternates between the identity of internal agent (in relation to their employer) and principal (in relation to the organizations that receive support from Sida).

Taking this insight further, the whole idea of "Trust Based Management", if applied and understood as a mandate coming from the top, is not feasible. When the individual judgement goes against the judgement made at an organizational or systems level – the individual will be likely to hang on to the sources of trust he/she believes in. Examples of this could be seen in asking for additional informal meetings, doing extra check-ins, or extra control measures

(on top of what is formally sanctioned by the organization as a whole).

This means that in situations when there is 'insincere trust' (Skinner, 2014), i.e. when the formal organization's decision is supported by a *stated willingness* to trust but not from actual trust perceived by the individual representatives of the organization, this often leads to micro-management (Wright, 2000), increased controls, or even "obsessive measurement disorder" (Natsios, 2010). *Whenever donor organizations take a formal decision to trust recipients, we must therefore expect and look out for possible deviation where individual representatives of the donor organization do not in fact feel trust and hence take their chances at double agency – that is letting their own decisions and actions depart from a hierarchical decision or order.*

Such double agency typically occurs when the individual representatives feel personally responsible for local operations and do not believe that the central decision made is wise, seen from their local perspective. The finding of double agency – middle managers opting not to follow central decisions and policies, or to make their own interpretations of these – may of course give off confusingly mixed messages to recipients. Such mixed messages may in turn affect the recipients' assessment of the donor's benevolence and integrity (and hence trustworthiness).

However, in our view and in line with Honig (2018), it does not need to be a constraint when an individual opts for its own interpretations, or decouples. This can indeed be a necessary action to take in a certain situation and a sign of an individual following its own judgment of what it considered necessary in a certain situation.

In interorganizational relations there might be *several* individual trustors and trustees, depending on different individual relations in between the organizations. We have found that this creates confusion. Something *that may create distrust or lower trust, are mixed messages or even misunderstandings on mixed messages.* This happened for example in the Union to Union case when the Sida director general sent out a message about flexibility but Union to Union had the experience of remining highly controlled by the individual program officer (see 4.2.6.). This finding is in line with findings in a Sida study

on partners' experiences of the interaction with Sida, where it was found that "The flexibility around requirements has not been a blessing for all partner organizations" (Gouzou et al., 2018).

5.3 In Proper Organization we Trust – as proxy and extrapolation of results

In previous literature on management reforms, it has been argued that different political reform ideas typically come and go in different "tides of reforms" (Ferlie et al., 2009; Light, 2006; Light, 2011). A predominant explanation for "tides of reforms" in previous literature is that people tend to continue to believe in *rationality* and rational models (Abrahamson, 1996; Brunsson, 2006; Ferlie et al., 2009; Sundström, 2003), despite the fact that they might fail to achieve their objective.

Rationalistic and modernistic ideals are held high as hopes are placed in the ability of human intentions and plans to govern and improve the future (Bornemark, 2018). Large numbers of collaborating actors from different cultural settings are assumed to be efficiently coordinated by such rationalistic plans and models. As discussed in chapter 1, reaching a sense of certainty while facing conditions of distance, inequality and complexity is challenging, and previous trust research has found that it is typically more difficult for individuals to trust one another in situations of distance and inequality - situations characterized by a perceived lack of closeness and mutuality/reciprocity (Korsgaard et al., 2015).

This means that most often, actors involved in aid relations try to put their faith in a range of different sources of trust. A strong – and dare we say – dominating source of trust is the use of formal organizing, with structures and processes of "proper" organizations, such as certain management technologies or control structures. The "messiness" of the social world should be put straight and uncertainty should at least be reduced.

Although many organizations officially proclaim a unique identity and put a lot of time and resources into branding, identifying

organization-specific values etc, such features are clearly challenged by the ideal of the Proper Organization (figure 1.1). The isomorphic pressure to conform to general standards and adopt general knowledge is strong.

Based on our case research, two findings on the impact of general knowledge are particularly interesting: 1) The trusted experts tend to be externally sourced from the market, rather than employed in the donor or recipient organization. 2) The sourced experts tend to be experts in general management (organization structures, processes and RBM-technologies) rather than experts in more specific knowledge domains relevant to the content of the aid projects carried out (such as for instance, experts in math, climate change or social inclusion). Our cases indicate that external experts and expertise have a generally high status as sources of trust. But to be really prominent, these experts should spread and promote general management knowledge (in line with the ideal of the proper organization) rather than context or domain specific knowledge.

Moreover, we have found that despite the quest for outcomes and outcome information, simple results information is often favored. Actors in the field often are rather open about the difficulty in actually gaining knowledge on actual (long term) results – and communicating such knowledge across distances proves even more of a challenge. *Outcome information which often tends to be more complex is toned down or even ignored in processes of trustworthiness assessment.*

We also found that management *technologies* often are considered as a must for the recipients in the field. Beyond that, implementing the right structural and processual features is favorable. Hence, it seems to us that, many times, the form becomes more important than the content. Or rather, having a legitimate form for one's management of aid is interpreted (typically by donors and others at a distance) as a valid *proxy* for actual results.

This could of course be a problem, but seems more often to be considered a pragmatic solution to the uncertainty of the field and its operations. Having the technology, structures, processes associated with the proper organization in place is thus *interpreted as a result in itself.* And what is even more interesting for our purposes

in this report: we have seen from our cases that having the technology in place seems to give the organization a higher trustworthiness assessment in terms of *benevolence* (the recipient demonstrates a willingness to adhere to the technological standard to make life easier for the donor) and *ability* (in terms of general management skills).

It seems that actual future outcomes are often *extrapolated* from legitimate technology and general management skills. The *standardization* and spread of management tools, enabled by the many consultants/evaluators in the field, (Brunsson & Jacobsson, 2000; Furusten, 2016) has contributed to giving certain results technologies (such as the Logical Framework) high status, not only as sources of trust but also as proxies of future results. What this means is that a proper form (legitimate technology) today is thought to be linked to good outcomes in the future. Or in our theoretical language: Features of the proper organization make up an important source of trust from which trust is transferred onto recipients who then gain a higher trustworthiness assessment from the donor.

Considering the conditions, this is reasonable. Uncertainty creates a need for trust, but for trust to be built and sustained, actors must find something they feel they can communicate, grasp and assess. To exemplify, both ISP and Union to Union have decided to *add* general management technologies to the ones already existing in order to enhance their legitimacy and trustworthiness. However, in both cases we found that not much learning and follow-up how these different management technologies were used by the recipient, and if/how they affected the results achieved, took place. This supports our conclusion about management technologies as proxies and extrapolations.

5.4 When diversity and conformity ideals collide

In society, it is often the case that there may be several splendid ideals or goals encouraged at the same time. In practice, these may

then collide to create confusion and conflict which affects organizing aimed to fulfil them.

What we have found in this study is that there seems to be such a conflict between the ideal of good results stemming from encouraging a *diversity* amongst actors (i.e actors from the different institutional domains or even the idea of organizations with a unique identity and contribution) and the ideal of good results stemming from conformity. Over the past decade, and as officially launched in the Swedish Policy for Global Development (Gov, 2002/2003), the general policy has been that global development can only be achieved with a "broad participation of a variety of different actors" (Gov, 2002/2003:54). Thus, the variety of different actors and their domain specific knowledge has officially been seen as the way to combat global poverty. However, from our empirical studies we see a danger that this ideal has collided with the ideal of good results stemming from encouraging *conformity*. Conformity is here seen in the attempts to *standardize* both governance and operations across the multitude of diverse actors in the field. An example is how similar type of management technologies to the *Logical Framework Approach*, is seen as appropriate for all kinds of projects and actors.

It is a well-established finding in organization theory that tides of decentralization are followed by tides of centralization. While decentralization typically honours diversity, centralization typically favours conformity within a larger system. Conformity may increase a sense of control and efficiency among those who make the centralized decisions at a distance from local operations. Furthermore, if all are to abide by the same rules, comparative analysis is easier to perform and some large scale and streamlining credits may be won. However, innovation, sense of ownership and respect of different values and interests may instead be hampered.

Under a centralization and conformity regime, aspirations for *value heterarchy* – giving *equal* weight to different values, such as efficiency and equality – may turn out instead as *value hierarchy* – giving unequal weight to different values, for example letting efficiency dominate over equality (Alexius & Örnberg, 2015). Whilst it is impossible to have it all and not easy to tell what system, if any, that produces the best results, we believe that recognising and discussing the conflict

that the diversity and conformity ideals have created is important to get an understanding of all results that are being produced.

There are several reasons why we often see conformity aspirations dominating over diversity aspirations. One is the abundance of experts and not least consultants. This, in itself, is a large and prominent field of research. If we wish to understand how popular management ideals and practices spread across society, we must look at the carriers, where consultants are a powerful group. However, we cannot "blame it all on the messengers", but must ask: what makes this conformity message – or product (in this case a general management technology) worth its price in the market? As argued and demonstrated in previous research (Furusten & Werr eds, 2005), consultants "deal with confidence" in two ways. First, consultants cannot make any deals if their clients do not find the consultants trustworthy. Secondly, and as discussed in the section 4.1.2. on general management experts, consultants actually offer their clients a *transfer* of trust. For when clients adopt a management technology like *The Logical Framework*, they incorporate a prominent source of trust into their organization.

Another reason for increased conformity could be that, during the past decades, donors have felt a need to make their operations more effective due to the increasing budgets for aid projects and the simultaneous decrease in budgets for staff costs. In addition, there has been an increasing pressure to work in more fragile recipient countries. A result we see of these changes is the increasing tendency to integrate vertically by creating intermediaries who are to handle all administrative work related to creating the proper organizations and proper structures, on behalf of a donor. In the Swedish context, for a lack of better word, we have called them "mini-Sidas" (ForumCiv, ISP and Internationella Programkontoret are some examples). These make up an expanding body of donor-related organizations who seem to contribute to raise the demand for general management knowledge and consultants[10].

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[10] This could for example be organizations who support recipients to track donor's current priorities and funding opportunities. See for example http://DevelopmentAid.org and https://donortracker.org/

5.5   Ideas for future research

Up to date, trust has not been studied to a larger extent in development aid. This study has its limitations in being a qualitative exploratory study focusing on a smaller number of cases. Our analysis has however presented us with several indications on trust patterns in aid relations which we believe are worth well exploring further.

These include: 1) conducting larger surveys with more organizations/actors on current trust patterns; 2) conducting comparative studies on how trust in aid is perceived in other donor countries and among different recipient countries/type of recipients, such as multilateral organizations, in direct bilateral relations etc. 3) studying how the power relations and dependency relation between donors and recipients influence trust. 4) conducting a more in-depth study to test our tentative hypothesis: i.e. that it seems to be the case that the greater the distance, inequality and complexity – the lower the chances to achieve certainty which in turn means a greater need for trust. And in terms of whom or what to trust, we suggest that the greater the distance, inequality and complexity, the more likely is an impersonal source of trust, such as a management technology or particular organizational structures and processes. 5) We also call for more studies on the switch-roles behavior of aid organizations and 6) The impact of perceptions of distance, inequality and complexity among organizations in the *same* country or geographical region on the wider aid net and its delivery.

5.6   Practitioner implications

There are of course a large number of learning points and take-aways from this report, many of them underlined in chapter 4 and some discussed in more detail in this chapter. We have written the report with practitioners in mind and think that it has implications for both everyday work practices and a deeper understanding of the wider web of relations in development aid. This said, in closing, we would like to draw particular attention to four points that we hope

will spur discussion among different kinds of practitioners; staff at the MFA, public donor organizations, staff at the different institutional domains, consultants, evaluators etc.

First, our report has indicated that the widespread adoption and use of general management technologies, rules and other rational means of governance may, in part, be explained with reference to current trust patterns in aid, hence them being perceived as generally prominent *sources of trust*. Management technologies and "proper" organizational standards are treated as good administrative proxies for future results. From a broader aid architecture perspective, the current trust patterns imply that more and more intermediaries enter the aid scene, and that organizations tend to grow larger since being properly equipped requires resouces. *How do you as a practitioner feel about this finding? Does it make formal organizing (including formal results measurement activities) more meaningful, or less? And what is your view on proxies and their relation to future results?*

Second, our report has indicated that informal relations often are looked upon as insufficient sources of trust. We argue that there is a tendency to officially 'hide' or downplay interpersonal relations as sources of trust despite the fact that these are key to the trust building process. We also argue that actors in the aid system would benefit from acknowledging the impact of these informal relations. *How do you as a practitioner feel about this finding? Would it make sense to acknowlede and invest more in understanding how trust is built and maintained through informal relations, as well as how these relate to other sources of trust?*

Third, our report has shown that inherent tensions in the aid system could stem from the two dominating social roles; the donor and the recipient of aid. We have shown that despite that the same organisation frequently alternates between these two roles, there is a lack of understanding on how this *plural actorhood* and its roles-switching affects relations and trust patterns. In general, we thus recommend a reflexive discussion about the two roles and how their taken-for-granted expectations affect relations and governance in the field. We believe that seeing yourself in the other – and vice versa – opens up for mutual understanding that enhances learning and trust and opens up for a discussion on mutual responsibility and accountability on behalf of the wider aid net. *How do you as a*

practitioner feel about this finding? How can you improve your work and relations by acknowledging that you and your organization acts as both a donor and a recipient? (where applicable).

Fourth, we have seen indications that there exists a conflict between diversity and conformity ideals in the current aid setting. This means that although there is an ideal that calls for trust in domain specific practices and knowledge, this is not always the case in practice, since the ideal of results through conformity (the "proper organisation" as a proxy for future results) has a strong impact. *How do you as a practitioner feel about this finding? Is diversity worth defending and if so, what measures could be taken by various actors (yourself, and your own organization included)?*

Some actions that we believe could be taken in this direction, to defend and nourish domain specific practices and knowledge are:

a) Recruit staff with domain specific competence.

b) Increase the use of external experts with domain specific knowledge.

c) Spend time to learn more and spread the word about domain specific ways of organizing aid (in order for this diversity and "unorthodox" ways of organizing to be more generally trusted and accepted).

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Annex 1 Trust in Aid Governing Documents

Trust is thus not a new topic for development aid, rather it can be seen as a new concept for an old or even eternal phenomenon in social life. Although not always explicitly mentioned by its term, trust has been an important dimension in Swedish Policy documents on development cooperation ever since the inception of public aid in 1960's. As shown by Vähämäki (2017), management reforms focusing on trust seem to continuously come back, although it might in new times be relabelled and re-packaged with other concepts.

In 1970's when the *solidarity* concept was commonly used, reciprocal trust in between aid partners was seen as a fundament for solidary relations (see Dahl, 2001 for an overview). Moreover, in the 1970's Swedish Aid, Country Programming, which more than before emphasized the ownership question, was established as the principal way of managing relations with Sweden's partner countries. One could say that the main ideas from Country Programming have remained present ever since, although investigations such as the Parliamentary Commission on Roles in management of Swedish Aid (SOU 1994:19) have had the effect that roles and responsibilities of different actors in the process have been more clearly defined.

A starting point for the *partnership* concept used in development aid is the 1969 report of the Pearson Commission on aid and development which stated that "The formation and execution of development policies must ultimately be the responsibility of the recipient alone, but the donors have a right to be heard and to be informed of major events and decision". Partnership was not only about information sharing and policy dialogue, but also specific commitments as well as expectations on the other on both sides; for recipients to use aid efficiently but also to expect steady aid flows, and for donors to disburse funds and have a hands-off approach in implementation.

The partnership concept became popular in the end of 1990's. In 1998 the OECD/DAC for example produced a checklist on 'Strengthening Development Partnerships'. There was at this time push for partnerships as a way of organising since "Policy goals have over the years become more ambitious and the basis for many contemporary policies is holistic, multifaceted and complex. We no longer just build roads, houses and schools or provide business loans, educate children and inoculate against infection" (Stern, 2001 paper to WB).

In Sweden, he partnership concept was first introduced as part of the Parliamentary Commission on Swedish Policy for Global Development (Gov 2002/2003) as well as by the Foreign Ministry Report on Partnership with Africa (skr 1997/98:22). The concept was launched against, what it argued to be an earlier way of conceptualizing development aid – in terms of donors and recipients, patrons and clients (Dahl, 2001). When launched in the report on partnership with Africa it was said to be: "...an approach in a contractual co-operation built on a shared ground of values and reciprocal trust" (Schori, Arbetet, 1998-06-08, translated by Dahl 2001) The ground of reciprocal values was seen as part of the partnership concept. According to Dahl (2001) the partnership concept was launched as an alternative to 'solidarity'. The concept retains the ideological connotations of equality but has no element of suggested identity or shared membership in any larger collectivity. Dahl argues that the partnership concept was launched in the end of 1990s since "the solidarity concept was no longer trusted to stand on its own as a motive for help" (Dahl, 2001:16).

The partnership concept was operationalized into different versions of Sidas working manuals, Sida at Work. In Sida at Work 2005 it was argued that partnership arrangement implied that Sida defined the tasks, roles and commitments of the parties. It stated that "partnerships should be based on shared values and well defined roles, including ownership structures. They should be distinguished by equality and mutual trust". This shows that the concept of mutual trust formed part of the partnership concept. However, as noted by Edgren, the concept also came with the concept of "shared values", such as that good partners are commitment to reduction of poverty,

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democracy, good governance, respect for human rights, gender equity and protection of the environment and natural resources. Sida at work argued that "In cases where there is little consensus on common values, Sida will not aim at establishing partnerships. Cooperation might still continue, but in different forms at lower levels of ambition." (Sida , 2005:21). It is clear that the shared values were somehow seen as conditions for cooperation. According to Edgren (2003), the partnership concept became blurred when it became introduced with the dimension 'shared values'. It raised doubts as to how far donors can go in advocating some of these values without resorting to the traditional "donorship" syndrome, since these values easily made the donor use his "financial muscle in an attempt to make the recipient change his development strategy" (Edgren, 2003:12). Similarly, Maxwell and Riddell (1998) concluded that partnerships can easily slide back into the kind of one-sided conditionality that partnership relations were supposed to have replaced.

The concept of *mutual accountability* was a concept that was launched with the Paris Declaration for aid effectiveness in 2005. The concept was launched as a way to counterbalance the uneven relationship between donors and partner countries. According to the OECD (2008) "Mutual accountability is a process by which two (or multiple) partners agree to be held responsible for the commitments that they have voluntarily made to each other. It relies on trust and partnership around shared agendas, rather than on 'hard' sanctions for non-compliance, to courage the behaviour change needed to meet commitments". The typical instruments for mutual accountability have become either joint results frameworks in countries, or specific mutual accountability frameworks, where joint work has been defined and is being measured.

Despite that the mutual accountability principle was launched to counterbalance the unequal relation between donors and recipients, studies have found it ineffective. For instance, the evaluation of the Paris Declaration in 2008 argued that relatively few mechanisms ensure that partner countries have an equal voice; often targets and methodologies do not reflect their perspectives ((Wood et al., 2008)). This finding has been echoed in other an evaluation made

by SADEV, in which one country, Mozambique, was studied. The evaluation came to the conclusion that despite that the different tools for mutual accountability work at a technical level, they have not been able to address the "underlying political nature of mutual accountability" implying the power imbalance between donors and recipients in aid. The study also argued that since the mutual accountability principle has foremost focused on technical mechanisms, sight has been lost of real issues and of the overall objectives of poverty reduction (SADEV, 2012). Evidence thus suggest that since the mutual accountability principle have largely been built on technical solutions on how to enforce donors and partners to account jointly, it has not supported real trust building.

According to a study conducted by ODI (Steer & Wathne, 2009) it is foremost the dialogue involved in discussions on mutual accountability, as well as clear agreements on expectations, roles and responsibilities of each stakeholder in the aid relationship, that have contributed to build reciprocal trust. However, the study also noted that building trust was a challenging task. Especially in politically sensitive areas, some recipient governments even perceived mutual accountability dialogues as threats associated with the cancellation of aid or with introducing new and unfamiliar ways of operating (Steer & Wathne, 2009). This shows that despite good intentions, the mutual accountability principle has been perceived as a technical principle, which means that trust has not been built towards the principle as such.

Today, and in the follow up of the Agenda 2030 the concept of *mutual trust* is promoted to be important. The common trend in terms of following up international agreements, both for Aid Effectiveness and the SDGs, is voluntarism. Many countries have established so called "voluntary national review" (VNR) mechanisms to follow up commitments. Agenda 2030 therefore talks about a multi-level accountability framework led by national governments. It has been argued that whereas mutual accountability mechanisms are relying on traditional development assistance concepts such as ODA, partnerships for the 2030 Agenda increasingly encompass whole-of-government approaches and a much broader group of development partners, including the private

sector, foundations and civil society (Mahn Jones, 2017). A change in perspective is thus that change processes need to be led by national governments, and that monitoring needs to be voluntary and not enforced. These principles echo better with the literature on what works for building trust.

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Trust based management is increasingly seen as a model for effective public organisations. This study investigates to what extent trust characterises relations between various Swedish entities involved in development cooperation. Is there a risk for too much streamlining?

Tillitsbaserad styrning anses kunna leda till effektivitet i offentliga organisationer. Denna studie undersöker graden av tillit i samarbetet mellan olika bistånds-organisationer i Sverige. Finns det risk för en alltför stor likriktning?