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Stakeholder perspectives on ownership and gender equality:

A case study on perspectives from different operating levels regarding two development collaboration projects at Bussi Island, Uganda

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ABSTRACT

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The tool for including local actors in development collaboration projects is called ownership and it is defined in the Paris Declaration on Aid Effectiveness. However, researchers have detected flaws with the definition and implementation of ownership. Some also argue that gender equality and the empowerment of women are neglected aspects in the Paris Declaration and that they are not emphasised enough in the aid effectiveness dialogue.

The objective of this study is to examine the perspectives and experiences of stakeholders about the meaning and implementation of ownership on different operating levels through a gendered lens. Additionally, in order to be able to investigate *how* these matters are interpreted and implemented in practice and affecting beneficiaries, two development collaboration projects on Bussi island, Uganda, were selected for this case study.

The main objective was to gain a deeper understanding of the perspectives of the informants, and not to generalize. That is the reason why this is a qualitative case study where the information is based on words and not on numbers. Semi-structured interviews were used for the data collection. Informants form Erikshjälpen, a local organization called RODA and beneficiaries living on Bussi Island were interviewed as representatives for the different operating levels.

The conclusion is that the critique provided by previous research can in some aspects be applied to the case of this study. There are no specific strategies on ownership or gender equal ownership by either Erikshjälpen or RODA. There are conflicting perspectives on what the term "ownership" actually means by all informants from the different operating levels. There are also coherent perspectives regarding the importance of ownership and gender equality on all levels, and participation is a key word used by all the informants. However, since a strategy is missing, there is no tool for examining if participation actually can be used to claim that successful ownership and gender equal ownership has been implemented. If a strategy were to be created, it should include a definition of ownership, a plan for gender equal ownership, and agreed upon indicators for measuring both phenomena.

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List of abbreviations

AIDS	Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome
CIDA	Canadian International Development Agency
EU	European Union
FEP	Family Empowerment Program
GDI	Gender Development Index
HDI	Human Development Index
HIV	Human Immunodeficiency Virus
NGO	Non-Governmental Organization
ODA	Official Development Collaboration is government aid, designed to promote the economic development and welfare of developing countries. Aid can be provided bilaterally or through a multilateral development agency such as the World Bank or the United Nations.
OECD	The Organization for Economic Cooperation and Developments
SADC	Southern African Development Community
SIDA	The Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency
SUSIEP	Sustainable Schools and Inclusive Education Project
USD	United States Dollar

1. Introduction

The tool for including local actors in development collaboration projects is called ownership and it is defined in the Paris Declaration on Aid Effectiveness (OECD, 2005). However, researchers have detected flaws with the definition and implementation of ownership (Gibson, Andersson, Ostrom & Shivakumar, 2005; Nathan, 2007; Swedlund, 2011). Some argue that gender equality and the empowerment of women are neglected aspects in the Paris Declaration and that they are not emphasised enough in the aid effectiveness dialogue (Holvoet & Inberg, 2014). However, voices are raised to acknowledge the role of women within development collaboration.

> The working poor, especially women, need to be empowered to hold policymakers accountable… They need to have a representative – and stronger – voice, and to make rule-setting and policy-making institutions more inclusive, offering them a seat at the policy table (Chen, 2010).

Debusscher and Hulse (2014) who cites Chen (2010) highlights the importance of women's voices by examining powerful actors in southern Africa. They state for example that "If the European Union (EU) truly wishes to transform unequal gender relations in southern Africa, it should take greater care to include the voices of southern African women".

When it comes to the critique of the implementation and meaning of ownership and gender equality, researchers state that there are misconceptions between operating levels. There are strong indications that the concepts are not properly transferred from a macro-level perspective to a micro-level reality. What is said on an international level among powerful actors is not always easily implemented in real life. Incorporating the voices of beneficiaries, especially women's voices, has proven to be difficult (Debusscher & Hulse, 2014; Gibson etal., 2005; Nathan, 2007; Swedlund, 2011).

Previous research points out several areas of critique against today's development collaboration. Among them the ownership and gender equality aspects are areas that could be improved. However, it is quite hard to find research on the combination of ownership and gender equality, and there is not much research to be found on what this actually means to individuals on different operating levels. What consequences might occur when there is a lack of mutual understanding on different operating levels is hard to examine without research on the subject. The importance of gender equal ownership seems to be swept under the rug since it is barely mentioned when looking at official definitions.

This study focuses on ownership and the combination of ownership and gender equality within two specific interrelated collaboration development projects in Uganda. Stakeholder perspectives were collected through interviews, and later examined and analysed.

1.1 Development collaboration in Uganda

According to the OECD "Development aid at a glance" report from 2019, 52 800 million USD were invested in African countries during 2017. One developing country that is progressing is the Republic of Uganda in east Africa. Uganda receives a great amount of yearly assistance and

according to OECD the amount of Official Development Assistance (ODA) that was given to Uganda in 2017 was 2008 million USD. On the African continent, Uganda is ranked as the seventh country who receives the greatest amount of financial assistance (OECD, 2019).

The country became independent in 1962, and at the time it was one of the wealthiest countries on the African continent. This however, changed, and the wealth vanished due to dictatorship and years of misrule. The HIV/AIDS epidemic has also affected the country extensively. Today, Uganda has recovered to some extent and the standard of living has increased during the last decades though it is still considered to be a poor country. The majority of the Ugandan people live in the rural areas. There are about 41 million people living in Uganda today. The women in Uganda can reach high positions within politics and about a third of the members of parliament are female. Female participation in primary and secondary school is on the rise, however when reaching adult life, women earn significantly less than men. Further women have less influence over decision-making in the work sector, especially within agriculture (Utrikespolitiska Institutet, n.d.).

According to the Gender Development Index (GDI) Uganda was ranked as number 162 out of 189 countries in 2017. This entails that Uganda is at the bottom of the scale which is classified as "Low human development" (UNDP, n.d.-b). The GDI measures gender gaps in human development achievement by looking at the differences between men and women within three different aspects of human development. The three aspects are knowledge, living standards and health. These are the same measurements that are used to measure Human Development Index (HDI) but the GDI examines these aspects while comparing men and women (UNDP, n.d.-a).

1.2 Motivation for conducting this study

The objective of the study is to ask questions about how stakeholders refer to and implement ownership and gender equality as a strategy to improve problem areas.

This study needed to be conducted in a country where development collaboration is affecting the population. Uganda is a developing country which receives a great amount of assistance every year. Gender equality can always be examined, no matter if it is a developing country or not. However, in order to examine perspectives on the combination of development collaboration and gender equality, the research needed to be conducted where those two phenomena intervene. Uganda was chosen as the research country because of these aspects.

The development collaboration projects chosen for this study were the *Family Empowerment Program* (FEP) and the *Sustainable Schools and Inclusive Education Project* (SUISEP). Both projects are financed by the Swedish organization Erikshjälpen and implemented by a local organization named RODA at Bussi Island in Uganda (FEP progress report, 2018). These specific projects were chosen because of the possibilities to do interviews with individuals from three operating levels. Erikshjälpen, RODA and the local beneficiaries are all connected to these projects, but they have completely different starting points. Hence, this enabled research from different stakeholder perspectives on different operating levels.

1.3 Objective and research questions

The objective of this study is to examine the perspectives and experiences of stakeholders about the meaning and implementation of ownership on different operating levels through a gendered lens. Additionally, in order to be able to investigate *how* these matters are interpreted and implemented in practice and affecting beneficiaries, two development collaboration projects on Bussi island, Uganda, were selected for this case study.

1. What differences or similarities are there regarding stakeholders' perspectives and implementation methods when examining ownership?
2. What differences or similarities are there regarding stakeholders' perspectives concerning the combination of ownership and gender equality and how to implement it?
3. Are there any conflicts of interests, meanings and/or implementation methods at different operating levels? If yes – what?

1.4 Disposition

Following the introduction is Chapter 2 with the background which contains an overview of previous research which contains the development collaboration actors' views on ownership and gender equality on different operating levels, as well as a brief introduction on how this study relates to the Sustainable Development Goals. Thereafter in Chapter 3, the research methodology is presented which includes how and why this study was conducted in a certain way. Also a discussion on the validity of the study is included. Further it includes information about the interviewees and some critical aspects concerning ethical considerations. Chapter 4 contains the empirical results, and it is structured to guide the reader through the different perspectives which are connected to the research questions. In the beginning of the chapter there is background information about the actors of this study and about the chosen development projects. Research question 1 and are 2 are answered in this chapter. Chapter 5 presents the final conclusions from analysing the data material. Research question 3 is answered and reflections connected to research question 1 and 2 are included. There is also a section containing reflections regarding research question 3. A comparison of perspectives and an analytical discussion is provided. Lastly, a section on possible further research concludes this thesis.

2. Background

This chapter presents an overview on previous research regarding ownership and gender equality within development collaboration. It briefly presents some problematic aspects and why this subject is relevant for global studies.

This chapter is divided according to three different levels, which are referred to as the macro, meso and micro-level. Section 2.2.1, 2.2.2. and 2.2.3 presents different views on ownership and gender equality which is representative for each level. There is also a brief description about SDG no 5 (gender equality) and no 17 (partnerships), since these goals are relatable to this study.

2.1 Modern development collaboration

 The discourse regarding collaboration during recent years has included both optimistic and pessimistic views on the implementation and outcomes of aid. There is a wide consensus that the structural adjustment programmes initiated in the 80s contributed to several negative outcomes which affected many developing countries. During the 90s this resulted in a legitimacy crisis for foreign aid, and therefore a new collaboration architecture was designed to regain its legitimacy. A new emphasis was put on partnership, rather than conditionality. Basically, conditionality meant that governments in recipient countries had to promise certain reforms to receive foreign aid from donors. Conditional aid has been viewed as neo-colonial and it has also been criticized due to difficulties when discussing accountability regarding unsuccessful reforms. Conditionality also made governments of the developing countries more eager to please the donors than their own people. Multiple donors with conflicting interests and demands did not create development in the developing world since focus was not on the beneficiaries. When conditionality grew out of fashion, the notion of a new type of aid emerged, with focus on collaboration (Sjöstedt, 2013). This new type of aid was presented in the Paris Declaration on Aid Effectiveness in 2005. One important principle that was emphasised in the declaration was *ownership*, and this principle could be described as an antagonist to conditionality. The ownership principle is all about putting the decision-making in the hands of the recipient country and in some cases, the hands of the beneficiaries (Swedlund, 2011). However, researchers problematize the implementation of the ownership principle as well as the difficulties with agreeing upon a common definition (Gibson et.al., 2005; Nathan, 2007; Swedlund, 2011).

2.2 Previous research regarding ownership and gender within development collaboration

Ownership is defined at a macro-level by OECD and the term is also understood through a macro-perspective when reading the Paris Declaration on Aid Effectiveness. However, many researchers chose to take the term to a meso or micro-level, describing ownership and its connection to organizations (meso) and to individuals/beneficiaries/citizens/recipients (micro). The following text will include a separation of the different levels, presenting different perspectives on both ownership and gender equality.

2.2.1 Macro-level perspective

This section describes the macro-level and highlights the perspectives of international actors and governments as well as presenting official definitions and strategies.

In March 2005 during the second high-level forum the Paris Declaration on Aid Effectiveness was presented as a result of the criticism against conditional aid. It works as a roadmap to improve the quality of development collaboration. The Paris Declaration promotes five different important principles of partnership commitments (OECD, 2005).

1. *Ownership* –Aid receiving countries exercise effective leadership regarding their policies and strategies. They themselves are the coordinators of their national development plans.

2. *Alignment* – Meaning that donors shall base their decisions on the partner countries' national development procedures, institutions and strategies.

3. *Harmonization* – The actions of donors shall overall be more harmonized, collectively effective and transparent.

4. *Managing for results* – Improving the decision-making processes and manage resources to achieve results.

5. *Mutual accountability* - Both partner countries and donors are held accountable for the development actions put in place and its results (OECD, 2005).

It is possible to go deeper and further explain the meaning of 'ownership'. In the OECD statistical glossary, the definition of national ownership is:

> The effective exercise of a government's authority over development policies and activities, including those that rely – entirely or partially – on external resources. For governments, this means articulating the national development agenda and establishing authoritative policies and strategies

In the glossary, the definition is also contextualized:

> For [aid] donors, it means aligning their programmes on government policies and building on government systems and processes to manage and coordinate aid rather than creating parallel systems to meet donor requirements (National ownership, 2007).

There is also an official definition of gender equality by the United Nations (UN):

> Equality between women and men: refers to the equal rights, responsibilities and opportunities of women and men and girls and boys… Gender equality implies that the interests, needs and priorities of both women and men are taken into consideration, recognizing the diversity of different groups of women and men… Equality between women and men is seen both as a human rights issue and as a precondition for, and indicator of, sustainable people-centred development (United Nations, n.d.).

The Paris Declarations' fifth principle, *mutual accountability*, which has to do with result-orientation, can be used to avoid gender blind policies according to Nathalie Holvoet and Liesbeth Inberg (2014). They argue that putting emphasis on results together with increased monitoring and evaluation can be used to highlight the absence of results regarding gender equality. However, there is no guarantee that development policies will have increased gender equality focus. When wanting to achieve results, it is favourable to focus on 'quick wins' rather than long-term slow-moving fundamental changes in society. Gender equality and women's empowerment do not happen overnight, and this is partially one reason for gender equality objectives to be 'forgotten' in development policies (Holvoet & Inberg, 2014).

2.2.2 Meso-level perspective

The meso-level represents the mid-range actors, such as national and local organizations as well as civil society organizations.

Researchers argue that contractors who are paid by the International Development Association (IDA), have control over the information flow from recipients to donors and vice versa. They are working directly with the beneficiaries and they are therefore possessors of power. Meanwhile, the beneficiaries have very limited power over what will be prioritized in a development project. Sometimes, contractors chose to design projects so that they will be indispensable. They put themselves in a unique and favourable situation. A response to this unequal distribution of power would be to promote programs/projects that place the beneficiaries in the centre, rather than the contractors. Development collaboration strategies need to be adjusted in order for this to happen. One obstacle to overcome is the scepticism that has been built up by beneficiaries over the years. Beneficiaries have been told to participate in decision making in the past, but in reality, it meant 'showing up to meetings and accept whatever had already been decided' (Ostrom, Gibson, Shivakumar & Andersson, 2001).

The Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency (SIDA) recognizes that complete ownership can only be achieved if political actors and beneficiaries engage in and support the decision-making process. Another important aspect is the mutual understanding of responsibilities among all stakeholders. SIDA also encourage the idea of 'popular ownership' which means that beneficaries might get some power over the shaping and implementation of the collaboration. Also, the staff of development projects get to develop some sense of ownership. (Ostrom et al., 2001).

It is believed that independent and powerful non-governmental and civil society actors can exercise influence over governments, which in turn can pressure them into accepting greater accountability. The same principle works in the field of gender equality. However, in order for this to be realised, there must be such strong actors that works actively to promote gender equality (Holvoet, 2008). Ruth Phillips (2015) also points out that Women's Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs) are key players to achieve gender equality. She examined how gender equality is understood from the perspective of women's NGOs. Such NGOs tend to focus on key structural issues, for example, development within the community and human rights, putting emphasis on changing the context. Individual empowerment is also important but not given as much resources. Women's NGOs often measure progress within gender equality by looking at progress within three specific indicators: 1) freedom from gendered poverty; 2) equality under the law; 3) freedom from violence. However, when comparing different NGOs and actors, there is evidence of diverse understanding of what gender equality approaches entails. Phillips (2015) compared the Canadian International Development Agency (CIDA) with the Australian government's gender equality approach. She detected that CIDA focuses on equal human rights with emphasis on opportunities, choices and control. While, the Australian government instead have a strong focus on measurable targets such as women's economic empowerment or women's representation in decision-making (Phillips, 2015).

2.2.3 Micro-level perspective

Within development projects, beneficiaries are often defined as those that will benefit directly from donor intervention. In theory, individuals in beneficiary groups have close connection to their government. A problematic aspect is that governments of recipient countries are not held accountable to their citizens (Ostrom et al., 2001; Vähämäki, Smith & Molander, 2011). If there is a lack of effective institutions provided by the government, development collaboration is likely to be unsustainable. Civil society actors are therefore important to create a linkage between the citizens and the government. Providing opportunities for the locals to make their voices heard is important in order for them to gain influential power over policies (Ostrom et al., 2001).

Local ownership does not mean that local actors necessarily will develop fantastic policies. Rather, the idea is that respecting and empowering local actors will enable positive, sustainable and lasting results. This approach will avoid undermining local actors, which most likely would cause unstainable results in the long run (Nathan, 2007). There are researchers that problematise the definition of local ownership. The definition is elastic and elusive from both operational and definitional perspectives. There is confusion regarding its meaning when reading official documents or engaging in dialogue with either recipients or donors. Scholarly literature and donor agencies have yet not found a broad consensus in the matter (Donais, 2009; Gibson, et al., 2005). One questionable aspect is the identity of the "locals". Who are the locals really? Local political elites can be considered as the most legitimate 'local owners' but they can also be problematic due to the fact that they might not support certain reforms and they might not have the citizens best interests in mind (Donais, 2009). Swedlund (2011) did research in Rwanda and discovered that bilateral and multilateral donors have collaborated with small elite groups of governmental policy makers. In other words, Rwandan beneficiaries were not truly setting the agenda even though it was implied that they did through the representatives. It is a type of centralized collaboration, that forms and implements socio-economic developments plans, where donors still exercise power. Swedlund (2011) argues that this is due to three factors: the preferences of the donors, the amount of leverage that the government is able to use and state society relations (Swedlund, 2011). Laurie Nathan (2007) wrote about the Security Sector Reform (SSR) in South Africa and she shares a similar view. She states that donors have acknowledged the importance of local ownership, but they seem to fail when it comes to implementation, and the idea have not been translated into successful strategies used in the field. Ostrom, Gibson, Shivakumar and Andersson (2001) agrees with Nathan (2007) and acknowledges that there is a lack of feedback from recipient country beneficiaries to donor country taxpayers. This knowledge gap creates opportunities for manipulation of information. In agreements and official documents between recipient government and donors, the word 'ownership' and 'sustainability' is often mentioned. However, little of this "fancy wording" is actually put into practice (Ostrom et al., 2001).

Debusscher and Hulse (2014) compared the EU and the Southern African Development Community (SADC) within the scope of gender mainstreaming. The aim of gender mainstreaming is to eradicate discriminatory gender norms, practices and structures in all societies. The gender mainstreaming approach is considered to be 'transformative' because it

strives to implement fundamental transformation. According to the EU, the biggest threat against gender equality in southern Africa is either health related or connected to lack of education. The solutions are therefore associated to poverty reduction and economic growth, such as reducing unemployment. Gender equality is not regarded as an aim of its own, but merely it is used instrumentally, to meet the demands of the labour market. SADC shares the view of the EU, but includes more specified objectives, such as ending violence against women and equality between both sexes in decision-making positions. However, civil society actors who work closely with the local women stress that gender equality is much more connected to socially accepted cultural ideologies and beliefs that favours male privilege, rather than economic or educational factors. Debusscher and Hulse (2014) concludes that the EU gender mainstreaming agenda in southern Africa is missing crucial aspects when defining problems and designing solutions, as well as including female beneficiaries in decision-making. They also stress the fact that most national policies in southern Africa see women as the ones affected by gender inequality and the ones who shall provide solutions to the problem, the role of men is rarely mentioned. Debusscher and Hulse (2014) argue that this entails that female beneficiaries are "solely responsible for 'catching up' with the implied male norm". Civil society organizations on the other hand, provide a more complex interpretation of gender inequalities and its relation to both men and women. Finally, Debusscher and Hulse (2014) concludes that the voice given to female beneficiaries are poorly integrated in decision-making and policy-making.

2.3 The Sustainable Development Goals

Other important factors determining the directions of modern development collaboration are the Sustainable Development Goals (SDG) which replaced the Millennium Development Goals (MDG) in 2015. The SDGs address global challenges with the aim to achieve a better sustainable future for all. The goals address various topics and they interconnect with each other (United Nations, n.d.-b).

2.3.1 Goal no 5: Gender Equality and Women's empowerment

Goal number 5 is named Gender Equality and Women's empowerment, and it addresses the inequalities faced by girls and women around the world. The United Nations (UN) states that providing girls and women with equal access to decent work, education, health care and representation of them in decision-making processes regarding both economy and politics will be beneficial for societies and all of humanity (United Nations, n.d.-c). However, for example the EU is criticized for not including the voices of southern African women. Also, when focusing on results and measurable indicators of progress, the gender equality objective is being neglected. Gender equality is not a quick solution to an uncomplicated problem, it is a complex and slow-moving process that requires time which makes it less interesting for donors who require measurable results within given timeframes. Researchers also conclude that civil society organizations that aim to include the voices of the women are poorly integrated in decision-making and policy-making (Debusscher & Hulse, 2014; Holvoet & Inberg, 2014).

2.3.2 Goal no 17: Partnerships

Goal number 17 is about forming partnerships in order to achieve sustainable development. Partnerships are needed on global, regional, national and local level, and it highlights the importance of having shared goals and values. There needs to be cooperation between governments, the private sector and civil society, and it is extra crucial in developing countries (United Nations, n.d.-d).

3. Research Methodology

The methods used in this study and reasons for choosing those methods are presented in this chapter. Theoretical background information about the use and meaning of the methods is also included.

First the qualitative research method is presented and a motivation for choosing that specific method. Also, information about qualitative semi-structured interviews is included since this approach was used for this study. Also a discussion on the validity of the study is included. Further there is a section regarding the sample selection of the informants, followed by information about the informants and the criteria's for choosing those informants. The theoretical saturation of this study is reflected upon and a brief delimitation section is provided. Also, the analytical framework is explained, and lastly this chapter contains a section on ethical considerations.

3.1 A qualitative research method

A qualitative study focuses on individuals and their perspectives. This type of research acknowledges that people see their own constructed reality and that reality is not static, rather it becomes flexible when considering different perspectives (Bryman, 2011, p. 40-41). For a qualitative study, understanding the context is important to make an accurate analysis (Bryman, 2018, p. 479). Therefore, a description of the context is included in this study to give the reader the background of the Ugandan context which is crucial to understand and interpret the objectives and research questions of this study. The main objective is to gain a deeper understanding of the perspectives of the informants, and not to generalize. That is the reason why this is a qualitative case study where the information is based on words and not on numbers.

The objective of this study was to examine the subjective perspectives of the informants representing different operating levels. How they experience and view the research topics was central to the study. A case study is preferable when wanting to examine *why* and *how* something is occurring or unfolding in a certain way (Yin, 2007). Therefore, a one case-study approach was used as research design. According to Bryman (2011, p. 74) previous research has for example used a school, a society, an organization or a certain event as the "case" for research. The development collaboration projects at Bussi Island are constituting the "case" of the study and the informants are the "examples".

Development projects have shifted focus from "aiding" countries in need, to collaborating with them instead, forming partnerships (Sjöstedt, 2013). Therefore, the term "development

collaboration" is used in this thesis instead of "development aid" since it gives a more accurate description of what type of development work that is examined in this study.

3.1.1 Qualitative semi-structured interviews

Three examples of previous research studies that are used as references in this study used interviews to gather data about ownership or gender equality (Jones, 2011; Kim & Jeong, 2013; Swedlund, 2011). The methodologies used in these examples have inspired this study and motivated the choice of qualitative semi-structured interviews which were used for the data collection.

Qualitative interviews give the informants multiple possibilities to express themselves about the topic and it enables the researcher to find deeper meanings within the new information. It can also help the researcher to understand the informant's worldview and to gain knowledge about complex phenomena (Hjerm, Lindgren & Nilsson, 2014, p.149). Since focus was on the subjective perspectives of different stakeholders, this also motivated the choice of qualitative interviews. The study put emphasis on the deeper meaning of the answers of the informants.

The semi-structured interview-approach was chosen because it allowed for follow up questions which was considered favourable when the researcher came across unexpected but valuable information. This is further evidenced by Bryman (2018, p.260). Semi-structured interviews made it possibilities to personalize each interview. This helped the researcher to steer the conversations in certain directions and it helped with the validity of the study because it created a structure that could be followed. This approach is explained by Hjerm, Lindgren and Nilsson (2014, p.150-151).

3.1.2 Purposive sample and quota sample

Since, this study focuses on the perspectives of different stakeholders, highlighting their different perspectives is essential. Therefore, representatives from different operating levels were chosen. Time and management were determining factors when choosing the number of informants. With limited time, the number of interviews needed to be limited in order to have enough time to process and analyse the data. This also motivated the choice of methods and the design of the study.

A purposive sample method in combination with a quota sample method was selected. A purposive sample is when the researcher chooses to interview people who are suited to answer the research questions. They are strategically chosen because of their relevance to the study. A critique however, is that the results cannot be generalized but this is not always the purpose of the research. It can instead be used as an indicator of some sort or it can be used as a first step towards further research (Bryman, 2011, p. 392). The second method, the quota sample, is when the researcher choses informants from different categories. The number of informants in each category is the 'quota' and it is the researcher who determines the individuals that shall belong to the different categories. A problem with quota sample is that the selection of informants will not be representative for a bigger population, however it is regarded to be a good choice of

method when there is limited time (Bryman, 2011, p.197-198). These methods are both techniques that generates a targeted selection. A targeted selection is when the researcher aims to match the research questions with the sample (informants) in order to get those questions answered (Bryman, 2011, p.343).

3.1.3 Validity discussion

Validity is a term that refers to the quality of the study. A typical question that researchers ask themselves is "Does this study measure what it is supposed to measure?" Further the term validity can be divided into internal and external validity. Internal validity refers to that there shall be conformity between the observations of the researcher and the theoretical ideas that the researcher develops. External validity refers to what the degree the results can be generalized to other social environments and situations (Bryman, 2011, p.352).

This study has a good validity in terms of answering the research questions, and focusing on the objective of the study. The choice of method, informants, research questions and analytical framework were strategically chosen to achieve reliability and a strong validity. The theoretical ideas presented in chapter 5 are based on previous research and the results of this study. The transparency of the process of this study and structure of the data material enables the reader understand the connection between the results and conclusions. The results of the study are very specific and cannot be generalized, however, the study could be conducted in another setting. It is possible to examine perspectives on ownership and gender equality, using the tools provided by this study.

3.2 Presentation of the participating informants

It is a common practice for case studies to include relatively open interviews with key individuals who can provide the researcher with facts and their opinions about these facts. The interviewee can also assist the researcher by suggesting other individuals to interview. When a respondent is assisting the researcher in such a way, then he or she becomes an informant (Yin, 2007, p.117). The individuals that were interviewed for this study are referred to as "informants" because they also brought up facts that shaped the study, they provided background information about the projects and they suggested other informants.

The prospective informants of the study were first divided into three categories. The different categories represent the macro-, meso- and micro-levels connected to development collaboration projects on Bussi Island.

1. Erikshjälpen, which is the main Swedish donor
2. RODA, which is the responsible organization for the projects in Uganda
3. The beneficiaries, which are the individuals living at Bussi Island

3.2.1 Criteria and division of informants

The table below showcases the criteria that were used when the informants were chosen. Informants from each category were necessary in order to examine the perspectives from all different operating levels. Also, it was important to include both male and female informants because of the gender perspective of the study. Only including informants of the same gender

could have impacted the result in a bias way. Age was not a determining factor when choosing informants because the objective of this study did not include age-based data collection. All informants were in-between the ages of 35 to 65 years old.

Two to four individuals from each category (operating level) was estimated to be sufficient in order to both have enough time to manage the interviews and to gather enough data to make the analysis. The beneficiary informants were found through recommendations from RODA. The informants from RODA were chosen after information about who would be fit to answer the questions was obtained through field work. The informants from Erikshjälpen were chosen based on who had connections to the projects at Bussi Island through their work assignments.

Table 1.
Categorization of the informants

	Interview Person	Pseudonym	Gender	Operating role	Category
1	Program coordinator	Mats	Male	Erikshjälpen	1
2	Program coordinator, East Africa region	Therese	Female	Erikshjäpen	1
3	Program coordinator	Ester	Female	RODA	2
4	Human resources and Project coordinator	Alex	Male	RODA	2
5	Group leader of one farm group (parent)	Peter	Male	Beneficiary	3
6	Group leader of one farm group (parent)	Robert	Male	Beneficiary	3
7	Farmer (parent)	June	Female	Beneficiary	3
8	Farmer (parent)	Ruth	Female	Beneficiary	3

3.2.2 Motivation for choosing these informants

The reason for choosing more informants from category 3, beneficiaries, was because their answers were only reflecting upon their own personal thoughts. The interviews with individuals from category 1 and 2, aimed to find out both the standpoint of the organization but also the views of that certain individual. Since the interviews with the beneficiaries were more personal and specific to that individual, there was a need for including more beneficiaries in order to find codes and themes within their answers. The aim was to interview women and men from all categories, and this was achieved.

3.2.3 Theoretical saturation

According to Hjerm, Lindgren and Nilsson (2014, p.155) the sample should at least include eight informants. When interviewing informants with different criteria, the interview shall continue until a certain theoretical saturation is achieved.

This study was limited by time and therefore the theoretical saturation was somewhat compromised. There is a possibility that including more informants would have generated more information. However, the conclusion was made that the obtained information was enough to conduct the study and to do an analysis regarding different perspectives.

3.2.4 Limitations

This is study examined perspectives from different operating levels, but it is not representative for all individuals connected to these development projects. The study is limited to a quite small number of informants, which was enough in order to discover themes to analyse. However, more informants may have generated other perspectives or strengthen the perspectives already found. The objective of this study was never to generalize, but to highlight existing perspectives and to focus on the experiences of these certain individuals.

3.3 Research process and data collection

This section provides a description of how the research was conducted and how the data was processed.

The three examples of previous research studies that were used as methodological references had another common denominator, besides using interviews, which was spending time in the country while doing empirical fieldwork (Jones, 2011; Kim & Jeong, 2013; Swedlund, 2011). Empirical fieldwork was a necessity to conduct this study, due to the fact that a literature study would not be sufficient nor would include information about the stakeholders' perspectives about these specific collaboration projects that were chosen for this case study. Time spent in Uganda covered eight weeks in total. Preparations for the study were done in the capital city, Kampala. Before going to Bussi Island to conduct the interviews, one day was spent at the island beforehand as part of the preparations. During this day, information about the projects and the surroundings was obtained through informal conversations and observations. Conversations were held with staff from RODA and one farmer (a beneficiary). Four days were spent on Bussi Island when the actual data collection with the beneficiaries took place.

3.3.1 Interview guide

An interview guide was created for this study and it was based on previous research as presented in chapter 2. The questions were about ownership, and ownership in combination with gender equality. The interview guide was designed so that the research questions of the study would be answered. When an informant started to talk about something that would benefit the study, it was possible to follow up that particular information because of the semi-structured method. A flexible mindset when conducting the interviews was also helpful in order to not miss out on any important information.

Regarding the interview questions, it was not possible to use exactly the same questions for all the informants. This was because the informants had different roles and therefore the questions needed to be adjusted to fit the operating level of that informant. Instead themes were used, which targeted the same topics, but they were phrased differently.

3.3.2 Managing the interviews

All interviews took place in comfortable and familiar places for the informants. All beneficiaries were interviewed in their own home. The informants from Erikshjälpen were interviewed via Skype during office hours. One informant from RODA was interviewed in her home and the other informant from RODA was interviewed in the same house where he usually spends quite a bit of time.

The interviews were scheduled to last 30-60 minutes. All interviews were voice recorded and transcribed. The reason for recording the interviews was to not miss out on any verbal information and it enabled the researcher to focus on the informant instead of taking notes. This enabled the conversation to run smoothly and it made the interview-situation less threatening.

The interviews with the informants from Erikshjälpen were held in Swedish. Therefore, their answers have been translated to English for this thesis.

3.4 Analytical framework

This is a qualitative iterative study which also is hermeneutic. It means that during the process of gathering data, the researcher also interprets the material. This is a process where already known information is compared to the new set of information obtained through the study. This is also called "constant comparison" due to the fact that the researcher scrutinizes the data several times and goes back and forth (Hjerm, Lindgren & Nilsson, 2014, p. 34-35).

Preparations are crucial in order to analyse the data correctly. In this study the framework presented by Matthew Miles and Michael Heuberman (1984) in their book *Qualitative Data Analysis* is used. They wrote about three different levels of analysis.

1. Reduction of data (coding)
2. Presentation of data (thematization)
3. Conclusion and verification (summary)

The first level, coding, is about first organizing the data quite widely. The second level, thematization, is when the data is organized more thoroughly. During the third level, summary, the data is analysed, and conclusions can be made (Hjerm, Lindgren & Nilsson, 2014, p.34).

The motivation for choosing to do coding and thematization was because it provided the study with a reliable structure which facilitated the organization of the data. The structure made it easier and more convenient to form the analysis.

First the data in the study was organized into two major codes, which was 1) questions regarding ownership and 2) questions regarding ownership and gender equality. Further when the transcribing the of interviews was conducted, codes were found and broken down into clusters of themes. Such as 1) What is ownership? 2) Feelings of ownership, 3) Economy and ownership, 4) Who should have ownership 5) What is gender equal ownership? 6) Participation and gender equal ownership. After the data was organized into these themes, the analysis became a natural process since it was possible to distinguish coherent and/or conflicting perspectives.

In chapter 4, containing the results, research question no 1 and no 2 is answered through the empirical data material. The results describe the answers of the informants, highlighting their perspectives on how they view ownership and gender equality. Further the answers of question no 1 an no 2 are discussed in chapter 5 containing the analysis. Research question no 3 is both answered and discussed in chapter 5.

3.5 Ethical consideration

Efforts have been made to ensure a reliable study, however there are always aspects that can be criticized, and this section highlights those aspects. The ethical principles which are essential for Swedish research have been thoroughly considered and assessed for this study. This is verified by only using the data material for research purposes, ensuring confidentiality and using informed consent (Vetenskapsrådet, 2002).

An interpretivist approach influenced the study and was motivated by the objective to capture the subjective meanings of social actions. The approach is about understanding and interpretation (Bryman, 2018, p.52). Reflexivity is also included and analysed. This refers to that the researcher is aware of his/her impact on the research and its results. The researcher is self-critical, self-aware and examines his/her own opinions and assumptions (Bryman, 2018, p 471).

In my role as a researcher I had to acknowledge the fact that I am a female foreigner, younger than all of my informants, with white skin and a different cultural upbringing and socioeconomic background (except when the staff from Erikshjälpen was interviewed). This may have affected the study in different ways because of my cultural glasses regarding gender equality and ownership. The background of the researcher and the researcher's self-awareness are very important for this type of study when interpretation is central for the analysis. Also, the cultural glasses or perhaps feelings of mistrust may have hindered the informants from being able to answer the questions. To give the informants the best prerequisites to partake in the study, no excessively formal language was used, and I dressed modestly to not stand out more than necessary.

All informants were asked through email, by phone conversation or asked in person if they wanted to participate in the study before any interviews took place. They were informed that anonymity was an option and they gave consent before any interview was recorded. Voice recordings were used for all interviews. Also, all informants were given a brief introduction about the study and why they were interviewed. All the names of the informants in this study are fictive.

The researcher and the informants from Uganda did not speak the same mother tongue, and this created a slight risk for misconceptions or misinterpretation of the data. The interviews were held in English which was the second language of both parties, with exception for the interviews with staff from Erikshjälpen that were held in Swedish, the mother tongue of both parties. The risks connected to the language barrier are acknowledged but not considered to be compromising the overall result of the study. When an informant had trouble understanding a question, different phrasing was used to help that informant.

4. Results

This chapter contains the results collected from the data material. It is structured so that the reader will know what was said on each operating level. The aim of the structure is to create a transparent overview which enables the reader to distinguish the different perspectives provided by the informants. Firstly, background information about Erikshjälpen, RODA and the development collaboration projects on Bussi Island is provided as a preamble. Secondly, perspectives on ownership as a separate phenomenon is presented, and the views of the informants are divided according to their operating level. Thirdly, perspectives on ownership and how it relates to gender equality is presented. Once more, to maintain the structure of this thesis, the perspectives are divided according to the operating level of the informants.

4.1 The basis of the study

This section contains information about the components of the study. These are the different actors and the chosen development projects. Such information was necessary to include in order to contextualize the answers of the informants.

4.1.1 Erikshjälpen

Erikshjälpen is a Swedish organization that first and foremost aims to help vulnerable children in developing countries. It has several partners in different parts of the world and supports a large number of projects. The main focus is on children's rights to education, health and safety. Also, a big part of its agenda is to strengthen the capacity of the organizations that it works with (Erikshjälpen, n.d.).

4.1.2 Redeemed of The Lord Evangelistic Church Development Agency (RODA)

The organization Redeemed of The Lord Evangelistic Church Development Agency (RODA) is a faith-based organization in Uganda that promotes the wellbeing of marginalized and disadvantaged children and their families in the four districts Masaka, Wakiso, Hoima and Mbarara. The organization works with empowerment, strengthening self-reliance and improving the livelihoods of beneficiaries. The organization aims to address the gap in education and life skills among vulnerable children. Another aim is to prepare the children and their families for possible risks connected to environmental, social and economic change. One of their main donors is the Swedish organization Erikshjälpen. (RODA, 2018).

4.1.3 Development collaboration projects: FEP and SUSIEP

RODA is working at Bussi Island which is located in Lake Victoria, not far from Entebbe on the Ugandan mainland. The projects currently established at the island are called the *Sustainable Schools and Inclusive Education Project* (SUSIEP) and the *Family Empowerment Program* (FEP). The SUSIEP initiative aim to "maintain, expand and sustain safe learning places and improve the quality of education in four different schools" (SUSIEP progress report, 2018). The FEP initiative aim to "improve the general wellbeing of children and their communities with an emphasis on increasing household food production, improving access to

microfinance and credit, enhancing entrepreneurial skills for families, supporting cooperative formation of marketing and strengthening household resilience and coping mechanisms" (FEP progress report, 2018). The elementary school Bussi Jr is establish at Bussi Island and is run by RODA and financed by Erikshjälpen. All the parents of the children at the school are offered to take part in the FEP program. RODA provides learning opportunities about agriculture and they have 13 started agricultural groups consisting of parents. These groups grow crops together at a common field to provide for their families, thus enabling their children to afford school. Also, all members of the group grow crops for themselves at their homes so that they will have food on the table. RODA provides the groups with seeds and there is a gardener named Joseph who visit the farmers twice a week to offer help if it is needed. He also brings feedback from the farmers to RODA. In each farm group there is an elected leader who represents the group and who provides RODA with updates on their progress. There are both female and male leaders and all leaders are elected by the farmers in the groups. After each harvest an evaluation takes place where the beneficiaries are asked questions about the project and if they are satisfied with their leader.

4.2 Perspectives on ownership

This section is about how different stakeholders view ownership. Questions that were brought up target different aspect on ownership, such as "what is ownership", "how do you know ownership has been implemented" and "who should have ownership".

4.2.1 Ownership according to Erikshjälpen

Two staff members, a man and a woman, representing Erikshjälpen were interviewed. Both of them answered that Erikshjälpen does not have a written definition on what ownership means to their organization, but that the ownership principle is still present in their work. According to them, ownership is about local involvement. Therese explained the importance of local involvement and local decisions, and she said:

> Initiatives should come from below. The ownership should be as close as possible, preferably you should not use a top-down approach at all. The initiatives should come from below because of the feeling of ownership.

She emphasizes the importance of letting decisions come from below, and that other actors should not try to implement projects without consulting the locals. However, Therese also mentioned that sometimes there are decisions and regulations that do come from donors, and that finances are fundamental for development projects. She said:

> In real life it is also about donors and money. There can still be certain demands from above and projects must be designed in a certain way or have specific features and such in order to get approved to receive finances. This is the other side of the coin so to speak.

When the informants were asked about *how* Erikshjälpen know that ownership has been implemented at Bussi Island, both informants spoke of "a feeling of ownership". Mats said:

> When I visit ongoing projects, it is very important to feel how development projects are received, how people are involved in the projects, and a lot of that can be shown by looking

at the children. Do they seem to thrive in school? There are so much more that you feel when you are at the site.

Therese also answered the question:

When you meet beneficiaries, when you are visiting the villages and so, you get a feeling. Because it is not just about results, about what you have achieved and such. It is also about that specific feeling of how well-committed people are, that they feel that they are part of this project and that it is based on their needs.

Both the feeling that they themselves experience when they visit the projects and the feeling of the beneficiaries are indicators of ownership according to them. Erikshjälpen also receives progress reports from RODA and staff visits the projects and programmes two times per year to examine how the work is progressing. In Uganda, there is a local office that usually make those visits but staff members from the office in Sweden also make visits from time to time.

When asking about *who* that should have ownership, the informants from Erikshjälpen had a coherent view on the subject. They both agree that it could be the beneficiaries that have ownership, or it could be the local organization in the developing country. It is not Erikshjälpen that should have ownership, instead they emphasize that ownership should always be local. Therese describe the position of Erikshjälpen: "It is not we, Erikshjälpen, situated in Sweden that shall decide what should be done at the site, that should be determined locally." Mats also agrees: "It is not we who do it for anyone, but it is carried out by local partners to local contexts where those who are affected are involved so that it becomes local ownership".

4.2.2 Ownership according to RODA

RODA does not have a specific strategy targeting ownership solely, however, both informants spoke of how ownership is implemented in their work. They work to make the beneficiaries feel that they own the projects, that they are part of the goal and able to affect the means to get there. They also strive to make the beneficiaries independent and not to rely on all solutions to come from RODA. There is also a close dialogue between RODA and the beneficiaries where they can express opinions, for example during meetings. During those meetings RODA encourage the beneficiaries to own the projects and they urge people to voice their suggestions and opinions. Alex, who work at RODA explained what views to be a very important indicator of ownership: "When I look at the objectives, I must feel that I am part of the objectives and the ultimate goal." He spoke of the feelings of the participants, and that ownership can be communicated through how well a project is received by the community. He argues that the objectives must include the beneficiary's wishes and that they need to feel included. The other informant from RODA, Ester, described how RODA is helping the communities through their projects and that ownership is something that is present but not targeted separately:

We don't have a policy about ownership. Now we are talking about the projects, but it's like a philosophy in the back of our minds. We believe that we are a channel to the community, and we want to empower them, it is for them to own whatever process we are starting.

Besides talking about objectives and empowerment of the beneficiaries, the informants from RODA also spoke of the economy of the beneficiaries to be an ownership indicator. They included finances in their understanding of ownership. This is something that was not mentioned by the representatives of Erikshjälpen. Ester and Alex, representing RODA, talked

about how the groups at Bussi Island had been affected by the FEP project and how economy relates to ownership. The beneficiaries planted tomatoes, but it did not go well for everyone when the crops were ripe and ready for the market. Not all groups managed to sell their crops and make a profit. Ester said:

> And you know, different groups, one had like one million shillings, another one had four hundred, so there were different levels, and those who did good sales, they took ownership.

Alex spoke about the financial aspects of the FEP project by explaining how the farmer groups at Bussi Island divided the profit. He said that they have a system and that the profit is divided according to input. If someone participated less in the sowing and harvesting activities, that person would earn less. When he answered the question on what could be done to improve ownership at Bussi Island, he said:

> I would think if we are able to bring the population in Bussi to a place of having a fully-fledged saving and credit cooperative. That would be a very good ground because this kind of cooperative is run by the people themselves in the island.

He emphasizes the importance of being financially stable to increase the level of ownership.

Questions regarding *who* that should have ownership was also brought up during the interviews. Different stakeholders have interests in the projects, but should ownership be exclusively for those who benefit from the projects or are there any other stakeholders that should have ownership? When Ester answered the question, she said:

> Ownership like in a school, there are different stakeholders. If you look at our objectives in our log frame, we have three blocks. One about quality, and under the quality we have partnerships, we want to have partnerships with governments and different stakeholders. So, ownership is for everyone, parents, teachers, non-teaching staff, government, local councils, etc… Even RODA should have ownership because we are the owners of the vision and we have a vision to change communities, to reach out.

Alex also spoke of different stakeholders and that they all must be part of the objectives in order for ownership to be implemented.

> I consider ownership to be an attitude of both the implementers and the beneficiaries of having the program/project as their own and it has to be an understanding that the people involved, or the stakeholders involved, count themselves as part of the objective.

Both Ester and Alex talked about the importance of making the beneficiaries independent, but it is a process that takes time to follow through. Proof of independence is also proof of ownership according to Ester and she said that one beneficiary at Bussi Island had shown her a great example of ownership. That beneficiary had told her "Everything you taught us I know. You don't have to bring another teacher. I volunteer to be the resource to teach everyone who wants to plant tomatoes on this island because I know exactly what to look out for." Ester argues that this is a great indicator of beneficiaries taking ownership.

4.2.3 Ownership according to the beneficiaries
The interviews with the beneficiary informants differ from the interviews with the staff from Erikshjälpen and RODA. The questions are phrased differently, and emphasis was put on how the beneficiaries feel about the projects and if they were able to affect the projects. Something

that the beneficiaries in this study all had in common was that all felt that they were able to affect the projects started by RODA. In other words, they described that local decision-making has been implemented at Bussi Island in some forms. One of the informants named Peter was asked about what choices his group had made regarding the FEP project, and he said:

> This time we concentrated around tomatoes, and it was our choice. We are just growing tomatoes because the first time it was first tentative, but later on we required more knowledge and so we said; let us repeat. We just planted a second time, and that's where we been now.

Robert, who belongs to another farm group also had the same experience as Peter, he said: "We decided as a group that we wanted to grow tomatoes, and then asked RODA, they issued the tomatoes that we wanted." The informants all agreed that their groups were given the opportunity to choose what type of tomatoes they wanted to sow. They all expressed that they were content with being able to have power over such decisions. Another informant, named June expressed her thoughts on the matter. She explained how the group interacts with RODA and that they can disagree if they want to. She gave an example:

> RODA can decide if they want us to dig or plant something and then we are able in the group to say; no, we want this, we don't want that one, let us plant this. And then RODA say yes.

One informant named Ruth spoke of the importance of being able to take part in decision-making. She thinks that by including the beneficiaries in the decisions, there is a better chance of making decisions that are manageable for the group. She said: "Because when we decide as a group, we decide something that we are able to do." This exemplifies how local decision-making can be used as a tool for ownership and a way to empower the beneficiaries. Further, all informants stated that they need to share the responsibilities with RODA and that the dialogue between them is important. They mean that the FEP projects is a collaboration between them and RODA, and they do need RODA for guidance and seeds. Peter explained how he experienced the implementation of the RODA projects:

> Because, some years ago, the organisation from RODA came and taught us. We have also many workshops. They tell us about how we can really manage our families. Look after our families. So, we joined hands. We said if it's a good program, let's go ahead and join, and see what we can do. If we can afford to get some money and pay school fees for our children, let's go ahead, that would be also very good.

Peter expressed that they "joined hands" and that he chose to take part in the project because it could provide him and his family with potential benefits. Ruth was asked if her farm group have affected the project. She said that her group had been able to voice their opinions, but they are depending on support from RODA. Ruth stated:

> Yes, we have been able to affect the program with our decisions, but also there are some obstacles that we cannot decide as a group and then RODA comes in to help us. So, somethings we have to consult with RODA.

4.3 Perspectives on the combination of ownership and gender equality

This section presents how the informants from different operating levels view ownership and gender equality. They were asked questions such as "what is gender equality", "how do you

work with gender equality", "is it important" and "how is gender equality combined with ownership" as well as questions about "participation and how it relates to gender equality". The questions for the beneficiaries were slightly different and focused more on their experiences and feelings. The interviews with them also included their thoughts on possibilities to partake in development projects based on gender.

4.3.1 Ownership and gender equality according to Erikshjälpen

Both informants from Erikshälpen talked about the context and how it is fundamental for gender equality. Mats argue that gender equality might mean something different to different stakeholders which can create misunderstandings. It is important to be aware of the beneficiary's view on gender equality and not try to force Western ideologies on them. Mats gave an example on his thoughts:

> We have a clear view in Sweden what we think gender equality is, and we will say 'gender equality is this of course', but in another context people might think differently. In India, for example, if you ask women if they want to be equal with men, they would ask you 'which men should we be equal to?'".

Therese spoke about how the context affect their work with gender mainstreaming.

> In certain contexts, in many contexts where we work, it is extremely important that you try to incorporate that bit (gender mainstreaming). Because the power-relations are so different, so distorting. Above all, it is the needs of the women that are not met in the same way.

When asked if there are policies at Erikshjälpen that target gender equal ownership the informants responded that they work with both concepts but there is no policy regarding the combination of the two. Instead they both mentioned participating numbers and that their work is targeting both men and women. However, this raised the question; "Does participation of both men and women ensure gender equal ownership?" The answer to this question is dependent on what understanding of gender equality and ownership of the informant has. Therese said:

> We have specific policy papers and position papers about gender equality. There is no mention of ownership however, but there is talk about participation. No one should be discriminated or excluded. But to think about ownership is to take it a bit further.

Therese continued to speak about participation at Bussi Island and she acknowledges that Erikshjälpen has not questioned if equal participation truly means gender equal ownership.

> We talk about the number of villages, number of members and such in this project, but there is no mention of gender equality what I know of. So, this might be interesting to look in to.

Mats also talked about participation when questions about gender equal ownership was brought up. He mentioned that the society at Bussi Island is very traditional, but women are participating in their activities. He said: "The women are very active. There we see a very good mixture of men and women that participate together in the work."

4.3.2 Ownership and gender equality according to RODA

RODA does not have a specific strategy which aims to strengthen gender equal ownership. They consider gender equality when they recruit staff members and they reach out to all members of the communities, not only women and not only men. Ester argued that vulnerability can be ascribed to anyone, man or woman, boy or girl, and that is why it is important not to exclude anyone. Gender does not matter when it comes to vulnerability because everyone can be vulnerable, especially children. Even children with socioeconomic stability are vulnerable in certain situations according to her. Ester said: "When it comes to gender, everyone is vulnerable, and the vulnerability is almost the same. Boys are abused, girls are abused." Alex spoke of how they have gender equality as part of their objectives and that they approach all members of a household when they offer support from RODA. He also mentioned the gender equality approach is something that Erikshjälpen want them to incorporate in their work. He said:

> From ERIKS and through RODA, as we implement our project, gender equality is one of the most core things. And if you ask for strategy, just in particular, to balance out the equal numbers. I would say that this is what we are doing. But of course, ultimately there is more women.

He mentioned that there are more women than men participating in the FEP project. This is brought up by both informants from RODA and they have theories on why the situation is like this. Ester thinks the issue of men being absent has to do with culture and traditions, she explained her views:

> The issue culturally is that the women are the ones who respond most to such a program. The men feel like they belong somewhere else, they want to do their own thing. Men would rather do manly jobs. But slowly by slowly, when we start to succeed, you'll see the men coming in. In Bussi you could see that some of the groups are having more men than before, more young boys are coming in because they have seen results. Men wait to see.

Ester acknowledge that existing gender norms are making the men at Bussi Island less eager to participate in their project. She referred to that they rather do "manly jobs" and that they do not want to rely on RODA's support. However, when their projects are showing results, more men come to join them.

When the issue of the unequal gender-division of the participants in the FEP project was brought up, then also the question regarding participation and how it connects to gender equal ownership was brought up. Alex argues that participation is an indication of ownership, and that representatives of both genders need to participate, otherwise the ownership will not be optimal. He spoke of the absence of men and how it affects ownership at Bussi Island, and he said:

> I know we have discussed it with some of the group leaders, especially about the absence, which is an indication to ownership. If a person is often being absent then they are not owning the project, and if they come to meetings and they are just keeping quiet and not contributing, it is an indication that they are not owning the project.

Even though Alex connected ownership and participation, he also criticized it and acknowledged that equal participation among genders does not have to imply that there is also gender equal ownership in all cases: "But, just important to note is that just because both men and women came to participate, it does not necessarily mean that both men and women own

this project equally." Further, Alex also connected economy and gender equal ownership and he said: "But when it comes to, if we have sold, and the benefit, who does the benefit go to, the benefit goes to an equal share but that equal share is not based on if they are male or female." Ester also spoke of economy in a similar way as Alex did, she phrased herself like this when she spoke of financial input and gender equality:

> When they are in a group, like a cluster group, they pull money together. If they are going to buy seeds for 400 000 Ugandan shillings, and they are 20 persons in a group, they divide the money and say that everyone is going to bring 40 000 or 20 000. So, whether man or woman, they all bring the same.

Ester explained that the farm groups at Bussi Island have protocols and that they have guidelines when it comes to dividing the profit by counting the percentage of labour input and financial input. This prevents gender-based discrimination because the profit is not divided according to gender.

4.3.3 Ownership and gender equality according to the beneficiaries

The beneficiaries in this study were asked about how they view gender equality in order to understand how they experience gender equality in relation to the development projects at Bussi Island. Gathering knowledge about their thoughts on gender equality enabled the researcher to ask supplementary questions which connected their thoughts on gender equality with decision-making and ownership. According to the informant named Peter, it is very important to divide the work between him and his wife. He said:

> For us here, especially, let me talk about my family, if you don't get in contact with your wife, you cannot manage to get a decision for your family. You must be one person with your wife. So, what you have to do is that you have to believe that the woman, now women these days they work, she contributes, you contribute, you gather school fees.

Peter, his wife and their children are involved in the FEP and SUSIEP projects and they help each other to make mutual decisions. He values his wife's opinions and he highlights the importance of listening to each other. He argues that women today in Uganda are also providing for their families and that men are not the only providers; therefore, women shall also be included in the decision-making.

Ruth argues that gender equality within decision-making is essential because individuals of different genders might contribute with different perspectives on an issue. She phrased herself: "Opinions of women and opinions of men are not always the same. So, it is important for them to talk together, and then they unite together." Peter had a similar argument, he said that men and women contribute in different ways, which is beneficial for the groups. Peter said: "Yes because men are doing a lot of work, we have strength. We have more muscle power than women. Today women they do a lot of work with one heart, they are devoted." He argued that men have more physical strength while women are more dedicated to the work. Robert also argued that gender equality is important because if the group is not considering gender equality, it will not succeed. The group might fail, and people might leave the group if they feel excluded. He said:

Because every time when you decide, and you are one-sided and when you don't bring in another side because of their opinions you may dissolve the group and it never goes on. It never prospers.

All the beneficiary informants said that they have been able to affect decision-making regarding the farming and they all felt included, both the men and the women. Everyone also agreed that it is good to have a mixture of men and women in the groups. However, the beneficiaries had different views on how equal the decision-making are within their groups. When June was asked if she thinks that the decision-making in her group is gender equal, she said yes and that she thinks that her group is very balanced. When Robert was asked the same question, he responded differently "In most cases in our group it is the men who decide. Simply because for us, we have more experience than the women, and the women are just learning from us.". Ruth however, felt like June, that her group is being gender equal when it comes to decision-making.

The farm groups at Bussi Island have more women participating than men. The beneficiaries were asked if they have any thoughts on this. Peter responded that when some men are invited to join a project, they do not feel motivated, but it is not because they do not have time to participate. He is not sure why they do not want to participate, he said: "No, I don't know exactly. Men here they don't have a lot to do. You find some of them just loitering in the town. Having nothing to do". However, he argues that sometimes husbands do not allow their wives to take part in projects because of distrust. He continued:

Yeah. Some men they just frustrate their women. So, you will find some women who don't participate because of their husbands. They don't see the reason why they should join groups.

Robert had a slightly different view than Peter. He said that some men do not participate because they have other things to do. He said that there are different reasons why men are not participating and why women are not participating. He argued that men have other work assignments and that they do not take part in development projects because of their occupation. However, he thinks the reason why some women do not participate is because their husbands do not want them to. He said:

Yes. There are different factors with different genders. Those factors are, some of them are fishermen, others are businessmen and then there is a specific reason that most men do not trust their wives to come into the groups.

However, both Ruth and June did not think that there were any gendered factors which hindered anyone from joining the farm groups.

5. Analysis and discussion

Research question number 3, regarding conflicts of interests, meanings and/or implementation methods at different operating levels, is being answered throughout all of this chapter. This chapter contains the analysed data material and it concludes that there are different opinions among the stakeholders. There is a possibility that this might create issues affecting the

efficiency of the development collaboration. A closer dialogue between stakeholders about meanings, implementations and sustainable approaches is recommended.

Previous research problematizes how actors on different operating levels have defined and implemented ownership. This has resulted in beneficiaries being excluded from decision making and governments have focused their efforts to please donors, not being able to fulfil the needs of the beneficiaries (Gibson et al., 2005; Nathan, 2007; Swedlund, 2011). This research is essential for the first research question which focused on stakeholder perspectives on ownership as a separate phenomenon. The results of this study show that there are differences regarding the informant's perspectives and experiences of ownership. Erikshjälpen, representing the macro operating level do not have a strategy for implementing and evaluating ownership, nor does RODA have such a strategy. However, both organizations agreed that ownership is important and that they work with ownership through their other strategies, that it is in the back of their minds, yet not given singular focus. Something that really separated the views of the informants of Erikshjälpen and RODA is the fact that the informants from RODA spoke of the importance of economy, while informants from Erikshjälpen focused on the "sense of ownership" obtained while visiting projects. Informants from RODA associated ownership with having financial ownership over profits obtained with help of the projects. They spoke of the division of profits among the beneficiaries and they argued that since beneficiaries get financial stability and an equal share of the profit, ownership has been facilitated.

Maybe this classifies as a good example of how differently individuals can view the same phenomena because of their different relations to a development collaboration project. The staff of RODA work much more closely with the farmers at Bussi Island than the staff of Erikshjälpen. They see their everyday life on a much more regular basis, and they connect ownership with economy, which is much more concrete than speaking of "the sense of ownership". The staff from Erikshjälpen did bring up the issue of having to consider economy and the will of the donors when running a development collaboration project. However, the micro-finances of the beneficiaries were not brought up in the same sense. When the interviews with the beneficiaries took place, less emphasis was put on the word "ownership" since it did create confusion. Instead the term "local decision-making" became the main focus of the interviews since it referred to their own possibilities to affect the collaboration between themselves and other actors. An apparent similarity which the beneficiaries had in common with the other stakeholders, was that they also agreed that being part of local decision-making is important. The staff of Erikshjälpen mentioned that initiatives should "come from below" as much as possible. The beneficiaries however do not wish to have "full" ownership since they still rely on RODA for guidance. At the moment they are still in a stage of the development process where they need a lot of support from RODA, and complete independency is not requested. As Nathan (2007) states; local ownership is about empowering local actors, and the principle of ownership is not based on the beliefs that beneficiaries are amazing policy makers. However, the inclusion of beneficiaries will facilitate sustainability. Ostrom, Gibson, Shivakumar and Andersson (2001) problematized situations where ownership and sustainability is mentioned in policies, but merely as abstract formulations than actual practices put in to place. In the case of Bussi Island, this critique does not apply since the beneficiaries are able to affect decision-making and they are content with the collaboration with RODA. The

beneficiaries of this study did not mention Erikshjälpen, which might indicate that their association with their main donor is not very prominent. Perhaps a closer dialouge between stakeholders is needed.

The informants from RODA spoke of the empowerment of the beneficiaries and the importance of encouraging them to own processes initiated by RODA. Though different wording is used, it is possible to see how perspectives from the different operating levels relate to each other. All informants have a positive attitude towards an inclusive form of ownership where local decision-making is central. However, questions could be raised on how difficult it might be to reach such a successful form of ownership if there is no common policy or strategy which all operating levels can strive towards.

The interviews also included questions regarding *who* that should have ownership when speaking of the development collaboration projects at Bussi Island. The informants of Erikshjälpen said that they should not have ownership, it is the local organization (RODA) and if possible – the beneficiaries, that should be owning the project. However, previous research problematizes the definition of the locals (Donais, 2009), and since no shared ownership strategy is created by Erikshjälpen and RODA, there is room for confusion. Is the term "locals" including the staff on Bussi Island for example? Also, since there is no existing strategy, there is also no guidelines on how ownership should be divided among stakeholders. Uncertainty regarding questions such as "when is ownership achieved" could also create conflicts. Further the question of donor-dependency could also be discussed within those terms. How much should Erikshjälpen intervene for example? The informants from RODA had a slightly different response when being asked about *who* should have ownership. They both spoke of *all* stakeholders, but they did not explicitly mention Erikshjälpen. However, Erikshjälpen is a stakeholder and can therefore be included in their reasoning. RODA and Erikshjälpen do not have a consensus regarding who should have ownership. This is corresponding with the opinions of Nathan (2007), who have researched the subject. According to her, donors acknowledge that ownership is important, but they fail when it comes to creating successful strategies.

The second research question took the concept of ownership to a different level by incorporating gender equality and this created an expansion of the concept. This expansion is not visible in previous research as a prominent research topic. When scrutinizing databases with previous research, it is obvious that there is not enough research on the subject. Ownership is acknowledged to be an important cornerstone of development collaboration (Gibson et al., 2005; Nathan, 2007; Swedlund, 2011). However, researchers have not emphasized how the concept relates to gender equality and it seems like it has been forgotten in the debate. Of course, gender equality as a separate phenomenon is also acknowledged to be important, yet there are some issues on how to measure gender quality. Holvoet and Inberg (2014) have highlighted the fact that gender equality takes time, and it is hard to measure. Therefore, it is likely for gender equality objectives to be missed by development collaboration actors, since it is easier to focus on results which are easily measured.

Taking this information into consideration, it made it clear that this study was necessary due to lack of research. It was also clear that pervious research was relatable to the results of this study.

Ownership is interpreted as a flexible concept itself and it has not been related exclusively to gender equality by researchers and this approach was also very noticeable in this case study. Stakeholders in this study did also showcase conflicting or flexible interpretations. When the topic of gender equal ownership was brought up, both the informants from RODA and the informants from Erikshjälpen said that they did not have any policies or strategies on how to make ownership gender equal. However, everyone connected gender equality with participation to some extent. The informants from RODA spoke of the division of women and men in the farm groups and that they always try to include everyone, regardless of their gender. They said that the initiatives on Bussi Island are not gender based, but at the moment, more women than men are active in the farm groups. The informants from Erikshjälpen did also speak of the number of participants but Therese did mention that it does not have to mean that gender equal ownership has been implemented. Alex, from RODA, did also acknowledge that just because both genders participate, it does not have to be a certainty that ownership is gender equal. However, no one could exactly point out how to ensure that gender equality has been implemented within the scope of ownership. As mentioned by Holvoet and Inberg (2014), measuring gender equality is not done easily. Therefore, measuring gender equal ownership is also problematic. Focusing on finding indicators which promotes gender equal ownership which are transferable to development collaboration projects could be beneficial for development collaboration in general. This could be used as guidelines for concerned actors when initiating projects. It would also be preferable to have diverse indicators which are specific to ongoing projects. A specific strategy by Erikshjälpen and RODA would be beneficial for all parties, since it could provide guidance or milestones to use as indicators for all involved actors working with the projects on Bussi Island. This would be in line with the official definition of gender equality since it contains the phrase "…recognizing the diversity of different groups of women and men" (United Nations, n.d.). It emphasizes the importance of acknowledging the needs of different groups. The community at Bussi Island has a specific context and specific needs. Participation could be used as an indicator at Bussi Island since all stakeholders mention participation, which indicates coherent opinions on the subject. However, it does not have to be the only indicator, it could be combined with others to make it less static. RODA informants also mentioned economy, perhaps this is also a potential indicator which Erikshjälpen should consider.

The beneficiaries on Bussi Island did have conflicting opinions regarding whether or not their group had accomplished gender equal ownership. They all felt that gender equality is important, and some mentioned that men and women have different skills and can contribute differently. When asked more about gender equality and decision-making, the male beneficiaries said that the men are making the decisions, and that the women are following. The female beneficiaries said that they thought that the decision-making in their groups was gender equal. This raises the question, is it possible that the women did not expect full equality, and therefore felt satisfaction even though the men actually had more decision-making power? Or is it just a coincidence that both genders felt differently? Or is it perhaps contrasting understandings of what gender equality is, and therefore, conflicting opinions were found?

5.3 Conclusions

This thesis concludes that the critique provided by previous research can in some aspects be applied to this case which targeted the development collaboration projects on Bussi Island. There are no specific strategies on ownership or gender equal ownership by either Erikshjälpen or RODA. This is problematized by previous research since it can cause confusion. There are conflicting perspectives on what the term "ownership" actually means by all informants from the different operating levels. There are also coherent perspectives regarding the importance of ownership and gender equality on all levels, and participation is a key word used by all the informants. However, since a strategy is missing, there is no tool for examining if participation actually can be used to claim that successful ownership and gender equal ownership has been implemented. If a strategy were to be created, it should include a definition of ownership, a plan for gender equal ownership, and agreed upon indicators for measuring both phenomena.

5.4 Further research

There is not enough research on the subject ownership nor is there enough research on gender equal ownership. Further research could examine these topics by doing both qualitative research and quantitative research. This could provide deeper knowledge about personal experiences and perspectives (qualitative) as well as including more cases and more informants in order to generalize and compare (quantitative) the results. There is not enough research on how to measure ownership and gender equal ownership. What indicators should be used? Also, a deeper discussion on what participation truly means in terms of ownership is missing within today's research. Further research could also include more information regarding the outcomes and consequences when there are conflicting perspectives on different operating levels. What disadvantages might occur when there is lack of consensus?

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Appendix: Interview guide

All informants will be informed about the study and the aim of investigating the FEP and SUISEP initiatives. They will be told that it is up to them if they want to participate or at any given time, stop the interview. Anonymity is optional for those who want. All informants will also be asked to state their name and title (if they have one).

Erikshjälpen

Theme 1, Ownership

1. How does Erikshjälpen define ownership?
   a. Is there an official meaning?
   b. How does Eriksjkälpen work with ownership?

2. What is your personal view on ownership?
   a. In what way is it important or not important according to you?
   b. Should it more or less emphasised by Erikshjälpen?

3. How is Erikshjälpen ensuring local ownership within the initiatives located at Bussi island?
   a. Are there any difficulties? What?
   b. How do you know that ownership has been implemented?
   c. Do you think that Erikshjälpen is doing enough in terms of implementing ownership at Bussi Island? Why or why not?

4. Who are the ones that should be given ownership?
   a. Is it only the beneficiaries?
   b. Should anyone else be given ownership?

Theme 2, Ownership and gender equaliy

5. What strategy does Erikshjälpen has to include a gender perspective in the ownership aspect in general?
   a. Is gender mainstreaming or gender planning used? Why/why not?

6. What strategy does Erikshjälpen have to ensure gender equal ownership within the initiatives located at Bussi Island?
   a. Are there any difficulties? What?
   b. How do you know that gender equal ownership has been implemented?
   c. Do you think that Erikshjälpen is doing enough in terms of implementing gender equal ownership at Bussi Island? Why or why not?
   d. Is participation ensuring gender equal ownership?

7. What is your personal view on gender equal ownership?
   a. In what way is it important or not important according to you?

Redeemed of The Lord Evangelistic Church Development Agency (RODA)

Theme 1, Ownership

1. How does RODA define ownership?
   a. Is there an official meaning?
   b. How does RODA work with ownership?

2. What is your personal view on ownership?
   a. In what way is it important or not important according to you?
   b. Should it more or less emphasised by RODA?

3. How is RODA ensuring local ownership within the initiatives located at Bussi island?
   a. Are there any difficulties? What?
   b. How do you know that ownership has been implemented?
   c. Do you think that RODA is doing enough in terms of implementing ownership at Bussi Island? Why or why not?

4. Who are the ones that should be given ownership?
   a. Is it only the beneficiaries?

  b. Should anyone else be given ownership?

Theme 2, Ownership and gender equaliy

5. What strategy does RODA has to include a gender perspective in the ownership aspect in general?

  b. Is gender mainstreaming or gender planning used? Why/why not?

6. What strategy does RODA have to ensure gender equal ownership within the initiatives located at Bussi Island?

  e. Are there any difficulties? What?

  f. How do you know that gender equal ownership has been implemented?

  g. Do you think that Erikshjälpen is doing enough in terms of implementing gender equal ownership at Bussi Island? Why or why not?

  h. Is participation ensuring gender equal ownership?

7. What is your personal view on gender equal ownership?

  b. In what way is it important or not important according to you?

Beneficiaries

Theme 1, Ownership

1. What does ownership mean to you?

  a. What does local decision-making mean to you?

  b. Is it important or not? Why?

2. In what way have you been able to affect the projects with your opinions?
  a. How does RODA know your opinion?

  b. How often does RODA ask you about your opinion?

  c. Does RODA report back to you? Are you given feedback/answers?

3. Who should be able to take part in decision-making?
    a. Is it only the people living at Bussi Island?
    b. Should the RODA staff make decisions?

4. Are the people living at Bussi Island given enough or not enough opportunity to make decisions?
    a. Is there anything that could be improved according to you?

Theme 3, Ownership through a gendered lens

5. What is gender equal decision-making to you?
    a. What is gender equality?
    b. How can decision-making be gender equal?

6. Do you believe that both men and women have been given equal opportunity to take part in decision-making regarding the projects?
    c. If not – why?
    d. If yes – How do you know?

7. Do you think that it is important to include both women and men in decision-making?
    e. Why/why not?
    f. Why should men and women be given the same opportunity to affect decision-making?

8. Do you think that men and women at Bussi Island (who take part in the projects) have the same possibilities to participate?
    g. Does work/family/children/household/other affect men and women's possibilities to attend meetings?

9. What could be improved regarding gender equal decision-making within the projects?