

# “Sustainable Development Discourse”

Exploring “sustainabilities”: how is the language of “sustainability” exercised differently by Dutch Development Organizations?



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## **Abstract**

“Sustainability” is a widely known and powerful concept, not only used in personal life but also by governments and organizations on different levels and scales. “Sustainability” is given a wide variety of meanings by these different groups. This thesis aims to explore how the language of “sustainability” is exercised differently by Dutch Development Organizations (DDOs) in their sustainable development projects. Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA), which gives power to the written, spoken and visual text, has been used to examine “sustainability”. It shows that DDOs mobilise and give meaning to “sustainability” in different ways in their visual, written and spoken texts. Besides “sustainability” is in spoken text explained differently compared to how it is explained in the written text of the organization they represent.

“Sustainability” appears to be a contested concept, to which DDOs attach different meaning reflecting their perspective.

**Key words:** sustainability, discourse, language, text, DDOs, power, meaning.

## Preface

This thesis has been written as part of the MSc program of the study; Leisure, Tourism and Environment of Wageningen University and Research Centre. The topic of this thesis: the discourse of "sustainability" has been chosen because of my personal interest in "sustainability". In my daily activities, I try to live "sustainably". But even now when I write this, what does "sustainability" entail exactly? For everyone it means something different and that was something I found fascinating to explore further. Out of this interest, the idea of how organizations put "sustainability" into practise flowed. I was wondering what "sustainability" means for these organizations and how do they relate to it?

Writing this thesis has been a very exciting and challenging experience. I learnt a lot from it and found it very interesting to gain a deeper understanding of all the aspects that are related to "sustainability".

This thesis would not have been written without the help of some people, who I would like to thank for their support and involvement. First of all I would like to thank the interviewees who have delivered an important contribution to this research. I would also like to thank my father and mother for their support in completing this thesis. Furthermore, I would like to thank my boyfriend Martijn who has been a great supporter during the process of writing. Finally, I would like to thank my supervisor Meghann Ormond for her commitment, time and input that has guided me throughout the process of writing this thesis.

Elisabeth Vallinga

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Abstract

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## Abbreviations

CDA	Critical Discourse Analysis
DDOs	Dutch Development Organizations
WNF	Wereld Natuur Fonds
IUCN	International Union for the Conservation of Nature
NCIV	Netherlands Centre for Indigenous Peoples
UN	United Nations
EPA	Environmental Protection Agency
UNEP	United Nations Environment Programme
UNEP GC	United Nations Environment Programme Governing Council
MDGs	Millennium Development Goals
UNCED	United Nations Conference on Environment and Development
NGOs	Non-Governmental Organizations
CBD	Convention of Biological Diversity
FAO	Food and Agriculture Organization
INC	The International Intergovernmental Negotiating Committee
WHA	World Health Assembly
COP	Conference of the Parties

# 1. Introduction

*"Sustainability is about working with material that does not harm the environment and material that remains having a good quality on the long term. That is the true meaning, I am convinced of that."*

When I asked my brother what "sustainability" entails, my brother made the above commentary. He works in construction where "sustainability" is thought about in relation to building materials. For me, however, "sustainability" means something different: separating my waste, re-using my plastic bags, being vegetarian and buying organic food. This difference between us shows that individual people have their own specific ideas about what "sustainability" means.

But "sustainability" is something one is confronted with not only in our personal day-to-day lives. Organizations are increasingly incorporating "sustainability" in their activities, holding and attributing different meanings to "sustainability" as well. Mrs. Enthoven for example (program manager at WNF) asserted that "sustainability" is about: "*distribution*", "*sustainability is cooperation*" (Interview, 22 September, 2011) .

In the Oxford English Dictionary, the word: "sustainability" is derived from the Latin word: *sustinere*, which refers to 'keep up', 'sustain' or 'hold up' (Oxford English Dictionary, 2011). According to Whitehead (2007:9) it means "a sense of support in both physical and emotional terms". Whitehead (2007) argues that "sustainability" is frequently used as an adjective ("sustainable") used to clarify and qualify names to nouns. The term is rarely used in isolation and instead often compounded with words like "economic", "social", "environment" or "development". "Sustainability" has frequently been linked with "development", for example with "sustainable development" that is commonly and widely used. The term "sustainable development" came into use in policy circles after the publication of the Brundtland Commission's report entitled "Our Common Future" on the global environment and development by the United Nations in 1987. The Brundtland Commission defined "sustainable development" in the report as "*development that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs*" (United Nations, 1987). This report has led, according to Redclift (2005:1), "directly to the term "sustainable development" passing into policy discourse, if not in everyday language" .

The word "sustainability" evokes something positive. It is something all people can relate to, although they may do it in different ways. Everyone has their own idea about "sustainability". Swyngedouw (2010) argues that he cannot find a single source against "sustainability". Greenpeace,

for example, is in favour of it but so are the rubber tappers in the Brazilian Amazon... So, what does this tell us? It suggests that there is no overall consensus about the nature, content and meaning of "sustainability". Hopwood, Mellor and O'Brien (2005) suggest that the looseness of the concept and its theoretical underpinnings have enabled the use of the phrases "*sustainable development*" and "*sustainability*" to become the new trend for politicians and business leaders. It has so many definitions and is used in such a variety of contexts that it risks becoming meaningless. These authors argue that "sustainable development" is being used to "justify and legitimate a myriad of policies and practises ranging from communal agrarian utopianism to large-scale capital-intensive market development" (Hopwood, Mellor and O'Brien, 2005: 40).

Throughout this thesis I will be thinking about the term "sustainability" in relation to "sustainable development". "Sustainability", as said before, is used by people in their personal life, but also by governments, organizations and other actors. In this research I wish to focus on Dutch development organizations (DDOs) because they specifically operationalize the concept "sustainability" in relation to "development" in their practises. I focus on "sustainability" and "development" in relation to "poverty alleviation" and "biodiversity conservation" because these two social goals are nowadays an important part of the policy agenda of many states and international organizations. According to Adams *et al.* (2004), the principle that biodiversity and poverty are linked problems is widely accepted, such that it is believed that biodiversity conservation and poverty reduction should be tackled together. It has become part of the political agenda and institutions world-wide develop programs and strategies that cover these goals under the umbrella of "sustainable development". Therefore, I decided to look at how specific DDOs interpret and mobilise the slippery concept of "sustainability" within their policies and practises in relation to "biodiversity conservation" and "poverty alleviation" aimed at "developing countries".

## 1.1 Problem Statement

We have seen that “sustainability” is a widely-used concept, used in many contexts. It is also a powerful concept, with many different meanings attached to it. It is interpreted and implemented in many ways depending on the context of discussion and the audience, and it therefore provokes many different responses. As Mowforth and Munt (2003:24) argue, sustainability is a contested concept, socially and politically constructed and reflects the interests of those involved”. Development organizations are among those actors that use “sustainability” in their projects, holding and attributing different meanings and concepts to it. A way to look at the word “sustainability” as having meaning in particular, social and political conditions is by doing discourse analysis. As McGregor (2003:1546) says, “our words (written and oral) are used to convey a broad sense of meanings and the meaning we convey with those words is identified by our immediate social, political and historical conditions”. The words we use are thus never neutral; they are politicized. Words reflect the interests of those who speak. McGregor (2003:1546) emphasizes that: “opinion leaders, courts, government, editors, even family and consumer scientists, play a crucial role in shaping issues and in setting the boundaries of legitimate discourse (what is talked about and how). This results in the words of those in power being taken as the “truth” and the words of those not in power are seen as irrelevant.

In this research I will examine how language regarding “sustainability” is exercised differently by DDOs in their development projects. More specifically, I will look at how DDOs use language regarding “sustainability” in their written texts, visual images and oral language. I focus on the role of “sustainability” in “biodiversity conservation” and “poverty alleviation” because it helps me to think about the varied mobilisations of “sustainability”. “Sustainability” was first perceived largely as an environmental issue, in which the integration of environmental concerns into economic decision-making was the focus, resulting in policies regarding “biodiversity conservation”. Nowadays, however increasing interest can be seen in the dimensions of social development, especially in “poverty alleviation”(Goodland and Daly, 1996). I am interested in linking the more traditional perspectives on “sustainability” as being largely environmental with the newer perspectives that pay attention to economic and social components because these seem to be important in the “sustainability” discourse nowadays.

## 1.2 Research Objective and Research Questions

This study seeks to analyse how language is mobilised differently by DDOs in “sustainable development” projects regarding “biodiversity conservation” and “poverty alleviation”. How is language used in discourse about projects aimed at “developing” countries? What kind of convergence and divergence in policies, projects and opinions can be detected?

The following research questions have been developed to examine “sustainability” and are derived from Foucault’s work on power/knowledge (1972), Fairclough’s (1992, 2003, 2005) work on critical discourse analysis (CDA), Halls’s (2011) work on cultural representations and signifying practises and Rose’s (2007) visual methodologies.

**In order to explore “sustainability” discourse, I want to examine how the language of “sustainability” is exercised differently by DDOs in their sustainable development projects.**

### Research questions

- How is “sustainability” represented in DDOs’ visual text?
- How is “sustainability” represented in DDOs’ written text?
- How is “sustainability” represented in DDOs’ spoken text?

## 1.3 Report Structure

Chapter 2, the conceptual framework, will provide the reader with a background on the notion of “development”. Then an outline of the development of the ways in which “sustainability” and “sustainable development” have shifted over time in policies and practises is given.

Chapter 3 will discuss the epistemology and methodology used in this study. Concepts of representation, meaning and language in social science will be presented. Next to that, discourse analysis will be introduced. Two approaches, the Foucauldian and Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) will be discussed in more detail. This chapter will also explain the methods used for this study. In the following chapters the results will be described. Chapter 4 examines the representation of “sustainable development” in visual text. Chapter 5 looks at the representation of “sustainable development” in written text and chapter 6 at the representation of “sustainable development” in spoken text. The chapters will give an insight in how the DDOs give meaning and mobilise “sustainability” in visual, written and spoken text. In then discuss the most important findings in

chapter 7 and propose topics for further research. I conclude this thesis by summarizing the most important findings of this research.

## 2. Conceptual Framework

“Sustainable development” is found everywhere. It seems that everyone has an opinion about it and that many organizations deploy this concept. But when did the concept of “sustainable development” actually emerge? We start by reviewing the notion of “development” as it has been used over time, then the policy process regarding development practises over time will be reviewed. The last part of the chapter discusses the overall recognized dimensions of “sustainability”, ‘people’, ‘planet’ and ‘profit’.

### 2.1 The concept of “development”

According to Clark (2006), the shifting conceptualizations of “development” over the past 50 years can be characterized by three main moments that correspond to three contrasting theoretical orientations.

- Modernisation theory in the 1950’s and 1960’s was centred around growth as development. As Clark (2006: 447) states: “modernisation theory inaugurated a period of certainty in the minds of many theorists and world elites, premised on the beneficial effects of capital, science and technology”.
- This period was followed by dependency theory in the 1960’s and 1970’s, the roots of which can be found, in the notion that underdevelopment is related to the connection between external dependence and internal exploitation and not in assumed lack of capital, technology or modern values.
- The idea of “development” was questioned in the 1980’s by a growing number of people. As Clark (2006: 447-448) puts it: “they analysed development as a discourse of Western origin that operated as a powerful mechanism for the cultural, social and economic production of the Third World”.

These three moments that Clark (2006) identified can be classified according to the root paradigms from which they emerged, respectively: liberal, Marxist and post-structuralist theories (Clark, 2006). In which moment are we now then? According to Clark (2006), the deconstruction of “development” by post-structuralists has suggested that we are today in a so-called “post- development era”. This

era means different things for people. In general, however, it implies that “development” is not something that the West should impose on “developing countries” and it is more focussed on social movements and grassroots mobilisations as a way to move forward. The dialogue about “development” has however become difficult since there are more overlaps and eclectic combinations in comparison to the past (Clark, 2006).

## **2.2 Policies and development**

How has the concept of “development” been politicised? How have governments and other institutions integrated this concept of “development” in their policies? Below, the policy process regarding development practises over time will be reviewed.

### **2.2.1 1940's and 1950's**

In the period after WWI and WWII, policies were focussed on development as growth improvement. Harry Truman, former President of the United States was focussed on solving the problems of “the undeveloped areas” of the world. In the Truman Doctrine of 1949, foreign policy included technical assistance for “underdeveloped countries”. Development was in that time defined, according to Escobar (1995: 479), as:

*the process to pave the way for the replication in most of Asia, Africa and Latin America of the conditions that were supposed to characterize the more economically advanced nations of the world industrialization, high degrees of urbanization and education, technification of agriculture, and widespread adoption of the values and principles of modernity, including particular forms of order, rationality and individual orientation.*

This definition of development highlights the arrogant view of the West as having the “true” knowledge of modernity that has to be brought to “undeveloped countries”. A group of experts working for the United Nations even designed an influential document “for the economic development of underdeveloped countries” with concrete measures and policies (Escobar, 1995). The United Nations (UN) aimed to transform two-thirds of the world in terms of material prosperity and economic progress. This goal to develop “undeveloped countries” has had big consequences for the further implementation and interpretation regarding development. Escobar (1995: 4) states that: “by the end of 1950, the view of the UN had become hegemonic at the level of the circles of power”. This discourse of development coming from “developed countries” has led, according to Escobar

(1995), to numerous global problems, increasing poverty and hunger are among these major problems. Two-thirds of the world population are living in conditions of hunger, the cause and effect of poverty, as Escobar emphasizes. While the “developing” countries aimed to develop the “undeveloped” countries, it instead has resulted in “underdevelopment”. As Escobar (1999: 385) puts it: “underdevelopment, encompassing a range of problems such as poverty and hunger, became the subject of political technologies that sought to erase it from the earth but instead multiplied it to infinity”. Following Escobar’s line of thinking, can the development projects of “developed” countries be regarded as a new form of neo-colonialism of development practises? Does Western society support development organizations in their projects, actively contributing to improving the living conditions of “undeveloped” people?

### **2.2.2 1960’s**

In the 1960’s the focus was further put on development, with attention to economic growth and the expansion of GNP, the Gross National Product (which refers to the market value of all products and services produced in one year by labor and property supplied by the residents of a country). At the same time, environmental concern was raised. *The Tragedy of the Commons* was written in 1968 by Garret Hardin, an American ecologist. Hardin believed that the increase in human population and use of natural resources caused problems because Earth’s resources are limited. He identified the dilemma that individuals, out of self-interest, will deplete a shared limited resource even when it is obvious that it is not in anyone’s long term interest for this to happen. Although there have been many critiques of Hardin’s essay (e.g., whether individuals always act out of self-interest), his work has become very influential in thinking about resource management problems facing society today (e.g., decreasing fish stocks, oil and coal) (Feeny *et al*, 1990). Thomas Robert Malthus, an English scholar was already earlier concerned with population growth, he published from 1898 to 1826 six influential editions of his book “*An Essay on the Principle of Population*”, where he wrote that sooner or later population gets checked by famine and disease. This was in opposition to the popular view in the 18<sup>th</sup> century that saw society as perfectible, where people believed in the possibility of limitless improvement of society (Fiaschi and Signorino, 2003).

### **2.2.3 1970's**

This ecological concern on limited natural resources was further elaborated upon by several reports written by the Club of Rome in 1970 from an ecological perspective. The 1972 book *Limits to Growth*, for example, raised concerns about the continuous economic and material growth in industrial societies. The reports emphasized the world as a global system in which all parts are interrelated and therefore need management on a global scale. This “management” of the earth and nature, as Escobar (1996) emphasizes, is a novel historical assertion, demanding nature be treated as a commodity. The United States was at the time regarded as the leader in environmental policy-making. In the 1960's and 1970's, the environmental movement led to the first laws regulating air and water pollution and the formulation of the US Environmental Protection Agency (EPA).

The United Nation Conference of The Human Environment in Stockholm in 1972 put environmental deterioration on the international agenda. Interestingly, this was the UN's first international conference on environmental issues. The view held during this time was that environmental problems in developing countries were caused by underdevelopment. In summary, the UN report of the UN argued that in developing countries millions of people live below the minimum levels that are needed for a decent human existence, without adequate food, clothing, shelter, education, health and sanitation. With this line of thinking, it was thought that “developing” countries must work towards development while at the same time safeguarding and improving the environment. The “developed” countries from this view, should support and make efforts to reduce the gap between the “developing” and “developed” countries (United Nations Environment Program, 2011). This conference was a turning point in the development of international environmental politics, resulting in the foundation of the UN Environment Programme (UNEP). The UNEP's goal is to coordinate the environmental activities of the UN. It supports “developing” countries in implementing environmentally-sound policies and it encourages sustainable development through sound environmental practises (United Nations Foundation, 2011).

### **2.2.4 1980's**

In 1980, the UNEP together with Wereld Natuur Fonds (WWF) and the International Union for the Conservation of Nature (IUCN) implemented to *World Conservation Strategy*. WWF (World Wide Fund for Nature) is an organization that focuses on protecting the biodiversity of the earth globally. IUCN's goal is to “help the world find pragmatic solutions to our most pressing environment and development challenges (IUCN, 2011). This world conservation strategy stated three objectives, respectively: maintenance of essential ecological processes and life support systems, preservation of genetic diversity and sustainable development of species and ecosystems. These three objectives,

however, do not according to Van der Duim (2010), recognize the essentially political nature of development processes. Moreover, conservation seems to be above ideology, and the influence of inequality, class or power is not recognized. The leading response towards conservation aims has been, according to Adams *et al* (2004), the creation of protected areas since the 19<sup>th</sup> century. This can be seen in the number of protected areas in the World Database on Protected Areas (largest assembly of data on the world's terrestrial and marine protected areas) that included over 161,000 protected areas in 2010, covering 236 countries and territories throughout the world (WDPA, 2011). According to Adams *et al* (2004), the idea that the needs of local people should be integrated into protected-area planning was for the first time agreed to at the third World Parks Congress in Bali in 1982. This idea has since been developed further by many institutions and governments world-wide. The creation of protected areas has, however, not always been beneficial for the local people (Salafsky and Wollenberg, 2000). Local people often depend on their natural areas to meet their livelihood needs. This demand on natural resources by local people is, according to Salafsky and Wollenberg (2000), often in conflict with the conservation aims of institutions and governments. This point of linking conservation and livelihood objectives has been a point of discussion for the last two decades, putting the effectiveness of development projects in question (Salafsky and Wollenberg, 2000). Issues that are questioned are the direct effects on local people who are taken off their lands for the creation of protected areas.

The 1987 report of the World Commission on Environment and Development by the United Nations chaired by Norway's former Prime Minister Gro Harlem Brundtland, entitled: "Our Common Future", launched the discourse of "sustainable development" globally. This now widely known and used concept was defined as follows: "humanity has the ability to make development sustainable to ensure that it meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs" (United Nations, 1987). What is remarkable about this definition is that the emphasis on "sustainable development" is placed on meeting human needs rather than on the protection of nature. Through the Brundtland report, "sustainability" became a main theme on the international political agenda. Environmental problems and development were seen as part of the same global crisis. The view on solving these problems encompassed an international economic system committed to growth and eliminating poverty. While the World Conservation Strategy started with the principle of the need to conserve ecosystems, the report "Our Common Future" starts with people (Adams, 1990). It has become part of the political agenda and arena, and it is placed within the economic and political context of international development because it is global in scope.

There are, however, several critiques on the perspectives taken in the Brundtland report. According to Redclift (1992), the report focuses on the centrality of human needs and the role of the environment to meet those needs. This has generated confusion about the social, political, economic and environmental dimensions and their interrelationships in the discourse of “sustainable development”. Escobar (1996: 328) claims that the sustainable development discourse purports to reconcile two old enemies, economic growth and the preservation of the environment, without any significant adjustments in the market system”. This merging of economic growth and the preservation of the environment, as Escobar states, is the result of complex discursive operations comprising capital, representations of nature, management and science. According to Escobar (1996: 328): “in the sustainable development discourse, nature is reinvented as environment so that capital, not nature and culture, may be sustained”. Swyngedouw (2010) also questions the representation of nature in sustainability. He argues that one sort of sustainability seems to be predicated upon developing new natures, such as manufactured clean water, that forces nature to act in a way we consider sustainable or socially necessary. While the other sort is predicated upon limiting or redressing our intervention in nature, returning it to a more benign condition, so that sustainability in the future can be assured. While these two are in direct contrast to each other, Swyngedouw (2010: 187-188) believes that they share the same basic vision: “techno-natural and socio-metabolic interventions are urgently needed if we wish to secure the survival of the planet and much of what it contains”.

During this period, views on “sustainability” were varied. It seems that the environment and economic development are not compatible. Rather “sustainable development” seems to be an oxymoron, in which “development” and “sustainability” are in direct contrast to one another.

### **2.2.5 1990's and Biodiversity**

In the 1990's, climate change led to regional and global regime formation. An important event in sustainability discourse was the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development (UNCED) in Rio de Janeiro in 1992. The Earth Summit issued Agenda 21 to tackle environmental problems at all levels of government. The following quote from Agenda 21 shows this environmental concern.

*Humanity stands at a defining moment in history. We are confronted with a perpetuation of disparities between and within nations, a worsening of poverty, hunger, ill health and illiteracy, and the continuing deterioration of the ecosystems on which we depend for our well-being. However, integration of environment and development concerns and greater attention to them will lead to the fulfilment of basic needs, improved living standards for all,*

*better protected and managed ecosystems and a safer, more prosperous future. No nation can achieve this on its own; but together we can - in a global partnership for sustainable development (UN, Agenda 21).*

UNCED advanced recognition of the global context of development. It called on states and people to cooperate in good faith and in a spirit of partnership in the fulfilment of the established principles. International consensus was achieved on the principles of sustainable development. These are the following: Principle 3, inter and intra generational equity; Principle 5, essential task of eradicating poverty; Principle 8, reduction of unsustainable patterns of production and consumption; and Principle 20, vital role of woman; and Principle 22, indigenous people. Through the creation of these principles, an overall vision of what sustainable development entails was created (UN, 1992).

During this time, the notion of “biodiversity” emerged out of conservation biology. According to Escobar (1998), its textual origin can be found in the publication of Global Biodiversity Strategy (WRI/IUCN/UNEP, 1992) and the Convention of Biological Diversity (CBD) signed by 193 governments at the Earth Summit in Rio de Janeiro in 1992. The world leaders agreed on a strategy for “sustainable development” to meet current needs while ensuring a living planet for future generations. This way, “biological diversity” gained global attention.

But what does biodiversity entail? In Article 2 of the CBD, biodiversity is defined as “the variability among living organisms from all sources including, inter alia, terrestrial, marine and other aquatic ecosystems and the ecological complexes of which they are part; this includes diversity within species, between species and ecosystems” (Escobar 1998: 55).

According to Escobar, there is a dominant view on biodiversity produced by prominent institutions such as the World Bank and environmental NGO’s from the global North like the World Wildlife Fund, supported by the G-7 countries. This dominant view is based, according to Escobar (1998: 57), on:

*loss of habitats, species introduction, alien habitats, and fragmentation due to habitat reduction, rather than underlying causes; it offers a set of prescriptions for the conservation and sustainable use of resources at the international, national, and local levels; and it suggests appropriate mechanisms for biodiversity management, including scientific research, in situ and ex situ conservation, national biodiversity planning, and the establishment of appropriate mechanisms for compensation and economic use of biodiversity resources, chiefly through intellectual property rights.*

This view on “biodiversity” is promoted by many institutions in science, capital and management. Escobar (1998:55) argues that “biodiversity” in an absolute sense does not exist. Instead he claims that “biodiversity anchors a discourse that articulates a new relation between nature and society in global contexts of science, cultures and economies”. The discourse of “biodiversity” has resulted, according to Escobar (1998: 56), in an increasingly institutional apparatus that organizes the production of forms of knowledge and types of power linking one to the other through concrete strategies and programs”. The CBD (Convention on Biological Diversity) fosters national, regional and international meetings on a regular basis, in which the basic architecture of “biodiversity” is created and recreated with their scientific and institutional perspectives and agendas. It sets out commitments for maintaining the world’s biodiversity that support the livelihoods of billions directly and strengthens global economic development (WWF, 2011). The three goals of the convention are as follows: first, *the conservation of biological diversity*; second, *the sustainable use of its components*, and third, *the fair and equitable sharing of the benefits from the use of genetic resources* (Earth Negotiation Bulletin, 2011).

When and where did this convention emerge? During the 1960’s and 1970’s chemicals known as POPs (‘chemical substances that persist in the environment, bio accumulate in living organisms, and can have adverse effects on human health and environment’ (Earth Negotiations Bulletin, 2001) received international attention because of scientific evidence that exposure to chemicals in agriculture and industry can cause an increased risk of cancer, damage to central and peripheral nervous systems and diseases in the immune system, to name a few. The Intergovernmental Negotiating Committee (INC), consisting of UNEP GC (governing council), WHA (World Health Assembly) and other international organizations, developed an international binding instrument for implementing international action and met five times to elaborate the convention. In May 2001, the Stockholm Convention was adopted by the delegates. Key elements of this treaty include the requirement that developed countries provide new and additional financial resources; measures to eliminate production and use of intentionally produced POPs, manage and dispose POPs waste and use of safer chemicals (Earth Negotiations Bulletin, 2011).

On 17 May 2004, the Stockholm Convention entered into force with 173 parties (Earth Negotiations Bulletin, 2011). The Conference of the Parties (COP) meet every two years to look at new topics . Next to that, targets were adopted and programmes were developed to address biodiversity loss. Signatory governments to the CBD had to develop their own national strategies and action plans based on COP decisions. They also had to report on the implementation of the strategies and action plans. In 2002, the CBD adopted a target to “significantly reduce the rate of biodiversity loss by

2010" (Earth Negotiations Bulletin, 2011). All the programs of the convention were aimed to achieve this target. They were, however, largely unsuccessful. The CBD's protected areas program was an exception and was considered an effective instrument and has now been implemented widely (Earth Negotiations Bulletin, 2011). The management of global protected areas was a focal point for the Convention of Biological Diversity (CBD) during the Conference of the Parties (COP). The IUCN's Director General made in 2004 the following statement where he suggested that "*protected areas should be seen as islands of biodiversity in an ocean of sustainable human development, with their benefits extending far beyond their boundaries*" (p.1146). Although the CBD is positive about the protected areas program, Adams *et al* (2004) controversially argue that the global protected areas have largely negative impacts because they shut off future land-use options with significant economic costs. As Adams *et al* (2004: 1146) state "*the eviction of former occupiers or rights holders in land or resources can cause the exacerbation of poverty, as well as contravention of legal or human rights*".

In 2010, governments assembled for the 10<sup>th</sup> Conference of the Parties to CBD in Nagoya, Japan. The parties developed a new strategy to save the world's nature. A 20-point plan was adopted, which governments have to implement in the next 10 years in order to help tackle the mass extinction of species and loss of vital habitats around the world. The governments agreed on increasing the areas of protected land to 17% and 10% of protected marine areas of the oceans by 2020 (Earth Negotiation Bulletin, 2011).

### **2.2.6 2000's**

During the World Summit on Sustainable Development (WSSD) in Johannesburg in 2002, the fight against poverty was one of the priorities singled out for attention, the UN believed that the mutual enhancing of poverty and ecological degradation has been one on the main obstacles for achieving global sustainability. The summit aimed to develop programs to eradicate poverty by addressing underlying causes that relate to the principle of equity and an equitable access to resources, to opportunities and to decision-making structures on the one hand and debt relief programs for the poorest nations on the other (World Summit, 2002).

According to Adams *et al* (2004: 1146), the principle that biodiversity and poverty are linked problems and that conservation and poverty reduction should be tackled together is widely accepted. However, there is much debate about the social impacts of conservation programs and the success of community-based approaches to conservation. However, the international agreement on the urgency of global poverty elimination by the start of the 21<sup>st</sup> century has made the relation

between biodiversity conservation and poverty reduction an important element of debate about conservation policy (Adams, *et al*, 2004).

In 2000 the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) were developed by the 192 United Nations member-states. These are: *eradicate extreme poverty and hunger, achieve universal primary education, promote gender equality and empower women, reduce child mortality, improve maternal health, combat HIV/AIDS, malaria and other diseases, ensure environmental sustainability and develop a global partnership for development* (UN, 2011). Regarding to eradication of extreme poverty and hunger, it is agreed to halve the number of people whose income is less than 1 dollar a day and halve the number of people who suffer from hunger from 1990 to 2015. Adams *et al* (2004) emphasize that a parallel agenda has emerged that addresses the internationally recognized topic of poverty reduction. As a result, biodiversity conservation has somewhat disappeared from the sustainable development agenda which can be seen in the MDGs' focus on national poverty reduction strategies (Adams *et al*, 2004). The MDGs also lack attention to environmental issues in general, with environment comprising one of the eight goals. As Adams *et al* (2004: 137) note: "*Biodiversity conservation is not just the business of the environment goal, rather it underpins the achievement of the other*". The authors give several examples in which the biodiversity link is crucial. With hunger for example, where biodiversity underpins food security. According to Adams *et al* (2004), the UN Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) emphasize that there are close causal linkages between reducing hunger and the sustainable management of natural resources and ecosystems. In addition, biodiversity conservation can provide options for improving livelihoods of future generations (Adams *et al*, 2004). We can see that there are linkages between biodiversity and poverty. This relation is in general poorly understood, however. One of the reasons for this, according to Adams *et al* (2004), is that despite high dependence of poor people on biodiversity and natural resources, environmental goods and services are generally unaccounted for in national statistics and, as a result, not reflected as priorities in national policies (Adams *et al*, 2004).

Although the MDGs seem to fail in addressing the link between biodiversity and poverty, they do directly support a protectionist agenda that has been prominent in international conservation policy. In MDG number 7, "*ensure environmental sustainability*", targets are set to integrate the principles of sustainable development in country policies and programs and reverse the loss of environmental resources by protecting biodiversity.

Today, the social goals of "poverty alleviation" and "biodiversity conservation" are part of the policy agenda of postcolonial states and international agencies. States have created agencies to conserve

natural resource environments, to conserve biodiversity and alleviate poverty. Besides states, large numbers of non-governmental organizations operating at various scales also consider one or both of these goals as prime reasons for their existence (Agrawal and Redfort, 2006). While these different organizational actors have developed programs to achieve the goals, the views about whether and to what extent it may be possible to craft policies and interventions that secure both “biodiversity conservation” and “poverty alleviation” vary (Agrawal and Redfort, 2006). Agrawal and Redfort (2006) have identified two broad sets of inferences that summarize prevalent conclusions. First “biodiversity conservation” and “poverty alleviation” cannot be achieved together. This has led to two distinct policy directions. One is that poverty alleviation should be the preoccupation of states and the second is that hard-headed biodiversity conservation without much attention to poverty alleviation goals is the necessary task (Agrawal and Redfort, 2006). The second set comes, according to Agrawal and Redfort (2006), from those who see potential linkages between poverty alleviation and biodiversity conservation. Within this set, two views are present. One is that, for some, poverty alleviation will by itself lead to conservation since the poor degrade the environment because of their poverty. The second is that programs need to be developed that combine the two goals so they can be achieved jointly. I believe that the second set is the best approach, besides poverty there are more issues that influence the biodiversity value of an area. As we can see, there is no mutual agreement on the policy directions in varied contexts. As Agrawal and Redfort (2006: 2) note, *“literally billions of international aid dollars are being spent on programs that view a particular policy as the best solution”*.

One of the new themes in the “sustainability” discussion, is the notion of a “green economy”. In 2012, the UN will organize a Conference on Sustainable Development, one of the themes will be “green economy in the context of sustainable development and poverty eradication” (United Nations Environment Programme, 2011). A “green economy” is defined in the publication *‘Green Economy why a green economy matters for the least developed countries’* as “one that is low-carbon, resource efficient and socially inclusive. A green economy is thought to be able to take advantage of new growth trajectories designed to be more socially inclusive, as well as responsive to poverty reduction and economic diversification objectives. It can be seen that “poverty alleviation” is again given an important role in “sustainability” as well as the economic dimension (United Nations Environment Programme, 2011).

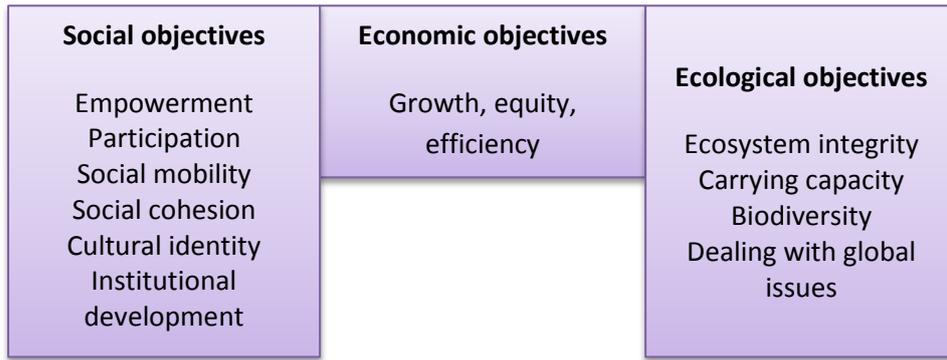
### 2.2.7 Summary of the policy processes regarding “development” over time

<u>Year</u>	<u>Policies</u>
<b>1940's and 1950's</b>	Focus on economic development Helping to develop “undeveloped” countries
<b>1960's</b>	Focus on economic growth Concern raised on environment by Hardin
<b>1970's</b>	UN Conference of the Human and Environment put environmental deterioration on the international agenda  It was believed that environmental problems in developing countries were caused by underdevelopment
<b>1980's</b>	World Conservation Strategy (focused on conserving ecosystems) was implemented by UNEP, WWF and IUCN  Leading response to conservation aims was the creation of protected areas  The 1987 report “Our Common Future” launched the notion of “sustainable development” globally (with a strong focus on people)
<b>1990's and biodiversity</b>	The Earth Summit issued Agenda 21, a plan to tackle environmental problems at all levels was developed.  Notion of biodiversity was launched globally, 193 governments signed the Convention of Biological Diversity (CBD)
<b>2000's</b>	The World Summit on Sustainable Development (WSSD) in Johannesburg focussed on the fight against poverty (mutual enhancing of poverty and ecological degradation was perceived as the main obstacle for achieving global sustainability)  UN member-states developed the MDGs  Notion of “Green economy”

**Table 1 Policy processes regarding “development” over time**

## 2.3 Sustainable development: people, planet and profit

Although the concept of “sustainability” has different meanings for people, there are in general three types of “sustainability” on which I wish to focus: social, environmental and economic - ‘people planet and profit’ (Goodland and Daly, 1996). Elkington, (cited in Bos-Brouwers, 2009) proposed the now widely known idea of this “triple bottom line” (TBL) for “sustainable development” in 1987. He suggested that businesses need to measure their success not only by the traditional bottom line of financial performance but also by their impact on the broader economy (profit), the environment (planet), and on the society (people) in which they operate (Vanclay, 2004). Thousands of companies around the world have since then been measuring and reporting their performance in environmental, economic and social terms. This TBL is, however, only one of the leading sustainability frameworks. The Natural Step, the Ecological Footprint and Graedel and Klee’s Sustainable Emissions and Usage are also widely known and used (Marshall and Toffel, 2005). The three dimensions are thus overall and internationally recognized and given priority in policies and practises in which “sustainable development” should try to reach ecological, social and economic goals. However, different priorities are given to each dimension. They are seen as related dimensions but they are not integrated into a whole because the perspectives between the dimensions vary. This makes the concept of “sustainable development” complex and vague. There are, however, authors that have tried to define the three dimensions. Among these authors are Goodland and Daly (1996: 1003), who define “social sustainability” (SS), “economic sustainability” (EcS) and “environmental sustainability” (ES). “Social sustainability” refers to community participation and a strong civil society. In addition to moral capital, this embraces maintenance and replenishment through shared values and equal rights and through community, religious and cultural interactions. “Economic sustainability” is described as maintenance of capital and is concerned with natural capital (the stock of natural ecosystems that yields a flow of valuable ecosystems good or services into the future). “Environmental sustainability” is about seeking to improve human welfare by protecting the sources of raw materials used for human needs and ensuring that the limits for human waste are not exceeded. Boutros-Ghale (cited in Goodland and Daly, 1994:1003) argues that “development is a fundamental human right that requires democracy and good governance. Economic growth is the engine of development”. The figure below from Goodland and Daly (1994) summarizes the economic, social and ecological objectives from their point of view:



**Figure 2-1: Dimensions of “sustainability”** (Goodland and Daly, 1994, 1007).

The debates about goals and means within theories dealing with both environmental and socio – economic questions have flowed into ideas on sustainable development. However, the above displayed objectives sometimes conflict. As Wackernagel and Rees (in Hopwood, Mellor and O’Brien:2005) argue, “the Brundtland Report attempted to bridge some of these debates by leaving a certain ambiguity, talking at the same time about the priorities of meeting the needs of the poor, protecting the environment and more rapid economic growth”. As described earlier, some authors argue that the environmental or ecological dimension has been given priority in the sustainable development concept. Littig and Grießler (2005:66) argue for example, “sustainable development should mainly help preserve the ecological systems and resources necessary for economic and social life – as an important prerequisite for meeting the future needs of humanity”.

### **2.3.1 Sustainable environmental development**

Environmental sustainability’s emergence is the result of according to Haque (2000), environmental catastrophes and a growing environmental consciousness that have led to the emergence of a new model of development called “sustainable development”. Raising concerns about natural resources such as decline in biodiversity, depletion of non-renewable resources and increase in non-biodegradable wastes resulted in development policies and practices that needed to be “sustainable”. This clear focus however has some shortcomings. According to Haque (2000:9), “sustainable development is constrained by its continuity with the agenda for economic growth, that in turn causes harm to the environment”. This is remarkable because sustainable development policies were developed to protect the biodiversity but are constrained by the economic growth dimension. Policies in most countries (“developed” and “undeveloped countries”) remain with the goal of economic growth based on industrial expansion. Rees (cited in Redclift, 1992:396), argues that “our mechanical perception of the biosphere is dangerously superficial and our continued belief in the possibility of sustainable development based on the growth-oriented assumptions of neo-

classical economics is illusory". Besides attention to natural resources, there is also an ethical manifestation, according to Redclift (1992), which is concerned with the idea of stewardship by humans over the tenants of the earth, conserving resources for the future. We, as a society, feel the need to preserve the earth for future generations.

In short, environmental sustainability is thus aimed at reducing the use and production of harmful substances, minimising pollution, and exploitation of valuable resources and use of the environment (Littig and Grießler, 2005). Many policies and practises have been aimed at environmental sustainability. For example, the well-known ecological footprint is a measure of human demand on Earth's ecosystems. This concept calls for a more environmentally friendly way of life, combining the ecological and social parts. People are encouraged to feel responsible for the earth by paying ecological taxes, for example, resulting in positive social effects such an increased awareness about the way products are produced. Littig and Grießler (2005), however, emphasize that the focus is still on obtaining the best ecological effects rather than on social-political effects, so a win-win situation is not created.

### ***2.3.2 Sustainable economic development***

Within "sustainable economic development", there are also different views. Redclift (1992:402) describes its objective as "reducing the absolute poverty of the world's poor through providing lasting and secure livelihoods". From this definition it can be seen that the emphasis is put on meeting economic and social goals, ecological objectives are left out. Economists have, according to Pearce and Barbier (1990), paid little attention to sustainable development because economists are not interested in environmental issues. However "economic sustainability" in other views is linked directly to the environment. According to Bishop (1993), the extinction of plants and animals imposes large economic losses. Therefore, the need to protect the environment through "sustainable development" arises, however this involves making economic costs. Bishop (1993: 70) argues that from an economic perspective, sustainability can be linked to efficiency; the goal is "to manage natural resources so as to come as close as possible to an idealized, highly efficient time path for the economy". But is this possible? Currents rates of natural resource and environmental depletion and degradation indicate that we are on an unsustainable path. Applying efficiency criteria to the preservation of biodiversity leads to a fundamental problem, according to Bishop (1993) because economists' first concern remains economic growth. The good thing is to protect species where positive net benefits are to be earned. However as Bishop (1993:70) states, "preserving species only when doing so meets efficiency criteria may not be sufficient to assure a sustainable

economy and the magnitude of net benefits will inevitably reflect the existing structure of endowments, which may place future generations in a disadvantaged position”.

### **2.3.3 Sustainable social development**

According to Lehtonen (2004), “sustainable development” has until recently been perceived as an environmental issue, in which the integration of environmental concerns into economic decision making was the focus. However there is an increasing interest in the dimensions of “social sustainable development”, which is the result of the fall of communism, difficulties in creating market institutions in transitional economies, financial crisis’s and problems of unemployment and social marginalisation in prosperous economies (Lehtonen, 2004).

According to Littig and Grießler (2005), a clear definition of what “social sustainability” entails is missing. There is no agreement about the social objectives of sustainable development. It depends on who defined them. Social sustainability’s objective is for example often defined as achieving social equity (e.g. woman rights). But there are also authors that focus more on political objectives like democratic rights. Next to that, Littig and Grießler (2005) stress that its meaning is complicated because “social sustainability” tries to link environmental protection with social equity. This is not only a big challenge from practical point of view but it also raises theoretical problems. How can social equity be achieved and what does social equity actually mean? It is rather a broad concept. For Becker (1991:1 *et al*, cited in Littig and Grießler, 2005), *“sustainable development might best be characterised as a contested discursive field which allows for the articulation of political and economic differences between North and South and introduces to environmental issues a concern with social justice and political participation”*.

Three well known dimensions of “sustainability” have been examined briefly. The perspectives between the dimensions vary and the dimensions are not integrated into a whole because the perspectives differ too much. This makes the concept of “sustainable development” even more complex.

## 2.4 Conclusion

This chapter reviewed the notion of “development” as it has been used over time. It further looked at how governments and other institutions integrated this concept of “development” in their policies. In the 1940’s and 1950’s the focus of governments was on economic development. The view in that time was to help develop “undeveloped” countries. In the 1960’s, focus was further put on economic growth, but during this period environmental concern was also raised (see Hardin, 1962). The UN Conference of the Human Environment in 1972 put environmental deterioration for the first time on the international agenda. It was believed that environmental problems in developing countries were caused by underdevelopment. In 1980, the World Conservation Strategy was implemented by the UNEP, WWF and IUCN. One of the leading responses to conservation aims was the creation of protected areas. The idea that local people should be integrated into protected area planning was for the first time agreed to at the third World Parks Congress in 1982 in Bali. The well-known 1987 report “Our Common Future” has launched the notion of “sustainable development” globally. While the World Conservation Strategy started with conserving ecosystems, “Our Common Future” started with people. Besides that it had become part of the political agenda and it was placed within the economic and political context of international development, global in scope. In 1992, the concern for the environment was further elaborated when the Earth Summit issued Agenda 21, in which a plan was developed to tackle environmental problems at all levels of government. During this time, the notion of biological diversity was also launched globally. Some 193 governments signed the Convention of Biological Diversity (CBD) at the Earth Summit in Rio de Janeiro. In 2010, during the Conference of the Parties to CBD in Japan, a 20-point plan was adopted to help tackle the mass extinction of species and loss of vital habitats around the world. During the World Summit on Sustainable Development in 2002, poverty alleviation was one of the priorities singled out for attention. It was believed that poverty and ecological degradation are the main obstacles for achieving global “sustainability”. This focus on social elements of “sustainability” was further elaborated upon by the formulation of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs). The last part of the chapter discussed the overall recognized dimensions of “sustainability”, ‘people’, ‘planet’ and ‘profit’. It showed that the perspectives between the dimensions vary and the dimensions are not integrated into a whole because the perspectives differ too much.

# 3. Epistemological and Methodological Framework

This chapter will give an introduction to the epistemology and methodology used for this study. Epistemology in general will be discussed, followed by an introduction to representation, meaning and language in social science. Subsequently, I will discuss two different approaches in discourse analysis; respectively the Foucauldian and Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) approaches and the concept of visual culture will be discussed as well. Paragraph 3.2 will describe how CDA and visual methodology are used for this study. This chapter will also reflect upon the barriers and constraints of these methods. Besides I will reflect upon my research. Finally, the Dutch Development Organizations (DDOs) that have been selected for analysis are introduced and the selection process is explained.

## 3.1 Epistemology

Researchers adopt different theoretical perspectives for looking at the world out there, describing what the world looks like and making sense of it. This embodies a certain understanding of 'how do we know what we know': epistemology. Maynard (in Crotty, 1998:9), explains that "epistemology is concerned with providing a philosophical grounding for deciding what kinds of knowledge are possible and how we can ensure that they are both adequate and legitimate". There are a range of epistemologies, such as objectivism, that holds a view that there is a meaningful reality apart from the operation of any consciousness. As Crotty (1998:8) puts it, "in the objectivist view of what it means to know, understandings and values are considered to be objectified in the people we are studying, and if we go about it in the right way, we can discover the objective truth". Constructionism on the other hand rejects the view of human knowledge in the sense that there is no one objective truth that can be discovered. Through our engagement with the realities in our world, truth or meaning comes into existence (Crotty, 1998). Meaning is thus constructed, so people construct meaning in different ways in relation to the same phenomenon. In the constructionist approach to meaning in language, as Hall (2011:25) stresses, "things don't mean, we construct meaning, using representational systems, concepts and signs". In this approach, it is thus not the material world that conveys meaning but it is the language system that we use to represent our concepts. People use conceptual systems of their culture through linguistic and other representational systems to construct meaning. Representation is a practise, which uses material

objects and effects. Meaning depends not on the material quality of the sign, but on its symbolic function, because as Hall (2011:26) points out, “a particular sound, or word stands for, symbolizes or represents a concept that it can function, in language, as a sign and convey meaning or as the constructionists say, signify”. The constructionist approach is adopted in this research because the notion of “sustainability” is highly contested, with struggles over its implementation.

### **3.1.1. Representation, meaning and language**

In the study of culture, the concept of representation connects meaning and language to culture (Hall, 2011). For Hall (2011:15), representation is, “an essential part of the process by which meaning is produced and exchanged between members of a culture, it involves the use of language, or signs and images which stand for or represent things”. Any sound, word, image or object which functions as a sign, and is organized with other signs into a system which is capable of carrying and expressing meaning belongs to ‘language’. According to Hall (2011), there are two interrelated systems of representation by which people produce meaning. The first system encompasses concepts formed in the mind that function as a system of mental representation, which classifies and organizes the world into meaningful categories (Hall, 2011). With the second system of representation we are able to communicate this meaning, namely language. As Hall (2011:28-29) puts it, “language consists of signs organized into various relationships, but signs can only convey meaning if we possess codes which allow us to translate our concepts into language and vice versa”. Codes which set up the correlation between our conceptual system and our language system in a way that we think of a house, the code tells us to use the English word “house”. In our culture (our conceptual and our language codes) the concept house is represented by the letters H,O,U,S,E.

Signs thus only carry meaning through codes; they help us to translate our concepts into language. These codes are the key for meaning and representation since they are part of our culture, shared maps of meaning which we learn and unconsciously internalize as we become members of our culture (Hall, 2011). Hall (2011: 29) emphasizes the following: “the constructionist approach to language introduces the symbolic domain of life, where words and things function as signs, into the very heart of social life itself”.

### From linguistics to semiotics

The study of signs in culture and culture as a sort of language is generally referred to as semiotics. Semiotics is an eclectic field. Its roots can be traced back to the teachings of Ferdinand de Saussure (1966), who can be seen as the father of modern structural linguistics. Saussure focussed on how language works and the role it plays in the production of meaning. Saussure called the link provided by the codes between the forms of expression used in language (including writing, drawing, or other types of representation) or “signifiers” and the mental concepts associated with them, the “signifieds”. The connection between these two systems of representation produces “signs”, and signs, for Saussure, when organized into language, produce meanings and could be used to reference objects, people and events in the real world (Hall, 2011). His theories are seen as the foundation for a general approach to language and meaning, providing a model of representation that has been applied in a wide range of cultural objects and practises. Roland Barthes developed Saussure’s linguistic model further by applying it to a much wider field of signs and representations. Barthes (in Hall, 2001) does not only see words and images as signifiers in the production of meaning but objects and activities as well. Barthes (in Hall, 2001) introduced the concepts “denotation” and “connotation” (both of which require the use of codes) to link signs to a wider level of cultural themes, concepts or meanings. Denotation is the simple, basic descriptive level, where consensus is wide and most people would agree on the meaning (Hall, 2011). Most people would for example agree on the meaning of a ‘dress’ or ‘table’. Connotation refers the signifiers to broader themes and meanings, linking them with the wider semantic fields of culture. For instance, our ideas of ‘formality’ or ‘romance’. While my idea of ‘romance’, for example is about candle-light or walking along the beach with my boyfriend, other people and other cultures have their own, and probably different, ideas of ‘romance’. As Barthes states (in Hall 2011:39) “these signifieds have a very close communication with culture, knowledge, history and it is through them, so to speak, that the environmental world of the culture invades the system of representation”.

According to Hall (2011), semiotics seem to confine the process of representation to language, and to treat it as a closed, rather static system. Following from this critique, developments in the study of semiotics became concerned with representation as a source for the production of social knowledge, thus a more open system, connected in more intimate ways with social practises of power. One of those people who thought that models of representation should focus on broader issues of knowledge and power is Michel Foucault.

Michel Foucault, a French philosopher, social theorist and historian is known for his critical studies of social institutions. His thoughts evolved in reaction to both the subjectivism of social science

perspectives and the naive empiricism imported from the natural sciences (May, 2001). As May (2001:16) stresses: "Foucault considers knowledge and power to be constructed within a set of social practices, the result is to question the concept of truth as separable from the exercise of power". His ideas are often regarded as provocative and are discussed at socio-theoretical and philosophical levels. Foucault's writings on power, knowledge and discourse have been very influential in humanities and social sciences. Foucault was concerned with the production of knowledge through discourse. Discourse is defined by Foucault (in Hall, 1997:72), as "a group of statements which provide a language for talking about – a way of representing the knowledge about a particular topic at a particular historical moment, discourse is about the production of knowledge through language". Dryzek (1997:8) argues that "discourse", "rests on assumptions, judgements and contentions that provide the basic terms for analyses, debates, agreements and disagreements". Foucault wanted, according to Hall (2011:43), "to analyse how human beings understand themselves in our culture and how our knowledge about the social, the embodied individual and shared meanings comes to be produced in different periods". It can be seen that Foucault's thoughts were partly embedded in the theories of Saussure and Barthes since he focussed on cultural understanding and shared meanings. The difference, however, is that Foucault was mainly concerned with relations of power and not on relations of meaning (Hall, 2011). The following quote from Foucault (1980, cited in Hall, 2011, p.114-115), shows how he moved away from the ideas of Saussure and Barthes.

*Here I believe one's point of reference should not be to the great model of language and signs, but to that of war and battle. The history of which bears and determines us has the form of a war rather than that of a language: relations of meaning...*

Foucault did not study language as a system of representation, but discourse as a system of representation, including both language and practise. In Foucault's view, discourses constitute subjects and objects. As Alvesson and Karreman (2000:1127) put it, "language put together as discourses, arranges and naturalizes the social world in a specific way and thus informs social practises". Foucault (in Alvesson and Karreman, 2000:1128) emphasizes that: "these practises constitute particular forms of subjectivity in which human subjects are managed and given a certain form, viewed as self-evident and rational". Subjects and objects are thus produced; they are socially constructed in Foucault's perspective. The idea that physical things and actions exist and only take on meaning and become objects of knowledge within discourse is, according to Hall (2011), the heart of the constructionist theory of meaning and representation.

Foucault focused his later work on the relationship between knowledge and power, and how power operated within what he called an institutional apparatus and its technologies. He argued the following:

*“We should admit... that power produced knowledge (and not simply by encouraging it because it serves power or by applying it because it is useful); that power and knowledge directly imply one another; that there is no power relation without the correlative constitution of a field of knowledge, nor any knowledge that does not presuppose and constitute at the same time power relations”* (1977:27).

Foucault (1977) argues here that the most powerful discourses, in terms of social effects are dependent on claims and assumptions that their knowledge is true. Knowledge and power are, in his view, entangled, knowledge is discursive - meaning that it is produced, meanings are connected together in a particular discourse, and all discourses are filled with power. In this power/knowledge relationship, power and knowledge support and depend on each other.

According to Foucault (1977) the construction of claims to truth lies at the heart of the intersection of power/knowledge. Rules and truths embedded in the social are formed through power/knowledge relations. For Foucault (1980:131): *“Truth is a thing of this world: it is produced only by virtue of multiple forms of constraint. And it induces regular effects of power. Each society has its regime of truth, its ‘general politics’ of truth: that is, the types of discourse which it accepts and makes function as true”*.

Discourses are, according to Foucault (1977), directly involved in a political field, power relations have a hold upon it, with complex reciprocal relations. Discourse is, in his view, a political and technological matter of knowing. Foucault (1977:26) emphasizes that this technology is *“diffuse, rarely formulated in continuous, systematic discourse; it is often made up of bits and pieces; it implements a disparate set of tools or methods”*. In his view, institutions use, select or impose certain methods, operating a *‘micro-physics of power’*. So, institutions operate parts of the discourse.

Philips, Lawrence and Hardy (2004:635) argue that language is fundamental to institutionalization: *“institutionalization occurs as actors interact and come to accept shared definitions of reality, and it is through linguistic processes that definitions of reality are constituted”*.

In their view, institutions are not just social constructions but social constructions constituted through discourse. Fairclough (1992:38) notes that discourse constructs its own conventions making sense of reality through the way it rules in or rules out certain ways of thinking and acting:

*A social institution is an apparatus of verbal interaction... Each institution has its own set of speech events, its own differentiated settings and scenes, its cast of participants, and its own norms for their combination... It is, I suggest, necessary to see the institution as simultaneously facilitating and constraining the social action of its members: it provides them with a frame of action, without which they could not act, but it thereby constrains them to act within that frame"*

Through these different sets of speech events, settings, scene, casts of participants and norms for their combination, the meaning about for instance "sustainability" can be ordered, assembled in different ways; discursively.

Now that we know a little more about representation, meaning and language, semiotics and Foucault's work on language, discourse and knowledge and their relation to questions of power, we will move to the different approaches to discourse analysis.

### **3.1.2 Discourse analysis**

#### Foucauldian approach

The term 'discourse', as stated before, has different meanings to researchers and their audiences and there is a wide variety of approaches to discourse analysis. These range from linguistic approaches that focus on communication to approaches that focus on ideas and actions central to discourse. Sharp and Richardson (2001) write that analysis of conversations, speeches, articles and statements can be regarded as *discourse as text*. What is said and written counts as discourse. Another way to look at discourse is to see texts as multiple and competing sets of ideas. In this case, discourses have coherence beyond 'text' and 'speech', and show a changing balance of power between the competing discourses. These are, however, only two examples of text approaches in discourse analysis. Sharp and Richardson (2001) argue that to analyse policy processes more fully, one has to move beyond a textually oriented approach in order to embrace the many aspects of policy making that lie beyond the texts produced along the way. In their view, shared by Hajer (1995), Flyvbjerg (1998) and Jensen (1997), "a discourse is not a communicative exchange, but a complex entity that extends into the realms of ideology, strategy, language and practise, and is shaped by the relations between power and knowledge" (Sharp and Richardson: 2001:3). Sharp and Richardson (2001:196)

therefore draw upon the work of Foucault because *“it interprets discourses as multiple and competing sets of ideas and metaphors embracing both text and practise; a specific ensemble of ideas, concepts, and categorizations that are produced, reproduced, and transformed in a particular set of practises through which meaning is given to the physical and social realities”*. There is thus a difference between discourse based on text and the broader Foucauldian view. However, both stress the importance and complexity of communication in social change. The different approaches are concerned with exposing inequalities of power as a means of achieving social change (Sharp and Richardson, 2001). What is said and written (discourse as text), will be one of the approaches in this study because it can identify how sustainable development discourse is manifested in written documents and which techniques (strategies) the DDOs use. Where are the tensions and which is at a particular moment, in a particular context, present? The struggles within sustainability discourse influence and shape the policy processes of organizations.

### Critical Discourse Analysis

While Foucault was focused on practices and texts in discourse, he was rather vague about how to study discourse. Another approach to discourse analysis, which tells how to study discourse, is critical discourse analysis (CDA), stemming from Habermas’s (1973) critical theory. CDA focuses on the influence of power relations on the content and structure of writings. Fairclough (2003, in Wetherell, Yates and Taylor, 2001:230) defines CDA as follows, *It’s about how language figures within social relations of power and domination, how language works ideologically, the negotiation of personal and social identities in its linguistic and semiotic respect”*. Blommaert and Bulcaen (2000: 448) argue that the goal of CDA is to analyse “opaque” as well as transparent structural relationships of dominance, discrimination, power and control manifested in language. It studies real and often extended instances of social interaction which take (a partially) linguistic form”. CDA is distinctive, according to Blommeart and Bulacaen (2000), because the relation between language and society and the relation between analysis and practises, is analysed. CDA is a theoretical approach characterized by a realist social ontology. It treats social structures and social events as part of social reality. This approach differs from Foucault, who can be regarded as a post-structuralist that recognizes the power of discourse in shaping reality, meaning that we only experience limited aspects of the world and some of what we experience is based on the discourses in which we are enfolded, such that we produce our own realities in discourse.

The relationship between structure and agency and between discourse and other moments of social practices and social events are viewed by Fairclough (2003) as dialectical. This means there is a social structure that influences people’s agency, but people also have their own agency that influences the

structure. The discourse is influenced by social practises and social events, but the social practises and social events also have an influence on the discourse. As Fairclough (2003) puts it, “discourse is different from social events and social practises, not reducible to social events and practises but not discrete from social events and practises, discourse internalizes and is internalized by other social elements”. Fairclough (2003) assumes that coherent accounts of the relationship between social structures and social events depend upon mediating social practises. Social practises as form of social activity, articulated together to constitute social fields, institutions and organizations. At all these levels, there is a semiotic dimension present. Texts are seen by Fairclough (2003) as part of a linguistic semiotic element of social events. (E.g. texts including written, spoken interaction, multi-media text of television, internet). According to Fairclough (1997), these elements are dialectically related, meaning that the elements are different from each other but not fully separate. The elements have distinct properties. Social relations have, for example, a semiotic character but are not researched and theorized in the same way as semiotics. However, texts are ‘over-determined’ by other social elements. Fairclough (1997) stresses that linguistic analysis of texts quickly finds itself addressing questions about social relations and identities. However this does however not mean that the linguistic analysis of texts is reducible to forms of social analysis (Fairclough, 1997).

In his later work, Fairclough (2000) identified three central tenets of CDA. First, discourse is shaped and constrained by social structure: status, age, ethnic identity, gender and class. It is further shaped by culture. For example, mainly white, middle-class men who are economists (social structure) have a professional culture which shapes and constrains the discourse. What the economists say is shaped by their professional culture, socialization and member profile (social structure). Lastly, discourse helps to shape and constrain identities, relationships, and systems of knowledge and beliefs (Fairclough, 2000). To take the example of economists again, their identities, nature of social relationships and knowledge and belief systems are shaped and constrained by the language and words espoused by others.

CDA tries to unite and determine the relationship between three levels of analysis: the *actual text*, the *discursive practices* (process involved in creating, writing, speaking, reading and hearing) and the *larger social context that bears upon the text and the discursive practices* (Fairclough, 2000). Regarding the first level of analysis, text is explained by Fairclough (2003) as a record of an event where something was communicated and involves the presentation of facts and beliefs (can be ideological), the construction of identities of participants discussed in the communication and strategies to frame the content of the message. In the second level of analysis, discursive practises are explained by McGregor (2003: 2) as: “rules, norms and mental models of socially acceptable

behaviour in specific roles or relationships used to produce, receive, and interpret the message. To quote Gee (in McGregor, 2003:3), “discursive practices involve ways of being in the world that signify specific and recognizable social identities”. For example, I have learned to be a student and it has become part of my identity. The last level of analysis, the social context, refers to distinct settings where discourse occurs, each with a set of conventions that determines rights and obligations – what each is allowed and expected to do (McGregor, 2003). Text becomes more than just words, instead it reveals how words are used in a particular social context.

McGregor (2003:3) states that the CDA approach “seeks to link the text with the underlying power structures in society through discursive practises upon which the text was drawn”. In other words, a text is interpreted and acted upon by readers or listeners depending on the social context (rules, norms) within a complex set of power relations.

### Visual culture

Gillian Rose (2007), a Cultural Geographer wrote about the study and interpretation of visual culture. The interest in culture for understanding social life, often described as the cultural turn, developed in the 1970's (Rose, 2007). Culture became a way to understand social identities, processes, change and conflict. It is a very broad and complex concept. For Rose (2007), it denotes the ways in which social life is constructed through the ideas that people have about it, and the practises that flow from these ideas. The visual is, according to Rose (2007), central to the cultural construction of social life in societies because images and photographs offer views of the world. However, these are never innocent because they interpret the world and display it in particular ways. Images, for instance, can visualize social difference or social power relations. Images can also offer particular visions of social categories. They can influence people. For instance, how do the visual images (advertisements) of Wereld Natuur Fonds (WNF) trigger people to make donations to a particular project? Rose (2007) identified seven different methods that can be used for the interpretation of the visual material depicted for analysis: audience studies, compositional interpretation, semiotics, psychoanalysis, an anthropological approach, discourse analysis and content analysis. Rose (2007), for example, proposes to use audience studies when looking at television programmes and psychoanalysis for films. Semiotics can be used for the interpretation of advertising, which is of relevance for this study because it deals with the question of how images make meaning. As Rose (2007:74) argues, “semiotics offers a very full box of analytical tools for taking an image apart and tracing how it works in relation to broader systems of meaning”.

### **3.1.3 Summary epistemology**

“Sustainability” is a complex concept that is highly contested, with struggles over its meaning, representation and implementation. I am interested in the way language is used in representing “sustainability”. The concept of representation connects meaning and culture because it is part of the process by which meaning is produced and exchanged between members of a culture. It involves the use of language, or signs and images which represent things (Hall, 2011). The study of signs in culture and culture as a sort of language is generally referred to as semiotics. It is however regarded as a rather static system. Foucault based his ideas partly on semiotics but broadened it with issues of knowledge and power, calling it discourse. In the study of discourse, there are different approaches a researcher can choose from (e.g. Foucauldian and CDA approaches). The CDA approach is adopted in this research because it focuses on the influence of power relations on the content and structure of writings. With semiotics a central tenet in CDA, a word or image referring to “sustainable development”, “biodiversity conservation” or “poverty alleviation” can be taken apart to examine how it works in relation to broader systems of meaning. Rose (2007) and Hall (2011) focus specifically on visual images using semiotics as methodology by looking at the meanings they carry and their influence. Images relating to “sustainability” can be analysed this way.

## **3.2 The methods of CDA**

For this study, discourse analysis is used as research method, in order to capture the complexity of the phenomenon "sustainability". More specifically CDA is chosen as a particular type of discourse analysis because it sees discourse as language in use in speech and writings as a form of social practice. Within CDA, power is given to the written and spoken word. CDA helps to study and analyze texts by revealing discursive sources of power, dominance, inequality and bias and how these sources are initiated, maintained, reproduced and transformed within specific social, economic, political and historical contexts (McGregor, 2003). I use three different methods of CDA to examine what Fairclough understands as text: documental analysis, visual methodology and in depth-interviews . These three different methods, allowed me to look at the representation of "sustainability" from different angles.

### **3.2.1 Documental analysis**

With written documents, Huckin (1997) and Price (2002) recommend to approach a text uncritically, so a researcher can read it without prejudices, regardless of one's position. A researcher then should read it with a critical eye. This encompasses revisiting the text at different levels, posing questions, imagining how it could be said differently and comparing it to related texts (McGregor, 2003). McGregor (2003) proposes three ways to analyze a text at different levels: first, look at genres, second, look at the framing, and last, analyze specific sentences, phrases and words.

#### Genres

Fairclough (2000) describes genres as the presentation of facts and beliefs, which are often ideological (e.g. websites, policy documents, journal articles, research reports e.g.). Each genre has a style of its own and as McGregor (2003) argues, has its different building blocks that make it unique from other types of documents. When these rules are applied to structure a genre that belongs to an institution, the genre becomes a means through which the institution extends power (McGregor, 2003). A website can serve different purposes, from making money to sharing information. It is an important means through which an organization presents itself. Information regarding the organization's activities, projects, mission statement can all be found here. Policy documents are often more formal and state the principles and rules of an organization. Research reports are used to present and describe findings about a particular study to an interested audience.

### Framing

One can also look at how the messages are framed. What perspective is being presented and from what angle is the perspective taken? The framing techniques presented below are drawn from Huckin (1997).

- First, it is important to look at the choice of specific photographs, diagrams, sketches and other things that are used to get the reader's attention.
- Second, which headings and keywords are used to emphasize certain concepts by giving them textual prominence?
- Third, what is not mentioned; what will the average reader not notice?
- Fourth, are words used that take certain ideas or perspectives for granted as if there is no alternative?
- And last, is the reader manipulated with the use of selective voices to convey the message that certain points of view are more correct, legitimate, reliable, and significant, while leaving out other voices?

### Analysis of specific sentences, phrases and words

Having examined the genre of text and how it is framed, the next step is to analyze specific sentences, phrases and words. The techniques below are again drawn from Huckin (1997).

- First, one can look at the topic position where the writer creates a perspective that influences the reader's perception. To what do most sentences refer, for instance?
- Second, sentences can convey information about power relations. Who is depicted as in power and over whom? Who is depicted as powerless and passive? Who is exerting power and why?
- Third, look at statements that the author takes for granted as it is regarded as the truth. Are the ones with power given more weight or a bigger voice?
- Fourth, do the authors make insinuations or are they suggestively carrying double meanings?

- Fifth, look at connotations. These are often assigned on the basis of cultural knowledge of participants. According to Huckin (1997), connotations associated with one word, or through metaphors and figures of speech, can turn the uncritical viewer's mind.
- And last but not least, look at the use of specific words that convey a degree of certainty and authority. The tone of doubt or surety is introduced by using words such as "may", "might", "could" as Huckin (1997:3) argues, "moods of heavy-handed authority or deference can be created simply by choice of verb or modal phrases, which assert or deny the possibility, impossibility, contingency, or necessity of something".

We have seen that the CDA techniques started with analyzing the full text, subsequently working down to the individual word level. This enables me to peel back the layers to reveal the invisible power of the written and spoken word in the "sustainability" discourse.

### **3.2.2. Visual Methods**

As said before, within CDA, one can focus on several forms of semiotics: symbols, body language, signs and symbols and visual images as means of discourse (Fairclough, 2002). Images are constructed and show specific views of the social world. Visuality can be seen as a discourse because visual images makes certain things visible in particular ways, and other things unseeable (Rose, 2007).

#### Genres

In this thesis I analyze visual images in different types of genres; homepages, posters and magazines or brochures. Homepages usually have images to attract visitor and present particular views. Images in posters are often very big and colorful and try to capture people's immediate attention. Posters have generally two main goals: to mobilize people into action and to popularize an idea. They are used to get people to do or believe something (IDRC, 2012). A brochure is a booklet that describes an organization, a facility or an activity. It is used to explain all or a segment of the organization's activities, or how the organization functions in a particular industry, or addresses a specific problem (MarcusLetter, 2012).

#### Framing

As with the documental analysis I looked at how the visual images are framed. What perspective is being presented and from what angle is the perspective taken? The framing techniques presented below are drawn from Huckin (1997), this time adapted to visual images.

- First, it is important to look at the choice of specific images that are used to get the reader's attention.
- Second, which visual images are used to emphasize certain concepts by giving them textual prominence?

### Denotation and connotation

While the documental analysis analyzed specific sentences, phrases and words, I will use Rose's (2007) methodology for a deeper analysis of visual images. Below I will give an introduction of this methodology.

How to bring the analysis of visual images into practise? Rose (2007) argues that a researcher has to look at every element of an image and at their interrelation. This allows a researcher to identify key themes such as recurring images. According to Rose (2007), it is important to look at how a visual image produces its effect of truth. What strategies are used? Are arguments scientifically grounded? As discussed earlier, the sign is the most fundamental unit of semiotics. Anything that carries a meaning can be understood in terms of its signs and the work they do. For Barley (1983:394), semiotics is:

*"a study of signs, semiotics concerns the principles by which signification occurs, signification refers both to the processes by which events, words, behaviours, and objects carry meaning for the members of a given community and to the content they convey".*

At the core of semiotics is thus the notion of sign. A sign is understood to be the relationship between a sign (an expression or form such as a word, sound, or a colored light) and the signified, the notion or content conveyed by the sign. The link between an expression and content is arbitrary because it is a convention of the group to which the sign's users belong (Barley, 1983). Arbitrary in this respect implies that the same expression can signify alternative contents and similar contents can be conveyed by different expressions. The actual concept in the world that the sign is related to is called the sign's referent (signified) (Rose, 2007). Semiotics is concerned with clarifying the different ways in which signifiers and signifieds are attached to (and detached from) each other. In this study I will select images from the DDOs websites. First of all I will look at the home page, to assess the kinds of visual images presented and how. I will then look at images that are linked to programs relating to "sustainability", "biodiversity conservation" and/or "poverty alleviation".

The first stage in analysis is then, as Rose (2007) explains, the identification of basic building blocks of an object, its signs. Dyer's (1982:96), (cited in Rose, 2007) made a checklist for exploring what signs

of humans might symbolize. One can look at representation (age, gender, race, hair, body) or at the representation of manner (expression, pose), representation of activity (touch, positional communication and settings (exotic or normal)).

As described earlier in the theoretical framework, Barthes (1962) proposed the concepts denotation and connotation. Denotation is the simple basic descriptive level, where consensus is wide and people would agree on the meaning of a sign, also called the *signifier*. For example, a dress or jeans. The second level connotation refers the signifiers to broader themes and meanings, linking them with the wider semantic field of culture, which he calls *signification*. For example, ideas of formality, romance. Here signs are interpreted in the wider realms of social ideology, the general beliefs, conceptual frameworks and value systems of society (Hall, 2011).

How to bring in practise? Hall (2011) proposed to keep the following questions in mind based on Barthes's theory.

- What signifiers can you identify in the visual image?
- What do they mean? What are their signifieds?
- Look at the visual image as a whole, at the level of "myth", what is its wider, cultural message or theme? Can you construct one? (Hall, 2011:40)

### **3.2.3. In-depth Interviews**

Individual interviews are the most widely used method in qualitative research. They are used for a detailed investigation of people's personal perspectives for an in-depth understanding of the personal context within which the research phenomena are located and for very detailed subject coverage (Lemke, 1998). This method gives the opportunity to clarify experiences, social processes and complex systems in a detailed way (Lemke, 1998). How do people tell their stories about the issues we confront them with? What do they say? I want to see how they might relate to the written text and visual images. So that I can gain more information about why they are doing what they are doing.

Verbal material is also part of what Fairclough understands as text. Graddol and Boyd-Barret (1994), state that recent theories of the text embrace the idea of spoken text, but there is still some debate about how far to go. Theorists, like Halliday (1987), regard spoken events as text which can be analyzed in a similar way to written material. In his perspective, spoken events become theorized as text when the technology of recording allowed them to become the object of study. Recording can

turn the spoken event in a relatively stable object because a recording of speech shares certain qualities with other kinds of text. It can be approached as written text.

I conducted semi structured interviews with key figures within five organizations relating to “sustainable development’ focused on “biodiversity conservation” and/or “poverty alleviation”. Although McGregor (2003) focused on the analysis of texts in the form of written documents, I also applied parts his methodology to the analysis of verbal material. I looked at the genre, framing and specific sentences, phrases and words of the verbal material.

I selected “sustainability” as the main topic in order to learn how people working for the DDOs give meaning to it. I addressed questions on “sustainability” in relation to the vision of the organization, projects and goals.

### Genres

As explained before, each genre has building blocks that make it unique from other types of texts. Language is a means of communication and it comprises two types of communication: verbal and non-verbal. Although language is known as the most convenient means of communication and understandable, communication is possible without language through non-verbal communication. It is by Tayade (2011:96) understood as: “the process of communication through sending and receiving wordless messages”. In non-verbal communication facial expressions, gestures, body positions, eye contact and appearance play a significant role. Below a short explanation of the types of non-verbal communication drawn from Knapp and Hall (2009):

- *Facial expressions*

Facial expressions form a large proportion of non-verbal communication. While non-verbal communication and behavior varies between cultures, facial expressions for happiness, sadness, anger and fear are quite similar throughout the world.

- *Gestures*

Deliberate movements and signals are an important way to communicate meaning without words. Common gestures include waving, pointing, using fingers to indicate numeric amounts.

- *Body position*

Posture conveys can indicate feelings and attitudes. It usually focuses on defensive postures, arm-crossing, and leg-crossing.

- Eye contact

Looking or staring is also non-verbal behavior. Looking at another person can indicate a range of emotions, including hostility, interest and attraction.

- *Appearance*

Clothing, hairstyles, choice of color are other factors that are also considered a means of non-verbal communication. Appearance can also alter physiological reactions, judgments and interpretations.

(Knapp and Hall, 2009).

### *Framing of verbal communication (text)*

Spoken text is a form of communication that continues to be the most important aspect of our interaction with other people. I look at how the interviewee frames his/her message. The framing techniques are again drawn from Huckin (1997), this time however applied to spoken text.

1. Which keywords are used to emphasize certain concepts by giving them prominence during the interview?
2. What is not mentioned or avoided in the interview?
3. Does the interviewee use words that take certain ideas or perspectives for granted as if there is no alternative?
4. Does the interviewee make use of selective words to convey the message that certain points of view are more correct, legitimate, reliable, and significant, while leaving out other perspectives?

### *Analysis of specific sentences, phrases and words*

After I examined the genre of the verbal material and how it is framed, the next step was to analyze specific sentences, phrases and words. The techniques below are again drawn from Huckin (1997), however slightly adapted for the analysis of spoken text.

1. What is the topic position of the interviewee, where does the interviewee mostly refer to?
2. Who is depicted as in power and over whom? Who is depicted as powerless and passive? Who is exerting power?
3. Does the interviewee make insinuations or is he/she suggestively carrying double meanings?

4. Look at the use of specific words in the interviews that convey a degree of certainty and authority.

With these techniques, I analyzed the spoken text fully and with the same approach as with the written text.

### **3.3 Data Analysis**

In this paragraph I will describe how I analyzed the written, spoken and visual texts of the DDOs. For the selection of DDOs I started to look for DDOs that focus on “sustainability” in their projects in “developing” countries. Eventually I found the Nature and Poverty Network, a network that focuses on three themes: “sustainability”, “biodiversity conservation” and “poverty alleviation”. From the 17 organizations that are part of the Network, four and the Network itself were willing to cooperate by giving an interview. From these five DDOs, I examined their visual, written and spoken text.

#### Visual text

The visual images I selected for analysis also had to meet certain criteria. The images had to be part of the organization’s presentation of its goals and vision and there had to be a link to “sustainability”, “poverty alleviation” and/or “biodiversity conservation”. Because there is a wide variety of images DDOs use, I limited myself by looking at three genres of visual text: images at the DDOs’ homepage, in posters and in brochures/magazines. This way I could not only compare the use of images between the DDOs but also between the different genres of visual text.

#### Written text

The written text was collected during the process of writing this thesis. The written text of the DDOs selected for analysis had also to meet certain criteria. As with the visual text, it had to be part of the organization’s description of its goals and vision. Besides it had to have a direct link to “sustainability”, “poverty alleviation” and/or biodiversity conservation” aimed at “developing” countries. All DDOs selected have projects that are related to one or more of those concepts. I decided to look at three genres of written text: text on the homepages, in policy documents and in research reports, this enabled me to compare not only the different perspectives of the organizations but also the difference between the types of texts.

### Spoken text

Regarding the spoken text, five DDOs were willing to cooperate by giving an interview. In three cases, I went to their head-office, where I spoke with people responsible for or working with “sustainability” in their daily activities. I conducted two interviews by telephone (with the same person) because of the interviewee’s time constraints. In order to be able to analyze the interviewee’s responses correctly, I recorded each interview and transcribed them. I transposed the data from the activity in which it originally occurred to an activity I was able to analyze. This allowed me to look at the specific sentences, words and phrases thoroughly and it ensured me that no important information would be lost. By this displacement through transcribing I actually shaped the data. According to Lemke (1998:23), this is a critical determinant of the information content, because as he emphasizes: “data is only analyzable to the extent that we have made it a part of our meaning – world, and to that extent it is therefore always about us”.

I selected particular quotes from each transcript that reflected the interviewee’s opinion regarding “sustainability” in relation to the organizations’ vision, projects and goals the best. Since the interviews I conducted were in Dutch, I had to translate their responses into English. This was sometimes a bit difficult, because some words do not have a straight- forward translation. I tried to translate it in a way that would best reflect their opinion.

### 3.4 Barriers and constraints

As with every study, I was confronted with barriers and constraints during my research. These will be discussed below. I will start with three different methods and then discuss the barriers and constraints of critical discourse analysis (CDA).

#### Research methods

With every text I had to make a choice regarding the type of text I wanted to use in this study.

Concerning the analysis of visual text, I had to decide which type of genres I wanted to examine. I chose to look at visual images on websites, posters and brochures. Unfortunately, I could only find a poster of one organization, that of WNF. A weakness of visual methodology is that I was to one who decided what to use for analysis and where to stop. I had to limit myself by only looking at the homepage images, images that were part of a project relating to “sustainability” and images on posters and brochures/magazines. Another barrier regarding the analysis of visual images is that I am, as a researcher, already culturally and psychologically informed, which influences how I perceive the data. The visual images exist materially, but I was the one giving meaning to them (Prosser, 2006). Visual methodology’s strengths, however, are that it pays careful attention to images themselves and their interrelations and it addresses questions of power articulated through visual images.

Regarding the analysis of the written text I had to decide which types of genres I wanted to examine. I chose to look at websites, policy documents and research reports. But even then I had to decide which websites and which research reports of the DDOs I wanted to examine further. With regard to the policy documents I could, unfortunately, only find one document, that of IUCN. Besides only IUCN and WNF seemed to have a brochure or magazine. This can be regarded as a weakness of this study. Next to that, I was the one who decided what to use for analysis and where to stop.

Concerning the spoken text, a constraint has been the number of interviews I could arrange.

The majority of the organizations were too busy and could unfortunately not cooperate by giving an interview. Eventually I arranged 5 interviews, although the list of the Nature and Poverty Network consisted of 17 organizations.

Above, I discussed the barriers and constraints of the three different types of texts. There were, however, more. Although I used three different types of texts, I could only touch upon a small part of the “sustainability” discourse. In order to investigate it more thoroughly, more time should be spent on each of these methods. There are many other methods that could be used as well in looking at

“sustainability”. One method could, for instance, be visiting the projects and seeing with actually happens there. The data analysed only gives a reading of the written, visual and spoken text.

Another constraint in doing a CDA has to do with the temporal boundaries of the analysis. The outcomes of discursive struggle in “sustainability” discourse are, for example, a manifestation of a particular moment. The aim of DDOs’s projects has been the result of discursive struggles and the one present in the documents can be seen as the ‘winner’ of at that time struggles. The risk is that present discursive struggles may not be manifested in current outcomes, as their effects are delayed and cannot be seen at the moment (Sharp and Richardson, 2011).

Another constraint is that while I tried to look at the data objectively, I am influenced by my background. My educational and cultural background has influenced the way I look into the world. It is formed, by beliefs and knowledge. For Gee (1997:2) the way a researcher is shaped and influenced by his/her culture is explained as follows:

*When we speak or write we always take a particular perspective on what the “world” is like. This involves us in taking perspectives on what is “normal” and not; what is “acceptable” and not; what is “right” and not; what is “real” and not; what is the “way things are” and not; what is the “ways things ought to be” and not; what is “possible” and not; what “people like us” or “people like them” do and don’t do; and so on and so forth, again through a nearly endless list. But these are all, too, perspectives on how we believe, wish, or act as if potential “social goods” are, or ought to be, distributed.*

By using the CDA approach I did not intend to provide answers. I tried to understand the conditions behind the concept “sustainability” , by paying attention to the details of what is written, what people say about it and how visual images are used in the representation of “sustainability”. This enabled me to look from different angles into the “sustainability” discourse.

### **3.5 Reflection on Research**

From my personal interest in language and “sustainability” flowed the idea to do something with discourse analysis, more specifically CDA because it is concerned with relationships of dominance, power and control manifested in language. This has been very challenging, since I was not familiar at all with the concepts of Foucault, Fairclough and others. The biggest challenge for me was to

familiarize myself with all the different theories on discourse analysis and all the different perspectives on “sustainability”. Since “sustainability” is such a broad concept, it was one of my first concerns because I discovered that there is nowadays a discussion on the decreasing role of the environment in “sustainability” and an increased interest in the social part, that of “poverty alleviation”, I decided to focus on those two concepts within “sustainability”.

Concerning the spoken text obtained via the interviews, I have to note that it was sometimes difficult to interpret the opinion of the interviewee, whether it reflected his or her opinion or that of the organization or whether it was a combination of the two.

In this thesis I furthermore tried to treat the visual, written and spoken texts as equally as possible by giving them the same amount of attention. In many studies however, the primacy of spoken text as opposed to written text is debated. According to Chafe and Tannen (1987), the study of language in the West focused for more than thousands of years on language as it was written. Language that can be stored, collected, examined, manipulated and analyzed in ways that were until recently impossible for spoken language. Many linguistic studies have been concerned with language in speech and writing. There is however little agreement on the characteristics of the two. The general view according to Biber (1985) is that written language is structurally elaborated, complex, formal, and abstract, while spoken language is concrete, context-dependent, and structurally simple. There are also studies that identified almost no linguistic differences between speech and writing, while others argue that speech is more elaborated and complex in comparison to writing. Historically, academics have regarded writing as the true form of language, speech was considered to be unstable and not worth to study (Biber, 1985). This changed in the 19<sup>th</sup> century when linguistics such as Grimm began to study speech in its own right. By the early 20<sup>th</sup> century linguists as Saussure (1983), Sapir (1939) and Bloomfield (1955) emphasized the primacy of spoken as opposed to written language, relegating the latter to a derived and secondary status. Since written language had a secondary status, there was no motivation within structural linguistics for comparison in speech and writing (Biber, 1985). However, this primacy of speech over writing has not been widely accepted outside of linguistics. The historical view that written language is true language continues as the dominant perception in present time.

### **3.6 Dutch Development Organizations (DDOs)**

I interviewed representatives from development organizations based in the Netherlands which operate in so-called “developing” countries about “sustainability” linked to “biodiversity

conservation” and “poverty alleviation”. I selected them because they actively work on “sustainable development” projects and present themselves on the internet as organizations that actively work on “sustainable development”, with a focus on “biodiversity conservation” and or “poverty alleviation”. This link to “biodiversity conservation” and/or “poverty alleviation” was one of the criteria in selecting the DDOs. It allowed me to narrow my focus from among the extensive number of organizations and projects that are nowadays linked to “sustainability”. This focus allowed me to compare different organizations and search for coherence and divergence in policies, projects and opinions. I expected to see a difference because the concept is so broad, such that organizations might operate “sustainable development” linked to “biodiversity conservation” and/or “poverty alleviation” in completely different ways. Below, I will provide some background information on the organizations that have been selected for this research.

### **3.6.1 WNF- NL**

A group of conservationists and scientists from Great Britain signed the “Morges Manifesto” in 1961. This declaration formed the foundation for WWF as we know it today. The declaration started with the following statement: *“We must save the world’s wildlife”* (WWF, 2011). Until that time conservation was seen as the domain of scientists and hunters. WWF brought conservation into the public arena for the first time in history. The declaration laid the foundation for WWF as the world’s largest independent conservation organization. Today, the organization is active in more than 100 countries on five continents. It has over 5 million supporters globally.

The focus of WWF has evolved over time. Whereas the efforts were first focused on single species and individual habitats, today WWF strives to preserve “biodiversity” and achieve “sustainable development” globally (WWF, 2011). WWF has many offices around the world; WNF-NL is one of them. The offices run their own conservation programs and projects.

WNF-NL its office is located in Zeist. The goals of the organization as written on their website are protecting the habitats of plants and animals in cooperation with society, government and companies to find solutions and sustainable use of natural resources. All the projects of WNF have ultimately the same goal; the protection of the ecosystems and biodiversity (WNF, 2011).

I interviewed Chris Enthoven, program manager for Livelihoods and Nature and Poverty at WNF.

### **3.6.2 IUCN**

The International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN) was founded in 1948. It is a democratic membership union with a large international network. More than 1,000 members, 11,000 scientific

experts and volunteers are involved in the six thematic commissions in the fields of biodiversity, natural resources management, environmental technology, policy, law and information. Some 1,000 employees work together in more than 160 countries. The Council is the principal governing body of IUCN and is responsible for the oversight and control of all the affairs of IUCN, subject to the authority of the World Conservation Congress (IUCN.org, 2011).

#### IUCN NL

IUCN acknowledged the IUCN National Committee of the Netherlands as a National Committee of IUCN in 1996. On its website, it is written that IUCN is the only organization for the conservation of nature that can boost both states and non-governmental organizations (NGO's) among its members. IUCN NL is based in Amsterdam. Its platform is composed of 35 IUCN members based in the Netherlands. These members range from civil society organizations to scientific institutions to the State of the Netherlands (IUCN.nl, 2011). IUCN NL aims to form a bridge between social organizations, business, the government and science. It focuses on the struggle against biodiversity loss. The organization applies its knowledge in cooperation with partners to contribute to global issues in the fields of nature and environment. In addition IUCN sets up projects in which biodiversity is studied and the organization provides financial support to social organizations in "developing" countries. IUCN mainly focuses on the conservation of nature and the improvement of the environment in relation to poverty reduction. IUCN NL focuses on three actors: Dutch government, Dutch businesses and Civil Society Organizations in the Netherlands and "developing" countries.

I interviewed Heleen van den Hombergh, senior officer at IUCN.

#### **3.6.4 Both ENDS**

Both ENDS is an independent foundation started in 1990. It has supported many environmental organizations in Africa, Asia, Latin America and countries in Central and Eastern Europe over the past years. The organization supports fundraising, creating networks in and outside the Netherlands and collecting relevant information. In addition, issues of groups of people in "developing" countries are brought under the attention of policy makers and the corporate world on a local, national and international level. In cooperation with local organizations, Both ENDS has initiated programs that focus specifically on the management and protection of river stream flow areas, forests, wetlands and dry areas (Both ENDS, 2011). The office of Both ENDS is located in Amsterdam.

I interviewed Tim Senden, Communication Officer at Both ENDS.

### **3.6.5 NCIV**

The Netherlands Centre for Indigenous Peoples (NCIV) is a non-governmental organization. It was founded in 1969 and their office is situated in Amsterdam. NCIV has a formal structure of a foundation consisting of a board (with 6 voluntary professionals). The organization supports the promotion, recognition and protection of indigenous people's rights. NCIV operates within a world-wide network of indigenous people's organizations (IPOs), NGOs and other organizations, (academic) institutions and individual experts (NCIV.org, 2011). NCIV is the only organization in The Netherlands that focuses on indigenous peoples. Currently they focus on issues the following issues: climate change, the millennium development goals, corporate social responsibility, bio fuels, protection of biodiversity and sustainable forest management (NCIV.net, 2011).

I interviewed Leo van der Vlist, external relations officer at NCIV.

### **3.6.6 Nature and Poverty Net**

The Nature and Poverty Net is a knowledge and learning network for practitioners working on nature conservation, sustainable use of natural resources, poverty eradication, social and environmental justice and organizational capacity building. It was founded by the IUCN National Committee of the Netherlands in close cooperation with 17 Dutch-based organizations and their NGO partners in the Global South, to support a process that helps organizations better learn from each other to improve their work. The platform's goal is to connect with people and organizations, to share experiences, find tools and resources, to provide access to experts and offer field-based knowledge and insights regarding daily work activities. The objectives are formulated as follows: *"increase the understanding and effective action on the linkage between nature and poverty, and to enhance the effectiveness, efficiency, impact and the sustainability of field projects and interventions"* (natureandpovertynet, 2011).

An interview was held with Heleen van den Hombergh, coordinator of the Nature and Poverty Net.

## 4. Representation of “sustainable development” in visual “text”

In Chapter Two, we saw that “sustainable development” covers a wide range of ideas and meanings, with different perspectives over time. Organizations use linguistic and representational systems (as Hall calls it) or speech acts (as Fairclough calls it) or texts (as I call it in this thesis) to show their shared definition of “reality”. When actors within an organization interact and come to accept shared meanings of how “sustainability” should be mobilized, “sustainability” becomes institutionalized. Visual text is a representational system or speech act or text through which an organization constitutes its meaning on “sustainability”.

This chapter gives insight into how DDOs use visual images to represent themselves as development organization and give meaning to “sustainability”. Paragraph 4.1 examines the genre of the selected visual images. Then, paragraph 4.2 looks at how the visual images are framed in different types of genres, using the methodology of Rose (2007) and Hall (2011).

### 4.1 Genres

I looked at visual images of the DDOs because they are used by the organizations to present their views and perspectives to the audience. The images are also used in relation to “sustainability”. Visual images are present in different types of genres. In this study I looked at images on websites, posters and brochures. A website is the portal to the organization; every organization seems to have one nowadays and the general public expects that an organization has one. It is a very strong medium for an organization to present itself. Posters are used to capture people’s immediate attention; often they are big, bright and colorful and have a great visual image. Posters have generally two main goals: to mobilize people into action and to popularize an idea. They are used to get people to do or believe something (IDRC, 2012). A brochure is a booklet that describes an organization, a facility or an activity. It is used to explain all or a segment of the organization’s activities, or how the organization functions in a particular industry, or addresses a specific problem (MarcusLetter, 2012).

## 4.2 Framing

Here I look at visual images presented by DDOs to get the audience's attention. I use an approach based on Huckin's (1997) critical discourse methodology. I moreover use the methodology of Rose (2007) and Hall (2011) on semiotics. First I look at the homepages of WNF, IUCN and The Nature and Poverty Network. Then a specific visual image of WNF and The Nature and Poverty Network that is used in relation to a "sustainability" project is examined. This paragraph furthermore looks at how posters and brochures are used to frame the organization's views and perspectives.

### 4.2.1 Websites

In this paragraph, the homepages of WNF, IUCN and The Nature and Poverty Network are analysed.

#### WNF



Figure 4-1: Print screen homepage WNF (WNF, 2011).

Looking at the framing of the visual images on the home page, images of animals are displayed to draw the attention of the audience. The symbol of WNF: the panda is given a prominent position.

The WNF website comprises many 'signs' (Figure 4-1). These 'signs' include many colorful images that are presented in an attractive way to draw visitors' attention. But what do those 'signs' symbolize? The images mainly symbolize animals. An example of a 'sign' that is used to attract visitors attention is the image of the elephant. The signifiers (elements of the image) include an elephant that is represented as a cute stuffed doll. This assumes that this specific sign or image is focused on getting children's attention and the attention of their parents who are concerned with their children's interests. The other images on the homepage show a tiger, parrot, panda bear and fishes. To the Dutch audience, these animals symbolize exotic animals that can only be seen in the zoo. All in all, the majority of the 'signs', on the website show images of exotic animals that do not live in the Netherlands. This assumes that WNF's intention is to present itself as an organization concerned with exotic animals. Animals that appeal to the imagination of the Dutch audience since the exotic animals do not live in the Netherlands.

## IUCN

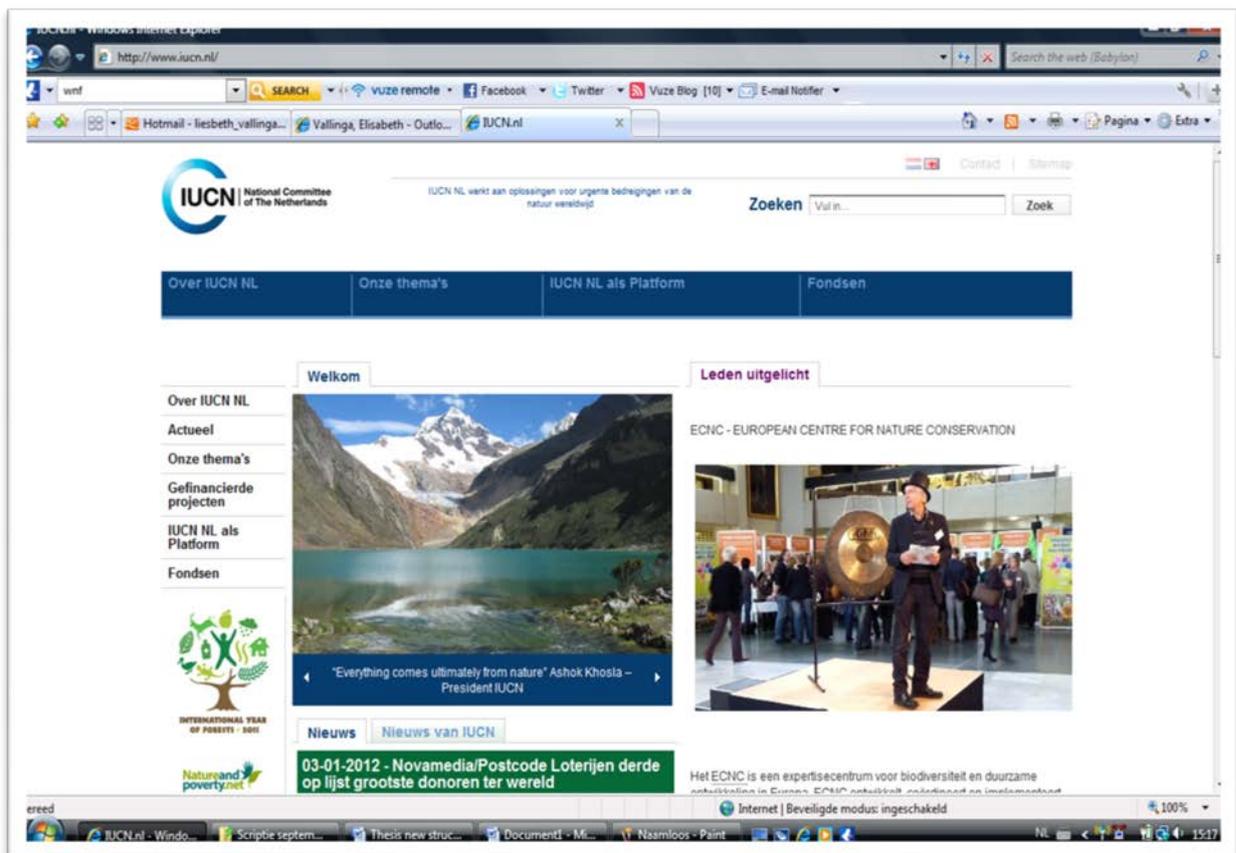


Figure 4-2: Print screen homepage IUCN (IUCN.org, 2011).

Looking at the framing of the visual images on IUCN's home page, images of nature and people are displayed. Both are given a prominent position to draw visitors' attention.

The framing of IUCN's home page looks quite different in comparison to WNF. Whereas WNF placed many colorful images on their website in general, IUCN does this only on their homepage. The other pages do not show many images. The majority of 'signs' include key-words. It has a more formal character. At the home site (Figure 4-2) the 'signifiers' include an image of mountains covered with snow and in front of it, a lake is displayed. It is a beautiful picture of nature in a foreign country that is probably used to show the beauty of nature to an audience that appreciates nature. Besides it shows how the water of the lake flows into side waters, probably to show that the lake is a natural resource. The other image denotes a man wearing a suit with a big hat. He is standing on a stage, holding a paper in his hand looking into the audience. It looks like this 'sign' is used to show the visitor IUCN's knowledge and expertise, the man who is standing on the stage shows a kind of authority, which is accentuated by the clothes he is wearing and his position, by standing on a stage with a paper in his hand. It assumes that IUCN is focused on a formal audience, probably on experts, businesses, governments and other interest groups. Looking at the home page as a whole, the message IUCN wants to spread is that they are concerned with the beauty of nature and with sharing knowledge.

## Nature and Poverty Learning Network

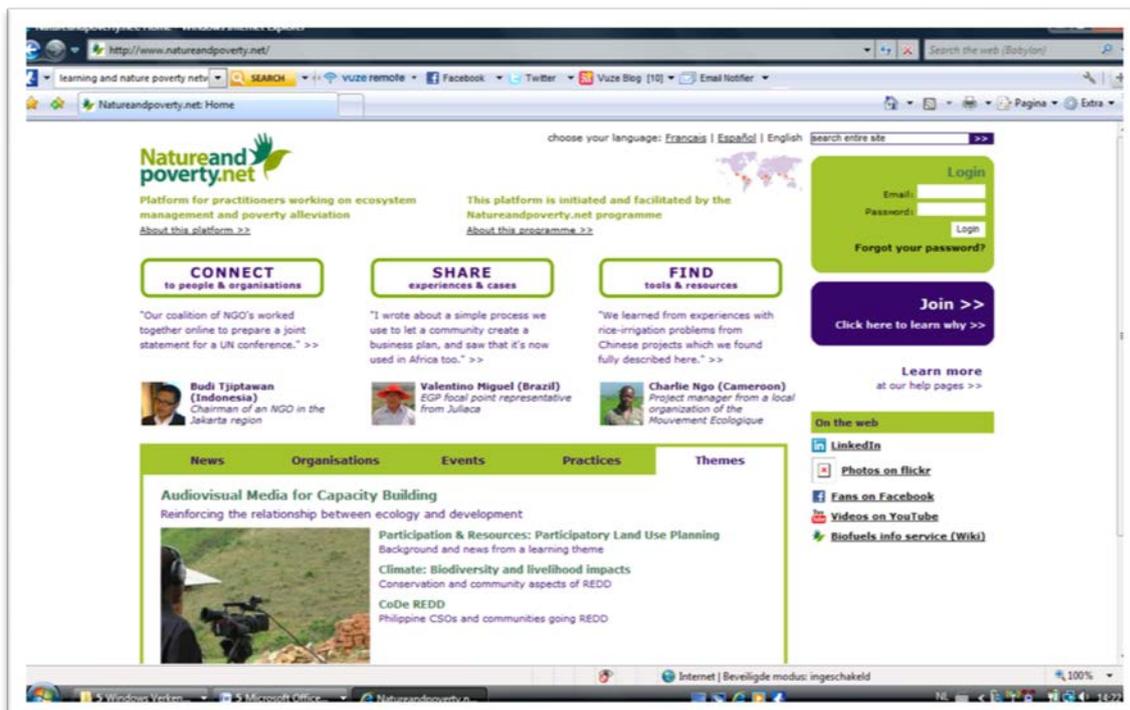


Figure 4-3: Print screen homepage the Nature and Poverty Network (The Nature and Poverty Net, 2011).

Looking at the framing of the visual images on the Network's home page, images of three persons and an image of a man behind a camera are displayed to draw the attention of the audience.

The 'signs' on the website of the Network (Figure 4-3) that are presented show three men looking into the camera. The first image displays an Asian man, the second image displays an Asian or South American man and the last shows a black man. The Network possibly intends to show its international focus because it shows people from different cultural backgrounds. Besides it means that the organization is concerned with individuals (possibly locals) because photographs of specific man are displayed. The other image on the website shows a person standing behind a camera with a grass field in front of it. The image is meant to indicate that the Network is doing something with the camera, but what it means is unclear to me.

Looking at the home page as a whole, the wider message the organization wants to spread is The Network's concern with individual people from different cultural backgrounds. This is an entirely different presentation of visual images in comparison with WNF that uses mainly animals and IUCN that shows nature and people.

#### ***4.2.2. Specific images in relation to "sustainable development" projects***

I also looked at specific images that DDOs use in relation to their "sustainable development" projects. Although the economic, environment and social dimensions are by many scholars (such as Goodland and Daly, 1996) regarded as dimensions of "sustainability", I could not look for the presence of it in the images because I would need written text that indicates that the images relate to the dimensions. Below are two examples of visual images, one of WNF and one of The Nature and Poverty Network both used in a "sustainability" project.

## WNF

WNF placed the visual image (Figure 4-4) in relation to the Linking-Future program under the theme 'Nature and Development' on the website.



**Figure 4-4: Image project WNF (WNF, 2011).**

The 'sign' (Figure 4-5) signifies human and nature. In the visual image, four black children are walking through nature, carrying buckets on their heads. They are walking on a path that is used frequently. The four children are moving and seem not to be aware of the camera. It looks from a westernized perspective "exotic" through the surroundings (plants and trees) and the clothes the people are wearing.

WNF probably intends to show that these people are dependent on natural resources and that they do not have all the necessary natural resources at hand. The children are possibly on their way to a well or river to obtain water from. They have to bring this water in buckets back to their village. Since there is a path, it seems that the area is cultivated. The image of WNF relates "sustainability" to nature and local people's dependency on it.

## The Nature and Poverty Network

The Nature and Poverty Network placed the image (Figure 4-5) in relation to the Kasyoha Kitomi Forest project on the website:



**Figure 4-5: Image project the Nature and Poverty Network** (Nature and Poverty Net, 2011)

The 'sign' (Figure 4-5), signifies human and nature. Looking at the presentation of the image, it denotes a group of black men in a forestry area. The area looks degraded because the men are standing in a barren part of the forest. They wear basic clothes: trousers and shirts. One man is giving instructions by pointing towards "something". The other men are standing and sitting around him and all look at him. One man is holding "something" (a rope?) in his hand.

The Nature and Poverty Network probably intends to show that it focuses on sharing knowledge and collective action because one man is explaining something towards the other people who all seem to listen to him. It seems that the man is giving instructions because the man in blue shirt is planning to undertake action holding "something" in his hands.

The image does however not reveal whether the man who is giving instructions works for the Network or if he is a local. The Network relates "sustainability" to nature and collective local action.

### **4.2.3 Poster**

I also looked at posters of the DDOs, which are used to mobilize the audience to take action. I could unfortunately only find one of WNF.

## WNF



Figure 4-6: Poster WNF (WNF-NL, 2012)

The poster of WNF denotes different 'signs'. It shows a close-up of three types of animals: a rhinoceros, a polar bear and a monkey. The images are colourful and duplicated (doubled). The animals are looking into the camera. The rhinoceros is in movement, it seems it is running. The polar bear is sitting on snow and the monkey is hanging in a tree. The types of animals WNF uses do not live in the Netherlands, for a Dutch audience these animals mean something special. Since the animals look straight into the camera, the audience feels connected with them. The monkey, for example, looks cute but a bit sad as well, which provokes a kind of empathy for the animal. Looking at the poster as a whole, it seems that WNF aims to mobilize people to help these exotic animals. WNF tries to accomplish this by trying to evoke audience's sympathy for them.

#### 4.2.4 Magazine and brochure

##### WNF

I also looked at brochures and magazines. It however seems that the DDOs do not all use brochures and magazines to present and promote their activities. I could only find a brochure and magazine of WNF and IUCN.

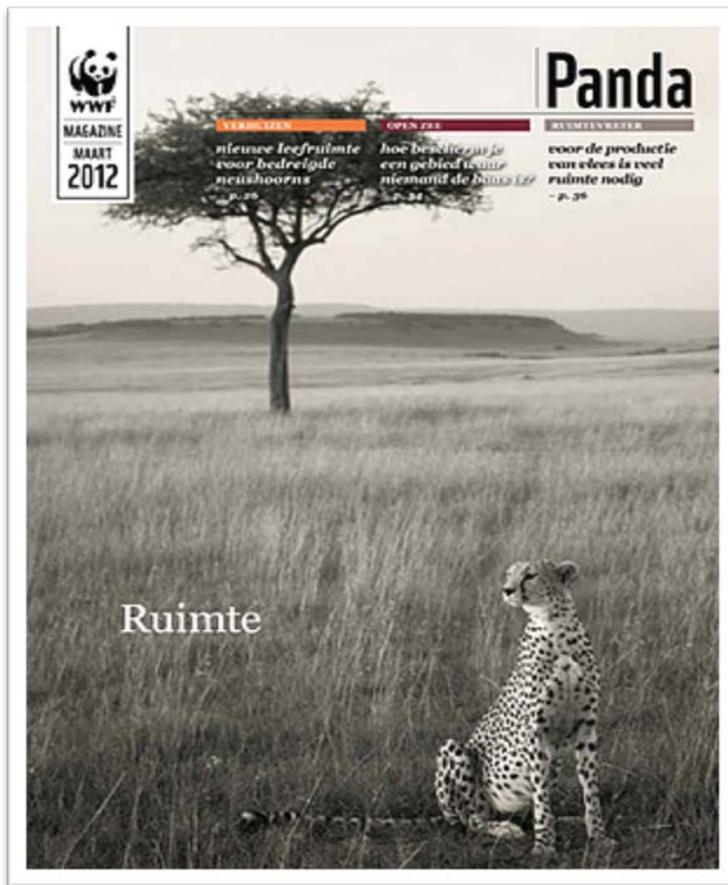
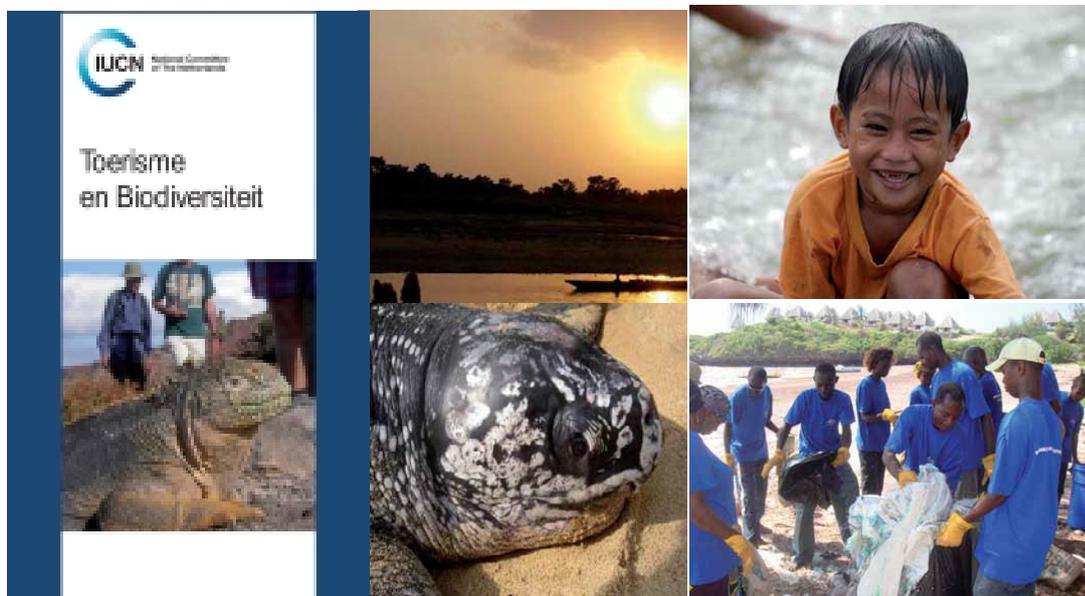


Figure 4-8: Magazine WNF (WNF, 2012)

The magazine of WNF, called Panda, was published in March this year. The front page shows a cheetah sitting in a grass field with a tree on the background. The cheetah looks very calm and emits something majestic. The area looks uninhabited and barren. The image is probably taken in Africa because the type of tree is an acacia, which grows in Africa. Whereas WNF uses many colorful images on their website and poster, the front page of the magazine is in black and white. The content of the magazine, however, is in color. Images that WNF displaces in the magazine denote many types of animals: seals, albatrosses, an elephant, a zebra, a bear, tuna, a wolf and a tiger. Again, WNF uses images of animals that are by the Dutch audience regarded as special and exotic since they do not

live in the Netherlands. There are a few images where humans in interaction with nature are displayed. One image denotes, a photographer with a baby seal lying on top of him. The photographer looks at ease, smiling towards the camera. He is lying on the ground with a camera in his hand. The image signifies a kind of harmony with nature where animals and humans can interact without danger. It also provokes a positive feeling since the man looks very happy and satisfied. All in all, the images form an important part of the magazine; eighty percent of the magazine's content includes images. Looking at the magazine as a whole, the message WNF spreads is its concern with animals because it displays many images of exotic and endangered animals. It furthermore shows some human interaction with animals, but not other organizations do in their visual images. WNF means to say that humans and animals can interact and live together in harmony.

## IUCN



**Figure 4-9: Brochure IUCN (IUCN, 2012)**

IUCN uses many images in its brochure about tourism and biodiversity. The front page denotes an iguana with two people behind it who seem to walk towards the animal. Close to the iguana a leg and shorts of a person is displayed. The persons wear basic clothes: shorts and t-shirts. Possibly they symbolize tourists. The person is standing very close to the iguana since only the legs and shorts are visible. The image is probably used by IUCN to show that people approach the animal very closely. The message it wants to spread is that people approach the animal too close because the iguana symbolizes an endangered animal. It is endangered due to habitat deconstruction and needs protection. The iguana is furthermore placed in the center of the image indicating that the focus of

the image is on the iguana and not on the people behind it. The other images in the brochure denote a sunset, an Asian boy who is laughing, a close-up of a turtle lying in the sand and a group of black people who all wear the same blue t-shirt and who wear yellow hand gloves. They are busy with an activity because they are holding garbage bags in their hands and are looking at the ground. The image connotes local collective action; the group of people is cleaning up the surroundings. Looking at the brochure as a whole, IUCN aims to show the audience that people in this case possibly tourists approach animals that are endangered very closely (too close). Besides it intends to show how humans can make a positive contribution to nature by collectively cleaning-up garbage.

### **4.3 Conclusion**

To refer back to Philips, Lawrence and Hardy (2004:635), "institutionalization occurs as actors interact and come to accept shared definitions of "reality", and it is through linguistic processes that definitions of "reality" are constituted". Through visual text an organization's shared vision of reality is exposed. Through different sets of 'texts' (as I called it, in this thesis), and norms for their combination, the DDOs perspectives and ideas regarding "sustainability" are given different meaning and mobilized in different ways.

WNF's combination of visual texts show its concern with exotic animals, that are depicted as approachable. The organizations aims to evoke audience's sympathy for the animals. IUCN's combination of visual text show something different: a concern with natural resources and endangered animals that are approached too closely by people. The organization aims to provide information and share knowledge. The Nature and Poverty Network's combination of visual texts show its concern with individuals, communities and collective local action, where it aims to share knowledge with other organizations.

The next chapter takes a closer look at the written text, often used in combination with visual images. What does WNF for instance write to the audience about the exotic animals?

## **5. Representation of “sustainable development” in written “text”**

In the previous chapter, we saw how the DDOs use their visual images to present their views and perspectives and how they communicate their shared definitions of “reality” and ideas regarding “sustainability” in visual text. This chapter gives insight into how DDOs give meaning and mobilize “sustainability” in written text. Paragraph 5.1 examines the genre of the selected written documents (websites, policy documents, and research reports) Then, paragraph 5.2 looks at how the written texts are framed on the home pages. Lastly, Paragraph 5.3 looks at the language of “sustainability” in written text, by focusing on specific sentences, phrases and words in specific “sustainability” projects on the website, policy documents and research reports.

### **5.1 Genres**

I looked at written text in different types of genres: websites, policy documents and research reports. A website, as said before, is the portal to the organization. It is an important means through which an organization presents itself. Information regarding the organization’s activities, policies, projects, mission, and vision can all be found here. In policy documents an organization states the details of their policies. It gives insight into the principles or rules of an organization that are used to guide decisions and achieve rational outcomes. Research reports are used by an organization to describe and present findings about an particular issue to an interested audience.

### **5.2 Framing**

Here I look at how the DDOs frame their message in written text on their websites. I used the framing techniques from Huckin (1997).

### 5.2.1 Mission statements of the DDOs

To give a first impression of the ideological background of the DDOs, below are the mission statements of each DDO, as they are written on their websites.

- *“Building a future where humans live in harmony with nature, that is what we do. For the benefit of nature. And for the benefit of humans that need nature” (WNF.nl, 2011).*
- *“ Helps the world find pragmatic solutions to our most pressing environment and development challenges”(IUCN.org, 2011)*
- *“Both ENDS sees a world out of balance. Nature, and therefore people in developing countries are paying the price for our economic growth and our Western consumption patterns” (Both ENDS, 2011).*
- *“NCIV believes in a world where indigenous peoples can live in peace without poverty on their ancestral territories, maintaining their own cultural identity” (NCIV, 2011).*
- *“The online platform Natureandpoverty.net is set up to increase understanding and effective action on the linkage between nature and poverty, and to enhance the effectiveness, efficiency, impact and the sustainability of field projects and interventions you and your organization are involved in, and thereby of the participating organizations themselves” (The Nature and Poverty Net, 2011).*

These short mission statements already reveal much about the ideological background of the DDOs. As can be seen, they differ from each other. WNF wants to “build” a future where humans live in harmony with nature. Nature is depicted as powerless, as it needs “our” help. IUCN also depicts nature as powerless, but instead of “building” a future, it aims to “help” the world in finding solutions for environmental problems and development challenges. This difference in “building” and “helping” tells already something about the different perspectives of the organizations. WNF believes it has the knowledge to “build” a future, while IUCN is a bit more modest, as it states it wants to “help” the world. Both ENDS, on the other hand, is making a critical statement about what they “see”: a world out of balance. They place the “developing” countries in a powerless position because they are the ones who feel the negative consequences of Western practices. NCIV’s mission statement is about their “belief” in a world where indigenous people live in harmony with nature.

They focus on a specific target group (the indigenous peoples), who are depicted as powerless and need the help of the organization. The Nature and Poverty Net’s mission is to share knowledge about the linkage between poverty and the environment. They do not present themselves as the ones who have the knowledge, but instead aim to empower local people and organizations.

## 5.2.2 Websites

In this paragraph, I again look at the home pages of WNF, IUCN and The Nature and Poverty Network, but this time, I take a closer look at the written text.

### WNF

In the previous chapter we saw that WNF uses many images on their home page. The organization however also uses many key-words such as: *‘word donateur’* (become a financial supporter) and *‘sluit een deal’* (close a deal). This shows that WNF is focused on getting financial support for their activities. The language of the written text is in Dutch, WNF thus focuses on a Dutch audience. The written text next to the stuffed doll includes: *‘Is deze knuffel straks voor jou?’* *‘Red de Afrikaanse olifant met een eenmalige gift’*. (*‘Will this doll in a moment belong to you?’* *‘Save the African elephant with a gift’*). Without written text the image can be interpreted in a variety of ways, for instance, merely as a cute stuffed animal. However, with the written text, WNF argues that we as humans have to the responsibility to protect the African elephant. When one donates money, WNF offers the possibility to receive the stuffed animal. This assumes that this specific sign or image is focused on getting the support of children and their parents, who are concerned with the future.

All in all, the majority of the written text on the homepage asks for financial support. WNF focuses on donors (adults and children); through donations it wants to obtain money for the protection of exotic animals.



Figure 5-1: Print screen homepage WNF (WNF, 2012)

## IUCN

The framing of IUCN's home page looks quite different in comparison to WNF. It includes many key-words and headings such as: '*nieuws*' (news), '*thema's*' (themes), '*fondsen*' (funds), '*over IUCN*' (about IUCN) and '*platform*' (network). The home page is used as information portal and not as a means to attract people for donations. The meaning of the key-words is to inform people about IUCN's activities rather than to convince or attract people to do donations. The written text: "*everything comes ultimately from nature*" is placed under the image of the mountain. Although the home page its written text is in Dutch, this particular quote is in English, indicating IUCN's international character. This particular quote also reveals that IUCN's ideology is based on the belief that we have to appreciate nature because we are depending on it. Another heading is placed in relation to the man standing on a stage and states: '*ECNC – European Centre for Nature Conservation*', an expertise center for biodiversity and sustainable development. This reveals that IUCN promotes and supports an organization that is concerned with biodiversity and sustainable development.

The written text tells us that IUCN aims to provide, share and gain information about nature and related topics, by which it focuses on other organizations and the government to cooperate with. It is modest in asking financial support, "*funds*" are only mentioned once.

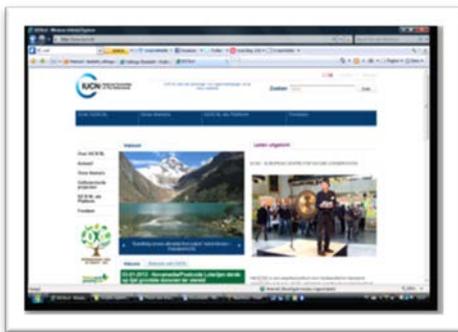


Figure 5-2: Print screen home page IUCN (IUCN, 2012)

## Nature and Poverty Learning Network

The Network frames its written text entirely in English, which indicates that The Nature and Poverty Network is focused on an international audience. The heading tells that the Network is a platform for practitioners working on ecosystem management and poverty alleviation. Key-words that are presented on the website include: '*connect to people and organizations*', '*share experiences and cases*' and '*find tools and resources*'. This reveals that the Network is a platform where organizations can find information and share knowledge and experiences about ecosystem management and poverty alleviation. Other written text that is given a prominent position on the home page are the

descriptions of the visual images of the tree man. The first man is Budi Tjiptawan from Indonesia who is chairman of a NGO in the Jakarta region. The other man is Valentino Miquel from Brazil who is focal point representative from Julalia. And the other is Charlie Ngo from Cameroon who is project manager from a local organization of the movement Ecologique. This focus on local individuals from different countries reveals that the Network regards an individual and local approach as very important. In relation to the image of the man behind the camera it is written: *'audiovisual media for capacity building'*. It means that the Network regards capacity building as an important part of their approach. The written text of the network show that the goal of the organization is to connect, share and find solutions on ecosystem management and poverty alleviation in close cooperation with local communities and organizations, by which it aims to empower local communities and organizations. The Nature and Poverty Learning Network focuses on other organizations and the government to gain financial support for the execution of their projects.



**Figure 5-3: Print screen homepage the Nature and Poverty Network** (The Nature and Poverty Network, 2012)

### 5.3 Analysis of specific sentences, phrases and words

The next step, according to Huckin (1997), is to analyze specific sentences, phrases and words. I look at the topic position, power relations and the way statements are made in the written text of the DDOs.

#### 5.3.1 Specific written text in relation to "sustainable development" projects

I looked at WNF's and The Nature and Poverty Network's the descriptions of a project related to "sustainable development".

## WNF

WNF placed the written text (Figure 5-4) in relation to the Linking-Future program under the theme 'Nature and Development' on the website.

### ***Nature & Development***

*Building a future, where people live in harmony with nature, that's the mission of WNF. For the benefit of nature and for the benefit of people who need nature. The improvement of local livelihoods is needed for the conservation of nature on the short and long term. This is a focal point in the nature protection approach.(WNF, 2011).*



**Figure 5-4: Project description WNF (WNF, 2012)**

## WNF

The name of the project is called: Nature & Development. Nature and development in WNF's perspective relate to building a future where people live in harmony with nature. Through stating that it wants to "build", it assumes that humans and in this case, local people are currently not living in harmony with nature. As solution WNF writes that it wants to improve the local livelihoods so that nature can be protected. The organization is very certain about its approach because it even calls it a solution and the organization states it is a focal point of their nature protection approach. The organization thus relates "sustainability" to *nature and improvement of local livelihoods*.

### **The Nature and Poverty Network**

The Nature and Poverty Network placed the image with the following written text (Figure 4-5) on the website part of a "sustainability" project:

### **Restoration of the degraded areas in Kasyoha Kitomi Forest (Uganda)**

Nature Uganda is involved in: Conservation and management of key conservation areas; Monitoring and management of species, sites and habitats including development of sites and species action plans; Training and capacity development; Awareness, publicity and advocacy; conservation and community development (livelihood improvement); Environmental education; Biodiversity research; identification of areas important for conservation.



**Figure 5-5: Project description the Nature and Poverty Network** (The Nature and Poverty Network, 2012)

The project is called: restoration of the degraded areas in Kasyoha Kitomi Forest in Uganda. The Network is describing the activities of the organization Nature Uganda. It shows that the Network is supporting other organizations. It also tells us that the Network regards monitoring and management of species, training and capacity development, awareness, publicity and advocacy, environmental education and biodiversity research as important parts of “sustainability”. Local involvement is key of the Network’s approach, a big difference in comparison with WNF, who places the local community in a position of needing help. The Nature and Poverty Net shows a “sustainability” project in relation with the *empowerment* of a *local organization* who *collectively* take action to restore a degraded area.

### **5.3.2 Policy document**

I looked at specific words, phrases and sentences in a policy document of IUCN. This was unfortunately the only policy document that I could find.

**IUCN**

IUCN published a policy statement on sustainable use of wild living resources in 2000. The policy documents look formal because it consists of written text only. The policy statement states nine perspectives of IUCN regarding sustainable use of wild living resources. Figure 5-6 shows a fragment of these statements. The audience to which the policies are aimed at are probably people who work for IUCN and partners of the organization because it talks about 'wild living resources' without explaining what it means. This assumes that this document is written for people who are already familiar with it.

1. Conservation of biological diversity is central to the mission of IUCN, and accordingly IUCN recommends that decisions of whether to use, or not to use, wild living resources should be consistent with this aim.
2. Both consumptive and non-consumptive use of biological diversity are fundamental to the economies, cultures, and well-being of all nations and peoples.
3. Use, if sustainable, can serve human needs on an ongoing basis while contributing to the conservation of biological diversity.
7. On the basis of these analyses, IUCN concludes that: a) Use of wild living resources, if sustainable, is an important conservation tool because the social and economic benefits derived from such use provide incentives for people to conserve them; b) When using wild living resources, people should seek to minimize losses of biological diversity; c) Enhancing the sustainability of uses of wild living resources involves an ongoing process of improved management of those resources; and d) Such management should be adaptive, incorporating monitoring and the ability to modify management to take account of risk and uncertainty.

**Figure 5-6: Policy statements IUCN (IUCN, 2012)**

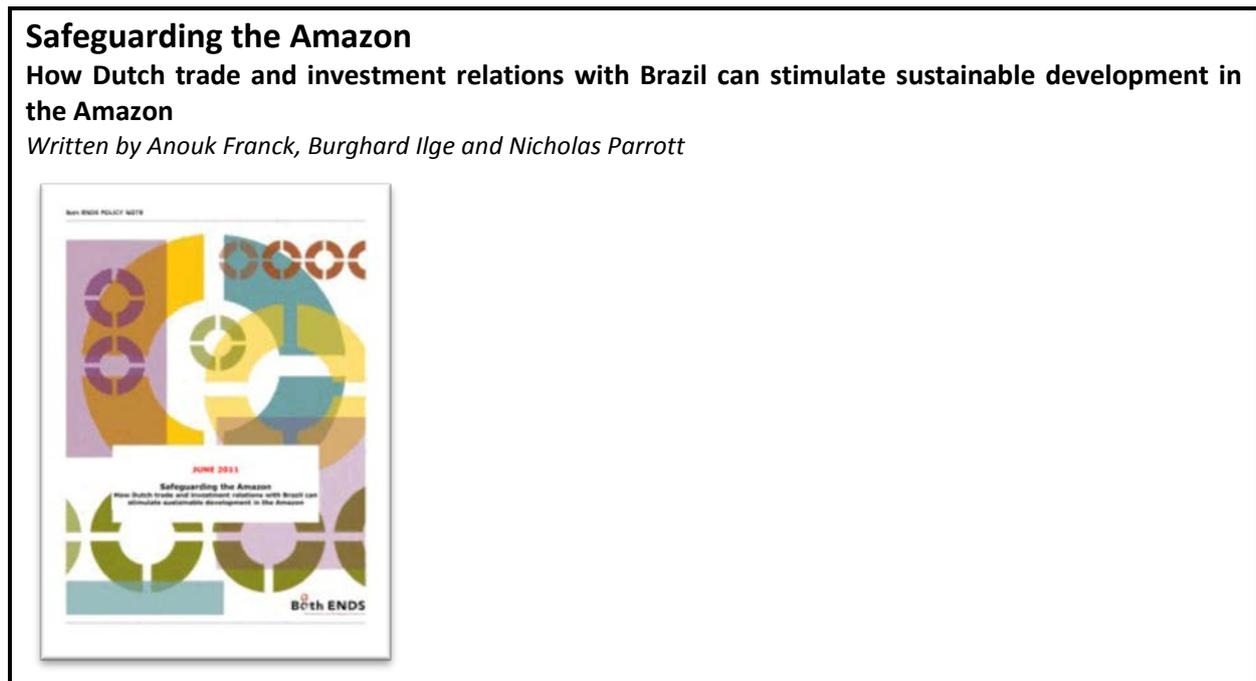
The word "sustainable" is in the policy document frequently related to 'use', the use of 'wild living resources'. IUCN focuses on biodiversity and states that the "sustainable use" of resources will contribute to the conservation of "biological diversity". The written text of the document displays a kind of authority, the word 'should' is used to emphasize the necessity of "sustainable" use. The policy document tells that IUCN relates "sustainability" to biodiversity, this message probably aimed at IUCN's own employees and partners and not to the general public. It actually states how IUCN as organization thinks about "biodiversity" and the use of 'wild living resources'.

### 5.3.3 Research reports

In this paragraph two research reports are analyzed. One of Both ENDS and one of NCIV.

#### **Both ENDS**

This research report (Figure 5-7) is commissioned by Both ENDS and synthesizes the results of two studies about safeguarding the Amazon. It has been produced with the assistance of the European Union.



**Figure 5-7: Research report Both ENDS (Both ENDS, 2012)**

The report is written by three authors, it draws upon other research results from Greenpeace and NCIV. Media articles published in the Economist and other scientific research reports are used as source as well.

The topic of the report is safeguarding the Amazon. It gives recommendations on how Dutch trade and investment relations with Brazil can stimulate “sustainable development” in the Amazon. Headings in the report are: *‘Brazil: a test-bed for sustainable development’*, *‘The links between the Brazilian and Dutch economies’*, *‘Potential conflicts with policy commitments’*, *‘The role of Both ENDS’* and *‘Policy recommendations’*. These headings tell that the report deals with “sustainable development” in relation to the economy and policies. “Sustainability” as concept is not used in the report, but the word “sustainable” is frequently used in relation with the word *‘development’*. But

also with the words: *'use'*, *'growth'*, *'patterns of production and consumption'* and *'management'*. "Sustainable" is thus used as an adjective in relation to the economy, a focal point of the report.

In the report, Brazil is depicted as a country that faces social and environmental problems. The authors argue that the Dutch government should be aware of the potential dangers of being directly or indirectly involved in supporting economic development in the Amazon. According to the authors the Dutch government should take responsibility to prevent harmful effects since the Netherlands are world's second largest importer of Brazilian agricultural commodities. The Dutch government is in the report depicted as the one in power and Brazil as the one that needs help. The authors of the report give recommendations to the Dutch government about how they stimulate "sustainable development" in the Amazon. Below a fragment of these recommendations:

The Dutch government should at least match its increased "economic diplomacy" by intensified "social and environmental diplomacy" for the Brazilian Amazon.  
The Dutch government should explore how it can address Brazilian capacity constraints related to the monitoring and enforcement of social and environmental protection and active civil society involvement in these processes.

**Figure 5-8: Research report NCIV (NCIV, 2012)**

These recommendations convey a degree of certainty and authority which is introduced by using the word *'should'*, which asserts the necessity of their recommendations.

Both ENDS uses this report with the purpose to show the audience that they are "helping" Brazil with their social and environmental problems. The role Both ENDS wants to play is to intensify diplomatic support for economic relations between the Netherlands and Brazil by focussing on intensive cooperation in the area of social and environmental policies and regulations.

**NCIV**

NCIV published a report called: International expert dialogue on MDG 7: "Achieving Sustainable Livelihoods for Indigenous Peoples" on 8 April 2010. The project was financially supported by three organizations: Mensen met een Missie, OxfamNovib and Stichting Doen.

Headings in the report are: *'Development with Culture and Identity'*, *'Needs and Challenges in Realizing MDG7 for Indigenous Peoples'*, *'EU Humans Rights Policy on Indigenous Peoples'*, *'Gender and Indigenous Peoples in Africa'*, *'The role of Indigenous Peoples' Cultures for Environmental Sustainability'* and *'Capacity Building'*. The headings tell that the report is about indigenous peoples' social development. The word "sustainability" is frequently used as a concept, denoting environmental and economic "sustainability", "sustainability" of the supply chain, "sustainability" of

life, measures of “sustainability” and global “sustainability” mechanisms. The word “sustainable” is also used as an adjective, frequently in relation to ‘development’ and ‘livelihoods’ but also in relation to ‘projects’, ‘business’, ‘entrepreneurship’, ‘products’, ‘changes’ and ‘capacity building’. This shows that NCIV relates “sustainability” not only to social issues but also to economic issues. In the report NCIV argues why and how indigenous peoples rights should be protected. It critiques the policies of the Dutch government on indigenous peoples. Below a fragment of this:

The Netherlands government used to have a progressive and active policy on indigenous peoples, but in the recent years the attention towards indigenous peoples’ issues has diminished considerably. Within the current Dutch policies on development there is no specific attention for indigenous peoples, despite the alarming situation of indigenous peoples around the world.

**Figure 5-9: Research report NCIV (NCIV, 2012)**

The Dutch government is in the report depicted as the one in power, they are in NCIV’s perspective not given attention to indigenous peoples’ rights. The indigenous peoples’ are placed in a position of needing support by NCIV.

The report furthermore provides a long list of recommendations aimed at governments, development agencies, donors and businesses. The recommendations all include ways about redefining development policies in programs, projects and budgets for the development of indigenous peoples. They convey a degree of certainty and authority which is introduced by the word ‘should’, which is used in all the 31 recommendations. With this NCIV stresses the necessity of their recommendations. This shows that they are convinced that their ideas on how to incorporate indigenous peoples’ rights are the right ones. The report is published by NCIV to show the audience the current situation of indigenous peoples’ and what “should” be improved. It presents itself as the “helper” of indigenous peoples’, talking for them. NCIV wants to play a central role in improving indigenous peoples’ well-being.

## **5.4 Conclusion**

Written text tells something about the organization’s shared definition of “reality” and its shared meaning on “sustainability”. This chapter showed that the DDOS give different meaning and mobilize “sustainability” in different ways in the different sets or genres of written texts.

WNF’s combination of written text show that the organization wants to “build” a future where people live in harmony with nature, they raise awareness on endangered animals and aim to

mobilize people to support them financially. "Sustainability" is linked with nature protection and local livelihoods dependency on it.

IUCN's combination of texts tell that the organization wants to "help" nature, they provide information about nature, but do not ask financial support, like WNF does. It has a policy document in which they describe how wild living resources should be used. The Network's written text show that it wants to "share" knowledge, they aim to mobilize other (international) organizations to cooperate with. "Sustainability" is given meaning through linking it to the empowerment of local organizations and restoration of nature. Both ENDS's combination of text show that it "sees" problems in relation to poverty and nature. The organization aims to mobilize Dutch government to take "sustainable development" into account. NCIV's combination of written text show that the organization "believes" in a future where indigenous peoples rights are respected. They give meaning to "sustainability" in relation to social and economic issues regarding indigenous peoples'. The organization aims to mobilize the Dutch government to improve indigenous peoples' rights. This chapter showed that each DDO has its own set of written texts in which they give meaning to and mobilize "sustainability" in different ways. How people working for these organizations do this will be discussed in the next chapter.

## **6. Representation of “sustainable development” in spoken “text”**

The previous chapters have given insight in how the DDOs give meaning and mobilize “sustainability” in their visual and written texts. These types of texts showed the organization’s shared vision of its aims and its shared meaning of “sustainability”. But how do people, who work for these organizations explain and relate to “sustainability” individually? Spoken text, obtained via the interviews is used for analysis. As with the analysis of the written documents, I looked at the framing and at specific sentences, words and phrases based on McGregor’s (2003) and Huckin’s (1997) methodology of CDA. I also examined the body language and visual appearance of the interviewees and their office.

### **6.1 Genres**

In the spoken text obtained through interviews, I analyzed the verbal text of the interviewee. In the transcript of the verbal text, I looked at the framing and specific words, phrases and sentences on “sustainability”, again based on Huckin’s (1997) methodology. People do, however, not only communicate verbal, but non-verbal as well. Body language and visual appearance are important parts of non-verbal communication. Body language consists of body posture, gestures, facial expressions and eye movements. It can either contradict or reinforce what is being communicated verbally. The visual appearance of the organizations’ office and the people who for the organization also give insight in how the organization wants to present itself to the audience.

### **6.2 Framing and specific sentences, words and phrases on “sustainability”**

This paragraph examines how people working for DDOs give meaning to “sustainability”. I will examine how they frame “sustainability” and what kind of words they use to describe it. Besides, I will reflect upon their body language and visual appearance during the interview.

## WNF

*“Sustainability” is about leaving enough for future generations, that is the vision of WNF. We only have one planet, like WNF says: “one planet living” and we have to live with that fact. “Sustainability” is in fact about distribution. A relatively small group of people use too much, that is us, those are the Americans, and we all know that if 9 billion people have the same living standards like we have, we are not going to make it. So, we have to distribute the resources on earth more equally”.*

The statement above tells us what “sustainability” means for WNF according to Mrs. Enthoven. Looking at the framing, key words related to “sustainability” are *‘future generations’* and *‘distribution’*. These are according to Mrs. Enthoven essential parts of “sustainability” for WNF. In comparison with the written ‘text’ on the website, this statement is more reflexive, because it talks about equal distribution of the earth’s resources. Whereas the written and visual text targets donors to build a future where humans and nature live in harmony and nothing is mentioned about distribution. Mrs. Enthoven argues that we, humans, have to live more like the “powerless” because we currently use too much. This is not the story that WNF communicates on their website. Is it because they are afraid that people are not willing to donate money if it has a (negative) impact on their daily lives?

Based on Huckin’s (1997) methodology, I have looked at specific sentences, words and phrases in the transcript of the interview. “Sustainability” is mostly referred to in combination with the protection of ‘biodiversity’ and ‘social development’ in “developing” countries. This is in line with the written and visual ‘text’ of the website. The challenge for WNF, as Mrs. Enthoven said, is to link nature protection with social development. In the three linking-future programs, the aim was to protect biodiversity in three different circumstances. She emphasized several times that biodiversity conservation is the main aim of WNF and thus also in the projects. *“In the three programs relating to sustainability, we wanted to work in three different situations on “biodiversity”, which is our main aim. However, we want to ensure that the local people benefit from it as well”.*

Projects are selected by WNF for their biodiversity value; whether local people benefit from it is of second concern. However, Mrs. Enthoven notes that nowadays a project which covers both aims has more appeal to businesses and members, and thus also for WNF. This means, however, that if there is a local community in the surroundings of a high biodiversity value area only this particular community will be supported.

Another issue Mrs. Enthoven emphasized during the interview were the results of “sustainable” projects. She was critical about working on nature protection without disadvantaging local people.

She stressed that while we have been thinking about “sustainable development” for long time, we still do not have the solution. As she said: *“there is not one perfect sustainability model”*. She also questioned whether it is possible to contribute structural to poverty alleviation. In her opinion, it is often temporary, and she said that in the end only a small group of people will experience the benefits. In her opinion, there is not one solution for “sustainability”, she stressed that every situation demands a different approach. According to her, WNF experiences a big gap between “sustainability” as a theoretical concept and “sustainability” as a concept that works locally.

For Mrs. Enthoven “sustainability” means the concern with future generations and equal distribution of earth’s resources. These two issues are however not presented in the organization’s written and visual text on “sustainability”. She furthermore relates “sustainability” to the protection of “biodiversity” and social development” in “developing” countries. This meaning on “sustainability” is in line with what the organization presents in their written and visual texts.

#### Body language

Mrs. Enthoven had a closed bodily position during the interview, she was sitting behind a table keeping her arms crossed. This showed a kind of authority, marking some distance between us. During the interview she was very calm, she did not use her hands and arms to emphasize her points. Regarding her facial expressions, she looked a bit annoyed and hurried in the beginning of the interview, she directly indicated that she did not have much time to talk. During the interview, however, she became more enthusiastic about her story and took more time to explain her points thoroughly. When she talked about “sustainability” she looked very confident and satisfied about the way WNF is incorporating it in their projects. During the interview she remained very formal and professional as she did not show her emotions. All in all, the body language of Mrs. Enthoven indicated that she is a confident woman with a professional attitude.

#### **Both ENDS**

Both ENDS is an organization that focuses on social development and environment in relation to “sustainability” in “developing countries”. According to Mr. Senden, communication officer, “sustainability” for Both ENDS means that environment and development go hand-in-hand and long-term perspective can be offered to local people and farmers. Concerning the framing, “sustainability” by Both ENDS is related to ‘environment’, ‘development’, ‘local people’ and ‘farmers’. The last, ‘farmers’ is given prominence, treating them as a separate target group, by placing it apart from local people.

Based on Huckin's (1997) methodology, I have looked at specific sentences, words and phrases in the transcript of the interview. "Sustainability", for Both ENDS, explained by Mr. Senden, is used in projects in or that relate to environment and poverty alleviation. Based on the idea that poor people are directly dependent on a healthy environment like clean water to drink and obtain fish. This relation is what Both ENDS aims for in every project. Mr. Senden emphasized that Both ENDS does not have direct contact with local people but instead contact happens always through a local organization: *"professional local organizations can estimate the local needs much better than we Westerners can do. This makes us different from other organizations"*. Here, Mr. Senden insinuates that empowering local organizations is the best strategy. In fact, Both ENDS acts as a mediator in which power is first given to Both ENDS (by subsidies and donations from the government and organizations), who in turn pass this power to the local communities and organizations.

A key topic of the interview has been the balance between, as Mr. Senden called it, the "rich West" and "poor South". According to him, Both ENDS tries to raise awareness about the unequal relation between the West and the South. As he argues: *"business as usual, like the way produce is no longer possible"*. This unequal relation is linked to increasing food security concerns. According to Mr. Senden, Both ENDS sees it as the biggest problem of our generation: *"how we are going to ensure that in 2050, 9 billion people have enough food to live?"*. Mr. Senden noted that this is the major problem of society nowadays: *"the challenge lies in how we Westerners are going to do something about it, without falling back into neo-colonial practices where the West is exerting power"*.

Concerning these unequal relationships, Mr. Senden calls Europe a fortress with big walls around it when it comes to trade. He critiques the tariffs that have to be paid by developing countries and the quality standards that have to be met are big trade barriers for these countries. *"You actually exclude developing countries from trade. The model of free trade is not right or honest at all"*. This sentence clearly conveys information about power relations. The "rich West" is depicted as in power, and the Southern countries as powerless and passive through the trade barriers that Western countries have implemented.

Another key topic of the interview were the 'people', 'planet' and 'profit' dimensions. Mr. Senden mentioned these as part of "sustainability". He said that there is still too much focus on profit within "sustainability". He argued that while we live in a world with a lot of problems, the main concern is always 'how do we stimulate our economy'? He suggests making the economy more sustainable, so it has a long-term perspective and by giving the other two dimensions more attention. He furthermore critiques the passive attitude of all the conferences and goals of the UN (e.g. Millennium

Goals) because they do not result in anything concrete: *“it is unbelievable that banks receive billions in support, while other more important and bigger challenges deserve much more attention. In fact, it is too crazy to be true”*. He blames the economy model of business, calling it old-fashioned, only focused on profit, with a short-term perspective, where satisfying the share-holders is the most important goal: *“there is no room for ideas relating to sustainability and long-term planning”*. Mr. Senden conveys a degree of certainty about the economy receiving too much attention, insinuating that it is all about making profit in the end.

“Sustainability” is for Mr. Senden, related to ‘environment, ‘development’, ‘local people’ and ‘farmers’. As well as the empowerment of local people and organizations. Additionally, “sustainability” is linked to unequal relationships in which ‘the West’ has the power and focuses too much on making ‘profit’. These topics are in line with the written ‘text’ of Both ENDS, which describes the same things as part of “sustainability”. The spoken text is, however, a bit more critical about power relations.

#### Body language

Mr. Senden had an open bodily position during the interview, he sat on a chair right in front of me. He was very calm and serious, not using many hand and arm movements. He took all the time in answering my questions. Regarding its facial expressions, he looked very worried and concerned when talking about poverty and environmental issues which Both ENDS tries to address in their activities. It seemed that he was very concerned with these issues personally as well. The body language of Mr. Senden indicated that he is very passionate and dedicated to his work.

#### **NCIV**

NCIV is an organization that focuses on social development in relation to indigenous peoples. For NCIV “sustainability”, according to Mr. van der Vlist, denotes the three dimensions: ‘people’, ‘planet’ and ‘profit’ and these need to be in balance to work sustainably. NCIV ‘s main focus is on ‘people’, as Mr. van der Vlist emphasized: *“NCIV focuses on the social aspect, but the planet is closely related to it because it relates to the living environment of indigenous peoples”*. The profit dimension, is according to Mr. van der Vlist approached, from the perspective of the indigenous peoples in relation to the economy in providing livelihoods. ‘People’ is given a certain prominence, treating indigenous peoples as a specific target group (separate from local people in general).

Mr. van der Vlist argues that the ‘profit’ dimension is still given priority by the Dutch government and governments world-wide. He stresses that, with the economic crises, banks are supported with hundreds of billions and they are not invested in sustainable practices. NCIV perceives the ‘planet’ as

the basis for everything. *“Economic interests are given priority all the time. Often you cannot see it but sometimes you discover that people play games in the background”*. Here, Mr. van der Vlist insinuates that the practices of the Dutch government are often invisible or hidden and the economy or ‘profit’ dimension is always given priority.

Another key topic of the interview were the MDGs. Mr. van der Vlist stated that NCIV is critical towards the MDGs because indigenous peoples have not been taken into account during the development of the goals. Aspects such as tenure rights, land access and food security are goals important for indigenous peoples. They are, however, not included in the millennium goals, he argued. Why has NCIV then developed a topic regarding these MDGs? Mr. van der Vlist explained that NCIV believes that there is a close link between poverty and the loss of land and natural resources that result in an unsustainable livelihood. NCIV therefore focuses on MDG 7, which ensures a sustainable livelihood, and MDG 1, which seeks to realize poverty reduction, both focused on indigenous people. He admits that this link with the MDGs is used to attach themselves to ‘hot’ topics in the Netherlands so their voice is heard: *“it is actually a kind of strategy, to be able to tell your story, the story of the indigenous peoples”*. According to Mr. van der Vlist, it is also necessary to work in coalitions, to make the message stronger and be heard: *“It makes a big difference whether you work with organizations like Greenpeace, WNF and Milieu Defensie or alone”*. Here Mr. van der Vlist implies that a small organization such as NCIV has to use strategies in order to survive.

“Sustainability” for NCIV in spoken text relates to ‘people’ with a specific focus on ‘indigenous peoples’. This is in line with the written text of the organization. The spoken text however exposes the strategies the organization uses.

#### Body language

Mr. van der Vlist had an open bodily position during the interview, he was sitting in front me behind his desk. He talked very passionately about his goals for NCIV, using hands and arm movements to emphasize his points. His facial expressions ranged from interested to serious when talking about indigenous peoples’. He took time to explain his story thoroughly. The body language of Mr. van der Vlist indicated that he is dedicated to NCIV aims, not only professionally but personally as well.

## IUCN

IUCN is an organization that tries to find pragmatic solutions to the most pressing environment and development challenges. It has many projects aimed at “developing” countries. Mrs. van den Hombergh explained that for IUCN “sustainability” is linked to ‘people’, ‘planet’ and ‘profit’. IUCN’s main concern however is the ‘planet’: *“sustainability is, of course, impossible without a strong nature protection dimension”*. *No, ‘planet’, no ‘people’, no ‘profit’*. In these comments, she demonstrates a kind of certainty about the role of nature protection in “sustainability”, explaining it as something that is ‘the truth’. Looking at the framing, key-words that are related to “sustainability” are ‘people’, ‘planet’, ‘profit’ and ‘biodiversity conservation’. With the main focus on ‘planet’ related to “biodiversity conservation”.

Another key topic of the interview was “biodiversity conservation”. Mrs. van den Hombergh notes: *“sustainability is such a broad thing, “biodiversity”, is easier to explain, it is just about the diversity of life. It is, however, a rather technical term with which many people are not familiar”*. She is very certain about the meaning of “biodiversity. The idea that it is about the diversity of life is taken for granted, she leaves no room for other perspectives. Next to that she says that people in general do not know the meaning of “biodiversity”, insinuating that only people who work with the concept know the “real” meaning of it.

“Sustainability” was by Mrs. van den Hombergh also related to ‘people’, ‘planet’ and ‘profit’. she said that IUCN finds that the ‘profit’ dimension is given priority by governments and businesses. She noted that the basic assumption of development is still about developing the economy further and what happens to the environment is of secondary concern. This, as she said, is reality nowadays and not sustainable at all. It however does not mean that IUCN does not take the ‘profit’ dimension seriously: *“we are convinced that you have to take into account the economic value of ecosystems in your choices and those are more important than many people think”*. As an example, she pointed out the benefits around the protection of mangroves that not only result in the conservation of the plants and animals, but also result in more and healthier fish. This shows, according to her, there is economic value in preserving nature. IUCN believes that businesses can play a positive role. But, as she said, without them there is no solution either.

For IUCN, “biodiversity conservation” is related to “sustainability”. The organization’s main focus is on the ‘planet’ because they say it is the basis of the other two dimensions: ‘people’ and ‘profit’. “Sustainability” without nature protection is impossible for IUCN, according to Mrs. van den Hombergh. In the written and visual text, the focus on ‘planet’ is also visible. The spoken text however reveals some critique on the focus in the tree dimensions.

### Body language

Since the interview with Mrs. van den Hombergh about IUCN was done by telephone, I could not analyze her body language.

### **The Nature and Poverty Learning Network**

The Nature and Poverty Learning Network is an organization that offers a platform for practitioners working on ecosystem management and poverty alleviation in “developing” countries. Mrs. van den Hombergh says the following about the meaning of “sustainability” for the network: *“the relationship between the natural environment and human livelihoods is a complex one. The potential of using natural ecosystems to support the eradication of poverty is even more complex. Yet this complex relationship contains the key that leads to sustainable development”*. Looking at the framing, “sustainability” is linked to ‘ecosystem management’ and ‘poverty alleviation’.

Based on Huckin’s (1997) methodology, I looked at specific sentences, words and phrases in the transcript of the interview. The first key topics of the interview were the themes and projects. Mrs. van den Hombergh explained that the network as placed on the website does not longer exist. It has undergone some major changes because it did not work. But why did it not work? Mrs. van den Hombergh said it was because of time limitations and 17 organizations were too many with too many different ideas about “sustainability”, “poverty alleviation” and “biodiversity conservation”. She suggested that it is difficult to get an overall consensus on how to work “sustainably” when the organizations involved all work from different angles, from nature to human development. Every organization has a specific idea about how “sustainability” should work.

Currently, the network has three main themes: participatory planning and management of natural resources, improvement of implementation of standards for commodities (soja, palm oil and biofuels) and climate change. Another big difference, she explained, is that they now cooperate with 16 “developing” countries. According to Mrs. van den Hombergh, those are the themes which partner organizations work because they are important in the international development agenda. She noted that the themes seem very broad, but the focus in every theme is to look at a way to support poor people so they can benefit from nature. She argued that the network assumes that it is better to conserve a mangrove than to build a dam. The Network then looks at ways to make sure that the local people benefit from the mangrove, also economically.

Another key topic was the link between nature and poverty. In the vision of the Network according to Mrs. van den Hombergh, the one cannot go without the other in the battle against poverty in the long term because, as she said, we need healthy ecosystems. *“You cannot conserve an ecosystem by*

*putting a fence around it. When there is poverty, it will be used anyway. It is also nature protection if you look at the people living there, that they can meet their basic livelihood needs. It is a must or necessity that you link those two*". In the statement above, Mrs. van den Hombergh sees it as a 'must' that those two concepts be linked- it is taken for granted as if there is no alternative.

The last key topic of the interview was the 'learning' part. According to Mrs. van den Hombergh, there is a need to better understand, learn from and use knowledge rooted in field experience of practitioners working at the crossroads of ecosystem management and poverty alleviation. The Network wants to share knowledge with their partners and she thinks that there has to be more attention to learning during international conferences.

The Nature and Poverty Network relates "sustainability" to 'ecosystem management', 'poverty alleviation' and 'learning'. These three topics are also central in the written and visual text of the organization. The spoken text, however, revealed why The Network as it was described on the website no longer exists.

#### Body language

Since the interview with Mrs. van den Hombergh about the Network was done by telephone, I could not analyze her body language.

## 6.3 Visual appearance

### WNF

WNF's office is located in Zeist, it is a large building and looks beautiful through its special design (see Figure 6-1 below). WNF states on the website that the building symbolizes WNF's goal: "building a future where people live in harmony with nature". It is designed as a meeting place for its employees and visitors. The office is called "sustainable". In the building many "sustainable" techniques are applied. WNF writes that it was build with "sustainable" materials: it makes use of solar energy and it furthermore provides space for animals, for instance to bents.

The interview was not conducted in Mrs. Enthoven's office but in a large public room with many chairs, tables and couches. The room furthermore showed photos and written text on the walls where the organizations' history was outlined. Next to that, there were many posters hanging on the walls which showed the projects WNF is currently working on.

The visual presentation of Mrs. Enthoven consisted of a black suit, this made that she looked professional and formal. Both the office and Mrs. Enthoven's appearance made the impression on me that WNF is a professional and wealthy organization.



**Figure 6-1: Office WNF** (WNF, 2012)

### Both ENDS

The office of Both ENDS is located in the centre of Amsterdam. The organization shares the building with three other organizations. The office of Mr. Senden looked like a living room: the music was on and there were many things present, ranging from scientific books, to personal attributes like clothes and posters of musicians. Concerning Mr. Senden's appearance, he wore casual clothes: a jeans and shirt. He did not wear shoes. This made that he looked informal.

Both the office and Mr. Senden's appearance made the impression on me that Both ENDS is an informal organization. I had the feeling that I was in someone's private room rather than someone's office.



**Figure 6-2: Office Both ENDS** (Both ENDS, 2012)

### **NCIV**

The office of NCIV is located in Amsterdam, a little outside the city centre. NCIV shares the building with a number of other organizations. The office was very small, consisting of one room with two desks in it. The office furthermore looked a bit sober: no posters, no personal attributes e.g.

One of these desks belonged to Mr. van der Vlist. He wore casual clothes: a jeans and shirt. It made an informal impression on me. The visual presentation of the office and Mr. van der Vlist showed that NCIV is a small and informal but therefore an approachable organization.



**Figure 6-3: Office NCIV** (NCIV, 2012)

### **IUCN/The Network**

The interview with Mrs. van den Hombergh was done by telephone, I can therefore not say much about the office and visual presentation of Mrs. Van den Hombergh. IUCN's office is located in the centre of Amsterdam. The Network does not have an office.

## 6.4 Conclusion

This chapter has given insight in how people working for DDOs give meaning to “sustainability” in spoken text. How they communicate this verbal and non-verbal. Each interviewee has its own set of ideas about what “sustainability” means for the organization. The combination of the verbal and nonverbal material showed that WNF is a large and wealthy organization where “sustainability” is not only part of its activities but is incorporated in the office design as well. For Mrs. Enthoven from WNF, “sustainability” means to be concerned with future generations, equal distribution, protection of biodiversity and social development. She was very confident about the importance of these issues for WNF but also critical towards translating “sustainability” into practical solutions.

The combination of Both ENDS’s text showed that it is a small and informal organization. Mr. Senden from Both ENDS relates “sustainability” to environment, development, local people and farmers. As well as the empowerment of local people and organizations. Additionally, “sustainability” is linked to unequal relationships in which the rich “West” has the power and focuses too much on making “profit”. Mr. Senden believes that “sustainability” can and has to be achieved, he was not only professionally concerned with it but also personally as he talked very dedicated about his work.

The texts showed that NCIV is a small and informal organization. Mr. van der Vlist related “sustainability” for the organization to the balance between ‘people’, ‘planet’ and ‘profit’, where the main focus is ‘people’, and for the organization specifically on indigenous peoples. Mr. van der Vlist believes in a future where indigenous peoples’ rights are respected, he spoke very passionate about his work and is not only professionally concerned with it but also personally. He was very critical towards in his opinion, the Dutch government’s lack of attention on indigenous peoples’ rights.

The spoken texts of IUCN showed that Mrs. van den Homberg relates “sustainability” for the organization to the balance between ‘people’, ‘planet’ and ‘profit’ as well, with the main concern on biodiversity which she regards as part of the ‘planet’ dimension. She thinks that the profit dimension is still the focus of many organizations, in her opinion this should be the planet as she regards it as the basis over everything.

Mrs. van den Hombergh related “sustainability” for the Network to ecosystem management and poverty alleviation. These are according to her key in achieving “sustainability”.

## 7. Discussion

In this thesis I tried to gain insight in the way the language of “sustainability” is exercised differently by DDOs in visual, written and spoken “text”. It has not been my intention to provide a meaning for “sustainability”, I was concerned with exploring the different meanings circulating within the “sustainability” discourse. A general principle of critical discourse analysis is that a researcher does not go behind the “text” in search for a prior reality or events in the world. For Wood and Kroger, (2000: 42): “discourse is not a route to something outside the discourse, including other discourse, discourse is situated and must be viewed in its own context”. I found that “sustainability” is given different meaning and is mobilized differently in the texts of the DDOs. “Sustainability” appears to be a contested concept, with so many meanings attached to it that it risks becoming meaningless. There does not seem to be a shared vision on what “sustainability” means and how it should be mobilized. This meaninglessness is something that many authors, such as Marshall and Toffel (2005), who developed a sustainability framework, and Mebratu (1998), who developed a concrete body of work on “sustainability” or “sustainable development”, are concerned with. They all propose different ways for making “sustainability” meaningful. These range from ecological, environmental, social, political perspectives. All these intentions, however, result in a variety of meanings of “sustainability”. However, although it thus risks becoming meaningless, this can also be regarded as the power of “sustainability” as so many people and organizations can use it in different contexts and where it is often used to denote “something” positive.

This thesis showed that the DDOs give different meaning and mobilize sustainability in different ways in their texts. As Fairclough (1992: 38) said: *“each institution has its own set of speech events, its own differentiated settings and scenes, its cast of participants, and its own norms for their combination...”* The combination of the visual, written and spoken text identified that WNF is concerned with exotic animals, as they show many images of them in the different genres of visual text. “Sustainability” is therefore related to nature protection and the exotic animals that inhabit it. With written text the wider message WNF aims to communicate to its audience becomes clearer: it aims to mobilize people to do donations. However, while the written text talks about “sustainability” where building a future where humans live in harmony with nature is the focus, Mrs. Enthoven related “sustainability” in spoken text also to equal distribution, saying that we have to share our resources more equally. This is different to what WNF communicates in their written text which is building a future where people from “developing” countries live in harmony with nature. Mrs. Enthoven stated that her vision about “sustainability” is also WNF’s perspective, is it influenced by her own opinion?

Do other people working at the organization also think that way? And if it is indeed WNF's perspective, can it state the message of equal distribution on their website? Does this message sell and attract donations?

Both ENDS's combination of visual, written and spoken text showed that the organization links "sustainability" with the environment and social development. Visual images show collective local action in natural areas. With written text the message Both ENDS aims to communicate to its audience becomes clearer: they want to raise awareness of the problems "developing" countries face. The organization wants to mobilize other organizations to support them. There is however a difference between the written and spoken text regarding the meaning that is given to "sustainability". The 'people', 'planet' and 'profit' dimensions are according to Mr. Senden key in the "sustainability" approach of Both ENDS. Where he noted that 'profit' is still the main focus, this should according to him be 'planet' and 'people'. The written text does however not mention these dimensions. How come that this is not visible in the organizations' written text? Are the dimensions not institutionalized within the organization? Or is it, but do they not communicate this in their written text to the audience?

The combination of visual, written and spoken text showed that NCIV links "sustainability" with the rights of indigenous peoples and to MDG 1 (poverty reduction) and MDG 7 (ensuring sustainable livelihood). It aims to mobilize the government to respect their rights. While Mr. van der Vlist related "sustainability" to the 'people', 'planet' and 'profit' dimensions, the written text of the organization does not mention them. He critiques that the profit dimension is given too much attention, which should in his opinion be the 'planet' and 'people'. The spoken text also revealed why NCIV links indigenous peoples' rights to the MDGs. Mr. van der Vlist said that it is a strategy because the MDGs are a hot topic and perfect to tie on to. Mr. van der Vlist, like the interviewees before, give different meaning to "sustainability" in spoken text.

IUCN's combination of texts show that the organization is concerned with nature protection. Visual images mainly show images of nature as natural resources. With written text the wider message IUCN aims to communicate to its audience becomes clearer: protect earth's biodiversity through providing information, implementing projects and sharing knowledge. Mrs. van den Hombergh regards the 'people', 'planet' and 'profit' dimension as part of "sustainability". Again, the written text does not mention these dimensions. She critiqued that the 'profit' dimension is the focus of many organizations and governments. Here like before, the dimensions seem not to be

institutionalized within the organization while Mrs. van den Homberg is very certain about the dimensions as part of “sustainability”.

The combination of texts of the Nature and Poverty Network showed its concern with local people. The visual images show individual people and local collective action. With written text the wider message of the Network becomes clearer: cooperation and learning from and with local organizations by empowering them. The spoken text was in line with this message, the spoken text however also revealed that the Network as it is shown on the website does not longer exist. Mrs. Van den Homberg said that the 17 organizations of the Network could not come to one shared vision on “sustainability”. The network will however go on with a smaller number of organizations because Mrs. van den Homberg thinks this will help to reach overall consensus easier.

This thesis showed that the combination of the visual and written text reveals the wider message of the organization. The spoken text in some cases differs from the visual and written text. How come? Can spoken text maybe be regarded as more important than the others. Exposing more “truth” as one has less time to frame its message? This primacy of spoken text opposed to written text is an established debate among scholars like Saussure (1983), Sapir (1939) and Bloomfield (1955). And to what extent is the spoken text about “sustainability” influenced by personal opinions? The research results showed that in spoken text “sustainability” was by some explained differently compared to how it was explained in the written text of the organisation they represent. It moreover appears that spoken text contains more critique on topics like the MDGs and ‘people’, ‘planet’ and ‘profit’ dimensions.

On the next page, a news item that was published on the 16<sup>th</sup> of April 2012 addresses this issue between peoples’ personal vision and the vision of the organization.

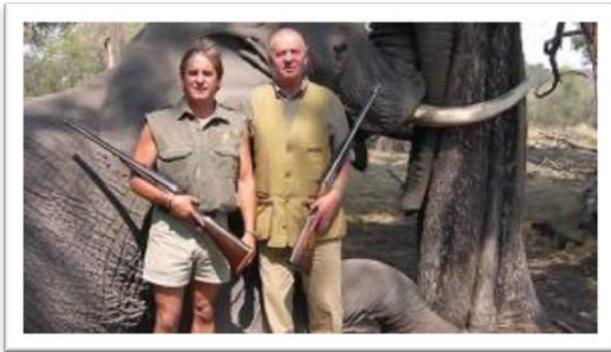
If it was up to me, the Spanish King will no longer be honorary chairman of the organization. That is what WNF director Johan van de Gronden said in the NOS radio-1 program: Met Het Oog Op Morgen.

Even though King Juan Carlos is honorary chairman of the Spanish WNF, last week he was on elephant hunt in Botswana. This became evident when the Spanish King broke his hip on a safari trip.

#### **Letter**

WNF has sent an open letter to the king, in which they ask him to explain this.

According to the Dutch director of WNF, the letter clearly suggests that King Juan Carlos has to acknowledge his fault and has to resign.



**Figure 7-1: News item (NOS, 2012)**

King Juan Carlos as honorary chairman of WNF clearly acted in a way that was by others such as WNF director Johan van Gronden not considered representational for the organisation, for its institutionalized norm. The King's actions implied a difference between his individual norm (it is okay to shoot elephants), and the one, institutionalized and taken for granted by the organisation he represents (we have to protect wildlife and their habitat). In his revealed act, the king openly breached (or shot) this institutionalized norm (the stuffed elephant doll) and is therefore by other members no longer considered as part, or member, or supporter of WNF. Consequently he has been asked to withdraw from his position as honorary chairman of WNF. Although an extreme discrepancy, I do question how people (re)produce institutional norms on individual level? Moreover, is there a difference between the way the taken for granted, the "truth", the norm is (re)produced institutionally and individually? In other words, and related back to my research, does someone else working at the same organization explain "sustainability" for the organization in the same way? These questions and the one I asked before about the primacy of spoken text opposed to written text could be central questions for further research.

## Conclusion

I started this thesis by reviewing the notion “sustainability” over time. The idea of “sustainability” dates back more than 40 years to when during the United Nation Conference on the Human Environment in 1972 “sustainability” and “sustainable development” were for the first time considered key topics. The natural environment has since then been perceived differently by people, as something that needed to be protected. It was then adopted by national governments planning and businesses and non-governmental organizations on all levels.

The core of “sustainability” thinking among many scholars is the idea of three dimensions: ‘environmental’, ‘social’ and ‘economic’ (also known as: ‘people’, ‘planet’ and ‘profit’). “Sustainability” is used to cover very different ideas. Organizations and governments on all levels use “sustainability” or “sustainable development” all in different ways, expressing sometimes very diverse visions of how the economic, social and environmental issues should be managed.

In this research, I was interested in the way “sustainability” is given meaning by organizations. I focused on DDOs, how they give meaning to “sustainability” in their representational systems or speech acts, or as I referred to in this thesis, in texts. In order to examine the varied meanings of “sustainability” in different types of texts, I used theories and methods on discourse analysis, visual methodology and semiotics. CDA in particular seemed to be relevant for looking at “sustainability” because CDA sees discourse in use in speech and writings as form of social practice. Within CDA, power is given to the written and spoken word. I therefore proposed the following research objective: *to explore how the language of “sustainability” is exercised differently by DDOs in their sustainable development projects*. Using CDA, I selected three kinds of representational systems (or speech acts, or texts) that the DDOs use. These are visual, written and spoken text. This enabled me to look at “sustainability” from different angles.

In chapter Four, I examined how the DDOs vision and “sustainability” is presented in visual texts. Through different sets of texts, and norms for their combination, the DDOs perspectives and ideas regarding “sustainability” are given different meaning and mobilized in different ways. The combination of visual images of WNF showed its concern with exotic animals where it tries to evoke audience’s sympathy for them. They are shown as approachable. IUCN’s combination shows its concern with endangered animals within natural areas. They try to raise awareness about endangered animals that are approached too closely by humans.

The Nature and Poverty Network's combination of visual texts showed its focus on individuals, communities and collective local action. They aim to share knowledge with other organizations to cooperate with.

In chapter Five, I looked at how the DDOS give meaning and mobilize their vision and "sustainability" in different genres of written texts.

WNF's combination of text showed that they want to "build" a future where people live in harmony with nature. Endangered exotic animals are the focus and people are triggered to support WNF financially so they can protect the animals. "Sustainability" is given meaning through nature protection and locals dependency on nature. IUCN's combination of texts showed that the organization aims to "help" nature. The organization provides information about biodiversity issues but is not focused on gaining financial support. They focus on "biodiversity" and even have a policy document that outlines how to use wild living resources. The combination of texts of the Network showed that it aims to "share" knowledge. They want to mobilize other organizations to share and find knowledge in topics regarding "poverty alleviation" and "biodiversity conservation". "Sustainability" is related to the empowerment of local organizations and restoration of nature. Both ENDS combination of texts showed that it "sees" problems in relation to poverty and nature. They try to mobilize the Dutch government to make their trading practices more "sustainable". NCIV's combination of written text showed that the organization "believes" in a future where indigenous peoples rights are respected. "Sustainability is given meaning in relation to social and economic issues for indigenous peoples'. They aim to mobilize to Dutch government to improve indigenous peoples' rights.

In chapter Six, I examined how people working for DDOs give meaning to "sustainability" in spoken text. The combination of the verbal and nonverbal material showed that WNF is a large and wealthy organization. "Sustainability" elements according to WNF are even incorporated in the building's design. Mrs. Enthoven from WNF, related "sustainability" to future generations, equal distribution, protection of biodiversity and social development. She was certain about the importance of these issues for WNF. Hence also critical towards translating "sustainability" into practical solutions that work locally.

The combination of Both ENDS's text showed that the organization is small and informal. Mr. Senden from Both ENDS relates "sustainability" to environment, development, local people, farmers and the empowerment of local people and organizations. Moreover, "sustainability" is related to unequal

relationships in which the rich “West” has the power and focuses too much on making “profit”. In his opinion the rich “West” is the cause of the problems in the poor “South”, he was not only professionally concerned with it but also personally.

NCIV appeared to be a small and informal organization. Mr. van der Vlist related “sustainability” for the organization to the balance between ‘people’, ‘planet’ and ‘profit’, where the main focus is ‘people’, and for the organization specifically on indigenous peoples. He spoke very passionate about his work and is not only professionally concerned with indigenous peoples’ rights but also personally. He showed his critique to the Dutch government’s lack of attention on indigenous peoples’ rights.

Mrs. van den Homberg from IUCN relates “sustainability” for the organization to the balance between ‘people’, ‘planet’ and ‘profit’ as well, where the ‘planet’ dimension is their main focus. In her opinion this ‘profit’ dimension is still the focus of many organizations, it should be the ‘planet’ as IUCN regards it as the basis over everything, she said.

Mrs. van den Hombergh related “sustainability” for the Network to ecosystem management and poverty alleviation. These are according to her key in achieving “sustainability”.

The discussion took a closer look at the combination of the texts of the DDOs, as Fairclough (1992:38) says it: *“A social institution is an apparatus of verbal interaction... Each institution has its own set of speech events, its own differentiated settings and scenes, its cast of participants, and its own norms for their combination...”*. I argued that it is the combination of visual and written text that reveals the wider message of the organizations. This message seems to differ significantly among the DDOs . WNF that mainly focuses on exotic animals to mobilize people to do donations. And IUCN that is concerned with biodiversity protection and sharing knowledge and cooperation with other organizations. While Both ENDS focuses on environment, development, empowerment and local collective action. NCIV on the other hand aims to raise awareness on indigenous peoples’ rights. And the Network is concerned with poverty and nature protection. Aiming to share, find and share information and experiences. In spoken text , however, people working for the DDOs, related the ‘people’, ‘planet’ and ‘profit’ dimensions to “sustainability”. Besides the spoken text exposed more critique on topics like the MDGs and the these dimensions.

To conclude, there not only seems to be a difference between individual representation and institutional representation regarding “sustainability” but also within the “sustainability” discourse there are differences since the organizations give meaning and mobilize it in different ways. Therefore I propose to do further research on institutional theory that takes a closer look at the difference between individual and institutional norms and the primacy of spoken text opposed to written text.

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