Lost in translation?

Which discourses create the public understanding of social entrepreneurship in Germany?

A contemporary analysis set in the city state Hamburg

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ABSTRACT

Informed by the case of Hamburg, this thesis investigates which discourses create the understanding of social entrepreneurship in Germany. It defines social entrepreneurship in line with the European EMES criteria which it employs to enhance the tangibility of the research field. For the same reason, it relies on a conceptualisation of the discursive public sphere, which leads its research about the public into the frame of civil society and political sphere. On the basis of this, it firstly provides an overview of the current status of social entrepreneurship in the public understanding, thus making an inventory of the notion in both realms of civil society and political sphere, starting with an overall German account and gradually narrowing it down to the Hamburg case. The methodological framework is provided by Norman Fairclough's Critical Discourse Analysis. Through discourse analysis, underlying relational dynamics are discovered by means of critically analysing conversations with four informants from the Hamburg context. The thesis concludes that although it has given an extensive overview of the field, a straight answer to the problem formulation cannot be provided. This is due to the instantaneous formation and mutual influencing of discourses, that would let any conclusion be obsolete shortly.

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INTRODUCTION

Since its official debut in Europe in the beginning of the 1990s, social entrepreneurship has been subject to much appreciation and excitement as well as to contest and competition. Seldom does a term encourage and embrace such varying opinions from such wide ranges of disciplines, geographies, and traditions. Social entrepreneurship experiences exceptional successes on the international stage. National and trans-national levels discuss strategies to strengthen the concept, to enhance its relevance in social policy and social practice. Conferences are held, networks are established, charming slogans are designed, under the banner of which social enterprises set out to challenge established orders.

Meanwhile, in Germany, social entrepreneurship mainly seems to raise question marks. The most prominent ones being how it distinguishes itself from and adds value to the existing social- and welfare structures, social entrepreneurship must prove itself in an established, traditional sector. However, the questions marks do not only lie with politicians and third sector organisations, who defend this field. Also, practitioners of social entrepreneurship ask themselves why there is so little infrastructure in place for their obviously beneficial social practices. When peeking into the German context, it is surprising than both sides are equally overwhelmed by the ambiguity they are faced with.

This motivates this thesis to find out which dynamics play a role here and why social entrepreneurship is so inert in the German context. To do so, it introduces the role of discourse and wonders whether social entrepreneurship might be lost in translation somewhere within it, as it anticipates a variety of competing viewpoints and practices that are specific to the German case. For the course of its detailed investigation, the thesis proposes the following problem formulation

PROBLEM FORMULATION

Which discourses create the public understanding of social entrepreneurship in Germany? – a contemporary analysis set in the city-state Hamburg

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The supporting research questions are:

1) Who or what is the public?

2) What is the current situation of social entrepreneurship in Germany?

3) Which discourses prevail and why?

Overview of this thesis

The thesis starts by clarifying and narrowing down the key concepts. Chapter 1 will firstly introduce social entrepreneurship in its European conceptualisation, before it explains the public as discursive public sphere made up of civil society and the political sphere. Chapter 2 is dedicated to the theoretical background of Norman Fairclough's Critical Discourse Analysis which frames this thesis theoretically, methodologically, and philosophically. In Chapter 3, the contemporary status-quo of social entrepreneurship is described both for the civil society and the political sphere. The methodology in chapter 4 will shed light on the social constructionist philosophy of science and will explain the practicalities of this research, before the analysis in chapter 5 will reveal the discourses in place that creating the understanding of social entrepreneurship. Reflecting the findings, Chapter 6 will take up some of the many meta-societal thoughts triggered by this thesis as a whole. The conclusion will eventually round off the research.

Chapter 1

Concept Clarification

This research rests on a strong fundament of concepts, theory, and philosophy in order for it to draw informed and thoroughly reflected conclusions. The following chapter will therefore provide explanations about the most important elements emerging from the introduced problem formulation. The chapter starts with the concept of *social entrepreneurship* and its position in the context of public, private and third sector. It then takes up an explanation of what is meant by *public* understanding through the concept of the discursive public sphere.

1.1 Social entrepreneurship

It is crucial to firstly clarify the concept of social entrepreneurship (hereafter also referred to as SE) around which this thesis revolves. The following pages set the scene by highlighting the parameters of the European SE field. A short general introduction to the definitions of SE will be given, as well as a clarification of terminological distinctions within the field. Further, SE will be located in the third sector. One should be aware, that this thesis refers to European strands of SE theory, as opposed to other parts of the world. What SE means in the particular case of Germany will be taken up in chapter 3, where the here given theory will be braided with empirical examples.

While much research has been conducted about the field, there still exists confusion as to where social entrepreneurship should be ideally located in the context of its inherent hybridity, as it neither seems to belong to the "private-for-profit sector [n]or to the public sector, defined in conventional ways" (Defourny, Hulgård and Pestoff, 2014, p.1), and in the interplay between state, economy, and society (Pestoff & Hulgård, 2015, p.1742).

As can be currently observed through SE examples in fields such as ecology and the environment as well as inclusion and integration, public innovation, and welfare provision, it can tackle societal challenges in an unconventional manner that knows to relate to public, private, and communal sectors in a complementary way. Nicholls (2006) offers a comprehensive description of social entrepreneurship in this context:

> "Driven by a new breed of pragmatic, innovative and visionary social activists and their networks, social entrepreneurship borrows from an eclectic mix of business, charity and social movement models to reconfigure solutions to community problems and deliver sustainable new social value" (p.2).

The necessity to combine the above mentioned "business, charity and social movement models" serves as indication that social entrepreneurship has emerged in a time of shifting "social and environmental demand- and supply-side developments (Nicholls, 2006, p.2), deriving from systematic cuts in governments' provision of public goods (Nicholls, 2006, p.1). These can be said to be rooted in "new political ideologies that stress citizen self-sufficiency and that give primacy to market-driven models of welfare" (ibid).

1.1.1. The EMES criteria

Fostering both a more detailed and more overarching understanding of what SE encompasses, the pan-European research network EMES has made it its mission to combine insights from practices in EU countries to conclude a European ideal type of social enterprise based on three dimensions.

Economic and entrepreneurial dimensions
a) Continuous activity producing goods and/or selling services
b) A significant level of economic risk
c) A minimum amount of paid work
Social dimensions
a) An explicit aim to benefit the community
b) An initiative launched by a group of citizens or civil society organisations
c) A limited profit distribution
Participatory governance
a) High degree of autonomy
b) A decision-making power not based on capital ownership
c) A participatory nature, which involves various parties affected by the activity

TABLE 1: THE EMES CRITERIA (ADOPTED FROM DEFOURNY&NYSSENS, 2012, P.12)

Summing up these criteria, social enterprises generally distinguish themselves from more traditional, advocacy-based non-profit organisations in providing goods and/or services of any kind on a regular basis. Frequently, their viability depends on the efforts of its own members to raise and maintain resources, which are not only of financial nature, but also refer to time and man power. Its characteristics also distinguish it from some conventional businesses by not distributing the money as dividend amongst its shareholders, but by re-investing it in its enterprise or supported projects. And although volunteers play a role in SEs, it is remarkable that in contrast to non-profit organisations or charities there is a minimum of paid work. SEs derive their reason for existence in serving the community and promoting a sense of responsibility on the local level. Mostly, they are formed around a shared need or objective, triggering a sense of collectivism which "must be maintained over time in one way or another" (Defourny&Nyssens, 2012, p.12), though the concept of leadership is significant (ibid). The ideal SE is an autonomous project. It might receive support from public authorities or private actors, which, however, do not influence the course of the SE. Decision-making processes take place in a democratic one-member-one-vote manner, not based on ownership. This relates to the often flat hierarchies that can be observed in SEs. And lastly, SEs stand out by involving their target group or customers in its activities, counting on the co-creation of and advice on the goods and services provided (Defourny&Nyssens, 2012, p.13).

It needs to be pointed out that there exist other definitions of SE, though mostly with a narrower radius. By operationalising the EMES definition, this thesis shows a certain amplification that serves to catch as many understandings as possible in the later specified German context. This should however not be confused with negligence of the different components within SE. Since this thesis pays close attention to the use of vocabulary, the following distinction between social entrepreneurship, social enterprise, and social entrepreneurs is a matter of necessity. These terms are often used interchangeably in this thesis. While this is acceptable, it should underlie a certain reasoning and should explain the differences upfront.

1.1.2. Social entrepreneurship, social enterprise and social entrepreneurs

Taking into account that the terms were originally borrowed from traditional economic theory, the latter will be consulted for their respective distinction. There are two ways to think about entrepreneurship as such. One is the entrepreneurial process, which "involves all the functions, activities, and actions associated with the perceiving of opportunities and the creation of organizations to pursue them" (Bygrave&Hofer, 1991, p.14). The other might follow the latter as entrepreneurial event (ibid). Thus, social *entrepreneurship* refers to the input- or process-oriented undertaking of establishing a social *enterprise*, most likely on the basis of a perceived societal shortcoming. Social enterprises can appear under different labels, such as e.g. social venture, social business or social startup. The German context makes use of an even bigger variety of names. The entrepreneurial process and event can be carried by a collective group of citizens, as was the case in the above definition by Nicholls (2016, p.2), or by a single social *entrepreneur.* The Ashoka foundation pays considerable attention to the latter: "Social

entrepreneurs are individuals with innovative solutions to society's most pressing social, cultural, and environmental challenges. They are ambitious and persistent, tackling major issues and offering new ideas for systems-level change." (Ashoka, n.d.).

In the course of this thesis, the reader will detect references to SE, if it is justifiable to condense social enterprises and social entrepreneurship, just as Defourny, Hulgård, and Pestoff (2014) do. The extent to which their distinction plays a role in the understanding for social entrepreneurship in Germany remains to be seen.

Despite a condensed SE field, all above elaboration foreshadows that this thesis does not and cannot merely refer to *one* definition of social entrepreneurship, but that it much rather will attempt to provide a holistic picture of it in Germany through the EMES criteria and respective institutional settings. To be better equipped for the course of this thesis and the understanding of SE in Germany, it if further useful to navigate SE through an entanglement of notions that will be relevant in the later chapters to locate it in Germany between *third sector, social economy,* and *non-profit sector*. A short introduction to these aims to provide an orientation for the localisation of social entrepreneurship in the theory.

1.1.3. Social entrepreneurship in the third sector

Despite the overall conceptual variety of social entrepreneurship, the literature generally agrees that SE has its roots in the "very heart of the third sector" (Defourny&Nyssens, 2006, p.4). In historical perspective, the third sector holds an important role "in the quest for more democracy in the economy and society at large" (Pestoff and Hulgård, 2016, p.1754). In this role, third sector organisations aim to tackle state and market deficits through their quality to mediate between them with "flexibility, rapidity, creativity, and a willingness to take responsibility (…) (Defourny, 2014, p.6).

The literature often splits the third sector into two components: the *social economy* and the *non-profit sector* (Defourny, 2014, p.4). The former refers to the special type of social-value-creating, economic activity whose institutional frame is known as "CMAF" (Spear, 2016, p.3), standing for **c**ooperatives, **m**utual benefit initiatives, **a**ssociations, and **f**oundations (ibid). They form entities from "multi-societal and lateral networks" that operate to "combat exclusion and to regenerate communities (…)" (Spear, 2016, p.2). In Germany, as will be seen shortly, their economic activity is not a precondition.

The latter *non-profit sector* operates according to social value creation as well, though its organisations theoretically underlie the non-distribution constraint, which, in contrast to social economy organisations such as cooperatives, does not allow for profit distribution amongst its members (Spear, 2016, p.4). In many countries, the non-distribution constraint is regarded obsolete. In Germany, in fact, discussions arise about the definition of profit in the non-profit sector and whether non-profit should better refer to the organisations' aversion against profit-*maximisation* instead of its generation and distribution (Informant 6). Practitioners in the field explain that

they are becoming increasingly dependent on economic activity since public financial support is decreasing and the staff has to be paid (Informant 1).

Interestingly, this mirrors a general development over time, in which the economic variable seems to have become slightly more relevant than the value base to the extent that nowadays the third sector is in fact crucial in the major economic role of public authorities (Defourny, 2014, p.5). Third sector organisations take part in the allocation of public resources (ibid), as they for instance provide “quasi-public goods and service” (ibid) such as health care and education. In turn, they often actually “regulate the economic life”, or at least take influence in it, for instance by leading long-time unemployed citizens back into the job market, stimulating the national economy. This trail of thought, in which the lines are blurring between state and community organisations, has a significant impact on the understanding of social entrepreneurship, and will be followed up in more detail in the analysis of the Hamburg case.

In light of these developments, in which third sector organisations take increasing responsibility as mediator between state, market and citizenry, Defourny and Nyssens (2012) argue that the third sector cannot actually be regarded as separate from these realms anymore (p.11). Much rather, the third sector has become a “tri-polar” intermediary between these realms’ agents, resources, and types of economy (Defourny, 2014, p.5):

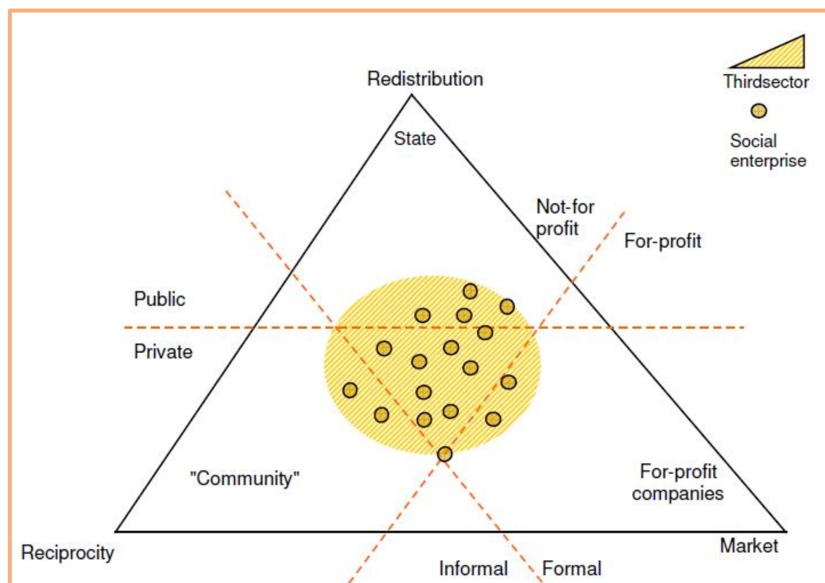

FIGURE 1 (ADAPTED FROM PESTOFF, 2008, 2015).

The EMES research trajectory has continuously paid attention to the deeply rooted connection between social entrepreneurship and the third sector (Defourny, 2014, p.3). The dots in Figure 1 localise social enterprises according to the EMES definition in the three-sector-context. Depending on its justification and tackled issue, it is attracted by (and actively attracts) state, market or community attention and work modes.

Summing it up, the above pages have sketched out a contemporary portrait about social entrepreneurship. Definitions have been introduced as well as the efforts to streamline them, with initiative especially from the pan-

European EMES research network that defines nine criteria of an ideal SE. It is crucial to note that social entrepreneurship does not follow one definition, but that it is much rather dependent the cultural, structural, and socio-economic context it is embedded in. As a consequence, the meaning of SE not only varies geographically between countries, but also ideologically within countries and communities. Social entrepreneurship is located in the third sector which has become increasingly important in state and market sector functioning. Social entrepreneurship adds to third sector organisations a new flexibility and creativity to tackle societal problems. The discourse that takes place around the topic is of global scale and points at the magnitude of the SE concept. The discourse analysis set in the city Hamburg is therefore suitable, as it grounds the research and has the potential to explain apparent divergences in the public understanding of social entrepreneurship in Germany. The following pages will elaborate what and who is meant by the public. For this purpose, it will draw on the conceptualisation of the discursive public sphere.

1.2 The discursive public sphere

This thesis chooses to introduce the notion of the discursive public sphere as it finds its long-lasting and widely-acknowledged tradition in particular by Jürgen Habermas' *Structural Transformation of the Public Sphere* (1991). The following pages aim to present extended considerations about the public sphere to host the later analysis in its contemporary complexity. It needs to be noted that the following introduction is considerably thinned-out by the limited scope of this thesis.

The public sphere dates back as far as two thousand years: Its Greek antecedents *polis* and *bios politikos* refer to a public life in which citizens' concerns were brought up for discussion, e.g. on market places (Habermas, 1991, p.4). Indeed, still today, research about the public sphere generates a rich body of thought, and a range that reaches from 'micro' forms of public sphere, such as debates in coffee houses and book clubs to 'macro' forms of mass media broadcasting, citizens' referenda, and opinion polls (Edwards, 2014, p. 69). What can generally be said is that an understanding of *public sphere*, in one way or another, exists in all societies (Edwards, 2014, p.69).

A number of inevitable features unfold in definitions of the public sphere, though the most important is probably the very understanding of *the public*. Contemporary usages of the word point at a terminological difficulty, a "multiplicity of concurrent meanings" (Habermas, 1991, p.1). According to Habermas (1991), the appearance of *public* is often misleading, as is for instance the case in descriptions such as alleged public - but not accessible - buildings, or public authority - which is not literally in the hands of the people (p.2).

Per se, the public consists of private individuals who come together to scrutinise the authorities in a thrive for a common good (Habermas, 1991, p. 27). This motivates Habermas to define two separate domains: the private versus the public (ibid). The extent to which the public can really be separated from the private is a lengthy literary discussion. Some, including this thesis, defend that all issues brought to the public debate will necessarily be

informed by private experience. This can go as far as identity is concerned. McClain and Fleming describe the public sphere as a:

> "non-legislative, extra-judicial, public space in which societal differences, social problems, public policy government action and matters of community and cultural identity are developed and debated" (McClain and Fleming, 2000, p.302).

Looking at the previous chapter, a short statement about the *private* might be useful at this point to prevent possible confusion. The public and private *sectors* that mark the SE field in chapter 1.1, differ from the public and private *spheres* described here, though they are certainly connected. This can be explained by historical developments in the notion of private: The liberal bourgeois private *sphere*, according to Habermas, was originally constituted by "occupation and family", the definition of a household free from economic function (Habermas, 1990, p. 152). However, with industrialisation and changing perceptions of work came the gradual transformation of the private sphere, through which the original household-understanding was increasingly forced out of the picture until the private sphere was in fact de-privatised (ibid). If one speaks of the private *sector* today, one refers to the latter in which private matters made space for work identification and business enterprises. In his intention to differentiate these implications, Habermas sometimes refers to the very original private sphere as the *intimate sphere* (Habermas, 1990, p.152).

The public sphere is, however, not exclusively defined by its relation to the private. Other scholars focus rather on the public sphere as platform for speech: "a particular type of spatial relationship between two or more people (…) connected by means of communication (…) in which non-violent controversies erupt (…) concerning the power relations operating within their given milieu of interaction" (Keane, 1998, p.169). For political scientist Michael Edwards (2014), the public sphere is an "arena for argument and deliberation as well as for association and institutional collaboration" (Edwards, 2014, p.67).

What crystallises here is the discursive element that is crucial for the course of this thesis and its discourse analysis. The public sphere can be said to rest on a foundation of communicative interaction. Through an infrastructure that lets different voices and opinions be heard and acknowledged, the definition of an often-mentioned *common good* is developed not seldom in the form of suggestions for solving societal issues. The common good is variable in time, it is a concept that conforms with specific developments in a society (Leppert, 2008, p. 18).

What has so far been introduced as a single overarching public sphere in fact "symbolically constitutes the matrix of the political community" (Laville&Salmon, 2014, p. 10), that is, an array of publics that form a pluralistic space. Fraser (1990) observes "a host of competing counterpublics" (p. 61). In the striving to capture the here implied possibly unequal power relations between these parallel publics, Habermas (1997) distinguishes between "weak" publics, that are a "vehicle of public opinion", a rather "wild complex that resists organization as a whole" (p.209) and vulnerable in comparison to institutionalised "public spheres of parliamentary bodies" (ibid). In this thesis, the former is attributed to the social entrepreneurial initiatives, and the latter to the German political apparatus.

This approach of differing publics triggers an interest in investigating certain inter-public relations (Fraser, 1990, p.65f). This examination is not only theoretically engaging. It is also of particular interest for this thesis, as it suggests a collective discourse- and opinion-construction of social entrepreneurship in Germany by actors that are likely to originate from different publics. The plurality of publics does not exclude meta-public spheres in which publics can meet to deliberate. This will become relevant when looking at the dimension of social practice in discourse theory according to Norman Fairclough in the following chapter. Social practices serve as reference points that, to an extent, anchor publics around a certain shared perception. These can be e.g. the economy, democracy, and the organisation of public life.

Speaking about the weak and strong publics, it is relevant to examine the relationship between public and political sphere in more conceptual detail. Here, again, approaches are varied. To begin with, Edwards distances his considerations firstly from a representative, "elitist" way of understanding politics. Much rather he brings into play the integrated and continuous grassroot practices of "'active citizenship' that can help to shape both the ends and the means of the good society" (Edwards, 2014, p.71), thereby referring to politics through increasingly popular notions such as civic agency, direct democracy, or dialogic politics (ibid).

Habermas insists on a functional divide between public sphere and the state. In his *Theory of Communicative Action (1995)*, he carves out two components of societies in general: The Lifeworld and the System. While the latter was traditionally an overall organisation that could ensure and concentrate in itself the capacity for action of the societal collective, it developed into societies' modern version of scattered state institutions, some of which are de-politicised and permeated by the capitalist economic order (p.255). The Lifeworld, in turn, relates to the uncommercialised domain concerned with culture, society, and identity (p. 229). Much to Habermas' worry, the System makes latent efforts to "colonise" the Lifeworld from within by influencing communication and action (p.277), destroying the function of the Lifeworld to inform and counterweight the System, and triggering the demand for state legitimisation (p. 279). In connection to the above, the Lifeworld can be regarded as arch over both the public and the intimate sphere which are in Habermas' thoughts ideally situated separately from the state System. In *Between Facts and Norms* (1997), Habermas admits to a relativation of the power struggle: "deliberative politics is internally connected with contexts of a rationalized Lifeworld that meets it halfway" (Habermas, 1997, p. 205). It is implicit that forms of active citizenship are meant to inform state-level politics. Edwards argues that the public sphere is "crucial to the health of a democracy" (Edwards, 2014, p. 67), though the extent to which a public sphere *can* strive in the first place, is surely also dependent on the democratic basis and the space it provides for collectivism. In modern societies, it seems that "major change can only come when sufficient public debate has sorted through the issues and a community emerges to support it" (Edwards, 2014, p. 72).

In extended definitions, the public sphere is composed of both the structural embodiment of the good society in the form of associations and organisations that have the capacities to strive for the common good, the so-called *civil society*, and state level politics that has the processes to bring such striving further (Edwards, 2014), although they are still "quite distinct" from each other (Habermas, 1997, p. 205). Fraser postulates that a strict private-

public-divide would be long-outmoded since "welfare state mass democracy" has let state and citizenry to become "mutually intertwined" (Fraser, 1990, p. 59). It is indeed this last perception that will decide the further course of this thesis. The view on social entrepreneurship as associational embodiment of the good society and the state as distinct facilitator under the same roof of the public sphere were perceived as particularly fitting, not least as the German context was introduced in the light of blurring lines in which a strong welfare- and third sector has settled. The public understanding in question thus refers to a comparison of discourses by the civil society on the one hand, and the political sphere on the other. However, also the relation between System and Lifeworld and the already latently introduced power struggles by Habermas will play a role in answering the problem formulation.

In sum, the theorisation of the public has brought to light a multiplicity of opinions and approaches. In the public sphere, individuals gather as collectives in the aim to strive for a common good; a societal concern that they are likely to relate to. The public sphere hosts parallel publics organised by interest, demand, and relevance. This thesis sees an overarching public sphere where civil society and the political sphere supposedly meet in an act of deliberation. Both civil society and the political sphere will be taken up separately in the German context, although their intertwined, mutually-influencing relation must be kept in mind. This dialectical extent will be explained in the following chapter that introduces discourse theory as the grand host of this thesis.

CHAPTER 2

DISCOURSE THEORY

The overview of the discursive public sphere suggests the significance of discourse to this thesis. The problem formulation and the above chapters have so far set the conceptual scene for this thesis to now delve into the theory and methodology of *discourse,* which provides it with a distinct framework. With discourse studies unfolding a vast array of approaches, the following pages aim to shortly navigate through theory and disciplines to then shed light on the particular means of *Critical Discourse Analysis* (hereafter referred to as CDA) that is central to the methodological understanding of this research.

2.1. THE GENERAL FIELD OF DISCOURSE STUDIES

Studying discourse reveals a remarkable portfolio of perspectives, diverging according to scientific traditions, disciplines, and philosophical schools. Angermuller, Maingueneau and Wodak (2014) refer to discourse studies as a "truly interdisciplinary field at the crossroads of language and society" (p.4). Bhatia, Flowerdew and Jones (2008) provide a synopsis of discourse that reaches from socio-linguistics, to psychology, anthropology, and rhetoric as well as business and organisational studies (p.1). Additionally, these disciplines can be observed in settings of positivist, poststructuralist, hermeneutic, and critical philosophy.

On a meta-theoretical level, discourse studies can roughly be divided into two approaches. The first derives from a linguistic-pragmatic tradition and emphasises the literal examination of texts, speech, and grammar to investigate micro-sociological relations. The second approach takes on a macro-sociological viewpoint from which it observes communication processes historically, including "verbal and non-verbal practices of large communities" (Angermuller, Maingueneau and Wodak, 2014, p.2). The latter is commonly attributed to social sciences. With regards to the above theorisation of a comprehensive public sphere, it serves as a framework to investigate how discourse influences and is influenced by the notion of social entrepreneurship in Germany. This decision does, however, not equal a straightforward user-manual for the further course of this research. In social sciences, too, opinions about discourse depend on respective philosophies and credos.

The most recognisable figure in this regard is probably Michel Foucault, who had a great influence on discourse studies in its social sciences approach. Many scholars in the field build on his conceptualisations and vocabulary, agreeing to varying extents to his rather abstract perception of the social world being exclusively constructed by discourse (Fairclough, 1992, p.41). Recapitulating the discursive public sphere, Jürgen Habermas contributes to discourse theory as well by referring to it in terms of an ideal of deliberation and communicative action in democracy (Habermas, 1990, p. 315).

Despite its polymorphous appearance (Angermuller, Maingueneau and Wodak, 2014, p.4), social science discourse theory builds on the shared understanding that discourse is a "*particular way of talking about and understanding the world (or an aspect of the world)"* (Jorgensen and Phillips, 2002, p.1., emphasis in the original). Discourse is coloured by "different patterns that peoples' utterances follow when they take part in different domains of social life" (ibid). These patterns are formed beyond the literal discourse understanding of syntax, they revolve around the meaning of socially embedded meaning of language. Angermuller et al. (2014) further this argument by explaining that meaning "[is] a product of social practices", and that thus meaning is "not to be understood as an inherent property of utterances of texts" (p.3).

The definition of text in social science discourse studies generally depends on the extent to which emphasis is put on literal wording. Bhatia et al. observe the increasing relevance of "nonlinear, extra-linguistic forms of

communication such as pictures, diagrams, gestures (…)" (2008, p.4), which some scholars treat as analysable texts, especially with the emergence of digital communication and new media (ibid).

What becomes thus apparent is the importance of context in discourse. Texts derive their meaning from the environment and partly also the medium they are embedded in, instead of representing literal, fixed, and insulated definitions. In other words, "meaning is a fragile and contested construction of the discourse participants" (ibid). To illustrate this, reference can be made to Habermas in chapter 1.2. and his observation about the historical development of the *private* from the intimate household to the economised private sector. In a more short-term oriented understanding, meaning is the production of shared meanings by individuals in an act of deliberation, according to Habermas. The width of a discourse context can range from everyday processes, such as an individual reading a news article, to the creation of meaning in large communities and societies. This thesis tends to the latter, in its investigation of public understanding about social entrepreneurship in Hamburg, and Germany respectively.

2.2. Critical Discourse Analysis

The thesis at hand embraces the above criteria by deploying the methodology proposed by Norman Fairclough's *Critical Discourse Analysis*. To locate this approach in the above discourse studies overview, it can be said that it adheres to the introduced principles firstly in that it consults some sort of underlying text, "samples of either written or spoken language" (Fairclough, 1992, p.3), to identify the specificities of a discourse. CDA implies a linguistic orientation in interplay with a certain "discoursal" moment or element (Fairclough, 2010, p.7) that provides the starting point for analysis.

Additionally, Fairclough agrees that discourse is relational, i.e. "its primary focus is not on entities or individuals, but on social relations" (Fairclough, 2010, p. 3). The studies do not examine discourse as a researchable object, but the multi-layered relationships between individuals it implies, and their respective relations to a given theme. Fairclough calls these relations *discursive practice* (Fairclough, 1992, p. 78). The observations about discursive practice connect effortlessly with the theorisation of the public sphere, in which it was argued for a multiplicity of spheres that are constituted by inter- and intra-relational communication.

Importantly, Fairclough expands the essence of discourse by one further dimension, namely that of an external relation by discourse with established, i.e. non-discursive, points of references in an outer social world, so-called *social practices* (Fairclough, 1992, p.86). Fairclough grants attention and importance to his non-discursive dimension, constituted by *objects* which might have been created through discourse at some point, which however settled insofar as they provide a stable reference in discourse. These objects can inhibit any topic, though they are mostly oriented towards economics, politics, culture, and ideology (Fairclough, 2010, p.13). Through this perception of social practices, Fairclough distinguishes himself from other theoretical approaches, notably from

that of Foucault who defends a social world in which such settled anchors of reference are non-existent (Fairclough, 1992, p.41).

Fairclough accepts these objects and admits to their influence on other objects in the discourse, as well as the impact other discourses have on the object itself. He refers to these dynamics as dialectical relations (1992, p. 65), leading to the assumption that

> "[d]iscourse is a practice of not just representing the world, but of signifying the world, constituting and constructing the world in meaning" (Fairclough, 1992, p. 64).

What follows is that "no one other object or element (such as discourse) can be analysed other than in terms of its dialectical relations with others" (Fairclough, 2010, p.4). This has implications for the theorisation of the public sphere in the sense that civil society and the political sphere can firstly be regarded as functionally separate from each other, as proposed by Habermas. Nonetheless, they influence and constitute each other: The civil society provides the state with input about the common good and the state ideally acts accountably.

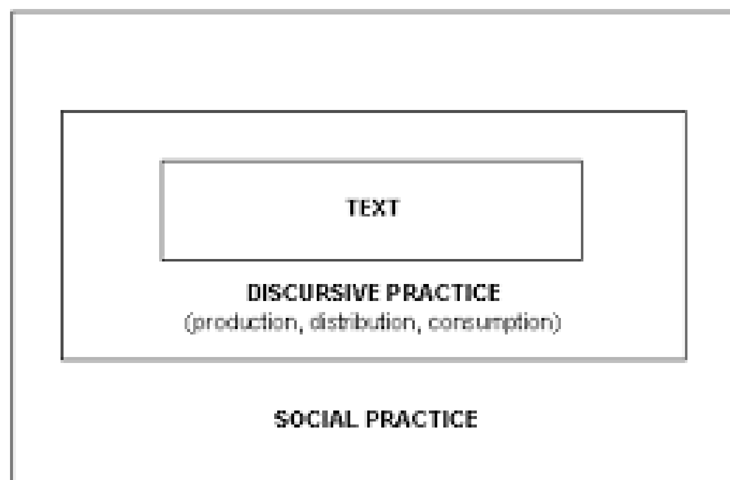

FIGURE 2: THREE-DIMENSIONAL CONCEPTION OF DISCOURSE (FAIRCLOUGH, 1992, P.73)

Figure 2 shows the conception of discourse according to Fairclough in its three nested dimensions. The grounding of CDA is represented by pragmatic considerations of *text*. The second layer refers to the production, distribution, and consumption of text, thus the interpretative space of *discursive practice* which consists of both discursive and non-discursive dimensions. The latter non-discursive dimension is anchored in the outer layer of *social practice*.

Thus, Fairclough observes and acknowledges the existence of various discourses that take place in their respective relationship amongst each other and with an external layer. A topic such as social entrepreneurship, which is assumed to be already publicly debated by social entrepreneurs, politicians, and other practitioners in the field, could thus additionally make connections with a variety of objects, such as social movement theory, theories of

power and hegemony, and orientations of economic systems. Naturally, a more detailed insight will be provided by the actual analysis in chapter 5.

2.3. Ideology and Hegemony

These struggles are likely to be in part traced back to ideology and its aware or non-aware striving for domination (Fairclough, 1992, p.88). In Fairclough's theorisation, ideologies are sets of "significations/constructions of reality (…), which are built into various dimensions of the forms/meanings of discursive practices, and which contribute to the production, re-production or transformation of relations of domination" (Fairclough, 1992, p.87). In the three-dimensional model, ideology is mainly found in the dimensions of social and discursive practice, where it "is an accumulated and naturalized orientation which is built into norms and conventions" in the former and "an ongoing work to naturalize and denaturalize such orientations" in the latter (Fairclough, 1992, p. 89). Depending on the level of internalisation, or naturalisation, individuals are either aware of their usage of ideology or not. It is interesting for this thesis and the topic of hybridity in SE to explore the complementarity or contradiction between ideologies, which according to Fairclough, should result in "confusion or uncertainty, and a problematization of conventions" (p.90). It is important to note that ideology is only one facet of discourse, i.e. not all discourse is ideologically influenced.

In this regard, the concept of hegemony is a fruitful concept for CDA. Referring to the theorisation by Antonio Gramsci in the early 20th century, Fairclough brings forward the understanding that "[h]egemony is in leadership as much as domination across the economic, political, cultural and ideological domains of a society, (…) but it is never achieved more than partially and temporarily, as an 'unstable equilibrium'" (in Fairclough, 1992, p.92). Hegemony becomes visible in discourse in the way that the order of discourse, i.e. the collection of all discourse types in a discourse, is a representation of this unstable equilibrium in which ideologies struggle for domination.

So far, this chapter has introduced Fairclough's theorisation of discourse. At this point it is crucial to note that CDA represents a holistic methodology that already begins with the construction of a research object and stretches up to the theory-informed guidelines for discourse analysis. In addition to that, it needs to be highlighted that CDA is essentially *critical* in nature. It is inherent to CDA that it attempts to uncover wrong-doings in society and how they might be eased (Fairclough, 2010, p.8). Here, it is important to note the normative orientation of CDA, as it "assesses what exists, what might exist and what should exist on the basis of a coherent set of values" (Fairclough, 2010, p.7). However, this thesis adheres to this critical agenda only in limits. On the one hand, the overarching problem formulation acknowledges that there might be diverging discourses at play in the understanding of social entrepreneurship in Germany. Therefore, there is room to discover the misconceptions that serve as bases for Fairclough's point of entry in CDA. On the other hand, it is not so much a fundamental normative discussion of

right or wrong in essence. It is rather an analysis of discourse patterns and the consequences these findings have on a perceived social reality (and vice versa).

In sum, discursive interaction can be described as "active, reflexive, interpretative and collaborative process of representing the world while simultaneously negotiating social relations with others and one's own identity, as one moment in a social practice" (Chouliaraki&Fairclough, 1999, p. 46). In addition to that, factors of ideology and hegemony are at play in discourse studies, which suppose the composition of individuals and consequently that of discourse to be multi-faceted. In all its aspects, CDA is deemed appropriate to capture an insight into the discourse(s) on social entrepreneurship in Germany. Discourse analysis is not an examination of individuals or entities, it lies in the relations between them. Discourse is both constituted and constitutive, and it is open to other theories, which it will certainly be subjected to in this thesis, given the fact that the concept of social entrepreneurship, too, underlies multi-disciplinary approaches.

In what follows, the theoretical considerations make space for an empirical account of the status quo for social entrepreneurship in the German public sphere. In line with the above conceptualisation, the chapter will be functionally divided into a description of the civil society account and the later political account. Their dialectical relation therein should not be forgotten.

CHAPTER 3

SOCIAL ENTREPRENEURSHIP IN THE GERMAN PUBLIC SPHERE

Having clarified the conceptual and theoretical key components to this thesis, it is now time to introduce the problem area, that is, the German context in which this research is embedded. The overview of contemporary discourse about SE in Germany is theoretically informed by the above conceptualisation and will be facilitated by the division of it into two elements: on the one hand the associational civil society, and on the other hand the institutional political realm. Both sub-chapters begin with a national overview in order for the reader to understand the respective German context before the specificities of the Hamburg case will be taken up. This chapter is crucial to this thesis, as it a first point of reference for the later discourse analysis. It is imperative to understand the background of specific statements by both representatives of civil society and politics. Therefore, the following inventories of SE in Germany are tailored for this thesis and should not be regarded exhaustive

3.1 Social entrepreneurship in the civil society

Recapitulating the conceptualisation informing this research, what is striking about civil society is its composition by individuals who gather around a topic of common concern, organising themselves in types of democratic and participatory unions to restore or maintain the common good. The German civil society is thus a suitable starting point to research the understandings of social entrepreneurship. For this thesis, an overview of the civil society is narrowed down to those actors that somehow stand in relation with the concept of social entrepreneurship, to depict an authentic image of this part of the German ecosystem. These actors are the social enterprises themselves, their appearance in Germany respectively, as well as ideational and financial facilitators.

Regrettably, locating social enterprises in the civil society is not a straight-forward undertaking in the German case. While in many countries, social enterprises are legally recognised as a model for civic organisation, and social entrepreneurship can rely on its integration in the organisational landscape, this is not the case for Germany, where social enterprises lack a legal title and therefore take the 'disguise' of other organisational forms. A 2016 study on behalf of the German Ministry for Economy laments a lack of transparency and missing indicators to specifically encircle social enterprises in Germany, which is why estimations of the actual number of social enterprises lie somewhere between 1700 and 40 000 (Unterberg et al., 2016, p. 5). In their extensive examination of German SE concepts and contexts, Birkhölzer et al. (2015) conclude that “we cannot build on a coherent general 'social enterprise debate' in Germany” (p.4).

3.1.1. Typology of social enterprise formations

To be able to draw any conclusions about SE in Germany at all, it is therefore necessary to uncover how it *does* appear. Birkhölzer (2015) finds a total of 15 prevailing organisational families that qualify as approximation to social enterprises in their hybridity between social and economic aims and certain EMES criteria. They all appropriately fit into the afore-established third sector conceptualisation and confirm that social enterprises are in one way or another settled here, both as rather older and newer social entrepreneurial formations. Birkhölzer's typology provides an entrance into the examination of the German SE field. Due to the scope of this thesis, an overview of the different organisational 'host families' is consciously thinned down.

The top of Birkhölzer’s list of organisations that show elements of SE, features the classic CMFA formations that were thematised in the social economy in chapter 1. In Germany, these are cooperative- and welfare-models as well as the models of foundations and traditional associations (Birkhölzer, 2015). The overview should begin with an explanation of the German *welfare model*, as it is quite designative for the German SE ecosystem.

Studies about the field in Germany find that social entrepreneurial activities primarily take place in the provision of welfare services, such as children-, youth- and elderly care, education, work integration, or regional development (*inter alia* Scheuerle et al., 2013, p. 7f; Zimmer and Bräuer, 2014, p.14).

It is important to realise, however, that the German welfare sector, consisting of more than 100 000 welfare organisations and 6 grand welfare associations (Birkhölzer et al., 2015, p.11) is not an undermanned sector that would makes this status understandable. In fact, it is a strong construct, defined by long-lasting tradition, comprehensive networks, and is a supporting pillar in the self-conception of the German state system. As was raised in the explanation of the third sector in chapter 1, in Germany, too, welfare organisations have "extended rights (…) to co-govern public social planning and allocation decisions". Here, they operate under charitable law (ibid). Although they are formally independent, welfare organisations are privileged by the solidarity principle (Sozialgesetzbuch § 5 Abs. 1 SGB XII) that favours welfare organisations against state-supported initiatives in the same provision of welfare service.

Reforms in the welfare sector led to the introduction of quasi-market conditions in the 1990s, meaning competitive selling of their service to the state and the citizens. This generated internal structural changes of the welfare organisations in the direction of performance orientation, professionalised management practices and the striving for innovation in which welfare organisations still find themselves today. In line with this development, some welfare actors have established economically active branches that are called "*Sozialunternehmen*" in German, which literally translates into social enterprise; in addition to that, they are active in a so-called "*Sozialwirtschaft*", again literally translating into social economy (Birkhölzer et al. 2015, p. 4). Operating in this manner for many years, though still shielded by tax privileges and not really understood as part of the large, traditional national economy (ibid), a paradox was consequently triggered with the arrival of the English term *social entrepreneurship*, which suddenly meant something different than what had been practiced for decades. This perplexity is in fact likely to be the cause of a large share of the hurdles SE meets in the German context.

Since the marketisation, the boundaries blur and as the welfare sector increases its competitive activities, it might appear logical for social entrepreneurs in the lack of legal recognition as social enterprises, to register their initiatives as welfare organisations. Bureaucratic frameworks hinder them, however, by making the charitable status difficult to achieve and by restricting economic activity to only being complementary to the very specific welfare mandate (Informant 6). This creates a paradox: social enterprises cannot compete with the recognition and establishment of traditional welfare organisations, and the latter often suffer from an "innovation problem", lacking new impulses (Stiftung Mercator, 2012).

As the welfare status is challenging to obtain, some social enterprises therefore appear under the *cooperative model.* Historically speaking, cooperatives were a "prototype of a social enterprise" (Birkhölzer, 2015, p.6), aiming to overcome poverty and social exclusion through economic self-help, docking on to the EMES definition particularly by participative and democratic internal decision-making procedures (ibid). However, what makes the

cooperative model rather complicated in the SE debate it its profit-distribution clause, forcing cooperatives to distribute their profits exclusively among their members, leaving no possibility for investment in external projects. The legal cooperative form is therefore often not sufficient neither for the understanding of SE, nor their location in the social economy, as cooperatives could hypothetically strive for the maximisation of private profit.

In comparison to that, the *foundational model* appears rather straight-forward social, as "one of the oldest forms of organisation supporting social or community-oriented projects" (Birkhölzer, 2015, p.9). In Germany, some of the more-established foundations are ascribed to the ideologies and history of political parties or businesses. Most foundations generate their resources by donations. There are, however, operational foundations, too, that are economically active and whose numbers have grown significantly recently (ibid). Just as with cooperatives, foundations should be carefully examined in the SE context, as they are managed rather hierarchical. Not all of them fit the characteristic hybrid structure and participatory governance that are common for social enterprises. Additionally, it is questionable in the light of political and/or business proximity, to what extent these formations act independently, as is an important criterion in the EMES definition.

The last CMFA-related appearances of social enterprises in Germany, and the model that is chosen by the grand majority of social entrepreneurs to take on societal issues (SEFORIS, 2015, p.14), which makes it highly relevant for signs of SE, is that of *associations*. Looking back in history, associations were constituted by and restricted to their "idealistic objectives" (Birkhölzer, 2015, p.10). This is still prevalent today. However, associations, like all other forms must respond to contemporary developments and an increasing number establishes an "entrepreneurial activity" which by law must "fulfil the idealistic objective" (ibid). What firstly sounds simple is in fact rather difficult in German every-day practice. Many associations split their activities into 'idealistic' and 'economic' branches to avoid legal- and tax difficulties. There is an infrastructure in place for associations that declare their work to be for the common good, which can theoretically earn them the common good associational status with tax benefits. However, this decision lies with the tax offices, who, in Birkhölzer's observation, consult a list of criteria that is "rather outdated and no longer appropriate" and "heavily restricts the types of economic activities that these associations may carry out" (Birkhölzer, 2015, p.11).

There are a number of comparatively younger types of third-sector organisations marked by Birkhölzer as an approximation to SE, which continue the investigation of SE appearances. Birkhölzer identifies additional eleven models that fall under a comparatively newer category, which are important to list for the sake of completion. However, they are not recognised under their names legally and like social enterprises they take on the title of the above mentioned more established formations. Examples of the newer organisations next to social enterprises are integration enterprises, volunteer agencies, self-managed enterprises of various alternative movements, self-help initiatives, socio-cultural centres, work integration enterprises (the German WISE), local exchange and trading systems, or neighbourhood and community enterprises (Birkhölzer, 2015).

Deviating from Birkhölzer's classic third sector trail, the second largest share of social entrepreneurial initiatives register (after associations) in fact as capital enterprises, attributing them in Germany with the title *GmbH*, a company with limited liability (SEFORIS, 2015, p. 14). Here, too, a common benefit status exists, although it is highly regulated (ibid). Companies that acquire that common benefit status are a *gGmbH,* leading again to certain tax benefits. GmbHs and gGmbHs tackle a weak spot in the SE field: societal dedication is often 'reduced' to voluntary and honorary work as occupation next to a full-time career (Informant 11). In the case of gGmbH instead, it is at least by its legal title elevated to being a full-time engagement or career in the common perception. Despite the advantages of being (g)GmbH, the organisational structures are required to move along the lines of traditional hierarchical business management structures and financial reporting. Usually, also business jargon is used, e.g. when it comes to "start-up", or "venture capital".

Excursion: German civic engagement ("Bürgerschaftliches Engagement")

Picking up the thread of voluntary work, a short paragraph needs to be dedicated at this point to civic engagement. Within the civil society conceptualisation, civic engagement is a perfect example of individuals coming together as publics to advocate themes of societal importance. In contrast to the above models, including social enterprises, in Germany civic engagement almost exclusively refers to volunteerism (Mutz, 2011, p.41). Here, it has a high significance since the 1970s for similar reasons as social economy organisations: the state as guardian of social welfare was under scrutiny (Braun, 2001, p.85). Often, civic engagement and social entrepreneurship are understood interchangeably, especially by politics (Informant 5). The significance for this thesis will be elaborated in more detail by the analysis.

3.1.2. Typology of social enterprise operational models

In the context of the above, it might be surprising to know that social enterprises choose their respective legal forms rather pragmatically (BMWi, 2016, p.6). That is, the legal acknowledgement as a formation in the civil society is rather secondary to the operational models that its members can identify with. This has relevance with regards to the conceptualisation of the various publics in the civil society in which individuals find together based on their philosophies, in that sense also their imagination of how to gain the most results from their personal initiative. The interviews for this thesis confirm that a need for a specific new legal form for SE is not actually a pressing topic (Informants 2,3). Nonetheless, given that it is the present environment for SE after all, the wish sounds out to enhance the existing legal infrastructure to make it compatible with social enterprise operational principles when they choose a legal name, such as the generation (and maxismisation) of profit to re-invest into the social enterprise and to expand its projects. Often, legal issues constrain them from research and development and "future-proofing" the enterprise (Informant 2).

The most popular operational models among social enterprises are a fee-for-service model, in which its services are commercialised and then directly sold to the population or other clients, in the German case also the public

sector (SEFORIS, 2016, p.10). Some social enterprises not only provide services, but also tangible products. Others sell SE-support and market-mediation. This type sells business advice and financial support to other individuals or firms in the field, which in turn sell their social products and services in the open market (ibid). Considerably lesser social enterprises adopt the pure employment model in the style of integration and work integration enterprises. And finally, the least popular model seems to be that of cooperatives.

Although the quoted SEFORIS study on operational models relies on a count of 107 social enterprises, which can be regarded barely representative, and although the extent to which social enterprises can choose their operational model is dependent on their legal structure, this classification gives a useful indication of social entrepreneurial internal functioning. This classification contributes to an enhanced understanding of SE practices in the complex German context.

In sum, the typology of models has reflected the argument that social enterprises are technically not new to Germany. In parts, especially when looking at the traditional CMFA social economy organisations, they can be argued to be functional in Germany for decades. Their social entrepreneurial branch becomes visible in the light of marketisation and professionalisation processes and cuts in public funding. Younger social enterprise formations legally fall under the disguise of one of the above CMFA/gGmbH models, particularly as gGmbH and associations. It is important to compare operational models and ideological claims, and to consider the EMES criteria, as these are likely to distinguish social enterprises by definition from other organisations in the field. Despite the introduced complications, or because of them, there is a remarkable enthusiasm and support for social entrepreneurship – by its name – on German civil societal level.

Staying in the context of the civil society, the following will turn to ideational and financial facilitators of social entrepreneurhip in Germany. Similarly to the above typology of models, the facilitators are an imperative part, as they take a natural influence in the public (firstly civil societal) understanding of social entrepreneurship. The below categories evolved from the literature and from the interviews conducted for this thesis.

3.1.3. Ideational facilitators

Incubators and support programs

A docking point for an investigation of social enterprises are connective actors in the respective regional areas, i.e. hubs, labs, or incubators that provide young social enterprises with a platform for ideation and set-up advice, and advanced social enterprises with assistance in financing and scaling. In Germany, these actors are by name especially the Social Impact Lab, that has branches in the bigger cities, and the Impact Hub, a well-established actor with international offices. Recognising the variety in SE, the "*Social Entrepreneurship Netzwerk Deutschland*" (Social Entrepreneurship Network Germany) was established in 2017 as a branch from the association "*Deutsche Start-ups*" (German start-ups) with the aim to gather all forms and voices of SE representatives to make the topic more accessible and to raise awareness (SEND, 2017).

Another, comparatively big actor in the context of SE facilitation is the Ashoka foundation, one of the most established proponents of SE in Germany. Its fellowship is prestigious and competitive, allowing only a restricted number of individuals access to a large professional network and the respected Ashoka reputation (Informant 2). Remarkably, in the quest for "systemic impact" (Informant 11) Ashoka focuses on the individual entrepreneur in comparison to the aforementioned incubators that back-up the holistic social enterprise processes.

Such incubators and connecting platforms are significant in an overview of SE in Germany. Besides the hubs that are spread across the country, most metropoles have their own inventory of local incubators, co-working spaces and other contact points. Interestingly, the local reputation and the impact of SE strongly depends on these actors in the respective radius and how they interpret social entrepreneurship (Informant 9). In some cities, universities are powerful actors in the field (Informant 9), others such as Hamburg are more drawn to private initiative incubators.

Awards, competitions, and conferences

Moreover, national, and local events, conferences and exchanges are signs of a vivid support for social entrepreneurship on grassroots level. Competitions and awards promise consultancy, financial assistance, networks and visibility. Competitions and awards are usually not only ways to earn recognition, but also to earn some kind of starting resources, be it knowledge, human resources, or indeed money. The practices within such competition programs are interesting in the regard that they present an interface between SE and the business world, for instance through mentorship.

Universities and education

According to some interviewees, the education sector indeed plays a vital role, also in the communication of social entrepreneurship (Informants 5, 8). In fact, nation-wide increasing founding of "enterprises with common benefit objectives" is specifically observed in the university context. Social entrepreneurial activities seemingly have a "high mobilisation potential – especially for the young, well-educated citizenry" (Bundesregierung, 2017, p.1).

3.1.4. Financial facilitators

Admittedly, financial facilitators are not the first thing that jumps to mind when speaking about civil societal formations. However, they are a crucial part within it, and thus in the SE context in Germany, as was attested by the informants, and will play a considerable role in the later analysis.

Although Germany shows "examples for all possible sources of finance - public foundations, public grants, subsidies, and tax benefits; private donors such as large funds and family trusts; social venture funds and other equity financing; business angels; and loan capital – for social enterprises" (European Commission, 2014, p. 18), the informants lament that the types of financing lack a well-designed infrastructure capable of meeting SE needs properly (Informants 8, 9, 2).

An important role for social investment is played by social venture funds, such as Ananda, and the Financing Agency for Social Entrepreneurship (an initiative by Ashoka) who bridge social enterprises and investors (FASE, n.d.). There are a number of credit institutes that might be comparably more open-minded to social enterprise models, such as ethical banks, the Bank for the Social Economy, and the KfW banking group and its foundation. The KfW is a special case as it has the mandate from the state to enhance social, economic, and ecological living conditions (KfW, 2017a, p.2), making it a quasi-public institution often involved in the financing of social initiatives; for instance, it funds the Social Impact Lab in Duisburg (Informant 8).

It is not seldom that social enterprises, in the need for starting capital, choose the way of crowd funding; Online platforms in which private individuals can donate money to financially encourage the establishment of an initiative.

Financial facilitation represents an interface between SE and politics. Although the German government realises the inappropriateness of traditional financing especially for certain forms of service-based social start-ups and enterprises (BMWi, 2016, p.26), the relevance of success-dependent financial models is in Germany at an early stage and is hindered by a lack of transparency and relevant market data (Weber and Scheck, 2012, p. 4). The political actors point at the need for investor mobilisation and enhanced indicators for social investment. The growing establishment of the Social Reporting Standard (SRS) in Germany since 2011 can be argued to be a sign for gradual progress in the area of awareness-creation (Informant 11).

In conclusion to this first general civil society part of this chapter 3, it can be said that by name especially welfare organisations, associations and common benefit businesses challenge the recognition of social enterprises as new actors in the field. Much of the confusion and perceived inertia around the SE field could be argued to derive from the infrastructures that are already in place for a long time, leading in fact to questioning the role and function social enterprises should have in comparison to other traditional organisations (Zimmer&Bräuer, 2014, p.13). Nonetheless, support for the concept and idea of SE is strong. Social enterprises by name do exist and they receive attention and fostering by a number of ideational and financial facilitators, whereby the latter often faces critique by representatives of SE. What is often proposed as worthy of improvement is therefore the rather stiff legal infrastructure for third-sector organisations, and also the financial support whose criteria so far seem too narrow.

3.1.5. Social entrepreneurship in the Hamburg civil society

After having established the national account of civil society in relation to SE, in which the case of Hamburg is embedded, this chapter turns now to the specific SE ecosystem in Hamburg. It connects to the above seamlessly by firstly paying reference to Hamburg's civil societal characteristics with regards to the topic, before it introduces three types of social entrepreneurial formations in the city. These types served as textual informants to the later analysis, wherefore their introduction at this point is important.

Hamburg is a comparatively wealthy city-state that wants to achieve the status of an innovation metropole (Informant 4). In 2017, Hamburg established itself ahead of all other German federal states, drawing a plus in new start-ups per 10 000 inhabitants over the last three years (KfW, 2017b, p.4). Although this result does not exactly give information about the percentage of newly founded *social* start-ups, it can still be interpreted as a willingness to support new businesses. Turning from the economic side to the social, in terms of civic engagement more than every third person above the age of 14 was in 2014 in one way or another voluntarily committed, especially in the areas of migration, citizens with handicap or citizens with low education status, youth, and senior citizens (BASFI, 2014, p. 22f). While it can be expected that SE in Hamburg is located somewhere between newly established businesses and civic engagement, there is no further publicly available data on SE specifically. Despite that, the informants of this thesis throughout confirm a vivid grassroots SE scene, whose key cornerstones are comparable to the national situation.

Representatives of incubators and support platforms are popular in Hamburg. Co-working spaces, such as Betahaus host a number of social enterprises. The same is true for the Hamburg branch of the Social Impact Lab, as well as e.g. the local Impact DOCK as networking and connecting platforms. Challenges and competitions take place yearly, e.g. the refugee innovation challenge or the social innovation challenge. In order to raise awareness for the topic, and to bring actors together, in April 2017, the Social Impact Lab in cooperation with numerous partners in the local SE field created the initiative 'Innovative City Hamburg', a program targeted at co-creating a network and interactive map for “social innovation, civic participation and societal engagement” (Innovative City Hamburg, 2017) to present a unified platform and voice of social initiative. So far, the list counts 38 local social projects and businesses and is ideally continuously extending.

Turning to the topic in traditional third-sector organisations, in the welfare context, all six grand welfare associations are represented in Hamburg. Only one of them shows signs of engaging with the topic of social entrepreneurship locally in Hamburg. The association “Paritätische Wohlfahrt” set up a support program for social entrepreneurs in 2015, which however does not seem to be active anymore. SE also finds hearing in foundations, although, none of the third-sector actors relate social entrepreneurship to their own activities. There are approximately 9500 associations registered in Hamburg. The city sees them as “representations of civic engagement and self-help” (Stadt Hamburg, n.d.), while no statement can be made about the number of associations with a social entrepreneurial claim.

Interestingly, when looking at the university context and its importance for (social) entrepreneurship, Hamburg's universities come off rather poorly in the national comparison. With only three professorships in entrepreneurship (in comparison: the also young research field of gender studies has eighteen), there are comparatively low numbers of start-ups making use of the academic knowledge resources (Informant 4).

Again, similarly to the national context, the practitioners regret a lack of structural and financial support for their social enterprises. Money by publicly available funds is usually distributed amongst capital start-ups, as social

enterprises "usually are not sufficiently profit-oriented" (Informant 12), as is the case in the support program Innovations Starter Hamburg. The latter is a program financed half by the city of Hamburg and half by the European Union (Innovationsstarter, 2015). Generally, it can be observed that financial issues are either taken up through donations, with city-political agencies, or with nation-wide programs such that were explained above.

Peeking into the field, there are various forms in which social enterprises appear, as was certainly expected. The following shortly introduces the three examples that provided the information this thesis' discourse analysis.

3.1.6. Three examples

Dialogue Social Enterprise

Since the 1980s, Dialogue Social Enterprise dedicates its work to societal integration of the visually and hearing impaired as well as to elderly people in Hamburg (Dialogue Social Enterprise, n.d.). It is comprised of three branches: The first are participative exhibitions co-run by the disadvantaged themselves in formats that let visitors have an authentic experience of being blind, deaf, or elderly. The second branch are business training programs for the management level about team building, empathy, communication, and leadership. The third pillar are research and development, where new exhibition formats and learning experiences are developed. What is special about Dialogue Social Enterprise is its own definition of being a social franchise, i.e. the initiative partners with organisations all over the world to bring about their exhibition formats. Dialogue Social Enterprise shows a mix of operational formats: it follows the service-subsidisation and employment models, as well as entrepreneurial support and market mediation in foreign countries. Its founder Andreas Heinecke is a well-known personality in the Hamburg and German-national SE context and has been Ashoka fellow since 2005.

Dialogue Social Enterprise is registered as a gGmbH, a common benefit business, with the aim to be financially sustainable (Informant 2). Looking at the EMES criteria, Dialogue Social Enterprise is a typical social enterprise. It covers the economic dimension by its continuous service provision and its financial self-sufficiency through its three pillars. It pays its employees, a part of which are the target group themselves, which points at the participatory governance. In fact, it is reluctant to take in volunteers, as it aims to show their appreciation for the employees work with remuneration. In the context of its registration as gGmbH, its profit distribution is limited. Its existence clearly builds on benefiting the community. In one point Dialogue Social Enterprise deviates from the EMES criteria, which is that one single entrepreneur started the initiative instead of the group of citizens suggested by EMES.

Housing&Integration

In comparison to the established Dialogue Social Enterprise, Housing&Integration is an example for the new wave of social enterprises in Germany, taking on the currently challenging topic of refugees in Germany. Housing&Integration won the refugee innovation challenge in Hamburg and receives support by the local Social

Impact Lab (H&I, 2017). The idea is an agency through which refugees can rent a guest room at a local host in Hamburg. Still in the beginning of its operations, the initiative so far functions according to the fee-for-service model, although it thinks about switching to a cooperative model in which every participant buys their way into the service. According to the EMES criteria, Housing and Integration covers the social dimension in the sense that is has an explicit aim to benefit the community, it is launched by three individuals, two of which have a refugee background themselves (Informant 3). In the context of its stipend, critical voices might argue about its autonomy and the decision-making power. Also, the regularity in provision of its service is not yet secure, although this is certainly the objective. In terms of legal structure, a statement cannot yet be made, as the initiative is still in the phase of its legal registration.

Hamburg Leuchtfeuer

Hamburg Leuchtfeuer was initiated by a group of citizens in the 1980s. It dedicates its work to a high quality of life and self-determination for people with severe illness in Hamburg (Hamburg Leuchtfeuer, n.d.). Its hospice is open for all kinds of severe illnesses. The treatment consists of consultation and advice hours. A funeral home is based on an alternative, participatory approach. The newest undertaking is the establishment of an integrative housing project in one of Hamburg's most popular areas. Operationally, Hamburg Leuchtfeuer maintains its hospice mostly through financial and material donations, and is in part paid by the city of Hamburg. It organises charity events, workshops, and seminars from which it retrieves earnings (Hamburg Leuchtfeuer, 2017). Its alternative funeral home, on the other hand is an independent branch according to the fee-for-service model. The housing project relies on funding by the city and donations, before it can be relatively income generating.

Hamburg Leuchtfeuer is not a typical social enterprise by definition, and therefore an interesting case for this thesis. On the one hand, it can be seen as third-sector and common good organisation that explores its entrepreneurial options to secure its future, building on societal unmet demands. It shows signs of social innovation, e.g. in the traditional field of funeral homes, as it offers personalised company and learning about the grieving process. Also, the integrative housing project, which aims to bring together the vulnerable group with tenants such as students who can dedicate some of their time to volunteer with the severely ill person, could be read as social entrepreneurship. What is missing is the component of economic self-help that is important in the EMES criteria. The relation of Hamburg Leuchtfeuer to the topic of social entrepreneurship will be picked up in the analysis, where its nature and position will be investigated. It is certain that in its own understanding of being entrepreneurial, it can provide valuable insights to the understanding of social entrepreneurship.

To conclude this civil society overview, an impression of the SE field was given in terms of social enterprise typology, SE operational models and their ideational and financial facilitators. The case of Hamburg shows parallels to the national context, although it surely has its own condensed ecosystem. Both the national and the regional overviews struggle with the lack of transparency in the SE field. The foci of this chapter were chosen after the revision of the informant interviews. Although they aim to cover the topic broadly, it is likely that the civil society overview misses certain voices, for instance of the Hamburg citizenry, or the general media, which is due to the

scope of this thesis. The thesis is also aware that its operationalisation of the EMES criteria on German social enterprises is rather ambitious, as it is much more specific than many of the practitioners own defining SE criteria. Nonetheless, the conscious choice of concepts and elements for this thesis underlies its ambition to investigate the discourse on social entrepreneurship in manageable scope and impartially.

3.2 Social entrepreneurship in the political sphere

Having established the civil societal part of the public sphere, it is now important to learn about the political realm and to capture how the topic of social entrepreneurship echoes here for the later analytical comparison of a public understanding. The political realm is interesting for two reasons: Firstly, the policy environment seems to shape the frame in which social enterprises exist, such as SE legal personas and many of the publicly financed support programs. Secondly, the preliminary findings have suggested a discrepancy between grassroots enthusiasm in the civil society and a sparse political awareness for SE. The following pages will shed a light on these two points.

This thesis focuses on the political sphere's legislative and executive core dimensions, firstly on the German national level, and later in the context of the Hamburg federal-state parliament together with its respective government, ministries, and agencies.

Excursion: The social market economy

According to Informant 6, a political investigation must begin with the economy. In a discourse-theoretical understanding, both politics and economy are mutually dependent on each other. Clarifying the German economic system of the social market economy is thus of value, as it is likely to explain political reasoning in the later analysis. It stands in connection with the liberalisation of social services in the 1990s after which German welfare organisations started operating in free competition, though still under the “'shelter' of the welfare market” (European Commission, 2014, p.6). Thereby, the state strengthened and fostered the quasi-market in Germany to an extent that Heinze et al. (2011) even speak of “welfare corporatism” (p.99). The signs for this have been established in the above civil society realm and the strong position of the welfare organisations. The social market economy has created a prevailing and, throughout the years, institutionalised appreciation for both welfare services and also civic engagement that both complement, and seemingly complete the third sector (Heinze et al., 2011, p.99), as connectors between economy, state, and citizens. The principles of the social market economy will be illuminated further in the analysis. For now, it can be said that it has a significant influence on political decision-making, and on the understanding of social entrepreneurship in the political sphere.

3.2.1. Milestones then and now

A condensed overview of SE in German politics begins in the year 2000 (Zimmer&Bräuer, 2014, p.25f). This is based on the two circumstances that firstly, the academic debate had started in Europe, and secondly, chancellor Gerhard

Schröder (Social Democrats) contributed significantly to the introduction of SE in Germany through his stark reform politics "Agenda 2010" during his time in office from 1998-2005. Schröder lay the foundation for SE in Germany in collaboration with considerable economic actors, by name the US management consultancy McKinsey and DaimlerChrysler, through a competition for social entrepreneurs. "StartSocial" was a success with more than 2000 applications in the first year (ProSiebenSat1, 2001). Since 2005, StartSocial is under the patronage of chancellor Angela Merkel (Christian Democratic Union, CDU). In contrast to its early years, it is now institutionalised as association and a shift of focus took place from social entrepreneurs to initiatives of civic engagement. In her speech at the award ceremony in 2016, Merkel underlined the significance of voluntary work and civic engagement, having "a long tradition here in Germany" (StartSocial, 2017, p. 11).

In 2002, an Enquete Commission, which is the political opposition's chance to call for a special parliamentary consultation about a topic of current relevance, discussed the future of civic engagement (Bundestag, 2002). It resulted in the intention to strengthen not only voluntary work, but also the institutional landscape to facilitate any forms of civil societal engagement (Bundestag, 2002, p. 7), which could have been read as a chance for the introduction of SE structures. However, it was not until the 2004 opening of the German Ashoka branch that SE was put on the German political agenda again.

While actually an actor in the previously mentioned civil society, Ashoka is an example of an important interface between civil society and the political. From the beginning, Ashoka enjoyed a high political reputation and shaped the definition of social entrepreneurship in Germany significantly, not least through the participation by one of its representatives in the so-called "Sylter Runde", a selected group of experts and influential representatives from various subject areas who discuss socio-political topics and propose solutions that attract the interest of politics (Sylter Runde, 2014).

The arguably most substantial leap forward for SE was the 2010 National Engagement Strategy. Though still under the overall umbrella of civic engagement ("civic engagement is a motor for the development of socially innovative solutions […]" (Bundesregierung, 2010, p.5), the government recognised social entrepreneurs explicitly as "new trend […] creat[ing] organisations through their individual civic engagement which solve societal challenges with innovative and entrepreneurial approaches" (Bundesregierung, 2010, p. 5). The 2010 paper announces the striving for support of social entrepreneurs in the future, through the shared involvement of different ministries (ibid, p. 63f).

As result of the National Engagement Strategy, the federal Ministry for Families, Senior Citizens, Women, and Youths (BMFSFJ) was appointed as contact point for social innovation, as well as with the responsibility to improve the framing conditions of social enterprises, for one by hosting multi-stakeholder dialogues to gain an advanced understanding for strategic cooperation and support (Bundesregierung, 2010, p.63). These took place in 2011 and 2013 and resulted in comprehensive expertise reports. Moreover, the National Engagement Strategy served as momentum to augment the awareness for SE among citizens, for instance by promoting the start-up of own social

enterprises (ibid). In cooperation with the KfW credit bank, the BMFSFJ also introduced financial instruments for the systematic growth of social enterprises (BMFSFJ, 2011).

In 2013, social entrepreneurship was included in the coalition agreement of the new government by Social Democrats (SPD) and Christian Democrats (CDU). Again under the headline civic engagement, it states that "social innovations also by social enterprises are support-worthy" in the sense that the government plans to facilitate the "establishment of initiatives based on their civic engagement" by making bureaucratic conditions easier (Bundesregierung, 2013a, p.78). Interestingly, these negotiations endure still today, the last meeting having been held in May 2017 (Bundestag, 2017).

The same legislation period saw the convocation of another Enquete Commission in the German parliament. The Enquete Commission with the name "Growth, Wealth, Quality of Life – Ways to a sustainable economy and societal development in the social market economy" (Bundesregierung, 2013b) came together in the aftermath of the world economic crisis and discussed the significance of economic growth and its impact on society. In the opposition's attempt to scrutinise the status quo, the parliament proved to be accessible for alternative ways of thinking about the economy, e.g. focus lay on the social economy. Unfortunately, the Enquete Commission was finalised without having found a clear common approach to the contemporary challenges, as all opinions were too far apart (Informant 5). The Enquete Commission thematised SE under the headline of alternative economy together with movements from the solidarity-, sharing-, and collaborative economy (Informant 5).

Since 2016, SE is covered also by the federal Ministry for Economics and Energy (BMWi). In information brochures, it educates about the concept (BMWi, 2016), and recently gives advice about starting one's own social enterprise (BMWi, 2017). However, the explanations of social entrepreneurship and/or social enterprise remarkably contradict each other. While on the one hand, information brochures confirm that social enterprises can take on any kinds of forms, they on the other hand state that they must not be mistaken for a "business in the social sector", as they supposedly do not aim to earn money.

3.2.2. Political parties and social entrepreneurship

The German parliament, the *Bundestag*, was made up of four political fractions in the legislative period 2013-2017 during which this thesis was written: Christian Democrats (CDU) and Social Democrats (SPD) formed the federal government, while Greens (Bündnis 90/die Grünen) and The Left (Die Linke) represented the opposition. Moving from the ministerial political roof to the respective standpoints of the political parties on SE reveals a more distinct account of opinions. A quick overview was chosen to be important with regards to the respective positions of the political informants for this thesis. On the one hand, a representative by the Greens informed the national SE context, while a Christian Democrat was interviewed for the Hamburg case study. Generally, social

entrepreneurship is not exposed to much attention, as it is nominally mentioned in neither of the fractions' political programs nor their aims for the elections in September 2017. What does find support and mentioning, however, are underlying principles on which also social entrepreneurial initiatives are built.

For one, the SPD declares the importance of innovation and strong, “courageous” entrepreneurial spirit (SPD, 2017, §630 f). Not only does it propose “to support technical product innovation, but also social innovation” (SPD, 2017, §660 f), which it defines as “new ways to solve societal problems” embracing economy, work life and environmental protection (ibid). The CDU is less explicit. In its government program 2013-17 it speaks of the need to create growth that brings together “economy, ecology and the social”, and “sustainable and intelligent strategies” mostly to tackle climate- and demographic change (CDU, 2013, p. 19). The party does stress, however, that it wants to continue its praise for voluntary citizens’ engagement (CDU, 2013, p. 20). The Greens do not mention social entrepreneurship by name, however their program uses vocabulary such as “pioneers of change” and the “existential task” of the “social-ecological transformation of the economy to make it more common-good-oriented” (Bündnis 90/Die Grünen, 2017, p.3). The Left seems to connect to the social entrepreneurial ideal of a “social-ecological re-thinking and democratisation of the economy” through “the democratisation of development, production and distribution” (Die Linke, 2017, p.46).

It appears that the above SE-like principles are currently taken up in relation to certain common topics. For instance, they can be noticed in declarations about digitalisation, entailing the need for innovation and in this matter also the awareness for social innovation. Further categories are globalisation, demographic change, unemployment, and economic growth. These in tendency rather pragmatic headlines can be ascribed to the governing parties. The opposition brings forth a more idealist view on a re-thinking of the economy and democratisation.

Summing up the national political side of the public sphere, it is evident that SE is taken up rather sporadically, wherefore an overview can be checked off comparatively quickly. A study by the Thomsen Reuter Foundation about the “best countries to be a social entrepreneur in 2016” reveals that the German government's policy support for social entrepreneurs is ranked on position 34 out of 45 countries (Thomsen Reuters Foundation, 2016), which confirms the above impression. What is special for the German political sphere is its historically explained orientation at civic/voluntary engagement. Together with the strong welfare construct which was a topic in chapter 3.1., sceptical voices argue that there is little space left for SE. While these two arguments speak for their embeddedness in the social market economy, the report on the Enquete Commission about the future of the current growth-orientated economic system has shown a certain placement of SE along the lines of alternative economic concepts.

Despite the existing offers and support programs for social enterprises by the ministries and various financial facilitators, the efforts are unstructured and often miss the point, as they require capital market conditions that

are not given to social enterprises due to missing reporting standards, predominantly on social impact and return on investment.

In order to anchor the above in a more empirical context, the case of Hamburg will be elaborated. The Hamburg parliament is particular in its function as regional and local government simultaneously. Although this might mean more responsibilities, politicians in the parliament are only part-time politicians, most of them practicing another job next to their political mandate. In the light of the discursive public sphere and for the later discourse analysis, this condition is especially interesting, as it suggests a certain permeable political sphere and the likelihood of considerable interdiscursivity.

3.2.3. SOCIAL ENTREPRENEURSHIP IN THE HAMBURG POLITICAL SPHERE

Continuing the political overview for SE in the city-state Hamburg, the results are somewhat sobering. From the publicly available documents, as well as from the information provided by Informant 4, it becomes clear that neither social entrepreneurship nor its German counterpart *Sozialunternehmertum* finds much attention in the city-state political arena. Hamburg is governed by a senate of a coaltion between Social Democrats and Greens. The opposition is constituted by Christian Democrats, Liberals, the right-wing party AfD and the left wing The Left. In the coalition agreement 2015-2020 the senat claims that it wants to "bring together relevant stakeholders in Hamburg and build up a start-up ecosystem" (Landesregierung Hamburg, 2015, p.24).

What is striking about Hamburg is its focus on civic engagement. Similarly to the national government in 2012, Hamburg called for the Hamburg Engagement Strategy in 2014. In contrast to the former, however, the Hamburg version did not mention social enterprises as actors of civic engagement or even a part of the strategy. An economic dimension was only represented in the form of the aspired trialogue between economy, state and civil society, and the valued gestures of enterprises that incorporated CSR strategies, supporting the civic engagement strategy further. Any type of financial compensation of the engagement was in fact seen as "risk of the monetisation of the engagement" (BASFI, 2014, p.9).

Typically for the political apparatus, the Hamburg ministries and agencies are divided into their fields of activity. Since SE often takes on issues in very separate societal segments, it is challenging both for social enterprises to find their way to the correct contact person (Informants 2, 3), but surely also for the public administrative staff to understand the unconventional SE concept outside the rigid bureaucratic categories (Informant 2).

Summing up the political sphere as second realm to the understanding of social entrepreneurship in Germany, the expectation of its practically weak SE coverage can be confirmed. So can its structural rigidity and the likely conventional categorisation of SE into the CMFA clusters. However, there are signs for a social entrepreneurship understanding as part of an alternative economy, which was surprisingly a topic of lengthy discussion on the

national level. In national politics, the usage of the SE concept has recently shifted from the ministry of the social to the ministry of economics. While the national context already seems sporadic, the Hamburg political sphere looks even thinner. According to informant 4, until now social entrepreneurship has not manifested itself in the Hamburg parliament.

It can thus be anticipated that both civil societal and political sphere understandings of social entrepreneurship diverge considerably. It is the task of the following analysis to find out which discourses underlie the creation of the respective perceptions and how they might contribute to or change their manifestation as the public understanding. Before that, the philosophical and methodological frame of this thesis will offer an insight into the research- and analysis process that has resulted in this thesis' findings.

CHAPTER 4

METHODOLOGY

4.1. SOCIAL CONSTRUCTIONISM

The philosophical viewpoint presented in the following corresponds with the multi-disciplinary approach taken by this thesis. Social constructionism was chosen due to its ability to host approaches by sociology and linguistics, which will be especially relevant in the later discourse analysis. Most importantly however, it creates a frame around the various scholars that substantiate the conceptual and theoretical frame of this thesis, reaching from Habermas and Fraser in critical theory, to Fairclough as self-proclaimed critical realist, even to Foucauldian poststructuralism.

Due to its large spectrum, the literature commonly avoids a claim for one specific definition of social constructionism. Scholars in the field do, however, point towards shared characteristics of its approaches (Burr, 2015; Lock&Strong 2010).

First and foremost, social constructionism refuses any forms of positivism (Burr, 2015, p. 9). Much rather, it calls for the critical reflection of taken-for-granted knowledge and the awareness that knowledge, instead of undisputed standards, is a socially constructed product (Burr, 2015, p. 2). That is, knowledge is created, sustained, and renewed by individuals through social interaction. In the eyes of a social constructionist, the defence of one particular truth, or the claim for objective facts are invalid. Burr (2013) argues that “no human being can step

outside of their humanity and view the world from no position at all, which is what the idea of objectivity suggests" (Burr, 2003, p.152).

The perception of constructed realities certainly has implications for the understanding of the individual and his or her personal pool of knowledge. It can be argued that individuals in fact do not have independent opinions or beliefs, but that they are shaped by their socially constructed environment. People are "self-defining and socially constructed participants in their shared lives" (Lock&Strong, 2010, p.7). In other words, individuals are influenced and at the same time actively influencing their social world and the knowledge they infer from it. This is not to say that individuals can do so without limits. Lock&Strong (2010, p.7) explain that these processes are anchored in socio-cultural and historical backgrounds, and vary according to time and place. Thus, social interaction constructs and is constructed by individuals with own and very different accounts of fluctuating knowledge.

At times, social constructionism is therefore said to be relativistic, that is, all knowledge is continuously scrutinised, configurated, and newly established, as also social interaction is continuous. In this regard, it can host a Foucauldian poststructuralism. However, this argument is only partly true. Weinberg (2014), for instance, argues that the question of relative knowledge is "one of degree" (p.1); the extent to which social constructionist thinkers accept it. Fairclough confirms the social practice anchors in discourse as "defensible grounds for moral choices and political allegiances" (Burr, 2015, p.24). Lock&Strong identify the critical stance as a common quality of social constructionism, aiming to uncover "operations of the social world, and the political apportioning of power that is often accomplished unawares, so as to change these operations and replace them with something that is more just." (Lock&Strong, 2010, p.8). Here, it can host Habermas' proposition of struggles for domination by the System over the Lifeworld.

A common tool for this investigation is the analysis of language as constructive force. Burr (2015) confirms that the "analysis of language and other symbolic forms […] is at the heart of social constructionist research methods (Burr, 2015, p. 28), as such expressions are the "manifestation of discourse, outcrops of representations of events upon the terrain of social life" (Burr, 2015, p. 76). It is for this reason that the thesis at hand chooses the method of discourse analysis, as it expects to reveal underlying social practices and wants to use those as possible explanations and to provide an outlook for SE in Germany.

4.2. Research Design

The research design is the fundament of data collection and analysis and has, as such, implications for the conclusions drawn in this thesis. Firstly, it is necessary to underline that this research was conducted with a sceptical approach understanding that the created knowledge should be free from claims of absolute truth, and that it "must always be provisional" (de Vaus, 2001, p.11). As the above chapters surely indicate, an absolute truth is neither the aim nor in the scientific philosophy of this thesis. Much rather, it wants to contribute to a

contemporary 'inventory' of social entrepreneurship discourse in Germany, showcasing different perspectives by means of Crititcal Discourse Analysis.

Based on imperative research transparency, the following subchapters will firstly introduce the overall research design, before a detailed insight into the methods of investigation, the data collection and the framework for analysis will be given.

4.2.1. Qualitative Research

This thesis is built on a qualitative research approach. Much more than a quantitative approach, it lets the research reflect, discover, and be informed by the ecosystem it is embedded in. Ontologically, qualitative research assumes that "multiple subjectively derived realities can coexist" (Lee, 1999, p. 6), which implies that epistemologically, the research is designed in a way that lets knowledge be inferred from interaction with the studied phenomenon (ibid). As has been established, the thesis at hand builds on these criteria, and understands the implicit delimitations that come with it, as for one it is not only the phenomena of this scientific research that are set in a social environment, but also the researcher herself. Consciously embracing this condition, rather than aiming to avoid it (which would philosophically be impossible) the data collection took place through rather informal means of research and communications which enhanced the connection to the environment of investigation. At the same time, it increased flexibility and responsiveness to unforeseen developments in the research process. Typically for qualitative research, a mix of methods was applied, that were, nonetheless, conducted with best possible neutrality towards the informants and the topic.

4.2.2. Case Study

In comparison to other forms of research design, the case study was chosen based on its ability to generate contextually-informed insight into the problem area. Yin (2003) distinguishes between holistic and embedded types of cases. In the case of this research, both come into play. The holistic unit is the overall German discourse (on social entrepreneurship) with all its characteristics in chapter 3. The embedded type is not only the case of Hamburg, but the various components within the Hamburg SE environment that can be singled out as yet another case level. This research makes use of this interleveling, to enhance the insight of the problem at hand. In addition to the constructionist philosophy of science, also de Vaus (2001) stresses the importance of context to case study research design. According to him "behaviour takes place within a context and its meaning stems from largely from that context" (de Vaus, 2001, p. 235).

Having established the meaning of holistic and embedded cases in this thesis, it needs to be mentioned that Yin (2003) adds three designs to the case study types: explanatory, descriptive and exploratory (p.3). Without going into much detail, the latter exploratory design was chosen as particularly fitting, as it is often utilised to investigate

a certain phenomenon that is faced by a lack of prior research, and often deals with broad and ambiguous concepts. Moreover, an exploratory case design is applicable when prior knowledge of a phenomenon seems one-dimensional, in which more perspectives are improving the results. (Thomas, 2011, p. 104).

The case of Hamburg

Hamburg was chosen as case study, since the majority of contacts for this thesis were established here. With an image of an innovative, financially well-off city, it was expected to be a fertile ground with many support mechanisms for social entrepreneurship. Hamburg is a city-state, i.e. governed by a combination of both city and federal state administration. This suggested a knowledgeable structural level in both regional and local regards. As a students' city, it is popular among younger people. Just like any other German city is embedded in a rather rigid public administration, Hamburg, too, was expected to pose a number of challenges for social entrepreneurship.

4.2.3. Research Methods

The data for this thesis was generated by multiple methods in line with qualitative research, and with an eye on their usability as 'text' for Critical Discourse Analysis. Interviews and written documents such as opinion papers were of primary importance in this regard. Observations and background research were imperative for the framing of this thesis.

establishing the Sampling frame

Asking which discourses create the public understanding of social entrepreneurship in Germany thematises the complexity of the SE field here. Though it has special attention for the case of Hamburg, the thesis aims to provide an impression on a holistic level. The identification of a sample was crucial to begin the research. A sample is “a selected set of *elements* (or *units*) drawn from a larger whole of all the elements (…)” (Baker, 1988, p. 144. Highlights by author). These elements can have the form of “particular settings, persons, or activities [that] are selected deliberately to provide information that is particularly relevant to [the] questions and goals, and that can’t be gotten as well from other choices” (Maxwell, 2003, p.97). In the case of this thesis, the sample was eventually composed of 12 interviewees for the German SE context that were divided into the clusters of 'academia', 'practitioners', 'politicians' and 'civil society'. The interviews in the academic cluster served as research basis and contributed to the detection of the problem area and -formulation. As well as the civil society cluster, it assisted in and ensured the grounding of the research and keeping it connected to hands-on problematics. The clusters of

practitioners and politicians were designed in line with the expectation and the theory of a preliminary separation between civil society and political sphere.

A short background of informants 1-4 will be provided, as it gives an additional reference to their statements in the analysis:

Informant 1 is the CEO of Hamburg Leuchtfeuer. In this position, he is knowledgeable about the strategies, operations, and economic statements of the organisation. The impulse to include Hamburg Leuchtfeuer in this thesis came from a research report that listed it as example for social entrepreneurship. The interview with

Informant	Cluster	Relevance
Informant 1	Practitioner: Hamburg Leuchtfeuer	*CEO*
Informant 2	Practitioner: Dialogue Social Enterprise	*Head of Operations*
Informant 3	Practitioner: Housing&Integration	*One of the three founders*
Informant 4	Political sphere: CDU (Christian Democratic Union)	*Member of the regional parliament, part of the critical opposition and the committee for start-ups and digitalisation*
Informant 5	Political sphere: Bündnis 90/Grüne (The Greens)	*Assistant to the economy-political spokesperson in the fraction of the Greens in national parliament*
Informant 6	Academia: social economy	*Authoring working papers about the typology and situation of SE in Germany*
Informant 7	Academia: Social politics	*Authoring a German overview about SE in Germany*
Informant 8	Practitioner: Social Impact Lab Duisburg	*Experience in the field*
Informant 9	Practitioner: Cool Ideas Society	*Experience in the field*
Informant 10	Practitioner: Social Entrepreneurship Netzwerk Deutschland	*Co-founder of newly estabilished network for SE lobbying*
Informant 11	Practitioner: Ashoka Germany	Experience in the field
Informant 12	Others: Innovationstarter Hamburg	

ANONYMISATION: CODING OF THE INFORMANTS

informant 1 took place in person. Informant 2 works for Dialogue Social Enterprise for seven years. She did project management in the past and is now responsible for future projects. Dialogue Social Enterprise was chosen for this thesis, as it is one of the few social enterprises that in fact carry the concept in their name. Informant 3 was contacted on the basis of her profile at the Social Impact Lab Hamburg, where her initiative is symbolically residing. Together with two co-founders she won the Hamburg Refugee Innovation Challenge and decided to stay in Hamburg to develop the initiative, which is still very new. Informant 4 is a part-time member of the Hamburg

parliament for the Christian democratic union (CDU), and a part-time economics professor at Hamburg University. In parliament, he is the CDU spokesperson for digital economy (including start-ups) and science. The conversation with informant 4 took place in person.

4.3. Data Collection

While the grassroots SE field as well as the academic informants were generally very helpful in providing information, the political sphere was comparatively difficult to access. While the cluster of SE practitioners provides a certain variety, the political cluster is restricted to one representative from national politics and one representative from Hamburg politics. On the one hand, this might hinder a faceted perspective on the political context. On the other hand, the common inaccessibility of the field makes the data even more valuable for the analysis. Especially hearing the Hamburg opposition in the social entrepreneurship discourse was precious, as there was not much data provided by the government in the first place, and the critical oppositional view revealed information that would have not been found otherwise. The interviews were conducted in a semi-structured strategy, i.e. guiding questions with a considerable amount of flexibility to follow up on important information. Depending on the location and the interviewee, the conversations ranged from informal to rather formal. The data was collected by personal meetings in Berlin and Hamburg, as well as by recorded telephone and video chat.

Data in the form of observations was gathered by the researcher continuously. The observations were not only restricted to the interaction with interviewees, but also to the examination of social media channels, newspaper articles and newsletters by social enterprises and stakeholders. In that sense, observations were especially powerful in that they revealed conditions and practices that took place without actively searching for them in the course of the thesis. This enhances the authenticity and reliability of its claims.

4.4. Data Processing: Coding

The data was processed according to Fairclough's suggestions. Returning to the three-dimensional model of CDA, the data processing oriented itself around the layers of text, discursive practice, and lastly social practice. Due to the scope of this thesis, not all 12 conversations could serve as data for the CDA, as this would have been too complex. The conversations were recorded and transcribed. The data was processed in relation to the text and the choice of its wording as much as possible. However, during the coding it had to be accepted that the literal analysis would have resulted in possible misunderstandings, since the interviews were led in German and the literal meanings risked getting lost or not being understood in its entity. Also, the analysis of non-verbal communication had to be eliminated, since the video-chat could not capture mimics and gestures. The coding of the textual level was thus restricted to the categories of *coherence*, a limited amount of *wording* and *word meaning*, and

presuppositions. The focus lay on coding signs of *interdiscursivity, conditions of discourse practice* and *discourse representation.*

4.5. Data Analysis

Through CDA, the analysis of the interview data was subject to specific discourse-theoretical conditions. It made continuous connections to 'interdiscursivity', proposed by Fairclough as tool to keep the relational character of discourse in mind (Fairclough, 1992, p.231). It also utilised his suggested means of 'conditions of discourse practice' (ibid) which enabled the analysis to keep the informants' background and under which circumstances and social practices the texts had been produced. Moreover, the analysis took place with a critical approach towards taken-for-granted knowledge about social entrepreneurship. Analysing the data, it quickly became evident that two of the most taken-for-granted concepts in the discourse were *social* and *entrepreneurship*. On a more literal note, their 'word meanings' (ibid) were chosen as first part of the analysis, as they had the potential to provide rich interdiscursive content, which would have a positive effect on the conclusion.

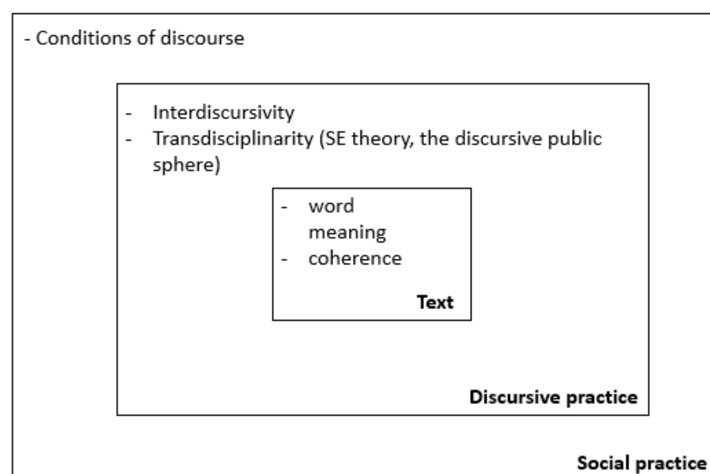

FIGURE 3: DATA ANALYSIS (ADAPTED TO THIS THESIS FROM FAIRCLOUGH, 1992, P.73)

Figure 3 represents the adaption of the three-dimensional model to the data analysis of this thesis. After representing some of the discourses that create the understanding of social entrepreneurship in the Hamburg case study, the analysis payed attention to the practicalities of discourse creation and the question how discourse takes place and in which forms. This approach was chosen on the particularities of chapter 3, which raise the concern that not much discourse was actively taking place between civil society and political sphere, since their handling of social entrepreneurship proved to be far apart. Continuing the technical investigation of how discourse is created, it was analysed how power relations come into play. This last category was particularly promising for the conclusion, as it was capable to provide insights into which discourses are prevailing in the understanding of social entrepreneurship and why.

As the interviews were conducted in German, the analysis makes use of translated references. Their indication in the interview transcripts in the appendices are marked by a time indication.

It must be said that the analysis of discursive relations turned out to by multi-layered into smallest details, not restricted by the three levels in Fairclough's CDA, which made the analysis challenging, but also particularly open to future investigation.

4.6. Bias and Delimitations

Given the fact that CDA relies on normativity, it needs to be pointed out that the researcher aimed to stay as objective as possible in the whole process, realising and accepting that her own biased sets discourse orders certainly framed the set-up and the conclusions of this thesis. For reasons of bias, it was also decided to part ways from Fairclough's complete philosophical claims in CDA, especially in his later works, in which social wrong-doings and social change play a significant role.

It cannot be denied that the researcher possessed an academic leverage in the social entrepreneurship debate led in this thesis, visible for instance in the anticipated diverging interests and understandings in the public discourse. The knowledge also impacted the interviews, in which the practitioners were seldom referred to the static definitions brought forward by the researcher, but on their personal experience with the concept. Being aware of this bias, the conversations were kept broad in order to capture as many dynamics in the field as possible. Also, the EMES criteria frame the investigation of social entrepreneurship considerably. Its choice for the thesis is defended by the fact that the diffuse German context needed a tangible definition for its operationalisation.

In terms of delimitations, it is acknowledged, already within chapter 3, that the EMES criteria might be too narrow to capture the German context of social entrepreneurship. The typology of social enterprise models in Germany provides a certain balance, although the analysis (and the identification of Hamburg Leuchtfeuer as welfare organisation) clarifies that there is a need for SE-defining conditions.

Naturally, the findings of this thesis are limited to the specificities of the Hamburg case study and within that case study the knowledge of the informants. Conclusions to the overall German context must be made cautiously. While CDA was rich in findings, it was also limited by the physical scope of this thesis. It has to be acknowledged that there are discourse strands that could not be thematised and which might have had an impact on the conclusion, e.g. cultural practices, or the influences on social enterprise start-ups through incubators and mediators. Also, it can be lamented that the claim for an analysis of the public understanding of social entrepreneurship does not take into account voices from the general public, or from the SE target groups. The decision to concentrate on the public as combination of civil society and political sphere was made consciously with regards to the theory, but also with the anticipation that the discourse led in these spheres is influenced by and influences the general citizenry. An investigation of the latter is a proposition for future research.

4.7. Reliability and Validity

The thesis at hand makes the claim to have reflected and produced reliable information. With a large share of knowledge being acquired through interviews with professionals from various directions of the SE field, the body builds on a strong fundament of expertise. The reports providing additional backgrounds, especially in statistics, were interpreted carefully. Possible contradictions were made transparent and served this thesis' argumentation of an incoherent social entrepreneurship discourse.

The findings of the data are valid to the extent that they produce one version of how a critical social entrepreneurship discourse analysis can look like. They are valid, as they have resulted from a transparent and detailed process which this thesis pays reference to. Its firstly inductive approach enhances the validity of the overarching problem formulation, as it aimed to avoid presuppositions and finding out authentic dynamics in the SE field from which the problem formulation eventually emerged. In a more philosophical understanding, the findings of this thesis are valid only to the extent that they are set in the researcher's subjectively perceived contextual discourse, which frames their interpretations and explanations. This thesis clearly wants to distance itself from making claims of exhaustive truth and validity. Fairclough raises an important consideration:

> "The only basis for claiming superiority [of the critical discourse] is providing explanations which have greater explanatory power. The explanatory power of a discourse (or a theory, which is a special sort of discourse) is its ability to provide justified explanations of as many features of the area of social life in focus as possible" (Fairclough, 2010, p.8).

Despite from the fact that it does not claim superiority in any way, the conclusions were legitimised by a stringent compliance with the theory and CDA conditions, and the combination of authentic and reliable sets of knowledge. Naturally, there are other ways to interpret the data that are just as valid.

By investigating only the case of Hamburg, this thesis should not be perceived as generalisable for the whole discourse on social entrepreneurship in Germany.

Concluding the methodology, it can be seen that this thesis was thoroughly constructed in the frame of Fairclough's Critical Discourse Analysis, which is not only responsible for this thesis' choice of theory, ontology and epistemology, but also for its technical research design and its analytical tools. In this sense, this thesis firstly builds on social constructionist philosophy in which no single truth exists and the social world is made of fluctuating relations that provide it with meaning. For matter of completion, it needs to be stressed that Fairclough identifies two types of constructionist relations. On the one hand those relations in the discursive level that continuously combine themselves to new meanings. On the other hand, the settled social practices that are created through discourse practice but have settled to the extent that they are not as easily de-constructed and put together again.

On a more practical note, the qualitative research design is centred on the exploratory case study of Hamburg and its informants. Data collection, processing and analysis took place as suggested by Fairclough: As case-specific and transdisciplinary interpretation of his CDA guidelines. This thesis is aware of its biases and delimitations, as well as its conditions of reliability and validity. Having established the methodological considerations, it is now time to turn to the analytical centre piece of this thesis.

CHAPTER 5

ANALYSIS

The quotes this analysis is built around are retrieved from the raw empirical data of the interview transcripts (see Appendices 1-5).

An empirical investigation about social entrepreneurship discourse must start with some sort of definition on which the informants build their knowledge about the field. Re-visiting the interviews, none of the informants had a clear-cut vision of social entrepreneurship. In line with the constructionist philosophy of this thesis, the respective versions became evident only through the conversation as a whole and the relations that were discovered through it. Revisiting the interviews, two quite obvious cornerstones were detected that assist in comparing these different versions and perspectives of the field. They are imperative as starting point to the question which discourses create the public understanding of social entrepreneurship. The analysis therefore starts off by separately investigating the very meanings of the words *social* and *entrepreneurship* to get a detailed impression of the interdiscursivity at play. Later, the analysis aims to uncover the communicative shape of the discourse between the publics civil society (practitioners) and the political sphere, and which discourses are taking the lead in the public understanding of social entrepreneurship in Hamburg.

THE SOCIAL

This thesis finds that the social in social entrepreneurship can generally be equated with the common good defended by the public in a society. As has been made clear in the theory, the common good is variable, as it mirrors societal concerns at a particular moment in time. In the case of this thesis, extracts of the current meanings of the social are presented in the perception of the four informants in Hamburg.

Comparing the informants' expressions about their respective social(s) reveals that each of them draws on a mix of discourse types. To begin with, Housing&Integration taps into the discourses of refugees and of integration and combines them into its mission to create

> “[…] a sort of integration-springboard, through which both sides get to know each other” (Informant 3, 20:24).

By mediating housing for refugees at local hosts in Hamburg, Housing&Integration presents a very specific understanding of the common good and how it should be defended. The so-called 'refugee crisis', that led thousands of refugees to Germany since 2015, lets the German people polarise, raising scepticism and imbalances between foreigners and locals. Housing&Integration aims to recover the balance by means of contact points between both sides in the form of shared living space at locals' homes. This is interesting with regards to the theory. While Housing&Integration itself is a representation of an associational public that defends the common good, it is also a platform that calls for the engagement of the intimate sphere, that is the private households, to contribute to this recovery. Therefore, it not only builds on keywords of refugees and integration, but goes deeper into more emotional discourse types of trust and empathy. The same can be observed in the case of Dialogue Social Enterprise. Similarly set in the broad discourse combination of vulnerability, disability and inclusion, on the basis of the fact that elderly, and handicapped are disadvantaged in the Hamburg community, informant 2 explains that the enterprise wants to raise:

> “a broad public awareness, and a profound awareness in the individual” (Informant2, 21:35).

It confirms that social entrepreneurship is not only subject to and aiming for a public discourse, but also wants to target private discourse oriented at the intimate individual, influencing their perception of the social. Hamburg Leuchtfeuer adds to this. Its mission being the de-stigmatisation of chronically and severely ill patients within the Hamburg community that often meets them with prejudice. Informant 1 remembers the starting phase:

> “the people came together as a network and started going very visibly and publicly through the city to ask people for their support” (Informant 1, 03:45).

A difference can be detected here with Hamburg Leuchtfeuer. Other than Housing&Integration and Dialogue Social Enterprise, the contact points between vulnerable group and community are not the centre of its approach. Rather, it provides an “open-ness and liberal being” (Informant 1, 48:18) within its own premises to support its target group. This difference is made clear by an expression of informant 2:

> “Every visitor […] is not only a recipient, but someone who actively co-creates the experience. After all, those are encounters, everything rests on encounters. Both sides are contributing“ (Informant 2, 22:50).

With reference to discourse theory, the discourse on the social is therefore constructed by the participants in that particular moment by the social enterprise's impulse. It is manifested also by its distinction in different groups who encounter each other to learn about their respective truths. Vice versa, the experience is likely to construct the discourse by those participants in the future, by either maintaining or shifting their perceptions. Thus, in addition to the component of the intimate individual, the social in social entrepreneurship also draws on discourses of deliberation and participation, as proposed to be a crucial characteristic of social enterprises within the EMES criteria.

The introduction of the intimate sphere to this discourse analysis, and its role in the pursuit of the common good holds the potential for further investigation to what extent personalities in a discourse are strictly public or private. In the constructionist philosophy, both are combined in a dialectical relation. It would be interesting to discover which relations these are in an analysis of the *social*.

A valuable observation has to be singled out at this point. All three *socials* exist because of the dialectics in the community that mark refugees, elderly, handicapped, and chronically ill individuals as outsiders. The *social* is thus not only in the aim to recover a balance in society, but for the society to be aware of this relation in the first place. Informant 1 raises a valuable point for this analysis. According to him, Hamburg Leuchtfeuer works for the patients to

> “[…] perspectively take life into their own hands. That they can gain hope and feel able and legitimated at all to see a sense in it” (Informant 1, 04:58).

In relation to the above, what is introduced here is the discourse-thread of legitimacy. The question arises who the patients in this example supposedly feel the need to be legitimate to. It is likely that this reference points to a societal legitimacy; a socio-cultural codex according to which individuals ought to function in a community. This societal legitimacy discourse has two levels. Firstly, the social entrepreneurial initiatives in this thesis defend the legitimacy of their target group to be an equal part in the society, as shown in the above reference.

Secondly, the claim for societal legitimacy is put forward by all three examples themselves in many occasions during the interviews, as they uncover and take care of a shortcoming in the Hamburg community. Herewith, 'the society' is revealed as social practice to which the discursive practice in this analysis is directed, in which it is anchored, and through which it is justified: Informant 2 defends that “[…] we contribute to society” (Informant 2, 37:27), Housing&Integration has “[...] the potential to advance society” (Informant 3, 43:00) and with Hamburg Leuchtfeuer “It is always about the society” (Informant 1, 20:48).

From the *reason* to exist, i.e. taking care of the societal benefit, these actors thus infer a *legitimacy* to exist, which often shifts the legitimacy discourse from an undisputed societal to a rather complicated discourse on political relevance. Commonly, the state and its regional and local branches are considered the guardians of social welfare. In its legitimacy discourse, social enterprises often not only expect symbolic acknowledgement of their relevance,

but also a certain financial compensation in the event of filling a particular welfare shortcoming. While, according to informant 1, Hamburg Leuchtfeuer never experienced any kind of refusal by politics as they are “explicitly politically wanted” (Informant 1, 35:22), Dialogue Social Enterprise struggles with receiving funding from the city agencies although informant 2 can “say for sure that it is politically wanted, but wanted to the extent that it is realisable and funded in the end is a different story” (Informant 2, 39:44). Also Housing&Integration notices that it is “particularly difficult to implement the topic in Hamburg, and also the cooperation with the city did not go as we wished” (Informant 3, 08:01). At this point it has to be inserted that while the word meaning of cooperation might also entail notions such as ideational support, the financial branch is the most prevailing. This dynamic gives a first impression of the relations between practitioners and political sphere. The financial discourse strand is an interesting indication of the contemporary frame for the discourse on social entrepreneurship, and will be taken up again at a later point.

While the *social* of the three examples is rather undisputed, there is a divergence of politically (financially) supported *socials*. An explanation for this might be found in the fact that, in line with social constructionist and discourse theoretical tradition, the *socials* taken on by social enterprises are subject to a public discourse themselves. This again has a grand impact on the discourses and understandings of social entrepreneurship. Housing&Integration, for one, finds itself embedded in a fast-changing discourse about refugees: While in Germany two years beforehand people empathetically welcomed refugees with banners at the train stations, the discourse is recently overshadowed by assaults through asylum seekers, by a growing political right wing and the very title of a 'crisis'. Informant 2, too, reports the dependence of Dialogue Social Enterprise on the common perception of its themes: the “topics of blindness and disability are of course already a little older” wherefore it is supposedly more difficult to get funding for these than for new projects (Informant 2, 48:51). Paying close attention to why Hamburg Leuchtfeuer seems to be sufficiently legitimate for political (financial) support, it can be observed that the support is not actually directed at Hamburg Leuchtfeuer's core target group: Informant 1 clarifies that the plan for the integrative housing project was adjusted to also include “individuals that are not chronically ill, but who have little financial ressources” (Informant 1, 12:30).

In relation to this, and possibly most importantly in the analysis of social entrepreneurship discourse, it must be pointed out that if a social enterprise's social, its raison d’être, revolves around an individually perceived socio-political shortcoming, it follows that it is normative in nature; that is, what is perceived as an urgent need for some might not trigger the same urge in others. This can be exemplified by a reference from informant 2:

> „The refugee topic is heartfelt for me, because I have a migration background myself“ (Informant 3, 02:05).

The normativity triggers and is a sign for a strong identification with the respective *social* to the extent that social entrepreneurship in some cases might already be called an ideology, a set of values that knowingly or unknowingly

steer the discursive practice. Informant 2 explains that the founder of Dialogue Social Enterprise grasped the term 'social entrepreneur' as part of his identity:

> "[…] It has helped him, this self-perception, to say: Yes, I am a social entrepreneur" (11:30).

This complicates the understanding of social entrepreneurship in Germany further, as there is not only a lack of definition about the term itself, but also taking it apart into its main elements, the *social* reveals a normative, case-specific justification for the social enterprise, a certain submission to time-, place-, and audience-dependent discourses, and ideology. In the case of social entrepreneurship is not seldom that the latter is understood as a claim to wanting to do things better, correcting the perceived shortcomings in and by society. To establish in more detail how this criticised society as social practice looks like, it is interesting to have a look at a political perspective on it. Informant 4 states:

> "This is what makes Germany strong, […] that we don't leave anybody behind in this context of the social market economy […]. Everyone has to make an effort. But we anticipate that there are individuals where there's a limit at some point. And we still take care that they are not falling behind. One can fight about whether they should get more [money], or what one can do more in social support. But at the end of the day this social support has to be paid. And there must be incentives for people to make more of themselves. This is how our society functions and this is very good as it is" (Informant 4, 51:00).

A number of observations can be made from this quote. Firstly, informant 4 sheds light the German society as social practice. The socio-cultural codex implies social support by the state, which links to the common understanding of the state as guardian of social welfare. The latter is linked to a principle, i.e. the expectation towards individuals to contribute their share to the common benefit, in the form of "making more of themselves". This can be interpreted as docking point for social enterprises, as chronically ill, elderly, handicapped and refugees do not have the means or capabilities to contribute their share.

Informant 4 intuitively connects the maintenance of the common good to financial support: "one can fight about whether they should get more". This is understandable, assuming that these fights refer to representatives of social enterprises in the context of which the conversation with informant 4 was set, and who have proven to trigger this discourse.

Moreover, informant 4 clarifies that the notion of society is anchored in the social market economy, whereby the foreshadowed economic discourse is introduced for the understanding of the *social* in social entrepreneurship. This has implications for the above-mentioned legitimacy discourse and its direction towards society as social practice. While the informants of the civil society seem to draw particularly on the component of "not leaving anybody behind", the political sphere has to be accountable both to the people in Hamburg and to the economic frame in which it is set as distributor of public resources (Informant 4, 15:04). The economy can thus be identified

as social practice next to the society and has implications for the understanding of the *social.* The established, overarching social market economy in Germany is equipped with its own *social* in the form of voluntary civic engagement, praised and maintained as traditional, honorary practice. Informant 3 laments:

> It is the prevalent image: If one does something social, one should not ask for money. Because then it would be less social" (Informant 3, 30:10).

This might offer an explanation why the *social* in social entrepreneurship tends to be seen by politics rather in relation with the entrepreneurship discourse than on its own, as it is supposedly already covered by practices of civic and voluntary engagement, as informant 4 confirms:

> "[…] for instance, 'I want to pay better salary as the average, or I want to give people who are having difficulties in the jobmarket a direct chance, or I want to offer products at a cheaper price without decreasing the quality' or other things. Where there is the clear thought I want to be entrepreneurially active. But with a little bit of altruism" (Informant 4, 13:33).

In line with the characteristic hybridity of social entrepreneurship, the social and the economic surely go hand in hand. The diverging priorities in the public understanding of the *social* call for an investigation of the *entrepreneurship* part. Summing up the social first, it needs to be mentioned that is a semi-anchored notion in the German context. On the one hand, it is filled with content and ideological tendencies of social enterprises. In this Hamburg case study, these were among others identified as discourses on refugees, on handicap, age, and severe illness, as well as integration, inclusion, participation and co-creation, open-ness and emotionality. The civil society strand of the *social* in social entrepreneurship was discovered to be rather normative due to its subjective perception of a socio-political shortcoming. Also, the *socials* are subject to discourse themselves, which is likely to reflect on the understanding of social entrepreneurship. On the other hand, the *social* is traditionally settled as honorary civic engagement in the social practice of the society and the Germany-specific social market economy, wherefore the *social* in social entrepreneurship in the understanding of the political sphere is rather related to the distinguishing economic element in SE.

It was found out that the *social* in social entrepreneurship as common good is defended by the civil society and the political sphere equally, although both justify their actions into different directions. The former draws on societal legitimacy in terms of a participatory discourse and co-creation, as far as the intimate sphere is involved. The latter seems captured by its legitimacy towards the social market economy and (financial) functioning of society.

Entrepreneurship

Picking up the above argumentative trail, social entrepreneurship is exposed to presuppositions from various sides, not least for the word meaning of its second element: *entrepreneurship*. The interviews reveal a comparatively bigger focus on this part of social entrepreneurship, possibly since it appears to be the most obvious element that

means to distinguish it from traditionally known honorary engagement as well as from traditional business in the social practice of the social market economy. The following paragraphs will consider the meanings of the word *entrepreneurship* for the representatives in Hamburg.

Taking the political sphere into consideration first, informant 4 locates *entrepreneurship* in the economic discourse:

> "If one looks at an enterprise's reason for being, then it is the principle of generating profit […]. If someone introduced himself as social entrepreneur, then I would say ok, this is someone who in the best case also had an innovative idea, but does not prioritise the maximisation of the profitability of his entrepreneurial action" (Informant 4, 4:17; 5:20).

This introduces an interesting thought about the economic discourse. On the one hand, it was established that the social market economy frames and defines the contemporary German society. So far, it was not discussed what the word economy can mean in different discourses. The above quote refers to two types of economy. On the one hand, the "hard market economy" (Informant 4, 03:10) which is profit and growth-oriented in the setting of Germany as a player in the global economy. On the other hand, an economy that functions according to other principles, not prioritising maximisation of profits. In the case of the latter, reference can be made to the notions of solidarity-, sustainable-, sharing-, or social economy that were introduced in the theory and in chapter 3 for the German setting. In the national Enquete Commission in 2013, social entrepreneurship was named along the de-growth movement and initiatives for an alternative economy. Dialogue Social Enterprise exemplifies this dimension:

> "[…] our logic and decision-making is rather based on social factors than on profit.[...] We make an effort to support people who don't actually have the resources [to pay for the service]" (Informant 2, 20:00)

If one scrutinises the meaning of the commonly defended meaning of a growth-oriented economy, this has an impact on the perception of the often-mentioned hybridity discourse in which social enterprises are supposed to balance their social and economic dimensions. It means that the definitions of *entrepreneurship* and the *social* in social entrepreneurship are an exceptional example for a dialectical relation in the sense that the social creates an economic discourse about socially oriented ways of entrepreneurial activity, distinct from the grand market economy. Vice versa, this understanding of the economy then influences the social, as it adds to it after all the legitimacy for an economic component.

As "easy as it sounds" then to solve societal issues with entrepreneurial means (Informant 2, 04:35), the alternative economy is in essence still only an alternative, as it opposes the social practice. Informant 4 soberly clarifies this:

> "[…] nothing is more sustainable than an entrepreneur who realises an idea and creates employment" (31:52).

The reference to the notion of sustainability could be read in an ironic tone, not least as it aims to clarify that at the end of the day, it is the social market economy in which any form of business is embedded. It is not surprising, then, that social enterprises find themselves in the same support category, with the same requirements as conventional businesses, although they obviously function according to other principles, already in the start-up phase. While informant 4 might have this awareness due to his economic background, this analysis cannot make the same assumption about the Hamburg government. The latter writes in its statement about support for social enterprise in Hamburg:

> "The senate supports the classic contact points such as chambers, and business development agencies in the realisation of innovative business models by social enterprises" (Senat, 2017, p.1).

Informant 4, too, states that

> "often in the starting phase of an enterprise, it doesn't matter if it wants to make a lot of profit or little profit, there are large costs that it cannot cover itself. And for that we have start-up programs, but in my opinion way too little" (Informant 4, 31:52).

Disregarding the politically oppositional tone of voice with which informant 4 hints at the necessary improvements for the Hamburg innovation and start-up scene, both above references either show an ignorance or unawareness of the fact that social entrepreneurial initiatives usually fail to get accepted to those programs in the first place, as they cannot provide the requirements for sufficient growth expectancy; an insight that was provided by an informant at 'Innovationsstarter', a program that gives start-up financing, carried by the city of Hamburg and the EU. Evaluation criteria in such programs, such as e.g. a social return on investment, are often filled with criteria from the political sphere (Informant 2, 62:06) and therefore likely to contribute to blurring the lines between conventional and social business (ibid).

The embeddedness in the market economic discourse is noticed by the practitioners. Dialogue Social Enterprise would like to be more socially active, "[…] but at the end of the year […] our costs have to be covered" (Informant 2, 20:06). Hamburg Leuchtfeuer even reports that it is in fact not sufficient anymore in the common benefit sector to write a „black zero" (Informant 3, 21:53), i.e. it is necessary to make profits instead of just covering the costs. Housing&Integration is now faced with the decision of "going life" at all, since their insecure financial situation forces the entrepreneurs to take jobs that distract their focus off the initiative (Informant 3, 15:44).

This shows the ambivalence of the social entrepreneurship discourse. On the one hand, it promotes an alternative way of doing business. On the other hand, it locates itself in the centre of the grand market economy and aims for cooperation with the city administration, in Habermas' conception the incarnation of the System colonising the social life. In the light of constructionist philosophy and discourse theory a fertile ground for new discourse combinations making the social life.

Evidently, legitimising activities are in place directed at the social practices which social entrepreneurship has to adhere to. Interestingly, these legitimising practices are directed at two sides. On the one hand, as informant 3 realises the meaning of entrepreneurship in the market economic context, she communicates with the perspective locals not as "social enterprise", but as "one of many social initiatives […]" (Informant 3, 31:12), which makes it easier for the general public to understand the social benefit and legitimises it to receive money. On the other hand, Housing&Integration has to have an entrepreneurially practical expertise in the eyes of the city government legitimising their activities (Informant 3, 13:12). On the basis of the latter, not only Housing&Integration takes on business vocabulary, such as "scaling partner" or "good case practice". Informant 2 comments that

> "maybe that is what it's all about in social entrepreneurship. That we are not realising projects that cannot carry themselves […] nobody wants an eternal life cord" (Informant 2, 51:46; 51:04).

This statement plays into the observation of the growth-orientated economy as social practice, as informant 2 seems to have naturalised the monetary principles.

The legitimacy discourse is interesting, as it uncovers why it is not of importance that social entrepreneurship is really called by its name in Germany. What counts in the end is that it is legitimate in the eyes of the citizenry by communicating the social value. And that it is legitimate in the eyes of politics by proving that it can be for the common good and handle money (Informant 2, 50:11). Interestingly, the English and German terms were used interchangeably and without much interpretation to make from them. This deviates from the anticipated debate before this analysis.

Finally, the attention is shortly shifted to Hamburg Leuchtfeuer and the entrepreneurial discourse it embeds itself/ it is embedded in. In comparison to the other practitioners, Hamburg Leuchtfeuer does not live off entrepreneurial activity in a monetary sense, as it relies mostly on donations. It can be questioned with regards to the social practice, why it is unofficially calling itself entrepreneurial (Informant 1, 20:24). Informant 1 firstly states that the organisation responds to a societal understanding of entrepreneurship, rather than a monetary one (20:48). The slogan "*Unternehmen Menschlichkeit*" translates into "Undertaking Humanity"; the word *Unternehmen* in German can refer both to enterprise and to taking on an issue in general. This is an indication that Hamburg Leuchtfeuer is captured in an ambivalence between societal and conventional entrepreneurship discourses. What is more, within this context it seems to build rather on an input-related discourse on entrepreneurship, as opposed to the output-related, resource-generating discourse of the other organisations. This is evident from informant 1's understanding that it is entrepreneurial in practicing a new way of providing help to chronically ill, it does marketing and PR, market analysis, it has a loan at the bank and it invests its donations into the development of the organisation (Informant 1, 22:51). To the question whether Hamburg Leuchtfeuer could imagine expanding the webshop in case of declining donations, informant 1 however strictly opposes:

> "but then we would be profit-oriented! Then this would have an entirely different image. With our efforts and motivation, I would have confidence in us [to do it]. On the other hand, we want to be and stay recognisable" (Informant 1, 61:02).

Nevertheless, informant 1 states that

> "if we were established today with the same direction and the same professional approach how to realise it, how do we build this enterprise, then we would say straight away 'we are entrepreneurs'"(Informant 1, 53:01).

On an analytical coherence note, informant 1 refers to entrepreneurship rather than *social* entrepreneurship during the entire conversation. This might be due to the fact that he is not knowledgeable in the field. Despite that, he does also strongly oppose the conventionally entrepreneurial dimension, which appears as a contradiction. On the basis of this observation, and in interplay with the fact that it works in close relation with the city administration, to which it adjusts its target activities, it could be argued that Hamburg Leuchtfeuer is rather an example for a welfare organisation caught in the trouble of the increasing professionalisation and business discourse in its segment.

This is an interesting observation for the social entrepreneurship discourse. It can be discussed why a third sector organisation such as Hamburg Leuchtfeuer would see itself as social enterprise and not 'just' as welfare organisation with an entrepreneurial branch. One reason is surely its framing by the conversation for this thesis. It could also be that social entrepreneurship is a contemporary trend. Informant 1 says that "I heard it for the first time in 2005, and I thought, oops what is that? And first I thought, well that is cool!" (Informant 1, 54:12). Confirming the suspected disguise informant 1 describes that "[…] one learns to create ways how support can take place" (Informant 1, 58:16). In this function, Hamburg Leuchtfeuer not least represents the blurring lines in the understanding of social entrepreneurship and thereby contributes considerably to the case.

Summing up the excursion into the meaning of *entrepreneurship*, it can be said that *entrepreneurship* similarly to the social component, appears to be a semi-established social practice: A settled understanding exists of *entrepreneurship* in an economic context, that economic context being established as profit-oriented social market economy. The meaning of *entrepreneurship* lets the discourse on social entrepreneurship be influenced by business vocabulary and therewith connected presuppositions, e.g. a certain growth-orientation and conventional business principles. In Hamburg, social entrepreneurial initiatives are targeted through the same support mechanisms as conventional business start-ups. On the one hand, this is understandable in the light of the market economy the political sphere is accountable to. On the other hand, it is remarkable as there is an awareness for the fact that social enterprises do not function to conventional market principles.

The dialectical relations within the *entrepreneurship* discourse can, again, be observed in legitimising practices by social enterprises. Informants 1, 2 and 3 use business vocabulary in a conventional business sense, supposedly to

be legitimate as actors of social service provision in the eyes of the political administration, in an attempt to increase chances for funding. In all cases, the prevailing economic umbrella is presented as recognised, in some cases also naturalised. On the other hand, the social enterprises define and live *entrepreneurship* as alternative to the social practice in place, and connect it closely to its social claims of self-realisation, responsibility, and a certain pride that are closely related to the *social* and ideological tendencies. The prevalence of the social market economy will be taken up in the analysis of power relations.

Forms of Discourse

The interviews present a high amount of vocabulary relating to the literal discourse creation. What can be expected from the strong inter-public relations in the civil societal sphere as described in the German and Hamburg context in chapter 3, communication is strong amongst the social entrepreneurial initiatives. Discursive practice creates networks, which are of significance in the social entrepreneurship ecosystem. Informant 2 refers to the support of the specific Ashoka network, and that it had helped the founder of Dialogue Social Enterprise to establish the concept of social entrepreneurship in his setting (Informant 2, 65:40). The inter-public relations certainly encourage the social entrepreneurship discourse, especially in co-working spaces, conferences, and incubators. Nevertheless, it must be noted that it is likely to be a repetitive discourse, in which the participants probably have similar visions and expectations towards the topic. An exception to this are possible 'intruders' with a market-economically influenced discourse, such as mentors and strategic advisors in incubators, or award challenges, as was the case for Housing&Integration in the Social Impact Lab. While discourse creation amongst social enterprises is interesting, it is comparatively more revealing to shed a light on how social entrepreneurship is communicated to the general citizenry, and to the political sphere.

Discourse about social entrepreneurship between the social entrepreneurial initiatives and the citizenry take place in practical, grassroots methods. Informant 2 refers to a “knocking on doors” with their new project (Informant 2, 48:21). Informant 3 describes that in its establishing phase the team talked to “people on the street” (Informant 3, 19:15). Informant 3 had exchanged opinions about social entrepreneurship with a “friend who is open for these things” (Informant 1, 54:12). Legitimising practices certainly play a role in communicating social entrepreneurship with the citizenry. Housing&Integration, for one, explains that “in the topic of refugees, social entrepreneurship, I don’t know, just had a negative connotation” (Informant 3, 30:52), which is why they called themselves a social initiative in conversations with locals. Nonetheless, communication with the citizenry takes place rather directly through the carrier of the societal issue at the centre of the conversations, rather than the notion of social enterprise. In this trail of thought, further analysis would benefit the answer to the question which discourses create the public understanding of SE, hereby including also the general citizenry.

The communication of the practitioners with the political sphere is comparatively less straight-forward. Although the political sphere is similarly composed of private individuals, inter-personal communication seems to be filtered through the administrative system. Informant 3 describes the attempts to bring forth the initiative in the political

sphere as “agency hopping” (Informant 3, 12:10), as responsibilities often lie in different parts of the political apparatus. Here, the importance of network appears again. Informant 2 refers to the attempt to “bring different stakeholders around one table […] those are personal contacts, personal conversations, over a longer period of time” (Informant 2, 49: 43). As informant 2 indicates, creating and being part of a strategic network does take time and effort and is rather unrealistic for a young SE such as Housing&Integration to rely on.

That being said, it is likely, that the discourse on social entrepreneurship in its various facets seldom reaches the political decision-making level, which offers an explanation for the fact that it has not yet appeared in political discussions in the Hamburg plenary or committees (Informant 4, 41:10). Thus, the discourse in the Hamburg political sphere is sporadically filled with information found on the internet, and by single initiatives that have sufficient publicity to be found under the social entrepreneurship keyword, which becomes evident from the interview with informant 4, and when reading the position statement of the Hamburg senate. Although it says in the statement that “the senate is in dialogue with initiatives in the field”, informant 4 uncovers that “[…] being in a dialogue…, one usually says that if one hasn't done anything yet” (Informant 4, 42:04). Although this expression must be evaluated as critical opposition statement, it suggests a starting point for an explanation why there are so many confusions around social entrepreneurship.

Discourse creation in the political realm is peculiar, as it appears to be a relative journey through bureaucracy in addition to its otherwise momentous creation in conversations. Nonetheless, informant 4 proposes different means for SE representatives to establish the contact with the political sphere: “[…] one could make a roundtable with members of the parliament, or an appointment, or something like a platform of interaction where ideas can be shared (Informant 4, 35:45). However, informant 4 underlines that

> “if an enterprise with a social claim, or an organisation that supports a social entrepreneurial focus…if they want something from politics, then it is understandable that they must approach politics. Just like everyone else who wants something must approach politics” (33:17).

Two observations can be made from this reference. Firstly, informant 4 does not use the notion of social entrepreneurship. Although “enterprise with a social claim” or “organisation that supports an entrepreneurial focus” come close to the concept, neglecting social enterprise explicitly at least confirms that discourse on social entrepreneurship is not established in the Hamburg parliament, and further awakens the impression that it is not taken very seriously by its name. This argument might trigger the counter-reaction that if practitioners do not call their initiatives social enterprises in the first place, but rather disguise it with other wording (which is again embedded in the fact that the exact title social enterprise does not legally exist), it is only logical that it is neither used in politics, wherefore a discourse, and hence awareness, for social entrepreneurship cannot be easily created.

Secondly, the reference introduces a new analysis strand, namely that of hegemony and struggles for domination. Informant 4 elevates the political sphere to a dominant position in that it has the power to let people come to it, although it exists ideally in serving the people.

Hegemony and struggles for domination in discourse

The above references suggest that verbal exchange between the civil society and political sphere is limited, and in the case of social entrepreneurship possibly even non-existent. The analysis of discourse strands exposes the discrepancy between the Hamburg parliament and the social entrepreneurial initiatives which is likely to maintain and to be maintained by two separate orders of discourse that create deviating understandings of social entrepreneurship.

In contrast to Edwards' conceptualisation of a communicative, dialogical state as equal agent in the civil society, the context of social entrepreneurship discourse, and how it has appeared so far, makes Habermas' suggestion of a cleavage between System and Lifeworld seem more appropriate. This perception goes hand in hand with a naturalised dynamic of (discourse) hegemony: social entrepreneurial initiatives present weak, provocative publics struggling against the political sphere as strong, dominant public with decision-making power (mainly about money).

Rather than relying on a mutual dialogue, the political sphere seems to impose its order of discourse onto the civil society. Social enterprise start-ups must fulfil growth-related economic criteria before they can receive funding by the city-state. Their proposition of the *social* must be in line with the current perception of the parliament. Also, social engagement is obviously defined in the lines of traditional civic engagement for the advancement of which there is an explicit strategy by the government. The political sphere, thus, defends and strengthens the social practices that anchor the discourse.

Dialectically speaking, it can only exercise this position of power through its democratic mandate by the Hamburg electorate, which in fact forces it to stay in the lines of these long-negotiated, settled truths. In the interviews, this is visible by the Christian-democratic informant 4, who defends the Christian-democratic ideal of the social market economy, introduced a hundred years ago, and now something “we should be proud of” (Informant 4, 52:48). Moreover, not only is the parliamentary discourse accountable to the citizens, but also on a practical note to budget, time, and personnel constraints, which are discovered on many instances in the interviews through all four informants. This situation makes the parliament choose its priorities strategically. To survive, the social entrepreneurial order of discourse thus ironically has to relate to the social practices in place, that it often criticises, to be taken into account by the powerful decision-making sphere as legitimate agents. The understanding of social entrepreneurship in this dynamic often underlines the *entrepreneurial* element with vocabulary of business and financial efficiency. This only becomes complicated when the economic side is held up higher than the social, as in the German context it awakens a “*Grundskepsis*”, an underlying scepticism, if one possibly earns profit with the social (Informant 2, 53:58).

In the philosophical claim of this thesis, it should not be neglected to take a critical look behind the scenes of this scenario. In line with the Gramscian conceptualisation, the current hegemonic position of the current political order of discourse is an unstable equilibrium: It is in constant movement/negotiation and under continuous

scrutiny by parallel orders of discourse. From what has been discovered above in the case of Hamburg, attacks on the hegemony of the System's discourse on social entrepreneurship are coming from two sides: from the outside, in the form of the civil society, and the inside, through the political opposition.

The civil society's verbal weapons of choice are innovation and the advancement of society. All initiatives under the here investigated context want to raise awareness for their respective social, questioning the present decision-making as it results in their respective perceived societal shortcoming. Ideology plays an important role here as sets of naturalised personal truths which take the upper hand in discursive practice of the civil society, and eventually aim to de-naturalise social practices that are not conform with this ideology. In the case of social entrepreneurship, for instance, the wish for an alternative economy sounds out, which is not growth- but socially oriented. Informant 1 speaks about the “cultural socialisation” of

> “the evaluation, the meaningfulness of value and profit according to the motto 'if there’s a big plus it's good. If not, it's bad'” (Informant 1, 57:36),

while he himself understands it not on a monetary note. In fact, the discourse of an alternative economy has started to win ground and influence the economy discourse on the German national political level, as can be inferred from the Enquete Commission in 2013, which was however still framed by the social market economy discourse already in its title. While it might be in discussion on the national level, it has not yet reached the resource-restricted Hamburg local level.

Ideological tendencies by the civil society also aim to naturalise the social discourse around their topic of concern. Dialogue Social Enterprise and Housing&Integration attempt to do this through integrative discourse with the citizenry by the exhibitions and housing initiative.

Informant 3 even explicitly mentions to wanting to change the system:

> “[…] this thought that one takes own responsibility, but in a case, in which one is not just another element in a running system, but where one advances truly system-changing solutions” (Informant 3, 03:43).

What effect this objective has on the current hegemonic social entrepreneurship order of discourse remains to be seen. What can be said is that it conforms with the grassroots, system-critical movement strand stated by SE theory. In this regard, another power struggle seems to emerge, which takes place between social enterprises themselves in their ideological claims: On the one hand, those social enterprises that build their raison d’être on changing the system, on the other hand those which exist within and because of the system. Currently, this power struggle is in favour for a certain SE-elite that emerges from the ideational and financial support of universities; as a public institution likely to be tied to the naturalised social practices. Also, fellows in the Ashoka and Schwab foundations are often attributed with the elitarian notion.

Turning back to the current hegemony of the Hamburg political order of social entrepreneurship discourse, it is not only scrutinised by the civil society, but also by the opposition to the social-democratic/Green senate. The ideology of the civil society has a counter-part in the ideology brought forward by the political parties, which is why the political order of discourse on social entrepreneurship depends on the respective government, how it perceives SE, whether or not it takes it up as societal relevant topic, and under which conditions. Informant 4, representing the opposition, expresses the expectation towards the senate to have taken up SE due to their left-ideological points of connection (Informant 4, 03:10), which it however did not. In the case of Hamburg, where social entrepreneurship is apparently not a hot political topic, it thus rather functions as carrier of the power struggle between government and opposition, in which the latter attempts to scrutinise the status-quo, by uncovering a supposed ideological incoherence of the political parties in power. This becomes evident in a number of other expressions by informant 4 in which social entrepreneurship is used to rail against the senate (24:43; 25:14; 44:56). Despite the fact that social entrepreneurship is used opportunistically (in fact by both the civil society and the political sphere to further their goals), social entrepreneurship manages to question the practices in place.

Concluding the analysis, the Hamburg case study firstly confirms that there is no coherent discourse about social entrepreneurship in Germany. To give an educated answer to the question which discourses then do create the public understanding of it, it has to be said that they prove to be pieced together momentarily and case-dependent by various dialectical sub-and super-ordinated discourses. To find out which discourses make up these combinations, it was perceived as necessary to firstly investigate the literal meaning of the *social* and of *entrepreneurship* as main discourse elements. It turned out that the public understanding of both diverge significantly, leading into two orders of discourse nurtured on the one hand by the civil society, and on the other hand by the political sphere.

In the realm of the *social*, the civil society has very specific interpretations of the common good. The three representatives draw on discourses of refugees, elderly, handicapped and ill individuals, and in their mission for integration, inclusion, and co-creation. As associational gatherings that defend the common good, it is remarkable that the Housing&Integration and Dialogue Social Enterprise include the intimate sphere, i.e. private individuals that are not their target group, in their social value creation. These discourses create an understanding of social entrepreneurship in the sense that they offer a tangible topic of societal relevance. As the choice of the *social* is connected to normativity and ideology of the social enterprises, and on the discourse of the social issue itself, the understanding is likely to lead into various directions. The political informant interprets the *social* directly in its hybrid relation to the economy. The latter was thereby in the focus of the conversation and resulted detecting the discourse strand of honorary civic engagement which is the commonly perceived default *social* in Germany which is likely to contribute to the confusion rather than the understanding of social entrepreneurship. The discourse of hybridity thus plays an important role in creating an understanding of social entrepreneurship. It introduces the discourse on *entrepreneurship* in which the strands of social market economy and alternative social economy were mentioned. The former creates an understanding of social entrepreneurship in a conventional business sense,

which was mostly discovered in the political sphere, but also in the civil society. The latter contributes to an understanding of it under alternative market principles, which can be rather ascribed to the practitioners' viewpoints.

The appearance of the verbal creation of discourse in the frame of social entrepreneurship revealed sobering results, confirming the existence of parallel orders of discourses that barely meet, as was foreshadowed by chapter 3. Connections in the public discourse take place on the basis of social practices, more or less settled anchors of reference in the social entrepreneurship discourse.

A number of social practices were detected throughout the analysis. What was particularly mentioned was the society, and its socio-cultural codex according to which Germany functions. Additional anchorages were found in the notion of the economy, by which reference is made to the German system of the social market economy, which can be said to pose conditions for a certain understanding of the societal codex as well. Finally, the analysis found the social practice of democracy to be not explicitly mentioned by the informants, but still significant, as it facilitates the challenging of those social practices.

As the analysis clarifies, ideologically invested struggles for domination do take place in social entrepreneurship discourse. They are essential in drawing critical conclusions about the public understanding of social entrepreneurship, as they uncover which of the above discourses are prevailing. The struggles for discourse hegemony are semi-hidden practices which the informants might or might not be aware of. The analysis finds that the city-state administration incorporates the social practices. It derives its powerful position from the democratic mandate that tells it to maintain an order within these social practices. While the practitioners, to a certain extent, aim to scrutinise the established truths through an ideological claim, they are still subjected to it. This results in the fact that social enterprises are often confronted with the balancing act of legitimacy. Within the growth-orientated social market economy it has to assert itself as alternative to the traditional monetary and civic engagement discourses.

Figure 4 illustrates a selection of discourses that were established in the above analysis in their three-dimensional relation.

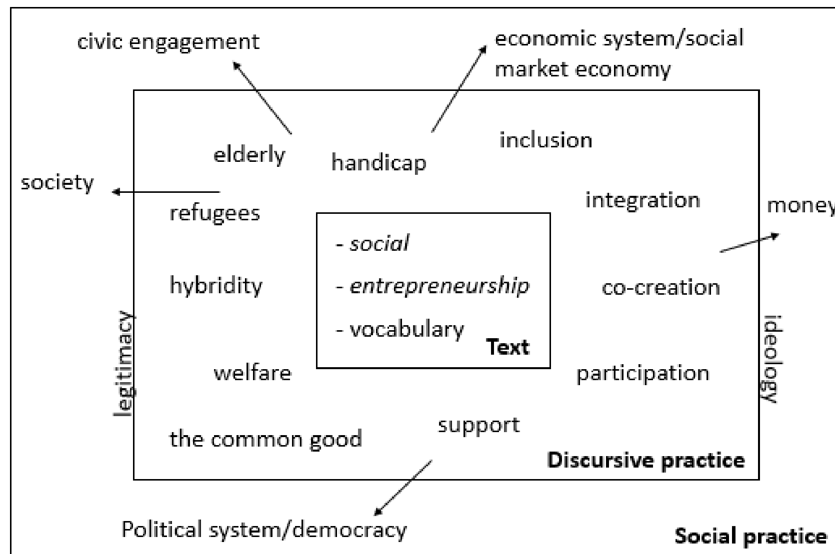

FIGURE 4: DISCOURSES CREATING THE PUBLIC UNDERSTANDING OF SOCIAL ENTREPRENEURSHIP IN GERMANY (ADAPTED TO THIS THESIS FROM FAIRCLOUGH, 1992, P.73).

These findings are not set in stone. Neither does the current hegemony of the political/social practice order of discourse on its own create the understanding of social entrepreneurship. It is the combination and the dialectical relation of all discourses mentioned in this analysis, which is probably an even bigger arsenal than what could be analysed in this thesis, that make up the understanding of social entrepreneurship.

To increase the relevance of the findings made by the analysis, the following discussion will take them to a meta-societal consideration.

CHAPTER 6

DISCUSSION

Although the findings were discussed in the analysis to a large part already, they should be elevated to a more comprehensive societal consideration in order to be relevant in the overall German context. In the end, which discourses create the public understanding of social entrepreneurship in Germany is only partly represented in the

Hamburg case. Without going into too much detail, there are some points which should also be given some reflective space.

Firstly, the intangibility of the results, especially through the titles posed on social entrepreneurship by legal conditions and legitimising practices, raises the question how a future for social enterprises in Germany can look like. Since there is no telling where the dialectical relations start in the debate whether there is no awareness for it, because there is no such title, or vice versa, it remains exciting to see how and if this conditions changes. It is surprising to find out that the understanding for social entrepreneurship is more advanced, and that even discussions for alternatives to the growth-oriented economy were taken up, on the far-away national level more than in close-up local politics. In a discourse-theoretical setting this is understandable. The state government pays more attention to the social practice of democracy, in which it wants to represent voices from all directions of society, whereas the local administrations actually have to deal with their realisation in the frame of resource constraints.

Secondly, it could be thematised what it means to be an entrepreneur in Germany in general. This discussion point aims into the direction of cultural attributes that Germans are raised into. The understanding of entrepreneurship might be connected to a more traditional understanding of a family-led, middle-sized company. It is the understanding of an entrepreneur who knows what he is doing, as he is taking on a risk, while Germans are generally risk avert. When looking into the specificities of social entrepreneurship in the discourse of start-ups from universities, entrepreneurship is conquered by a generation that stands for self-realisation, and 'finding its purpose', that questions conventional ways of life, and that grows into discourses of 'making the world better place'. On a societal note, this is an interesting observation on its own, as this development can be said to trigger more self-centredness, however by putting the focus on the common good at the same time. For the understanding of social entrepreneurship, this means that it is probably also a part of this discourse wave, which in turn might make it look like a trend to some. What has not been raised by this thesis yet, are certain ideological struggles between social enterprises themselves, which emerged from these newcomers in the field.

Finally, at one point in the conversation, informant 4 points out that Germany is actually a pleasant country to live in, in which the poorest still have a roof over their head and access to health care. This acknowledgment and the fact that social enterprise has its origins in the rural area of India, lets the issues and claims raised by social enterprises in Germany appear in a different light. This does not in any way suggest that one societal challenge should and can be seen as more important than the other. It simply aims to raise awareness for a broader perspective and whether social entrepreneurship might be seen as redundant by some.

To conclude, there are many ways to perceive and understand social entrepreneurship. The way in which it was presented by this thesis aimed to give a comprehensive overview, with the continuous reminder that it can never by exhaustive. Facilitated by dialectical discourses, the smallest change in the society, and the smallest individual realisation, might impact the understanding of social entrepreneurship all together.

Conclusion

This thesis has provided a comprehensive insight into the concept of social entrepreneurship and its German ecosystem. Observing that social entrepreneurship does not seem to trigger the same excitement in Germany as it does in other countries, it was assumed that there are underlying dynamics at play that pose obstacles for its settling here. Asking which discourses create the public understanding of social entrepreneurship in Germany, this research aimed to find explanations for the supposed divergence.

To draw theoretically and empirically well-informed conclusions, the research firstly set out to clarify the key concepts of this framework, through which the intangibility of the SE field was established together with the choice for defining the public as both civil society and political sphere. This framing was made functionally, and in line with the observation of a rather split understanding within the public sphere, being aware that both realms would eventually build on each other somehow in the creation of the SE understanding. The thesis then developed the discourse-theoretical framework, relying on Critical Discourse Analysis by Norman Fairclough. This choice impacted the later philosophical, methodological, and analytical specificities of this thesis in a holistic process.

What was first mainly a conceptual divide between civil society and political sphere manifested itself in the exposure of the status quo for social entrepreneurship in Germany. Its representation in the civil society setting proved for it to be a young, innovative, and vivid segment that enjoys much popularity and support amongst a network of practitioners, and ideational and financial facilitators, conferences, and competitions. The political sphere, in contrast, showed that social entrepreneurship is not a topic of much discussion. Since its beginning roughly in the 2000's, not much has been done to establish an infrastructure for its development. For one, there is no legal attribution for social enterprises, which lets them take on the legal 'disguise' of associations, foundations, cooperatives, or conventional business. Moreover, it was established that the German ecosystem possesses a strong welfare sector, in which welfare organisations compete in a quasi-market, increasing the potential for confusions about a competing concept of social service provision. For a geographically fenced investigation, the German city-state Hamburg was chosen. Four informants provided textual data for the Critical Discourse Analysis which brought to light a wide array of discourses both in the civil society and in local politics that pinpoint the public understanding of social entrepreneurship for this particular moment of analysis. It was observed that these revolved around diverging perceptions of the word elements *social* and *entrepreneurship*. The discourse inventory revealed the reference of the participants to certain discourse anchors, which were singled out as the understandings of society; the economic system, in this case the German social market economy; and

democracy. Looking into the creation of understanding, i.e. of discourse resulted in the recognition that the cleavage between civil society and political sphere approaches to social entrepreneurship are not communicated between the two in Hamburg. A normative, ideologically and emotionally invested order of discourse clashes with a pragmatic, tradition- and resource-bound order of discourse. The analysis of struggles for domination revealed that the political sphere and its orders of discourse about social entrepreneurship currently has the power over the understanding of social entrepreneurship in its references to a growth-orientated economy, conventional business principles, honorary civic engagement, and a society defined by the social market economy.

The findings of this thesis have to be interpreted carefully. In the constructionist philosophical and theoretical convictions, the thesis holds that they are never a depiction of one truth and rather subject to continuous scrutiny and change. This is especially true for the case of Hamburg which can only be in parts representative for the German holistic context.

What can be said with certainty is that the future of social entrepreneurship will remain exciting and unpredictable, as well as the discourses it creates and is created by.

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