



## *What is Development?*

Peruvian local perception on “development” and foreign development aid- a way to a “non-westernized” development?

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## **Abstract**

“Development” is an essentially contested concept within academia and some critics, the so-called post-development school, argue that the concept and practice of development is a world-view monopolizing our imagination. The school of thought promotes alternative ways to think about development but is merely at the theoretical level and lacks taking into account empirical cases. Therefore, this theoretical approach is to test and develop existing literature and the theory is originating from the work of Michel Foucault and theory of post-development’s presented hegemonic development discourse. The aim is to study Peruvian NGO executives’ perceptions on development and alternative development collaborations through in-depth interviews and a critical case study design. The study reveals an alternative thinking about “development” and local perceptions challenge the “truth” of the hegemonic development discourse. A donor-recipient relation is visible where local knowledge is limited and local NGOs are coerced into new behaviors to satisfy donors’ demands. Studying “periphery” grass-root voices from the Third World is important to be able to imagine “development” differently in discourses silenced, limited and at the margins.

*Keywords: Post-development, development cooperation, local perspective, NGO, discourse, Peru*

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## 1. Introduction and General Aim

### *“What is Development?”*

The term development has been debated ever since its emergence and is an essentially contested concept lacking a clear cut definition. Many view development as the change of a society towards a better future, visualized e.g. in terms of economic growth, better infrastructure, longer lives, and higher literacy rates for individuals. Critics, fewer in number, see development in less utopian terms. Some critics view development as processes that enable the rich to live off the poor and which legitimizes more money and power for a small global minority. Others see it as a world-view that so monopolizes our imagination that we can no longer think of an alternative. The broad idea of “development” is a recent remedy which rests on a particular representation of the problems of “poor” and “marginalized”, remedy to the problem of “underdevelopment”.

Development as idea and practice emerged after World War II, spreading rapidly throughout the world and coming to structure international relations in fundamental ways. Merely decades later, classifying people and countries into “developed” and “underdeveloped” has become the most natural thing in the world. Development became one of the pre-eminent issues of our time; a disputed, complex and contentious phenomenon which has created a profound arena in the international community. With interest and emphasis on the worlds’ most vulnerable people and groups- the underdeveloped, the marginalized and countries set to the periphery – development continues to capture our imagination (Peet et. al. 2009).

*Developmentalism monopolizes dreams of progress and destroys alternative conceptions of the future (Peet et.al. 2009:3)...*

Within in academia, the so called post-development school has emerged which largely rejects the concept and practice of “development”. These scholars argue that “development has been and still is the Westernization of the world” (Latouche 1993:160), an external model dependent on and enforced by Western modernity and historicity, showing ignorance about local voices of the “underdeveloped” South. According to post-development scholars, “development” was characterized by a set of statements that determined what was possible to say, write, do and think about virtually every aspect of so-called “developing” societies, in other words it defined the “space” of development (Escobar 1992b). These established social facts and knowledge became an established truth of reality, so much that “development colonized reality, it became reality” (Escobar 1992b:414). A reality conformed to power domination and a cultural imperialism of the West which led to the idea and practice of foreign development aid. Societies which could be characterized as fundamentally distinctive in a number of respects- geographically, historically, by languages spoken, religiously, and so on –became bunched together in a homogenizing manner as essentially similar in the sense of being “underdeveloped”.

Consequently, the homogenized “underdeveloped” have become the target of endless numbers of interventions and programs that seem inescapable within the parameters of development.

In 1949, Truman substituted the words that already existed for “poor” and “backward” people into the term of underdeveloped. His ambition was “to lighten the burden of the poor” in terms of capitalism and market economy, which became known as the Truman Doctrine. The meaning of development was a social, economic, cultural and political practice with attention to change and transformation, for developers’ development was the transition from “traditional” society to “economic” culture that came to symbolize the developed. It appropriated the global march towards the Western ideal of progress and affluence through economic planning such as Europe had undergone during the nineteenth century (Escobar 1992b,c, Kothari 1995). Development therefore came to have a geographical/spatial as well as a temporal dimension, the former placing a stage of highest economic growth in a core (Europe and United States) and placing the homogenized “developing” countries in peripheral Africa, Asia, and Latin America. The latter, temporal dimension refers to the interpretation of the “underdeveloped” as being in a stage similar to the history of Europe in the way that underdeveloped countries are grouped as peripheral zones, each zone representing a stage of the core’s past (Peet et. al. 2009). These peripheral countries are looked at as “temporally behind” the developed countries.

Post-development scholars argue for alternatives *to* development, i.e. to rethink development outside the constructed discourse and conceptions of the West. The school promotes local grass-root perspectives to search for alternatives *to* development, but the promotion stays at the theoretical level without locating and exploring the local voices of the South. Post-development scholars have not embarked on including empirical studies of “peripheral” perspectives on what it means to be developed and how it is understood. There is a gap in development studies itself, but in particular within the post-development school that provides a theory without substantial ground in empirical studies.

Post-development scholars argue that certain ideas about “development” have become so hegemonic that there is little resistance to them. To make this case, -I argue that it is important to *empirically* study critical cases of foreign development aid from “peripheral” perspectives, particularly cases of “developing” communities which both have a history of resisting European and US involvement and which receive aid and collaborate with European/US organizations that promote alternative, grass-roots based development. If the allegedly hegemonic development ideas are present in such critical cases, then it is likely that such ideas really are as hegemonic as post-development scholars claim. The views of development aid recipients in the highland of southern Peru, which collaborate with the Swedish non-governmental organization Svalorna Latinamerika (LA) should be a good critical case.

The country of Peru has a long history of resisting European colonialism as well as US imperialism, and its recent history has been permeated by “Third Worldism” (support for national liberation movements and Third World independence from the US and Europe). The country of Peru has furthermore been the target of endless development interventions. For instance, foreign aid and the different development aid programs have increased significantly from 703 projects in 1994 to 1,724 in 2004 (Oscar Schiappa 2004). Its main flows for cooperation and financial aid now derive from non-governmental organizations (NGOs) that are regarded as grass-root organizations, some of which attempt to promote alternatives on how to practice and understand development. The NGO Svalorna LA has been established in development cooperation with local organizations in Peru for over fifty years and is currently working in the highlands of Castilla Media which is one of the poorest regions of Peru. Svalorna LA’s vision is to give local organizations a say in how to define the development of their communities and Svalorna LA bases their development aid on local knowledge and wishes in the practice of development aid. If we are not able to find alternative thinking and understanding of development and development practice in these Peruvian communities, where resistance towards foreign imperialism is strong and alternative development collaborations are supposedly in place, we are unlikely to find it somewhere else.

The aim of this study is to contribute to the post-development school by examining the views on development and development collaboration of “peripheral” voices of the so-called Global South. This study aims to focus on Peruvian local NGO executives’ perceptions on “development”, “underdevelopment” and its believed causes and solutions. Additionally, the study will examine how the relationship between a donor organization and the local NGOs is perceived from the local counterparts. Development studies need to make space for “local” or “peripheral” discourses. This research aims to open some of that space.

The rest of this thesis is organized into eight chapters. Chapter 2 discuss previous research and literature within the post-development school as well as existing empirical studies, ending with the discussion of the research gap already identified above. Chapter 3, consequently, set out the theoretical assumptions underlying the thesis, discussing the ontological position and theoretical concepts originating from the work of the French post-structuralist Michel Foucault and the theory of post-development (which is fundamentally influenced by Foucault). The discussion will result in the development of an analytical framework that identifies the main components of the hegemonic development discourse as presented by the post-development school. This is followed by chapter 4 with research questions and then chapter 5, the design and methods chapter. This chapter discusses the case study of the thesis, followed by a discussion of my use of in-depth interviews as data and discourse analysis as the method of analysis. Chapter 6 presents the main findings and analysis. Finally, the concluding chapter 7 summarizes the results and provides further suggestions on how to continue the work in the realm of development- and post-development studies followed by the bibliography.

## 2. Literature review

Two kinds of literature are fundamental to this project as it seeks to contribute to the existing scholarship on post-development and the local perception of international development interventions. The post-development scholarship is a rather theoretical and conceptual school of thought, criticized for the lack of concrete alternatives, whereas empirical studies provides an insufficient, rather few, empirical exploration on foreign aid recipient's view on it and the concept of "development" itself. My contribution is to the post-development school's theoretical discussion from an angle not considered in both areas of literature, i.e. an exploration of local Peruvian perception on development aid.

### 2.1 Post-Development Scholarship

The Post-Development school emerged in the 1980's when scholars became critical towards the discourse of development that emerged after World War II (WWII). Arturo Escobar a Colombian scholar was one of the first to criticize the concept of development and is still considered one of the main contributors to the post-development school (Escobar, 1984-1985; 1988; 1989; 1992a; 1992b; 1992c; 1994).

A common thread for post-development scholars is that the idea of development is a Westernized/Eurocentric discourse of development with the West/Europe as a model. Post-development scholars take a critical stance towards established scientific discourses on development and instead display an interest in an "alternative to development" and not "alternative development". The meaning of alternative development is defined by post-development scholars such as Nandy (1988) and Latouche (1993), as efforts that are still from the same worldview that define development. Instead the view of "alternative to development" is a concept that requires the "theoretical-practical transformation of the notions of development, modernity and the economy" Escobar (1992a:22). Scholars advocate a new way of thinking about non Western countries, also known as underdeveloped countries or the so called "Global South". They argue that power should be moved from experts to the members of society itself and development should not be normative nor representative.

In the post-development school the work of Foucault is central and scholars theorize from Foucault's concepts such as discourse, knowledge and power when speaking of development and the development apparatus. The work of Foucault's concepts on power, discourses and who constructs reality is clearly displayed by these scholars. For instance, Shiva (1997) assesses "...development, turns out to be a patriarchal project which has excluded women as experts..." (1997:163) and Nandy (1997) continues the critique about defining the Modern West and the Western man as the ideal of social change as well as defining the Non-West. Nandy (1997) argues even as far as "The West has not merely produced modern colonialism;

it informs most interpretations of colonialism. It colours even this interpretations of interpretations....” (1997:173).

The post-WWII idea of development is the idea of increasing economic growth, material accumulation, technological innovation and mass consumption, and can be described as something similar to Rostow’s classic and simple schematic i.e. moving from point A (traditional) to point B (mass consumption) and question whether point B really is desirable. This discourse is entirely rejected by post-development scholars collectively referred to as *first wave* scholars (see: Escobar 1984-1985; 1988; 1989; 1992a,b,c; 1994, Kothari 1988; 1995; 1997, Nandy 1998; 1997, Sachs 1992, Alvares 1992; 1997, Fergueson 1994; 1997, Esteva 1992; 1997, Latouche 1993; 1997, Rahnema 1992; 1997, Sheth 1997, Shiva 1997, Seabrook 1993, Illich 1992; 1997).

In the last 30 years, differences in the post-development scholarship have arisen and some scholars have distinguished between two kinds of post-development theories (e.g. Ahorro (2008) and Ziai (2004; 2009). Ahorro (2008) has identified the first and second wave of post-development theory which is characterized by the time frame in which it developed but also the theoretical variances. First wave scholar reject the entire paradigm of post-World War II “development” whereas second wave scholars are more reflexive in their analysis and seek to widen the meaning of it and claim that “alternative to development” must be inspired and led from within the subaltern (see; Brigg 2002, Ziai 2004; 2009, Lind 2003, Nustad 2001, Saunders 2002, Storey 2000, Matthews 2004, Rapley 2004, Andreasson 2005, Gibson-Graham 2005, McGregor 2007). The first wave post-development scholars were criticized by Nederveen Pieterse 1998; 2000, Corbridge 1998, Lehman 1997, Kiely 1999, Schurmann 2000, Cooke et.al. 2001 and these critics scrutinized the incompleteness and lack of concrete alternatives for development in the post-development school. As a result of the critique, new post-development thinking arose in the 21st century. Namely the second wave of post-development school that does not reject the entire paradigm, but rather investigate the development discourse and seek to widen the meaning of post-development theory. “The challenge is to imagine and practice development differently” (Gibson-Graham 2005:6). The discussions are mainly theoretical and create general reflections rather than apply to particular case studies. Apart from the defined first and second wave of post-development thought, some post-development scholars have feminist implications and are considered feminist post-development scholars (see: Parpart 1995, Nandy 1997, Shiva 1997, Saunders 2002, Lind 2003).

## **2.2 Scholarship on local perspectives on development**

Merely a handful of empirical case studies have been conducted exploring the local perspectives on development aid. The focus is put on the African continent (see: Smith et. Al. 2009, Davis et. al. 1994, Hayman 2007, Porter 2003, Townsend et.al. 2004). Also, two studies outside of Africa touch on the local perception, i.e. in Bangladesh and Afghanistan (Sanyal 1991 and Donini 2011). It is important to note that none of these studies have related

to post-development theory. This is unfortunate, since a focus on local views of development could make vital contributions to the understanding and practice of international development aid and post-development scholarship itself.

These studies show that local recipients hold a rather negative view towards the governmental international interventions but more positive towards international non-governmental aid and assistance. The poor perceived that no visible improvement or impact on their lives was shown and that official aid or large governmental aid programs are not reaching the poor, (Smith et al 2009, Donini 2011). Additionally it has been found that International non-governmental organizations (INGOs) workers' values and lifestyles in the field clash with local values and it has also been found that international aid is mismanaged or not in line with the needs (Smith et al 2009, Donini 2011). Moreover, shared findings from local perspectives were also reliant on financing and the dependency on INGOs and local NGOs necessity to find donors, discuss, and negotiate to satisfy donor demands, rather than focusing on the poor and their demands (Porter 2003, Townsend et.al. 2004) Porter also found in a case study of Africa that according to the local perception, an Asian-model of development had been applied.

### **2.3 Post-development meets local perspectives?**

These findings give a whole new and vital insight to the post-development school as development intervention is merely viewed as a Western model in that body of scholarship, but in empirical studies for instance findings might show, as above, different models or implications. According to Porter (2003), studies on power-relations and development partnerships are not yet fully developed. That obviously requires empirical case studies on development projects and local or recipients' perceptions of it, something that likewise is lacking in the scholarship of post-development. Two decades ago, Escobar claimed that "redefining development,...rests largely with the action of social movements" (Escobar 1992a:47). Despite this statement there have evidently only been Escobar's (1989), Lind's (2003), Matthew's (2004), Gibson-Graham's (2005) Ahorro's (2008), studies on discussion and cases of the "Third World", but unfortunately not from the local perspective or bottom-up perspective.

Post-development scholars thus seem to be aware and agree on the fact that existing post-development scholarship is only a first step towards thinking of possibilities beyond the conceptual limitations of the development discourse since WWII (see e.g.: Nandy 1989, Nustad 2001, Saunders 2002, Matthews 2004, Andreasson 2005, Ahorro 2008). For instance, Saunders, K. (2002:24) writes "post-development is... currently limited to a form of criticism or deconstructive practice that is just beginning to emerge", and also Nustad (2001) suggests that the way to continue post-development studies is to examine "how development interventions are transformed, reformulated, adopted or resisted in local encounters" (Nustad 2001:485). The lack of local perspectives is unfortunately also present in empirical studies exploring local perspectives on development cooperation, as Porter

(2003) and Townsend (2004) state. I argue that the two bodies of literature described, can benefit and complement each other for future alternatives and prospects for international development aid practices.

This project aims to contribute to the general reflections of the post-development literature with an empirical and qualitative case study from an angle that has not yet been considered; how development aid is perceived from the grass root perspective of organizations, more specifically, focusing on Peruvian recipient NGO perceptions of international development. Only Escobar has reviewed Latin America in a theoretical comparative study of post-development whereas the empirical literature has neither applied the theory nor investigated the cases and countries of Latin America. It is beyond the scope of one project to provide a general statement on local perceptions on development, in Latin America. This project will nonetheless offer insights into how to think about alternatives *about* development” and how the view of NGOs as the problem solvers might be perceived by NGOs in the so called Global South. Whether there is a resistance in local encounters on the discourse of development. As second wave scholar Andreasson (2005:983) puts it, “are we really engaging in an intellectual endeavor which brings a voice to peoples who are affected by the practices of development... or are we still primarily engaged in a North-South conversation among elites only?” This project aims to open the scope by giving voices to the locals and by extending existing post-development discourse.

### **3. Theoretical approach**

The lack of previous research on local voices of the “South” in the post-development school gives this research two theoretical implications. Firstly, an implication of “testing” the post-development school’s general statements and claims of a hegemonic development discourse by considering the local recipients’ perspectives on development interventions and secondly, an attempt to develop the theory. Post-development scholars have taken the stance of constructivism ontology (belief of what exists and how it exists) departing from the work of Foucault on interpreting the hegemonic development through the concepts of discourse, power and subject. It is therefore essential to depart from this ontological position including the sensitizing concepts of Foucault’s reasoning from an inductive theoretical stance.

#### **3.1 Constructivism and social constructivism**

The shared core assumptions of constructivism is that reality is a “social construction” commencing by ideas, beliefs, norms, identities and practice and interpretations of human actions (Marsh and Stoker 2010, Bryman 2008, Bacchi et.al 2010, Baylis et.al. 2008, Towns 2010, Hay 2002). A central idea is that actors act towards others based on the meaning those others have for them, or based on the meaning attributed to themselves, their identities, social relations etc. To explain why people do what they do, we must depart from how

people understand their world and the objects, actors and relations in it. Reality is therefore not given but is in part constituted by the ideas actors hold about that reality. Such ideas become 'social facts' i.e. rules, laws and norms on how to behave are constituted/constructed around these social facts and the belief of how to interpret different meanings of concepts. For instance, "development" is a concept that can have a number of different meanings, depending on the social construction of them and the dominating social facts, such as per capita income or the identification of basic needs.

### 3.2.2 The Discourse of Development

The term 'development' has been put into the term of a discourse<sup>1</sup> by the theoretical school of post-development scholars, contesting its truth, knowledge and practices. "Calling something a discourse means putting its truth status into question" (Bacchi 2009:35). Correspondingly a resistance to the particular discourse is given due to the power relations it brings to it which is merely possible when resistance exists (Nilsson 2008), i.e. how dominating knowledge operates and builds the social facts of reality and result in a discourse.

Three effects are identified by the practice of discourses and the first two are in a central place corresponding to the hegemonic development discourse; the discursive effects (limiting what can be thought and said), the subjectification effects (how subjects and subjectivities are constituted in a discourse through problematization representation) and the lived effects (how material has an impact on people's life). It is these effects of discourses that gives discourses *power*.<sup>2</sup> According to Foucault, power and knowledge are inextricably related. Francis Bacon claimed in the seventeenth century that "knowledge is power" but Foucault instead called for "power is knowledge"<sup>3</sup>. Foucault identified a dependency between the two and that these functions are prerequisites for each other (Nilsson 2008, Hay 2002). The concept of power is in relation to knowledge, which is the dominance of a discourse, i.e. a dominant knowledge is practiced and forms social facts in reality. What is more "some discourses have greater status than other discourses" (Bacchi 2009:36). A certain discourse is never outside power and where power exists, there also exists a resistance.

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<sup>1</sup> *The definition of a discourse is rather difficult and might mean different things in different analytical traditions (Bacchi 2009). In this research the relevant and dominating definition is taken from Bacchi (2009) and McHoul et. al (1995) where a discourse is viewed as sets of ideas and meaningful practices that set the term for what can be said, thought and done in a certain social field or theme. Such socially produced knowledge also places central focus on what is outside the discourse, i.e. the resistances, limitations of what to think, write or speak about a given social practice or object (Bacchi 2009, McHoul et. al.1995).*

<sup>2</sup> *When considering the term power, Foucault said that "Truth" is closely engaged in power. By truth, Foucault means "the ensemble of rules according to which the truth and false are separated and specific effects of power attached to the true" (Foucault 2003:317). At present, truth is often centered in scientific discourse with reliance on economic production and political power.*

<sup>3</sup> *He claimed that "there is no power relation without the correlative constitution of a field of knowledge, nor any knowledge that does not presuppose and constituted at the same time power relations" (Foucault 1995:27).*

Development's generation, diffusion and validation of knowledge has created and maintained a set of truths using a set of techniques and disciplinary practices (Escobar 1988). This is illustrated by professionalization of development, and also, by power being excised through the institutionalization of development: the establishment of a network of institutions that are both an effect of and responsible for the effects of development discourse (extending from international organizations to national, regional and local organizations in the Third World) (Escobar 1988). The knowledge of "development" is put into practice through different consulting practices, expert meetings, applied development programs etc. and its utilization constitutes a visible network that makes the exercise of power possible in development collaborations (Escobar 1988). According to post-development scholars the knowledge of the "Third World" is subjugated. Foucault identified two categories of subjugated knowledge; *erudite* knowledge which was a knowledge that is silenced, and the *indigenous* knowledge that may survive at the margins (Bacchi 2009). Post-development scholars call for the indigenous knowledge which is formed of local beliefs and understandings but has in the hegemonic development discourse been silenced and limited through the discursive effects. Foucault described indigenous knowledge as "unqualified, even directly disqualified knowledge" (Foucault 1980:83), which is especially the essence and critique of first wave and feminist post-development scholars (see literature review).

According to post-development scholars Third world countries are set to homogeneity; the countries of Africa, Latin America and Asia are all classified as underdeveloped. This classification and thinking of "them" being all the same is a common thinking in the hegemonic discourse and the idea of reaching an ideal state through constant change and improvement. Therefore, these variations are all put under the label of "hegemonic" discourse in this study. The aim here is to see whether there is something else above and beyond the hegemonic discourse in the local context, something that is discursively repressed.

### **3.2.1 Representation of the "problem" underdevelopment**

The discourse of development "problematized" (a common word from post-development literature) and generated the "developed" versus the incomplete "underdeveloped", it shaped "underdeveloped" as a problem by the identifications of "problems" and "abnormalities" related to countries and individuals, e.g. individuals' hunger, poverty, illiteracy and basic needs (see Escobar 1988, Kothari 1995, Illich 1992;1997, Latouche 1997). Evidently, 'development' is something that is discursively produced and represented as a solution to problematizations, and how a problem is represented has effects on "what can be seen as problematic, for what is silenced and for how people think about these issues and about their place in the world"(Bacchi 2010:112).

The subjects<sup>4</sup> of development are countries and individuals deprived of “*enough*”, i.e. not enough land, not enough food, not enough education etc. (Crush 1995). Countries that are dependent, needy, poor, in the periphery, lacking democracy, in debt, lacking capitalism and technology, having low economic growth are seen as “underdeveloped” (Illich 1992, Esteva 1992, Sachs 1992 etc). Individuals distinguished from the developed are rural, marginalized, unemployed, having low wages and inferior (Kothari 1990;1993).

### **3.2.2 Representation of the “causes” of underdevelopment**

It was the discourse of development that constructed the problem of underdevelopment and causes of the problem were prescribed to internal constituted factors of illiteracy, unemployment, corruption, poor natural resources, poor hygiene, lack of democracy or entrepreneurship, protectionism etc. (Esteva 1992). External causes attributed to the underdeveloped are terms of trade, protectionism, unequal exchange, dependency, imperfections of the market and the international division of labor. The international division of labor is analyzed through the dichotomy of the center-periphery, where the underdeveloped is classified as the periphery. It is the periphery deprived from its surplus, so the center can utilize it in the development of the center, consequently development in the center implied somehow underdevelopment in the periphery. It is the relation and this linkage of the periphery to the center that doomed the periphery to underdevelopment (Kothari 1990). The causes of waste of resources, degradation of the environment, institutionalized consumerism, total dependence on external life support, recession and deep crisis of values and cultural identity and unemployment are just some of many causes shaped during the development of development discourse (Kothari 1990).

### **3.2.3 Representation of the solution of underdevelopment?**

The hegemonic discourse of development views the eradication of the problem of being “underdeveloped” as a solution through internal and external means to underdeveloped countries. To be a country or individual is to not have this problem and internal solutions are to remove, illiteracy, corruption, hunger, starvation, health problems, stress free labor, reliance on market forces, a gradual process of industrialization and technological innovation and empowerment of the poor including women (Kothari 1990, Saunders 2002). Furthermore, internal solutions include development of transport networks, communications and networks of media, growth of urban systems, development of education, money economy and secularization (Peet et.al. 2009). Internal solutions were to remove the external causes of underdevelopment, i.e. underdeveloped countries were

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<sup>4</sup> *Subjects that this particular discourse creates are the poor and the underdeveloped, urban versus the rural, traditional versus the modern, core versus the periphery, donors versus recipients (Escobar 1992:b). The subject is only able to act and be through discourse i.e. sets of rules and norms on how to behave in a social context. Discourse constitutes a new form of power that operates through processes of normalization and disciplining of subjects.*

supposed to dissociate itself from the world market, and strive for self-reliance (Kothari 1990).

The external solutions are structural adjustments, such as democratic rights- and development aid activities from International Organizations (Kothari 1995, Escobar 1995 I Crush, Latouche 1993). It is believed that the transfer of resources from rich countries to poor countries can be an adequate development practice (Kothari 1990). A Keynesianism mechanism of development, where the increasing demand of the South can take up the productive slack of the North and lifting it out of its stagflationary slump (Kothari 1990). The relation of the center i.e. the so called developed world and their relation to the Third World was fundamentally dependent on guidance, assistance and aid for the progress of the periphery underdeveloped countries (Kothari 1990). A necessity according to the hegemonic discourse is decentralization and participation of large sections of the people of exploited and suppressed regions in the world and a new socio-economic order (Kothari 1990). This restructuring of the new world order led to the demilitarization which was an instrument of the maintenance of the dependence/dominance relationship (Kothari 1990). Additionally, the removal of international obstacles that are largely institutional in respect of trade barriers, financial transactions, technology transfers and control of communication and information channels are part of the solution (Kothari 1990).

### **3.3. The Development Discourse and its subjects**

The internal subjects of a developing country such as women, the aged, the illiterate, the oppressed, the poor etc., are part of the problem of underdevelopment (Kothari 1993). But also, external subjects such as global corporations e.g. MNC's, and the inequality and interdependence of countries such as the center and periphery area part of the problem (Kothari 1990). Due to the internal variations in the hegemonic discourse, internal subjects are differently viewed, as either part of the problem or part of the solution. This is also the case of external subjects such as International organizations (e.g. United Nations, UNESCO, ILO and Multinational Cooperations (MCN's), NGO's) are also seen as a solution for a country's success to reach the state of "developed" (Escobar 1995 I Crush, Rist 1999, Latouche 1993).

A discourse has discursive formations of the subject and its position e.g. international organizations are constituted in a Foucauldian sense into different positions such as a subject of "donating" organizations and local grass root organizations as the "recipient" organizations, i.e. it is a subjectification effect of the development discourse. The subject itself wants to be a subject as it believes itself to have no power exercised upon it. But in the Foucauldian sense of "political anatomy", the subject is an effect of productive power and thus falsely believes itself to be autonomous and able to shape its own reality. This is a discursive effect of development and creates in effect a sort of relationship between "donating" and "recipient" organizations. This discourse constituted relation between different subject positions is of importance as there are evidently different subjects in the

development discourse. The relationship between the “donors” and the “receivers” of aid has been paternalistic and implied a “superiority” and arrogance of the giver and the inferiority of the receiver in the hegemonic development discourse (Gronemeyer 1992).

### 3.4 Analytical framework

A systematic questioning using a modified “**What is the Problem Represented to be?** – approach (Bacchi 2009, 2010) will be implemented in the study and is then to be incorporated in the analytical framework. The WPR approach is elaborating on discourses<sup>5</sup> and refers to linguistic usage, the socially produced knowledge and the practice of it on others, in other words corresponding to Foucault’s definition of discourse (Bacchi 2009). The questions that are asked in the concept of ‘discourse’ are 1) What is the problem represented to be in the development discourse? 2) What presuppositions, assumptions or causes underlie this representation of the “problem” in the development discourse? And 3) What is the solution believed to be to the “problem” represented to be?

#### Analytical Framework: Development Discourses

	Hegemonic discourses	Local Arequipa discourse
<b>Representation of the Problem of Underdevelopment:</b> What does it mean to be “underdeveloped”?	The problem of under-development is about <i>a) countries</i> (lacking in national economic growth, low GNP/capita, low Human Development Index (HDI), lacking democracy, located in the periphery, in debts, lacking capitalism, lacking technology and innovation). <i>b) individuals</i> with short life expectancy, poverty low literacy, hunger, malnutrition, landless, low education, rural, marginalized, unemployed, inferior etc <i>c) Relation:</i> it is a prerequisite for the developed to be developed that there is an underdeveloped, it is a interlinked.	
<b>Representation of the Cause of the Problem of Underdevelopment:</b> Why are countries “under-developed”?	<i>a)</i> The causes of underdevelopment are <i>internal</i> to developing countries (i.e. corruption, illiteracy, poor natural resources, unemployment, poor hygiene, lack of democracy or entrepreneurship and protectionism. <i>b)</i> The causes of underdevelopment are <i>external</i> to developing countries (i.e. greedy wealthy countries or multinational corporations steal the wealth of the country in terms of trade, unequal exchange, imperfection of the market and international division of labor i.e. center versus periphery. Other causes are the waste of resources,	

<sup>5</sup> The concept of ‘discourse’ is derived from Bacchi’s WPR approach which is developed from a Foucauldian ontology and elaborated for different discourses. Bacchi (2009) proposed that ‘problems’ do not ‘exist’ ‘out there’ instead it insists on how problem representation is political interventions and constitute policy ‘problems’ in reality (Bacchi 2010:111).

	<p>degradation of the environment, institutionalized consumerism and total dependence on external life support through foreign aid.</p> <p>c) the causes of underdevelopment can be found in the <i>relations</i> between developed and developing countries (rich countries are rich because they can exploit poor countries, roles in international economy – developing countries caught in export of primary rather than industrial goods, dependent on economies of developed countries - etc)</p>	
<p><b>Representation of the Solution to the Problem of Underdevelopment</b></p> <p>(1) What does it mean to be “developed” (i.e. not have this problem)</p> <p>(2) How does a country solve the problem of underdevelopment (how does it “develop”)?</p>	<p>1) The opposite of being underdeveloped i.e. eradication of abnormalities and problems such as being wealthy (transport communications and infrastructure, libraries, parks, schools, churches, shared agriculture, fisheries and forests, public entertainment etc.), being democratic , high economic growth, high GDP/Capita and high HDI. Etc.</p> <p>2 a) solutions are <i>internal</i> to developing countries is to remove the external causes in respect to remove from the world market and strive for self-reliance. Also internal solutions such to remove corruption, illiteracy, and make a decentralization, demilitarization and remove hunger, starvation, health problems and include the marginalized individuals such as women and the aged.</p> <p>b) solutions are <i>external</i> to developing countries (i.e. constrain activities of wealthy countries, MNCs , structural adjustments such as democratic rights, and development aid from IOs).</p> <p>c) solutions must change the <i>relation</i> between developed and developing countries (e.g. developing countries must be allowed to develop their own industry to get out of the role of primary goods producer; developing countries must develop economies that are more independent of developed economies etc).Also the transfer of resources from rich countries to poor countries is vital and the alteration of the dependence/domination relationship.</p>	
<p><b>What subjects are believed to populate the world of development?</b></p> <p>(1) What subjects are seen as part of the <i>problem</i> of underdevelopment?</p> <p>(2) What subjects are seen as part of the <i>solution</i> of development?</p>	<p>(1) The actors and agents that are in the way of “development”: <i>Internal subjects:</i> poor, marginalized and rural individuals, corrupt politicians, women etc) <i>External subjects:</i> Global corporation such as MNCs.</p> <p>(2) Actors that favor development: <i>Internal subjects:</i> such as women, the excluded and marginalized, local organizations etc. <i>External subjects:</i> IOs such as MNC’s, United Nations, NGOs etc.</p>	
<p><b>How is the <i>relation</i> between development actors (donors and recipients of development aid) represented?</b></p>	<p>Hierarchical: (a) donors use money to coerce recipients into new behaviors, or (b) recipients voluntarily follow what donors say, because they have bought into the idea that donors are have superior knowledge about development.</p>	

#### **4. Aim of the study, specified questions**

The aim of this study is to a) examine the perceptions of local recipient organizations of international development and b) assess whether these correspond with the expectations and claims of post-development scholars. I will investigate a specific case of development aid performed by the Swedish non-governmental organization Svalorna Latinamerika and their local cooperation partners in the Andean city of Arequipa, Peru. I will look at how these local partners perceive the work and intervention of Svalorna LA and the notion of development more broadly.

The specific questions I aim to answer are;

1. How do local Peruvian NGOs understand “development” and “underdevelopment”? What do they believe it to be, its causes and solutions?
2. What perception do the local NGO’s have of their relation with Svalorna LA? How do they assess the “development aid” of Svalorna LA?

## 5. Research design and Method

The case of Peruvian local organizations' perceptions of development is explored through a single case study design and the empirical data collected through in depth-interviews. Collecting data using this method implies different ethical issues that are discussed below. An ideal type of hegemonic development discourse through the eyes of post-development scholars will be analyzed through thorough discourse analysis and with the analytical tools of the theoretical framework. The criteria for conclusions are personal judgments in relation to the analytical framework.

### 5.1 Research Design and its implications

The most suitable research design for the aim of this project, given the restrictions of time and cost, is a single exploratory case study, i.e. the case of Svalorna Latinamerika's recipient organizations in the highlands of the South of Peru. As stated before, it is beyond the scope of one project to provide a general statement on local perceptions on development, even for the region of Latin America. The study is rather an attempt to provide and explore some local perspectives to add to the theoretical academic post-development's debate. McCracken (1988) states that "qualitative methods are most useful and powerful when they are used to discover how the respondent sees the world", (McCracken 1988:21).

Some limited generalizations can nonetheless be drawn, as it is reasonable to expect that these development recipients may not be unique in their views. To some extent a generalization of organizations in a similar situation and context can be drawn, it might provide us with explanations not of *all* recipients organizations in development cooperation, however could suggest how local organizations perceive international development interventions and their attitude towards them. The logic behind this has to do with the fact of social constructivism and 'social facts' i.e. a community shape reality and few people's behavior is unique, spontaneous and idiosyncratic (Berg 2007). If there is a resistance to find towards the development discourse or another view on how to define 'development', it may not be unique for merely organizations in the South of Peru. Even though the empirical settings may be unique in context and time, many aspects of "development aid" remain uniformed and standardized from place to place. As Ferguson concludes that "development comes as a package of standard available inputs" and development is commonly a standard discursive practice (Ferguson 1994:259).

I see this as a first step to bring the identified research gap to academic attentiveness and see what the findings might convey to the post-development scholarship. I find it most appropriate for this objective to choose one relevant case and gain a deep understanding of a local perspective, rather than attempt to conduct a comparative case study and end up with superficial views (as the exploration on local perception requires a close and in depth

engagements with local organizations). As suggested by Denzin et. al. (2011), “Thus, case studies comprise more detail, richness, completeness and variance-that is depth- for the unit of study than does cross-unit analysis” (Denzin et. al. 2011:301). The design chosen is qualitative and valid for answering the research questions, and it can serve as a breeding ground for insights in the local context and perception of development discourse (Berg 2007). The single case study design’s implications on the findings are that these are bound to one single international non-governmental organization in the South of Peru and that social setting and circumstances of the single case study in a certain time may be difficult to replicate, i.e. findings are oriented to a specific context uniqueness and significance. Therefore I will attempt to keep records of all phases of the research process in an accessible manner to diminish the transparency issues. I will make use of an interview guide, transcriptions, coding through concepts and analytical framework that are vital for the possibilities of replication (Bryman 2008).

### **5.1.2 The selection of the case of Svalorna Latinamerika and its recipient organizations**

The choice of Latin America and specifically Peru as the case of this research is due to the lack of empirical exploration of Latin America from post-development scholars and the leveled critique against the development discourse. Peru’s situation is of interest in the development aid collaborations context despite its impressive rank according to the International Human Development Index (in place 63 of 169 countries according to the Human Development index 2011). Peru is still defined in international hegemonic development discourse as a “developing country” and there are a large number of development projects in the country.

Evidently, NGOs have come to play a central role in the international development aid practices. One of many such NGOs is Svalorna Latinamerika, originating in Sweden and established around fifty years ago to work with civil society in Peru (Svalorna LA 2012). The choice of Svalorna Latinamerika is a suitable match for this case study, as the organization has long established development collaborations with local NGOs in Latin America (Bolivia, Nicaragua and Peru) with a vision of giving a voice to local knowledge. The organization works closely in collaboration with local organizations, trying to work from local perspectives and promote alternative ways to practice development aid. It is therefore a “critical” case on exploring local perspectives and whether alternatives thoughts about development are present. Peru is influenced by “Third Worldism” and has due to history shown demonstrative resistance to foreign “aid” and cultural imperialism from US and Europe which has given space for resistance and alternative thoughts to thrive. If one cannot find alternatives thoughts about development here, where else might it then exist.

### **5.2 Method for collecting data**

In-depth interviewing in combination with semi-structured interview is used for the exploration of deeper information and knowledge that cannot be given through informal

interviewing, surveys, focus groups etc. (Gubrium et. al. 2001). The information sought to be found is usually lived experiences, occupational ideology, values and decisions, cultural knowledge or perspectives and this method gives the opportunity to step into the mind of another person and understand how they see and experience the world, in this case development and foreign development aid (Gubrium et. Al. 2001, McCracken 1988).

I will use respondent interviews, which is common for theory generating and a complement to previous research with the aim of renewing and broadening prior claims (Kvale 1997, Esaiasson 2007). Individuals themselves are not of importance, but rather what kind of thinking they may uncover and therefore respondents can easily be replaced within the organizations (Esaiasson 2007). Semi-structured interviews are in opposition to an unstructured interview covering some bullet list points or issues that should be addressed during the interview, which makes the method further valid for answering the research questions (Bryman 2008). The advantages of semi-structured interviewing is that themes guide the interviews trying to seek an answer to the research questions whilst simultaneously giving the interviewee space for their own thoughts and language is not biased and steered (Bryman 2008, Kvale 1997; 2007, McCracken 1988, Esaiasson 2007, Silverman 2010, Berg 2007). Although, a risk is that researchers and readers may find different meanings, but therefore an analytical framework and methods of analyzing data are developed to diminish these difficulties.

Respondents are chosen by a purposive sampling and are coordinators and directors for the collaboration within Svalorna Latinamerika's "Programa de Desarrollo Rural" (PDR) in Castilla Media. It includes up to eight interviews, each director of each organization and coordinators from 3 of the organizations. These respondents are relevant sources to locate perceptions on internationally received development aid, as these interviewees are well immersed in development cooperation. This selection might seem rather elitist, but my thought is that coordinators and directors are appropriately "local" as they are local Peruvians working with development cooperation. Thus, the result and findings will concern perceptions of local NGOs' executives and cannot be generalized to local internal subjects' perceptions of development. The NGO's executives have superior university education which might affect the result, as they are well aware of different "development" practices and the academic schools that lead them into the discursive practice on how to think, speak and act around the term "development". These organizations are bound to this case study as a single case, that is, it is the case of Svalorna LA's local partners in local field providing their perception. These institutions will be the focus for this study:

- Acción Social y Desarrollo (ASDE)
- Centro de Investigación, Educación y Desarrollo (CIED)
- Sociedad Agrícola de Arequipa (SADA)
- Yachay Wasi

The directors and coordinators will remain anonymous and will be labeled with numbers or letters. The local organizations are labeled in letters of A, B, C and D, and the respondents are labeled with numbers, e.g. R1:C (Respondent1:organization C).

The interviews will be conducted in the respondents' native language (Spanish) and then transcribed into Spanish. It will be the content of discovering a local discourse of development on how the respondent thinks and views the world (Kvale 2007) that is important. Transcriptions will thereby take a more formal format and the content will be replicated by statements according to the format of sequence of the interview guide and research questions. Unfortunately, it is possible that misunderstandings and misinterpretations due to poor recording quality and language barriers (Kvale 1997;2007, Bryman 2008) may arise as the recording equipment broke during the research. The interviews were though all recorded using other replacement recording equipment such as computer based programs and mobile devices.

The interview guide (see appendix 1) will have semi-structured questions that will cover the issues on how local executives understand the concepts of "development", "underdevelopment" and why these concepts exist. Additionally, the perception on the relationship between the local institutions and Svalorna LA is investigated by asking about the general perception and more specifically about the inter-institutional and inter-personal relations as well as the administrative processes. The questions are within the hegemonic development discourse, as am I as a researcher, therefore findings might be discursively affected on how respondents will think and speak about development concepts. But my aim will be to explore whether a resistance is shown towards the hegemonic discourse and if yes, it is most likely that alternatives about will emerge even though discursively affected. Thereafter, the analytical framework will systematically be applied on the interview transcripts.

### **5.2.1 Ethical implications**

When conducting a qualitative research study in the field and respondents are involved the research ethics usually concerns information, informant consent, privacy, confidentiality and accuracy and the utilization of collected material (Vetenskapsrådet forskningsetiska principer 1990, Berg 2007, Bryman 2008, Silverman 2010, Kvale 1997; 2007, Gubrium et. al. 2001, Denzin et.al. 2011).

The ethical implications of this project concerns the local organization's consent, gains and risks and bias, i.e. expectations. The local NGO's will be provided with information about what the objective of the study is, and why it is important to have their participation and consent. Respondents will remain anonymous and the results will be conducted on how local NGOs perceive Svalorna LA's development aid. It will be made clear that the purpose is not

to criticize Svalorna LA in any way; the purposive is to find out how these organizations perceive Svalorna LA's development aid and the development concept more general.

Another important factor to consider is my previous internship at Svalorna LA, and the implications of how that might affect the respondents' responses. It will be explained to the respondents that this research is self-contained and that Svalorna LA is merely providing practical help and contacts in the field, but are not evaluating any interviews or material. Although contrasted to this, my internship and previous acquaintances with the respondents is an advantage in the depth-interview, as a certain trust and a basis has already been built up, which is vital and corresponds to the first step in the method of depth-interviewing (McCracken 1988, Gubrium et.al.2001). The previous acquaintance will diminish the risk of respondents withholding information.

Although, awareness has to be raised to the researcher's own standpoint and place in community, what kind of social and economic status the researcher will be given and how that will be interpreted in the eyes of the interviewees, the researcher's authenticity and integrity etc. (Gubrium et. al. 2001). For instance, the power relation between the researcher and interviewee is negotiated and often the researcher might come into the role of controller and therefore it is important to minimize any sense of superiority in development research (Desai et. al. 2006). In Peruvian society, a researcher from Europe will be placed in the category of rich and powerful, this is a categorization I will try to avoid and I will negotiate our standpoints to equal through participation in field activities. These are inevitably issues that will have impact on the findings and the interpretation of the results.

### **5.3 Method for analyzing data**

The previously defined development discourse is kind of an ideal type of development, an ideal type that constructs typical visions, thoughts and ideas about a phenomenon and also uncovers parts that cannot be classified in the ideal type (Bergström 2005). I will use the ideal type of hegemonic discourse to explore the local perspective on development and development aid and whether it fits into the ideal type of development or not. Overall a foucauldian discourse analysis will be utilized incorporated the sensitizing concepts of discourse, power and subject. Discourse analysis is still viewed as controversial but is commonly used in the research for questions dealing with power and identity (Bergström et. al. 2005). The discourse analysis is composed of the meaning of ideas and behavior. However, I will merely explore and make use of the meanings of ideas; the dimension of this research does not allow, due to time limitations and choice of method, an exploration of meaningful behavior.

This will provide a proper base for the analysis of the collected material to answer the research questions. Possible conclusions will be drawn in part, on loose quantifications, i.e. to what degree (as well as in what ways) do the empirical phenomena resemble the ideal type of the hegemonic development discourse as defined by post-development scholars. The

criteria for conclusions will be the interpretations of coding statements into the different discourses in the analytical scheme of either hegemonic or local "Arequipan" discourse

## 6. Result and Analysis

Svalorna Latinamerika is non-religious and non-political organization and has been working in Bolivia, Nicaragua and Peru since 1959. In collaboration with local organizations the work is focused on four main points; democratic participation, human rights, economic rights and education. In Peru, the focus is mainly twofold: on increasing economic opportunities of self-sufficiency in the countryside, and on strengthening the local democratic processes. The vision of Svalorna LA is to give financial contributions to the local organizations and let the target group and the local organizations set the agenda. Svalorna LA is supporting program development and administrative planning. It funds projects through fundraising (10%) and receives the bulk of its funds (90%) from the Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency and its umbrella organization Forum Syd, a governmental agency.

Svalorna LAs' office is located in the volcanic town Arequipa in the southern region of Peru; it is Peru's second largest city. Svalorna LA's current work in Peru is implemented through a five year program (PDR-Programa de Desarrollo Rural) in Castilla Media 2012-2016 (one of the poorest regions in Peru), working one year in each district (Tipan, Union, Viraco, Pampacolca and Machuahay). The program is bound to three major objectives on political/democratic participation, economic development and education/communication working in collaboration with three local organizations CIED (Centro de Investigación de Educacion y Desarrollo), ASDE (Acción Social y Desarrollo) and Yachay Wasi). The former of the three focuses on improvement in cultural, social and democratic conditions, the second on collaboration between local actors and governmental agencies strengthening agriculture and democracy, and finally, Yachay Wasi emphasizes education (Svalorna LA 2012).

### 6.1 Local perception of the concept "development"

The respondents perceive "development" as an external image enforced internally that does not correspond to the specific necessities or context of Peruvian societies. "I do not view development as a material comfort, rather as living satisfied with e.g. health, education etc." (R1:C). The respondents' (R1:C, R2:D) feel that the idea of the consuming society (main component of the hegemonic discourse presented by the post-development school) does not always resemble peoples' values or wishes. For instance people in the rural areas of Puno<sup>6</sup> do not care about materialistic things such as a car, bigger house etc., even though, regarding some of them being wealthy; "They have other values, their house is made of

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<sup>6</sup> Puno is a district by the lake "Titicaca" in the South of Peru located on the border to Bolivia.

earth but they do have money, but they do not want a car or a more comfortable house what they want is education” (R1:C). Different social facts are constructed in comparison to the hegemonic discourse and it implies the existence of a resistance to it. The “truth” of the hegemonic developments’ generation, diffusion and validation of knowledge is evidently challenged and the “truth” is often centered in scientific discourse with reliance on economic production and political power. “Development was adapted... to have everything under control... to continue to practice hegemony, I state, hegemony of the concept and the category” (R1:A).

As Foucault argues that where a discourse exists, there also exists resistance, due to the certain power-relations and, as in this case, the power-relations between the West and the rest, the so called “developed” and “underdeveloped”. “There is a gap between the theory (referred to the theory of development), and the reality we live in” (R1:A). The concepts of development “are not very realistic for our country (Peru) and are not covering our necessities” (R1:A). “It is a North-American model” (R2:D) but for the respondents “development is not living like the North Americans” (R1:C), rather it is perceived as an external force where “an image of development originates from large cities and from Europe” (R2:A). The opinion is that development concludes in a discourse of capitalism, i.e. a free market interest that steers development, and that Peru is steered by foreign interests such as by transnational companies (R1:C). It is an overall interest in the capital that is referred to capitalistic system, where interests of the liberal capital and formations of e.g. the World Bank and IMF are governing. “If I am standing superior, I do not want to leave from the superior position, because I am superior...I refer especially to the large countries such as United States” (R1:C) and “the hierarchy; the superior and the inferior, i.e. the “developed” and the “underdeveloped” (R1:A).

*“The package of development and underdevelopment are categories that emerged in the West, and that try to explain a situation of well-being” and “for me it has very little usage because these creations and these categories emerged and emerge and corresponds to a particular context which is the West” (R1:A).*

The respondents reason instead about development as “better quality in life” and “being satisfied” (R3:D, R1:D) and the progress of values and the necessity for an alteration on how to think about development (R1:D). For instance, the “hegemonic concept continues in the head of people even in the very belief of hope for that state of development” (R1:A). In Peru, in the capital of Lima, in the wealthy elitist districts such as Barranco, Miraflores or San Isidro<sup>7</sup>, people seem to identify closer to the society of the West rather than to their own country of Peru.

*“In Lima, in the district of Miraflores, San Isidro or Barranco, people surely know about the New York road or aspire more to travel to France or some of those countries, rather than travel to Ayacucho, they feel more close to the West than some provinces in Peru.” (R1:A).*

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<sup>7</sup> Upper social class districts in Lima.

It becomes difficult to think outside the given discourse where development has become a monopolized knowledge in the area. In spite of this, respondents seem to offer a different understanding on development and one that is an “opportunity for everybody to gain a satisfied life, to have free time to enjoy life” (R3:D) and “a quality of life where a person can find themselves calm emotionally” (R1:B). The aspiration of development expressed by the respondents goes beyond the hegemonic discourse’s ideal state and searches for more than mere capacities.

*“If we comprehend that development is merely our capacity to achieve strategies and capacities that allow us to nourish ourselves, I think we are in a state of underdevelopment, because not only do we need to satisfy our need for food, but also we need to satisfy other things” (R2:D).*

The need to satisfy “other things” is referred to as quality of healthcare, quality of education and “it is not necessarily the one with more economic resources that is the most developed, nor is the one that has little, that is necessarily the underdeveloped” (R2:D). “I do not consider a successful person as a person that can spend the most, I see a successful person as one that is happier and feels that they like what they do” (R2:D). These ideas seem to imply a construction towards a local discourse on development. “For me, a person that doesn’t clearly define aims to be a happy person, I think is a person that does not point to be developed” (R2:D) and “development is how I want to live my life and where I feel satisfied” (R1:C). To some extent an idea is that development remains an individual concept of each person, something that cannot be decided by others, e.g. “the concept of being happy and satisfied in your life has to be up to every person to judge” (R2:D).

Local NGOs executives’ perceptions seem to correspond to post-development scholars’ statements, that development is a western construct and a hegemonic practice that cannot be applied to the context of the homogenized South. “We have had development, I do not know how many years in Peru, and we do not finish solving these issues, because, we say, the aspirations of development are as in the West” (R1:A). According to the respondents, one has to view the particular context and prerequisites of the country (Peru), this view indicates a discourse that offers an alternative thinking about development. A discourse silenced and at the margins, a discourse located in the southern hemisphere, the so-called periphery.

*“In reality, the term development is not for us” (R2:A)*

## **6.2. Perception of the concept “underdevelopment”**

The respondents speak about countries and individuals that are deprived of enough, i.e. resembling the discursively generated problematizations of the hegemonic discourse. Conflicting perceptions are presented whether these problematizations are an accurate

classification or conception of “underdevelopment”. In common though is the conception of “underdeveloped” as the “lack” of something.

The general interpretation uttered is the “lack of...”, e.g. lack of water, lack of electricity, population with low conditions, lack of basic necessities, “lack of technology, knowledge, and tools to develop” (R2:B), although mainly it is understood as the lack of capacities and access to basic necessities. This is identified as problems of society and the individual, which corresponds to post-development scholars’ hegemonic development discourse’s problematizations of the incomplete “underdeveloped”. This results in discursive effects (how to think, speak and act) of whether “underdevelopment” is an accurate measurement; “the manifestations of underdevelopment (R3:D)” are accurate to be used and “all the elements within it are appropriate” (R1:C) as well as “because the environment is visible and the quality of life that the people have” (R2:B). Respondents are evidently affected by the discursive and subjectification effects that the hegemonic discourse has on our imagination on how to think about “underdevelopment”. The subjectification affects show how the concept “underdevelopment” is normalized.

Underdevelopment indicates political, social, economic and environmental problems (R2:A) and the problems are related to society’s individuals and are located internally to the country(Peru), to different areas, to individuals and to internal subjects in marginalized, rural areas that are in malnutrition, poverty and that have low education. It is also represented in the country itself, in a state of lacking democracy, located in the Third World, corresponding to the world system order of the categorized periphery, and also the lack of technology and innovation. Respondents speak discursively about Peru as located in the peripheral, dependent zone representing a temporally behind stage of the developed West. “We have always been put into, at least globally, into the countries above that are located in the North and the countries below and we are located in the South that is underdeveloped” (R1:B).

Although, the “truth” of the hegemonic discourse is challenged as not all respondents agree that underdevelopment is an accurate classification. “The term discriminates, its value is at the last level” (R2:A). The last level is understood as the last identified level of being developed according to the hegemonic development discourse, more or less resembling Rostow’s last stage of growth. “Underdevelopment cannot be explained without development” (R1:A) and “aspirations of development correspond to the one in the West”(R1:A), that is how the dichotomy of these classifications is perceived by some respondents. This belief resembles the post-development school’s theory that the underdeveloped is a prerequisite to the developed, i.e. it is and interlinked and interdependent relationship. “Other countries from the “First” world refer to us many times as the “Third” World or inclusive the “developing” countries- to make it more friendly” (R1:A). A resistance is present amongst respondents, e.g.:

*“No, no, no, no. Underdevelopment is like an aspiration, an aspiration that we cannot claim to be a developed country to be in a situation of well-being. I prefer to use the concept that has come from Bolivia: the common good, the common well-being”. (R1:A)*

The reference to Bolivia seems to imply a concept more accurate to the local context of Latin America, rather than the discursive categorization of the developed West homogenizing Peru to Third World countries. Post-development scholars strive for greater emphasis on local voices and local movements particular to the specific context. As Escobar stated, power needs to be moved from experts to members of society and evidently this seems to be a similar idea displayed by several respondents. “All the developed countries, that obviously are developed... these countries transfer their “development” and we continue in certain circumstances that are not at all like ours” (R1:A).

### **6.3 The believed causes of “underdevelopment”**

Amongst the respondents, the believed causes are discursively spoken and thought about within the hegemonic discourse’s separation between internal, external and relationship causes. Some causes such as inequality have internal, external and relationship implications produced within the hegemonic development discourse and some causes are believed to be the result of the hegemonic development’s goal of a consuming society.

The discursive effects of the hegemonic development discourse show how respondents think and speak about different ideas of believed cause. The internal causes mentioned are inequalities, corruption, racism- and the effects of history whereas external causes are believed to be bound to the aspiration of other nation’s development and the international capitalism forming an interdependent relationship. Respondents describe that Peru struggles with large inequalities, internally as well as externally, the periphery in which Peru is positioned, is deprived from its surplus by the “developed” center.

*“I feel that there are many differences, there are huge spaces between societies, between different perspectives of the world that generate these spaces of underdevelopment. It exists because there are huge differences in the economic, cultural, education, namely the difference that we ourselves create. Discriminating the people because they have less or they have more, or they are colored, or other, I think this is one of the causes of underdevelopment.” (R2:D)*

This idea highlights the internal racism to be a cause of Peru being categorized as underdeveloped; in addition, racism is believed to have been influenced by Peruvian contemporary history with an apparent effect on how the state handles national politics. “Our life has always been colonized, yours have been the colonizers, and this also has an implication on the relationship” (R1:A) and history’s effects of the colonization of Peru by Spanish conquerors, constructed the “white” to be the superior, the urban elite.

*“They say that the colonial republic only changed the ways of exploitation, but the only thing that changed is that now it is the “criollos”<sup>8</sup> that have configured a state, a republic and it is from there the internal dominations come from, the internal inequalities, namely, in this history of citizen and development, and development is compatible to a democratic state. That is, if you are a developed nation, you have a democratic state.” (R1:A).*

Evidently, these ideas evolve around the power-knowledge nexus which maintains a set of truths through a set of techniques and disciplinary practices resulting in the presented ideas of respondents. Power is given through the dichotomy hierarchical relationship through the subjectification of the underdeveloped “South” and the developed “North”.

Essentially, it is the characteristics of egoism and the subsequent lack of watching out for the next that respondents believe is one of the main causes. They rule for a “sharing is caring” attitude, where respondents promote the necessity of sharing and not the will to obtain more and more. “I think that inside of us exists a certain egoism and that this egoism gets us to think much in ourselves but not of other people” (R3:D). The idea of egoism does not merely have an internal implication but also an external one where egoism might steer the relationship of the developed West stealing from the Rest, such as resources and capital. And that this certain egoism does not allow equality between countries; rather it forms a dependency of the rich center and the poor periphery, resulting in a discursively interpreted uneven international division of labor of the hegemonic discourse.

*“There exists a thinking that is formed and in which we are born, i.e. if we have more, we have power and we search for obtaining more to be in an advantage...and this thought is brought to society, i.e. the majority of the people think this way that having more equals having power” (R1:B).*

Respondent’s ideas are that consumption equals power which permeates the practice of what the West developed as a consuming powerful society and the truth. This believed idea of greed to gain more and more is evidently displayed in the relations between the wealthy “developed” and the deprived “underdeveloped”. “The world economy moves and there are national interests that some countries are not to advance” (R1:D). “There are interests from other countries, other capital and we are not totally free” and “the transnational capital that has its interest to make things here and gain benefits from us” (R1:C). “We are exporters of primary goods, we are not producing anything more advanced, and we do not transform the material. I feel that we are a country with quite a diversity of products but we have still not reached the process of such a production” (R1:A). This notion of exploitation that respondents seem to resemble to post-development scholars’ critic of rich countries exploiting the poor countries, where the developing countries are caught in export of primary goods and dependent on developed nations. Respondent R1:C states that transnational companies are interested in Peruvian national primary goods which are bought and then sold more expensively somewhere else. According to the exchange markets’ agreements, Peru is obligated to sell to the particular company or nation and is hindered to

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<sup>8</sup> A social upper class that stems from the Spanish conquistadors.

freely trade. The belief is that this is a cause which means that development cannot be generated, “they cut off our autonomy, they cut off our, for example, right to handle our own capital” (R1:C). Evidently, this points towards that the discursive formations of external subjects such as global corporations and Multinational corporations that are perceived by the respondents as an obstacle to Peru’s aspiration of development.

#### **6.4 The believed solution of “underdevelopment”**

Commonly believed solutions revolve around the problematizations represented by the hegemonic development discourse due to the discursive effects that it has on respondents. A reflection on respondents’ alternative about development is also echoed in believed solutions.

A general perception of what the solution to “underdevelopment” is responds to the hegemonic discursively solutions of e.g. education, i.e. better and more qualitative education- “The one that studies- triumphs” (R1:D). Furthermore, economic activities such as entrepreneurship, is believed to promote development for the ones lacking education might be excellent entrepreneurs as well as it is believed that there is a solution to be found in public, private and non-governmental programs.

Some believed solutions are apparently a reflection on how respondents think about “development” differently from the hegemonic discourse. For instance, values as stated before, have to change on every level, both internally and externally, the relationship between the “elite urban” and the “marginalized rural” has to find equality. Additionally, the relationship between the “developed elite” in the West and “the underdeveloped periphery” of the Third World needs to alter. “It is an obligation to share with the ones that have less” (R3:D). Respondents believe the solution entails “looking fairly at you next” which refers to see everyone as equal.

*“Still today in the world are people that are opting for having more, even the poor are in this plan of having more and this is creating a consumer society between all. The ones that have and the ones that do not have, but all want to have more. I think this does not lead to a good human development, it does not help us, namely, to have the necessary to live well” (R3:D).*

Short-term solutions are not believed in, maybe in long-term solutions (R1:B) but political and economic change is required; “The politics needs to give equality to the subjects of this nation” (R1:A). A common perception is that all subjects within the hegemonic discourse are responsible, not merely a government or some groups of people, for reaching a change, everyone needs to be involved in the process of development.

*“In the themes (Referred to as underdevelopment) somebody guilty it is always searched for, I believe that the people say the government, the mayor or search for the guilt in the authorities and that is the constant picture. And the authorities say that it is the people that do not help and that do not want to”. ..*

*It is a responsibility of everyone, namely, why the abusers exist because there are people that allow abuse, why our exploiters exist, because there are people that let them be exploited. Why corruption exists, because they allow being corrupt...then we are all guilty I think (R1:D).*

The perception here corresponds to post-development scholars' Foucauldian inspired critique on how power operates through processes and normalizations of the *subjects* of the hegemonic discourse. A subject is believed to have power over its own development nonetheless it is disciplined into the hegemonic discourse of development on how to think, speak and write about it. Subsequently, the subjects are perceived as internal as the hegemonic discourse labels them, i.e. the most vulnerable groups such as women, youngsters, the marginalized groups and the rural.

*"All the subjects are of "underdevelopment" are the poor, all in the highland that speak Quechua<sup>9</sup>, or in the city in the "pueblos juvenes"<sup>10</sup>. For example, the less access you have, in the less conditions you are..The most vulnerable people, speaking Quechua and women in the highland, are the subjects of underdevelopment" (R1:A).*

The perceived discursively external subjects as part of the solution are local NGOs and international NGOs such as the Swedish church Diakonia and Svalorna LA.

### **6.5 The general perception of the development cooperation from a local perspective**

The overall perception of the respondents regarding the collaboration with Svalorna LA is positive, but it is perceptible a dominating knowledge of Svalorna LA in Sweden that has set the "truth" through disciplinary practices limiting local knowledge.

Svalorna LA's development aid is perceived as "solidarity", "very good" and "interesting", the respondents all agree on that. "I think their contributions are very important" (R1:B), "it is a very good idea that Svalorna LA has started in Peru" (R1:D), "from what I have heard, the interventions of Svalorna LA, I think are excellent" (R3:D) etc. It is believed that the objectives that Svalorna LA implements are true to the reality in Peru, e.g. "the objectives relate to the typical problems of the rural area, I think the objectives are well oriented" (R2:D) and "there are two political lines that are from the Swedish cooperation...and these variables almost fit perfectly to the reality of our country" (R2:A).

However, the administrative processes within the collaboration are perceived as complex, complicated and distracting. Local organizations feel overwhelmed by all paperwork to justify their work in the field, which results in less time for the operative work in Castilla Media. The respondents offer imaginable reasons for why this might be, e.g. that they are new to Svalorna LA's work and still in a stage of planning. Another idea is that "a reflection on the wish to avoid corruption ...But for us when we work with others, we do not find the same distrust that is manifested in this requirement and it shocks us" (R3:D). The idea of avoiding corruption is a Western problematization put on Peru and respondents' claim that

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<sup>9</sup> Quechua, one of the mayor indigenous languages of Peru.

<sup>10</sup> Pueblo juvenes are the periphery/suburban to a large town.

even though Peru is corrupt, corruption is worse elsewhere in South America. This strengthens post-development scholars' particular critique that countries of the South with problem of e.g. corruption are set to the homogenized Third World. Also, certain distrust is perceived by the respondents due to that consulting always has to go through the main office in Sweden instead of being able to locally decide and this also slows down the process of work. This is viewed as an obstacle "it hinders development" (R1:D) and together in combination with the respondents' uncertainty on who is responsible and who to consult leads to disorientation and frustration. "It is like there are many bosses and many leaders" (R1:D).

*"I see three bosses, there is the program officer that says, ask the administrator, the administrator says ask the program officer that says again ask the country representative and in the end you do not know who is making the decisions and therefore the previous comment; " it feels like a world without a head" (R2:B).<sup>11</sup>*

It additionally implies the distrust in local knowledge and suggestions as the office in Sweden is decision making often lacking an explanation that reaches the local organizations as to why to perform something a certain way (R1:B).

*"For example, to name one case, in the PDR<sup>12</sup> there are some objectives with certain propositions that they are teaching but now we reckon that it is not going be easy to achieve...but it is part of the project and cannot for all in the world be moved" (R1:B).*

The idea of distrust and always consulting Sweden is a discursive effect of the hegemonic development discourse that becomes visible and that both Svalorna LA and the local organizations are subjected to. Svalorna LA's knowledge becomes superior and the local organizations' knowledge limited to consulting, but not decision making. The decision making implies a power domination which here is visibly and closely related to the post-development scholars critique on hegemonic discourse's power-knowledge nexus, where the local knowledge is silenced and limited but evidently respondents show resistance.

*"In the Swedish church I do not remember them to be like this, namely, they would accept your suggestions, arguments not always right away but on constant basis, you could talk, but here (referred to as Svalorna LA) not, here not" (R1:A).*

## **6.6 Local perception on the relationship with a foreign NGO**

The relationship is perceived as friendly, diplomatic and to some extent democratic but conflicting perceptions are present on the equality between Svalorna LA and its counterparts. One perception is that Svalorna LA is the financier imposing conditions on the counterparts which results in the respondents' perception of a discrepancy between theory and practice.

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<sup>11</sup> The comment was first mentioned in the field informal and outside of the interview, but was in the interview asked for again to verify.

<sup>12</sup> PDR stands for "Programa del Desarrollo Rural", i.e. a Program for Rural Development. It is a 5-year program in the Highlands of Castilla Media in Peru, collaborating with local organizations.

The overall interpersonal and inter-institutional relationship is strongly perceived as “friendly”. The perception of the relationship’s equality might differ somewhat depending on the respondents’ position in their institution. Two sides of the coin are present, to some degree it is believed that the relation to Svalorna LA is horizontal but also that a vertical part is present. For instance: “Vertical. Horizontal due to that all the directors are supposed to agree and respect it. Vertical because it is always put forward the as observations of what Sweden says. There is no horizontal decision-making...”(R2:B).

The idea of the relationship’s equality is nominally present but not operationally, i.e. “Nominally yes, I think my director feels very equal to Svalorna LA’s director, as a person, as a representative and as institutions they feel equal (R2:D)” But “I feel not everything is horizontal in the relationship, it is more a relationship where Svalorna LA decides things and the institutions ...do not have many opinions neither capacities to decide” (R2:D) and “I think there exists no equality... I feel that Svalorna LA is always above” (R1:D).

Although, another idea expressed is that activities, strategies and propositions are conducted within the PDR platform, but that Svalorna impose some lines of work; “It is Svalorna LA that imposes the parameters” (R1:D). “They decide together, but there are parameters that come from Svalorna LA from Sweden, that need to be respected” (R1:B) and “there are some political lines, let’s say, that emerge more from the cooperation with Sweden that are produced from above” (R2:A).

*“The project is horizontal in its realization but in the justifications and let’s say the distribution of the money, it is more vertical than horizontal. And this might be due to the principles that the organization (Svalorna LA) has because its position as a donor” (R3:D).*

Evidently, hegemonic discourse’s donor- recipient relationship is visible here, i.e. where donors use financial support to coerce recipients into new behavior. “I think the idea Svalorna LA sets is that we should work together in a group coordinating but in the end it merely results in that Svalorna LA decides where they are to spend money. But my perception is that this was not the idea” (R1:D). The intentions are perceived as good in theory, but when it comes down to practice the discrepancy is visible. “I think there are things they cannot decide there (in Sweden), because we are writing and working here and they need to understand us...”(R1:D).

The respondents (particularly R1:D, R2:D, R2:B) express that the local institutions need to adapt and learn the way in which Svalorna LA works which confirms the hegemonic discourse’s power-relations with recipients forced into new behavior. “It is Svalorna LA’s way, i.e. we are adapting ourselves to the way they work in Svalorna LA” (R1:D). Although, respondents show a resistance towards blindly following donors’ ideas, it is mentioned how local institutions try to explain what is operatively possible in the field of the goals and what is not. The response of Svalorna LA is that “they are listening but not resolving” (R1:D) but “the local organizations have no power to decide” (R2:B). Concluding, respondents believe

that there is equality to some extent and those local activities and strategies are decided together in a platform where all institutions are present. However, the power-relation is visible which the hegemonic development discourse has in this case though resistance, it is Svalorna LA that has the last saying.

### **6.7 Local perception has revealed alternative thinking about development**

It has been provided an empirical critical case of local/periphery perceptions which presents a resistance to hegemonic development (an external model dependent on and enforced by Western modernity) and challenges its “truth” on how to think about development. The local perception and ideas resemble first wave post-development scholars’ hallmark of interest in local knowledge and culture, a critical stance towards established scientific discourse and second wave post-development scholars’ call for imagine development differently. Even though it was previously argued that Svalorna LA is supposedly alternative development collaboration, this study has revealed that local knowledge still is limited and the relationship to local organizations is vertical a so-called donor-recipient relationship is visible. The discourses’ subjectification effects and discursive effects are visible in the local perceptions and are dominating the foreign aid practices.

## **7. Conclusion**

This research endeavored to explore a Peruvian local/periphery perceptions and whether it corresponds to post-development scholars’ theory and the possibility to develop it, departing from Foucault’s concepts of “discourse”, “subject” and “power”. Exploring in particular;

- How do local Peruvian NGOs understand “development” and “underdevelopment”? What do they believe it to be, its causes and solutions?
- What perception do the local NGO’s have of their relation with Svalorna LA? How do they asses the “development aid” of Svalorna LA?

Corresponding to post-development theory, respondents find themselves involuntarily positioned, in a term of “underdevelopment” with a spatial/geographical dimension, demonstrating resistance to it. Power supremacy is visible through the hegemonic development discourse’s discursive and subjectification effects, resulting in a superior “developed” and an inferior “underdeveloped”. The former located in the North versus the second in the South, also called the West versus the Third World. Amongst the respondents it is thought in alternatives about development with the idea being an individual concept each person deciding how to reach an opportunity to a satisfied life.

Conflicting perceptions are evident whether the classification “underdevelopment” is an accurate term or not, but it is believed that it is not applicable to the particular situation of

Peru. It appears to be the case of respondents being resistant to the hegemonic discourse, but lack the tools to speak outside the hegemonic discourse. Causes and solutions are spoken and thought of within the hegemonic discursive practice of development, although the solution is partly reflecting the understanding of a “real” more localized development to the particular context. Internal and external subjects are discursively thought about in regards to being part of the problem and part of the solution.

The relationship with Svalorna LA is perceived as positive, solidarity, friendly, and partly democratic and the development aid is perceived as excellent, interesting and the objectives of Svalorna LA correspond to the reality of Castilla Media. However, the relationship is comprehended as a donor-recipient relationship, a result of the hegemonic discourse’s subjectification effect where donors’ financial support coerces recipients into new behaviors. It is partly a horizontal relationship in the process of implementing activities and strategies in the field of Castilla Media but a vertical relationship on decision-making where Sweden always needs to be consulted and implement their final say; such as some political lines. The local institutions are required to learn and adapt to the line of work that Svalorna LA has and Svalorna LA’s knowledge has set the “truth” of the development’s diffusion, validation and disciplinary practices, i.e. respondents’ indigenous knowledge (as Foucault categorizes the knowledge surviving at the margins-the periphery) and power to decide is limited. Certain distrust by the donor organization is perceived by respondents mainly due to complexity and rigidity of the administrative processes, stealing time from the operative work in the field. Respondents explain possible reasons for the complex processes, such as avoiding corruption but which is believed to be a represented problem of the West applied on them without further view on the particular context.

The practice of development needs to be rethought as post-development scholars’ claim; we need to search for alternatives *about* development. This study has shown that as the post-development school argues, there is a local/peripheral resistance; there are voices from the South that might understand and view “development” differently, more accurate to local context, as post-development scholar Ferguson states; development is a commonly standard discursive practice.

I argue that we are required to broaden the field of development studies, studying local perception on grass root levels outside the hegemonic discourse of development, and not be limited to the particular classifications and problems represented to be. Evidently, exploring local perspectives from post-development theory provides important insights and meanings on how to practice development differently. The attempt to develop the theory has successfully proven to be possible and preparatory filling post-development scholars’ gap on empirical local perspectives. Filling this gap might make it possible to one day develop literature on the discourses silenced, limited and with lower status. It is first when we provide a space for local perspectives with local speech, integrity and discourse that we

might be able to imagine “development” differently finally find equality in development but still promote differences.

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## **Annex 1**

### **Semi-structured Interview guide**

The interviews were conducted during the year 2012 in April with 8 different respondents (coordinators and directors), all labeled by a number and a letter belonging to the organization. Organization A had two respondents R1:A and R2:A; Organization B had two respondents as well, R1:A and R2:B, Organization C had one respondent R1:C and finally Organization D had three respondents R1:D, R2:D and R3:D.

#### **Personal Information**

1. Where do you live?
2. Where are you from?

#### **Information about the organization**

3. What is your organization called?
4. What is your position and your responsibilities?
5. How many years have you been working in this organization?

#### **The concept “development”**

6. What does “underdevelopment” mean to you?
  - What kind of problems does it indicate?
  - How do you identify underdevelopment? Identification such as groups of people, countries, cultures etc.?
  - Reasons- Why do you think underdevelopment exists?
  - Are there solutions, what solutions?
  - Are there obstacles to solve the problems, if yes what kind of obstacles?
  - Do you think the concept of “underdevelopment” is an appropriate measure?
  - Is there somebody to blame for these problems? Is there somebody responsible for these problems?
7. What does “development” mean to you?
  - What kind of factors does it indicate?
  - What needs to be developed?
8. Do you think “development” is a local concept or is it influenced by something else?
  - Is there influence from other parts of the world?
  - Where do you think the ideas of development have emerged?

## **Collaboration with Svalorna LA**

9. What do you think about the Svalorna LA's assistance and interventions?

10. How does Svalorna LA implement their interventions and their financial assistance? Is it in a good way or manner?

11. Do you think Svalorna LA is in general a sensitive and listening organization?

12. What do you think about the relation between Svalorna LA and your organization i.e. is the local organizations?

- Exist equality between the local NGOs and Svalorna LA?
- Are there different views between local visions and the visions of Svalorna LA?
- Are the visions of Svalorna LA closely related to reality here?
- Do you need to justify your work to Svalorna LA, in what way?
- Are there factors that can be improved?
- What do you think about the interpersonal relationship?
- Are there any other difficulties or problems within the collaboration, do you think?

13. Are there cultural conflicts or shocks that occur in the collaboration?

Or different thoughts about the work, the relation, the interventions, objectives etc.?

**Anything you would like to add or any questions?**