

‘Women’s empowerment’: just a flashy concept?

An analysis on the interpretation and the implementation of ‘women’s empowerment’ by NGOs in Peru.



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List of Abbreviations

The following list contains the various abbreviations used throughout the thesis.

Abbreviation	Meaning
NGO	Non-Governmental Organisation
SNGO	Southern Non-Governmental Organisation
Feminist NGO	Feminist Non-Governmental Organisation
WBG	World Bank Group
IMF	International Monetary Fund

Introduction

‘Empowerment’ emerged as a concept in international development in the 1970s. It has only turned into a popular and frequently used concept in the 1990s, when bottom-up and participatory approaches arose in the development sector. It was in this period of time, that feminist theories gained visibility and empowerment was put in a women’s context, known as the empowerment approach (Moser, 1989). In 1994, during the United Nations’ International Conference on Population and Development in Cairo, the concept achieved its first landmark, as women’s empowerment and gender equality became recognized as cornerstones of development and population programmes (Smyth, 2010). In the years after, empowerment has been widely embraced by development institutions as the WBG, the IMF and NGOs. According to various scholars, however, the worldwide adoption and manifold usage of empowerment has changed the transformative roots of the concept (Arat, 2015; Cornwall & Edwards 2010; Eyben & Napier-Moore, 2010; Halfon, 2007; Smyth, 2007).

‘Empowerment’ has become a concept with a lack of meaning in the current international development discourse (Cornwall, 2007). The concept gained attention as an entirely distinct way of ‘doing’ development, but nowadays it looks like it is just the same old story, wrapped in a new flashy concept. It is therefore interesting to analyse how NGOs interpret and have implemented the concept in their organisation. Have they followed the mainstream adoption of empowerment or are they aware of the transformative meaning of empowerment?

Together with leading development institutions, INGOs and SNGOs have adopted empowerment in their programmes. Latin America has always been characterized by its number of NGOs working in the continent, but Peru stands out as there are already more than 1000 NGOs active in the country (Henriquez, 1996; Llona, 2008; Toche, 2003). With the rise of feminism in the southern hemisphere, the number of women’s and feminist NGOs is also growing in the country and in the region of Cusco (J. Borda Pari, December 12, 2018). These NGOs explicitly focus on women and have thus also widely adopted the concept of empowerment in their organisations.

This thesis aims to analyse how different types of NGOs in Peru interpret and have implemented the concept of ‘women’s empowerment’ in their organisation. It tries to understand different

interpretations amongst different types of NGOs and what this means for women's empowerment in practice.

Methodology

A literature review of primary and secondary sources has been conducted to make an analysis possible. During fieldwork in Cusco, Peru between the 26th of November 2018 and the 10th of January 2019, a qualitative research method was used to gather information from primary sources. Semi-structured interviews were chosen to obtain the most relevant information from different types of NGOs in Peru such as SNGOs, INGOs and feminist NGOs. News articles from national news outlets, academic literature and the websites of various participating NGOs were used for the literature review of secondary sources.

The three chapters of this thesis will altogether help to analyse NGOs in Peru working for women's empowerment. The first chapter focuses on the theoretical background of the main concepts in the thesis. Development as a discourse will be introduced and the importance of words and concepts in international development will be discussed. In the other sections the origins of the concept of empowerment and the various academic meanings will be elaborated, as well as NGOs as key actors in development.

The second chapter will focus on Latin American society and Peruvian society and will put the main concepts of this thesis in this specific context. The first section will briefly discuss the current international development discourse with the employment of empowerment together with present-day tendencies of the concept. Hereafter, the emergence of NGOs in the region and what their role is and has been in Latin America and Peru will be elaborated and the disempowered position of indigenous and rural women will be discussed.

In the third chapter, the gathered data of semi structured interviews, obtained during fieldwork in Peru will be discussed. Different types of NGOs were interviewed to get an understanding of their interpretation of empowerment and how they translate this into their programmes. The exact participant selection process will be described in the first section of this chapter. In the following three sections, building on chapter 1 and 2, three distinct parts of the analysis will be discussed. The thesis will end with a conclusion in which the main findings of the analysis will be summarized.

Chapter 1

A theoretical framework of development discourse, empowerment and NGOs

In the theoretical framework, academic research related to the research questions will be discussed. The most important concepts and current debates will be highlighted and set out. This means that firstly development discourses and buzzwords will be broadly discussed. After this, focus will be put on empowerment and subsequently women's empowerment. Finally, attention will be centred on NGOs and their role in development.

1.1 Development as a discourse and buzzwords

This thesis will not focus on what development exactly is and how it should be theorized better, but will focus on development as discourse, where word and texts are used to construct the world (Crush, 1995, p.3).

People see reality through language, as people link certain words to certain things. Language constructs reality and it thus makes a difference which word is chosen to describe reality. Ziai (2013, p. 125) describes a discourse as: "a system of relations between words and things which construct a topic in a certain way". According to Foucault (1980, p. 17): "They (discourses) possess certain rules on what can be said and regarded as true and are linked with institutionalised knowledge production and relations of power." It was Foucault (1980) who firstly described the strong relationship between power and knowledge.

Since the Second World War, development has been representing change in a political, social and economic dimension in third world countries, the South or underdeveloped countries (Naz, 2006). Ideas about development and what development means can differ between societies, institutions and even within institutions (Crush, 1995). These ideas about development and how it should be do not arise in a social or institutional vacuum. Development as a concept has various meanings. There are still enough different ideas and perspectives on how to reach development (Naz, 2006).

Conceptualizing development as a discourse indicates development as an interwoven set of languages and practices (Crush, 1995, p. 13). It indicates that development discourse is 'the

language' of development with a strong focus on the power-laden local and international context where they originate from and to which they turn to (Crush, 1995). Development discourse is created within a group of activities, power and material relationships. Research on development discourse addresses the construction of it and how it functions in different places. It's hard to speak of a singular development discourse, as there exist many approaches to development (*e.g.*, participatory, top-down, economic). But Ziai (2013) claims there do are a few assumptions all current discourses on development are based on, which still are very influential. The three most prominent assumptions are (Ziai, 2013, p. 127):

1. There is a division between 'developed' and 'underdeveloped or 'less developed'. Countries in Europe and North America are part of the 'developed' category and most countries in especially Africa, Asia and Latin America are 'underdeveloped'. Countries in the previously mentioned South need 'development'.
2. Countries in the South need economic growth, industrialisation and modernisation to reach development. This can be done through specific interventions.
3. These interventions are legitimate, as they are based on expert knowledge coming from the developed countries.

In the academic field, there are however different opinions on how static the dominant development discourse really is and how it's created. One side of scholars perceive development discourse as something clearly created and constructed in the North and thus as something static (Cornwall & Eade, 2010; Escobar, 1984; Escobar, 1995; Naylor, 2011; Boltanski, 1999; Ziai, 2013). Escobar (1984)), a post development theorist, concludes that in the context of development, power means power over or power exercised. He partly follows Said's (1978) theory of Orientalism, which argues that the study of development is a representational practice and thus represents the oriental as 'the other' and inferior. According to Escobar (1995) discourse has the power to affect reality. He describes that we need to see development as a discourse to perceive the systematic methods in which the western developed countries have 'created' a third world in a political, economic, social and cultural way. It furthermore helps understand how the North was able to control and manage this third world. The western development discourses represent and frames the third world as subordinate, different and as the object of development. People in underdeveloped countries are represented as passive receivers oppressed by power (Naz, 2006). Western institutions plan development and produce knowledge in this certain way, that it's hard for third world countries to escape

this hegemonic power (Batterbury & Fernandes, 2004; Escobar, 1995). Development is just another word for colonialism, but then formulated in a rather subtle way (Crush, 1995; Escobar, 1995). Concepts as underdevelopment and poverty are discursive constructs and can only be explained by analysing power relations at the time of their creation. The current most dominant view on development, used by all large development institutions as the WBG and the IMF is in this thesis referred to as the international development discourse.

Cornwall and Eade (2010) furthermore point out how concepts and language in development discourse, to a great extent, are defined by the cultural values and ideas of donor agencies. Mentioning that the contribution of cultural values and ideas of countries who are receiving is only little. The little influence of the South means that development practitioners and scholars are forced to use the frameworks and analysis methods by institutions in the North (UNRISD, 2004, p. 11). This phenomenon can even be compared with cultural hegemony, where the values of the dominating culture, in this case the North, seize the values of the working class, in this case the aid-receiving countries (Cornwall & Eade, 2010). According to Naylor (2011), the development discourse operates through relations of power corresponding a politics of pity. Politics of pity constitutes two classes, one who suffers and one who doesn't suffer: a relative social hierarchy to one another. These hierarchical structural relations of power amongst development actors make it impossible to address the real structural inequalities embedded in poverty (Boltanski, 1999). As long as the IDD operates corresponding this unequal relation of power, the ultimate goal of ending poverty and inequality will never be achieved (Naylor, 2011, p. 193). This thesis will focus on this hegemonic view on development.

Other scholars see development discourse differently. Grillo and Stirrat (1997) and Gardner and Lewis (2000) for example argue that development is not largely created and constructed by the North, nor that development is hegemonic and that there's a division between developers and receivers or 'victims' of development (Grillo and Stirrat, 1997). Gardner and Lewis (2000, p. 17) mention that it's not possible to assume that the current development discourses are only created in the North, as development is not only a western preoccupation. Underdeveloped countries also care for modernization and even though most aid institutions are owned by the North, it's hard to conclude that it wholly constructed in this part of the world. This means that development discourse is not static and therefore can change in language, strategies and practices over time (Gardner & Lewis, 2000). This change can be explained due to its reciprocal relation with fluctuation in who is in power and who is dominating (Crush, 1995). This is also

in consensus with Foucault (1990) who writes that we should not see one dominant discourse versus a dominated discourse. He writes: “We should think of a complex and unstable process whereby discourse can be both an instrument and an effect of power, but also a hindrance, a stumbling block, a point of resistance and a starting point for an opposing strategy” (Foucault, 1990, p.22). There do is this strong dichotomy between the global and the local whereas more focus should be put on ‘regional modernities’ (Sivaramakrishnan & Agrawal, 1998).

Buzzwords

Words matter for development, as they form the key to funding and influence (Cornwall & Eade, 2011). Since the end of the Second World War, the widespread concepts of international development have changed in remarkable ways. Discussion of modernization and challenges decolonization have been replaced by discussion of emancipation and challenges of globalization (Naylor, 2011). Gardner and Lewis (2000) also researched this change in discourse and investigated the White Paper on development, which is an overview of British aid policies. They compared the White Paper of 1975 with the White Paper published in 1997 and saw a significant difference in characteristics. The publication of 1975 focused more on the economic dimension of development, whereas in 1997 the publication was characterized by words as *empowerment*, *gender* and *partnership*. They nevertheless speculate whether development practices develop simultaneously with these new language and concepts or if it’s just a new vision of the North towards the South (Gardner & Lewis, 2000, p. 24).

Frequently used concepts and words in international development discourse are often called buzzwords amongst scholars (Collins, 1995; Cornwall. 2007; Cornwall & Brock, 2007; Smyth, 2007). William (1976) refers to these words as keywords, words that evoke and carry the political and cultural values of current times and which can be persuasive (p. 76). The international development sector likes to use as many of these words as they can, because they play an important role in framing solutions (Cornwall & Brock, 2007). But these buzzwords often lack meaning of what is actually done in its name (Cornwall, 2007, p. 471). Buzzwords in development discourse gain their power through their vagueness, their normative resonance and the given that multiple meanings are applicable, depending on who is using it in which context (Smyth, 2007). That buzzwords can have multiple meanings and nuances is sometimes referred to as the Humpty Dumpty Syndrome (Cornwall & Eade, 2011, p. 8). Some great examples of development buzzwords are *agency*, *community-based*, *participation*, *rights-based approach* and a prominent place for *empowerment*. But even *discourse* has become a buzzword

in last year's, as it is remarkably used in development studies (Cornwall & Brock, 2005). As equal partnerships have received a lot of attention amongst scholars and in international development itself, the most popular buzzwords of the last decade concern this phenomenon. Words as *civil society*, *social capital* and *partnership* have therefore entered the development sector (Cornwall & Eade, 2011, p. 6).

When studying buzzwords, Laclau (1996) concluded that there are these 'chains of equivalence', certain combinations of buzzwords that are linked together in development policies. This particular group of words work together to recall a specific set of meanings. When buzzwords are implemented in certain chains of equivalence, the meanings of the different words in it that overlap will take the overhand over other inharmonious meanings.

1.2 Empowerment

From the 1970s on, the concept of 'empowerment' has been applied by scholars and actors in different sectors and work fields. This includes social work and public health, but also includes more different extreme traditions, from feminist scholars to business management (Simon, 1994). The international development sector also implemented the concept in various ways.

Empowerment as power

To come closer to an understanding of the concept of 'empowerment', first, *power* as a concept has to be analysed (Pigg, 2002; Rowlands, 1997). There are different ways to see power, as the definition of power happens to be widely debated. In most literature, there have been two salient views of power: controlling power, referred to as 'power over' and empower, referred to as 'power to' (Haugaard, 2012). Rowlands (1997) nevertheless differentiates four different forms of power (p.13):

1. **Power over:** controlling or dominating power
2. **Power to:** generative power
3. **Power with:** generative power based on agreement
4. **Power from within:** inner strength as generative power

The first form of power, 'power over', is in this case a compliance definition of power, while 'power to', 'power with' and 'power from within' are more 'energy' definitions of power as they don't imply dominance (Hartstock, 1995, p. 223). 'Power over', characterized by

domination, however remains the form most people refer to when questioning power. Looking at power from this point of view, makes it seem unchangeable and also limits the ability to understand empowerment (Page & Czuba, 1999). It can be seen as a distributive form of power, closely linked to the idea of a zero-sum game (Korten, 1987).

To understand empowerment, power needs to be changeable. Weber (1946) for example rejects the ‘power over’ perspective on power, by claiming power is interactional and thus changeable. “It is this definition of power, as a process that occurs in relationships, that gives us the possibility of empowerment” (Page & Czuba, 1999, p. 2). More present studies have also introduced a new perspective on power, one that refers to the shared aspects of power. It implies that obtaining power not decreases the powers of others, but strengthens it (Korten, 1987; Kreisberg, 1992). To make empowerment possible, power needs to be both extendable and changeable (Page & Czuba, 1999). This matches with the ‘energy’ definitions of power described above. These are positive-sum perspectives on power and assume that everyone has power (Korten, 1987). Kreisberg (1992, p. 57), however, created a broader definition of power: “the capacity to implement”, which describes power in a way that makes empowerment possible.

Rowlands (1999) claims that the meaning of empowerment relates to a person’s interpretation of power. In opposition with Page and Czuba (1999), she does link dominating ‘power to’ a form of empowerment. Empowerment linked with this interpretation: “is bringing people who are outside the decision-making process into it” (Rowland, 1999, p. 13). ‘Power to’ and ‘power with’ are linked with empowerment as “is concerned with the processes by which people become aware of their own interests and how those relate to the interests of others, in order both to participate from a position of greater strength in decision-making and actually to influence such decisions” (Rowlands, 1999, p. 14). She eventually argues that the feminist interpretation of empowerment implies both ‘power to’ and ‘power from within’: “Empowerment is more than participation in decision-making; it must also include the processes that lead people to perceive themselves as able and entitled to make decisions” (p. 14). For feminists, empowerment should mainly attack current obstructive social constructions.

As implemented in education, economics and psychology, the concept of empowerment is used by various disciplines. As stated by Bailey (1992), the definition of empowerment, besides how power is interpreted, relies on the particular context (e.g. discipline) and people involved. But

despite context differences, Page and Czuba (1999) broadly define empowerment as: “a multi-dimensional social process that helps people gain control over their own lives” (p. 3). It is multi-dimensional in the way that the concept exists in multiple dimensions. Written literature on empowerment tends to focus on three dimensions of empowerment: individual action/personal or self-empowerment, interpersonal/relational empowerment and social action/collective empowerment (Rowlands, 1999; Perkins, 1995). The individual dimension focuses on the development of personal confidence and capacity and emphasizes the importance of the personal efficacy factor (Pigg, 2002). The relational dimension highlights the development of the ability to change the nature of relationships and decision-making in these relationships. Thirdly, the collective dimension focuses on collaboration to achieve more impact together, than the individual impact a person has. This multi-dimensional definition thus indicates that empowerment connects individual capacities with social policy and change (Page & Czuba, 1999).

Empowerment in development

Long before the popularity boom of empowerment in international development, many scholars already tried to define the concept. As empowerment has been implemented by various disciplines, now focus will be on the definition of empowerment within international development. Compared to other disciplines, definitions of empowerment in relation to development are limited (Rowlands, 1999). Shetty (1991) even concluded that no definition of the concept can fully do it justice. But to get a better understanding of the concept, a definition is needed.

If marginalised and poor people want to change their situation, they need empowerment (Rowlands, 1999). The reference to empowerment thus applies to various disadvantaged and excluded groups. Nayaran (2002a) therefore also indicates these excluded groups as *disempowered*. Nayaran (2002b, p. 14) defines empowerment in the development context: “Empowerment is the expansion of assets and capabilities of poor people to participate in, negotiate with, influence, control and hold accountable institutions that affect their lives” (p. 5). But also ‘choice’ is seen as an important element of empowerment. Alsop (2005, p.) defines empowerment as: “a group’s or individual’s capacity to make effective choices, that is, to make choices and then to transform those choices into desired actions and outcomes”.

Most definitions of empowerment are brought in the literature by feminist scholars (Batliwala; 1994; Kabeer, 2001; Sen, 1990). In international development, empowerment is often put in a women's context. Part of these disadvantaged and excluded groups are women. Women's empowerment, however, encloses some distinctive components (Malhotra, Schuler & Boender, 2002). In contrast to other groups of disempowered people as the poor or ethnic minorities, women fit in multiple groups. Women's empowerment is also always interwoven with interfamilial relations or the household level, which not counts for other disempowered groups. Thirdly, to make women's empowerment possible systemic transformation is needed (Kabeer, 1994). The common factor between women is that as a woman, you are defined by the norms, beliefs and values through which societies perceive the difference between men and women. Patriarchal structures should be fundamentally changed for women to be empowered (Kabeer, 2001).

Owing the fact that most studies on empowerment are from feminist scholars, definitions of empowerment in this literature have often already interwoven the women's context in their definition of empowerment. Sen (1990, p. 2) defines empowerment as: "a process of developing individual capacities through gaining education and skills in order to empower individuals to fight for a better quality of life". Kabeer (2001, p. 23) defines empowerment as "the expansion in people's ability to make strategic life choices in a context where this ability was previously denied to them". While both focus on the individual dimension of empowerment, Johnson (1992, p. 55) goes beyond the personal and focuses more on the collective dimension of empowerment: "women's empowerment involves gaining a voice, having mobility and establishing a public presence. Although women can empower themselves by obtaining some control over different aspects of their daily lives, empowerment also suggests the need to gain some control over power structures, or to change them". Batliwala (1994, p. 130) enlarges the notion of power in the definition of empowerment and defines it as: "the process of challenging existing power relations and of gaining greater control over the sources of power". Power is central in this definition and seen as a control over material and intellectual resources and ideology. She also points out that empowerment is not a determined outcome of economic strength.

Although empowerment is often associated with women, Rowlands (1997) mentions that the concept is not just something concerning gender, as it also affects men. But the core of empowerment remains in mobilising marginalized people, especially women, as they are

disempowered relative to men. Batliwala (1994, p. 9) also rejects the idea that women's empowerment would be against men. She argues that the process of women's empowerment also releases men and that they will be freed of gender stereotyping. Rowlands (1997, p. 11) argues: "Men's fear of losing control is an obstacle to women's empowerment", because when power is interpreted as 'power over', more power for women would mean less power for men.

Finally, it's important to mention that the literature consists of a variety of terms that might imply empowerment, as definitions have many similarities. Terms as *gender equality*, *gender equity*, *women's autonomy*, *women's status* are to be found addressing the concept of empowerment without any clear distinction between them (Jejeebhoy & Sathar, 2001; Malhotra, Schuler & Boender, 2002). Nevertheless, the concept of empowerment encloses two distinctive components. It, first of all, is a process (Batliwala, 1994; Johnson, 1992; Kabeer, 2001; Sen 1990). Secondly, empowerment is agency, thus marginalised people themselves have to be the driver in this process for change (Kabeer, 2001; Ibrahim & Alkire, 2007; Johnson, 1992; Sen, 1990). If this is not the case, something cannot be considered empowerment.

1.3 NGOs in development

NGOs are globally known as key actors in especially the development sector and have therefore received much attention in academic studies. As neoliberal policies have been implemented in large regions of the world, a real NGO boom has emerged since the 1980's (Lang, 2013). Due to this rapid increase of NGOs in resolving developmental issues, they have been advocated as instruments to bridge the gap between citizen's need and government's existing services (Banks & Hulme, 2012).

While there is a bigger presence of NGOs as important actors in international development, there still isn't any consensus concerning an universal definition or classification of NGOs (Vakil, 1997; Pearce, 1993). The one fact scholars can mainly agree on is that NGOs are part of the so-called 'third sector', the sector outside of the market and the state (Najam, 2000; Uphoff, 1993). Outside of this classification, confusion can be found between NGOs and other concepts as non-profit organisations (NPOs) and private voluntary organisations (PVOs), as they are used interchangeably (Vakil, 1997; Ahmed & Potter, 2006; Lewis, 2009).

Although NGOs vary widely and play different roles in different societies, definitions of NGOs do overlap. Some shared characteristics of NGOs in the literature therefore are: *self-governing*,

private and non-profit distribution. Vakil (1997, p. 2060) mentions these three elements in his definition of NGOs: “Self-governing, private, not-for-profit organizations that are geared to improving the quality of life for disadvantaged people”.

As NGOs have different focuses, differences can be found looking at the broader objectives they are fighting for as human rights or the environment. The concept of NGO is in most cases used respecting international or developmental work (Lewis, 2009). NGOs with developmental goals are often called developmental NGOs, in which this thesis will focus on. Only in the 1990s, a real boom of NGOs specializing in gender development issues occurred. Feminism has been made visible by the gender agendas addressing gender issues and women’s welfare of NGOs (Bernal & Grewal, 2014). This phenomenon has been identified as ‘the NGOization of feminism’ (Lang, 1997).

An important key distinction in the literature is the division between INGOs and SNGOs (grassroots NGO), their local colleagues, on the other hand. They differ in origin as INGOs roots lie in the industrialized countries while SNGOs roots lie in the less developed countries (Lewis, 2009). INGOs have emerged since the 1950s and are mostly associated with philanthropy and religious or voluntary charity groups, while SNGOs are often linked to social movements and the strengthening of them (Ryfman, 2004). SNGOs are often also called Grassroots Support Organizations or Membership Support Organizations and can sometimes be emerged from grassroots movements (Chahim & Prakash, 2014). SNGOs are defined as Grassroots Organisations, when working on a local level (Uphoff, 1993).

NGOs are key players in civil society along with other organisations as trade unions and social movements. They have therefore taken an important position in helping to close the governance gap and being the bridge between citizen and government (Coston, 1998). They do this by fulfilling two distinct roles: one as a service deliverer and one as an advocate for the poor (Banks & Hulme, 2012, p. 8). Both distinct roles focus on different aspects of development. In the role as a service deliverer, NGOs deliver and provide a broad selection of services, such as health or educational services and for example the building of agricultural infrastructure (Unerman & O’Dwyer, 2006). In the role as an advocate of the poor, NGOs are part of advocacy and campaigning in favour of certain interests. Many service provision NGOs combine this role with advocacy and campaigns, by connecting their services to organized campaigns (Unerman & O’Dwyer, 2006, p. 312). Following Banks, Hulme and Edwards (2015) and focusing on

function, NGOs should furthermore be bridge builders and therefore ‘bridges’ between various dimensions. Mainly geographically, as the organisation between different levels and countries and institutionally, as workers between civil society, government and the market. The secret of success is to move from control to facilitation and from being donors and decision-makers to co-creators and translators and therefore being functional bridges for the group they aim to support (Owen, 2000).

The way NGOs work is seen as the institutional alternative to existing development approaches and alternative practice and theory, which made their expand ever more successful (Bratton, 1989). It includes their way to experiment and innovate, but also their ability to implement programmes rapidly (Hulmes & Banks, 2012). The main characteristic of this alternative approach is their grassroots linkage, that brings them closer to the disadvantaged people and communities they are trying to reach. With this relation to grassroots, NGOs can create their own programmes and services based on participatory people-centred processes (Bebbington et al., 2008). NGOs furthermore not only strive to provide the needs of disadvantaged people, but aspire to assist them to proclaim these needs themselves and therefore *empower* them (Edwards and Hulme, 1994; Banks & Hulme, 2012). It’s perceived that grassroots and smaller national NGOs mainly work with a bottom-up approach while bigger national and INGOs use a top-down approach (Panda, 2007, p. 261). Although most NGOs claim to work and aim a bottom-up approach, as from the 1980s the importance of this approach emerged (Friedman, 1992). This is also associated with participatory development as a development approach. Following this bottom-up approach, development should operate from below and connects this approach with the alternative approach NGOs are famous for. Pearce (1993), as other scholars, suggested already that the real challenge of development is mainly about building sustainable social processes from the bottom. Unfortunately, little NGOs have initiated a strong relationship with social movements, who are part of the process towards social change (Edwards, 2008). The number of NGOs that are originated or that have strong ties from and with social movement remains low (Choudry & Kapoor, 2013).

NGOs have also been distinctive from other types of organisations due to their unique identity based on a strong set of values (Hailey, 2000). Their existence and foundation heavily relies on these specific principles and NGOs are therefore sometimes referred to as value-driven organizations (Brett, 1993). NGOs have certain values and goals in common with one another and try to reach justice, to empower disadvantaged people or reach equality with this value-

driven approach (Hailey, 2000). These core values are based around ideas of for example empowerment, good governance, sustainable development and shared learning (Korten 1990). They however aren't homogenous, as all types of NGOs choose their own path and strategy on how to achieve these goals and practice these values (Kabeer, Mahmud & Castro, 2010, p. 7). Because NGOs are part of civil society, they behave like it and thus protect civic values and participatory development (Tembo, 2003). Whether they want to transfer values or not, they usually certainly do play a cultural transfer role. Values of NGOs can also overlap with state and market values, but NGOs obviously don't pay attention to oppression and profit (Kaldor, 2010, p. 14). Being key players in civil society, NGOs have a strong role in strengthening it. As civil society is often associated with countervailing the power the state, NGOs are also placed in this position (Mohanty, 2002). In academic research, NGOs are thus often described as polarised with governments or anti-government (Banks & Hulme, 2012, p.6). But the relation between NGOs and the state is often more complicated and can range from enmity to close ties. Various types of relationships between governments and NGOs exist and differentiate between countries and between regions (Banks & Hulme, 2012).

One important core value of NGOs is promoting and transferring the process of democratization, as they are often seen as contributors to the democratization process. This also becomes apparent looking at the emergence of countries in democratic transition (Kamat, 2003). The legitimacy and practices of NGOs that people have a right to democracy has increased in the last two decades. Also, mainly because people are increasingly perceiving democracy as a value (McFaul, 2010). Civil society as a whole is highly involved in the democratization process and is said to mobilise pressure during democratic transitions (Mercer, 2002). Especially NGOs are, in the literature, broadly discussed as main players in democratic consolidation and transitions in numerous countries. This was largely the case in Latin America (Mercer, 2002). A democratization role for NGOs can enlarge state legitimacy and enforce civil society, thus can be favourable. Mercer (2002) however argues that it's easy to assume that NGOs strengthen both state and civil society, this also is a very neoliberal view and can also undermine and weaken them in other ways.

While NGOs are still very desired organisations, they have also been the subject of criticism (Panda, 2007). The faith that NGOs are the resolution to deep-rooted development problems has passed slowly (Hulme & Edwards, 1997). Scholars argue that NGOs are currently and therefore have been for a while, far distanced from empowerment of local communities and

disadvantaged people. Their activities have been more concentrated on service provision than on advocacy and empowerment, whereas this grassroots link has always been their main strength (Banks and Hulme, 2012; Borren, 2000). If this path will be continued, NGOs won't be able to create long-term structural and sustainable change and will remain advocating on other's behalf instead that local communities do this themselves (Wallace & Porter, 2013). This critique can be associated with the big 'd' dimension of development, indicating the alternative ways of intervening as service provision and project planning and not achieving a more radical structural change (Bebington, Hickey & Mitlin, 2013).

There is furthermore a bigger dependence on donors. Donor funds are increasingly demanding 'results' and NGOs are prioritizing these 'results' and therefore often choose this goal above their broader goals of empowering their target groups. Following these critics, NGOs always turn out to be putting donor interests and loyalties towards them first, but by doing this, simultaneously lose their original core values (Satzinger, 2014). As mentioned above, NGOs are built on these core values. Nowadays, NGOs are gradually distancing from these as a result of the specific demand of donors (Merce, 2002). NGOs' practices should result from core principles and values and whether NGOs claim to approach development like this, this has not been the case. If NGOs are slowly losing their core values, they will consequently lose their role and won't be able to serve the needs of the communities they work with or for (Hailey, 2000, p. 406). This critique is partly based on the unequal partnership between INGOs and SNGOs, as SNGOs are seen as 'agents' for INGOs and donors (Barr et al., 2003). NGOs actively proclaim the fact that they are working on this relationship, but unequal partnerships are still dominating (Binka, 2005). Donor dependence also gets enforced by the fact that this dependence of SNGOs of INGOs feeds the focus on a neoliberal approach on development. As NGOs tend to follow a 'western' way of development, due to this power structure (Satzinger, 2014; Funk, 2006). This finally gets connected with a new form of colonialism, described by post development scholars, as certain cultural changes about development are externally imposed by NGOs (Minasyan, 2016).

The partnership between INGOs and SNGOs, the North-South partnership, has been another specific topic for scholars in development studies. Given the fact that INGOs and SNGOs have to work together to reach their broader objectives. Historically, the relationship between NNGOs and SNGOs has been asymmetrical, because it was the Northern partner who was in charge of financial resources (Ashman, 2001). In any kind of relationship, the Southern partner

would be seen as the 'receiver' and the Northern partner as the 'giver'. In the last decades things have changed. Northern partners have become more willing to transform and change these unequal partnerships to a more 'true partnership' (Binka, 2005, p. 207). INGOs should be responsible for their own role, based on mutual respect with all partners (Anderson, 2000). If NGOs are 'bridges', then equality and reciprocity will arise as bridges imply equality at both sides and ideas go from one side to the other (Banks, Hulme & Edwards, 2015).

Chapter 2

Empowerment in international development discourse, NGOs and the disempowered position of women in Peru

In this chapter, the global, Latin American and Peruvian context will be addressed. First of all, empowerment in the current international development discourse will be discussed. Secondly, will be focused on different types of NGOs in Latin America and Peru. In the last section, the disempowered position of women in Peru will be exposed.

2.1 Empowerment in the International Development Discourse from the 1990s

The current most dominant view on development, employed by large development institutions, is in this thesis referred to as the international development discourse. The concept of 'empowerment' has been broadly applied in this discourse nowadays (Smyth, 2007).

Empowerment as a buzzword

One of the most ill-defined concepts within international development would be empowerment (Cornwall, 2000; Smyth, 2007). From the 1990s on, the concept slowly entered the international gender and development agenda simultaneously with the appliance of bottom-up approaches (Parpart, Staudt & Rai, 2002). Nowadays, it's frequently used in the IDD amongst NGOs, the UN and the WBG (Smyth, 2007). As the concept has been misused a lot, Batliwala (2016) perceives that its adoption has become a 'businesses'. Empowerment was also part of the Millennium Development Goals and is now one of the goals of the subsequent Sustainable Development Goals and therefore high on the development agenda (Smyth, 2007).

As the concept of empowerment has been broadly applied in international development, there is still little clarity about the true meaning of the concept. Defining it is difficult, as different epistemological, ideological and political interpretations of the concept can occur (Cattaneo & Goodman, 2015). As mentioned in the previous chapter, these frequently used concepts and terms are referred to as buzzwords in the international development dicourse (Collins, 1995; Cornwall, 2007; Cornwall & Brock, 2007; Smyth, 2007). Eyben & Napier-Moore (2010) call empowerment, amongst other popular concepts and terms as a fuzzword. This term refers to empowerment as a concept, due to its vague and fuzzy character. They sum up four explanations on why fuzziness of concepts is actually there. Firstly, due to intellectual laziness and time

pressure, as it might be the result of insufficient attention. Fuzziness is secondly used: “to create and sustain a broad-based policy constituency and to manage conflicts therein (p. 288). It provides some sort of normative meaning that everyone is content with. It can also be explained by strategic ambiguity. By not giving full clarity, people are not able to abandon the concept, which could happen by doing so. Finally, fuzziness is a result of collective action towards tensions within or between organisations.

In the past decades, shifts in the meaning of the concept have occurred. The WBG institutionalized empowerment for the first time in 2001 and described: “empowerment means enhancing the capacity of poor people to influence the state institutions that affect their lives, by strengthening their participation in political processes and local decision-making” (p. 39). By doing so, they supported the idea that poverty can only be tackled by empowerment of the poor. But it was criticized and Braathen (2000, p. 338) for example argued: “The report does not spell out the different epistemological, ideological and political interpretations of empowerment. No systematic presentation of the concept is presented”. For this reason, the WBG came with a new definition in 2002 and in 2006. In 2006, with the help of other scholars the concept changed and was now defined as: “the process of enhancing an individual’s or group’s capacity to make purposive choices and to transform those choices into desired actions and outcomes” (Aslop, Bertelsen, and Holland 2006, p. 1). The WBG thus defined empowerment differently multiple times, so even within an organisation the meaning of the concept can differ and change (Calvès, 2010).

Women’s empowerment as a buzzword

In the past years, women’s empowerment has received more attention as a development issue (Cornwall & Anyidoho, 2010). The feminist movement of the South can be seen as the first actor in international development that pointed out the importance of women’s empowerment (Calvès, 2009). Feminist theories have therefore had some major impact on how development is conceptualized (McEwan, 2001). The changing relationship between feminism and development can explain the visibility of gender in development in the last years (Cornwall & Whitehead, 2007, p.12). The big landmark was the publication of ‘Development, crises and alternative visions: Third World Women’s Perspectives by Sen and Grown (1987). It was the first book that shed light on this new role for women in development. A new women’s approach, soon identified as the ‘empowerment approach’ (Moser, 1989). It was the United

Nations' International Conference on Population and Development in Cairo in 1994 that gave the concept its first official visibility (Smyth, 2010).

During the 1990s, the amount of publications on empowerment and gender exponentially grew. Feminist scholars (Batliwala, 1994; Kabeer, 1994; Rowlands 1995 & 1997) developed theories based on the linkage between empowerment and power. With this notion of power, they gave empowerment a political dimension as well. For these feminists the power in empowerment is different than regular power, power of domination. The 'power of' empowerment implies power to achieve things, power as a collective political power and moreover a power from within (Calvès, 2009). This power from within can be linked to the false idea that interventions and programmes can empower women. From a feminist view, women themselves are the agents of such process (Smyth, 2010). It was the first time that feminism and thus attention for gender inequalities was combined with development issues. With these approaches, women started to demonstrate and change how gender is socially constructed. It was furthermore one of the underlying factors that explained women's oppression, which most previous interventions didn't recognise (Batliwala, 1994).

But the lack of consensus on the definition of empowerment in especially women's empowerment remains. Feminists along with other scholars, as described above, criticized the changing meaning of the concept (Aarat, 2015, Batliwala, 1994; Parpart, 2002; Calvès, 2009; Wong, 2003). It is now just a concept that has replaced terms as gender equality and women's status in development policies (Batliwala, 1994; Jejeebhoy & Sathar, 2001). The World Bank, as mentioned above, also changed its definition multiple times. The worldwide successful implementation of the concept can be explained by the given that every organization or institution labels it with a different meaning.

Women's empowerment, just as empowerment in general, is more and more focused on the individual (Calvès, 2009). Indicators for empowerment are not looking at a collective political dimension such as political participation or mobilization, but are centred on women's individual opportunities, for example access to services or education. While empowerment started as a process on both individual as collective dimensions of power, as empowerment goes beyond the individual and looks at an increase of participation in politics, the concept nowadays is interchangeably with mainly individual opportunities (Halfon, 2007; Sardenberg, 2008). It's

furthermore slowly reduced to a focus on the economic dimension of empowerment, that neglects the social and psychological dimension of power (Calvès, 2009).

Scholars agree on the fact that development institutions have lost track of the transformative meaning of the concept (Arat, 2015, Smyth, 2007). Parpart (2002) claims that the popularity of empowerment only maintains the status-quo as it not aims to achieve social transformation anymore. Institutions as the WBG focus more and more on the instrumental definition of empowerment, as they are not interested in changing existing power relations. This instrumental definition on empowerment is more concerned with how marginalized people can contribute to development, than how development can increase the power of marginalized people. It's focused on economic efficiency (Wong, 2003). Halfon (2007, p. 196) cites: "Women do not take power, it is given to them". The duty of development is not to change institutional development practice, but to achieve real social transformation. Eyben & Napier-Moore (2010) agree and write: "Today a privileging of instrumentalist meanings of empowerment associated with efficiency and growth are crowding out more socially transformative meanings associated with rights and collective action" (p. 280), which also implies that it now only maintains the current state of affairs.

A problem within NGOs is one that occurs while trying to operationalise the concept. Often the concept of empowerment is still seen as a goal, something that can be achieved. When NGOs implement empowerment in their approach, it is way easier to speak of a final product than a process (Smyth, 2010). But empowerment doesn't consist of a final goal and is an ongoing process, one simply cannot find themselves in a state of empowerment. People are empowered or disempowered relative to others (Rowlands, 1997; Moose, 2005). An example of this is women's empowerment as one of the Sustainable Development Goals. Batliwala (2007) furthermore argues that the meaning of empowerment in India, has shifted from a systemic transformation, the feminist point of view, to it becoming a 'magical bullet'. By this she indicates that empowerment has become an instrument for micro-credit programmes.

Though the application of the concept of empowerment by numerous international organisations and institutions at first was embraced by development professionals, intellectuals and activists, also criticized it (Calvès, 2009). It firstly is clear that the concept has become one of the many buzzwords in international development. It's been applied to create a sense of attraction, rather than to add value to current challenging development approaches. This

mainstream use of empowerment by international development organisations has changed the roots of the concept.

2.2 NGOs in Latin America and Peru

NGOs, as part of civil society, are key factors in international development. Latin America seems to have, in comparison to other regions, a reasonably active civil society (Molyneux, 2002). There are several historical and political reasons that have influenced civil society in Latin America nowadays.

The first NGOs in Latin America emerged in the 1950s, mostly focusing on industrialization. NGOs were there to promote and boost development, in this case mainly economic growth (Landim, 1987). From the mid-1960s on, they slowly developed criticism towards this traditional development model of industrialization. A big number of NGOs, nevertheless, emerged during the time of political dictatorship that faced most countries in Latin America in the 1960s and 1970s (Landim, 1987; Molyneux, 2002). With focus on resistance towards the state and accusing the state of atrocities, NGOs collaborated closely with other civil society actors, thus creating a stronger civil society. It was during this time, that NGOs also had strong ties with the church on activism and community development (Molyneux, 2002).

The 1980s were also characterized by a new development agenda, the Washington Consensus, containing policies concerning economic and political liberalism. These structural adjustment programmes were created to tackle the debt crisis of the 1980s striking Latin American countries (Molyneux, 2002). Latin American countries such as Peru, Argentina and Bolivia chose to radically implement these reforms (Arnaut, 2015). These reforms were accompanied by ‘social compensation programmes. While there was the ability to create sustainable social gains for everyone, these social gains ended up being short-term costs (Bebbington & Thiele, 2005). NGO specifically became important actors in this period and grew enormously as: “They not only assumed and expanded role in development work and in the delivery of welfare, but many also lobbied governments and worked with grassroots movements to advance citizen’s rights through legal reform and strategies designed to ‘empower’ the poor (Molyneux, 2002, p. 171). The neoliberal shift in Latin America led to interest in NGOs as they could provide, what the state didn’t provide anymore (Bebbington, 1997; Gideon, 1998; Macdonald, 1995). NGOs were now directly performing actions, the state was previously in charge of (Bebbington, 1993).

Both Latin American governments and northern donors turned to NGOs as they could fill the government gap and could also enforce the democratization process (Macdonald, 1995).

While they emerged in the 1950s and established their main characteristics during the authoritarian regimes, the return of democratization in the 1980s gave NGOs an extra boost (Landim, 1987). This due to one important core value of NGOs, that aims to promote and to transfer the process of democratization. From the 1990s onwards, participation, decentralization and self-management were seen as a first 'profit' of democracy (Molyneux, 2008; Lind, 2005). NGOs were highly represented during this time, because they collaborated closely with democratic and social movements which often transformed into NGOs. With the process of democratization and neoliberal reforms on the background, they not only had a practical contribution, but were also framing demands for other ideas. NGOs and social movements were now supporting ideas of democracy, citizenship, participation, and human development (Molyneux, 2008).

Activities of NGOs are influenced by the political, social and economic context of the country of operation (Landim, 1987). Nevertheless, the role of NGOs in Peru, stands in line with the role of NGOs in Latin America. They form the bridge between the government and the people and have historically seen focused on the democratisation process. NGOs furthermore have a hostile relationship with the state (Henriquez, 1996).

Amongst other Latin American countries, the socio-economic landscape of Peru is marked by high levels of poverty and inequality (Alasino, 2008). This not only implies economic inequality, but also inequality in term of uneven access to education, the judicial system and health. It furthermore is characterized by a deep polarisation in society (Lopez, 1989). After ten years of dictatorship ruled by president Fujimori (1990-2000), Peru started the democratization process in 2001. In contrast with various other countries in the region, Peru has still been devoted to neoliberalism (Pieck, 2013). Due to Peru's history of non-democratic regimes, corruption, poverty and inequality, NGOs have always been key actors in their national development. (International Center for Not-for-Profit Law, 2019).

Peru has faced a real NGO boom from the 1980s (Henriquez, 1996). The majority and concentration of NGOs are to be found in the capital Lima or in the Andes, including Arequipa, Cusco and Puno. In 1977 there were around 40 active NGOs, while in 1984, there were already

214 active NGOs. In 1990 this increased till 703 and in 2007, there were already more than 1000 NGOs active in the country (LLona, 2008; Toche, 2003). Regardless of the boom of NGOs in the 1980s, governments themselves often remain in distrust with them. This is especially the case in Peru, where tensions between the state and NGOs have always been high (Alasino, 2008). Both sides have accused one another multiple times of horrible activities (Vincent, 2012). The Peruvian government claims, that because NGOs have common goals with left-wing parties, they are seen as a threat (Alasino, 2008). This repression on actors questioning government, has even led to the creation of The Peruvian Agency for International Cooperation (APCI). This organ can monitor the cooperation of NGOs and to what extent it is in accordance with national development policies (Davies & Loveman, 1997). NGOs in Peru are furthermore facing big cuts in their funding. Not only by the state, but also by international institutions. This due to this described relationship with the state, but also because Peru is often seen as a middle-income country nowadays (S. Samamé, personal communication, December 12, 2018).

Women's and feminist NGOs

Amongst NGOs, Women's NGOs have been the fastest growing entity (Silliman 1999). These not all describe themselves as feminist NGOs, because feminist and gender equality perspective differ. From the mid-1990s on, feminist scholars have more frequently intertwined gender with development. From this moment on, women all over Latin America started to demonstrate and tackle women's oppression. Women in Latin America have organized in various arenas concerning a broad spectrum of issues (Markowitz & Tice, 2002).

“Women's social movements in Latin America are commonly seen as a response to military authoritarian rule and the current economic crisis, both of which create particular hardships for the working class” (Safa, 1990, p. 356). They therefore emerged in big numbers in the 1980s. In Southern countries, women organized mainly as mothers, who lost their children during these dictatorships. Women were by then often framed as unthreatening non-political actors (Roussead & Hudson, 2015). During the 1980s with the debt crisis and neoliberal reforms, women and especially working-class women established Community Kitchens and other women's organisations provided social services (Markowitz & Tice, 2002; Moser, 2004). These consequently got the attention of important actors as the Church and NGOs. Neoliberalism also enforced the NGOization or institutionalization of civil movements, such as the feminist movements and the grassroots women's movement (Boesten, 2003).

The feminist movement began to emerge from the 1970s. This movement also partly institutionalized into feminist NGOs together, but also into more informal feminist collectives (Alvarez, 1999). The way Latin American feminists practiced their beliefs changed entirely in the 1990s (Alvarez, 1999 & 2009). Feminist activists saw an opportunity in NGOs, as promising institutions and owning a women's network (Bernal & Grewal, 2014). NGOs were institutions that worked had ties with the state, the governmental, and were able to give feminism a world stage. The power of NGOs to influence policy has therefore led to the NGOization of Latin American Feminism (Alvarez, 1999; Lang, 1997). From the second wave of feminism in the late 1960s, feminist movements began to slowly professionalized and institutionalized with a boom in the 1990s (Alvarez, 1999 & 2009). Feminism from then on, was been made visible by NGOs' agendas focused on gender issues and women's welfare (Bernal & Grewal, 2014). From the 2000s, feminist activists shifted from participation in the political field, to participation in feminist and women's NGOs (Lang, 1997; Halley, 2006).

Today, feminist action can be seen as a highly heterogenous and broad discursive field of action reaching the political and social arena. NGOs have been significant actors by setting up 'social movements webs' that have connected feminist with its advocates. "Latin American feminist NGOs have been vital in fashioning and circulating the discourses, transformational goals, and ethical-political principles that are constitutive of the movement, even as these are continually contested and resigned by the diverse women who today identify as feminists" (Alvarez, 1999, p. 6). The big rise of women's NGOs is remarkably, yet they have given rise to discussion over class.

In Peru, the women's movement has been, as in other parts of the region, often mediated by NGOs focusing on women. The Peruvian Women's Movement is one of the greatest of the region and it even was famous for its diversity in the 1970s (Henriquez, 1996; Vargas, 1991). It consisted of, just as most neighbouring countries, a diverse set of processes reflecting the diversity of women in the country (Moser, 2004; Vargas, 1991). During the 1960s, women joined left political parties as opportunities to fight for their rights and equality. As their demands were not taking into account, they consequently created their own new (feminist) social movements (Moghadam 1999).

The Peruvian Women's Movement contains of three different interwoven streams: a feminist stream, the popular women's movement and movements from traditional political areas. This feminist sub movement focuses on the subordination of women in the social system as the problem itself. Some of these feminist groups developed themselves into Feminist NGOs in the late 1980s (Rousseau, 2006). The popular women's movement and the political movements on the other hand tried to distance women from their traditional role and promote female political participation (Henriquez, 1996; Vargas, 1991). Community Kitchens and the 'Glass of Milk Programme' and the emergence of women's commissions in unions and politics were part of these two streams (Rousseau, 2006).

The women's movement has, since the 1970s, been marked by a drive towards organization. They not only institutionalized into professional organisations like NGOs, but also created neighbourhood and self-help groups (Henriquez, 1996). Between 1975 and 1980, the number of NGOs working with or financing women's programmes increased significantly. Some calling themselves feminist NGOs. In the 1990s, NGOs working with women have established multiple political proposals by constructing networks and forums.

The feminist NGOization all over Latin America, also widely occurred in Peru. Due to the work of the well governed and donated feminist NGOs, the Peruvian women's movement achieved the majority of its victories in the 1990s (Rousseau, 2006). The heterogeneity of the popular movement, however, has led to a decline of the movement on the one hand, but to the development of NGOs emerging from the grassroots on the other hand (Moser, 2003). Many NGOs working with women, feminist or not, are still active in the country (ICNL, 2019).

Indigenous women's and indigenous feminist NGOs

Indigenous movements emerged in the 1990s in Latin America, which led to the creation of indigenous NGOs. They, nevertheless, not focused on gender, as collective rights were often the main focus (Mendez, 2006). Whereas indigenous women do face the same exclusion as non-indigenous women (Rousseau & Hudson, 2016). Women's organisations in Peru have been targeting indigenous women since the 1990s (Oliart, 2008). As mentioned above, the big rise of women's NGOs has brought up a discussion concerning class (Alvarez, 1999). Women are not one homogenous group, but women contain of a variety of women differentiated by class and ethnicity. A specific sound that has been heard from women in the south (McEwan, 2009;

Munro, 2013). Whereas indigenous women face the same exclusion as non-indigenous women (Rousseau & Hudson, 2016).

Discrimination based on class, gender and ethnicity is a prominent characteristic of Peruvian society (Henriquez, 1996). Indigenous women are discriminated often on all three dimensions in Peru and neighbouring countries. This specific situation that indigenous women are facing, is hardly understandable for middle-class radical feminists (Francke, 1990). For this reason, feminist ideas in Peru were sometimes seen as western and middle-class, which sometimes resulted in conflict in the 1980s (Oliart, 2008). The creation of the indigenous women's movement is thus created by the failure of indigenous movements and feminist and women's movements (Rousseau & Hudson, 2016).

A big landmark was set in 1992 with the fourth World Conference on Women in Beijing. Here, Peru was represented by a delegation including indigenous women of different social backgrounds, sent by feminist organizations (Oliart, 2008). When the United Nations declared the decade of Indigenous people in 1994 and with a transnational indigenous movement on the background, activists started to put the agenda of indigenous women high on the agenda. They did this in the last part of the 1990s by implementing it in existing organisations or creating new organisations (Oliart, 2008). Since then, NGOs targeting indigenous women have widely expanded.

2.3 The disempowered position of (indigenous) women in Peru

Peru is a multicultural society (Henriquez, 1996, p. 365). A country of tradition and modernization, marked by unequal development, exclusion and poverty. While being a multicultural society, discrimination based on class, gender and ethnicity is deeply rooted in society (Henriquez, 1996). Various parts of the population are excluded of social services, but also from participation in the decision-making process and the judicial system (Boesten, 2003).

Women's status

The majority of the poor in Peru are women. Women outnumber men in several human development indicators including unemployment and illiteracy (Molyneux, 2002). The intersection of class, ethnicity, and gender directs access to resources, social services, politics, justice and also feeds violence (Boesten 2010). Characteristics based on education, clothing or language, but also physical characteristics as skin colour and height determine someone's

position on the ethnic ladder in this hierarchical society (Boesten, 2012). This social hierarchy can be traced back to the patriarchal power system the country has known for many decades. This system maintains women's oppression by men, thus places women in a vulnerable position. The relation between men and women is based on female subordination opposed to male power in politics, economics, social institutions and within the family (Lázaro, 1990, pp. 237-238). Due to the pressure of feminist social movements, patriarchy (e.g. reproductive health and parental rights) legally changed in favour of women in most Latin American countries by the end of the twentieth century (Molyneux, 2000). Gender equality was legally established in 1984, which provoked another way of thinking about the men-woman relationship. Despite this transition, the conservative Catholic Church in Peru remains influential and the effects of patriarchal rule over women is still visible in the daily life of women (Boesten, 2012). Scholars have furthermore accused the Peruvian state, especially during the Fujimori regime, that they nurture this patriarchal rule over women (Boesten, 2003 & 2012). Women's rights in Peru have been violated independently of the type of political regime (Vásquez del Aguila, 2002).

Women and men in Peru and other Latin American countries, are being raised with different roles in society. These exist gender scripts, which can be seen as certain patterns of social interaction (Triandis, 1983). Men are perceived as dominating authoritarian figures, whilst women are nurturers or mothers, taking care of others. According to these scripts, men are more in control, which leads to a dependency of females (Heaton, Huntsman & Flake, 2005). Two important gender scripts are machismo and marianismo (D. Dodson, personal communication, December 11, 2018; Heaton, Huntsman & Flake, 2005). Especially machismo is referred to as the result of Peru's patriarchal society (Padilla, 1981; Hernandez, 2003). With roots in Spain, machismo defines some type of manhood. Deyoung & Zigler (1994, p. 386) define it as: "A cluster of traits that includes aggression, dominance, authoritarianism, adherence to strict sex roles, and exhibitionistic and nonnurturant tendencies". Marianismo on the other hand, perceives Latin American women as submissive (Heaton, Huntsman & Flake, 2005). While things have been changing for Peruvian women, society is still considered as 'machista' (Torra & Grow, 2015).

A vast majority of Peruvian women feels that they are being discriminated (Boesten, 2012). Partly due to the fact that discrimination is justified and perceived as 'normal' (Torra & Grow, 2015). In the last decades, human development indicators have made some great improvements.

Amongst them participation in politics and participation in the labour market (Henriquez, 1996). Between 1940 and 1990 the illiteracy rates for example decreased from 60.3 percent to 17.4 percent amongst women (Henriquez, 1996, p. 365). Even the Peruvian government has put gender equality on the political agenda (Molyneux & Thompson, 2011).

Citizenship, thus to have absolute rights and to be true member of the political community, not applies to all (Radcliff, 2002). Women's citizenship in Latin America, has always been shaped revolving motherhood and the responsibilities of being a wife and there is a masculine public sphere (Molyneux, 2001). "Women have been constructed by the state as dependent on men" (Yuval-Davis, 1997, p. 45). Democracy in Peru is often thus only perceived as the right to vote, it however, includes much more than that (Vásquez del Aguila, 2002).

From the 1970s onwards, women's access to resources as education, health services and the labour market have been increasing (Vargas, 1991). Under the Fujimori regime (1990-2001), a gender agenda was created for the first time. The period is marked by a remarkable interest in accentuating women's contribution in society (Rousseau, 2006). These shifts, however, have only little influenced gender discrimination (Vargas, 1991). The changing opportunities for women both enforced participation in women's movements and consequently influenced the impact these movements on social policy and awareness (Safa, 1990). Peruvian government has, over the past few years, introduced a number of policy measures and laws favouring women and subjecting gender equality, female discrimination, sexual and domestic violence, access to resources and opportunities in economy (Molyneux & Thompson, 2011). This in response to international pressure in the end of the twentieth century. The Ministry of Women and Development is an example of this, established in 2006 to promote women empowerment and provide aid in poor regions of the country (Peruvian Government, 2018). All happening alongside the support of civil society. One outcome has been for example the rapid growth of services for women's victims of violence or discrimination (molyneux & Thompson, 2011; Peruvian Government, 2018). This gender agenda, however, has also created tension within the country, as conservatives are not favouring these gender focused legislations (F. Boeren, personal communication, November 26, 2018).

Indigenous women's status

Peru has one of the highest indigenous populations of Latin American, with Quechua and Aymara speakers being the biggest group (Gender & Health Unit, 2004). While in recent years, indigenous populations have gained more collective rights, they are still perceived as lower-

class and are faced with lower life standards (Garcia, 2003). Indigenous communities are marginalised and excluded in Peru, as discrimination is an embedded phenomenon in Peru (Hooker, 2005). Indigenous people are not always seen as full Peruvian citizens but more as ‘second-class citizens’, based on their race. Despite things are slowly changing, the greatest part of their population lives in the rural areas, known for their high poverty rates (ILO, 2016). Above all, indigenous women, are considered more ‘indigenous’ than indigenous men (De La Cadena, 1991). Based on the hierarchical society based on class, gender and race, indigenous women in Peru thus end up on the lowest end of the social ladder, characterized by poverty, femininity and indigeneity (ILO, 2016). Indigenous women are therefore discriminated often on these three dimensions in Peru and neighbouring countries, a so-called ‘triple oppression or marginalization’ (Francke, 1990). Indigenous women also face the struggle of being marginalised from women’s politics and indigenous rights (Rousseau & Hudson, 2016).

The patriarchal system is, especially amongst indigenous communities, much respected. The duality or complementarity of gender roles are embedded by indigenous cultures (Meentzen, 2001). Indigenous women fulfil generally less valued responsibilities in the family, which often means that women take care of the household and the children (PNUD, 2010). Illiteracy is also specifically high amongst Peruvian indigenous women (Vargas, 1991). In a health perspective, indigenous women are more vulnerable to pregnancy and childbirth health risks (Kabeer, 2011). Historically seen, the indigenous population perceive labour for men different then labour for women. This is, however, complementary and reciprocal, based on their biological differences. In communities, women have several time absorbing tasks, which leaves them having less time for education or political participation (Gender & Health Unit, 2004). Indigenous men, therefore tend to make important political decisions within indigenous communities. They moreover have a higher life standard than women (Molyneux & Thompson, 2011; PNUD, 2010). At last, domestic violation rates have increased in line with alcohol abuse, poverty and unemployment amongst indigenous men (Gender & Health Unit, 2004).

As previously said, the Peruvian government has implemented a gender agenda tackling gender inequality, since the attention for gender and development in the 1990s. With President Toledo getting in power in 2001, even more attention was put on indigenous rights, as he became the first indigenous president of Peru. It was under his rule, that the first indigenous women entered National Congress (Garcia, 2005). Most legislation regarding indigenous rights, however, doesn’t focus on gender or womens’s issues. Above all, the legislation on women, doesn’t focus

specifically on the struggles indigenous women face. In daily life, the real impact of these laws remains little, due to deeply rooted social structures in society and indigenous culture (Vásquez del Aguila, 2002).

Chapter 3

Interpretation and implementation of ‘women’s empowerment’ by NGOs in Peru

In this chapter, gathered data of qualitative research conducted during fieldwork in Cusco, Peru between the 26th of November and the 10th of January will be discussed. Building on chapter 1 and 2, the chapter analyzes how different types of NGOs in Peru interpret and have implemented the concept of empowerment in their organisation. The first section discusses the considerations made when selecting the organizations. The reason for this is that this selection revealed some important aspects of the use of the concept of ‘empowerment’ in their presentation. The second is divided into three parts, each of them highlighting one distinct part of the analysis. The first part focuses on the interpretation of empowerment of the participating NGOs and differences and similarities between them and with the academic literature. The second part looks at how NGOs translate their interpretation of empowerment into concrete actions and how this fits Peruvian reality. Finally, the alternative approach and role of NGOs during the empowerment process will be discussed.

3.1 Participants and the selection process

12 semi-structured interviews were conducted amongst different types of NGOs in the region of Cusco, Peru. Three participants are INGOs, originally from Europe and the United States, including HoPe, Peruvian Hearts and Oxfam Peru. The other nine are SNGOs including CBC, CEDEP Ayllu, Manuela Ramos, RNPM, CADEP, MIDE, Rights Without Borders, Amhauta and Civil Association Wara. Manuela Ramos and Amhauta are the only two feminist NGOs.

The participating NGOs all work for women’s empowerment explicitly or have at least on project for women’s empowerment. They all mention the concept of ‘empowerment’ on their social media or their website, if applicable. The target group furthermore had to explicitly focus on indigenous women and *campesinas*. In the region of Cusco, this implies Quechua and rural women. Interviewees were mainly executive directors, project leaders and managers of NGOs. The list of conducted interviews with detailed information can be found in annex 1.

In all interviews, participants were asked to mention other organisations that would be interesting for this research. These given names and contact numbers were used multiple times to get in contact with other organisations in the region. This was mainly very helpful to find

organisations without any webpage or specific contact details on the internet. It furthermore was interesting to see, what types of organisations participants recommended and how they perceived their relationship with these other organisations.

During the selection process, two things became fairly clear. First of all, a few selected NGOs did employ empowerment as a buzzword. These NGOs mentioned empowerment multiple times on their website or on their social media. They, however, weren't aware of this or couldn't explain the meaning of the concept when asked. Eventually, these specific cases were excluded from participation, as they weren't suitable for this thesis. It supports the finding that the concept of empowerment is a buzzword and used as a flashy concept, as described in chapter 2. It is used as this sense of attraction and is not adding any value to these particular organisations and their objectives. This stands in line with the finding that it has become a replacement for concepts such as gender equality and women's status (Batliwala, 1994; Jejeebhoy & Sathar, 2001). Another specific finding is that there are two interesting distinctions between NGOs. The origin of the NGO, being southern or being western was already considered before conducting the interviews. But while searching for NGOs, it became clear that also the vision of being feminist or not, has to be taken into account. A feminist focus can be different than a gender focus on empowerment. An NGO with a gender focus, a women's NGOs, puts its focus mostly on the establishment of equal rights and equity between men and women. It aims to fight women's subordination to men. An NGO with a feminist ideology centres around changing the system and challenging power structures in society. It goes one step beyond gender equality and besides former, aims to abandon old relationships and create new ones. This thesis will focus on the ideological background and the origin of NGOs and thus takes both distinctions into account.

3.2 NGOs in Peru working for women's empowerment

3.2.1 The interpretation of empowerment

NGOs in Peru employ different meanings to the concept of empowerment. This supports literature and entails that empowerment remains a vague and unspecified concept amongst NGOs in the country. The most frequently mentioned components of empowerment in the interviews were: the making of own decisions, autonomy, the strengthening of capacities, the

recognition and exercise of rights, self-esteem, self-recognition, self-consciousness and the strengthening of identity.

While defining empowerment, participants came with various different components of the concept. These nevertheless are standing in line with each other. Noticeable is that the strong majority of the NGOs all focus on the individual dimension of empowerment. This dimension can be recognized by a strong focus on the development of personal confidence and capacities, thus self-empowerment (Pigg, 2002). This stands in line with the trend of individualization in the western world in which women's empowerment is more and more focused on the individual (Calvès, 2009). The relational and collective dimension of empowerment, including political mobilization and participation is becoming less visible. Both INGOs and (feminist) SNGOs tend to have this interpretation of the concept. This can be clearly demonstrated by feminist SNGO Manuela Ramos: "Empowerment is the development of self-esteem, it entails making decisions and to have own control of resources" (G. Diaz, personal communication, December 12, 2018). SNGO CBC is also in accordance with this dimension and defines empowerment as: "A process of evaluation of self-recognition, it implies a process of capacity to fight discrimination and violence. Be in a position of leadership, it is a life project" (M. Ligia Alencastre, personal communication, December 7, 2018). Four organisations (INGOs/SNGOs), however, did mention the importance of a political agenda and mobilization, the role in and impact on their community, which refers to other two dimensions of empowerment (D. Dodson, personal communication, December 11, 2018; G. Velasco, personal communication, December 11, 2018; J. Borda Pari, personal communication, December 29, 2018; W. Meekes, personal communication, November 30, 2018). INGO Peruvian Hearts for example defines empowerment as: "The ability for every woman to lift herself out of poverty, to break that cycle for her and her family and to go out to her community and make change" (D. Dodson, personal communication, December 12, 2018).

The roots of an NGO can explain the difference between a more individual dimension and a more collective dimension. In this case, both feminist NGOs focus explicitly on the individual dimension of empowerment when defining the concept. The feminist ideology and its goals, which forms the whole foundation of these NGOs, differs from other women's organisations and its goals. Goals of women's organisations are for example more focused on gender and on gender equality, whereas feminist organisations go one step further. Feminist sees women as agents and not simply as receivers of aid. Empowerment should criticize present-day social

constructions entails attacking gendered power relations and patriarchal structures. It thus makes sense that feminist NGOs focus on the individual dimension of empowerment, because they try to emphasize women as agents of change. To do so, they need confidence and they need to know that they are worth it.

Three NGOs, in contrast to other participants, furthermore emphasize the importance of identity when defining empowerment. SNGO CADEP for example mentioned: “Empowerment entails the strengthening of your own identity and the recognition of this identity. Being proud of your own identity” (C. Alvarez Ponce de León, personal communication, December 18, 2018). Identity is not something immediately linked with empowerment, as seen in the previous chapters, but it is interesting to see that it is a component amongst a few NGOs. It is striking that only (feminist) SNGOs mention this component of identity. SNGOs are all established in the south and in most cases in the specific country they are operating in. Although NGOs in general are famous for their grassroots linkage, SNGOs may have closer ties with the local population, because all staff is from the region. It is to say that, in comparison to INGOs, SNGOs are way more focused on identity and also prioritize this in the empowerment process. As they stand closer to this identity, they really fight for the survival of cultural traditions and languages. Identity can also be seen as your identity as a woman, which can explain why also a feminist NGO aims identity to be important.

The capability of making strategic and effective choices, the development of capacities, the expansion of assets and capabilities are frequently mentioned components in the academic definitions (Alsop, 2005; Kabeer, 2001; Nayaran, 2002b; Sen, 1990). Some overlap can be found between academic interpretations and the participants’ interpretations of empowerment. Five SNGOs mentioned the strengthening and development of capacities as a component. Self-esteem, self-recognition, autonomy and strengthening of identity are added by NGOs.

It is interesting to see that the recognition, consciousness and exercise of rights. were popular components amongst participants. They were mentioned several times by seven NGOs, including SNGOs, INGOs and a feminist SNGO. The fact that rights are seen as such an important component, shows that empowerment is linked to human rights and that there is thus quite some consensus on this component. NGOs want Peruvian women to know about their rights and that they exercise these rights. This can be explained by the fact that some work together in so-called ‘tables’ or networks and might adopt each other’s interpretation. But it can

also be explained by the idea that they value human (democratic) rights as NGOs, as they have historically seen, always prioritized this. Either they might see that indigenous and rural women are excluded from some of these rights and thus perceive that women's empowerment in Peru should include human rights. It though is striking that only INGO Peruvian Hearts focuses on the educational tool of empowerment (D. Dodson, personal communication, December 11, 2018). This stands in line with the definition of empowerment of Sen (1990, p. 2), which is the only definition that includes (school) education as a tool for the development of capacities, needed in the process of empowerment. The organisation, however, doesn't put education in their interpretation of the concept.

Feminist SNGO Amhauta also noted a component focused on challenging power structures:

"The idea that women have to belief in themselves, because women often think that they are not worth anything. It is a process in which women presume that their lives are all important ... Fight for these rights and begin to question the system" (R. Salazar Segovia, personal communication, January 5, 2019).

This is something that feminist scholars also highlight in their definitions of empowerment (Batliwala, 1994; Johnson, 1992). Questioning the system is clearly linked with the broad goal of feminism as they aim to transform the system. This was not present in any other given definition. Another finding is that in the organisations of nine participants (INGOs/SNGOs/feminist NGO), the economic dimension of empowerment was present. This, however, does not that this dimension dominates, Only one SNGO Mide focuses entirely on this dimension. R. Salazar Segovia (personal communication, January 5, 2019) even said: "Economics is an element, but we know that economic empowerment won't solve the problem of violence and definitely won't solve social problems. Money doesn't solve". That the economic dimension of empowerment doesn't dominate amongst the majority of the participants contradicts the academic literature. Which is actually a good sign, as this entails that NGOs in Peru don't forget the other dimensions of empowerment and maybe aim these as more important. In general, NGOs in Peru tend to focus on the political, social, psychological/personal, judicial and economic perspective of empowerment.

Which above all is clear, is that empowerment is perceived as a process amongst almost all participants. This has also been explicitly mentioned by a few. Only one organisation defined empowerment as something that can be achieved . SNGO Mide focuses on empowerment and

wants to reach empowerment through microcredit. Interestingly, because this is often seen amongst NGOs who focus on the economic perspective of empowerment such as microfinance services (Smyth, 2010). Nevertheless, the majority sees empowerment as a process.

With the above stated information, it can be concluded that there are similarities and differences regarding the interpretation of empowerment amongst NGOs in Peru. A consensus can be found when looking at the dimension of the interpretation of empowerment. Almost all NGOs focus on the individual dimension of empowerment and only a smaller number focuses on the collective dimension of empowerment. In this sense, the meaning of the concept empowerment has thus drifted away from its collective roots, but this can be explained by looking at the ideological background of an NGO. Participants furthermore frequently mentioned the component of identity and the component of human rights in their interpretation of empowerment. The former might be explained by the origin of an NGO, as (feminist) SNGOs are more closely tied to the Peruvian identity and female identity. The component of rights might be explained by the history of NGOs in Peru, as they have always focused on democratic values. There was furthermore some overlap between academic interpretations and the participants' interpretations of empowerment and empowerment was almost in all interviews perceived as a process. There was above all no favouritism of the economic dimension amongst participants.

3.2.2 Empowerment in practice

NGOs strive to provide the needs of disempowered people and to proclaim these needs for them (Edwards and Hulme, 1994; Nayaran, 2002a). All participants agree on the fact that women, in particular rural and indigenous women, are excluded and disempowered in Peruvian society. If women aren't empowered, the life of no one can be changed, as they are the engine of the growth and development of her family and community (C. Alvarez Ponce de León, personal communication, December 18, 2018; G. Velasco, personal communication, December 11, 2018; R. Salazar Segovia, personal communication, January 5, 2019; W. Zagarra, personal communication, January 10, 2019).

Indigenous and rural women in particular are historically been made invisible by the state and are in a very vulnerable position (V. Estrada Aguilar, personal communication, December 19, 2018). Rural women have a disadvantage in comparison to urban women:

In the city, women have more freedom, more equality and same rights, competencies and working spaces as men. In the Andean world you don't see this. Women maintain the farm, take care of their husband and children, prepare food and keep an eye on the crops (W. Zagarra, personal communication, January 10, 2019).

As empowerment tends to be a fuzzy concept, there are consequently no specific guidelines on how to start this process. NGOs in Peru work on women's empowerment through various programmes and topics. Programmes of participants were created around the following topics: leadership, illiteracy, political participation, sexual rights, productive activities, domestic violence, alcohol abuse, family planning, microcredit, human rights, school education, environment and interculturality. Most programmes focused on education, political participation and mobilization and productive activities and will be explained below.

Education is a tool for empowerment amongst several participating NGOs. These educational programmes focus on different aspects in different organisations, and not only means education in the sense of primary and secondary education, but education in a broader way. Education can be very practical as lessons on domestic violence, self-esteem, human rights, alcohol abuse, cooking, knitting or the Castellan language. But education in the sense of social life was also mentioned, including socializing and interacting for personal development (C. Alvarez Ponce de León, personal communication, December 18, 2018; M. Ligia Alencastre, personal communication, December 7, 2018). SNGO CADEP even educates women on feminism and women's movements to make women aware of their human rights (C. Alvarez Ponce de León, personal communication, December 18, 2018). INGO Peruvian hearts is the only organisation that offers scholarships to young women and therefore entirely focuses on school education as a tool. Very important, as the illiteracy rates are high amongst rural and indigenous women and many women haven't had any education. Two SNGOs furthermore advocate for a gender focus in education (J. Borda Pari, personal communication, December 12, 2018; S. Samamé, personal communication, December 12, 2018).

Education also comes back in other programmes more indirectly, such as women's groups or platforms where women can express themselves and learn from each other (C. Alvarez Ponce de León, personal communication, December 18, 2018; W. Meekes, personal communication, November 30, 2018). W. Meekes (personal communication, November 30, 2018):

Once I came to visit the women's group in Racchi and an interesting discussion emerged on domestic violence and whether a husband was justified to hit his wife. Some women said that a husband is allowed to do so, while others said that women shouldn't accept that anymore. This is fantastic, when the women start this discussion themselves.

Congresses and meetings of women are besides all not only organized for educational reasons, but to start the dialogue with other actors such as the state or private companies (M. Ligia Alencastre, personal communication, December 7, 2018; G. Velasco, personal communication, December 11, 2018). This with the main objective to create a women's agenda and promote women's political participation. As Peru has a masculine public sphere and it's normal in indigenous communities to exclude women from the political process, these type of programmes try to change this characteristic of patriarchy. It often gets combined with women learning about leadership and it tries to create a sustainable partnership between different actors. Especially those NGOs who defined empowerment as relational and collective had programmes like described above, but also NGOs who interpreted empowerment in the individual dimension had programmes like these. NGOs furthermore concentrate on a lack of primary and secondary education by adjusting to illiteracy and create programmes around this issue (C. Alvarez Ponce de León, personal communication, December 18, 2018; R. Salazar Segovia, personal communication, January 5, 2019). Of every ten illiterates in Peru, eight are women (R. Salazar Segovia, personal communication, January 5, 2019). Unique in this case is feminist SNGO Amhauta, who reaches these women through radio. Every week they have their own radio show in which they talk about various topics on the women's agenda (e.g. abortion or family planning). They have found an alternative way to bring information to excluded areas of the country (R. Salazar Segovia, personal communication, January 5, 2019).

Half of the participants (INGO/SNGOs) have one or more project on production activities. This includes programmes on microcredit, agriculture and cultivation, but also artisanal and fair-trade production. A concept that emerged in two conversations with SNGOs is cultural tourism (M. Ligia Alencastre, personal communication, December 7, 2018; W. Zagarra, personal communication, January 10, 2019). This is another perspective on tourism, in which local culture takes a central place. Economic empowerment is important, because when women earn their own money, they are less dependent from their husband and more autonomous (G. Diaz, personal communication, December, 12, 2018; W. Meekes, personal communication, November 30, 2018). As Peruvian society is characterized by a dependence of women on men,

economic empowerment can mean that women earn back a little part of their independence. Two SNGOs provide microcredit to indigenous and rural women, as their position makes it hard for them to get this type of funding.

It is interesting to see that although most of the interpretations were focused on the individual dimension, this individuality cannot always be traced back to their programmes. The individual dimension can be found in the educational programmes, as they mostly focus on individual opportunities, self-development and learning skills and don't focus on the politicization of women. But most NGOs did not have specific programmes on the development of self-esteem or self-development, which their interpretations would suggest. The NGOs who interpreted empowerment in a more collective way, all had political programmes though, in general more than the others with an individual dimension. But the other individually orientated NGOs also had political programmes aiming political mobilization and participation. It is important to recognize that although the consciousness, recognition and exercise of human rights were important components in most interpretations, in practice only three NGOs have programmes on this topic. This entails that not every NGO translates their interpretation into programmes that fits their interpretation. This might be due their set agenda, because they just adopted empowerment without any further actions, or because their definition of empowerment is still unclear and changes.

There is furthermore some friction between the wide range of programmes and topics. Various SNGOs claimed that especially programmes on agriculture, biodiversity and climate change are important topics for rural and indigenous women. Feminist SNGO Amhauta argues that abortion and reproductive rights are of same importance and should be on the agenda of both rural women as urban women (R. Salazar Segovia, personal communication, January 5, 2019). Noticeable is that SNGOs are more focused on these more traditional themes and that feminist and INGOs don't cover these themes. The reason for this difference can be explained by the origin of SNGOs, as employees are closer to the culture and real problems. While feminist NGOs and INGOs are a bit more detached and are only looking through their feminist and western/modern glasses while prioritizing certain topics and not considering the real problems occurring in the daily lives of these women.

Besides the different programmes, there are differences to be found in who's involved in the process of women's empowerment. With the importance of family and community in the

background, it can be found that some NGOs work with the whole family of women and some NGOs more individually focus on women. SNGOs almost always take the family into account, while the feminist and international NGOs choose to only focus on the women. R. Salazar of Amhauta argues: “We are against the idea of complementarity, which claims that a woman can’t live without a man and vice versa. We believe that women are individually important” (Personal communication, January 5, 2019). All seven SNGOs, without the feminist ones, covered the importance of family during the interview. They perceive an important role for the husband and children in the process of empowerment. W. Zagarra from ACW:

We always focus on the family as a whole. Women, their husbands and even their children. You can choose to work only with women, but women don’t live in a separate space ... The choices women make affect her family. Other persons also matter (personal communication, January 10, 2019).

Considering the above, feminist SNGO Amhauta and SNGO CBC brought up the concept of ‘nuevas masculinas’. All about new roles for men in society, opposite to traditional masculinity. Men should be involved in empowerment processes, because new relationships have to be created (R. Salazar Segovia, personal communication, January 5, 2019). Feminist NGOs tend to thus also work with men, but not the direct family of the women they work with.

NGOs work for women’s empowerment through several types of programmes on various topics. Programmes on education, political participation and mobilization and productive activities were most frequently mentioned. In general, the participants’ interpretation of empowerment doesn’t match with their programmes. Findings furthermore demonstrate that differences can be found looking at who is involved in the empowerment process and the different themes that should be on the rural and indigenous women’s agenda. Especially SNGOs traditionally perceive family as important. Also, feminist NGOs prefer other topics on the agenda of rural and indigenous women than other women’s NGOs.

3.2.3 The alternative approach of NGOs

In the region of Cusco, the number of women’s organisations is growing. This unfortunately doesn’t count for communities and more rural areas, where only little women’s organisations are active (J. Borda Pari, December 12, 2018). There are already more than 500 in the Cusco region, but these are not having a big impact yet (idem). This rise can be explained by the presence of

the feminist movement in the region. One downside is that these often only reaching urban or semi-urban areas of the country. Which leads to an urban women's agenda and little similarities with rural women's agenda. Agendas differ, because women in rural areas are facing other obstacles than urban women. The movement is making rural women invisible (G. Velasco personal communication, December 11, 2018; J. Borda Pari, December 12, 2018; W. Meekes, personal communication, November 30, 2018). As W. Meekes (personal communication, November 30, 2018) of INGO HoPe argues:

The feminist bulwark in Peru, with organisations as *Flora Tristán*, are elite groups. The feminist organisations failed to find any common ground with poor women and women in rural areas. For this reason, they have always followed their men's voting behaviour (e.g. Fujimore).

When talking about approach, almost all participants (SNGOs/INGOs/feminist) mentioned the participative approach of their organisation. This is in accordance with two characteristics of NGOs: their alternative bottom-up approach and their grassroots linkage (Friedman, 1992). It brings them closer to disempowered and excluded groups. But actually, all participants work with this approach, as they all work with local people and their services are based on people-centred processes, although this wasn't specifically brought up by them. Top-down approaches were furthermore also not favoured by INGOs: "One of our principles actually is that we don't come to the people and tell them what we have come up with. People themselves come to us with their needs and questions" (W. Meekes, personal communication, November 30, 2018).

According academics, NGOs have a role as a service provider and as an advocate for the poor's interest (Banks & Hulme, 2012). When looking at empowerment, specifically this role of an advocate of the poor should be taken into account. The role as a service deliverer is less under discussion as empowerment goes further than just service delivery and does not entails 'giving' empowerment to excluded groups (Halfon, 2007; Smyth, 2010). NGOs on women's empowerment are actually aiming to support and defend the position disempowered people. In the SNGOs with a focus on relational and collective empowerment, this role as a service deliverer was less visible. G. Velasco (personal communication, December 11, 2018) from SNGO CEDEP Ayllu:

We want women's participation in politics. This already happens more than previously. Women shouldn't only have a role in the kitchen or in the household. No, they have to actively participate in their

communities as for example a governor. Most of the time only men fulfil these types of functions. We are helping women to participate in these processes.

It is striking, however, that two SNGOs consider empowerment as something that is given to someone. This is in accordance with recent critique on the popularity of the concept of empowerment, that focus on the instrumental definition of it. Institutions are less interested in changing power relations and are maintaining the status quo. The fact that certain NGOs still refer to empowerment as some kind of service that you deliver to a person, shows that NGOs still don't understand the true meaning of it. It tends to only still be a limited concern to threat empowerment as a process in which women are the agents of change and get power and not just receive power. This comes forward in interviews, as they refer to empowerment as something that "we can give women" (S. Samamé, personal communication, December 12, 2018; W. Zagarra, personal communication, January 10, 2019). W. Zagarra: "Empowerment is strengthening and giving women capacities and stability for their personal growth and development" (Personal communication, January 10, 2019). The rest of the participants referred to empowerment as an act only women themselves can lead. The fact that certain SNGOs see empowerment as a service delivery points out that these organisations might have implemented empowerment as a buzzword.

But strategies between NGOs can also differ. Between feminist and women's NGOs, a big difference can be found. Feminist NGOs are way more critical, are challenging society, while other NGOs are following the mainstream and don't dare to be too critical or controversial. R. Salazar Segovia (personal communication, January 5, 2019) of Amhauta:

I think the big difference is the focus. We are always a little more critical and we observe. We primarily believe that empowering women means that women need to quit doing some of the things they have been doing. You can't empower a woman who is for example in a situation of domestic violence and she remains following her husband's will. We for example dare to talk about topics as abortion. Other organisations who work with women don't work on this topic.

It thus can be said that feminist organisations dare to be controversial and tackle obstacles even if this is against the state. That feminist NGOs work this way in contrast to other NGOs can be explained by their broader ideological goals.

The partnership amongst INGOs and SNGOs is moreover presented as one of equality. This, nevertheless, is found to be a bit more complicated in practice. Both INGOs brought up in the interviews that they work together with SNGOs, but that their ties aren't that strong. Especially Peruvian Hearts argued that in the past they worked a lot with SNGOs, but that this didn't work out due to their differences in strategy. SNGOs are supposed to work less efficient and lack in specifying their goals (D. Dodson, personal communication, December 11, 2018). The main funding institutions from all organisations were based in Europe and The United States. SNGO RNMP brought up that they don't propose programmes to their donors, but that their donors come up with the programmes for them (S. Samamé, personal communication, December 12, 2018). Following someone else's agenda, can lead to the loss of core values (Merce, 2002). All other NGOs nevertheless weren't very open on this topic and all claimed that they themselves through the participation of local people, develop new programmes. This is a good sign and demonstrates that NGOs are sticking to their own core values.

It can be concluded that participants strategy and role is in accordance with the traditional role of NGOs. There were no signs of any top-down approaches. Differences within these role and strategy can be explained by looking at the ideological foundation of an NGO. The role of service deliverer was, however, also a perception on empowerment. The slightly complicated partnership between INGOs and SNGOs demonstrates that fully equal partnerships are still not always the case in practice. But the findings do show that core values remain very important for NGOs in Peru.

Conclusion

Indigenous and rural women are excluded in Peruvian society. For this reason, they have become the target group for various women's and feminist NGOs in Peru. In the region of Cusco, many NGO's actively focus on the empowerment of indigenous and rural women. The aim of this thesis was to analyse how different NGOs in Cusco, Peru interpret and have implemented the concept of 'empowerment' in their organisation. For this reason, this thesis not focused on what development is, but on development as a discourse, in which concepts matter.

In the first chapter, it became clear that development discourse focuses on concepts in international development and that it's full of buzzwords. The concept of empowerment, however, does have a rich history and meaning, brought to life by feminist scholars. The popularity boom of the concept in the 1990s, has unfortunately led to the loss of the transformative meaning tackling social structures, and has made it the buzzword it is nowadays. NGOs, providing an alternative approach to development, not only deliver services to excluded groups, but also to assist them to proclaim these needs themselves.

In chapter 2, the global, Latin American and Peruvian context of the main concept was discussed. It demonstrated that empowerment has gained power, but that it has become a buzzword. It has been instrumentalized, as well as individualized by development institutions. As many women's and feminist NGOs are active in Peru, the concept has also been adopted by NGOs in the Cusco region. Despite that there is gender equality by law and discrimination is punishable, women are still in a less favorable position than man. Indigenous and rural women form a subgroup, as they are facing often more and other obstacles.

Building on the previous two chapters, the analysis of the gathered qualitative data started in chapter 3. Although all interpretations differed, various similarities were found. Not everyone just cherry-picks a customized meaning of the concept, but there are broad consensuses to be found amongst NGOs in Peru. Both the recognition, consciousness and exercise of human rights and the component of identity were frequently mentioned amongst the participants. This implies that NGOs in Peru agree on the fact that both components are important for women's empowerment. Looking at Peruvian society, these two components really fit, because (democratic) human rights have always been core values of NGOs in the region. The fact that

indigenous and rural women are often still excluded from human rights, such as healthcare, education and political participation, might have led to this interpretation of empowerment. Identity is also the reason why indigenous and rural women are excluded, empowering this might lead to an acceptance of this identity as a rural woman or as an indigenous woman. It is furthermore becoming individualized as the individual dimension has become the main focus of empowerment, that focuses on self-empowerment and individual opportunities. It supports the individualization trend in the western world. While there is consensus, NGOs unfortunately also employ the concept to make their programmes more attractive, as been found in the participant selection process. In this case, 'empowerment' clearly is a buzzword with a lack of meaning.

This thesis tried to understand the interpretation of 'women's empowerment' by NGOs in Peru. It's almost impossible to interpret women's empowerment the same in every country of the world. Every region has its own cultures with corresponding traditions, structures and gender roles. The findings of this thesis demonstrate that NGOs in Peru have adjusted the concept and made it suitable for the country they are working in. They gave a spin to the concept, and made it their own. Whereas the former can actually be seen as a good thing, there is also a negative side to it. Scholars created two central components of empowerment: empowerment as a process and empowerment as women agency. This unfortunately was not always the case. Two SNGOs perceived empowerment as a form of service delivery. In this sense, empowerment is given to women, which strikes as contradictory and even problematic under the understanding that only women can be agents in the process. If women aren't the engine of women's empowerment, then women aren't empowered but just 'receiving' power. Nevertheless, this is just a small part of the participants. From all NGOs, only one feminist NGO specifically mentioned a transformative component of the concept: challenging the system. Although only one feminist SNGO explicitly mentioned this, the two above stated components already show that most participants understand the transformative meaning of the concept. Almost all participants luckily perceived empowerment as a process. This is seen as a good sign, because empowerment, more than a goal or something that can be achieved, is a process in which people are only empowered or disempowered in relation to others.

Looking at the translation of empowerment into practice, programmes on education, political participation and mobilization and productive activities were most popular amongst the participants. Their implementation of programmes on these specific topics shows that NGOs in

Peru are aware of the society they are working in and the specific situation of their target group. Peruvian indigenous and rural women are generally poor, dependent on their husband, victim of domestic violence, dealing with little political participation and almost no educational opportunities. Through productive activities programmes, they try to achieve economic independence for women. These women are often forced into certain gender roles and household tasks, but by earning money themselves they can earn little independence back. With educational programmes, they aim to tackle the high illiteracy rates, as they often don't get the opportunity or have the time for decent education. With women politization programmes, they try to support women to join the political process. In Peru and communities, this is often still perceived a masculine space, in which women should not interfere. The participants actually thus really try to tackle specific obstacles and try to change the deeply rooted structures. They thus focus on different perspectives of empowerment, such as the social and political perspective, which again demonstrates that not

Striking is the fact that, looking at their interpretation of empowerment, most NGOs did not translate their interpretation of empowerment into matching programmes. The focus on the individual dimension, is for example not visible in their programmes, as they not focus on self-empowerment and personal opportunities. NGOs who interpret empowerment outside the individual dimension, had more political programmes though, but also NGOs who did not interpreted it this way had these programmes. This demonstrates that participants haven't clearly defined or understood empowerment.

Women's empowerment can partly be seen as a buzzword amongst NGOs in Peru. There is a consensus on several components and the dimension of the concept, but it has also been implemented as a flashy concept. The majority of NGOs in Peru perceive empowerment as a process, guided by women themselves. This reveals that the participants understand the transformative roots of the concept, even though they don't explicitly mention this. The interpretation of empowerment by Peruvian NGOs consist of their own unique components. Although their interpretations and their practices don't always match, their practices fit Peruvian reality and the obstacles indigenous and rural women face every day.

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Annex 1

List of conducted interviews

Interviewee	Organisation	Function	Date and place
Frank Boeren	Oxfam Peru (INGO)	Country Director	Cusco, Peru 26-11-2018
Walter Meekes	HoPe (INGO)	Executive Director	Cusco, Peru 30-11-2018
M. Ligia Alencastre	Bartolomé de las Casas Center (CBC) (SNGO)	Manager Intercultural Education	Cusco, Peru 7-12-2018
Danny Dodson	Peruvian Hearts (INGO)	Executive Director	Cusco, Peru 11-12-2018
Gloria Velasco	CEDEP Ayllu (SNGO)	Project leader Broederlijk Delen	Cusco, Peru 11-12-2018
Gloria Díaz	Manuela Ramos (Feminist SNGO)	Project Leader Microfinance	Cusco, Peru 12-12-2018
Silvia Samamé	National Network for the Promotion of Women (RNPM) (SNGO)	Executive Director	Cusco, Peru 12-12-2018
Carmen Alvarez Ponce de León	CADEP (SNGO)	Executive Director	Cusco, Peru 18-12-2018
Violeta Estrada Aguilar	MIDE (SNGO)	Executive Director	Cusco, Peru 19-12-2018
Jaime Cesar Borda Pari	Rights without Borders (SNGO)	Executive Director	Cusco, Peru 29-12-2018
Rosario Salazar Segovia	Amhauta (Feminist SNGO)	Executive Director	Cusco, Peru 05-01-2019
Williar Zagarra	Civil association Wara (ACW) (SNGO)	Executive Director	Cusco, Peru 10-01-2019