



# **Local Ownership and Poverty Reduction of Local Communities in the Global South- Perceived From a Postcolonial Perspective**

**The Case of Malian Small Scale Development Projects**

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the Global South- Perceived From a Postcolonial Perspective**  
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**“Like slavery and apartheid, poverty is not natural. It is man-made and it can be overcome and eradicated by the actions of human beings.”**

By Nelson Mandela (1918- 2013), anti- apartheid revolutionary, political leader, and inspirator.

Source quote: BorgenProject (2018). *Top 5 Mandela quotes on poverty*. Retrieved from: <https://borgenproject.org/mandela-quotes-on-poverty/>

# Acknowledgements

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Writing a MSc thesis with a topic like this within the International Development Studies master's programme was not an easy job. This is good, because the daily challenge has kept me focused. Reading, conducting about twenty interviews, rereading, writing, deleting pieces of text, reading again, and so on: these things have been part of my daily studying the past seven months. It was a nice time, with some struggles now and then. And therefore, I needed some assistance and guidance during the process.

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# Abstract

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*Development “aid” has in the last decades been rephrased into development “cooperation”, with a focus on the collaboration of the donor on the one side and the “ones to be helped” on the other (Di Ciommo, 2014). Among the development actors, such as NGOs, governments, and development banks, a quite new group came up, namely the private development initiatives (“ PDIs”)- which are small scale organisations that differ from the other groups mainly due to their small scale and local projects. Their focus, as claimed by several authors (e.g. Hellheiner, 2010; Kinsbergen, 2014; Van den Berg & De Goede, 2012; Shirch, 2019; Van der Lee, 2011), is concerned with local ownership and local sustainable development. Local ownership implies that the local community at focus does actively participate in the whole project planning, execution, and maintenance (=keeping it “running”). Four interrelated principles are key for local ownership, which are local participation, self-reliance, empowerment, and capacity building. It has been argued that this local ownership with an eye at development for a particular community at the long term, called in the thesis “local sustainable development”, is often a key part to integrate in the methods of PDIs (e.g. Jourdan, 1998; Hellheiner, 2010; Ejodus, 2017; Eijndhoven-Meijers, 2021; De Gaay-Fortman, 2021). There has been done research on the topic by scholars such as Kinsbergen (2014;2015), Ejodus (2017), Schulpen (2005), and Schirch (2019). However, there has not research research yet how local ownership is integrated by the PDIs specifically in their methods of small- scale local poverty reduction in the Global South. Therefore, the research in this thesis will focus on the main question: How is local ownership, with an eye on local sustainable development in the Global South, integrated in the methods of PDIs? By conducting in depth interviews with people that have had PDIs and with people that have a background in the topic, and by analyzing among other things policy documents of PDIs (secondary data collection), an answer is provided. Furthermore, a special focus is put on four specific PDIs in Mali and postcolonialism as perspective on the methods of the PDIs. Looking at the results, it can be concluded that local ownership is a key part of the method of PDIs and that the principles of community participation, self-reliance, empowerment, and capacity building are significant: letting the locals actively participate, relying on their own resources, strengthening their skills and capacities and/or empowering their mentality are key for the local development projects- and show lots of postcolonial characteristics.*

**Keywords:** *local ownership, local sustainable development, PDI, CBO, self-reliance, capacity building, community participation, empowerment, postcolonialism*

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## List abbreviations

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**ACD:** Action Couverture Développement

**AMAS:** Association Malienne des Amis du Sahel

**ASM:** Aide du Sahel Mali

**CBO:** Community based organisation

**CLD:** Community led development

**ECO-principe:** empowerment, community participation, ownership principe

**EU:** European Union

**NABC:** Netherlands African Business Council

**NGO:** Non-governmental organisation

**PDI:** Private development initiative

**PPD:** Partners Pays Dogon

**TNO:** (Nederlandse organisatie voor) Toegepast Natuurwetenschappelijk Onderzoek

**UNDG:** United Nations Sustainable Development Group

**UNHCR:** United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees

**USA:** United States of America

**USAID:** United States Agency for International Development

**VVD:** Volkspartij voor Vrijheid en Democratie

**WHO:** World Health Organisation

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# 1. Introduction of the thesis

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This first part of the thesis includes an extensive introduction to the main topic and its position within the broader topic related to development studies. It also discusses why this research has been done, what will be achieved with this research, and what its scientific and social relevance is. Furthermore, this first chapter will present the outline of the thesis.

## 1.1. Contextual background

Development aid is a phenomenon most people have been involved with at a certain point. Raising money for projects, donating money for natural disasters, watching television documentaries about development projects, the annual Serious Request radio show; name it, and the topic comes across. In the Netherlands, “development aid” as a term and phenomenon has gained a quite suspicious connotation (WNL, 2017; Trouw, 2021). People wonder where their donated money goes to and how it is being used, and some of them are also suspicious about the effectiveness of the aid (Malik, 2018; Ovaska, 2003). However, development *aid* has more or less changed the past few decades into development *cooperation*, which has adapted the focus of development projects mainly in terms of method: continuously helping the people that live in poverty (aid) has become an act of working together within the development projects ((community led) development) (Di Ciommo, 2014). NGOs, governments, multilateral development banks, and other organisations within the field of development aid have adjusted their philosophy behind and method of their development projects, in order to be among other things more effective and efficient in coping with development issues and challenges (Nairobi Outcome Document, 2016). They have also put more focus on the concepts of local ownership and community led cooperation, in order to cope with development issues.

The past few decades, a new group of development actors has entered the stage of the development organisations besides the traditional NGOs and governments- namely the so-called “private development initiatives” (PDIs) (Nel, 1994; Kinsbergen, 2014; Van den Berg & De Goede, 2012). These PDIs are small non-profit organisations initiated by only a few people and their methods in development are in general characterised by small scale and local focused development projects (Jourdan, 1998; Kinsbergen, 2014; Van den Berg & De Goede, 2012). Their small scale in organisation and focus on these small scale local development projects is their main focus due to financial and organisational capacities and more informally led work.

It is said that the PDIs in general focus specifically on training or *guiding* the local communities at focus, rather than *helping* these locals in the developmental processes (Kinsbergen, 2014; Van der Lee, 2011). This is most of the time called the support of “local ownership”, which is aimed at the best outcomes of the development projects for the local communities at focus, which improve the lives and benefit the local communities, or the so-called “community based organisations” (CBOs) (Schirch, 2019). Local ownership encompasses several elements, to mention *community participation* at the projects, *empowerment* of the locals, *capacity building* of the locals, and *self-reliance* of the community. Local sustainable development is often a goal of the PDIs and has to do with the long term benefits of the projects for the communities. Most of all, it is interesting to find out how the PDIs deal with development projects by integrating different key elements of local ownership in their methods.



Figure 1. *Capacity building- computer skills training for librarians in Uganda. EIFL (2015).*

Besides the interesting side of this understanding, it is interesting to look at four particular PDIs and how they deal specifically with the various elements that have to do with local ownership. This, because it will show specific cases with which PDIs are involved. It will also make better understandable how real life issues in practice are dealt with by the local people for which the projects are aimed. Furthermore, the topic will also be looked at from a particular lens, which is postcolonialism. This development theory criticises traditional development which is, according to supporters of this school, a form of neo- colonialism and Western

imperialism. How postcolonial- or to say, how anti neo-colonial the development methods of PDIs are- will also be discussed.

## **1.2. Research objective and question**

In much research, it has already been explained what PDIs and CBOs are, what their collaboration consists of and how their cooperation in development contributes to development aid as such (e.g. Kinsbergen, 2015; Schulpen, 2005; Van den Berg & De Goede, 2012). However, it has not been explained specifically yet how the different elements of local ownership are integrated in the methods of PDIs, with an eye at contributing to the lives of the poor in the Global South. This research tries to investigate and make understandable how this is done, or in other terms; how the various PDIs pursue local ownership in their cooperation with the CBOs. Research will be done on how local ownership is integrated in the methods of the PDIs. How the PDIs implement the core concepts of local ownership- community participation, self-reliance, empowerment, and capacity building- in their projects and methods, and to what extent the methods show characteristics of the critical theory of postcolonialism is at focus of the research. Four specific Malian development projects are taken as case study, in order to look detailly how they cope with core concepts of local ownership.

To extend the knowledge on the overall topic, this research will give an answer to the following overarching research question:

*How is local ownership, with an eye on local sustainable development in the Global South, integrated in the methods of PDIs?*

## **1.3. Why does this research matter scientifically and socially?**

Understanding what PDIs and CBOs are and mainly how their collaboration has a contribution to poverty reduction- issues that already often have been touched upon in various research projects- is a key thing within the field of development aid (e.g. Jourdan, 1998; Van der Lee, 2011; Van den Berg, 2012; ; Helleiner, 2010; Kinsbergen, 2014, 2015; Schulpen & Kinsbergen, 2013; Schrich, 2019; Rey-Moreno et al., 2014). Addressing scientifically the link between the support of local ownership and local sustainable development extends this understanding, which is key for various sectors and organisations that are involved in development aid. This, because these various sectors- to mention the scientific sector (e.g. universities and The

Netherlands Institute for Social Research), the business sector (e.g. VNO-NCW), the political sector (e.g. the Ministry of Foreign Affairs), and the development sector (e.g. Artsen Zonder Grenzen and Wilde Ganzen) - are involved in this topic more and more because of the growing group of PDIs in Europe. These organisations use this scientific knowledge and put also a specific focus on the collaborative part and independence of “the ones to be helped” in the low and middle income countries, called in Dutch *ontwikkelingssamenwerking* rather than *ontwikkelingshulp*- as discussed above already (Talsma, 2022; Rijksoverheid, 2022). The knowledge gained via this research can also be used by them, and mainly the academic sector, because it touches upon an issue which has not had much attention yet. It is therefore a valuable contribution to the scientific knowledge about PDIs, CBOs, and small scale local poverty reduction in general. By approaching the topic from a specific perspective which has not been done before either- namely from a postcolonial perspective- makes the research also scientifically relevant. It will namely show the central idea behind the collaboration of the PDIs and CBOs: development should not be a one way process guided by the Western organisations and people, but should be a process of cooperation and a process that focusses on the strengthening of empowerment and self- reliance of the people and communities that are in need for development. The methods used in this research will also add to the scientific relevance of the research, because the interviews and literature study provide first- hand information of people of PDIs, experts in development aid, and people from political fields. Finally, by taking four PDIs as special cases to focus on, a detailed and first hand understanding on how PDIs (can) deal with local ownership will be provided.

Furthermore, this research is socially relevant. By doing research local ownership is integrated in the methods (and also a bit what how this results to better living conditions of rht poor in the Global South), also stakeholders such as Partos and the Wilde Ganzen Foundation, people who start a PDI and people NGOs will get a clearer understanding of the role of local ownership in the whole process towards poverty reduction- on which the development projects are aimed. Governments or NGOs can for example use this knowledge to apply it to current or future planned development projects, no matter the scale of the project. Also policies can include knowledge. An organisation such as Wilde Ganzen Foundation can also use the information gained in this research. They can use the knowledge to make a presentation or a training which guides people with PDIs on how to cope with local ownership and how to implement this in their method, in order to make the projects more focusing on the locals. This can lead to more successful projects, whereby the future generations also can benefit from the

outcome of the projects (Nikkhah & Bin Redzuan, 2017). More knowledge will as a result be gained on the broader topic and this specific topic, which can be used by various organisations to improve or adjust their methods in development aid projects.

#### **1.4. Link to International Development Studies**

The research that is central within this thesis is closely linked to International Development Studies (IDS), because it touches upon themes and theories discussed in this MSc programme: among other things postcolonialism, modernisation theories, cultural relativism, paternalism, extreme inequalities, and the geography of development (Nederveen Pieterse, 2007; Peet & Hartwick, 2015; Porter & Craig, 2004; Strongman, 2014). Cultural relativism for example is a key topic within local ownership: in order to make the locals leader and “owners” of the projects, they have to be put central within the projects. Therefore, the donor should not impose its own (Western) way of thinking and working, but should respect the local traditions and cultures. The geography of development also returns in the research latently, because different modes of life (for example different cultures) lead to different types of development (in a Western society there are more industrial landscapes than in a non-Western one, where agricultural landscapes are dominating) (Peet & Hartwick, 2015).

#### **1.5. Wilde Ganzen Foundation as partner organisation**

A small part of the research is based on research done for the Wilde Ganzen Foundation, an organisation based in Amersfoort and originated in 1957, which supports Dutch PDIs with fundraising, knowledge and training on how to cope with small scale development projects. The Wilde Ganzen Foundation was in need of an assessment of the knowledge and skills gap in the so-called “coaching methods” among PDIs. This coaching method implies that PDIs focus more on making the local partner organisation (e.g. the CBO) leader and executor of the projects. The foundation wants to help PDIs in improving this coaching methods on the basis of training. I have done about twenty in-depth interviews with people of PDIs, in order to get to know their knowledge and skills gaps of the coaching methods, and what their needs are in



Figure 2. Logo Wilde Ganzen Foundation. Humanity House (2019).

terms of improvement. The in-depth interviews contained besides the questions needed for this research, also questions valuable for my research. This gave me insights which are also valuable for my own research: how the PDIs look at and include local ownership in their methods, and if and how they think this is valuable having good project outcomes.

## **1.6. Structure of the thesis**

The following part, chapter 2, presents a discussion on the topics of local ownership and local sustainable development, followed by the theoretical framework of postcolonialism- the leading theory that serves as lens in chapter 6. In chapter 2, also the conceptual model will be discussed. Chapter 3 follows up and is about the regional context of the Malian small scale and local development projects. A special focus is put on the Mopti Region, Tombouctou Region, and the Koulikoro Region- in which the projects of the four case studies are situated. After this chapter, the methodology chapter focuses on the methods of data collection, namely in-depth interviews and a literature study, and why these methods are valuable for the research. The succeeding parts, chapters 5 and 6, contain the analysis of the five sub-questions. It will be divided in four parts, in order to have a clear structural answer to each question. Chapter 6 also contains a critical analysis which focuses on applying the postcolonial philosophy to the methods of PDIs discussed in chapter 5: to what extent are the methods of PDIs that focus at local ownership postcolonial? “Community led development” is under discussion. The final chapter provides a discussion of the findings in light of the existing knowledge and a concluding summarizing answer besides any limitations of the research and suggestions for future research (chapter 7).

## 2. Theoretical framework of the main concepts and Postcolonialism

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Chapter 2 first discusses background information on the topic. Secondly, the theoretical framework will be explained. This will be used in chapter 6 to look critically at the methods of PDIs in light of criteria/characteristics of the postcolonial philosophy. Then, the knowledge gap will be shown- “what research is left to be done?”. Furthermore, the explanation of the main concepts will be discussed, in order to make these key principles more understandable. These will finally be shown in the conceptual model, in part 2.5.

### 2.1. Theoretical debate on local ownership and local sustainable development

PDIs are a quite new group of development actors in the development aid sphere and research to this group and their role in the international development aid has mainly been done by Sarah Kinsbergen, professor at Radboud University and her colleague and assistant professor Lau Schulpen. Other researchers who are involved in the research on PDIs, local ownership and local sustainable development are for example Lisa Schirch, senior researcher in peacebuilding at Toda Institute, Gerry Hellheiner who is a professor emeritus in international studies, and researchers at the Netherlands Institute of Social Research Van den Berg and De Goede. PDIs in the Netherlands are small scale development organisations where the ones that lead these initiatives are supporters of the Dutch “do-democracy” (Kinsbergen, 2014, p.39), which is characterised by citizens that do want to take responsibility for issues (like development aid) which was previously done by the state. These do- democracy citizens feel the need to do something good for others in the Global South, called “pragmatic altruism” (Van den Berg & De Goede, 2012, p.71). This is their motivation besides their feeling of responsibility and justice by executing projects with the ones in need personally and on a small scale (Van den Berg & De Goede, 2012). Schirch argues that this personal and small scale identity of these projects led by PDIs and their local partner organisations is characterised by the common slogan of the locals in the Global South who are in need: “nothing about us, without us” (Schirch, 2019, para. 3). This highlights the need for inclusion and joint decision making of the ones for whom the development projects are aimed, rephrased in the concept “local ownership”.

This local ownership follows today more and more the idea of *cooperation* relationships, rather than aid-recipients and aid-donor relationships (Hellheiner, 2010). The latter two namely



shows a focus on *help* rather than *cooperation*, where the “ones to be helped” or “the ones in need” are passive in the projects and only receive instead of cooperate (Schirch, 2019). According to Von Bollerbick, this cooperation relationship between the donor on the one side and the locals on the other- that is part of local ownership- would pay off better for the locals, because this local ownership adds value to sustainable development (Von Bollerbick, 2015). Local ownership namely focuses on local self-determination: locals are no longer the ones that are excluded from the development projects (Von Bollerbick, 2015; Schirch, 2019; Kinsbergen, 2014). PDIs mainly focus on the implementation of local ownership in their methods- which would lead to a certain degree of long term benefits of the project outcomes (Kinsbergen, 2014; Schulpen 2005; 2013). Sustainable development for the locals becomes more a key issue nowadays, because it aims at the dependence of the poor people in the Global South: by being engaged in the development projects, they will be more able and capable to keep the projects running, so they profit economically, socially, and environmentally from the project outcomes (Brundlandt Report, 1987).

Besides the focus at local ownership, it is claimed that PDIs put a focus on this long term, or as it will be called throughout this thesis “sustainable” development (Schirch, 2019; Hellheiner, 2010). Sustainable development has been mentioned often already within programmes of the United Nations, for example the 2030 Sustainable Development Goals (“SGDS 2030”). The focus here is to achieve development goals which do not harm and/or which are also beneficial for the future generations, such as the gender equality and climate improvement. The idea behind these fixed sustainable goals agrees with the aim of many PDIs: to achieve development for the current and future generations of a particular community (Van den Berg & De Goede, 2012; WRR, 201; Nikkah & Redzuan, 2020). Important to mention is that the focus of PDIs can be on (local) sustainable development. Important to keep in mind is the *local* aspect here. PDIs do in general namely have low budget because of their dependence of gifts and personal fundraising- which makes them unable to execute large projects (such as establishing entire healthcare systems or educational systems) (Van den Berg & De Goede, 2012).

## **2.2. Postcolonialism as theoretical lens**

The existing knowledge on the main topics of the thesis discussed above, are interesting to be looked at from a different view. This will be done in chapter 6, in which the methods of PDIs

will be put in a critical light. But first, a clear understanding of postcolonial philosophy needs to be gained.

Postcolonialism is a critical theory analysis that originated in the 1990s as theory part of the broader development theory and policy, which focuses on the legacy of West European imperialist domination over the world which took place from the 18<sup>th</sup> century until the 20<sup>th</sup> century- the period of colonisation (Ziai, 2019). It critiques the standards, perspectives, and ideas about traditional “development”, which according to post colonialists is an act of a continuing Western domination and hegemony of the dominated “subalterns” (Zein-Elabdin, 2011, p.216) - the colonised folks living in the Global South. The writings *The Wretched of the Earth* (1968) and *Black Skin, White Masks* (1986) by Frantz Fanon are more or less considered as the start of postcolonial criticism and writing. Fanon identified colonialism as destructive- in terms of physical and mental violence by the colonisers- for everything that has to do with humanity (1969). The British engagement from its second empire (19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> century) and the decolonisation processes that took place in Africa in the 1960s and 1970s are two major events for postcolonial scholars: the subordinated colonised people wanted to have self-control, self-determination, and self-government besides control over the territorial boundaries, history, language and other cultural aspects (Lvison, 2002). Besides these two major processes, the (legacy of) Enlightenment has a significant role within postcolonial studies and writing. According to Gregory Judanis, the fact that the Western Enlightenment ideals and ideas of progress, modernity, and human reason are unconsciously considered (within development aid) as universalistic applicable concepts is not good: it is too Eurocentric, which makes the Western donor considered as superior and the “poor” as inferior (2003). Traditional development is seen as an act which causes oppression and alienation of the ones to be helped by considering the Western forms of action, thinking, and behaviour as universalistic (Drabinski, 2019). To speak in terms of development, according to postcolonialists, the subaltern people should be able to speak for themselves in their own voices and to create their own cultural stories and decide what to do with their lives- which is not imposed by the donor. Related to this is a central idea of postcolonialists, namely that of “anti- conquest”, which implies that the ones in the Global South show resistance towards the culture of the colonizer (Strongman, 2014). In line with this, is Amartya Sen’s view on development, part of his theory Development as Freedom stated in his work *Development as Freedom* (1999), namely that development is an objective that should be aligned with people’s own perspectives and ideas. This implies that freedom is considered as both an end as well as a means to development, whereby the ones to be helped should be

able/”be free” to make their own decisions in the developmental processes (Sen, 1999). See the cartoon in the figure on page 20.

Zein Elabdin proposes in her text *Postcoloniality and development: development as a colonial discourse* three points which are main issues of the postcolonialist critique, to mention (2011):

1. The West has produced an image of the non-West as subaltern and ignorant, which justifies the domination.
2. The Western domination includes a cultural hegemony over the non-Western parts of the world.
3. The subaltern postcolonial societies (the Global South) are a mix of West and non-West, as a result of the domination- called “hybridity”.

These three points of critique are shared and come among other things from the well-known postcolonial thinker Homi Bhabha. He critiques the cultural imperialist character of development aid, which is part of postcolonial discourse that focuses on the aforementioned concept “hybridity”. Hybridity refers to the disorientation of the colonised by the colonisers, in terms of mixture of the mother culture of themselves and the alien culture of the colonisers, caused by colonial domination (Bhabha, 1994). The concept is, according to Bhabha, used as a strategic tool by the authoritative colonisers (or the development actors/donors) for dominating the others, through repetitive discriminative actions and behaviours (1994). Additionally, Bhabha mentions that hybridity is a form of “cultural displacement”- disrespecting the culture of the other and imposing one’s own culture, by using the colonial weapons of the coloniser’s language, education, administration, and religion (Zein Elabdin, 2011; Saha, 2015). Inequality, racism, and cultural dominance are all part of this cultural displacement. This, because postcolonialism critiques the idea that the West, which are the USA and Europe, is the centre of the world- and that it is “superior to the rest” (Grunberg, 2018). It namely says that if the West is the centre of the world, it is also the main culture and most civilised one- an example culture for all other cultures.

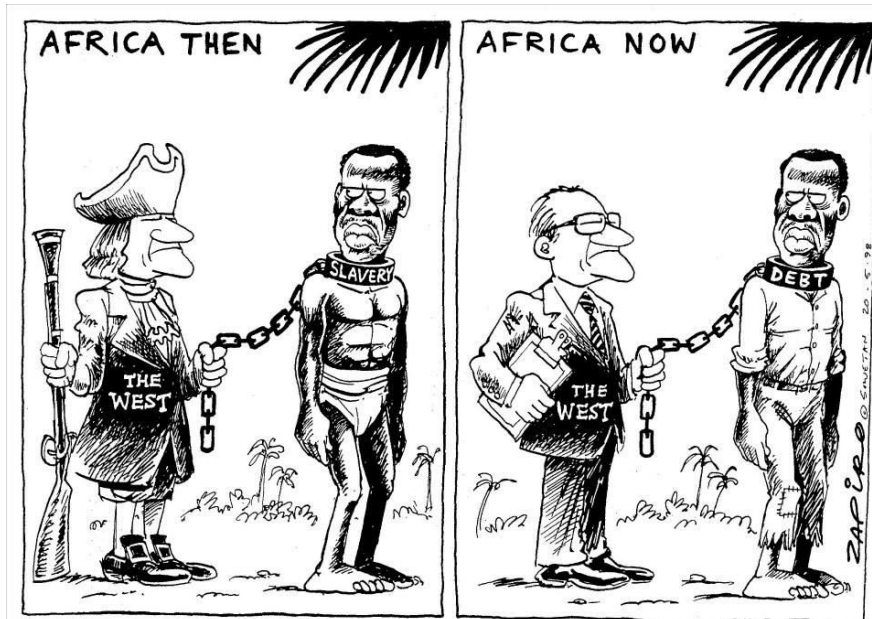


Figure 4. *The postcolonial philosophy artistically presented in a cartoon.*  
Mambrol (2016).

As can be noticed from the ideas and beliefs discussed above, it can be said postcolonialism is more or less anti-Eurocentric, being a critical theory of the Western history and the legacy of imperialism. Anti-Eurocentrism implies besides considering Europe (and America) as the centre of the world ( in terms of power) and as superior to the other cultures and parts of the world, that Western ideas and ideals are not universal. This is in line with the concept of cultural relativism, which says that every culture and its additional aspects (traditions, habits, etc.) must be relativised/respected and is considered equal to other cultures (Simon & Narman, 2014). Anti-Eurocentrism sentiments can be seen in many fields of society: e.g. politics, culture, economy. In the political sphere for example, it can be about considering Western (direct) democracy as not valuable for the political system in the eyes of non-Western governments. Looking at family structures for example Western societies are more focused on the individual, while non-Western ones value the collective of people (Humphrey & Bliuc, 2021). Besides these three and other fields, there is also development, which can be looked at as a Eurocentric phenomenon-resulting in an anti-Eurocentric sentiment by non-Westerns. The overall sentiment of postcolonial critique to development aid, is that development is a Western project which is implicitly a form of neo-colonialism/imperialism and Western hegemony (Six, 2009). How exactly development aid and more specifically the methods of PDIs are or are not a form of postcolonialism, will be discussed further and more in detail in chapter 6 *How “postcolonial” are PDIs?*.

In chapter 6, postcolonialism will finally be applied to the PDIs in general and to the case studies, serving as a lens for answering the fifth sub question. It will become clear to what extent the development aid executed by PDIs are postcolonial. To give already an example: some people of PDIs focus a lot on local participation within the projects- they find it very key to let the local community participate in the projects. This can be considered as a postcolonial stance towards development aid, because the Dutch donors do not want to exclude the locals in the projects and probably want to have the ideas of the locals also implemented here. On the other side, people of a PDI can (unintentionally) be postcolonial by excluding the locals of the project implementation and telling them what to do and how to do, as if the locals are ignorant people. Important to understand is that postcolonialism will be used as a *critical* lens throughout the thesis, meaning that if a PDI “is postcolonial” that it (unintentionally) shows postcolonial (= anti Eurocentric, anti-neo-colonial, anti-Western superior) characteristics.

### **2.3. Knowledge gap: what research is left to be done?**

As can be noticed, a lot has already been written and researched on the topics of local ownership, local sustainable development, PDIs in general and the methods of PDIs. The knowledge also clearly shows an interrelatedness between the various topics. However, how exactly local ownership is integrated in the methods of PDIs - the research objective of this thesis- has not been discussed (clearly) yet. Therefore, research on this specific side of PDIs is still left to be done. Besides this, no research has been done yet on the topic while keeping the theoretical lens of postcolonialism in mind, which will provide an interesting perspective on the issue. This, also because development issues are more and more focused at letting the local communities involved in the processes, an aim of NGOs, governmental bodies, and small scale development organisations. Furthermore, the knowledge gap will be filled up by looking at four case studies specifically and how these implement(ed) local ownership for achieving sustainable development for the communities at focus, which will put all theoretical knowledge in practice.

As already has been mentioned before, besides local ownership and local sustainable development, four key principles of the first concepts will be looked at specifically in the

research. But before these concepts will be discussed in light of the methods of PDIs, they will be first discussed in detail in the next part.

#### **2.4. An explanation of the main variables**

The six concepts that are central in the research are local sustainable development, local ownership, and its components community participation, self-reliance, empowerment, and capacity building. The latter four concepts actually “create” local ownership.

- *Local sustainable development* implies that development (economically, culturally, and socially) is aimed at long term, enduring solutions for local communities and groups (e.g. neighbourhoods, villages, hamlets) in a low and middle income country- which makes the projects sustainable and small scale (=local) (Hellheiner, 2010; Bouzoubaa & Brok, 2005). The projects are carried out by the locals with or without the supervision of the people of the PDI, but definitely with the supervision of the people of the CBO. The ECO plan, coined by Ton van der Lee (2011), can be a valuable mechanism for achieving local sustainable development: it includes empowering the local community to work on the project (=empowerment), let them involve in the project (=community participation), and let them be the leaders and owners of the projects (=ownership). Also key for local sustainable development is that the output, outcome, and idea of structural change are kept in mind. Output refers to reflecting if the results of the projects are still benefiting the communities, while outcome means that the results are still used for the same goals as it was aimed for, and structural change refers to problems both to be solved and prevented (Nikkah & Redzuan, 2020; Schrich, 2019). This all is key for the future generations and for the current generations to break the vicious circle of poverty (Van der Lee, 2011; Sobrino, 2009).
  
- *Local ownership* refers to the chance, capacity, and ability of the local groups- the ones to be helped in the Global South- to be owner and have leadership of the projects- therefore, they have the projects “in their own hands”, without (much) support of a donor, be it a PDI, a NGO, or a governmental organisation (Schrich, 2019; Kinsbergen, 2015). Local ownership is considered by some scholars and people in the field as a key tool to achieve local sustainable development, because it makes the locals able to continue the projects on their own- which is beneficial for the future generations (De

Gaay-Fortman, 2021; Meijers- Van Eijndhoven, 2021; Rey-Moreno & Sabiescu, 2014). “Shift the power”, a concept coined by the Wilde Ganzen Foundation (2022) marks the idea behind local ownership: the projects should not be imitated, implemented, and executed by the donors, but by the people themselves. A special focus is put on four ideas, which together provide a strong basis for local ownership: self-reliance, empowerment, capacity building, and community participation. It has been argued that if a PDI wants to focus on implementing local ownership in their methods and achieving this for the local community at focus, the PDI should implement at least one these interrelated ideas within their methods (e.g. Kinsbergen, 2014; 2015; Talsma, 2022; Hellheiner, 2010; Van der Lee, 2011; Interpeace, 2018). As will be noticed, these are closely interrelated to each other. Two main concepts within poverty reduction on the small local scale, overlap with local ownership, namely “community driven development” and “community led development”<sup>1</sup> More on the concepts will be discussed in chapter 6.1.

- *Community participation* in small scale development means that the local community at focus gets involved in the whole project process: from defining the problem statement of the issue(s), initiating to come up with solutions, to solving the issue (Sibanda, 2011; Bamberger, 1986). It is also key that no particular people of the local community are excluded purposely: for example, women and disabled people should get a chance to be involved, called inclusive local participation or “inclusive community engagement” (Rocheleau, 1996; Pantic, 2021, title).
- *Self-reliance* refers to the ability of the locals to function cohesively with each other within the community, to mobilise their own resources, that they are accountable for decision making and implementation of the projects, and that they as individuals and as group strengthen their capacities to find solutions for improving their lives – they should act as agents of their own development (The Hunger Project, 2020). The community development approach is closely related to this, because it says that the locals should be involved in the decision making processes and planning (UNHCR, 2001).

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<sup>1</sup> Community driven development and community led development only differ qua naming. Both focus at bottom up development “from within”, the community themselves.

- *Empowerment* refers to the processes in which people get trust in their capacities and their valuable contribution to improving their lives by themselves- in order to gain more control over their lives (WHO,2022). This will motivate them to be active in the projects (Van der Lee, 2011). According to the WHO, community empowerment focuses besides involvement and engagement also at the aim of social change (2022). People should thus have agency (= ability to set and achieve personal goals) and the chance to achieve things, with help of access to material, human, and social resources (Volker, 2020).



Figure 3. *The locals will be empowered, they speak for themselves.* Funds for NGOs (2020).

- *Capacity building* is understood as the development of human resources (skills and knowledge) and as organizational institutional development (Merino, 2012). As well as individuals, groups and organisations increase their abilities and capacities with capacity building, so they can: perform correctly in their function, define problem objectives, solve these problems, and understand how to deal with this in light of sustainability/long term perspective (UNDG, 2020).

“Measuring” how or to what extent the above standing principles are part of the methods of PDIs is not a straightforward thing, because no fixed exact data (for example, in terms of numbers) is used. However, the opinions, views, and knowledge of the respondents of the interview do indeed show a certain degree of focus on local ownership in the development projects. As will be shown in chapter 5 (and 6), the respondents do not always literally mention the concepts of capacity building, self-reliance, empowerment, and community participation.



However, the analysis of the primary data I gained also included coding of the interview outcomes. More on this will be talked about in the Methodology section.

Besides these six key concepts discussed above, it is also important to briefly focus on what is meant with “development” as such. It is a quite controversial concept within postcolonial philosophy. Namely, “what is the standard for being developed”? and/or “who is developed and who is not?” are controversial questions and difficult (if not, impossible) to answer. This, because you cannot call a Western person who has been educated at a Western university more developed than an African person who has gained knowledge on how to become a good carpenter, while both people have a decent living. Development is used in many different spheres, to mention for example economy, education, and construction. In this case, it is about human development- which still implies many issues: e.g. education, economy, healthcare. To make the abstract concept more concrete, the idea of the Human Development Index coined by the United Nations will be used. Although it remains abstract, the following will be used in order to give an idea of what “development” entails. People will have a developed life, when they have (WHO, 2022):

- A healthy and long life; measured by life expectancy at birth
- Able to be educated, gain knowledge and skills; measured by years of schooling and
- A decent standard living; a daily budget above the poverty line which guarantees them the basic needs (e.g. shelter, food, healthcare)

Although the above standing measures are relative (being poor in the Netherlands has a different connotation for example of being poor in Nigeria), they will be used as standard for an understanding of the meaning of development.

## **2.5. Conceptual framework: the interrelatedness of the main concepts**

The interrelatedness of the five core concepts that are conceptualised in part 2.4- local ownership and its components: community participation, self-reliance, empowerment, and capacity building- will be discussed below and are shown in figure 5. The largest block at left, includes local ownership, which is in this case an independent variable. This, because the

integration of one or more of the four principles shown here, decide if and how the methods of PDIs look like, or to say in the jargon of this thesis; how local ownership is integrated in the methods of PDIs. This is also the focus of the research question: How is local ownership, with an eye on local sustainable development in the Global South, integrated in the methods of PDIs?

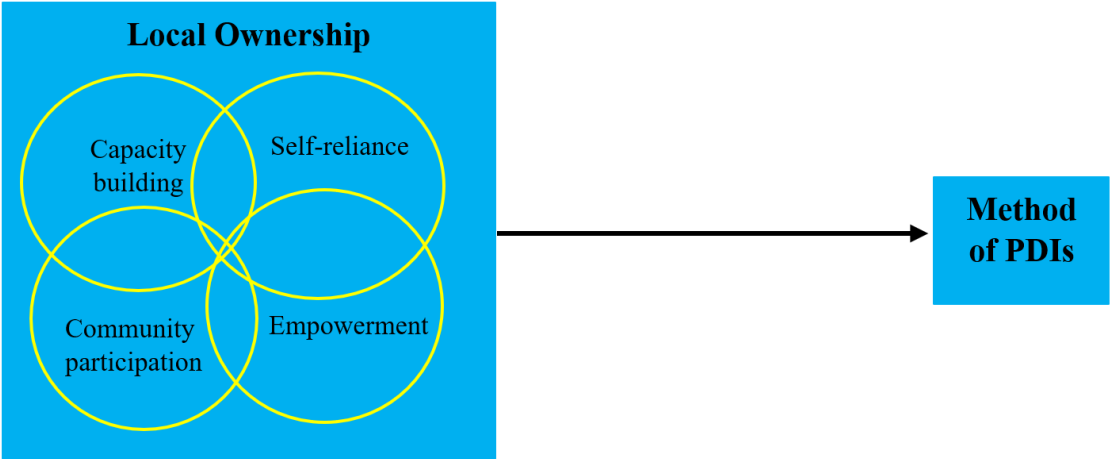


Figure 5. Conceptual model- the interrelatedness of main concepts.

The method of PDIs is an independent variable in this case, because the integration of the dependent variable local ownership is decisive for the processes of the projects (including local ownership or not including local ownership) and the outcome of the projects (included in the model). The independent variables in this case are “local ownership”, “capacity building”, “self-reliance”, “community participation”, and “empowerment”. These five are namely independent of the chosen method by the PDIs to execute the projects: do the PDIs focus on local ownership at all?, do they look for example more at empowerment than at self-reliance?, etc.

The figure above thus shows how local ownership relates to the methods of PDIs. Due to the interrelatedness of the four key principles of local ownership (which will become more clear in chapter 5), it can be said that a PDI integrates local ownership already when at least one of these principles are focused at during the development projects. Putting namely focus in the projects one or more of the interrelated key concepts of local ownership; self-reliance, community participation, empowerment and/or capacity building, makes the PDI contributing to the ownership and leadership of the specific community at focus, and thus integrating local ownership in the methods (Schulpen & Kinsbergen, 2013; Meijers, Van Eijndhoven, 2021; Omar, 2012; Sobrino, 2009; UNHCR, 2009; Hellheiner, 2010; Kinsbergen, 2014; Delhaas, 2012; World Forum, 2020).

### **3. Regional context of the Malian small scale development projects**

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Chapter 3 will delve into the geographical context of the country and the regions in which the four case studies are situated, respectively Mali and the three provinces to mention the Mopti Region, Tombouctou Region, and Koulikoro Region. There will be first a brief introduction to Mali's politics, economy and climate. Secondly, Malian small scale development will be under discussion. Finally, a contextual background to the three aforementioned regions will be given.

#### **3.1. A brief overview of Mali: politics, economy, and climate**

Mali is a Sahelian country, situated in North-western Africa and inhabited by 20 million people. Its capital city is Bamako, which is situated in the south western part of the country. The official language is French and its area is 30 times the size of the Netherlands. The nominal GDP (2018) was 17.4 billion US dollars, which is an average of 890 US dollars per capita (IMF, 2022). In terms of human development, Mali holds place 184 of the 189 countries with a human development index of 0.434, indicating a very low chance of human development, because of high poverty, low literacy, low educational chances, and low life expectancy (UNDP, 2022). Three aspects that are related to development issues in the country – politics, economy/trade, and climate- will be discussed below.

In 1960, Mali became independent from France. Until 1968, when the military took over the control in the country until 1979, the Soudanese Union Party was the sole party in the country (Britannica, 2022). From 1979 until 1991, the Malian People's Democratic Union was the sole party in, marking the political system again a one party system. When Alpha Konaré became president in 1992, with his party the Alliance of Democracy, more political parties were allowed (Britannica, 2022). This made the country a multi-party system, with a prime minister as head of the government and the president head of the state. This all changed in March 2012, when a military coup took place, followed by a second military coup in December the same year. The motivation of the Malian army to pledge these coups was dissatisfaction about the poor government's support in the provision of weapons and military backup to fight against the rebels- mainly Tuaregs- in the Northern parts of the country (Al Jazeera, 2012). These military coups have changed the Malian political and power situation, because the rebels could continue their advance in the Northern parts of Mali, due to a power vacuum. As a result, Mali has

become a more dangerous country and also due to following fights between terroristic Islamic groups, nationalistic groups, and the government forces, the situation continues to be unstable and unsafe (Clingendael & Hofman, 2013).



Figure 6. *Former president Konaré made Mali a more politically democratic country.* Peaceau (2015).

Looking at the economic situation of Mali, it can again be said it is an unstable country; it belongs namely to the top ten poorest countries in the world with an average of \$862,5 per capita (World Bank, 2022). Its economy is based on agriculture- while most farmers (80% of the population works in the agricultural sector) grow food mainly to meet their own needs (called subsistence agriculture)- and most people live in rural areas (African Development Bank, 2022). The percentage of people living under the poverty line is 64 (Oxfam Solidariteit, 2022). Due to these issues that keep the poverty standards high in the country, Mali heavily depends on foreign multilateral and bilateral aid from institutions such as the World Bank, the EU, the African Development Bank and countries like Germany and the Netherlands.

Mali belongs to the hottest countries in the world, because of its position on the thermal equator- causing lots of draughts throughout the year (Climate Centre, 2021). The rainy season only takes place in the southern parts of the country which have according to the Köppen climate classification a tropical wet and dry climate, the centre parts have a hot semi-arid climate, and the northern parts are classified as hot desert climate (Climate data, 2022). Looking

at the figure on this page, it is noticeable a large part of the country (red area) consists of the hot desert climate, which results in combination with the poor water supplies in the country in many serious issues with clean water, enough water for growing crops, and thus issues for food supplies and economic activities (Greiger, 2016).

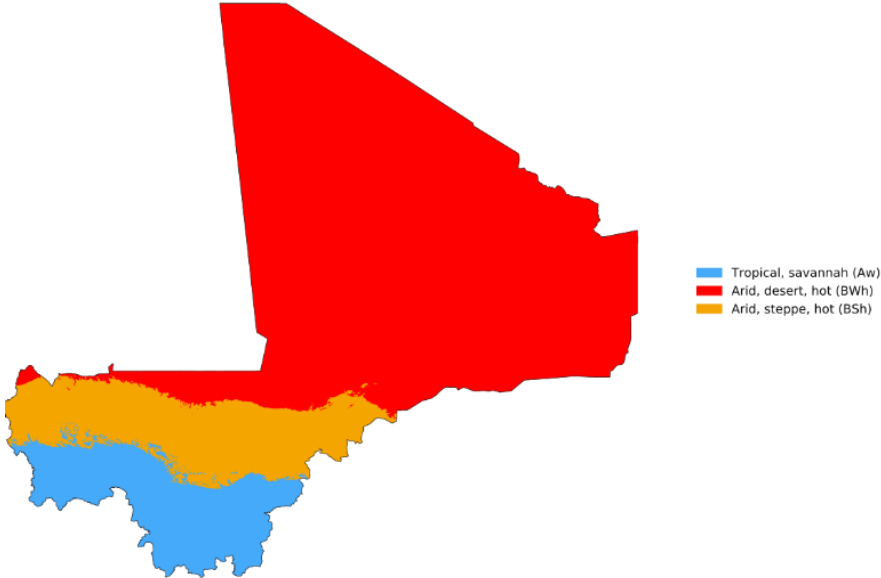


Figure 7. Köppen climate classification map of Mali. Beck et al. (2018)

These three issues are quite decisive for the country’s level of development. Political, economic, and climatological issues are closely interlinked to each other and have serious impacts on the lives of the Malian people. Therefore, it is important to keep in mind these issues while paying attention to the developmental state and issues of and in the country.

**3.2. Malian (small scale local ) development aid**

As already has been mentioned, Mali is heavily dependent on foreign aid. This implies that a lot of money flows from abroad into the country every year, mainly from the organisations mentioned above. The EU for example alone provided €435 million since the crisis in Mali started in 2012 until now (European Commission, 2022). According to the European Commission, the internal fights between the groups within the country cause many issues (2022). These are displacements of people, human rights violence, food insecurity, disruption of the educational system, and disruptions of the healthcare systems (European Commission, 2022). The EU donates money to organisations that work via the “rapid response mechanism”, which focuses on the assistance of food security, emergency shelter, access to primary and

secondary health, protection, education, and humanitarian coordination (European Commission, 2022). Besides the EU, big donors are the USA, the World Bank and the African Development Bank with donations provided that range between \$100 million and \$300 million the past years. The United States is the largest bilateral donor for Mali: its most recent type of help included the donation of more than a 100.000 Pfizer vaccines to support the Malians in the COVID-19 pandemic (US Embassy in Mali, 2022). The American organisation US Agency for International Development (USAID)- an organisation part of the American Ministry of Foreign Affairs- has achieved many developmental goals: the foundation of farmer cooperatives and improved irrigation systems to improve food supplies, a community school system to increase educational access, expand health services to reduce child mortality, and improvement the democratic and prosperous lives by reinforcing the stabilization of conflict affected areas, improving vulnerable communities, and advancing socio economic wellbeing (USAID,2022).

The development aid discussed above is bilateral and multilateral, meaning that it is help from a group of countries or organisations to one country (multilateral) and between two countries or organisations (bilateral). This help is mainly based on large scale, structural projects in which huge amounts of money are involved. On the other side of the coin, there is small scale development aid- help that involves the smaller projects for a smaller focus group, initiated for example by PDIs and CBOs and/or smaller NGOs. In Mali, these projects mainly focus on agricultural and water supply projects and projects of land greening. Examples of small scale local projects are *Trees for the future* that aims at revitalising land and plant trees, *Right to Play* that focuses on game based learning and teaching, *Bivision African Trust* with projects in improving farming methods, *Tree Aid* that tries to conserve woods as much as possible, small scale irrigation processes and *DONKO* aims at improving the sustainable management of lake Doro (Kergna & Dembele, 2018; Turing Foundation, 2022). More on the small scale development projects will be further discussed in the thesis. But first, the case studies will be introduced in the next sub chapter.

### **3.3. The four case studies introduced**

The four case studies are PDIs that have had projects in Mali, to mention Partners Pays Dogon, Stitching Walanta, Stichting Sanouna, and De Vrienden van de Sahel. These have been chosen, because they all say they focus a lot on the implementation of local ownership in the projects,

in order to make the local communities self-sustainable. Interesting is to do research whether this is true and to what extent they focus on local ownership. These four PDIs are also interesting to look at, because they are located in the North (Stichting Walanta), the centre (Stichting Sanouna and Partners Pays Dogon), and the South (De Vrienden van de Sahel), which makes them covering geographically entire Mali.

To begin with, Partners Pays Dogon (PPD) is an organisation that originated 25 years ago and its projects are located in the Bandiagara Escarpment, which is inhabited by the Dogon tribe. Their projects are executed in cooperation with the Association Dogon Initiative (ADI), which is their local partner organisation, and focus on the cultural, educational, food and environmental development of the lives of the Dogon. Together with the locals PPD and ADI have realised more than 70 projects in the past 25 years. PPD says they do not solve issues, but train the people, they do not give, but they develop- all to focus as much as possible at local ownership and leadership for the achievement of sustainable development (Partners Pay Dogon, 2020).

Stichting Walanta has had projects in the neighbourhood Abaradjou in Tombouctou and originated in 2011. The main aim of their organisation is to have a qualitative and sustainable professional education for the youth in this neighbourhood, so they can learn a profession (carpenter, blacksmith, leather craftsmen, or tailor) within three years (Stichting Walanta, 2022). They closely work with the locals, because according to Stichting Walanta, the locals know the issues, and have to come up with the initiatives. Together with their local partner organisation, Association Taflist- which consists of 35 local craftsmen- they try to make the working and living conditions of the Tombouctans as best as possible.

The third organisation is Stichting Sanouna, an organisation led by author and film director Ton van der Lee, which had projects in the small village of Sanouna near the city Djenné. Van der Lee wanted to help the people of Sanouna, about 250 people, with improving the water irrigation systems, building a school building with proper sanitation, and improving fishing opportunities. Van der Lee himself lived already seven years in Mali before he started the project, which is key for him: according to him, starting a project without knowing the “ins and outs” of the local culture is not a good thing. The processes Stichting Sanouna underwent and the outcomes have been written in Van der Lee’s book *Kinderen van Afrika* (2011), which is one of the four main secondary sources, besides the annual reports and policy documents.

De Vrienden van de Sahel is the final case study, and focuses on projects that are situated in Khalifabougou, a small village 40 km north of the capital city Bamako. They work with four CBOs, namely Action Couverture Développement (ACD), Association Malienne des Amis du Sahel (AMAS), Aide du Sahel Mali (ASM), and Aprosédé- which have connections with the local and lower governmental and communal institutions. The projects of De Vrienden van de Sahel are categorised in four groups: water management, improving healthcare, educational opportunities, and agriculture.

### **3.4. A background of the Mopti Region, Tombouctou Region, and Koulikoro Region**

The four case studies have projects in three regions of Mali: Stichting Walanta in the Tombouctou Region, De Vrienden van de Sahel in the Koulikoro Region, and PPD and Stichting Sanouna in the Mopti Region.

Tombouctou Region is situated in the central and northern part of Mali and is the largest region of Mali (10 times the Netherlands), inhabited by 470.000 people. The provincial capital city is the eponymous city Tombouctou. Tombouctou Region has a hot desert climate, which is previously visible in figure 7. Since the political coup in 2012- which resulted in a national crisis- the region is under control by Tuareg, which is a nomadic folk that also includes rebels that are still at war with the Malian government (Morgan, 2012). Tombouctou- which has been marginalised during the colonial period by the French- bases its (weak) economy on agriculture and trade.

Koulikoro Region is situated in western Mali and encapsulates the administrative unit of Mali's capital city Bamako, called Bamako Capital District. Koulikoro Region is inhabited by 2.5 million people. The capital city is also eponymous to that of the region, namely Koulikoro city. The climate differs from Tombouctou: Koulikoro's northern part has an arid steppe climate and its southern part has a tropical savanna climate (figure 7). These less dry climates makes its economy more prosperous than that of other regions in Mali. The region is an important port to the Niger river, agriculture is the dominant economic activity, and it contains Mali's second largest cotton production site (GASFP Fund, 2018).

The third region that has focus on in the research is the Mopti Region. It has an arid steppe and arid desert climate and two of its largest cities- Bandiagara and Djenné- are near the



locations of two case studies. Its capital city is also here the eponymous city Mopti and the region is inhabited by 2 million people. The Niger River flows through the region, joined by the Bani river, which is an important source for economy and agriculture within parts of the region. This makes the region respectively well developed, mainly due to successful fishing and (previously) tourism. The region is recognised as unsafe for foreigners due to intra communal security incidents (UK government, 2022).



Figure 8. *Weekly market in Djenné, Mopti Region. Travel with Brothers (2014).*

## 4. Methodology

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Central to doing a good analysis is a good methodology that fits within the research objective and research topic. As already has been mentioned before, the research methods for this research consists of both primary and secondary data collection, respectively in-depth interviews and a literature study. This chapter will first discuss the research design and questions, followed by the explanation of the two types of data collection- starting with the in depth interviews, and secondly the literature study. Finally, my positionality as a researcher will briefly and critically be discussed.

### 4.1. Research setup and questions

The research objective determines the research design. Central in this thesis is understanding how local ownership is integrated in the methods of PDIs. Doing two types of data collection for getting an answer to this objective is a good choice, rather than just one type. This, because the knowledge of each type of data collection is backed up by the other, and the information gained from one type is complementary to each other. Hereby, knowledge gaps from one type of data collection can be filled up by the other type. As a result, a thorough analysis of the results and discussion of the research will be provided. I decided to first read the four main sources for the secondary data collection, so I already gained a basic knowledge on the topic. Then, I wanted to do the first round of in depth interviews- the interviews with the people of the PDIs. By doing these two things, I could work on and finish the research project for the Wilde Ganzen Foundation. After this, I continued the in depth interviews with the second group, and I started analysing the policy documents and annual reports of the four case studies. I chose to do this, so I could properly finish the work for my partner organisation, which already provided a basis for my own thesis research. In the sub chapter after the research questions below, I will go more in depth in the types of data collection I chose to do.

#### Research question

This research will have one main overarching research question, which questions the relationship between local ownership and local sustainable development:

*How is local ownership, with an eye on local sustainable development in the Global South, integrated in the methods of PDIs?*

## **Sub questions**

To provide a cohesive answer to the above standing question, there have been formulated five sub questions:

SQ1. What role do local ownership, and its four key principles community participation, self-reliance, empowerment, and capacity building, have as approach in poverty reduction in the Global South?

SQ2. What role does local sustainable development have as approach in poverty reduction in the Global South?

SQ3. How do PDIs include ownership in their methods and what similarities and differences in including this local ownership do the PDIs have?

SQ4. To what extent have these similarities and differences determined the outcome of the projects in terms of contributing to local sustainable development?

SQ5. To what extent are the methods of PDIs that focus at local ownership postcolonial?

## **4.2. Primary data collection: in depth interviews**

In depth interviews are key for qualitative research, because they provide direct information from the people that are at focus in the research. By doing these types of interviews, I gain immediate first-hand information, opinions, and knowledge of people who are directly involved in the topic, in this case the people of PDIs (group 1) and people not related to PDIs but with knowledge on the topics, called the “professionals” (group 2). I have chosen to interview professionals as well, otherwise I will get a one sided view and knowledge on local ownership and local sustainable development, by only interviewing the more or less like-minded people of the PDIs. Being goal oriented, these interviews aimed mainly at gaining information on the *experience* of including local ownership in the projects and methods by group 1 and the *knowledge* of local ownership and local sustainable development of group 2. In total, 28 people have been interviewed (see the list in Appendix II). 22 people are of group 1, and all have had a PDI with one or more projects in one or more low-and middle income countries. Six people belong to the second group, the professionals. They are Wiebe Nauta (sociologist, Maastricht University), Jan Klink (member of Parliament, VVD), Heinz Greijn (Partos), Arne Doornebal (researcher, NABC), Jeroen Kelderhuis (Ministry of Foreign Affairs), and Mathilde Miedema (researcher, TNO). Two interview guides have been used during the research, namely one for

group 1 and one for group 2 (see the interview guides in Appendix I: Interview guides). The questions for group 1 were also useful for the research I conducted for the Wilde Ganzen Foundation. The interviews conducted with the professionals took place after I finished the research for the foundation.

All interviews have been conducted online, due to COVID-19 regulations, but also (when these regulations had been removed officially) because of efficiency in terms of travelling and time. I started every interview with a brief introduction why I contacted the specific person, how the interview would look like, and if the person had any questions beforehand. After approval on the audio recording of the interview, I started the interview. During the interview, lots of notes have been made, so I could get a quick and clear overview during the analysis of what has been said by whom.

I have contacted all people via email. The emails I sent included an introduction of myself, my research, and a document with the kind of questions they could expect. There have been contacted about 50 people in total, 30 replied of whom 28 wanted to join the research. The people of the PDIs have been selected partly together with my contact person of the Wilde Ganzen Foundation. They namely wanted to have some people with PDIs in Tanzania and Uganda. In these countries, agricultural projects are namely key- and agricultural projects are most complex in terms of capacity building. I selected the other respondents on the basis of their projects. The respondents of group 2 have been chosen by googling Dutch people who are involved in (small scale) development aid and local sustainable development with a professional background. I also contacted a friend, Onno Hoes who is chair of the VVD, if he had any suggestions. The persons who have been interviewed vary within the group of professionals well enough, because they are scientists, politicians, and experts on development aid. Biases in terms of selecting the respondents have not played a role. This, because I would have been happy with as much as people that respond to my emails and that would take part of the research. I contacted as many people as possible and for example among the people for group 2, I contacted right wing people (from the PVV; “Party for Freedom”), but also left wing people (from GroenLinks; “GreenLeft”). So, I did not consider particular people as not valuable for the research because of their (professional or personal) background. Due to this, I did not have to deal with omissions in selecting respondents. I would even be happier having had more interviews.

As discussed in chapter 2.4., “measuring” the abstract concepts such as the four key principles of local ownership, in order to show how (much) they are integrated in the methods of PDIs cannot be done by counting, which for example is the case with exact data (for example with numbers). However, because my primary data collection included in-depth interviews, I have developed coding schemes for myself to be able to categorise the opinions and knowledge of the respondents, which makes the analysis more clear and better doable. I for myself operationalised the abstract concepts to measurable phenomena, in order to conclude how the PDIs integrate the principles of local ownership, although they have not been mentioned literally all the time by the respondents during the in depth interviews.

### **4.3. Secondary data collection: literature study**

Besides the interviews, I have chosen to do a literature study of four books, annual reports and policy documents. This secondary data collection adds information, insights, and knowledge to the information gained from the in-depth interviews. The annual reports and policy documents are key within this secondary data collection, because they are specifically of the four case studies, gained via their websites. They show how each PDI specifically deal(t) with local ownership and how they apply this to their methods and projects, to come up with successful solutions for the local communities. This will be useful, because it adds more information to the topic, besides the specific interviews I have had with the people of these four PDIs. The four books that are at focus are *Kinderen van Afrika* (Van der Lee, 2011), *Samen de handen ineen!* (Van Eijndhoven and Meijers 2021), *Mensen ontwikkelen zichzelf* (De Gaay- Fortman, 2021), and *Particuliere initiatieven in ontwikkelingssamenwerking* (Van den Berg & De Goede, 2012). I will briefly introduce these sources below.

In *Kinderen van Afrika* tells author and film director Ton van der Lee about his project that focuses on the improvement of economic and scholarly activities in the small Malian village Sanouna. He mentions the “ECO principe” (Van der Lee, 2011, p. 91), which in his eyes is very key for PDIs by including local ownership in the methods, in order to make the projects successfully achievable. This idea implies that there should be a focus on the Empowerment of the locals, these people have to be involved in the processes; Community participation, and they have developed the idea that the project is theirs; Ownership. This will result, according to him, in sustainability of the outcomes of the projects (Van der Lee, 2011).

The source by Van Eijndhoven and Meijers (2021), *Samen de handen ineen!*, is about a project initiated by Dutch people. This source can be read both as a story and as a manual/guide for how to successfully cope with development issues in your own small-scale project. In terms of local ownership and its relation to sustainable development, they mainly mention that when a “community transformation” takes place, the locals get the chance to take own initiative within the projects, they will be more motivated and feel owner of the projects (Van Eijndhoven-Meijers, 2021). As a result, they will initiate new projects and keep realising new goals.

In *Mensen ontwikkelen zichzelf*, De Gaay- Fortman argues that local ownership implies that the donor organisation/the people who are willing to help others must understand the context of the living situation of the poor and must respect the cultural values of these people- so, their way of solving problems must be kept in mind (2021). Self-sustainability, which is key for the long-term vision of development outcomes, will be strengthened by giving people hope and strengthening their self-confidence. By mentioning this, she implicitly touches upon cultural relativism which already has been discussed before.

*Particuliere initiatieven in ontwikkelingssamenwerking* (Van den Berg & De Goede, 2012), is the source which provides me a lot of information on PDIs, their methods, and their role within development aid. It has been very useful so far, because I got a quick, elaborative and clear overview of the ins and outs of PDIs- which helps me create a context of the topic.

The literature study of the four books was done before I started conducting the interviews. As a result, I already gained an insight into what PDIs and their methods in general include, and how the people of the PDIs look at the topics of local ownership and local sustainable development. The study and analysis of the policy documents and annual reports of the four case studies have been done after the interviews.

#### **4.4. Positionality of researcher**

My positionality as a researcher is closely linked to my personal background. I understand and keep in mind that my positionality as a researcher within the research is important to acknowledge all the time. While focusing on the topics from my own personal position, I have to be as objective as possible. Most importantly, there is a cultural distance between myself and the locals at focus. My personal situation in terms of opportunities to develop myself, is very

good. This is the opposite of the people that are actually central within the topic- the poor in the Global South. How sad their situation and the stories are, I as a researcher should not be influenced by this. My orientations may not be affected by this, because this will lead to invalid discussions and results of the research. Therefore, I will be as objective as possible, by being as accurate as possible in analysing and interpreting the research results. This will result in valuable and factual results, which are not affected by personal circumstances. Furthermore, the cultural distance which is a result of not being able to travel to Mali because of external circumstances – whereby fieldwork is not possible (see limitations, part 7.2.) has led to gaps in knowledge of what the opinions and views are of the locals.

## **5. How is local ownership integrated in the methods of PDIs?**

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In this chapter- which is the main part of the thesis together with chapter 6- the analysis for addressing sub questions 1,2,3, and 4 will be provided, based on the data collection discussed in the previous chapter: in-depth interviews and a literature study. The focus here is to make understandable how local ownership is implemented by PDIs and which similarities and differences these PDIs have in this implementation, as well as in the contribution to local sustainable development (which is an important goal of many PDIs). The first sub chapter deals with the role local ownership has as approach in poverty reduction in the Global South. Then in chapter 5.2, what local sustainable development as approach entails, will be discussed. This is followed by chapter 5.3.: how PDIs include local ownership in their methods and what similarities and differences in including this local ownership the PDIs have. Finally, chapter 5.4 shows the extent to which the similarities and differences determined the outcome of the projects in terms of achieving local sustainable development, will be discussed. In chapter 5.3. and 5.4., there will be a look at PDIs in general and the four PDIs that serve as case studies specifically.

### **5.1. The role of local ownership and its four key principles in poverty reduction in the Global South**

Addressing the question “What role do local ownership, and its four key principles community participation, self-reliance, empowerment, and capacity building, have as approach in poverty reduction in the Global South?” needs first a clear understanding of the core concepts that are included in the question: local ownership, local sustainable development, poverty reduction, and Global South. This will first be done below.

The first two concepts are the two main variables within the research and have previously been conceptualised/operationalised. Poverty reduction – called “poverty eradication” by the United Nations- is number 1 of the Sustainable Development Goals and is understood as measures taken on economic and humanitarian levels that aim to lift people out of absolute (and relative) poverty permanently (Edward, 2006). Then, poverty itself is considered as a concept that is difficult to define properly. But, within this thesis, the definition by the United Nations (1998) will be leading:



Fundamentally, poverty is a denial of choices and opportunities, a violation of human dignity. It means lack of basic capacity to participate effectively in society. It means not having enough to feed and cloth[e] a family, not having a school or clinic to go to, not having the land on which to grow one’s food or a job to earn one’s living, not having access to credit. It means insecurity, powerlessness and exclusion of individuals, households and communities. It means susceptibility to violence, and it often implies living in marginal or fragile environments, without access to clean water or sanitation. (p.1)

The World Bank considers poverty reduction as a possible action when among other things the local poor communities are involved in the processes, called “community driven development”: as a bottom up approach, it will encourage villages, urban neighbourhoods and other groups to manage their own development, and local government and communities control their planning and investments (World Bank, 2013). Then, the second concept is “Global South”, which is considered as the regions Latin America, Africa, and Asia (see the red parts in figure 9 below).

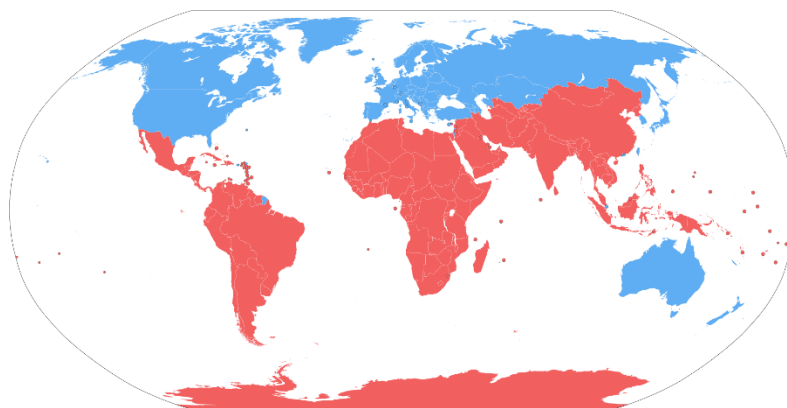


Figure 9. *The Global South is visualised in red, the Global North in blue.*  
Wikipedia (2017).

Local ownership can be considered as an approach within development studies and development aid, in the sense that it has a particular idea of “how to develop” the poor parts of the world. Central to the approach is that development should take place “from within”, which means from the community itself, and not outside (Rey-Moreno & Sabiescu, 2014; Nikkah, & Redzuan, 2020). This idea has gained more and more weight the past decades in the methods of NGOs, governmental organisations, and small scale organisations that deal with development aid. Therefore, the *help* of development *aid* has become a *collaboration* between the donor and the ones to be helped, which now and then rephrases development *aid* into

development *cooperation*. Four principles as often has been mentioned in the thesis, to mention capacity building, empowerment, self-reliance, and community participation, are considered as key for local ownership. These four concepts will namely encourage the locals to be more involved in the projects and to achieve better results (Jourdan, 1998; Nel, 1994). It is not that the donor (be it the NGOs, governmental organisations, and small scale organisations) only and just *helps* the poor focus group anymore: more focus is put on the self-reliance of the communities to be helped, since the transition of development aid into development cooperation (WRR, 2010). The local communities at focus become less dependent of help and support of the foreign donor, which is also key according to supporters of the “maximalist” approach of local ownership: local ownership is inclusive, recognises civil society and citizens as key agents for the developmental processes, and the donor support must come from domestic donors, because these donors and initiatives reflect best the local needs and dynamics (Nathan, 2007; Donais, 2008). The minimalist approach of local ownership focuses on the aim to involve national-level or local-level politicians or elites who have the capacity and legitimacy to implement reforms (Donais, 2008). These two approaches differ in the method to deal with development issues: the first one tries to involve as many people (locals) as possible, while the latter does not. In this thesis, local ownership is understood as a mix of the two: both the local people and the local elite/professionals/politicians will have a role within the development issues and projects.

Local ownership has become, as mentioned before, more and more a key topic within the international development aid. As an approach of today’s large scale and small scale development organisations, it is considered as a mechanism to build capacities of local stakeholders and people through inclusive processes that let them participate- processes partly guided by international actors (Interpeace, 2018). By fostering commitment between the donor and the ones to be helped (or to say the “local stakeholders”) on building these capacities of locals and inclusive participation, local leadership is needed. Locals cannot develop their lifestyles if they do not have leadership/ a say over their own decisions and the implementation of plans and strategies to come up with solutions (Interpeace, 2018; Kinsbergen, 2014).

## **5.2. The role of local sustainable development as approach in poverty reduction in the Global South**

Commitment between the locals and the donor, letting involve the locals, and building capacities and/or strengthening their skills, are only a few aspects of supporting local ownership which are considered as key aspects for achieving local development for the long term: a lack of supporting local ownership has namely been indicated as a failure for small scale local development projects (Rey-Moreno & Sabiescu, 2014). An “active approach” and motivation of the locals, according to a scientist who focuses on development innovation, is key for sustainable outcomes, because local ownership leads to more respecting and better understanding the local context and less donor driven help (Interview TNO researcher, 2022). As a result, there will be more equality between the donor and the ones to be helped which leads to a less “paternalistic” (=limiting the freedom of the others) of the donor and more self-reliance of the latter group (Interview De Vries, 2022). By keeping in mind the approaches of local ownership and local sustainable development, poverty reduction becomes a more doable process: the vicious circle of poverty will be broken, (Interview Vervoort, 2022; Van den Berg & De Goede, 2012; Interview Klink, 2022). According to Emily Garman, this vicious circle of poverty is as follows: poverty leads to a poorer physical and mental health, which in turn results in reduced opportunities for economic development, which leads to increased risks of lifelong poverty (2020). The “anti-poverty interventions” then deal with improving educational and employment opportunities, which will increase the mental health and economic opportunities of the poor (Garman, 2020).

These ideas related to sustainable development (on the local scale) have gained more and more weight the past few decades: an effective eradication of poverty with a growing population in the Global South is really needed (Wackernagel, 2021). Therefore, among other things- while keeping (local) sustainable development in mind as an approach- the Sustainable Development Goals 2030 have been put on the agenda of the United Nations.

## **5.3. How PDIs include local ownership in their methods**

Breaking the vicious circle of poverty *can* (it will not be for sure, because no development issue and project are the same), as be discussed above, done by supporting local ownership of the ones to be helped, instead of keeping the paternalistic approach of development as leading. Now it is interesting to look how this is done, and then mainly by the small scale development

initiatives, the PDIs. Therefore, the question *how do PDIs include ownership in their methods and what similarities and differences in including this local ownership do the PDIs have?* will be discussed.

### **5.3.1. PDIs in general and their dealing with local ownership**

The respondents of the interviews and the stories discuss many issues on how PDIs deal with local ownership. The four principles- empowerment, capacity building, community participation, and self-reliance- have been mentioned many times (not always literally) and are more or less umbrella concepts for the things said. To begin with, it has often been mentioned that a “facilitating” or “coaching role” is part of the method in development projects (e.g. Interview De Gaay-Fortman, 2022; Interview Van Lankveld, 2022; Interview Koppens, 2022). This implies that among other things the four key concepts discussed in the conceptual framework are included in the methods, and that the exit strategy of the projects is aimed at a so-called “snowball effects of initiates”: when the locals experience their input and ownership as valuable and having benefits, they will motivate other local communities to start and join the development projects themselves (Interview Koppens, 2022; Interview Van Dolleweerd, 2022; Interview Greijn, 2022; Interview Bus, 2022). This for example mainly refers to community participation: the community is involved in the development projects. *Coordinating* rather than *helping* within the projects is at stake here (Interview Bliersbach, 2022; Alonso, & Glennie, 2015; Di Ciommo, 2014). This touches upon self-reliance, because coordination shows that the locals will not be (fully) dependent of the help of the donor, but that they should cope themselves with issues, by using their own knowledge and skills (Kempe, 1984).

Moreover, a cultural relativistic approach is considered as key. Respecting, trying to better understand, and keeping in mind the local culture, behaviours, and way of dealing with life issues- and not imposing the Western ideas- will lead to a better cooperation between the donor group and the local group (Interview De Vries, 2022; Interview Sinke, 2022; Bakx & Al-Samarai, 2021). Furthermore, local ownership also implies according to some respondents that there is a “shared ownership”, which means that the donor motivates both the CBO and the locals to work closely together (Interview Hagelen, 2022; Francis & James, 2003). Shared ownership is part of capacity building and empowerment: it namely implies that the locals must be able to come up with project initiatives (partly) by themselves, how to execute

these, and how to maintain them in the future. This will not be dependent (anymore) on the skills of the donor. Therefore, the locals will get more control of their lives (=empowerment) and they should depend on their own resources (=capacity building).



Figure 10. *Cultural relativism respects differences between various cultures, which will result in better understanding and cooperation.* Trouw (2015).

According to Jan Vervoort, who has been into small scale development aid since four decades, only a small push in the back of the locals should be the case of sustainable development aid (Interview Vervoort, 2022)- which again refers to self-reliance, but also capacity building. The Dutch donor should not come with any input for projects proposals, but they only now and then guide the locals within the projects. This should be the case according to Vervoort, because otherwise, the locals remain dependent of donor driven development. Another aspect that often comes back in the primary and secondary data, which is part of the principle empowerment, of the idea of “realiteitsdenken”. This means that attention is paid by the people of the PDIs that the ones to be helped and that live under poor conditions, do not often have a broad horizon or a perspective (e.g. Meijers-Van Eijndhoven, 2021; Interview Van Duijnhoven, 2022; De Vries, 2022). People in the Global South that live in poverty are powerless and voiceless in terms of improving their lifestyles due to a lack of opportunities and chances- they live from day to day because they have to survive, which provides no broad horizon and good perspective (Narayan, 2000). It refers to empowerment, because *social change* is needed to broaden their short horizon- in order to be more successful in project results. This idea of realiteitsdenken is linked with the short termism and is partly related to cultural relativism. This, because the people of PDI keep in mind that development should not be done from their Western perspective, but

from the perspective of the locals- which is part of the local development approach (Schirch, 2019). In this case, the endogenous capacities, resources, and skills of the local group, community, or neighbourhood will be considered as valuable- “development comes from inside”, which is clearly part of the ideas of empowerment, capacity building, and self-reliance (Kempe, 1984; Van der Lee, 2011; De Gaay Fortman, 2021; Interview Overmeer, 2022; Biswanger, 2005).

Although it is claimed by many of the respondents and in the literature that the dealing with local ownership done by the PDIs is highly valuable for the development of the locals, there is also some critique. For example, development sociologist Wiebe Nauta says that people of PDIs too much lack experience on how to deal properly with local ownership and with structural solutions for development issues (Interview Nauta, 2022). This view is supported by the scientist of TNO, who besides the lack of experience also claims that the work of PDIs still remains quite paternalistic and (unintentionally) neo-colonial (Interview TNO researcher, 2022). Finally, VVD politician Jan Klink, who has development aid in his portfolio responsibilities, finds the work of PDIs now and then comparable with so-called “orphanage tourism” (Interview Klink, 2022).

### **5.3.2. The case studies and their dealing with local ownership**

With the aim of providing some clear examples of the things said in part 5.3.1., four PDIs and their dealing with local ownership will be discussed. As a result, it will be more clear how specific PDIs deal in real life with these topics.

To begin with, Stichting Walanta<sup>2</sup>, whose aim it is to achieve sustainable development (school) projects in Tombouctou city (Policy Plan Stichting Walanta 2022, 2022). Together with their CBO L’Association Tafliste<sup>3</sup> and the local Tombouctans they help the community with fundraising, but the CBO and these locals are the ones who come with plans, execute the projects, and *maintain* the projects- so the locals, who want it themselves, become independent in improving and sustaining their living conditions (Annual Report Stichting2020, 2020; Walanta, Policy Plan Stichting Walanta 2022, 2022). Furthermore, local ownership means for Stichting Walanta that they do the fundraising and give advice if plans are doable in

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<sup>2</sup> “Walanta” means in the Malian language Bambara “back to school”.

<sup>3</sup> “Tafliste” means “engagement/involvement” in the Bambara language.

financial terms and that they do not determine what the locals have to do. This refers to self-reliance, capacity building, and empowerment, because according to the donor, the locals know best what the issues are and how to solve them structurally and sustainably, because they have local connections and knowledge (Stichting Walanta, 2022; Jourdan, 1998). Moreover, Janka de Vries, chairwoman of the PDI, says that having an open (= “put of the Western glasses”) dialogue with the locals is key, so the donor knows what the local issues, culture and context are about (Interview De Vries, 2022)-referring to cultural relativism.

The second PDI, Stichting Sanouna, focused at improving the living conditions of the Malinese by working on the locals’ long term perspective on the basis of the “ECO plan” (Van der Lee, 2011, p. 91; Interview Van der Lee, 2022). According to Van der Lee, this plan is essential for achieving sustainable projects, because the locals are taught how to create a local economy with which they can bring their children to school, which give them better perspectives (Van der Lee, 2011; Stichting Sanouna, 2021). The ECO plan already in itself is a representation of empowerment, capacity building, and community participation-as discussed in part 2.4. Local ownership for this PDI also implies that “hulpafhankelijkheid”<sup>4</sup> has to be reduced by solely focusing on guiding the projects in terms supporting of planning and executing the projects (Van der Lee, 2011). Cooperation is key, but most of the things has to be done by the locals themselves. Besides this, Van der Lee highlights that it is important in the



Figure 11. *The Dogon youth has been educated to cultivate crops- one of the many projects by Partners Pays Dogon. Partners Pays Dogon (2020).*

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<sup>4</sup> “Hulpafhankelijkheid” is Dutch and refers to development aid, where *help* instead of cooperation is essential.

case of Stichting Sanouna to educate the “high potentials”, those who have shown to be most capable to follow a programme at university (2022). As a result, these people will educate their own folk, which results in a continuing and self-sustaining process of (educational) development (Interview Van der Lee, 2022). As a result, the local community becomes more reliant on their own resources in the form of skills and knowledge (educating one another).

Thirdly, the method of Partners Pays Dogon focuses on “training” and “developing” instead of “solving” and “giving”. This implies that they do not only, in cooperation with their CBO, support the locals to get out of the poor situation, but also to prevent them: they tackle issues at their roots, which prevent the locals becoming (again) poor/poorer (Interview Van Duijnhoven, 2022; Partners Pays Dogon, 2020). To achieve local ownership, local entrepreneurship, and economic development, the PDI organises an integrated approach, which deals with all kinds of activities (Partners Pays Dogon, 2020). To think of projects that deal with agriculture, greening of the desert, hydro management, women inclusion, cultural preservation, health, education innovation, and building of schools- which result in a “total package” of improved circumstances for the Dogon tribe that inhabits the Bandiagara Escarpment. This also leads to sustainable development, because each improvement (for example innovative water systems) leads to another improvement (better food supplies) – which in turn results in a continuing process of development (Annual report PPD 2020, 2020). Furthermore, Partners Pays Dogon highlights the importance of local ownership by stating and complying with the idea that partnership is key for sustainable development (Partners Pays Dogon, 2020). Partnership between the PDI and the CBO is needed, because they can learn from each other’s skills and mistakes. The four key principles of local ownership are all presented in this story of Partners Pays Dogon: all projects they have had have been executed with an active engaging role of the locals in order to become self-sustaining.

The last PDI is De Vrienden van de Sahel and they, like the previous three PDIs, highlight the importance of local ownership in their methods. They namely say that the projects are the results of the clear cut needs and wishes of the locals themselves, who initiate the solutions and projects (De Vrienden van de Sahel, 2022). The locals here are thus fully participating in the development issue, by having leadership over the project initiation and execution. The role of the De Vrienden van de Sahel within the development processes of the people that live in Kalifabougou (Koulikourou Region) include meetings and dialogues whether projects are doable in financial terms, if the projects would have significant effects and if these



are urgent at a certain time (De Vrienden van de Sahel, 2022; Policy De Vrienden van de Sahel, 2022). This is the bottom up approach they handle with, in order to let the local community as much as possible be empowered to participate actively in the projects and to be self-reliant on their own resources and capacities. Furthermore, the PDI will achieve with this approach that the people become financially independent and which in turn results in a self-sustaining (economically) community.

### **5.3.3. Similarities and differences between PDIs in including local ownership**

They have not been mentioned often and quite literally, but it can be said from the analysis that PDIs in general focus a lot on the four key principles of local ownership: local participation, self-reliance, empowerment, and capacity building of the locals. It has also become clear there is a close interrelatedness of these four: each principle is linked to another principle. More or less, the PDIs all let the local communities at focus involve in the projects. Even, some organisations keep the idea mentioned in the interview by Tiny Koppens that “leave the initiative of any project ideas at the locals” (2022), which means that the community needs to be involved in the whole process, from project initiation until project sustainment. Furthermore, this involvement also implies that the community needs to function cohesively to be able to achieve goals, which refers to self-reliance. This also involves strengthening their capacities, because they will develop their skills and knowledge, both individually and organisationally, which is highlighted by the respondents and in the literature (e.g. Van den Berg & De Goede, 2012; Interview Sinke, 2022; De Gaay- Fortman, 2021; UNDG, 2020; Zamfir, 2017). As a result, the locals get the ability, or to say the “empowerment”, to control their decisions and factors that shape their lifestyles, mentioned by for example development sociologist Nauta (Interview Nauta, 2022). Two other key issues that are similar for more or less every PDI, will be discussed in the next subchapter.

Major differences in terms of focusing on local ownership in the projects have not been mentioned. Each PDI and CBO does indeed have different project focuses, focus groups, goals, etc. However, the way they deal with local ownership- if they include it in the projects- does not differ significantly. One thing that attracted special attention is that some PDIs put a focus on the initiation of the locals themselves immediately at the start, while others for example highlight their need for a cultural relativistic perspective later, in which they *during*

the development processes leave the initiating and realisation of the projects at the tasks of the locals. A reason for this could be the difference of focus and/or method in the projects. According to the Wilde Ganzen Foundation, capacity building for example is a process which needs more assistance from the donor towards the locals, due to its complexity (2021;2022). Then, a less reserved stance of the PDI and CBO in the beginning is at stake: they guide or coach the locals more from the start and during the projects.

In conclusion of this part, it is also important to mention how decisions are made in development projects where local ownership plays a significant role. The ideas coined by Meijers- Van Eijndhoven in their *Samen de handen ineem!* (2021) more or less provide a summary of the ideas of many respondents on how decisions are made in development projects: who are involved in the meetings, how ideas come up, and how financial matters are organised.

Ideas are most of the time coined by the CBO, which as a small organisation officially represents the community (or more communities) in a particular village or region towards the donor, the local stakeholders and politicians. Key is that also people of the community itself take part in the organisation (community participation). People of the community and/or people in the CBO address issues they want to develop, for example the need for an improvement of the water management in their village. The CBO then makes a plan for project initiation, execution, and maintenance, with or without support or guidance of the PDI and other stakeholders such as the local politicians. This thus happens by themselves independently or in cooperation with the PDI (which in most cases takes a reserved stance and mainly focuses at fundraising and/or coaching) and other, but also – importantly- with input of the locals themselves. Most of the time money is needed, when plans are fixed. This happens via fundraising of the PDI, which collects money in the home land (The Netherlands, or elsewhere). With help of the CBO and support of the PDI, the locals are guided and trained on how to come up with solutions to solve the issues: this implies capacity building of skills and knowledge, but also self-reliance and empowerment of the people, in order to be able to use their own resources (they know the issues, and they know what is important for them). This is key, because as Van der Lee mentions (2011), Western people for example are used to have direct water in their houses, while (after experiencing and talking with the local community at focus), the people in the community at focus experience their half an hour walk to a water well as an important daily social occasion. Part of the whole project process is also the provision of

courses for the locals from the CBO- which has connections with many institutions in the regions, such as language centres, schools, and (local) governmental bodies. Courses are for example “how to maintain a school building, or how to crop your own groceries. A final key aspect to mention is about financial matters. As Meijers- Van Eindhoven mentions, financial matters all have to do with mutual trust between the PDI and the CBO (2021). Trust in this case both implies a) no corruption with fundraised money which is aimed for the projects, and b) trust in each other’s capacities to take the right decisions in terms of how to use the money and for which particular aspect of the project.

#### **5.4. How the similarities and differences have determined the achievement of local sustainable development**

At this point, it is clear how PDIs include local ownership in their methods, and what similarities and differences exist between their methods. It is also interesting to look how these issues actually can lead to the goals of most PDIs and CBOs: making the projects valuable for the future generations of the locals. Therefore, this chapter will formulate an answer to the fourth sub question “How have these similarities and differences determined the outcome of the projects in terms of achieving local sustainable development?”. Like in chapter 5.2., there will be first a discussion on PDIs in general, followed by a discussion of the four case studies specifically.

##### **5.4.1. How the similarities and differences have determined the achievement of local sustainable development of the locals- PDIs in general**

More or less every PDI has a so-called “exit strategy”, which is the plan on how to “end” a project. The exit strategy has often been decided at the beginning already and the method and course of the development projects fit within this strategy. This implies that when a PDI for example decides to create a self-sustaining school system in a village with an eye at sustainability for the this system in this community, it focuses both building the school, but also educating people to become teachers, but also people that can do the maintenance of the school building, sanitation, etc. Only building the school without having school teachers and people who can keep the school up to date, does not lead to a self-sustaining school system. The exit

strategy is therefore aimed at the self-determination of the community (Meijers-Van Eijndhoven, 2021; Van der Lee, 2011): in process of time, the people of the PDI and CBO withdraw themselves from the project in order to make the people to stand on their own feet. Van der Lee summarises the idea of the exit strategy which focuses on local sustainable development nicely: “Ze zijn even vergeten dat wij er zijn, en dat is goed”<sup>5</sup> (Van der Lee, 2011, p. 242). The ECO-plan mentioned already before and coined by among other things Van der Lee, is more or less integrated in the projects and methods of the PDIs to come to their exit strategy. It is a mechanism/plan of three steps<sup>6</sup>: 1) empowerment will make the people feel they can be valuable within the projects, and thus for improving their own living conditions; 2) capacity building of the skills and knowledge for the local people will guide them in the projects; and 3) step 2 and 3 will lead to a feeling of increased responsibility for the projects and motivation- ownership (e.g. Kinsbergen 2014; 2015; Turing Foundation, 2022; Talsma, 2022; Van der Lee, 2011; Nikkah & Redzuan, 2020). Like the four key principles of local ownership, this ECO plan is not (often) literally mentioned by respondents and in the literature, but the methods show a focus on this plan with the aim of achieving a sustainable situation for the communities at focus.

Moreover, a similar issue often coined during the research, which is considered as key for sustainable development, is trust. Mutual trust between people of the PDI on the one side and the people of the community and the CBO on the other is considered as a thing every PDI has to deal with, and which is not easy to achieve. According to Meijers-Van Eijndhoven, and supported by various other people (e.g. Duenas & Mangen, 2021; Interview Van Duijnhoven, 2022), trust is a major factor the development projects, and if it is there, success is more guaranteed (2021). Trust implies different things, to mention a) the different parties have faith in each other’s competencies; b) that financial matters are organised and corruption does not take place; c) transparency towards each other’s about needs, plans, and opinions, and d) allowing the time to get to know each other and each other’s cultures and traditions (e.g. Meijers-Van Eijndhoven, 2021; Interview Vervoort, 2022; Duenas & Mangen, 2021). Trust will create good bonds between the parties, but more importantly between the people of the community: they namely must do the job.

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<sup>5</sup> Translated from Dutch: “They have forgotten we are here, which is good”.

<sup>6</sup> This project shows the ideal process of the course of projects. Real life live examples also show the level of difficulty to really implement ownership within the community.

The major difference in the method between the PDI discussed in part 5.2. and its contribution to local sustainable development has to do with whether a PDI decides to be active or less active within the projects from the beginning. As discussed in part 5.2.1., Jan Vervoort decided with his PDI to immediately leave the initiative and project execution in the hands of the locals, instead of first co-working within the project and withdrawing after a few years. This, according to him has led to independence of the locals and good project results. This is supported by other respondents, such as Van Lankveld (Interview, 2022), Bliersbach (Interview, 2022) and Koppens (Interview, 2022), who claim that the local's independence also includes their responsibility to come up with project plans. Independence here refers to sustainable development, because the locals will not be dependent on donor driven development (anymore). Others, such as Brouwer (Interview, 2022), De Gaay Fortman (2021) and Bus (Interview, 2022) for example first work together with the locals and the CBO, and after a certain period they take a more reserved stance in the projects.

#### **5.4.2. How the similarities and differences have determined the achievement of local sustainable development of the locals- case studies**

The differences and similarities discussed previously also apply for the case studies: as has been discussed, they all deal in their own way with local ownership to achieve local sustainable development. Here it is also clear that some PDIs have a less active role in the projects than others.

Stichting Walanta leaves the project initiation mainly at the locals and their CBO, so they support the independence of the community in Tombouctou. The contribution of this to their sustainable development also lies in the fact that Stichting Walanta particularly focuses on fundraising and *advice* for the projects. This is in line with the idea of the Wilde



Figure 12. *Shift the Power*, where the “donor” takes a more reserved stance. ISSAT (2022)

Ganzen Foundation that teaches PDIs in “Shift the power”, where mainly guidance and coaching (=dialogues, meetings, and advice) are key for the PDI towards the locals. So, Stichting Walanta takes a more reserved stance in the project.

Van der Lee’s Stichting Sanouna focused on the water management and agriculture management that have been developed under supervision of the PDI, while most work has been done by the locals. As a result, the locals know how to cope with food shortages and food supplies to sell at the market in Djenné. This gives them the position to have a micro economy, which breaks the circle of poverty. By educating the high potentials, which return to the village after a while, the educational system keeps running; locals who have studied are now the teachers and can educate the new generations. Stichting Sanouna has taken a more active role in the projects than Stichting Walanta.

The active role of Stichting Walanta is also visible at the methods of Partners Pays Dogon. The PDI does indeed value local ownership, but their invisible hand in the projects is less invisible than that of Van der Lee’s PDI: Partners Pays Dogon is actively involved in every project of the Dogon tribe, varying from inventing ecologically sustainable bricks for a school building to activating women for their rights. They also do not have an exit strategy yet, but besides their active role, the PDI keeps repeating: without the locals, there will be no development possible (Interview Van Duijnhoven, 2022).

Finally, De Vrienden van de Sahel has like Stichting Sanouna a more reserved stance within the projects: their bottom up approach is aimed at letting the locals develop themselves and when needed, to give them advice on the feasibility of projects. They think that this will lead to an economically self-sustaining community. Moreover, by letting their local partner organisations play a bigger role than themselves in the projects, the PDI actually becomes “invisible”. Their CBOs know what issues are key within the communities and these CBOs provide classes for the locals in agriculture and water management. As a result, the exit strategy leads to a full withdrawal of the PDI and a bit of assistance from the CBOs for the community in the future.

## **6. The methods of PDIs discussed from a postcolonial perspective**

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Understanding how local ownership and its four key principles- community participation, self-reliance, empowerment, and capacity building- are integrated in the methods of PDIs and in the cooperative development projects between them and CBOs, already provides an answer to the main research question of this thesis. However, to shed some critical light- in this case postcolonial critique- on the integration of local ownership in the methods by PDIs, makes addressing the topic even more interesting. Are the ideas of local ownership like equality, and local leadership really part of the methods of PDIs or not? Maybe, PDIs do not act as cultural relativistic as they claim and they still follow the methods of traditional development aid which has characteristics of neo-colonialism. The opposite is also possible: PDIs represent the critique of postcolonial thinkers, by working anti-colonial and respecting the locals' skills and knowledge in the projects. Therefore, the final sub question "To what extent are the methods of PDIs that focus on local ownership postcolonial?" will be under discussion here. First, a key idea that has been mentioned briefly and which is linked to both local ownership and postcolonialism- community (led) development- will be explained.

### **6.1. Community led development explained**

Although it can also be considered as a synonym of local ownership, community led development ("CLD" or "community driven development") has not been included in the analysis in chapter 5, but will be discussed here- in relation to postcolonialism. This, because as an umbrella concept it overarches local ownership and needs a bit more understanding, and various authors highlight the importance of its relation with postcolonialism (e.g. Carpenter, 2013; Sylvester, 1999; Cislighi, 2009). Community led development entails among other things- besides lots of aspects that characterise local ownership- that the authority and decision making processes of development projects lies directly to the community at focus and that they are the ones to organise themselves to provide them in their needs (The Hunger Project, 2021). It differs from local ownership in the sense that community led development focuses on communities as a whole, while the latter one focuses either on whole communities or a specific projects/activities/programmes in which not everyone of the community takes part or is

expected to take part of (for example “women engagement programmes” or “school children programmes”) (Petr, 2013).

CLD is interesting to look at when defining to what extent PDIs are postcolonial, because it is connected to postcolonial thought. Postcolonialist Mick Carpenter says that interventions of traditional development aid institutions, for example the International Monetary Fund and the World Bank, in the past reinforced neo colonial relationships with the South that shaped notions of superiority and inferiority (2013). He also says that community led development is itself a product to recognise the need for reconstruction of the lives of the people that were subject of imperialism (Carpenter, 2013). Furthermore, postcolonialists value community led development. This, because they critique the disturbed balance of power between the Western donor and the ones to be helped in the Global South (Cislaghi, 2019). The first group are now and then not aware of their rhetoric and dealing with developmental issues: they generalise the ones in need for development as “they are poor”, “they need our help”, “they are violent and uneducated”. Community led development, in the eyes of postcolonialists, is a better alternative for development aid, because it implies among other things an inclusive and bottom up approach to particular development issues.

## **6.2. Applying the postcolonial philosophy to the methods of PDIs**

As can be read in chapter 2.2. on postcolonialism, postcolonialism has a critical stance towards development theory and policies, which in the eyes of postcolonialists is a continuation of the Western imperialistic domination of mainly today’s Global South. Together with this, the previous section shows a sentiment of postcolonialists supporting alternative ways of development as such, namely local ownership/CLD/ development cooperation, instead of traditional (latent Western dominated) development aid. This implies that “to be or act postcolonial” in the case of PDIs means that they show characteristics in their methods of the development projects that correspond to local ownership/CLD, that they are cultural relativists, and that they invest in cooperation rather than in help. But also that their methods do not correspond with neo colonialist ideas such as Western imperialism, cultural domination, and a stance like “we know it and we need to educate them, the ignorant subaltern poor”. The analysis has also already shown how PDIs deal with local ownership, but not if those PDIs (unintentionally) show characteristics of neo colonialism, or to call it differently, if they act postcolonial.



Looking at the methods of the PDIs and how they include local ownership in the projects, while keeping in mind what postcolonialism is about, it can be said that PDIs are very much acting according to the postcolonial philosophy. To begin with, the postcolonial idea that the people at focus in the projects should be able to speak for themselves in their own voices and decide what to do with their lives, comes back to the methods of PDIs. As mentioned in the analysis, some PDIs do not initiate projects but let the locals come up with ideas and plans for the projects- “without a say of the locals, there will be no project” is often said (e.g. Interview Van Lankveld, 2022; Interview Koppens, 2022; Interview Overmeer, 2022). This is nicely said by Meijers-Van Eijdhoven: “geen vraag, geen project is voor ons een heilig principe”(2021, p.59). Furthermore, De Gaay- Fortman mentions her focus on giving the people the control over their own lives and decisions (2021). This also refers to give people the chance to speak what they want. The bottom up approach which is wielded by lots of PDIs, which also highlights the input of the locals, refers to the postcolonial idea of let the people speak out loud.

A second key feature of postcolonialism- to view the non-Western people as not subaltern and ignorant, but as valuable people to develop their lives themselves- also comes back to the methods of the PDIs. As Overmeer it says: “je moet uitgaan van de kracht van de mensen”<sup>7</sup> (Interview Overmeer, 2022), which means that there should be trust in the skills and capacities of the locals, rather than viewing them as ignorant. Another person, Ton van der Lee rephrases the same a bit differently by saying that “De mensen moeten het zelf doen. Dat is onze filosofie”<sup>8</sup> (Van der Lee, 2011, p. 139). He does not mean with this that the locals are left to their fate, but that they get the trust in their own power to change their lives structurally. In line with this is the postcolonial idea that discrimination of locals is not done. This, because the locals may not be excluded from the projects, but included so they can unfold their skills and capacities (Merino, 2012).

Moreover, by working with a cultural relativistic mindset (= not behaving culturally dominant), the PDIs act according to the postcolonial critique to traditional development that is characterised as Western superior: in the eyes of postcolonialists, the Western ideas and way of dealing with issues is not considered as better than that of the locals in the Global South. The cultural relativist stance which has been mentioned often by the respondents (e.g. Interview Sinke, 2022), besides the equality within the cooperation between

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<sup>7</sup> Means: “You need to believe in the people’s capacities and skills.

<sup>8</sup> Means: “It is up to the people themselves, they have to do it. That is our philosophy”.

the donor and the locals (e.g. Interview De Vries; Gubert, 2014), and having dialogues to understand each other better (Interview Bus, 2022) would be key in the eyes of postcolonialists. Trying to understand each other namely means that both groups are empathic towards each other which is key for a good cooperation (Rumble, Van Lange & Parks, 2009; Green, 2020). Cultural relativism also implies in the case of PDIs that they do not look at issues from an Eurocentric view where the Western ideas of progress, modernity, and human reason are unconsciously considered as best: respecting the way of dealing with issues of the locals and how they perceive things, is key (Interview Nauta, 2022; Interview Vervoort, 2022; Lvison, 2002).

The fourth aspect which refers to the postcolonial character of PDIs is closely linked to the postcolonial philosophy and also has been mentioned, namely Amartya Sen's Development as Freedom. It actually comprises all things said about the methods of PDIs, namely their inclusiveness, their focus of local participation, building capacities of these people, and the self-reliance- the locals are the ones who decide what needs to be done and how this needs to be done. Their perspectives and ideas count. Community led development can be considered as a theory interlinked with Development as Freedom in this case: the community needs to be able to solve issues by themselves, from a bottom up approach, instead of a top down approach led by people who are not part of the community (Meijers-Van Eijndhoven, 2021; Van den Berg & De Goede, 2012).

There is again also some critique from the group of "professionals" that has been interviewed, with an eye at the postcolonial character of PDIs. Some of them do not categorise PDIs as postcolonial in their dealing with development issues, but actually as the opposite: neo-colonial. Hans Greijn questions the integrity of PDIs and finds their methods paternalistic (considered as part of neo-colonialism) (Interview Greijn, 2022). This idea is shared by the development researcher of TNO, who besides the paternalistic character also categorises PDIs as groups that are neo-colonialist and who finds themselves well does (Interview Researcher TNO, 2022).



Figure 13. Are PDIs pseudo-philanthropic- for the good image?  
Desai (2020).

Finally, Nauta finds PDIs sometimes mirror pseudo philanthropy, which he thinks is merely for a good image for oneself and more or less quite neo-colonial (Interview Nauta, 2022).

### **6.3. Conclusion on the postcolonial character of PDIs**

Analysing the methods of PDIs with their focus on local ownership- in which they let the local people have their say, involvement and capacities/skills play a major role- while keeping in mind the postcolonial philosophy, brings me to the conclusion that their methods do show indeed postcolonial characteristics. This implies that they (implicitly) go against neo -colonial sentiments in their development projects, which shows characteristics of Western imperialism, and paternalism. There is also some scepticism which tones down the postcolonial or “good” character of PDIs; some people argue they are paternalistic and still do indeed show neo-colonial (=“anti-postcolonial”) characteristics.

## 7. Discussion and Conclusion

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At this point, the explanatory and empirical parts of the research have been discussed in depth. It is important to put these discussions in the context of the broader topic, in order to know their contribution to the existing knowledge of the topic. This will be done first here. Furthermore, the limitations of the research and the methods done and used in this thesis process, and their bias on the results, will be discussed. These results will be reflected in light of International Development Studies, which is followed by a conclusion on the findings- the research and sub questions will be summarised. Lastly, suggestions for any future research are under discussion.

### 7.1. Contribution to existing knowledge on local ownership and local sustainable development

Discussing in depth to how local ownership is integrated by PDIs (and CBOs) in the small scale development projects, by focusing on four principles, looking specifically at four case studies, and perceiving the issue from a postcolonial perspective, makes the topic contributing significantly to the existing knowledge on local ownership (and local sustainable development). First of all, it has become clear in this thesis that four principles- capacity building, community participation, empowerment, and self-reliance- are key for local ownership and which reap benefits for the success and maintaining (= “sustaining”) of development projects. These four principles are closely interrelated: letting the locals involve in the building of a school (refers to community participation) for example, leads to strengthening their skills and knowledge about building constructions (refers to capacity building (and self-reliance)). By elaborating on the methods of four case studies, it has been shown that each PDI and CBO implements one or more of these principles differently. The key contribution of this knowledge to the existing knowledge on PDIs by among other things Kinsbergen (2014;2015), Schulpen (2005), Hellheiner (2010), Schirch (2019), and Van den Berg & De Goede (2012) is that it has become clear that local ownership is a key part of the methods of PDIs in the small scale development projects they guide with the goal to achieve sustainable outcomes for the local communities: including one or more of the four principles is very key for having a cultural relativistic, inclusive, and bottom up approach of this small scale development cooperation<sup>9</sup>.

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<sup>9</sup> With as few exceptions, including local ownership leads to successful sustainable projects.

Applying postcolonialism to the research both contributes to the knowledge gained by the authors mentioned above and to the theory itself. By perceiving the methods of PDIs from a postcolonial perspective, it has become clear that the PDIs are generally “behaving” postcolonial. For example the experiences of Ton Van der Lee, Roel and Marianne Meijers-Van Eijndhoven, and Betteke de Gaay-Fortman, written in respectively their stories *Kinderen van Afrika* (2011), *Samen de Handen ineen!* (2021) and *Mensen ontwikkelen zichzelf* (2021), can be perceived as postcolonial due to their focus on local ownership. It also contributes to the theory itself, because the case studies show clear examples of main points of the theory, such as the (implicit) critique of traditional development aid that is characterised by Western imperialism, cultural domination, and hybridity- topics coined by Fanon (1968; 1986), Bhabha (1994), and Zein Elabdin (2011). These examples show real life cases which make the theory in the case of development studies better understandable.

## **7.2. Limitations of the research and methods**

A research and writing process which is as extensive as this one will always face obstacles which cannot be prevented or which have not been taken into consideration beforehand. The main limitations in this research are concerned with the selection and number of respondents, and the demarcation of the topic.

The biggest limitation of the research is that I could not have interviewed local people of the CBOs in Mali, due to travel bans, COVID-19 travel restrictions, and poor WIFI connections. Their views and opinions on the methods of PDIs, the cooperation between the PDIs and CBOs, and their share in the projects could not have been tracked down. This is of course important, because at this point I only could have shared the views and opinions of (Dutch) people who have had a PDI and (Dutch) people with a professional background in the topic. I think new and different insights would have been provided when I was able to involve the locals also in the research. Furthermore, the respondents for the interviews have been selected on the basis of their relation to the topics local ownership, PDIs, and local sustainable development. This relation could be having an own PDI, or a professional, political, or academic background in one of the topics. The limitation is of course the number of respondents: the more respondents, the higher the representation of findings. But due to time management, deadlines and workload, it is impossible to interview tens of people. Another

limitation is the decision of how to select these respondents. There could be for example also valuable respondents in other groups of people besides the ones picked for this research. Furthermore, it would have been interesting and valuable if I could interview local people who are involved in the projects. Due to poor WIFI connection, travel bans of COVID-19, and security risks in Mali, this was not possible.

The demarcation of the topic is also a limitation: “where to stop writing on a specific thing?” and “when is the information I wrote enough?” are questions that come up continuously. During the research and writing process, it is important to continuously keep in mind not to write too much, which results in getting back off track of the actual things to be discussed. Writing not enough on a specific sub topic leads to a lack of substantive information of the major topic, which would not be not backed up enough.

### **7.2.1. Potential influence of (methodological) bias on the results**

As I already touched upon briefly, having more respondents for in depth interviews will lead to a better representation of the findings, which make the conclusions more generalized. The selection of the respondents also plays a role in the quality of the analysis. It is already good to have picked both people who have had their own PDI on the one hand, because they are often very enthusiastic about their methods, and people with professional knowledge on the other side, who look more from their political, and academic background to the topic. This has prevented the analysis to become a one-sided story that provides a tunnel vision. The lack of having interviewed the locals themselves, but getting their information from secondary sources, is that I could not get knowledge on their experiences with the methods of PDIs and CBOs first hand. An in depth interview makes it possible to ask follow up questions- which are not phrased beforehand- that provide extra and valuable information. I think their first-hand information would have influenced the results in the way to have more in depth information on how the projects have benefits (or not) for them, for whom the projects are aimed. Finally, the little struggle for a good demarcation of the topic has probably led to a shortage or overload of information on particular points within the thesis.

### **7.3. Reflection of the results within International Development Studies**

Within the MSc programme International Development Studies, all kinds of topics and theories have come across, amongst which sustainable development and postcolonialism are topics that are discussed. Local ownership has not been part of the study programme, and therefore, this thesis with its analyses and results could be valuable to extend the knowledge for students on this topic and its relation to (small scale, local) sustainable development. As told, local ownership becomes more and more a focus point of development actors, be it national governments, NGOs, development banks, and small scale organisations such as PDIs. This makes it an interesting topic for *international* development studies, with an emphasis on “international”. This, because these development actors are part of the global flows of for example economic, social, and cultural phenomena. The topic also deals with an international development issue: the cooperation within development projects between a Dutch donor/development actor and a group of people abroad (the specific community and the CBO). Moreover, the results are interesting within development studies, because it shows how postcolonialism can be used for an analysis of a real life phenomenon. As a development theory, postcolonialism sheds a critical light on topics concerned with development aid and cooperation. By analysing how the methods of PDIs can or cannot be called postcolonial- and thus anti-neo colonial- gives an extra dimension to the theory. It is easier and more interesting to imagine what is meant with a postcolonial stance towards development, by presenting examples from practise.

### **7.4. Summary of the analyses**

The first sub question that was dealt with was “What role do local ownership, and its four key principles community participation, self-reliance, empowerment, and capacity building, have as approach in poverty reduction in the Global South?”. Local ownership has become more and more a topic of interest in the development projects of which the various development actors play a role. Traditional development aid with the focus on “aid”-when the people in need really receive the aid and are not (so much) engaged within the project- has become more and more a phenomenon of the past. Development with a bottom approach, and from “within” the communities- also part of “community driven development”- is a way of executing the projects which is considered as more successful for poverty reduction. This more or less refers to the

maximalist approach of local ownership, which also implies the communities at focus as the major agents for the development process. The minimalist version finds the inclusion of local level politicians in the development processes important.

Furthermore, local sustainable development, which has been discussed as approach in the second sub question, is key here. This, because the vicious circle will be broken: if the problems are tackled at their roots, then people are prevented from ending up in a situation of continuing poverty. But also, sustainable development, with attention at the sustainability in terms of time, has become more key. The United Nations for example have set the Sustainable Development Goals 2030, which aims at improving the lives of the poor not for the short term, but for the long term, by having a different approach (tackling issues at the roots, as said above).

Thirdly, the question “how do PDIs include ownership in their methods and what similarities and differences in including this local ownership do the PDIs have?” has been discussed. It is clear that the methods of PDIs in general more or less focus on one or more of the key principles- capacity building, empowerment, self-reliance, and community participation- that will lead to their exist strategies: the snowball effects of initiatives. This implies that the communities have been coordinated and facilitated by the PDI and CBO rather than helped, which has made the locals self- reliant and empowered. Moreover, cultural relativism plays a role in the methods of PDIs. Respect and understanding of the local culture, traditions, will lead to better cooperation and to better results of the projects. Furthermore, “realiteitsdenken” is kept in mind: due to a lack of opportunities and chances, the poor are voiceless and powerless which make them living from day to day. As a result, people live from day to day. Making them aware to have chances by for example letting them engage in the projects (community participation), will broaden their horizons. Finally, major differences are not there in terms of including the principles for example: it is about the fulfilment of these principles. This means; how do they give meaning to the principles? Community participation can be for example engaging the locals from the start immediately, or later on in the process.

Moreover, to what extent these similarities and differences have led to sustainable development has been discussed in the fourth sub question. The exit strategy and mutual trust are two key similarities every PDI has to deal with. The exit strategy namely implies the course of the project processes and gives meaning to the role of the various parties within these projects, to mention the role of the PDI, the CBO, and the local community. Part of the exit strategy is the ECO plan, which is implicitly part of most methods of PDIs: local



ownership is put high on the agenda. Moreover, trust is an important factor to deal with for achieving local sustainable development. When the different parties trust each other on various topics (such as financial matters and each other's competencies), stronger bonds will be created which makes the cooperation better with better results for the project outcomes. A major difference that is significant for the achievement of local sustainable development is the role of the PDI in the project: does a PDI decide to have a more active or passive role in the projects? And how does this lead to more or less integrating local ownership, with an eye at achieving sustainable development for the community at focus? These are questions PDIs keep in mind.

Finally, the fifth sub question- To what extent are the methods of PDIs that focus at local ownership postcolonial? - dealt with how "anti- colonial" the methods of PDIs actually are. This has been done to critically look at the results discussed in chapter 5. Although they focus much on local ownership, an idea that implicitly goes against of some previous methods (sometimes unintentionally neo colonial) of traditional development, it is possible that today's development agents such as people with PDI still (unintentionally) show characteristics of Western imperialism, cultural domination and/or paternalism. Concluding, it can be said that PDIs are quite postcolonial with their methods. They let the local communities led the development much by strengthening the capacities of the communities, empowering them, letting them engage in the projects, and letting them rely on their own resources and capacities.

There is also some critique from the group of professionals on the existence and the methods of PDIs. some of the respondents from this group find the PDIs neo-colonial and paternalistic, besides their lack in experience and capacities to solve problems structurally. Moreover, it is said that the people with PDIs want to create a good image of themselves; they are "pseudo philanthropic".

Much has been said on the topic and conclusions have been made on the sub questions. Although an extensive and summarizing answer has been given already, it is also convenient to give a brief summarised answer to the overall question:

*How is local ownership, with an eye on local sustainable development in the Global South, integrated in the methods of PDIs?*

In a nutshell, local ownership which is integrated in the methods of PDIs is of high significance for breaking the vicious circle of poverty of local communities in the Global South.

Empowering/motivating and letting the locals participate by among other things engaging them in the project initiation and letting them use their own skills and resources, will make the people feel leaders of their own circumstances and will broaden their horizons. Guiding them in how to rely on their own resources and to support them in building their knowledge and skills capacities, are key things the PDIs integrate in their methods of small scale development cooperation. A bottom up, inclusive, cultural relativistic and small scale approach to issues that play within the communities, is at stake here- and as shown in most cases- will have an important impact on the improvement of the lives of these people and the future generations of the communities.

### **7.5. Topics and suggestions for future research and writing**

Although this research has a valuable contribution to the existing knowledge on PDIs, local ownership (and local sustainable development) it does not mean no interesting issues are left to be researched and written about. The conceptual model (see the figure and table in chapter 2.5.) that is leading in this thesis, discusses how PDIs integrate local ownership, with an eye at four key principles, in their methods. An alternative to look at, which has not been mentioned, is that a PDI does not focus on local ownership, but wants to achieve for example local sustainable development in a different way. In these cases it is thus interesting to look at PDIs that have a whole different method or aim within (small scale) development aid. Research then can be done for example to projects with no long term outcomes, while local ownership has been integrated in the method or looking at projects in which local ownership is not integrated. An alternative research is changing the case studies into PDIs that have projects in different countries, and comparing the differences and similarities in methods and project outcomes. Another idea that comes to my mind is taking a different lens (theory) to apply to the analyses. Interesting would be for example to integrate the modernization theory to the topic, in order to analyse what positive role local ownership can have on the negative effects modernization has caused for the poor in the Global South. Finally, in a new research, more focus can be put on the views and opinions of the locals themselves by integrating them in the research process. When possible, I could travel to Mali and have them as respondents for the interviews to be conducted.

But for now, it is clear that local ownership has a significant role in the achievement of local sustainable development- development that is key for the poor people in the Global South to get fair chances and opportunities, to improve their lives.

## **Final word**

I want to end this thesis informally by stating that the quote of Nelson Mandela (p.3) implicitly mentions the latent idea or lesson behind the topic of the thesis. The idea behind local ownership, which shows the postcolonial philosophy- in my opinion- namely shows that the “underdevelopment” of the people in the Global South is mainly a result of Western colonialism and domination from the past. Therefore, poverty (and slavery and apartheid) is man-made. The success of development projects today is also due to the shift from development aid to development cooperation and community led development, where people that in the past were called “donors” on the one side and people that were considered as poor and unknown on the other, now work together to create new and better perspectives mainly for the latter group. Therefore, poverty can be eradicated by the actions of human beings together- people from different cultures, and different backgrounds.

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14-07-2022

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# Appendix I: Interview guides

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Interview guide of the interview with the people who have had PDIs.

## **Introductie**

Beste heer, mevrouw,

Dank dat u mee wilt doen met mijn onderzoek. Het interview dat ik met u ga afnemen, gaat over de onderwerpen lokaal eigenaarschap en de duurzaamheid van de projecten in de desbetreffende lage-en middeninkomenslanden. Middels het interview wil ik een beter beeld creëren waarin duidelijk wordt welk effect en bijdrage het supporteren van lokaal eigenaarschap/ het integreren van lokaal eigenaarschap in de werkwijze bijdraagt aan de duurzaamheid van het project. Met duurzaamheid wordt o.a. het volgende bedoelt:

- de “empowerment” van de lokale gemeenschap in het project stimuleren, ofwel hen de handen uit de mouwen laten steken
- de lokale gemeenschap bij het project betrekken voor de langere termijn
- lokaal leiderschap stimuleren
- zelfredzaamheid van de lokale gemeenschap hoogachten, ofwel hen ook daadwerkelijk het idee geven dat ze er toe doen binnen het project en dat ze een verantwoordelijkheid over het project hebben

Dit zijn allerlei zaken die ervoor zorgen dat de lokale gemeenschap het project gaande houden, hetgeen de duurzaamheid van het project ten goede komt.

Middels dit interview wil ik graag van u horen of en hoe u bent omgegaan met het lokale eigenaarschap binnen uw project en hoe en welke bijdrage het heft geleverd aan het succes/duurzaamheid van het project.

Gaat u akkoord met de opname van het interview? De geluidsfragmenten worden alleen gebruikt voor het noteren, analyseren en categoriseren van de antwoorden achteraf. Dit zorgt ervoor dat ik de antwoorden goed kan behandelen en gebruiken voor een goed beeld te creëren over het onderwerp. Zodra u klaar zit en akkoord gaat, kunnen wij beginnen met het interview.

## **Interview**

### **Vraag 1**

Kunt u eerst uzelf introduceren en iets vertellen over uw project dat u heeft (gehad)?

- Locatie project
- Doelgroep
- Doel project
- Reden van het project

### **Vraag 2**

Wat betekenen de onderwerpen lokaal eigenaarschap en lokale duurzame ontwikkeling voor u?

- Wat is uw opvatting over deze onderwerpen binnen ontwikkelingssamenwerking?
- Hoe denkt u dat lokaal eigenaarschap en lokale duurzame ontwikkeling in het algemeen aan elkaar gelinkt zijn?
- Heeft u lokaal eigenaarschap in het project betrokken en zo ja, waarom heeft u dat geïntegreerd?

→ Denk hierbij aan de ideeën van capaciteitsopbouw, zelfredzaamheid, gemeenschapsparticipatie en “empowerment” (=eigen krachten gebruiken)

- Hoe heeft deze focus op het supporteren van lokaal eigenaarschap bijgedragen aan de outcome/resultaat van uw project?
- En als u denkt dat er geen bijdrage is/was, waarom denkt u dat dat zo is/was?

### Vraag 3

Het bevorderen van lokaal eigenaarschap vanuit de POI wordt ook wel “coachend werken” of “faciliterend werken” genoemd. Welke ervaring heeft u al met coachend werken binnen het ontwikkelingsproject?

- Welke kennis en vaardigheidslacunes bent u tegengekomen in dit type werken?/Waar merkte u dat u een tekort had aan bepaalde methodes of kennisaspecten?
- Mocht u behoefte hebben m.b.t. (beter) coachend leren werken, welke heeft u dan en waarom? En welke behoefte denkt u dat uw partnerorganisatie hiermee heeft (gehad)?

### Vraag 4

Stel dat er een vrijblijvende training aangeboden wordt u te begeleiden met dit coachend werken, hoe zou u dat het liefste willen hebben? Denk hierbij aan een on the pitch training, een naslagwerk of een workshop.

- En waarom zou u hiervoor kiezen of waarom zou u hier juist niet voor kiezen?

Dit was de laatste vraag. Heeft u nog vragen of opmerkingen die onduidelijk zijn of die u te binnen schieten en misschien van belang kunnen zijn voor het onderzoek?

Dan zijn wij nu aan het einde gekomen van het interview. Ik zet de opname nu op stop en wil u hartelijk danken voor uw tijd en medewerking.

Zodra ik mijn onderzoek heb afgerond, en u wilt het, dan zal ik het u toesturen.

Dankuwel.



Interview guide for the interviews with experts, politicians, and academics- called the “professionals”.

### **Introductie**

Beste heer, mevrouw,

Dank dat u mee wilt doen met mijn onderzoek. Het interview dat ik met u ga afnemen, gaat over particuliere initiatieven in ontwikkelingssamenwerking en hoe zij omgaan met de onderwerpen lokaal eigenaarschap en de duurzaamheid van de projecten in de desbetreffende lage-en middeninkomenslanden. Middels het interview wil ik een beter beeld creëren waarin duidelijk wordt wat uw visie is op deze onderwerpen. Met duurzaamheid wordt o.a. het volgende bedoelt:

- de “empowerment” van de lokale gemeenschap in het project stimuleren, ofwel hen de handen uit de mouwen laten steken
- de lokale gemeenschap bij het project betrekken voor de langere termijn
- lokaal leiderschap stimuleren
- zelfredzaamheid van de lokale gemeenschap hoogachten, ofwel hen ook daadwerkelijk het idee geven dat ze er toe doen binnen het project en dat ze een verantwoordelijkheid over het project hebben

Dit zijn allerlei zaken die ervoor zorgen dat de lokale gemeenschap het project gaande houden, hetgeen de duurzaamheid van het project ten goede zou moeten komen.

Middels dit interview wil ik graag van u horen wat uw opvatting is over lokaal eigenaarschap, hoe u tegen de werkwijze van particuliere initiatieven aankijkt, en of u denkt dat het supporteren van lokaal eigenaarschap een bijdrage en zo ja, welke bijdrage het heeft aan de duurzame ontwikkeling op lokaal niveau.

Gaat u akkoord met de opname van het interview? De geluidsfragmenten worden alleen gebruikt voor het noteren, analyseren en categoriseren van de antwoorden achteraf. Dit zorgt ervoor dat ik de antwoorden goed kan behandelen en gebruiken voor een goed beeld te creëren over het onderwerp. Zodra u klaar zit, u uzelf heeft voorgesteld en akkoord gaat, kunnen wij beginnen met het interview.

### **Interview**

#### **Vraag 1**

Hoe kijkt u aan tegen particuliere initiatieven en hun algemene werkwijze van ontwikkelingssamenwerking? Denk bij deze algemene werkwijze aan de kleinschaligheid en persoonlijke karakter van de projecten.

#### **Vraag 2**

Wat is uw opvatting over lokaal eigenaarschap? Denkt u hierbij dan vooral aan de onderwerpen zelfredzaamheid, gemeenschapsparticipatie, capaciteitsopbouw en empowerment.

#### **Vraag 3**

Denkt u dat er een verband is tussen het bevorderen van lokaal eigenaarschap en lokale duurzame ontwikkeling? Waarom denkt u van wel/niet?

Dit was de laatste vraag. Heeft u nog vragen of opmerkingen die onduidelijk zijn of die u te binnen schieten en misschien van belang kunnen zijn voor het onderzoek?

Dan zijn wij nu aan het einde gekomen van het interview. Ik zet de opname nu op stop en wil u hartelijk danken voor uw tijd en medewerking.

Zodra ik mijn onderzoek heb afgerond, en u wilt het, dan zal ik het u toesturen.

Dankuwel.

## Appendix II: List of interview respondents

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Below is the list of the respondents and between brackets the name of the PDI or profession and organisation (the names in red have not been interviewed yet; they have barely WIFI connection in the country they resides currently). I have used their knowledge, gained from the book they have written and from email contact).

- Tunafasi (Betteke de Gaay Fortman)
- Sanouna (Ton van der Lee)
- Stipulae (Hans van Luijk)
- Steun voor Oudalan (Dianne Nicolai)
- Help Malawi (Bo Teerling)
- Beijenteelt Noord Oeganda (Theo Sinke)
- Bon Baana (Yvon van Lankveld)
- ELPG (Emile Hagelen)
- Hakuna Matata (Henk Vervoort)
- Stichting Kwataniza (Tiny Koppens)
- De vrienden van de Sahel (Fabiola Bliersbach)
- PEFO Oeganda (Rudy van den Hoven)
- Solid International (Inge Overmeer)
- NME Mundial (Arnold Brouwer)
- Farm Friends (Max Kooijmans)
- Jappaleh ( Hetty van Dolleweerd)
- Water is Leven (Fons Bus)
- Partners Pays Dogon (Marleen van Duijnhoven)
- Stichting Walanta (Janka de Vries)
- Jalihal (Kees Traas)
- Seed4Farmers (Frans Tetteroo)
- Harambee Holland (Marianne en Roel Meijers-Van Eijndhoven)
- Wiebe Nauta (sociologist, Maastricht University)
- Jan Klink (member of Parliament, VVD)
- Heinz Greijn (Partos)
- Arne Doornebal (researcher, NABC)

- Jeroen Kelderhuis (Ministry of Foreign Affairs)
- Mathilde Miedema (researcher, TNO)