Dutch development NGOs and their Images of Intended Beneficiaries, Themselves and their Projects

How NGOs' Interpretations inform Strategies for Action in the case of Conservation Agriculture

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Abstract

Actors in development, including Non-Governmental Organisations (NGOs), have faced many critiques over the years regarding the way they engage with their ultimate intended beneficiaries. These critical voices are directed to issues such as the effectiveness, normativity and desirability of development practice. Though certainly changes were realised, still a major challenge is the observed gap between discourses and practices. One might wonder why NGOs continue to talk about participation, inclusion, sustainability, community-based approaches, multi-stakeholder partnerships et cetera, while practices do not seem to change fundamentally? Therefore, in the context of our search for an ethics of development cooperation, we aimed to investigate how 'northern' NGOs view their interaction with intended beneficiaries of their interventions.

We did so by researching the interpretations of ten Dutch development NGOs – five of which are explicitly faith-based – that are involved in the promotion of Conservation Agriculture in sub-Saharan Africa. In particular, we investigated their interpretation of (1) the Other - the targeted farmer with his/her norms and customs; of (2) the Self - the NGO with its norms and customs as well as its strategies for action; and (3) how these interpretations relate to understandings of the ultimate horizon – that what is considered unconditionally nondependent reality. Research methods included semi-structured interviews with NGO representatives and an analysis of NGO documents.

Through analysis a diverse range of ideal-typical interpretations were identified concerning the Other – the conservative, autonomous, constrained and fearful farmer; the Self – the superior, engaged and responsible NGO; as well as NGOs' interpretations of the core characteristics of their own strategies for action – rationality, superiority, progress and flexibility. In addition, in this research three dominating and mutually exclusive understandings of the ultimate come forward: economic prosperity, human autonomy and (the Christian) God.

Yet, this exclusivity of ultimate horizons is counterbalanced by the mix of overlapping, non-exclusive interpretations on a more practical level. Moreover, no strict correlations were identified between interpretations of the Other, the Self, strategies for action and the ultimate horizon of interpretation. Nevertheless, more conceptual relations do exist, for instance between the autonomous farmer, the engaged Self, flexibility in strategies for action and human autonomy as ultimate. Importantly, we observe both positive and negative tendencies in terms of ethical development and because of the non-exclusive nature of the interpretations there exists ample room for cooperation in ethical development, in particular when organisational differences on the level of the ultimate are acknowledged. In conclusion, this research provides insights in the interpretations of NGOs and explores their relation to ethical development.

Key words: *ethical development; non-governmental organisations; discourse versus practice; interpretation; the Other and the Self; conservation agriculture.*

Preface and acknowledgements

With the submission of this thesis an adventurous journey has come to an end. The first plans were made almost two years ago. Since my departure I have seen many landscapes passing by. From proposal writing with interesting directional discussions to long hours of analysis-struggles, and from enjoyable times of writing to stressful periods due to a lack of time. Looking back, I appreciated all these situations and learned a lot from them.

Of course I want to thank the people who have contributed to this journey. First of all, thanks to the ten interview respondents who provided rich information and were willing and open to share some time with me. Furthermore, I greatly appreciated the support of my supervisors: Corné Rademaker with valuable constructive, detailed and philosophical insights; Otto Hospes with supportive feedback and anthropological expertise and methodological guidance; and Henk Jochemsen with a wealth of knowledge and visionary ideas about the larger picture. All three of you truly inspired me before and during the period of this thesis, and you(r ideas) will continue to do so in any further activities. Besides support on the content, many people assisted me at the process-side, most notably Lieneke, my wife. Your encouragement, trust, feedback, practical help and compensation for poor time management were of great value for the final product of this research. Upon arrival at my destination, I conclude that I enjoyed this great experience and I learned a lot more than expected. Importantly, I am confident that insights from this journey will contribute to both my working and personal life in the future.

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Abbreviations

CA	Conservation Agriculture
NGO	Non-Governmental Organisation
FAO	Food and Agriculture Organisation of the United Nations
FBO	Faith-Based Organisation

1. Introduction

The 2015 UN report which introduced the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) for the period up to 2030 was entitled *Transforming Our World.* As a typical example of development-related policy publications, this document had a genuinely inspiring and hope-fostering title calling for change and envisioning a bright future. However, critical readers might argue that the development cooperation sector[1] should be 'transformed' itself, before assuming it is strong enough to combat the urgent and persistent problems of this world. In retrospect, we can certainly say that major changes have taken place in the past seventy years. For example, the initial emphasis on nation-states and giving aid to governments, has turned into strong emphasis on decentralisation and private actors. Furthermore, whereas the most important actors first included international (financial) institutions and national governments, since the 1980s these are accompanied by Non-Governmental Organisations (NGOs). More fundamentally, the general perception of the 'first world helping the third world to get towards the first world' and strong emphasis on 'modernisation' and 'westernisation', have been mitigated to discourses of partnership, complexity and equality. Still, in public debates many critiques with regards to effectiveness, normativity and desirability can be heard in a diversity of countries, ranging from Western 'donors' to African or Asian 'recipients' (Engelbart, 2017; Herskovitz, 2012). Similar points are raised in academia (Ferguson & Gupta, 2002; Ramalingam, 2013; G. Rist, 2007). In other words, moving towards the motivating problem of this research: a discrepancy is perceived and experienced between well-sounded discourses and continuing ill functioning on the ground. More specifically, one might wonder why actors in development continue talking about participation, inclusion, sustainability, community-based approaches, multi-stakeholder partnerships et cetera, while their practices do not seem to change fundamentally?

In an attempt to provide an answer to this question various lines of argument are possible. An initial important reason, posited by the Dutch scientific council for governmental policy, is that (1) development cooperation suffers from a profound lack of "intervention ethics tailored specifically to development aid" (van Lieshout, Went, & Kremer, 2009, p. 133). Other authors take a more structural perspective by pointing to (2) global political and economic structures of exploitation and oppression, which require action beyond the development sector (Kamat, 2004; Kamruzzaman, 2012; Said, 1984). A last strand of researchers points at the (3) considerable, potentially conflicting, differences in cultural backgrounds between actors in development and their ultimate intended beneficiaries, which not only materialise in terms of world- and lifeviews, but also in concrete and actual practices concerning

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[1] In this thesis the term 'development cooperation' refers to general efforts in development, whereas 'development aid' refers specifically to (governmental) donor-money. Although 'sector' might not be the best term due to manifold interconnections and complex intermediary positions, it refers to the totality of actors working on development at different levels.

economic or agricultural activities. In case of power imbalances, such differences and misunderstandings might lead to practices that are not in line with ethical development (Hilhorst, 2003; Long, 1990). These three themes provide an important context to this research.

As mentioned above, since some decades NGOs have become central actors in the development system, therefore being a suitable object for research on development cooperation. In the 1980s they were welcomed as the new alternatives to state-centred aid, as many scholars and policy makers had become disappointed in the functioning of the new nation-states. In essence, NGOs were seen as entities that were closer to the people, more 'embedded' in the local context and more flexible in structure[2]. However, the challenge of alternatives is always to fulfil the high expectations, also in this particular case (Mitlin, Hickey, & Bebbington, 2007). Gradually, more and more scholars raised critiques against the functioning and positioning of NGOs, questioning if they were actually in any way different from the dominant (neo-)liberal approach associated with states and markets (Farrington & Bebbington, 1993; Hulme & Edwards, 1997; Kamat, 2004). Moreover, for many critics these organisations, though once the alternatives, have now become the most dominant actors in the western project of development, with the aim to penetrate into the lives of beneficiaries and transforming them into governable westernised subjects (Ferguson & Gupta, 2002; Harsh, Mbatia, & Shrum, 2010; Seckinelgin, 2006). Thus, together with the critiques concerning the normativity and the lack of ethics in development cooperation in general, the central question becomes: How do northern NGOs take into account intended beneficiaries[3] with their social environments in their programmes?

One way in which this 'environment' can be examined is by looking at the norms and customs of beneficiaries and, importantly, how they are *interpreted* by NGOs. A focus on interpretations can reveal more than a separate study of practices on-the-ground or the superficial use of well-sounding language. In other words, it shows the underlying tendencies which are deeply embedded in organisations and in the minds and reasoning of their employees. Moreover, they may be at the roots of the abovementioned problems and critiques and their investigation gives input for the formulation

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[2] Over the course of time various 'variants' of NGOs have emerged, ranging from International NGOs (INGOs) to Community-Based Organisations (CBOs). As this research concentrates on Dutch NGOs working in sub-Saharan Africa, it can be said that by definition they are INGOs. However, we will use the more standard abbreviation NGO to refer to these organisations.

[3] With regard to the term 'beneficiaries', it might be argued that it only refers to a donor-defined reality by which people are turned into 'benefiting parties' in development. Still, it is an often used term to refer to the population that is aimed to be reached by a certain development intervention. However, because it is necessary to leave room for the possible failure of development projects, we use, similar to amongst others Banks et al. (2015), the adjective 'intended'.

of an ethics of development cooperation. Importantly, as has been argued by various scholars, not only interpretations of others but also interpretations of ourselves reveal more about an ethics of engagement (Giri & van Ufford, 2004; Husserl, 1960). Therefore, to have an integrated view on NGOs interactions with intended beneficiaries, both constructed images of those beneficiaries and of NGOs themselves should be included in research. What is more, these two levels of interpretation are informed by an ultimate horizon of interpretation, referring to an end-point of reference which gives meaning to 'the everyday'[4]. However, in order to be able to research such dynamics in detail, a more specific theme within the broad field of development cooperation is needed. Therefore, below we will introduce the case of the promotion of conservation agriculture.

Complex problems of food and nutrition security and the sustainable increase of agricultural production have an enormous impact on a worldwide scale. Many have studied these issues and sought for new technologies or different approaches and understandings that can contribute to improvement of the situation (Baudron, Andersson, Corbeels, & Giller, 2012; Eakin et al., 2010; German, Ramisch, & Verma, 2010; Kennedy & Liljeblad, 2016; Vanlauwe et al., 2014). Conservation Agriculture (CA) is an example of such an approach or technology. It aims to simultaneously improve yields and provide sustainable farming techniques, in fit with calls for 'sustainable intensification' (Garnett et al., 2013). In the past decades, CA has gained much attention in agricultural research, policy and practice. Three central principles are: minimal soil disturbance (no or minimal tillage), permanent soil cover (mulch layer or green legumes), and crop diversity (intercropping or crop rotation) (FAO, 2015)[5]. The approach has now spread throughout the world and is being applied on larger and smaller scale, because of a variety reasons ranging from cost reduction to environmental sustainability. Amongst others, the Food and Agriculture Organisation (FAO) and a number of high-level research institutes and NGOs are implementing and promoting CA in developing countries (Giller et al., 2015; Jager, 2015).

Despite its widespread promotion and adoption, CA is not uncontested. From multiple sides weaknesses and critiques are formulated, both targeting technical and social issues. For instance, with regard to the principle of no-tillage, Pittelkow et al. (2015) identified an overall negative effect on yields, while much variability exists depending on the circumstances. Others have critically assessed

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[4] In the theoretical chapter 2 these notions of images of the Other (the intended beneficiary) and the Self (the NGO) and the ultimate horizon of interpretation are more elaborately discussed.

[5] While this is an often used definition of the FAO, Rademaker and Jochemsen (n.d.) note that, much disagreement exists concerning the definition of CA and which principles are involved (FAO, 2010; Sommer et al., 2014; Vanlauwe et al., 2014). Some mention additional principles such as good management in relation to planting and weeding, and other refer to the appropriate use of fertilize (Sommer et al., 2014). The Zimbabwean Conservation Agriculture Task Force also mentions the principles of "not burning crop residues" and "efficient use of inputs" (ZCATF, 2008, p. 3).

the use of crop residues as mulch (Erenstein, 2002; Naudin et al., 2012) and the benefits to livelihoods of smallholder farmers (Giller et al., 2015; Nkala, Mango, Corbeels, Veldwisch, & Huising, 2011). With regard to the social domain, some authors point at CA's (negative) impact on gender relations as well as community customs regarding (traditional) ways of farming (Farnworth et al., 2016; Scheba, 2017). While these norms and customs are further investigated in chapter 3, the interesting question arises: To what extent do the techniques of CA fit with the norms and customs of the smallholder farmer? More importantly, for the purpose of this research: What do NGOs do when the techniques of CA do not fit with the norms and customs of their intended beneficiaries?

1.1 Problem Statement

After having introduced several important questions concerning development cooperation and CA, here we summarise how these relate to the central problem of this research. First of all, we noted a discrepancy between what the development cooperation sector communicates and what happens in practice. As mentioned above, there are three very relevant sides to this problem, namely that only marginal coherent thinking about ethics is available; interactions between NGOs and their intended beneficiaries are full of normativities; and that the structural problems of global development are full of complexity. All three demonstrate the importance of reflection and action, but within the scope of this research we primarily focus on the second aspect: the interactions between NGOs and their intended beneficiaries. Hereby, the aim is to contribute to the first domain, the development of an ethics of engagement. A further part of the problem is that NGOs, though previously appraised as close to the ultimate target group, are currently perceived as a prominent part of the problem. This evidences the need to gain deeper insights in how these NGOs interpret their intended beneficiaries and their norms and customs in particular. Finally, CA serves as an adequate and interesting case study because it is in fact widely promoted by NGOs, while debate is ongoing about how the technical and social implications of adoption affect the lives of farmers.

1.2 Research Objectives

From the above we can formulate three objectives which we will introduce below. First of all, through this research we aim to contribute to the debate on CA, in particular regarding the question whether it is in line with farmers' own norms and customs. Importantly, we aim to show that beyond technical aspects, perhaps assumed to be neutral and universal, the entire multi-aspected lives of farmers should be included in the discussions. Such a perspective is not only relevant in the specific case of CA promotion, but also with regard to other agricultural interventions and development assistance in general.

Secondly, in the new era of globalisation increasingly more cultures and religions come into contact with each other. As every practice and custom is interconnected with underlying norms and values, ways of life and views of the world and human beings, development cooperation as a sector can be seen as an arena of cultural intersection, with daily encounters full of interaction and negotiation (Long, 1997). Because of the various critiques that development has come to face in recent years and the alleged legitimacy crisis that is related to these critiques (van Lieshout et al., 2009), it is important to acknowledge and get a better understanding of this intercultural interaction. Although many have studied this from a systemic or structural perspective, focusing on the organisational side and important power (im)balances, here we aim take a different route and examine processes of interpretation[6]. In particular, through the case study of the promotion of CA, this thesis aims to contribute to the understanding of the processes of interpretation within development NGOs. In essence, the objective is to research how interpretations of NGOs about the intended beneficiary with his/her norms and customs and NGOs' interpretations of themselves inform their strategies for action. Hereby, we aim to examine the underlying, 'tacit' dynamics within organisations and their employees. In a more practical sense, this thesis provides insights for NGOs how interpretation processes work within their type of organisations. This is a necessary step in order to be able to recognise (un)desired interpretations and practices within organisations, which is at the root of correction towards and moving towards ethical engagement. In the end, the aim is a better understanding of the way in which NGOs, as external actors, intervene in 'local' situations, in order to increase the quality and thereby possibly the successfulness of development projects.

Finally, this research also aims to contribute to the formulation of an ethics of development engagement, both within organisations and in academia. Since the field of development is a continuous interplay between a large diversity of norms, values, cultural backgrounds and customs, there is no neutral ground (Olivier De Sardan, 2004). Thus, especially for actors such as NGOs, it is crucial to consider the ethical choices that arise in their encounters with others (Gasper, 2012; Long, 1999; Rademaker & Jochemsen, 2018). In order to contribute to the understanding of an ethics of development, throughout this research but in particular in the concluding chapter we refer to the ethical implications of the results of this research.

1.3 Research Questions

The central question of this research is: **How do the interpretations of northern NGOs inform their strategies for action?** In order to guide our explorations three sub-research questions are formulated.

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[6] This central concept is further defined below in chapter 2, particularly textbox 2.3.

1. **How do northern NGOs interpret their intended beneficiaries and their norms and customs in their promotion of CA?**

This first sub-question is answered in chapter four. However, before we speak about interpretations we have to know what norms and customs are actually relevant in the promotion of CA. Therefore, in the first paragraph of chapter four we answer the question: What norms and customs of intended beneficiaries are relevant (constraining or enabling) in the promotion of CA?

2. **How do northern NGOs interpret their own position and their strategies for action in the promotion of CA?**

This second sub-question is answered in the fifth chapter, respectively discussing the interpretation of the NGOs itself and their strategies for action.

3. **What is the ultimate horizon of interpretation of NGOs in their promotion of CA?**

In the third sub-question, answered in chapter six, we turn to the deepest, most basic level of interpretation, namely that of the ultimate horizon.

However, before we start the journey of answering these questions in the chapters four to six, the chapters two and three introduce the theoretical background and the methodological design of this research. In chapter seven we conclude and situate our findings in the broader context of development cooperation.

2. Theory and concepts

Building further on earlier academic attempts to grasp some of the complexities of (agricultural) development processes, this chapter will discuss the theoretical underpinnings of this study. First we introduce the concept of lifeworlds, as developed by Norman Long and several colleagues. By means of this concept, the contours of development cooperation as already introduced above will be conceptualised. More specifically, the focus is on the interaction between intended beneficiaries and northern NGOs and their different lifeworlds. The theory of modal aspects of reality introduced in textbox 2.2, will serve as heuristic framework to be able to research the concept of lifeworlds. Secondly, with reference to interpretative and postcolonial studies, these two actors are characterised as 'the Other' and 'the Self'. These are two central terms which will return in the rest of this thesis. Besides addressing how these notions have been used in earlier studies on intercultural interactions, it is shown how they can be used in an analysis of the interpretations underlying these interactions. For this purpose, textbox 2.4 provides more detail about the methodological concept of ideal-types which will be used to research the interpretations of NGOs. Finally, the conceptual triangle for this thesis (see figure 2.1) is completed with the ultimate horizon of interpretation, which refers to a central and final point of reference which provides meaning to interpretations and strategic choices on the more practical level. Throughout the discussion of these theories and concepts, the relevance to the case study of this research, the promotion of Conservation Agriculture, is clarified.

Figure 2.1: Schematic overview of concepts used in this thesis
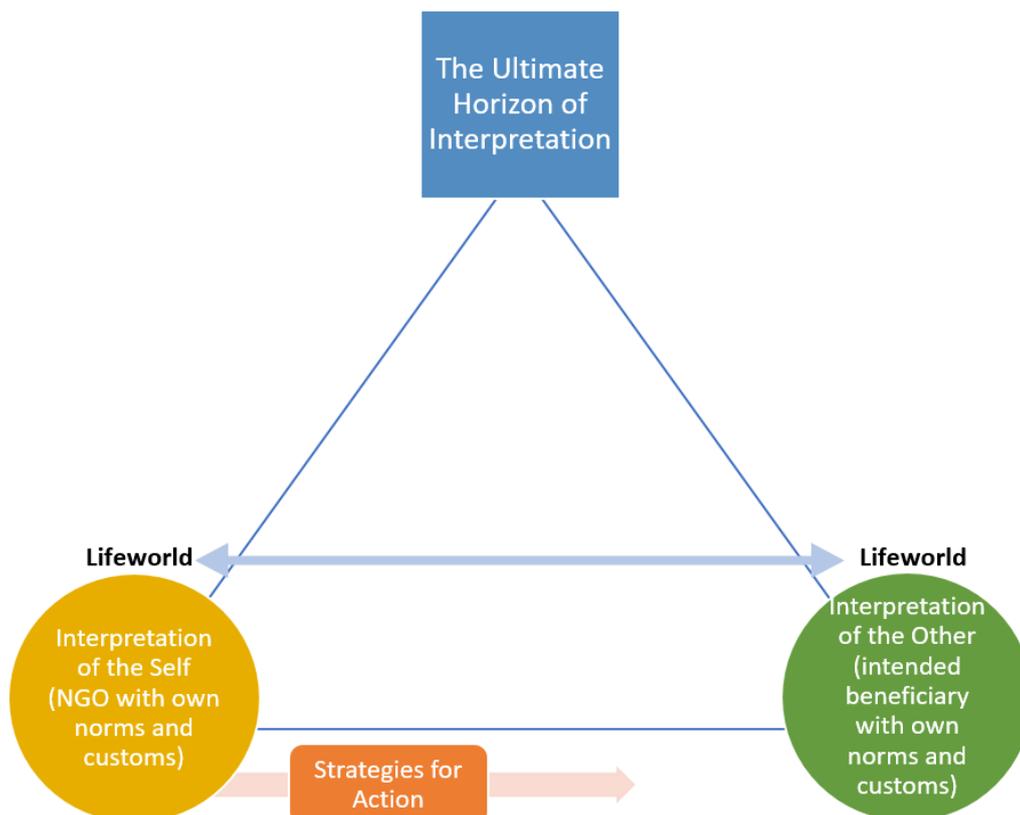
2.1 Lifeworlds in international development cooperation

Considering the growing gap between established development approaches and critical post-development initiatives in the late twentieth century, Long and several colleagues developed the so-called actor-oriented approach. This was an attempt to advocate for "a more sophisticated treatment of social change which emphasises the interplay and mutual determination of 'internal' and 'external' factors and relationships, and which provides accounts of the life-worlds, strategies and rationalities of the different social actors involved" (Long & Villarreal, 1996, p. 141). Moreover, as Eriksson Baaz (Eriksson Baaz, 2005) notes, through this approach actors in development are not seen as static and passive structures either on the sending or on the recipient side, but as strategic actors within their own environment. In other words, the actions of individuals and organisations are situated in a social context, which in turn provides specific meaning to certain practices. This meaningful social context is referred to by Long as a lifeworld, which he defines as "the 'lived-in' and 'taken-for-granted' world of the social actor" in which actions are informed by personal as well as socially constructed intentions and underlying beliefs (Long, 2001, p. 54). Importantly, there exists both a certain unconsciousness and an intentionality in this definition, reflecting the need to balance structure and agency.

Textbox 2.1: Customs and Norms

Since the concepts of customs and norms[7] are central in this thesis, it is necessary to provide a definition of these terms. In short, the former broadly refer to ways of doing, practices or habits in everyday life, being implicitly influenced by normative principles that people adhere to (T. Jones, 2006), while the latter are primarily socially defined and constructed through interaction, having more explicitly a normative character. Applying this to the agricultural practice, many everyday customs of farmers have a particular influence on farmers' lives (German et al., 2010). For instance, an issue where normativity is clearly playing a role is the perceived sustainability of a certain agricultural technique. While the expected or perceived sustainable increase of yields as a result of CA can be a reason for adoption of one farmer, another farmer might practice slash-and-burn agriculture because he perceives no sustainability problem in this. It is, however, crucial to note that people are not always aware of the norm or value that underlies their customs, as customs are often unconscious activities and sedimented in routines, as noted above. Consequently, people may not only adhere to certain customs or traditions actively believing in the deeper notions that are connected to it, but also they might adhere to dead traditions while not (anymore) recognising or

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[7] The study of values is not included *directly* here, due to limitations of time and space and because it is beyond the scope of this thesis. However, as values are generally understood to be underlying certain norms and customs and guiding ways of thinking (Alrøe & Kristensen, 2002; Hailey, 2000), they are *indirectly* involved as well. Still, if the aim was to directly investigate values at the level of the intended beneficiaries, this would mean an extensive fieldwork period in SSA countries. Furthermore, the principle objective is to examine the interpretation process at the side of northern NGOs, in which the norms and customs of intended beneficiaries are the object that is interpreted.

believing in the underlying principles. Importantly, both of these, the intentional and the unintentional, are within the contours of the lifeworlds of actors as studied here.

In line with this strand of thinking, NGOs and their employees are here seen as strategic actors[8] with their own embedded norms and customs instead of merely organisational structures (see for instance Hilhorst, 2003) and NGOs' intended beneficiaries are seen as social human beings whose lives are not restricted to one aspect of life, e.g. the economic (see textbox 2.2). As mentioned in the above, a considerable distance – both physically and culturally – between NGOs and their ultimate beneficiaries can be observed in development cooperation today. Therefore, in this research we conceptualise the backgrounds of these two actors as different 'lifeworlds'. In addition, this concept is suitable for this research as it focuses on interpretations as noted by Long: "The central issue is how actors struggle to give meaning to their experiences through an array of representations, images, cognitive understandings and emotional responses. (…) Analysis must therefore address itself to the intricacies and dynamics of relations between differing lifeworlds, and to processes of cultural construction" (Long, 2001, p. 51).

For Long and colleagues, one way to research the interaction of lifeworlds is to analyse development interfaces (Long, 2001). This concept refers to the point where diverse, perhaps conflicting, lifeworlds or social worlds come into contact with each other and negotiation arises on the basis of normative differences or conflicts of interests (Long, 1997; Long & Villarreal, 1996). This is a suitable way to analyse very concrete interactions, such as between an agricultural extensionist and a Mexican farmers' community (Long, 2001). However, in this research we rather focus on non-governmental development professionals and the images they, and their organisations, have constructed of intended beneficiaries. Yet, importantly, we assume[9] this interpretation process remains embedded in the interaction between development professionals and intended beneficiaries in practice (e.g. through field visits) and discourse (e.g. through engaging with documents).

Textbox 2.2: Modal aspects of reality
One dimension of the concept of lifeworld in development studies that is often emphasised in development studies concerns the multi-dimensionality of life. Anthropologist Jean-Pierre Olivier de Sardan referred to this as follows: "Classic economic phenomena (…) that are generally involved in 'development' processes cannot be arbitrarily isolated from their social (…), cultural and symbolic (…), political (…) or their magico- religious dimensions" (2004, p. 62). In order to make this diversity of aspects more concrete and researchable, we use the theory of modal aspects of reality. It serves as a heuristic device or loose framework guiding our search for the different types of norms and customs that are relevant to the promotion of CA. As such, it prevents us from reading particular

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[8] This brings in the question of representativeness with regard to the interview respondents, as noted by Mosse (2004). This was taken into account in the process of selecting respondents and mentioned during each of the interviews as well (see also section 3.3.2 on the interview methodology).
[9] How this assumption is anticipated is also further explained in section 3.3.2.

norms and customs into the data ourselves, while it still provides a certain structure for our search for the different types of norms and customs (Van Woudenberg, 2003). This theory, developed by Dooyeweerd (1969), originates in the field of Christian (or Reformational) Philosophy. Since the beginning of the nineteenth century a wide range of philosophers have been engaged in this field with the core objective to gain insight into God's creation. A core principle is that they search for a certain order and cause underlying all things and practices in this world, since God created things with a purpose in contrast to at random evolution. As explained below, the theory of modal aspects is both about the diversity of aspects in reality as well as the order amongst them, which makes it relevant for this research.

One central observation by Dooyeweerd was that people experience various aspects simultaneously in the reality around them, since they are to greater or lesser extent related to each and every object or practice in the world. Most commonly the fifteen aspects in the table below are recognised within the field, but also outside of it (see for instance Wigboldus et al., 2016). The study of these aspects provides a diverse but integrated picture of life, especially because they are related to each other. None of the aspects can be reduced to another, as each has a unique 'meaning-kernel' or 'normative principle' which is not reducible to any of the others (Van Woudenberg, 2003). An example of this can be encountered in the work of a plant scientist who studies a plant's biotic functioning. In reality all other fourteen aspects are in some way relevant to this plant. However, the plant scientist typically excludes from his/her analysis the economic, aesthetical or even religious ways in which this plant is relevant. This does not mean that the study of the plant scientist is inherently wrong or not functional, but it should be acknowledged that these other aspects are omitted and that a plant's existence is not exhausted by a scientific 'biotic' picture of it.

In this way, it is attempted to avoid relativism, reductionism and other biases that can be tendencies of specific scientific disciplines (Van Woudenberg, 2003). Cultural relativism is overcome through the distinction between meaning-kernels or normative principles and the acting upon these principles in a contextual practice. This means that certain principles hold universally, such as the politeness in the social, clarity of speech in the lingual and retribution in juridical sense, however, these can have very different manifestations depending on concrete situations, time and culture (Van Woudenberg, 2003). In addition, these principles may even be violated. For instance, the appropriate behaviour and body posture related to paying due respect to other people is different in cultures across the world.

Another important remark, is that this theory also emphasises that different entities and processes are qualified differently. For instance, the entity of a plant is qualified by the biotic aspect

Table 2.1: Modal aspects of reality

Aspect of reality	Meaning-kernel or core value
1. Quantitative	Discrete amount
2. Spatial	Continuous space
3. Kinematic	Movement
4. Physical	Physical
5. Biotic	Life functions
6. Psychic	Emotion
7. Analytical / Logical	Distinctions
8. Formative / Historical	Formative power
9. Linguistic	Symbolic representation
10. Social	Interaction
11. Economic	Frugality
12. Aesthetical	Harmony
13. Juridical	What is due
14. Ethical	Love
15. Pistic	Faith and vision

although other aspects, e.g. the quantitative or the physical, might be relevant as well. Similarly, the practice of agriculture is primarily defined (i.e. qualified) by the economic aspect. Relating this to the above, it is evident that the qualifying aspect of an entity or process also brings in certain normative principles. With regard to the plant, one should make efforts to keep it alive, and in the agricultural practice a central – though not the only – objective is to make profit.

Integrating this theory of modal aspects within the concept of lifeworlds as used in this research, we now understand that development professionals will act and evaluate events in coherence with the norms and customs of their profession. The development professional's lifeworld is different from that of a farmer. What is more, next to being engaged in different professions, e.g. smallholder farmers in a rural village in Malawi are located in a very different context compared to (cosmopolitan) development professionals from The Netherlands. Therefore, such farmers might have a different view on their agricultural work than a scientist or development worker from the Netherlands. Although certain principles are universal (e.g. agricultural processes that follow biotic rules), agricultural 'packages' such as CA, are embedded in specific contexts which results in very different interpretations. For one CA might be an economic opportunity, whereas for another it might be a deviation from the practices of forefathers and thus considered risky. Through the theory of modal aspects we thus enrich the concept of lifeworlds with a broad understanding of normativity. It will serve as a heuristic device for researching the norms and customs that are relevant to CA through a literature review (see paragraph 3.3.1 and chapter 4).

An important final remark in this paragraph concerns our aim to contribute to the ethics of development cooperation. Whereas other perspectives often only consider ethical principles in the more specific sense of 'caring for', in this research we employ a broader concept of ethics in that we see human activity as inherently normative. In other words, there is economic normativity, juridical normativity, et cetera next to ethical normativity (in a the narrow sense). More concretely, by investigating a wide range of relevant types of norms and customs in relation to CA promotion, we developed a broad understanding of lifeworlds and the normativity within them. This was done by means of a literature review on the relevant norms and customs of intended beneficiaries of CA promotion, using the theory of modal aspects as a heuristic framework.

2.2 Images of the Other and the Self

Moving on to the more interpretative side of this research, we introduce the theoretical notions of the Other and the Self. The images of the Other and the Self enable us to understand how NGOs interpret (1) their intended beneficiaries (the Other) with their norms and customs as well as (2) their own organisation (the Self) and their (3) strategies for action. Below we will first show how the philosophical notions of the Other and the Self can be deployed for an exploration of the ethics of development. Subsequently, it is examined how postcolonial scholars have used the Other and the Self for a critique

of (historical) intercultural interactions and how their approaches can be useful for analysing processes of interpretation. Finally, it is explained how the images of the Self and the Other were made concrete in this particular research, for which textbox 2.4 provides some theory behind the methodology of ideal-types – further explained in paragraph 3.3.3.

In phenomenological philosophy, most prominently in the work of Edmund Husserl, intersubjectivity is a core principle in the relations among people (1960). This means that persons, as well as objects, only become meaningful in relation to someone who or something that is different, which can be defined as 'Other'. In human interaction, people thus construct and continuously adapt

> **Textbox 2.3: Defining interpretation**
> An important term in this research is 'interpretation'. In our understanding this refers to a thought-process that posits an issue in a broader framework based on existing knowledge and experiences and in doing so connects a certain meaning, value or judgement to it, based on personal or organisational values[10]. This means, as further elaborated upon in this paragraph, that interpretations do not only depend on the 'object', but also on the person who interprets and his/her lifeworld. This is, however, not a subjectivist position as we also hold that interpretation should do justice to what is interpreted; just like texts, reality cannot be interpreted arbitrarily (Geertsema, 2000). Moreover, in paragraph 2.3 we further elaborate on the ultimate horizon, a single point of reference which relates to all other interpretations and provides meaning to them.

an image of people who are considered different. These different people are grouped in the category of 'the Other'. Simultaneously, people formulate a picture of themselves, or how they would like to see themselves: the category of 'the Self'. Interestingly, the philosopher Levinas pointed to the ethical implications of this intersubjectivity, emphasising that ethical engagement with the Other implies giving attention to the Self as well. Thus, not only the Other, but also the Self should be 'taken care of' in a broad understanding. Applying this to the context of development, Anant Giri and Philip Quarles van Ufford provide an important social-philosophical exploration of the ethics, amongst others based on Levinas' philosophy. In their conclusion they call for "realizing development as responsibility embodying ethics and aesthetics, self-cultivation and socio-spiritual struggles, a responsibility, which is aware of the contingent nature of our locations and the need for a transcendental and transversal opening of our vision" (2004, p. 30). By exploring different typologies of the Self and the Other in this research we aim to contribute to such a process.

In the late twentieth century, the notions of the Other and the Self also played a significant role in the development of postcolonial theory, deployed by, amongst others, Edward Said (1984) and Valentin-Yves Mudimbe (1994). The central argument of this critical field of study is how during and after the colonial era, non-western countries have been interpreted in the light of the superior West.

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[10] Although this is our own definition, similar lines of thinking can be found in (Bagdasarov et al., 2016; Geertz, 1973; Yanow & Schwartz-Shea, 2014)

In the case of the African continent, Mudimbe called this 'deviation', emphasising its complete difference in the eyes of the West (1994). In such a process of 'Otherisation', several general features can be distinguished according to postcolonial thought. The first is that a diverse group of people is interpreted as a *homogenous* category, as can for instance be noted in the thinking and speaking about the African population as uniform. The second step is to *feminise* this group, by portraying and perceiving them as inferior and less meaningful, without recognising the meaningfulness or potential advantage of the Other's thinking and way of life. Finally, the Self starts to recognise only the *essentialised* characteristics of the Other, not acknowledging the totality of one's being (Belli & Loretoni, 2017). These processes can to greater or lesser extend indeed be recognised in the rest of this thesis.

Interestingly, Maria Eriksson Baaz (Eriksson Baaz, 2005) uses these ideas from postcolonial theory in her insightful study on identity in development aid with a case study on Tanzanian development workers. Through analysing the discourses of development practitioners she shows how different frames are employed and how these construct a certain identity of the Self as well as the Other, juxtaposing each other. For example, she recognises various images of the Other and the Self, such as the 'passive', 'potentially dangerous' or 'deceptive Other' and the 'omniscient' or the 'honest gullible Self'[11] (Eriksson Baaz, 2005). Similarly, in this research we study the processes of interpretation, and investigate the images of the intended beneficiary (the Other)[12] and those of the NGO (the Self). However, we employ a different methodology than Eriksson Baaz, called the ideal-type method. This methodology is very much suited the analysis of the collected research data, and it was specifically designed with the purpose of advancing ethical standpoints, in line with the aim of this thesis to contribute that the ethics of development.

> **Textbox 2.4: The methodology of Ideal-Types**
> As one of the founders of the discipline of sociology as we know it today, Max Weber's work is still widely referred to. One of the domains which he influenced significantly are the methods of interpretative research, most notably through the notion of *Verstehen*. Interestingly, Kim (2017) notes that with his discussion of the methodology, Weber intended to contribute to the understanding of historical and social scientific knowledge and specifically the ethical judgements following from this as always subjective and normative. Although he encouraged to strive for objectivity and value-freedom in science, he acknowledged that interpretations from a certain perspective are inherent to ethical positioning.

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[11] Although we follow the ideas on the images of the Other and the Self, we employ a somewhat more structured methodology, namely that of ideal-types, as explained further in textbox 2.4.
[12] It should be noted in advance that studying the interpretation of the Other from the perspective of northern NGOs is a complex process. It means fostering an understanding, perhaps affinity, with the respondents' lifeworlds and their perspective. Through a careful process of analysis, further explained in the next chapter, misinterpretation is avoided as much as possible.

In a similar vein, Yanow and Schwartz-Shea state in their book *Interpretation and Method* (2014, p. xiv), that social behaviour could in a positivistic sense be presented and analysed somehow in numbers, however, this too is always inherently based on value judgements and subjective choices about meaningfulness. Besides this, such an approach almost always loses sight of important unique and dynamic characteristics of human beings. In this thesis we therefore agree with Weber and Yanow and Schwartz-Shea that any scientific endeavour, certain disciplinary, paradigmatic or more personal frameworks play a role and might influence results.

This does not mean, however, that social science becomes an irrational, purely intuitive practice, but the validity of methods is grounded in something different than reproduction or correspondence with reality. As we will elaborate upon in the next chapter, its validity is first and foremost guaranteed by adequacy of the research methods, which is indeed still informed by the researchers' own subjectivities. In this respect, Weber suggested that the method of ideal-types can serve as well as sociological investigation and ethical evaluation (Kim, 2017).

In his seminal work on *The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism*, Weber mentions that the ideal-typical method concerns the structuration of phenomena "by the one-sided accentuation of one or more points of view" by means of which they can be analysed more clearly (Kim, 2017). Since then, a wide range of social scientists have applied this method, referring to them as "simplifications" (Wuelser & Pohl, 2016, p. 791), 'parsimonious constructs' (Mamadouh, 1999, p. 396), "stereotyped conceptions" (Olivier De Sardan, 2004, p. 72) or more simply "'ideal types' rather than 'real types'" (Treib, Bähr, & Falkner, 2007, p. 3). Most of these labels show both the core idea of foregrounding certain significant characteristics found in the researched phenomenon and the normative nature of science. These are more broadly recognised features in interpretative research (Yanow & Schwartz-Shea, 2014, pp. 113–114).

As this research builds on the strands of interpretative research – most notably through the use of the images of the Other and the Self – the ideal-typical method is used here to reveal the underlying interpretations and tacit knowledge in the discourses of NGOs. Through implementing this methodology in an adequate and open way, further elaborated upon in section 3.3.2, validity of the results is ensured. Indeed, the ideal-typical representations of NGOs' interpretations of the Other, the Self and strategies for action point to particular tendencies in the interpretations of NGOs that promote CA, which leaves the option of inter-organisational variability open. Importantly, as these typologies reveal the hidden and underlying tendencies in NGOs thinking, this research is both relevant for academic research, by providing a typology of interpretations, and for practical application in NGOs' work, as they clearly showcase those issues that can be improved.

In sum, the current research builds on the philosophical perspective and the critical postcolonial view on the Other and the Self. Where the former is useful in understanding the ethical implications of the images that we explore, the latter helps us in its understanding of discourse and identity. Before we move on, for the sake of clarity, it might be good to specifically define the Other and the Self as understood in this research. The Other is the farmer who potentially adopts CA and is interpreted in the context of his/her lifeworld with a diverse set of norms and customs. The Self refers to the NGO as an organisation in development. Importantly, the Self is not about personal images of employees but about organisational ones. It should be noted that not necessarily the organisational structures are discussed, rather their discourses and strategic positioning, perceiving the organisations

as strategic actors[13]. To make this 'strategic' character concrete we not only analysed discourses in interviews, but also conducted a text analysis of documents analysing general organisational policies and policies on (conservation) agriculture specifically. In addition, for the interviews we selected employees with both experience in developing countries and affiliation with organisational policies. By means of these two complementary methods, further explained in the next chapter, it was possible to investigate this image of Self[14]. Finally, as mentioned earlier, for an adequate understanding of processes of interpretation, it is important to recognise that all interpretations follow from the ultimate horizon of interpretation which we will discuss in the next paragraph.

2.3 The Ultimate Horizon of interpretation

Within the field of Christian philosophy various scholars have concluded that everyone has some point of reference from which all other beliefs follow. This can be referred to as 'ultimate assumption', 'ultimate conviction', 'ultimate concern', 'the ultimate horizon of interpretation', or in short: the Ultimate (Clouser, 2005; Geertsema, 2000; Hart, 1984; Rademaker & Jochemsen, n.d.; Tillich, 1957). Something that is rarely explicitly acknowledged in approaches such as (social) scientific analysis on discourses and interpretations, is the explicit acknowledgement that these are based on deeper underlying convictions (Geertsema, 2000) – here referred to as the ultimate. In this paragraph we first more specifically define the notion of the ultimate. Thereafter, in order to link this to anthropological and sociological theoretical approaches, we consider the potential relations between the ultimate and the notion of world- (and life)views in development studies. By means of incorporating the concept of the ultimate in our research as a dimension beyond the interpretation of the Other and the Self, we aim to explicate the tacit convictions underlying discourses and practices and gain insights into what is at the heart of NGOs' interpretations.

For a concrete and applicable definition of the ultimate we turn to the field of Christian philosophy. Hendrik Hart provides a definition of the ultimate as "[a] foundation which itself has no ground but is the ground of all grounds" (Hart, 1984, pp. 455–456) and Clouser defines the ultimate as that which is "unconditionally non-dependent reality" (Clouser, 2005, p. 23). As an example, Hart mentions that for Christians God is the ultimate, but that people can have many other ultimates. This points to the fact that the ultimate is in fact identical to a faith-horizon. This does not mean that only explicitly religious people, such as Buddhists, Christians or Muslims, do have such a horizon. Indeed, it is easily overlooked that *all* people, religious or not, have such a faith-horizon and act and interpret

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[13] See for an insightful study on organisations within the actor-oriented approach the book of Dorothea Hilhorst (2003) on discourse, diversity and development with a case study on Philippine NGOs.
[14] See paragraph 3.3.2 for a further explanation on the selection procedure and ensuring validity within the interviews.

based on that. In this sense it has often been used by phenomenological philosophers to object to the idea of objective science (see Husserl, 1960). For example, for a Christian philosopher his/her Christian belief in 'a personal God who created both man and world with love and wisdom' functions as ultimate horizon of interpretation. On the other hand, the ultimate horizon of a pragmatist philosopher could be in 'time and chance'. In essence it is about an understanding that guides human thinking about meaning and meaningfulness, which includes all scientific endeavours (Geertsema, 2000). Interestingly, making a connection to the theoretical framework of our research as explained above, Geertsema (2000) states that the understanding of oneself and the understanding of the other – or the world around us – are dependent on this horizon. Being human implies an understanding of the Self and of the world – the Other – and related to both is some idea of an ultimate horizon from which reality is understood in its nature and meaning (Geertsema, 2000).

This exploration of the philosophical understanding of the ultimate, has strong relations to sociological and anthropological research on world- and lifeviews. For instance, in framing theory Lakoff (2006) identifies the layer of worldview to be underlying the levels of surface frames – our daily language – and deep frames – the value attached to language. Our worldview is a sort of metaframework that incorporates our values and which enables us to interpret the complex reality in a certain way (Jansen, 2017). Important for our ethical exploration is that Jansen (2017) mentions that in current complex, networked societies, making such deep and normative levels of thought explicit in communication or unravelling them through research is an important step towards dialogue with and sensitivity to others and their views.

In the context of development cooperation, Hoksbergen (1986) provides an interesting analysis of the importance of world- and lifeviews. By studying three very different evaluations of development interventions, he identifies the following three approaches: the standard western economic, the humanist and the radical Christian. These 'paradigms' have distinct, potentially conflicting, propositions that influence the outcomes of impact evaluations. Moreover, Hoksbergen notes that in development all statements about how 'development' ought to work are derived from "very basic faith statements" about the definition of 'the good' (Hoksbergen, 1986, p. 297)[15]. This underscores the importance of studying both the strategies for action as well as the ultimate horizons of interpretation present in organisations. Moreover, with the purpose of advancing ethical development, we emphasise with Hoksbergen (1986) and Gasper (1999, 2012) that recognising and acknowledging such deep beliefs is crucial for the ethics of development interventions because it

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[15] With his reference to worldviews as 'very basic faith statements' Hoksbergen comes very close to the concept of the ultimate. We acknowledge that the precise relation, overlap or difference between these two notions needs more attention, however, this is beyond the scope of this thesis.

influences how we see the Other, the Self and how the Self should design its strategic actions towards the Other. The former author notes that "without such [an understanding of the ultimate good] evaluation becomes an arbitrary and unconvincing exercise" (Hoksbergen, 1986, p. 283). Thus, through including the ultimate horizons of the NGOs in this research, we gain insights in the entire process of interpretation in development cooperation which can contribute to an ethics of development cooperation. Therefore, in the chapters 4 to 6 we start our journey with the image of the intended beneficiaries and their norms and customs, continuing with the images of NGOs about themselves together with their strategies for actions, finishing with their ultimate horizon of interpretation.

3. Methodology

After having discussed the theoretical approach of this thesis, in this chapter we introduce the methodology as well as the different data collection and analysis techniques that were employed. The overall methodological approach is based on Grounded Theory (GTM), introduced in the first paragraph. This has important implications for both data collection and analysis. Subsequently, some key issues with regards to research validity, authenticity and credibility are pointed out. In the last paragraph the various research tools that will be used in this thesis are elaborated upon.

3.1 Grounded Theory Methodology

A major objective of this research was to search for the concealed processes of interpretation present in NGOs. Therefore, it was necessary to employ an open-ended theory and methodology, since it was not possible to hypothesise the outcomes prior to starting the data collection. Grounded Theory Methodology (GTM) is specifically designed to discover implicit theoretical concepts that people in the research population hold, often as 'tacit understanding', sometimes implicit or explicit in spoken discourses or in written statements. Below we will introduce this approach, its key ideas and central methods and at the same time explain the specific application of GTM in this thesis.

Grounded theory methodology was founded by Glaser and Straus in their 1967 book The Discovery of Grounded Theory (Glaser & Strauss, 1967). As they observed a gap between theory and empirical data in social scientific research, they suggested to let theoretical concepts emerge from the empirical data. While this seems to be an inductive approach, one of the distinctive features of GTM is that it relies neither on a purely inductive nor on a deductive style of research, but seeks an abductive approach. That means the researcher repeatedly comes back to existing and newly acquired or developed data and concepts. In this way, the desired connection between theory and empirical data is strengthened (Dewulf & Bouwen, 2012).

> **Textbox 3.1 GTM theory and practice**
> In practice, we should acknowledge that it is impossible to start researching without any assumptions and previously acquired knowledge. For instance, in this thesis the interview and text analysis phases are influenced by the preceding literature review. This increases the importance of a systematic and credible literature review. Furthermore, the theoretical underpinnings of this thesis, presented in the previous chapter, were to some extent determined before the start of the data collection. However, in line with GTM, the answers to the core research questions, the interpretations of NGOs, were only developed during the analysis of the interviews and documents.

In a recent publication, Charmaz (2017) distinguishes between a objectivist and constructivist type of GTM. The former relates more to a quantitative method, searching for ultimate generalisability through verification. Thus, in its pure form this becomes a very extensive project as it is necessary to include all potentially relevant information. However, constructivist GTM as a method "joins critical

analysis with people's lives", thereby foregrounding people and their perspectives and continuously seeking the balance between analysis and the stories of people (Charmaz, 2017, p. 41). Following the latter GTM type, this research aims to put the interpretations of organisations at the centre through a critical analysis of their oral and written 'discourses'. Although, the ideal-types that are presented in chapter 4 and 5 are not quantitively verifiable, they are very close to the research data itself.

Of great significance in GTM are so-called *sensitising concepts*, a long-established term that refers to "directions along which to look" (Blumer, 1954, p. 7). More specifically, sensitising concepts are themes that emerge from the start of the research and are guiding in the stages of data collection and analysis. As will be explained below, they can be adjusted over the course of the research towards new insights and new theory. However, they can also be refuted in the course of a specific project. In this research, the finally established sensitising concepts are the basis of the ideal-types[16] presented in chapter 4 and 5.

Finally, a grounded theory approach is practically manifested in the combined use of three specific methods. The first of these concerns coding, which is not merely for the purpose of classification but also to develop theoretical concepts (Timmerman, 2011). In fact, it is a natural process that during every interview or reading of a text a researcher analyses and interprets the content in a certain way and starts to act upon this. The strength of GTM methodology is, that it acknowledges this process and makes it explicit (Charmaz, 2017). The second method is theoretical sampling and is based on the similar idea that the information of the first interview influences the selection of further informants. During the research it is necessary to repeatedly reflect on the retrieved material and look for new cases and informants that might lead to adaptation or refutation of earlier assumptions. In doing so, negative cases should not be avoided, as they can lead to new directions and insights. This means that information contradicting the data already obtained, is actively sought after instead of discarded as irrelevant (Bernard, 2011). The third method of GTM is constant comparison, which aims to continuously put phenomena and contexts next to each other, in order to identify relations. In this light, GTM prescribes that every interview informs the later ones in terms of questions and topics. For instance, if in the first interview the theme of indigenous knowledge comes to the fore, this could also be discussed in later interviews. In this way, sensitising concepts get more and more theoretical and definitive shapes as they are enriched and evaluated with every new piece of information (Timmerman, 2011). While further explaining the methods used in this thesis in the

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[16] The idea of ideal-types and how they were developed was already introduced in textbox 2.4 and will be explained further in paragraph 3.4.

following paragraphs, GTM will be the overarching methodological framework in which the specific tools are used as depicted in figure 3.1.

Figure 3.1 Relation between principles of GTM and other research tools used in this research
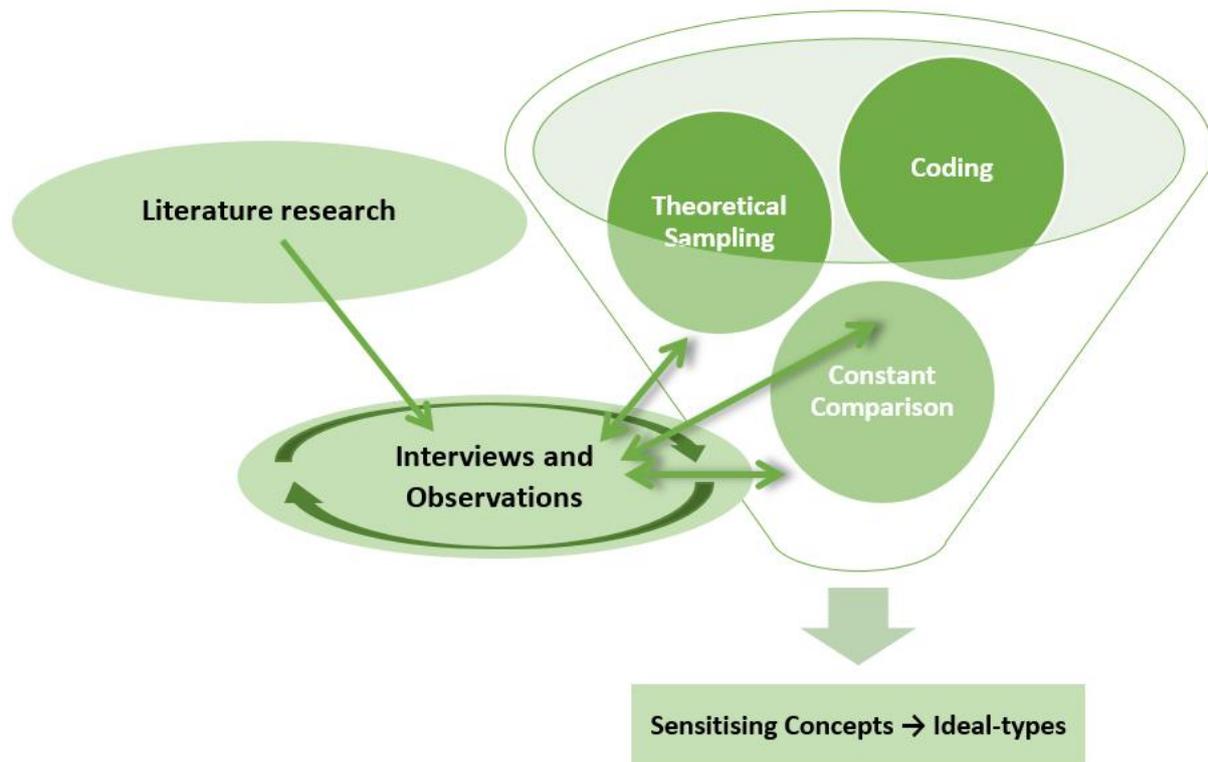
3.2 Research validity

As mentioned in our brief discussion of ideal-types in textbox 2.4, when discussing the validity of scientific research it is important to keep in mind the distinction between positivist science, emphasising objectivity, and interpretative approaches, acknowledging the inherent presence subjectivity within any form of science. In line with this, validity-criteria such as repeatability and generalisability are originating from the positivist side of science. Unfortunately, at the side of interpretative research, in which this research can be categorised, debate on which criteria should be adopted is ongoing. Below we will discuss the validity of this research by using various of the criteria mentioned in Schwartz-Shea's (2004, p. 129) elaborate literature study of important criteria and techniques for interpretative research.

The credibility of research is a frequently mentioned criterion, which is ensured when the research findings are not influenced by accidental mistakes or misinterpretation due to non-systematic working (Timmerman, 2011). In the following paragraph on research methods, the systematic character of the data collection and analysis is shown in the various step-wise methods in analysing both primary and secondary data. By following the guidelines of GTM during the entire research process, accidental mistakes in the results were anticipated. Indeed, Schwartz-Shea similarly refers to

the criterion of a "detailed description of data collection procedures". Secondly, a way in which credibility can be improved is triangulation, which means that information obtained with one method can be checked through other methods (Bernard, 2011; Timmerman, 2011). For this thesis different tools for data collection were used, namely semi-structured interviews and text analysis. As will be elaborated upon below, while only one person per organisation was interviewed, substantiation and triangulation of 'the organisational interpretation' was done through text analysis. Importantly, the aim is not to research the views of specific organisations in the first instance, rather to investigate the range of possible interpretations existing within northern development NGOs. Finally, credibility increases when research findings and interpretations by the individual researcher are discussed with peers. Therefore, throughout the process of this research various experienced researchers in the field of development cooperation and philosophy have shared their views on research design, results and conclusions.

Another often mentioned criterion in social-scientific research is data saturation. This means that the researcher should continue with gathering data until no new data is added or no further adjustments are made to the sensitising concepts. An important remark is that the so-called 'research group' for this research, namely Dutch NGOs promoting CA, was confined to no more than twenty organisations[17]. The aim was to include them all in the research, however, some organisations refused for different reasons[18]. Consequently, in the end ten NGOs were interviewed and their documents were analysed. Given the fact of the small research group and the homogeneity of the actors as they are all Dutch NGOs, the sum of ten organisations is not small. On the other hand, during the selection process the aim was to hold on to the principle of purposive sampling. That means contradictory information and so-called extreme or negative cases are actively sought for and targeted, which improves the validity of the results (Bernard, 2011; Charmaz, 2017; Glaser & Strauss, 1967). In the end the sample of researched organisations included a some (strongly) religious organisations as well as NGOs focusing on women empowerment having humanistic beliefs.

Finally, in recent decades researchers' reflexivity is also added as an essential component of validity in the social sciences and interpretative methods in particular. This refers to the ability and

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[17] In order to estimate the number of organisations to be included in the research population three methods were used. (1) The NGO members of two different Dutch networks were approached by email or telephone and asked if they promoted CA. (2) At the end of the interviews respondents were asked if they knew other organisations promoting CA. (3) From the Dutch NGO database of CIDIN (Radboud University), IS academy and the Dutch Ministry of Foreign Affairs the organisations that work on agriculture were selected and approached.
[18] Commonly mentioned reasons included too much workload or no current projects on CA. Others mentioned they were promoting the techniques of CA but under a different name, as CA would be too much related to the discourse of multi-national companies and large scale agriculture. In addition, some NGOs knew that their partners were promoting CA, but their own role was only monitoring and financing. In these cases their staff would have inadequate knowledge with regards to the norms and customs of intended beneficiaries of CA promotion.

openness to reflect critically on one's own findings. In this thesis this reflexivity is manifested in various forms. Firstly, by following a GTM approach which is open-ended by definition, the aim was to avoid research assumptions that could have determined outcomes. Secondly, as we are using the ideal-typical method we acknowledge that our findings are subjective and we are open about our own standpoint. In the third place, reflection was encouraged through frequent discussion with experienced researchers as mentioned above. Finally, in the discussion section we will revisit more elaborately the research findings and possible assumptions underlying the research design and implementation. In conclusion, the validity of this research is not necessarily based on principles such as repeatability and generalisability. However, this thesis ensures validity through research credibility, data saturation, purposive sampling and reflexivity.

3.3 Research Tools

In the last paragraph of this chapter on methodology, the four research tools that were used in this thesis will be briefly addressed. They are discussed in the chronological order in which they were executed during the research process.

3.3.1 Literature Review

The first method used in this research was a systematic literature review, in order to find out what norms and customs of intended beneficiaries are relevant to CA promotion. Below the procedure of the literature search is introduced. The Scopus search engine was used to make a selection in the scientific literature (steps 1 to 3, see below). In addition, to check for other academic literature an additional, a less detailed search in Google Scholar was conducted to include non-academic literature (step 4). Finally, forward and backward referencing was checked in order to find relevant literature through interrelationships between articles (step 5). The guiding in- and exclusion criteria were language (English or Dutch); research area (sub-Saharan Africa); date published (since 1990[19]); and focus (research that provided insight in the role of norms and customs in Conservation Agriculture). This last point means that articles focusing on purely agronomic analysis or the technical principles of CA were not included, unless they relate to the social norms and customs that were already found.

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[19] This date is selected to exclude outdated or irrelevant information.

Textbox 3.2 Step-wise method of the literature review

1. A first search in Scopus concentrated on the concept of norms. Only articles with the exact word combination "conservation agriculture" in the title were included. In addition, the articles should include the stem "norm" or any extension of it. This resulted in the following query: TITLE ("conservation agriculture") AND ALL (norm*). This resulted in 32 articles, however, after reading the abstracts only **seven**[20] of these 32 were selected based on the in- and exclusion criteria above.

2. Secondly, a search was conducted using the stem "custom" instead of norm. The exact query was: TITLE ("conservation agriculture") AND ALL (custom*). The abstracts of the resulting 14 articles were read with the in- and exclusion criteria, after which only **one** article was found to be relevant and added to the selection to be analysed.

3. A third step was to find articles that did not specifically use the terms norm or custom, but were still relevant in this respect. Therefore, a search was conducted with the stem 'value'. While it denotes the motivations or origins underlying norms and customs, value is a more widely used term then norm or custom. However, the stem 'value' can have different meanings – e.g. value chain, economic value - and is not always related to farmers' values. Therefore, it was included in the search that the stem 'value' should be within a range of 10 words from 'farmer'. Thus, the following query was used: TITLE ("conservation agriculture") AND ALL (value* W/10 farmer). The query resulted in 15 articles of which **one** article was added to the selection, following the procedure above.

4. In the fourth step Google Scholar was used to find non-academic literature or texts not included in Scopus (e.g. MSc theses or policy papers). To limit the search results, only the stem 'norm' was used in combination with the exact phrase "conservation agriculture". The query was thus: norm "Conservation Agriculture". Google Scholar gave a total of 3600 results. Subsequently, the first 110 items were analysed on the basis of titles and the text fragments shown by the search engine on the basis of same in- and excluding criteria. As articles were listed by relevance and because after the 90th result no new item was selected for analysis, it was concluded that browsing further was not necessary as it would not bring new information. On the basis of this part of the search **seven** new articles were added to the list for analysis.

5. The final step of the process was to search for more relevant articles through forward and backward reference checking. In this way another **11** important texts were selected for analysis.

A table of the entire list of references to the documents used for the literature research can be found in appendix 1. Besides this a few more specific articles were added to the literature below to contribute to the validity of the results.

In conclusion, by means of the five steps described above **27** relevant articles were selected. These were read and analysed through searching for important words in all texts. These included first and foremost "norm", "value", "custom", "culture", " cultural"[21], but in later stages also the norms and

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[20] For reasons of clarity the number of articles that was added at each step on the basis of the in- and exclusion criteria is written in **bold**. The sum of these are 19 relevant articles.

[21] These last two words were added to previously used words as they are often used in relation to the norms and customs that are the subject of this research.

customs that were already found were cross-checked in other articles. For instance, the articles were analysed for references to 'religion' and 'gender'. In this way all relevant information about these issues was studied.

3.3.2 Semi-Structured Interviews

The second research tool was semi-structured interviewing. These interviews were crucial to gain insights in the interpretations of NGOs of the norms and customs of their intended beneficiaries. In this section we first explain the selection process of respondents and then present how the content of the interviews was analysed.

As mentioned above in paragraph 3.2, ten respondents were interviewed who were all working for (a country office of) a Dutch NGO. Because this research prioritises actor-orientation instead of focusing on the organisational structures of NGOs, it is important to explicate what kind of respondents were selected. The interviews were conducted with development practitioners with experience of the implementation of CA in SSA, while simultaneously they had enough affiliation with organisational policies to express the NGOs' view or interpretation of norms and customs (see also Mosse, 2004). This was mentioned during each interview, to make the respondent aware of this 'tension'. In general, this did not result in major complexities, although sometimes it was noted that respondents tended to give 'personal' answers instead of 'organisational' ones. This was, however, taken into account during analysis process of the interviews. Importantly, in line with the principle of purposive sampling, extreme or negative cases were looked after (Timmerman, 2011). These criteria resulted in the list of organisations and respondents presented in table 3.1. Due to reasons of confidentiality more details of organisations cannot be mentioned.

Table 3.1: Overview of Organisations and Respondents

In-text Reference Letter	FBO / NGO	Function respondent
A	NGO	Project Coordinator
B	FBO	Agricultural Advisor
C	FBO	Program Advisor
D	NGO	Program Advisor, based in Kenya
E	FBO	Agricultural Advisor, based in Uganda
F	FBO	Manager, based in Malawi
G	NGO	Senior advisor Water & Food Safety
H	FBO	Programme Officer
I	NGO	Policy Advisor
J	NGO	Senior programme officer, based in Ghana

A standard interview guide was designed prior to the first interview on the basis of the literature research. Since an important idea in GTM is that the information retrieved is continuously evaluated and checked with new respondents, the interviews were conducted over a relatively long

period of time which left room to adjust the interview guide from time to time in order to search for confirmation or refutation of available data and to gather missing information. In accordance with the principle of constant comparison and the notion of sensitising concepts, over the course of the research this guide was adapted to obtain the necessary information and gain more insights in the interpretations of NGOs.

A few more remarks should be made on this selection of NGOs. Firstly, as can be seen in table 3.1, five organisations are classified as Faith-Based Organisation (FBO) and the others as NGO. This is to make a clear distinction between organisations who explicitly acknowledge their religious background and ones that do not. As argued in this thesis, this does not mean that the other organisations are purely secular or without fundamental beliefs underlying their existence. Furthermore, it is good to note that all five FBOs have a Christian background, which will frequently return throughout the analysis of the research data. Furthermore, two of the interviews were conducted in English, whereas the others were in Dutch, but this is not expected to have a major impact on the results. A second important note, already referred to above, is that the primary aim of this thesis is not to research the views of specific NGOs per se, rather to investigate the range of possible interpretations amongst Dutch development NGOs promoting CA. Therefore, the exact details of organisations are less important. However, the third and final remark, related to this selection is that because of the search for more general processes of interpretation, the representativity of the research sample becomes more important. On the one hand this is ensured because of the small 'research population', as no more than twenty Dutch organisations promote CA. On the other hand, the diversity amongst the researched organisations improves reliability. This diversity is shown in characteristics such as: amount of employees (from 1 or 2 to 100+) and available budget; very different ideological or religious backgrounds; and extensive or little focus on agriculture as a primary goal in development.

After having discussed the selection procedure of the organisations and interview respondents, we now move on to the analysis phase which, together with the text analysis, was the basis of the various ideal-types of interpretations as presented in chapters 4 and 5. After conducting an interview the recordings were transcribed as soon as possible and important notes were taken in order to inform further interviews and to develop the sensitising concepts. After transcription, the analysis followed the stages below, which resulted in the ideal-types presented in chapter 4 and 5.

> **Textbox 3.3 Step-wise method of the interview and text analysis leading to the ideal-types**
> 1. Relevant information was coded in Atlas.ti. Transcriptions were coded with an 'open-coding' approach, typical for GTM.

2. All codes were **interpretatively analysed** in order to identify the specific interpretations that underlie these codes[22]. An example of this analysis is shown in the table in appendix 2.
3. A differentiation was made between codes that concerned an **interpretation of the Other and of the Self**. The first category is discussed in chapter 5, the second in chapter 6. Stage 4 to 7 were carried out for these categories separately.
4. Text analysis, further elaborated upon in paragraph 3.3.3 was conducted using the codes and the **'memoing-method'**. This confirmed and further crystallised the codes from the interview analysis.
5. The codes that occurred in a high diversity of (>3) interviews were used as sensitising concepts.
6. Both the relations among sensitising codes and between sensitising codes and the rest of the codes were analysed using co-occurrency tables.
7. As outcome of step 6, networks of associated codes were formed, which were used as the basis of the narrative ideal-typical typologies described in the next chapters. The 'grounded' nature of these typologies is guaranteed by the many "exemplar quotes" which are used in these chapters to illustrated the analysis (Bernard, 2011, pp. 438–439).

3.3.3 Text Analysis

The third and final important research tool was the analysis of texts that were published or provided by NGOs. The aim of this method was to substantiate and triangulate the data from the interviews as well as to gain further insights in NGOs' interpretations of the Self and their strategies for action. In order to achieve this, from each organisation two different texts were analysed, namely one document that (amongst others) discussed mission and vision and one that focused more specifically on agriculture or CA promotion. During the text analysis the codes resulting from the interview data were identified in the documents and corresponding and contradicting information was noted down. Bernard (2011, pp. 435–436) refers to this as "memoing" during the observation of texts, which is similar to taking field notes in ethnographic research. The step-wise method described above, explains how the text analysis resulted in the various ideal-types presented in the following chapters 4 and 5.

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[22] As interpretative analysis is always a rather personal process, it is important to guarantee credibility and reliability of the research. Therefore, the interview texts were also read by two researchers and the process and outcomes of the interpretative analysis was discussed with them. In this way accidental mistakes or wrong interpretations were anticipated (see also paragraph 3.2).

4. Interpreting the Other

In the following three chapters we will present the analysis of the collected data, in order to answer the research questions. This chapter will start with an analysis of the interpretation of 'the Other', as conceptualised in the theory chapter. However, to be able to conduct a proper analysis of how such an interpretation process is manifested in the promotion of CA, we first address the sub-question: What norms and customs of intended beneficiaries are relevant – i.e. either constraining or enabling – to the promotion of CA? This question was answered by means of a thorough review of the available literature and some additional information from the interviews, of which the results are presented in the first part of this chapter. In the second part we discuss how NGOs interpret the Other – the intended beneficiary who should adopt CA. The norms and customs found through the literature review provide a crucial foundation in order to understand the lifeworlds of intended beneficiaries. However, documenting an image of the Other is a complex process, full of ambiguities and seemingly contradictory notions, in particular when it concerns ten diverse organisations. Therefore, the second part of the analysis presents four different ideal-types of interpretations of intended beneficiaries. For a full and correct understanding of this chapter, as well as the next two, it is important to keep in mind the theoretical underpinnings and the methodological approach of this thesis, as described above.

4.1 The relevant norms and customs in CA

In order to be able to research and grasp the complexity of the lifeworld of famers in developing countries, it is necessary to include a background study here. Through this literature review, systematically executed, we gain insights in the range of norms and customs that are either constraining or enabling the promotion of CA. While, the methodological details of this literature study have been explained in section 3.3.1, below we will first discuss different methodological perspectives from which researchers study farmers' lifeworlds and their norms and customs in particular. Subsequently, six important types of norms and customs are addressed. By discussing such a wide range of norms and customs, this analysis aims to provide a sound basis for the further analysis of images of interpretation of NGOs and a broader understanding of the ethics of development. In order to achieve this, the theory of modal aspects will be used as a heuristic frame to trace the normative categories underlying the norms and customs.

4.1.1 Methodological issues

Much scientific literature on CA aims to model and measure certain agroecological or agronomic features (Naudin et al., 2012; Siddique et al., 2012; Vanlauwe et al., 2014; Verhulst et al., 2009). Often the objective is to either provide more scientific support for the promotion of CA or to make a side

note regarding the alleged successfulness of the techniques. In many cases, the question of adoption amongst smallholder farmers is central. Consequently, in the results of the search above, several studies employ methodologies such as system modelling and (household) economic analysis. For instance, Van Hulst and Posthumus (2016) use the Reasoned Action Approach to further understand Kenyan smallholders' (non-)adoption of CA. Through this (social-psychological) approach they systematically study the attitudes, perceived social norms and the perceived behavioural control (over CA techniques) in relation to the beliefs underlying these. They conclude that of the three sets of factors, farmers attitudes were most important for the intentions to (not) adopt CA. This, according to Van Hulst and Posthumus, "corresponds to the claim that CA adoption requires a certain mind-set (change)" (2016, p. 310). Lalani et al. (2016) use the same method in a Mozambican case study, focusing on the roles of yield, labour, soil fertility and decision-making. They draw similar conclusions, namely that smallholders are most inclined to adopt CA due to their personal attitudes, which is in turn "strongly influenced by their perceptions towards the benefits of CA vis-à-vis a locally constructed innovation system that has created opportunities for social learning and thereby reduced the risk and uncertainty associated with a 'new' management system such as CA" (Lalani et al., 2016, p. 89). This underscores the importance of considering contextual social and cognitive issues in research on CA.

In another recent article, Lalani et al. (2017) focus on farm level economics through cash flow analysis, in order to identify whether CA is actually financially beneficial for the poor. They conclude that a change in farming practices towards CA can indeed benefit the poorest farmers, while it is difficult to calculate this added value as this is dependent on the crops cultivated and the costs of crucial inputs such as labour. Yet, for many smallholder farmers uncertainty and risk increases when adopting CA practices due to reduced predictability of yields and the amount of labour needed (Lalani et al., 2017). Besides that, CA is often understood as a knowledge-intensive form of agriculture and therefore it will cost time to get familiar with the techniques involved (Grabowski & Haggblade, 2016). As will be emphasised below, the avoidance of risk is a very important strategy for the poorest smallholder farmers.

While indeed technical agronomic and agroecological issues need attention, most of the studies discussed below are based on ethnographic and in-depth case study research. This is in line with Andersson and D'Souza (2014), who warn for overly econometric approaches focusing on farm and household characteristics such as farm level economics and analyses of household surveys. They state that they are of limited use in explaining adoption and therefore for the analysis of norms and customs of intended beneficiaries. Here the authors refer to Knowler and Bradshaw (2007) who argue that there are few, if any, constant universal variables that explain farmers' adoption of CA. Most importantly, Andersson and D'Souza emphasise that adoption is complex to measure and almost impossible to predict due to the context-specific character as well as social and individual attitudes

and perceptions (2014). Knowler (2015) adds to this that the role of social capital and networks of farmers are still under-researched in relation to CA. In this respect the qualitative model developed by Ndah et al. (2014a) appears to be a better tool, as it maps amongst others the institutional, socio-economic and cultural aspects that are relevant to CA adoption. Moreover, it is site-specific and a new assessment should be conducted in each new context (Ndah et al., 2014a). Such factors are crucial to take into account when discussing the most relevant norms and customs below, as social norms may vary greatly amongst different countries or villages and customs are to a large extent defined by a specific socio-historical context. Therefore, in the following paragraphs we aim to give an overview of the norms and customs that could be enabling or constraining for the promotion of CA in sub-Saharan African countries.

4.1.2 Crop Rotation and selective adoption

To start with the CA principle of crop rotation, various authors note that it is important to take into account that in most parts of the sub-Saharan Africa, maize is by far the most produced staple crop for consumption (Amelia, Kopainsky, & Nyanga, 2014; Umar, 2013). Therefore, a significant portion of most smallholder plots of sub-Saharan Africa is dedicated to the cultivation of this crop. This might conflict with optimal crop rotation as maize occupies such a large part of the acreage (Farnworth et al., 2016).

In relation to this, a widely recognised pattern is that farmers only partially adopt the principles of CA (Amelia et al., 2014; Giller et al., 2015; Grabowski & Haggblade, 2016; Lalani et al., 2016; Ndah et al., 2014b; Scheba, 2017). This complicates both the measurement of adoption and the reliability of expected outcomes of adopting CA.

Furthermore, in relation to the issue of crop rotation, in her MSc Thesis Hachiboola (2016) adds that farmers often only start with this principle when they perceive a certain benefit, either economic or nutritional. This suggests that the soil improving factor, the biotic aspect, is considered less relevant. However, gender differences also play a role in household decisions about which crops to grow. Cash crops, such as sunflower, tea or soya are typically favoured by men, whereas legumes, crucial for food and nutrition security, are preferred by women (Hachiboola, 2016). While various authors and respondents agree that this is a tendency amongst most African smallholder farmers, it is also very dependent on the general economic situation, market opportunities and individual circumstances (Farnworth et al., 2016; Kevane, 2012). For instance, Sikod (2007) refers to the case of Cameroon where women became more market-oriented, thus preferring more cash crops, after a decline in the

salaries earned by men, due to an economic depression. It is thus interesting to see that the formative[23] aspect of the 'crop rotation technique' meets with social issues, such as a preference for maize, gendered crop priorities and the economic aspect of marketability.

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Textbox 4.1 Knowledge claims and the promotion of CA

Closely related to the question of the interpretation of norms and customs relevant to the promotion of CA are issues of knowledge. The debate on 'different knowledges' in the context of CA is articulated by Moore et al. as follows:

> "CA does not fit well with memorized knowledge. It is based on principles of adaptation which require that knowledge be something that grows and evolves with the situation. Studying knowledge as if there were a standard against which it could be ranked or arranged pre-empts a comparison of knowledges-in-themselves. Indeed, seeking such universal knowledge about knowledge leads one to take sides in a battle over local truths, each with their own sources of validity"
> (2014, p. 293).

Indeed it is important to recognise that extensionists or trainers are often highly educated. Science teaches them 'facts' as if these could not change within new findings and contexts. However, as emphasised in this literature search, it is not only NGOs that bring 'new knowledge' about CA techniques, farmers equally bring in their understanding of agriculture locally, such as rain patterns and soil fertility. The promotion of CA might thus result in a conflict in the formative domain between farmers' knowledge – based on their own principles – and extensionists' knowledge – based on western science. Both of these should be legitimated in a CA promoting programme (Halbrendt et al., 2014; Moore et al., 2014; Ohja, Paudel, Banjade, McDougall, & Cameron, 2009). In addition, the discussion of different knowledges implicates a certain mindset change which is necessary for farmers in order to adopt CA. Indeed, this idea also emerged during various interviews (Respondent C, 2017; Respondent D, 2017). According to Moore et al. it is necessary to integrate both a discussion on different types of existing knowledge as well as the involvement of key actors in farmers networks to facilitate such a change (2014). While it is beyond the scope of this thesis to include an in-depth discussion on the knowledge claims of NGOs, it is important to acknowledge the interrelations with the interpretations we are studying here.

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4.1.3 Mulch versus Livestock

Secondly, the organic mulch layer is of importance for the profitability of CA as it can both increase infiltration of water into the soil and reduce evaporation in times of drought. It is scientifically proven that a certain amount of crop residues can indeed be beneficial for the status of the soil (Erenstein, 2002; Giller et al., 2015; Naudin et al., 2015). One major obstacle is, however, that in rural African societies crop residues are used for other ends as well. An often mentioned trade-off in the literature

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[23] It is good to take into account that most of the principally formative things mentioned in this chapter, refer to techniques, which means a change in agroecological practices. These are defined as 'formative' as they are often brought to farmers by 'extension agents'. In turn, these actors are often informed by western science, which links this formative closely to the analytic domain.

is that between retention and livestock feed, discussed below, but also fuel and clothing for traditional dances are amongst the uses of crop residues (Farnworth et al., 2016). Again the formative aspect of the mulching technique causes tensions in the economic and social domains. Besides that, Scheba (2017) notes that in a Tanzanian community wild animals were perceived to accumulate when crop residues were left on the field. Subsequently, these would also eat the seeds and plants in the next season. Furthermore, in the same case study, he found that it was perceived to be a sign of laziness to leave crop residues on the field, while the preparation of a 'clean' soil was considered a good practice. In this context this 'cleaning' was generally done by burning the fields as the farmers thought the field was otherwise left 'dirty' (Scheba, 2017). Thus, also the aesthetical aspect plays a role in farmers' agricultural practices.

However, by far the most prominent obstacle for crop residue retention is the tension with livestock husbandry (Andriarimalala et al., 2013; Baudron, Jaleta, Okitoi, & Tegegn, 2014; Naudin et al., 2015; Rusinamhodzi, van Wijk, Corbeels, Rufino, & Giller, 2015; Valbuena et al., 2012). While mixed farming systems are widespread in SSA and organic manure can be beneficial for agricultural productivity, several conflicts may occur when combining livestock with CA. Besides the intra-farm demand for livestock feed, an important issue is that in many communities it is common practice that animals are allowed to roam and graze freely, in particular during the dry season, as regulated by customary legislation[24] (Grabowski & Haggblade, 2016; Wall et al., 2013). This is not a problem when the land is uncultivated, yet when CA is practiced, free-grazing livestock may eat or disturb the mulch layer which is retained on the field. In addition, these animals can destroy planting basins which are complementary to CA and often prepared during the dry season. In this way, socio-juridical agreements might lead to the loss of agricultural preparations which cost valuable hours of labour. Also gender turns up here, as often women are ought to prepare the agricultural lands before the rainy season. Moreover, as livestock is often managed by men, female CA practitioners are worried as they are not in the position to send the more powerful men with cattle from their fields (Farnworth et al., 2016; Wall et al., 2013). Paradoxically, in some cases communal grazing rules are seen as a positive contribution to both the livestock owners and farmers. For instance, Umar (2013) refers to a Zambian case where, "livestock owners benefit through increased access to crop residues for their livestock while the owners of the fields benefit from the replenishment of soil nutrients through the dung that is dropped as the livestock graze" (2013, p. 280).

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[24] In scientific research different opinions are visible with regard to the conflict between residue retention and communal grazing, different opinions are possible. On the one hand, it is possible to doubt the fit of CA to the social circumstances within a community (Giller et al., 2009), but on the other hand some authors neglect this option and only mention that such obstacles should be overcome by community action (Wall et al., 2013). This latter position was also often returning in the interviews.

Once again, this controversy shows that norms and customs and their enabling or constraining effects on CA vary greatly amongst different communities. Still, in most literature it is agreed that the trade-off between crop residue retention and livestock feed is an important constrain for the promotion of CA. However, most of these studies are highly econometric and agronomic in focus (See for instance: Andriarimalala et al., 2013; Naudin et al., 2015; Tittonell, van Wijk, Rufino, Vrugt, & Giller, 2007b) with little focus on the norms and customs of farmers themselves underlying these problems. Nevertheless, it can be concluded that the practice of mulching touches upon aesthetical norms, economic trade-offs, juridical rules as well as social aspects in communities. Gender is an issue that cross-cuts many of these domains and, as will also be seen below.

4.1.4 Land rights

Besides communal grazing rules, the juridical aspect also emerges when discussing land rights and the promotion of CA. A major issue in any agricultural intervention is that only a small percentage of African agricultural land is titled (Sumner, Christie, & Boulakia, 2017). Indeed, several respondents agreed that land rights are crucial since farmers are only inclined to invest in long-term soil fertility – e.g. by adopting CA – when they can cultivate the land for a longer period (Respondent B, 2017; Respondent J, 2017). Furthermore, it is important to note that in many African contexts land is often not just an economic asset that can be sold, but ownership depends on cultural, social and political conventions (Umar, 2013). Land rights are thus socio-juridically defined, contrary to a more economic definition in western contexts. In addition, several authors note that the gender aspect plays a role, as official ownership is frequently restricted to men. Besides that, cultural norms with regard to land rights may result in a disadvantage for women and subsequently lower yields on the fields they manage (Kevane, 2012). For instance, Farnworth et al. (2016) refer to the norm that women should first cultivate the land managed by men, before turning to their own fields. In addition, these authors note that in existing farming systems gender relations and different rights and duties are very complex and can extend over a long period of time, which can thus be a constraining factor for the promotion of CA.

4.1.5 Labour in CA

An issue on which profound disagreement exists in academia as well as practice, is whether CA reduces or increases the demand for labour (Umar, Aune, Johnsen, & Lungu, 2012; Wall et al., 2013). While many have studied labour using Western economic models and principles (Lalani et al., 2016; Nyagumbo, Mkuhlani, Mupangwa, & Rodriguez, 2017; Tittonell, van Wijk, Rufino, Vrugt, & Giller,

2007a), again it is important to understand that smallholder farmers do not necessarily follow these models in their reasoning (Umar et al., 2012).

For the purpose of this research the focus lies on smallholders' norms and customs in relation to labour. For instance, in the promotion of CA it is should be taken into account that in many areas there are norms concerning the division of farm activities that are principally done by women or by men. Farnworth et al. state that "men and women may have different rights and responsibilities for particular crops, and livestock species and/or specific livestock products" (2016, p. 143). As a result, adopting CA will change these patterns as it might alter the cultivated crops and change the role and value of livestock. In addition, it is generally agreed – also by several respondents – that women work with a tight time schedule as they execute most of the typical household activities (Farnworth et al., 2016; Kevane, 2012). Therefore, taking up new tasks or learning new techniques necessary for CA might, at least on the short term, reduce efficiency and effectiveness in other household activities. Finally, farmers who adopt CA mostly have to rely on manual weeding. Some reasons to assume this are: (1) the fact that the principle of minimal soil disturbance (no tillage) does not allow for animal or mechanical traction, (2) herbicides are too costly for most African smallholder farmers, and (3) the effectivity of weed control through soil cover varies greatly. This again links to gender differences, as manual weeding is one of those tasks that is primarily done by women, while animal-driven or chemical weed control is often a men-task (Umar et al., 2012).

To control this increased labour burden for weeding, various researchers – as well as practitioners – promote the use of herbicides in combination CA. However, this might create another social problem as in many cases the poorest members of communities are hired for labour such as weeding. Therefore, the danger is that the poorest members will lose an important part of their income, thus resulting in higher inequality (Andersson & D'Souza, 2014). This clearly links to an ethical aspect within the economic question of labour. In addition, Umar (2013) argues that ethnic identities can also be constraining for the promotion of CA. For instance, in the case of the Zambian Tonga people who were known in the region for their ploughing-efforts. If CA is widely adopted in their area, the principle labour activity of this ethnic group will thus be marginalised and their incomes will decrease. Evidently, these are very site-specific examples and labour characteristics that might vary greatly amongst different local communities. However, when addressing the question of labour in CA ethical, economic and social aspects – including gender issues – should be considered.

Textbox 4.2 Gender and CA

Most African smallholder farmer households are dependent on women as primary farmers, while the household itself might still be officially described as male-headed in terms of decision-making. This might become problematic in cases that it is difficult to reach these female farmers through extension services. Farnworth et al. (2016) refer to various reports that identify a disadvantage for women in their access to extension services. Furthermore, women often have less possibilities to gain access to credit, land and grazing rights, markets and economic groups. Frequently, it is difficult in such debates to point to the ethical issues concerning the balance between local cultural norms and customs and the Western beliefs about gender emancipation. From their point of view Farnworth et al. argue that when extension or development organisations do not sufficiently consider the gender relations in an area, "normative conceptualisations of 'farmers' can result in inappropriate targeting and ineffective messaging" (2016, p. 148). However, more research would be valuable on gender issues in CA, both to provide more details through case study research and to synthesize findings from different contexts and continents in order to draw more general conclusions. Importantly, such research should foreground the views of male and female smallholder farmers *themselves*, avoiding an interpretation of the norms and customs from an emancipated, modern perspective that might not be suitable in a particular situation. This could provide more interesting insights for the purpose of this research, as the current body of research on gender and CA is often an evaluation of the local situation in a 'western' framework.

4.1.6 Social relations and Ethics

A next type of norms and customs is coined by Amelia et al. (2014), namely social relations and ethics. First these authors find that in Zambia cultural norms together with trust in the effectiveness of CA are important social factors that influence adoption. Moreover, they state that in the rural areas farmers perceive CA to be only appropriate for the poorer farmers. As a result, richer farmers only practice CA in times of high food insecurity, but return to their earlier practices in better times. Related to this, Umar, also referring to the Zambian context, states that "in response to the pervasive risks and uncertainty, practices and norms aimed at minimizing risk and the adverse effects of calamitous events have been developed and are consciously maintained" (2013, p. 288). One respondent provided an example of this in a Sahelian context, where surplus produced in a good year is used to strengthen social bonds by sharing with others in order to create a safety net for difficult years future (Respondent I, 2017). On the one hand, this shows how community ties and (social) institutions incorporate and anticipate assumptions concerning risk, thereby making the community as a whole more resilient in times of shocks. However, this also means that in case one or more members of a community start adopting CA, this will inevitably affect the situation of the non-adopters. For instance, Boone (2016) in her study on two Malawian CA projects observes that farmers do not adopt CA while knowing that their yields could possibly be higher. This was exactly because of the reason that any surplus is to be shared with those who have lower yields, since the penalty is to become marginalised from both community and extended family. Farmers often prefer to conform to the average of the community,

as this will not lead the attention to them – also in relation to witchcraft, as discussed below. It is thus important to see how communal norms and customs concerning social interaction, ethical care and moral responsibility are related to households' (economic) choices regarding CA adoption.

Furthermore, Amelia et al. (2014) postulate that CA smallholders do not primarily aim at maximisation of their profit but prioritise food security. This again relates to the attitude of risk aversion amongst the poorest farmers. Similarly, Knowler and Bradshaw state that "farmer decision-making naturally reflects a compromise between private and collective utilities" (2007, p. 37). More specifically, they argue that a cost-benefit analysis for farmers not only includes material issues, but also feelings – e.g. pride or fear. One respondent mentioned as an example that the male members of a particular ethnic group in Burkina Faso take their farming equipment all year round with them, while only using it fragmentarily, since they are proud to be farmers (Respondent I, 2017). The authors themselves refer to the positive notions that farmers connect to agricultural practices that 'care for the soil' or more religiously put 'care for God's creation' (Knowler & Bradshaw, 2007). Hereby, they refer to sustainability and stewardship, which are concepts that allegedly are significant for farmers in their adoption or non-adoption of CA. Considering that CA is perceived as more environmentally sustainable than conventional farming, this way of reasoning seems to be an enabling factor for the promotion and adoption of CA. This is further reinforced by the fact that stewardship is often connected to various religious beliefs (Ahmad, n.d.; Andersson & Giller, 2012; Boone, 2016) which are strongly represented in many African societies. Thus, agricultural techniques and practices are linked to wider community dynamics and social questions as well as to personal ethics and religious beliefs.

4.1.7   Religious and Traditional Beliefs

As a last type of norms and customs we turn to beliefs. Andersson and Giller (2012) further investigate these linkages between religion and CA promotion. They find that CA is promoted and criticisms are silenced by a group of people and organisations with Christian roots. Although these authors have always been hesitant about the positive effects of CA, in particular its fit with the circumstances of smallholder farmers (Andersson & D'Souza, 2014; Baudron et al., 2012; Giller et al., 2015; Tittonell & Giller, 2013), their 2012 article explicitly warns for the way in which some actors are promoting CA, as if it is the "only way to farm that is faithful to God" (2012, p. 23). They state: "practising CA becomes a righteous act, an act of faith, where agronomic practices also have religious meanings, such as mulch cover being understood as 'God's blanket'" (2012, p. 23)[25]. The ethical question that we need to address here is whether this is an appropriation of CA to African smallholders own beliefs, or rather an

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[25] While much could be said about the arguments and themes that Andersson and Giller address here, this is beyond the scope of this thesis. For a response to their article see (Rademaker & Jochemsen, n.d.).

instrumentalisation of religion. Unfortunately, the authors do not provide an in-depth analysis of the beliefs and religious norms in relation to agriculture from the perspective of farmers. Nevertheless, this example aptly shows how underlying beliefs and attitudes of people are connected to the practice of agriculture.

Supernatural issues are also relevant with regards to the traditional beliefs[26] of intended beneficiaries. In Boone's Malawian study, she identified the fear that other community members can make use of witchcraft (Boone, 2016). Various respondents confirmed that such beliefs are widespread in (rural) African villages (Respondent A, 2017; Respondent B, 2017; Respondent I, 2017). In particular in the case of higher yields, people might easily spread rumours about a bewitched field or the owner might be threatened to be bewitched. In other cases, inorganic fertilizers are thought to prevent witchcraft on an agriculture plot. This can thus have considerable impacts on whether CA is adopted and in which ways it is promoted (Boone, 2016). Unfortunately, besides this research by Boone only marginal references to witchcraft and CA promotion can be found in Kaumbutho and Kienzle (2007) and Baudron et al. (2012). Still, in more general academic literature on development it is often recognised that traditional beliefs and witchcraft do in fact play a role in all aspects of life from the perspective of rural African communities (Altaf & Pouw, 2017; Bornstein, 2003; Olivier De Sardan, 2004).

In lieu of a conclusion of this first part of the chapter the following table provides an overview of the norms and customs, their enabling or constraining effects and which modal aspects of reality are relevant for each norm or custom. The norms and customs found through this literature research are leading in the rest of this chapter as well as the next one. They informed the data collection through interviews and documents and thereby were essential for the construction of the ideal-types of NGOs' interpretations presented below. Further conclusions are presented in the last paragraph of this chapter.

Table 4.1: Overview of the relevant norms and customs of intended beneficiaries in the promotion of CA

Norm or Custom	How is it concrete in CA?	Enabling or constraining?	Relevant modal aspects

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[26] For the sake of clarity, in this thesis we distinguish between religious beliefs and traditional beliefs. Whereas the former refer to an aspect of a world religion, the latter are connected to animistic or ancient beliefs that are often specific for an African community. This is not to suggest a sort of hierarchy or an argument that one or the other is a more 'real' belief, but to provide clarity. Besides that it also logically follows from the interview analysis as respondents articulated this difference as well.

Maize preference	Crop rotation is difficult when farmers have a strong preference for maize as this is their staple food.	Constraining	Biotic Economic
Gendered crops	Difference preferred crops between men and women.	Unclear	Social Economic
Residues as livestock feed	Not enough residues to practice effective mulching.	Constraining	Social Economic
Social constraints to mulching	People do not want to practice mulching as it is considered lazy, inappropriate and/or attracts wild animals. Burning of fields before the next season is seen as proper 'cleaning'.	Constraining	Aesthetic Social Economic Biotic
Free grazing	Livestock that is allowed to graze freely after harvesting feeds itself with valuable soil cover. Or free grazing animals can add fertility to the soil through manure.	Unclear	Social Juridical Biotic Economic
Land ownership is complex, flexible and land is often untitled	Farmers who have no guarantee to cultivate the same land in the future are less likely to adopt CA as it is an investment in fertility on the long-term.	Constraining	Juridical Social Biotic Economic
Land ownership is only for men	Women have less decision-making power and are not allowed to decide themselves to adopt CA or not.	Unclear	Juridical Social Economic
Division of farm labour among men and women	Labour burdens of men and women are disproportionally affected as men do not have to plough or apply fertilisers, but women do have to do more weeding besides typical household activities.	Constraining	Economic
Poorest farmers work as labourers on neighbours' fields	Poorer farmers who do the weeding might lose income when weeds decline due to provision or promotion of herbicides.	Constraining	Economic Biotic
Ethnic identities connected to farming	Rural people might have ethnical identities that are strongly based on farming practices that might disappear under CA, such as tillage.	Constraining	Formative Social
CA is for poorer farmers	As a low-input way of farming, CA is seen as only for the poorer farmers and conventional agriculture is considered to be better as soon as it can be afforded.	Constraining	Economic Social
Surplus is to be shared with others	When (CA) farmers produce a surplus, they are ought to share this with extended family and community members.	Constraining	Social Ethical Economic
Food security is more important than profit maximisation	In case a family can produce its own food, it is less likely that they take the risk to adopt CA, although income might increase under CA.	Constraining	Biotic Economic
Feelings are part of a cost-benefit analysis	When farmers are proud to be a (modern) farmer or experience fear, these feelings have a considerable impact on farmers decisions concerning adoption of CA.	Unclear	Psychic Social Economic
Sustainability and stewardship	When CA is considered an environmentally sustainable way of farming, (religious) farmers	Enabling	Ethical Pistic

	who care about sustainability and stewardship are more likely to adopt CA		Biotic
Religion plays a large role in farmers' lives	As most farmers are religious in African countries, this increases the likelihood that they care about sustainability and stewardship. This 'religiousness' can also be instrumentalised by NGOs in CA promotion.	Enabling	Pistic Social
Fear for witchcraft	Farmers feel the fear that when they produce above average, they will be accused of witchcraft or others will bewitch them.	Constraining	Pistic Social Psychic

4.2 Interpretation of the Other

Moving on to the interpretations of NGOs in the second part of this chapter, we change from using secondary sources to primary data collected through the interviews and documents. A close link with the academic literature is ensured as the interview and text analysis built further on the above described literature. The interpretations of NGOs were analysed through a step-wise method, ultimately resulting in four ideal-types. Three of these ideal-typical images, focusing on conservativeness, autonomy and fearfulness, mainly refer to the attitudes of the farmer, whereas the one, on constraints, refers more to context and environment. In advance, it is important to keep in mind the methodology of ideal-types, particularly that these typologies are extractions of the body of data. Thus, as they point out the general tendencies that can be found in NGOs' interpretations of the farmer, their salience and applicability varies for each organisation. In addition, the ideal-types are very much interrelated but at some points also mutually contradictory, which shows the complexity of this subject. In the subsequent sections we will present the four different types of interpretation, which will all be concluded by a short synthesis of the specific norms and customs and how they are interpreted by NGOs.

4.2.1 The conservative farmer

A first important interpretation of norms and customs of intended beneficiaries can be seen in the image of the conservative farmer. Key concepts in this respect are stubbornness and risk aversion. Identical to the authors in the paragraphs above, most NGOs recognise that smallholder farmers have a risk averse attitude to new technologies. Interestingly, on the one hand, they mentioned various practical reasons underlying this risk aversion, such as the acute need for food or money in the short term[27] or the fact that few farmers have savings that can be addressed in times of scarcity. In addition, others mention that changing farming practices towards CA also means a whole new way of life,

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[27] Interestingly, NGOs disagree about how fast CA brings results to the farmers. While some report higher yields in the first season, the majority says that farmers can expect benefits – in particular more stable yields – after some years.

implying that adoption is quite a big step for most smallholder farmers. On the other hand, especially in the interviews, risk aversion was mostly discussed in terms of a negative attitude, hampering the work of NGOs promoting CA. For instance one respondent said: "For me the logic of a demonstration field is that when surrounding people see that this method works, they would adopt it" (Respondent F, 2017). The frustrating issue for this person was that intended beneficiaries did not copy the methods. In this light, others identified also ignorance, unteachability or even stubbornness as characteristic attitudes of farmers. One explained almost sighing: "I think that we have to keep bringing them back to the three principles and explain how they are working together" (Respondent E, 2017), otherwise farmers revert back to more unsustainable practices or only practice some of the principles.

Another issue that was referred to in relation to risk aversion, is the 'seeing is believing' attitude of their intended beneficiaries, meaning that they only adopt the promoted techniques when they see the results in practice. This might become annoying for NGOs for whom CA is already proven on the basis of solid scientific research. When asked about the relevance of scientific research, relating to the issue of knowledge claims in the promotion of CA, one respondent based in Uganda said:

> "We see the value of adding the scientific research to what we are doing. But at the end of the day, it is not really numbers that should convince the farmer, but it is seeing and believing – seeing that this crop looks nicer or whatever (…). So certainly there is a role for research and it can push farmer thinking (…) a bit more. But farmers are not really so much convinced by research, they are convinced by what they see" (Respondent E, 2017).

Since farmers hold on to this 'seeing is believing', it has become standard practice for NGOs to establish demonstration plots. In addition, some organisations support farmers in doing their own experiments and trials in order to convince them and simultaneously do research on what works the best in this context. The hope is then of course that farmers follow the best practices from so-called 'model farmers' or demonstration fields.

This points to another issue of the conservative farmer that is unappreciated by NGOs. Farmers seem to be 'stubborn' as they prefer to maintain the practices of their forefathers and their neighbours. As a reaction, one respondent said: "The intention is not to just copy what the neighbours do, what their forefathers did or what everyone does. (…) It is about very informed usage". Later she added:

> "They leave a lot of things to others, that is very much embedded in the education system. When the teacher says: "one plus one is four", then it is true. We have a very evaluating and reflecting way of thinking. In Africa, you see that the highly educated decide the things for you. The doctor will not tell you *why* it goes wrong. When he says: "That person is dead", then no-one would ask: "How come? I want evidence". That just doesn't happen there" (Respondent A, 2017).

A concrete reason for following the standard agricultural techniques in the community, might be to avoid marginalisation as a result of deviation. This 'group conformity' as well as the social norm that farmers ought to share their surplus amongst their extended family are identified by NGOs as factors that limit adoption as farmers do not profit themselves.

A final particular agricultural custom which is frequently mentioned in combination with collective pressures and the resulting risk aversion, is burning of the fields between the harvesting and the planting season. As noted in the literature review, this is constraining the promotion of CA principles such as mulching. However, it is still often encountered by organisations and often interpreted to be just the opposite of what they promote. One respondent mentioned various reasons of farmers to burn, ranging from catching edible mice to increasing sterility of the field. After that, he concluded that in fact it is "nonsense" to burn, but if it is collectively practiced it becomes the norm (Respondent F, 2017). Other organisations explicitly mention the role of historical ways of farming and local knowledge. For example, one organisation working in the Sahel notes: "It goes against the way of agriculture as they learned it from their forefathers: first clean the land, (…) then preferably set fire." But the action following this observation is: "We (…) try to *resist* something that is really deep in their traditions. That is quite a challenge" (Respondent I, 2017). Thus, while NGOs seem to acknowledge some of the reasons for farmers' risk averse attitude, they are also frustrated as it impedes their promotion of CA.

This farmer is in the eyes of NGOs conservative in both an economic and technical sense and strongly adheres to norms and customs of forefathers and others. Ultimately, in line with this last quote, one respondent explicitly stated what seems to be implicit in the interpretations of other NGOs as well, when he remarked: "the best thing you can do is selecting farmers that are open-minded, who believe in CA and want – and are able to – take that risk" (Respondent D, 2017). While indeed an attractive approach for NGOs, the inherent danger to only support these farmers is to leave the poorest and most vulnerable behind, which should be avoided from an ethical standpoint. Another undesirable consequence is that through such selection, any ownership by the farmers' community in the process of CA adoption is eliminated. Thus, though depending on the specific attitude of an organisation, interpreting intended beneficiaries as stubborn and risk averse could lead to negative and exclusionary processes of development.

Synthesis: Risk aversion and 'seeing is believing' attitudes, as well as group conformity and burning are interpreted as signs of conservativeness and stubbornness. Some NGOs respond by excluding farmers with such attitudes from their programmes, while many also acknowledge the complex reasons underlying these attitudes.

4.2.2 The autonomous farmer

A second ideal-type of the intended beneficiary concerns the idea of the autonomous farmer who makes choices based upon rational thinking. Several NGOs see this as a 'cure' for the risk aversion described above, which is exemplified by the usage of demonstration fields[28]. However, it is linked to several other issues as well. As mentioned in the literature review above, a prominent tendency in both research and practice is the interpretation of farmers as calculating 'economists'. Similarly, this was visible in interviews as well. For instance, some NGOs referred to the practice of burning, as "just a simple technique" to cope with weeds, instead of emphasising its ecological unsustainability (Respondent B, 2017). From the perspective of these organisations, farmers 'just' make an economic cost-benefit analysis between the loss of organic matter and the amount of labour that is needed to remove weeds and defy the danger of reptiles. In addition, another respondent noted more explicitly that in the eyes of farmers "everything that costs labour, should very much prove itself" (Respondent I, 2017). This shows how organisations tend to expect a strong economic rationality in the mindset and reasoning of their intended beneficiaries. Problematically, as Umar et al. (2012) note, the danger is to restrict the life of a farmer to the economic aspect, while above it was shown earlier in this chapter that CA adoption and promotion involves much more aspects of life.

Other organisations refer to such an economistic view as 'pragmatism'. One respondent exemplified:

> "They really take what they think is useful… and what they don't find useful in the project, they might say "yes" but they will never do it. So, if farmers really think it is useful, they will adopt it, for sure (…). But when it does not work they will just not adopt it, definitely not because they like the project or the people" (Respondent I, 2017).

A similar interpretation appears with regard to the promotion of the principle of crop residue retention. As noted above, this can bring considerable challenges in a rural African setting because of established norms and customs. Indeed, the majority of NGOs is confronted with practical impediments, most importantly the use of residues as livestock feed or fuel and the excessive increase of soil life (e.g. termites and worms). However, again, in the eyes of multiple respondents this is a trade-off which farmers analyse and can decide upon by themselves.

Besides using economic and pragmatic reasoning, this image of 'the Other' also emphasises considerable autonomy of farmers. In particular when compared to the other interpretations of intended beneficiaries, this view demonstrates a high level of confidence that organisations have in farmers' own choices. For instance, various NGOs state as their primary aim the promotion of freedom

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[28] As such this ideal-type could to some extend be considered as a 'mirror-image' of the conservative farmer described above.

of choice of farmers. With regard to the promotion of CA, this means that they leave open options for different agricultural techniques. One organisation stated: "We actually do not have one particular type of agriculture that we try to promote very much. What is paramount for us is that the farmer has as much freedom of choice as possible and governance over his own business management" (Respondent I, 2017). In addition, such an interpretation could be a reason for NGOs to promote so-called Self Help Groups (SHGs) also referred to as saving groups. These entities could be seen as the 'most local' form of organisation of a project, often a group of community members or affiliated farmers. Several NGOs in this research appreciate SHGs as they can boost development without too much external assistance. One organisation, with a strong focus on these kind of groups, is also very wary of any normative guidance, in full trust that the intended beneficiaries could fix problems themselves. For instance, when asked how to deal with accusations of witchcraft in communities[29], the respondent replied: "Then you just fall back on the group structure. We would never say: "This should happen and this is the solution" (Respondent A, 2017). Thus, interestingly, the perspective of farmers as rational human beings seems to be linked to more autonomy in projects and consequently to a more flexible approach to farmers[30]. Importantly, in the eyes of organisations this autonomy not specifically pertains to the rational individual that is crucial in neoclassical economics but more to a farmers' group or community which is believed to be central in African societies in particular.

This more flexible approach is also encountered in farmer-to-farmer trainings, a strategy that is often used by NGOs promoting agricultural innovations in order to enlarge their impact. That means, the group of initially trained farmers that is obliged, or at least strongly encouraged, to spread the techniques further and train others. This implies that organisations expect and trust farmers to be capable of educating others. In terms of ethical development such strategies could be seen as positive tendencies. A side-note, however, could be that often only 'model-farmers' are expected to train others, which points to a certain selectivity in NGOs' confidence in intended beneficiaries. The question then becomes, on the basis of what arguments takes the selection place.

Synthesis: Farmers adhering to (economic) calculation and pragmatic or rational reasoning are seen as autonomous. Organisations have more confidence in the decision-making of intended beneficiaries who are expected to be able to choose themselves whether norms and customs should be adhered to or not. This leads to an emphasis on 'hands-off' approaches in projects.

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[29] This theme is revisited below in section 4.2.4
[30] This flexible approach to projects will be further elaborated upon in section 6.4.4.

4.2.3 The constrained farmer

A third ideal-typical image of intended beneficiaries is that of the farmer who is constrained, typically by prevailing gender norms and customs, his/her knowledge and mindset and collective pressures. Importantly, this is a slightly different typology than the other three as it is not so much about the attitude of the farmer, but about the way in which the (social) environment influences personal attitudes, or perhaps even imposes them. This means that the agency of the farmer is not the issue here – arguably this agency is assumed to be present – but the constraining factors should be removed in order to unlock this potential agency. That constraints emerge in this analysis is not surprising, as 'the resource-constrained farmer' is often mentioned in research on CA, as well as agriculture and development in general (Giller et al., 2015; Scheba, 2017). However, here we move beyond merely financial resources and include the norms and customs that are relevant to CA promotion.

The first major issue of constraints perceived, concerns gender relations, since all organisations refer to these as 'imbalanced' or 'unequal'. One very prominent gender issue is related to the increasing demand for labour under CA. As women are in most cases responsible for weeding, their labour burden is expected to increase[31], whereas men's activities (e.g. animal drawn ploughing) are rendered obsolete. Most NGOs recognised these gendered norms as important challenges which have significant impacts. For instance, women ought to do many activities for the overall well-being of the family, thus both household activities and food security might be endangered when their workload increases because of CA adoption. Interestingly, one respondent speaking about the use of chemical herbicides in order to reduce weeds, recalled with denigrating voice:

> "Our partner first said: "farmers have to weed and hoe without chemicals". I said: "How large are those fields in Uganda then". Because that was unknown for me as well. "Well", she said, "may be half a hectare". [laughing] Well it is really easy to weed and hoe that, come on. Yes, if it is about one hundred hectares, then it is a different story."(Respondent G, 2017)

When asked if this would not disproportionally affect the labour burden of women, she acknowledged that this may be "one of those contradictory things" (Respondent G, 2017). This shows very prominently the complexities of interpretations and the trade-offs between different organisational values of NGOs, in particular because this respondent was in fact working for an organisation with a strong emphasis on women empowerment. Therefore, for this NGO a tension emerged between promoting CA and the established gender norms.

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[31] It should be noted that it differs per NGO whether chemical herbicides are an integral part of CA or not. Some argue it is necessary in order to avoid an outgrowth of weeds, with coinciding labour increase, especially on more commercially oriented farms. Others point to the dependency it creates from the side of the farmers, they will never be able to pay these inputs by themselves. One organisation (Respondent G) was explicitly warning for the ecological damage caused by chemicals.

In addition, gender relations were recognised to be very dependent on the context, influenced by cultural, socio-historical, religious and economic traditions. Therefore, most respondents were wary of any generalisation. However, in general the social environment of intended beneficiaries is interpreted to be rather paternalistic when speaking about gender. This is illustrated by the following norms and customs that often appeared in interview and text analysis: Men have more authority within the family and community; men receive the money while they do less work in agriculture than women; men make the financial decisions; and men are in charge of land negotiations and titling. In addition, organisations emphasise that women tend to think in a different way and have different priorities than men. For example, as mentioned above, more than men women have an eye on the food security and the well-being of the family as a whole.

A second interpretation related to the constrained farmer, though less concretely manifested in norms and customs, is that smallholder farmers lack the knowledge needed for real agricultural development. This issue was already briefly discussed in textbox 4.1. Similar to other innovative approaches to agriculture, CA is generally seen as knowledge-intensive, in contrast to for instance capital-intensive technologies. One respondent stated: "Knowledge plays a role in the whole process, together with the *openness* to absorb new information" (Respondent C, 2017). Apparently, farmers should meet certain 'knowledge-norms' and degrees of 'openness' in order to be good farmers in the eyes of NGOs. They should at least have knowledge of this and that and have a certain way of reasoning. Hereby, in fact, they construct an image of the unknowledgeable Other, who is in need of education and information by external parties.

As third and final social norm burning of fields can be considered a constraining social norm which significantly inhibits CA promotion. Some respondents emphasise that this is complicated by the fact that burning is often an issue of the entire community which perceives cleared fields to be 'better' or 'nicer'[32]. Another adds the aspect of historical ways of farming, saying that farmers were used to just burn a new piece of land and adopt a very extensive way of agriculture. However, "now diversification and intensification (…) is the only way for smallholders to survive. (…) In this way it becomes interesting for young farmers", he says: "(…) Labour-intensive, diversified systems with high-value products. It should make some money on the market" (Respondent I, 2017). This idea of resisting prevailing norms and customs of intended beneficiaries, in order to unlock their potential and the agricultural potential of their fields is key to this interpretation of the constrained farmer.

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[32] Interestingly, one respondent remarked concerning a West African setting, that it was the other way around: "Some [farmers] would naturally say, we don't encourage burning and even some communities in the area, they have been declared as no-burning communities" (Respondent J, 2017).

Synthesis: Social pressures in combination with gendered norms and a lack of knowledge, are interpreted as constraints for development, in particular for the quick and adequate adoption of CA. In response, NGOs aim to create an enabling context to unlock the potential of farmers.

4.2.4   The fearful farmer

The final ideal-type touches upon a less familiar image of farmers, namely that of the fearful farmer. This is mainly connected to the religious and traditional beliefs of intended beneficiaries and their effect on social dynamics in communities[33]. Many of the respondents agreed that such beliefs have (indirect) connection to their work, while it were mostly fragmentary memories with marginal impact on agriculture specifically. Unsurprisingly, the FBOs emphasised the role of these issues more than the other organisations. Therefore, we will first highlight some of the interpretations of FBOs, before pointing out two important tendencies with regards to (traditional) beliefs that are recognised by secular organisations as well.

The most explicit case is found with a NGO working in southern Africa which strongly links its development work to overcoming a culture of fear. Their idea is that jealousy in combination with witchcraft results in fear and mistrust. In fact, the respondent from this organisation repeated the example that was mentioned above: where one farmer produces better because of CA, others will become jealous, which makes the successful farmer anxious to be bewitched. Consequently, it might be more attractive to go back to standard farming techniques and conform to the group again (Respondent F, 2017). In the end, according to this person, this prohibits any cooperation and thereby development in general. Therefore he stated:

> "I want to see people freed from their fears, so that they can trust in God and say:
> "Whatever happens to me, I trust in God". (…) People have to learn to make their
> own steps, beyond their own comfort zone. (…) I think God wants them to go through
> that process of fear. (…) We have to facilitate people in that complex process. (…) I
> think hunger is one thing, but I think that the fear in which people live has much more
> impact on their lives than the physical challenge". (Respondent F, 2017)

In similar ways, other FBOs advocate that development can only happen if first a spiritual transformation, in people's personal lives or in the community as a whole, takes place:

> "The spiritual world has such an enormous impact on farmers' lives, on their thinking
> and actions, you cannot erase that (…). It is my opinion that that is the brake on the
> development of Africa. Not that we should make Africa a capitalist continent, I
> believe that there are much more qualities in Africa (…). More income, being honest,

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[33] For the sake of clarity, in this thesis religious belief refers to an aspect of a world religion, whereas traditional beliefs are connected to animistic or ancient beliefs. While this might suggest a sort of hierarchy, it is more or less following from the interview analysis as NGOs perceived a difference as well.

care for your wife, all those things that are good for a good society (…) they should
not be disturbed by (…) this fear and worldview. (Respondent H, 2017)

While these quotes are examples of very strong linkages between beliefs and farmers' development, other FBOs are more modest in their approach and do not emphasise this spiritual transformation specifically. Still, all of them refer to God's creation and the fact that He still looks after this world. In addition, most of them identified a direct influence of God on farmers' lives and agriculture.

Besides these explicitly faith-based perspectives, the impact of traditional beliefs and religion on communities was also acknowledged by some of the secular organisations. Various organisations refer to the idea that (fears for) witchcraft is a way to explain events that are not understood. In this respect, it was noted that people who enjoyed more education are often ashamed of such traditional beliefs as they 'know better'. One respondent moved on to say that education, "with its enlightened, capitalist, modernist thinking", has a 'westernising' influence with regards to the spiritual world and "when this becomes the framework of reference for people, there is less room for the inexplicable forces" (Respondent B, 2017). Importantly, this 'westernisation' was not the objective of this NGO, but it shows how this employee interpreted the 'reality' on the ground. In a quite different manner, another respondent said: "I always thought that the more educated people are, the less you believe in these things. But that is really not the case. This is really strongly in someone's mind. But for my western thought the stories where sometimes ludicrous" (Respondent A, 2017). This feeling that the logic of 'the Self' is very different from the logic of 'the Other' was encountered more often in the interviews. Frequently, the only option NGOs perceive is to accept this difference and work with it. However, in relation to NGOs' activities, such as promoting CA, (traditional) beliefs are often interpreted to be accompanied by negative impacts on agricultural development according to the respondents.

Finally, in relation to the abovementioned 'culture of fear' a secular organisation underscores that farmers can easily develop a sense of inferiority. Farmers can feel afraid that the successful techniques of others will not work for them for different reasons. For instance, they believe that 'model farmers' are not hindered by spirits or only achieve better yields because they receive input support from NGOs. In other cases, demonstration plots are not fruitful because farmers feel inferior to 'white' people with respect to agriculture. It was often noted that it is difficult to persuade farmers to abandon their fears and (traditional) beliefs. Indeed, perhaps as a consequence, most organisations discard these beliefs as unrealistic or absurd, which suggests they do not really reckon with them in their interventions[34]. Evidently, such beliefs are complex in particular because they also impact wider community dynamics. In one project proposal it was explained that particular groups – e.g. blacksmiths

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[34] These dynamics are also found by other researchers, see for instance the publication by Altaf and Pouw (2017).

– are inhibited to participate in society because of cultural beliefs with regards to their profession. Furthermore, elderly people can be marginalised and "withdraw from society due to the fear of being a burden" (Document A, n.d.-b). Another NGO said that in the Sahel region conservative religion has a negative impact on agriculture and gender issues, referring to areas were radicalised religious groups are active.

Synthesis: (traditional) beliefs create fear and mistrust in individual lives, resulting in a culture of fear and social pressure in communities. Spiritual and social fears are acknowledged by some organisations, while others disregard them as they do not belief in such issues. FBOs mostly recognise the fears but contest them since they believe that people can be set free through faith in God. The general perception is that (traditional) beliefs and social pressures should be abandoned as they impede intended development processes.

4.3 Conclusion: The Other and Norms and Customs

In this chapter we investigated NGOs' interpretations of the Other, as intended beneficiary and farmer. First, through reviewing the existing literature on CA and the norms and customs that are relevant in its promotion we developed an idea of the lifeworld of the Other. The enabling or constraining norms and customs are found in many aspects of the lives of intended beneficiaries as shown by the range of modal aspects that are relevant. In addition, the exact norms and customs are very site-specific and their enabling or constraining effect is also dependent on the context. That said, NGOs' interventions, e.g. the promotion of CA, also significantly impacts the lifeworlds of farmers. Through the literature review we established a basis for researching how NGOs understand these norms and customs. Therefore, in the last part of the chapter we presented an analysis of these interpretations of NGOs of the Other and his/her lifeworld.

In the remainder of the chapter we have seen that oganisations interpret their intended beneficiaries to be a mix of conservative, autonomous, constrained and fearful people. Without giving an entire summary here we briefly point to the most important tendencies. The conservative farmer is the type that evokes the most frustration at the side of NGOs and is either to be avoided through only selecting the open-minded or to be persuaded to adopt CA in one way or the other. Organisations have the most confidence in autonomous farmers, who make pragmatic decisions and follow the rules of economic calculation. In contrast, the third ideal-typical image of the constrained farmer, is very much in need of outside assistance as his/her social environment is believed to 'impose' the attitude toward CA adoption. Hence, their 'passive accustoming' should be get rid of and their potential should

be unlocked. Finally, the least understood farmer is the fearful one[35], who is afraid because of social or spiritual dynamics and a 'culture of fear'.

The remaining questions then become: What do these interpretations this tell us about practices? How are these images relevant in NGOs' everyday work? What do they mean for ethical development? In the first place, the study of these ideal-types demonstrate an organisation's view probably never restricted to one ideal-type and that there are variations visible amongst and within organisations. For instance, whereas one seems to interpret farmers more often as autonomous and does not mention the fearful component, others emphasise the conservativeness but also refer to farmers' autonomy[36]. Furthermore, we observed the presence of both positive and negative tendencies with regards to the ethics of engagement. However, it is difficult to give a definitive answer to these questions before having examined the side of the Self and their strategies for action.

Figure 4.1 Overview of Ideal-types of Interpretation in this chapter

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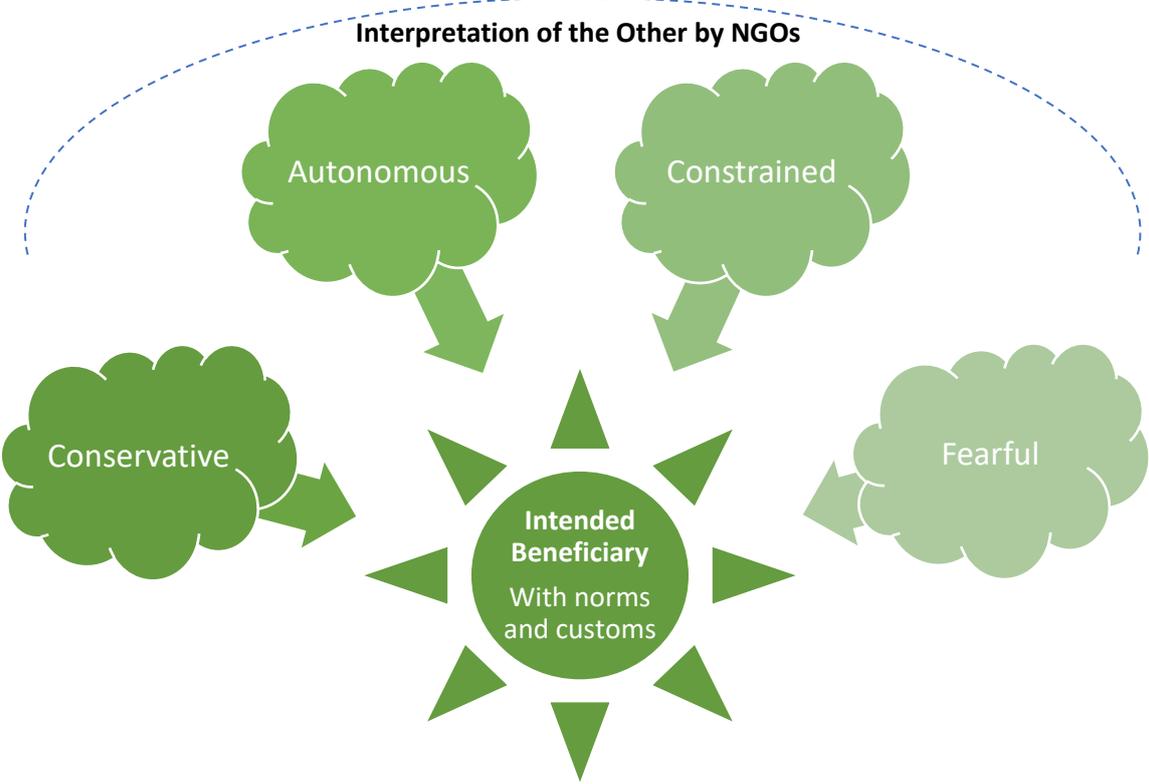
[35] While indeed the organisations in this research find it difficult to understand farmers' traditional ideas about spirits and the related community pressure, there seems to exist a tendency that faith-based organisations are more in touch with these issues than their secular counterparts. This might be due to the fact that they believe that this spiritual world is real or that they have a better understanding of spiritual issues in general.

[36] Although this tendency is briefly mentioned here this is not discussed in detail, because the aim of this thesis is not to study individual organisations but to discover the overall tendencies.

5. Interpreting the Self and Strategies for Action

The interpretation of the Other and their norms and customs does not stand on its own. It is influenced by what attitudes NGOs adopt towards their beneficiaries, what they believe about themselves and the world around them, as well as what kind of development approaches and techniques they adhere to. Therefore, this chapter moves on to first analyse NGOs' interpretations of the Self in their promotion of CA. Subsequently, we discuss the interpretations of NGOs concerning their own strategies for action, which bridge the interpretations of the Self and the actions of NGOs in relation to the promotion of CA. These typologies are based on the same methodology as employed in the previous chapter.

5.1 Interpretation of the Self

Although some aspects the images of the Self might already have been touched upon in paragraph 4.2, below we will analyse these in detail, on the basis of the interview and text analysis. Three ideal-typical typologies of interpretations of the Self from the perspective of NGOs themselves are presented, centred around superiority, engagement and responsibility. These depict three central ideas of organisations that are visible in the reasoning and interpretations about themselves and their position.

5.1.1 The Superior Self

Firstly, the Superior Self is recognised, which points to the tendency to see the own organisation as superior to the intended beneficiaries. In this sense, the Other is regarded as the lower, inferior party. In this paragraph we respectively address how organisations envision their own position with regards to issues of gender, focusing on cultural differences and the promotion of beliefs of equality.

As a first example how superiority thinking can be present in the interpretations of NGOs, we address how they speak about cultural differences between the Self and the Other. The issue of gender in general is a theme that is particularly sensitive in settings where cultural interaction and communication is present. Moreover, cultural differences can easily evoke normative thoughts about the better and the worse side, which was also observed in the interviews. Phrases were used such as 'our western emancipated ideas' or 'the equality that we have here', as if referring to some kind of Western standard that African societies should strive for. A further intriguing issue was that, various respondents observed that "it is not realistic" that 'other' cultures would be able to reach this soon (Respondent A, 2017). One said: "We do not expect that everything changes instantly. They shouldn't. They have their own cultures (…)" (Respondent G, 2017). It is unclear, however, whether this is said from a standpoint of superiority, suggesting that other cultures will always remain subordinate to the West, or with a more egalitarian view, with the intention to respect the other and leaving space for

difference[37]. With regards to CA promotion, the importance of gender-focused trainings is often explicitly mentioned, as one project proposal states: "Women will have greater choice and increased control over assets, income and their own lives", and in the end "all have the same chances regardless of gender" (Document A, n.d.-b). Thus, for the majority of NGOs women empowerment is a prominent reason of existence and the reduction of inequality amongst men and women – in some cases including children – is a so-called cross-cutting theme in many programmes on CA promotion. The question however remains: To what extent are NGOs aware of their own normative standpoints expressed in such interventions, and the way these relate to the norms and customs of intended beneficiaries.

Indeed the 'equality of chance' is an often heard phrase in this respect. There is a difference, however, in the way in which organisations address this and how much pressure is put on these issues. Whereas one respondent said "we try to make it negotiable" (Respondent B, 2017), another stated "there should be equal chances" (Respondent G, 2017). Moreover, in their objective to reach out to women and enhance their rights, several NGOs positively discriminate women in CA projects. An extreme case is found with an organisation working in a rather conservative religious area in Africa. The respondent mentioned that it attempted to include women in the program through misleading the male community leaders. Project officers would, for instance, ask for someone with adequate knowledge on local food dishes or (medicinal) spices, knowing that these are almost always women, in this way excluding men. In another case, the organisation promoted landownership for women, which was not allowed by the law in that area. Consequently, it used an organisation of women – which legally could possess land. "So basically", the respondent proudly stated, "we just do some tricks, and say: "this is an organisation, not a woman"" (Respondent I, 2017). It thus appears that intended beneficiaries' norms and customs with regard to gender are fundamentally undermined. In other words, the prevailing standards in the western world on gender and women empowerment are regarded superior to intended beneficiaries perspectives. Therefore, the way in which gender issues are approached within CA programmes, seems to be conflicting with the idea that NGOs acknowledge their context specificity. Hence, it might be necessary to review the central place that gender issues have in CA promotion – as well as development projects in general (Jochemsen, 2018). The interventions on gender empowerment and the existing approaches which are used in development cooperation are vulnerable for a superior Self-interpretation, and consequently position of NGO.

Synthesis: inferiority and subordination are present in reasoning about gender from the perspective of the superior Self. Emancipation and gender equality is strongly promoted with the danger to overlook the norms and customs of the Other.

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[37] This latter perspective is also addressed in paragraph 5.2 on the engaged Self.

5.1.2   The Engaged Self

The second ideal-typical image of development organisations is more positive and is centred around the idea of engagement with 'the Other'. Respect and tolerance are crucial concepts here, openly communicated as key values by the majority of the NGOs. Another, less straightforward issue to be discussed here is, criticism to the Self. Being respectful is mentioned in relation to many diverse norms and customs of intended beneficiaries, ranging from beliefs in witchcraft to the practice of burning agricultural fields, and from livestock conflicts between pastoralists and arable farming to imbalanced gender relations. Since we cannot elaborate on all these topics, below we will first address the more engaged character of NGOs' interventions on gender issues and subsequently discuss several critical perspectives of NGOs on their own position and the global economy.

In contrast to aforementioned critiques, several organisations explicitly mention that they always avoid to impose normative ideas with regards to gender that could lead to westernisation. They emphasise that changing gender relations is a complex process which is not determined at forehand and should be as 'local' as possible. One respondent remarked:

> "I think you cannot just impose the Western emancipatory ideas about men and
> women on another culture. You have to be careful (…) and even be very reluctant
> with that I think. Because you just have to respect the lives of the people who live
> here." Concerning the participation of women he added: "You have to consider each
> case separately, per business case, even per area or group of farmers. Thinking: 'How
> can we approach [women participation] in this business case?'. So it is not a one-size-
> fits-all approach" (Respondent D, 2017).

In addition, another respondent remarked that NGOs should not demand radical change instantly, as our own cultures are 'not fully equal' as well. Another added that it has long been tried to enforce women participation through so-called gender-norms, but that they had learned that this does not have any real effects. These perspectives demonstrate that organisations can also aim to have a more cautious, flexible approach to gender issues. In addition, such reflection and learning are crucial for ethical engagement with the Other.

The engaged character of NGOs is furthermore manifested in various critical perspectives on the Self and their own 'Western' backgrounds. A first observation concerns the individualistic culture that is predominant in northern NGOs' countries of origin. Though individualism might boost development as everyone pursues his/her own interests, a valuable sense of "togetherness" might be lost, as one respondent noted (Respondent A, 2017). Above that, one FBO adds, "God stands outside of people's lives" when we look at individualistic societies (Respondent F, 2017). Another often heard critique is that the structure of development cooperation in itself should be improved and that the power and voice of NGOs is too weak as opposed to global economic forces that obstruct equal, sustainable development. In a strategy paper one organisation writes: "Agricultural policies and

subsidies (…) cause farmers in developed countries to produce a surplus of cheap goods. These are exported to developing countries and sold at falsely low prices that undercut and destroy local production systems" (Respondent H, 2017). This accusation is related to the role and influence of the private sector, which by some of the organisations is interpreted as dangerous: "The risk is (…) that we comply to much with the trend of private sector interests, because these public-private partnerships are so popular currently. But this remains a very difficult concept for the [interests of] smallholder farmers specifically" (Respondent I, 2017). Others more cautiously point out that side-effects of the increasing role for the private sector are difficult to predict. However, these critical and cautious visions on western cultures and global economy point to an image of the Self that is wary to involve self-interested partners with underlying values that might do harm to intended beneficiaries' lives and livelihoods.

Synthesis: Respect and tolerance in terms of cultural differences as well as self-critique are core characteristics of the engaged Self. These NGOs are sympathising with the farmers and critiquing forces that might have a negative influence on intended beneficiaries' lives.

5.1.3 The Responsible Self

The third and final interpretation of NGOs' Self, concerns their responsibility. Most organisations refer to a responsibility that they see for themselves to do their work with the objective to help others or to make this world a better place. In this paragraph we discuss three different aspects that are relevant in this respect, namely: responsibility to God, responsibility to care for nature, and responsibility to influence (local) governance.

The ideal-type of the responsible Self is most prominent in the interpretations of faith-based organisations. They all acknowledge that their religion is a major source of motivation for their work, as one organisation states in its mission: "we seek to contribute every day towards a sustainable transformation of people" (Document B, n.d.). Consequently, they see it as their duty to care for others as a task given by God. One respondent noted: "Our motivation is primarily based on our religious conviction and that God created us as humans that have a responsibility for each other. That also means that you take care of the neighbours that are less fortunate than we are" (Respondent C, 2017). Various FBOs also confidently speak about their own qualities in moving beyond a merely technical intervention[38]. In this light, one respondent emphasised the importance of research which "shows the difference between (…) [approaches that] only consider the agricultural techniques or when one

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[38] This is not implying that other organisations only have technical approaches and never move beyond agro-technological issues. However, most organisations saw an overall tendency that secular organisations were more prone to this pitfall than faith-based organisations.

includes the whole of the human being". This organisation had indeed a very 'holistic' vision on development processes. Altogether this shows how important religion can be in the work of FBOs and how they can both provide a motivation for development work in general and have an impact on CA promotion in particular.

Textbox 5.1 The role of religion in CA promotion and development practice

From the discussion of FBO's interpretations of responsibility, the question might rise whether these organisations are really different from their secular counterparts when encountered 'in the field'. One respondent from a secular organisation said that there is no distinction in practice, they are only called FBOs because of fundraising opportunities. However, as also mentioned above, FBOs themselves see it as crucial to connect their religious beliefs to development issues in general, as it is a fundamental source of inspiration in their visions and missions. In addition, as they belief that Gods creation should be cared for, the Christian religion is related to CA promotion in particular. Moreover, several FBOs see it is as an advantage that they "have the same spiritual way of thinking, so to say, which resonates with the people" (Respondent F, 2017). In this way they appear to better understand issues such as fears for witchcraft or prayers for good harvests. However, the role of religious thinking in the work of NGOs can also lead to a very instrumental use of beliefs, as exemplified by this respondent:

> "When I was promoting agriculture, when I was working directly with the church, then I would use a biblical justification or use the Bible as a starting point for environmental protection, care for the soil, resting the soil , whatever it might be. (…) Because people belief that and they say: "Well it is in the bible then we want to try and do it. We won't overwork our oxen. We will rest the soil every so often. We will take care of the environment." Because it is in the Bible, then they will do that, so then it can be used to your advantage." (Respondent E, 2017).

In fact, this is one of the main criticisms of Andersson and Giller (2012), referred to in paragraph 4.1, in their article on the epistemic community that promotes CA. However, as Rademaker and Jochemsen (n.d.) note, while such an instrumentalisation of a certain religious background can be critiqued, the role of Christian faith as an ultimate horizon of interpretation is another question. This perspective will be further discussed in the next chapter.

A second source of responsibility is the moral call to care for nature. This is of importance for all of the organisations, regardless of religious convictions. For instance, one Christian respondent said about his own motivation: "That Christian element (…) comes in strongly because I think we have the responsibility to take care of this world for future generations" (Respondent E, 2017). Another respondent from a secular NGO emphasising women empowerment states: "We envision a world in which gender equality has been achieved and all women, men and children live in dignity, and share responsibilities for a healthy environment, and a just and sustainable world" (Document G, n.d.). Thus, where the former organisation feels responsible towards God, perhaps also His creation, and next generations, the latter includes all of humanity, 'women, men and children'. God, creation and the Other are therefore important sources of motivation for building resilience for climate change. In particular the NGO documents analysed evidence that this is a major motivation for all organisations

to promote CA. They generally conclude that conventional farming practices are not able to cope with further changes in rainfall and temperature deviations, et cetera, as one respondent emphasised:

> "Actually, as to agricultural practices, and especially in terms of building farmers' resilience and the vulnerability of the land itself, it is really important that [CA] gains more attention. Also in terms of the vision on fertilisation, not only in minerals but also soil resilience, it is absolutely important that it does get attention" (Respondent B, 2017).

Furthermore, several organisations also mention the alleged benefits of CA in terms of reduced greenhouse gas emissions in comparison to conventional practices. This shows how NGOs indeed feel responsible for the future of our earth and attempt to reduce the future impact of climate change for their specific intended beneficiaries.

The issue of climate change, together with population growth, leads most NGOs to increasingly address land-use and -rights in their CA promotion, which leads to involving or influencing (local) government agencies. Hereby organisations take the responsibility to influence the wider institutional environment beyond their immediate intended beneficiaries. Intriguingly, various NGOs perceive (national) governments to be complicating factors in development. One respondent wonders why, after so many years of development aid, "still we need to do this kind of [agricultural] projects?". "Then", she stated, "there are of course deeper failures in such a country, in particular corruption, I think" (Respondent G, 2017). Other NGOs agree that the structure of institutions is crucial. The tendency is to think: if governance is not changing, people will ultimately not benefit and NGOs' work is negligible, as stated in an annual report: "In the end, in order to realise lasting change, efforts need to be driven by the community and its members themselves, by the (local) governments and by the other actors present" (Document E, n.d.). Thus, NGOs perceive a responsibility for themselves with regard to improving governance issues as well as responsibility for local and national governments.

One important problem specific to CA promotion, is that land pressure can lead to more (free roaming) livestock eating the crop residues which function as a mulch layer on the field. As discussed above this is a widely recognised constraint for the adoption of CA. Consequently, some organisations automatically position themselves against pastoralist groups in the areas of their intervention. As an officer of one organisation remarked: "As long as there are no bylaws on this issue, the pastoralist just let their cattle graze freely. The trees that you might have planted, you won't see them back" (Respondent A, 2017). While attempting to take responsibility for 'own' intended beneficiaries, such discourses tend to discriminate other inhabitants of the area, amongst others pastoralists, who might historically have had similar rights to the same land. The use of bylaws, illustrates how organisations often try to resolve these issues in a juridical manner, in many cases complemented with lobbying for better legislation at the local government. "However," the same respondent stated firmly, "then it is a

task of the local government to organise awareness raising campaigns, in order to let the pastoralists (…) know that we have rules and that *you* can get a fine when you just let your cattle walk in farmers' fields" (Respondent A, 2017). This shows how actions out of a feeling of responsibility should also be reflected upon taking into account the wider context of the intervention.

Synthesis: The responsible NGO can be motivated by religious and moral calls to care for the Other and the environment. Increasingly, such organisations feel a strong responsibility to influence local governance with regard to issues of land use and ownership, in order to support their intended beneficiaries' interests.

5.2 Interpretation of Strategies for action

The three ideal-typical images of NGOs' self-perception give us a sense of how they think about their positioning towards intended beneficiaries. However, this is further manifested in how they promote CA in their project, i.e. what strategies for action they envision. Therefore, in this second part of the chapter we describe four ideal-types of core characteristics that NGOs perceive in their own strategies for action, namely: rationality, superiority, progress and flexibility. Again the same methodology as presented in section 3.3.2 was used, thus it is grounded in the interview and text analysis as well. This analysis will both address new issues and build further on the analyses above. Ultimately, we seek an answer to the question how the interpretations of the Other and the images of the Self inform the strategies for action of NGOs with respect to CA.

5.2.1 Rationality

The first interpretation of strategies for action is that of a logical construction or a stepwise process, following the rules of rational reasoning. This approach resonates with the image of the autonomous farmer presented above. As already noted above, such a perception seems to be coupled with a belief that farmers will do what is rational – in this case adopting CA. In this light, one project document presents CA techniques as "straightforward" and states that it is "not rocket science" (Respondent D, 2017). One respondent similarly described their approach in agricultural projects as follows: "Just let farmers implement something. Just show them the difference. (…) And then (…), because they contain it as a sort of demonstration plot themselves, well it is a question of balancing pros and cons." (Respondent B, 2017). This illustrates how NGOs have confidence in the power of rationality underlying their promotion of CA. The main argument for this confidence seems to be that is proven by scientific research.

In addition to this interpretation of CA adoption as 'straightforward', rational reasoning is also present in NGOs' ideas about upscaling and achieving larger impacts. Many organisations share a

strong belief in progress. Although we further elaborate upon this theme in section 5.2.3, here the notion of a stepwise, 'linear' upscaling of project is of importance, as demonstrated in one of the interviews:

> "First we look how CA adoption moves from large farmers to medium-sized farmers. (…) And in a next phase we probably want to do a following pilot with smaller farmers". And a bit later: "In this way you can start to scale that up (…). Then they see at their neighbours or farmers they know, that something works. That is I think the best you can do. Just create as many places as possible where people can see that things can improve [by farming] in a different way" (Respondent D, 2017)

An important factor in such a linear trajectory is the market, which of course ought to work according to economic rationality as well. In other words, as one strategic plan states: "There is a need for a movement from 'farming for food' to 'farming as business'. This economic embeddedness is necessary to move on to another area at a certain moment" (Document C, n.d.). This shows how NGOs see market mechanisms as a driving force in their projects, in particular for upscaling impacts and for ensuring longer term sustainability.

Synthesis: NGOs interpret and present their own projects as rational, because CA is a combination of 'straightforward' techniques and since CA promotion follows the rules of rationality in project planning and the way organisations manage these trajectories. These ideas of rationality relate to the autonomous Other.

5.2.2 Superiority

The second ideal-type of NGO projects is rigid and fixed. From this perspective, the project (plan) is in fact superior to anything and gets priority above the inclusion of actual needs, beliefs, norms and customs of intended beneficiaries. This interpretation is of course strongly related to the image of the superior Self, but also to the conservative Other which should be persuaded to adopt CA. It results in a very aggressive, inflexible way of implementing a project. Consequently, the promotion of CA is in this sense a rather one-directional process in which the NGO provides training and perhaps inputs and the farmers are receiving. This attitude is incompatible with earlier remarks about engagement, respect and autonomous farmers. Moreover, the idea of the superiority of own projects could very well lead to a negative attitude towards anything that changes the initial proposed plan, contrary to discourses such as 'adaptive programming'. Indeed, it is agreed by various scholars that this is an inherent characteristic for all development projects. An intervention might be planned into great detail, but external influences and many internal dynamics can always change the path (Banks, Hulme, & Edwards, 2015; Jakimow, 2016; Lewis & Kanji, 2009).

Although much critiqued, from the interview and document analysis, these positions appear to be very much present in the interpretations of NGOs. As one respondent noted with regard to the

tendency of farmers to only adopt one or two principles of CA: "You know, CA is package and they have to implement all parts and not just a bit" (Respondent E, 2017). Moreover, another said concerning a situation where norms and customs of local people worked against the project, that the NGO could say: "Well, yes, these are your rules, but now it is an obstacle to the project. How do we deal with that?" (Respondent A, 2017). The ideas of tolerance and respect are thus very limited in this ideal-type. While on the one hand normativity in projects is inevitable and to some extent also desirable, with regard to specific norms and customs of intended beneficiaries NGOs run the risk to move beyond that and interpret their projects as superior to anything, resulting in an unwelcome exercise of power.

This sense of superiority can also be manifested in the way NGOs interact with their partners. For instance, one respondent remarked with regards to livestock grazing on CA fields:

> "These are the competitors for the organic matter that is on the field after harvest. Indeed that is one of the things about which I said to our partners: *"You really have to work more on this. Because if you say that you are practicing CA, then you should also show it in practice. Not that the fields are totally empty and there is no mulch."*"
> (Respondent H, 2017)

Next to partners, local governments are also held accountable, as noted in an earlier example on the making of bylaws on the custom of free grazing. In that case, the NGO pressures governance to act upon these issues, to make legislation and systematically enforce them. A document from another organisation adds: "Many (…) barriers to adoption could be addressed if national governments and donors invested in relevant enabling institutions such as producer organisations, social protection, and land tenure." (Document I, n.d.). These attempts to influence governance together with the top-down approach and exercise of power towards beneficiaries, shows that development is in some way dependent on the actions of NGOs as outsiders, which relates to the images of the conservative Other as well as the superior Self.

Synthesis: Superiority in strategies for action is visible in the fixed and inflexible interpretation of project plans and CA as agricultural technique. NGOs also tend to see development as a one-directional process emphasising top-down accountability towards other actors. Such strategies for action relate to the superior Self and the conservative Other.

5.2.3 Progress

The third central notion concerning NGOs' strategies for action is related to a strong belief in progress. Besides the fact that progress is inherent to almost any kind of reasoning about development, it can be very explicitly represented in projects underlying assumptions. For instance, in the interviews it was noted that it is a widespread assumption amongst NGOs that Africa has to 'move forward' and that

the continent has 'a long road ahead'. The end of this road was sometimes explicitly referred to as the western-type of society or a prosperous economy, but more often this remains a vague idea of a 'better situation'. In this understanding, NGO projects aim to unlock the potential of the 'constrained' farmers. As noted above, gender is interpreted as an important constraining factor for farmers to adopt CA and to foster development in general. Therefore, many NGOs address gender issues in their agricultural interventions, aiming to break through the ideas of the current paternalistic communities. However, as one respondent notes, "this process in particular is a very long process and in many areas you will only be able to make little steps forward. I also don't think it is realistic to think some countries will ever reach the equality we have here" (Respondent A, 2017). This aim to 'make steps forward' through the promotion of gender equality towards the idea of an emancipated society, clearly shows the underlying belief in a form of progress.

Interestingly, a prominent notion that is often connected to progress is cooperation. Many documents mention that cooperation, between NGOs as well as amongst beneficiaries, is absolutely necessary for development. One organisational mission states: "There is a single agenda and a single strategy: together we learn and progress, together we achieve results, and together we decide on future steps" (Document J, n.d.-b). Another report adds with regards to public-private partnerships:

> "A partnership cannot flourish in vacuum. (…) Expanding the project requires the partnerships to move beyond the individual companies themselves. The enabling environment, the government and related civic actors and the business sector all need to be strengthened to grow and succeed" (Document D, n.d.).

As these quotes brings in the discussion of the involvement of the private sector again, it is good to note that the belief in progress through cooperation often seems to be coupled with a confidence in market mechanisms. Various NGOs explicitly state the importance of collaboration with the private sector in various manners, with the goal to ensure that projects have long-term impacts and are also sustainable without NGO support. While these are noble objectives, it may result in less desirable outcomes, as already touched upon above. For instance, one organisation that is very much focused on involving the private sector employs a certain 'trickle down' mechanism in its projects, starting to promote economic growth in the national agricultural sector at large. Therefore, this organisation targets only the 'best farmers' – large- or medium-sized, motivated entrepreneurial and not extremely poor – in their CA promotion, as these are only able to adopt CA at this moment. Although the organisation itself beliefs that these economic mechanisms will gradually include all members of society, including the poorest, many critical development theorists and economists have critiqued such a thesis (Escobar, 2015; Lewis & Kanji, 2009; van Lieshout et al., 2009).

Indeed many other organisations are much more cautious with such an economistic approach to development projects and most of them belief that promoting smallholder agriculture is the

foundation of overall development. One organisation writes about small-scale farmers: "They are crucial in building sustainable, inclusive regional food systems" (Document A, n.d.-a). One respondent states about his personal motivation: "I really believe that agriculture is a foundation block to change. So if I am given the opportunity to preach agriculture, I encourage people to use agriculture and not run away from agriculture" (Respondent E, 2017). Thus besides private actors, smallholder farmers can also be identified to be the agents who are at the basis of progress.

Synthesis: Progress can be explicitly represented in thinking about strategies for action in terms of the end goal that the project(-country) has to reach – e.g. with regards to gender emancipation. For some organisations the private sector is the catalysing actor in this process, for others the emphasis should be on smallholder farmers. Progress may relate to the ideal-type of the constrained farmers.

5.2.4 Flexibility

The final ideal-type of projects is arguably the most positive. As it centred around the idea of flexible interventions that are not entirely fixed at forehand, it is contradictory to the superior strategies for action in 6.4.2. On the other hand, it is related to the interpretation of 'the engaged Self'. When interpreting projects in this way, people start to make nuances about their promotion of CA. For instance, as mentioned above, some organisations let farmers experiment themselves with the principles of CA on their fields or they introduce techniques that have been effective elsewhere and let farmers test them in their location. Moreover, one respondent noted: "Yes, CA is very important, but you should not see it as a magic solution. I think that we should not think that this is the silver bullet for all problems. I interpret CA as one of the many means to improve agriculture, especially in areas where people are at the bottom of society having very few resources" (Respondent H, 2017). Thus, this demonstrates a flexible interpretation of CA adoption and promotion, without strong pressures on farmers or other actors.

Interesting remarks were also made concerning gender issues. Some NGOs (or their donors) set clear percentage-norms in advance of a project, in order to ensure a high level of women participation. Other organisations are wary of such 'technical' measures. As one respondent illustrated: "Enforcing [women participation] won't work. We tried it for a long time, saying: "Ok, we want a board with 50% females". Then you have those 50% women in a meeting, but they won't open their mouth for the whole meeting. So that just does not work" (Respondent I, 2017). Another organisation working in an area in West Africa indeed aimed to have 20% women participants in a CA project, but in the first two years only 5% female participation was achieved. After a mid-term evaluation they concluded that "the contractual nature of the relationship between [the farmers'

association] and the farmers would suggest that female farmers are culturally inhibited from signing up without the approval of their husbands" (Document J, n.d.-a). Another reason was, according to the respondent from this organisation, that women did not appreciate the rule that they could only sign up for the association as a group, in particular since others had to pay the contribution if one member was not able to pay. "So for that matter, if we wanted to encourage women participation in the programme, we needed to abolish the group system", he concluded. They did, and subsequently women participation increased significantly. Thus, organisations that learn from past approaches and are able to adjust their projects based on that – i.e. through adaptive programming – can expect improved results.

A final issue that relates to this flexible interpretation of projects is co-creation, working together with partners, local governments and intended beneficiaries during the project. Various organisations emphasise this as an important feature of the whole process, from needs assessment to final evaluation. Respect and acknowledging each other's responsibilities is a precondition in this approach, as noted by one organisation. This reveals something of the connection between project flexibility and engagement with the Other. Moreover, one organisation developed an intervention strategy by bringing the local community into contact with local land owners initiating discussion on questions such as 'How can we together realise something in this area in terms of agricultural production?' What are the roles of different actors in this? Another respondent further explained:

> "One important part of the whole process is awareness, change takes place in the context in which people live. (…) So having discussions on: Which resources do you have and how are you going to make optimal use of them for the well-being of the whole community? On the basis of that, decisions must be made on individual basis and on village level. (…) So we work on developing a vision on household level and (…) on village level by which integrated plans are created on both levels" (Respondent C, 2017).

Similarly, these flexible type of projects emphasise the value of relations with local government officials and try to involve them in the program. "When we start somewhere it is important that we have all these parties at the table. So that we know what the rules are in an area. Actually, we never really impose things" (Respondent A, 2017). Again, the aim to refrain from imposing issues relates to the ideal-type of engagement with intended beneficiaries.

Synthesis: Flexibility is recognised in the perception of CA as just one of the many agricultural options, a strong emphasis on learning from past approaches (e.g. to gender) and a co-creative character throughout the course of the project. The ideas often relate to the engaged Other.

5.3 Conclusion: the Self and Strategies for action

In this chapter we have discussed several typologies of the Self and strategies for action from the perspective of NGOs themselves. The Self included the superior, the engaged and the responsible. In the first interpretation of the the Self, NGOs' own ideas seem to suppress the norms and customs of their intended beneficiaries, while this is the opposite in the engaged ideal-type which emphasises respect and self-critique. The responsible Self provides moral or religious motivation for NGOs' work and causes many organisations to influence governance.

Figure 5.1 Overview of Ideal-types of Interpretation in this chapter

Strategies for action of NGOs are interpreted in four different ways, namely rationality, superiority, progress and flexibility. These are understood to be core characteristics of projects by the NGOs in this research. The first presents CA as straightforward and attempts to upscale impacts in a linear, stepwise way with the use of market mechanisms. Superiority at the core of strategies for actions puts NGOs at the top of the development cooperation pyramid, leaving little room for

Interpretation of the Self by NGOs

Engaged

Superior

Responsible

NGO-self with own norms and customs

Rationality

Flexibility

Superiority

Progress

Interpretation of strategies for action by NGOs
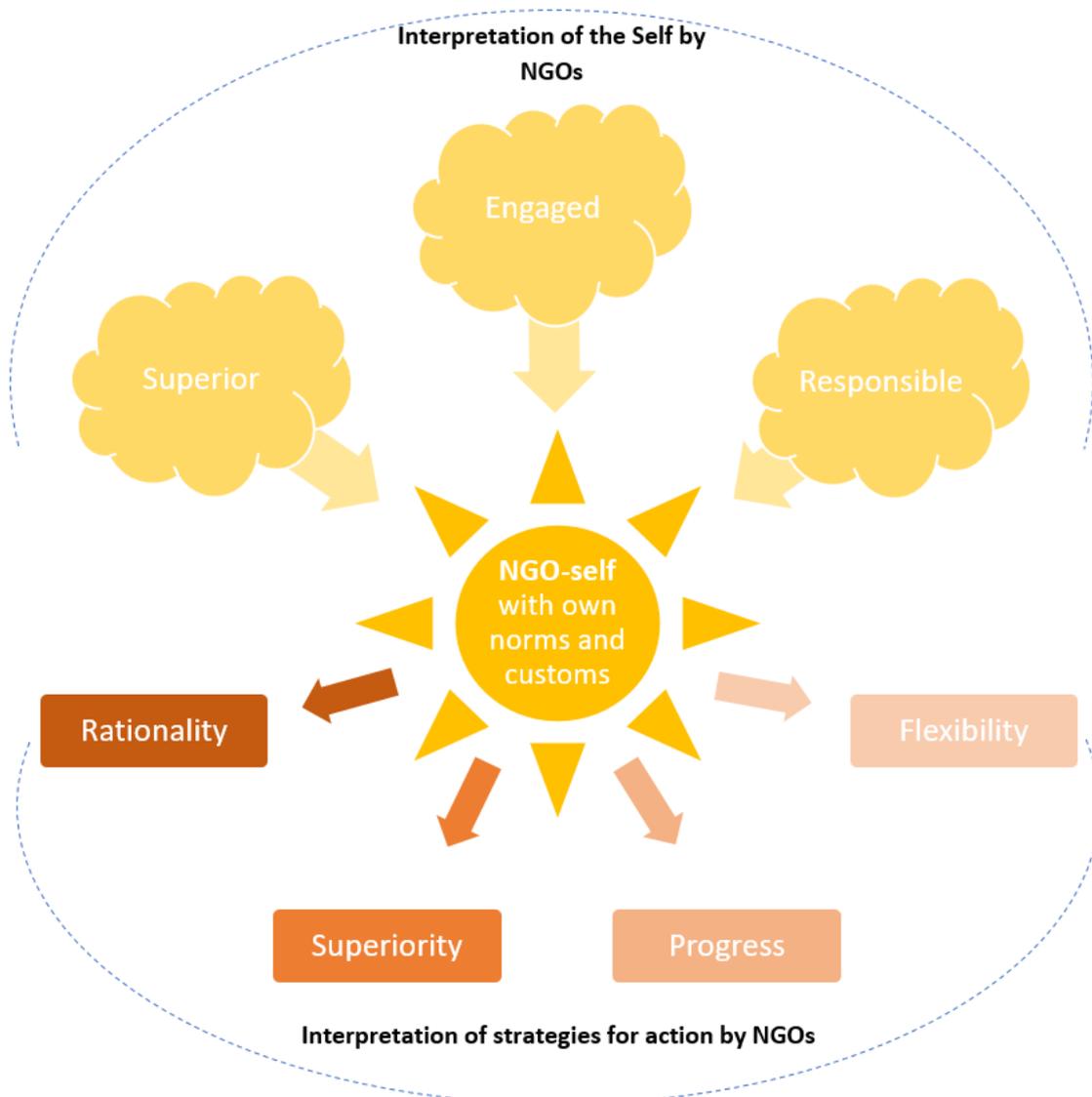
understanding context but rather emphasising the persuasion of risk averse farmers. The ideal-type of progress in projects shows that many organisations have a rather western perspective on the type of communities and economies that project-countries progress to. Flexibility instead emphasises co-creation and programme adjustments and specifically leaves room for other agricultural approaches besides CA.

Thus, over the course of the chapter we have seen what organisations see as their duties, their reasons of existence, their beliefs, attitudes towards the Other and what they regard as sound or necessary approaches to development. Similar as in the previous chapter, with regard to ethical development we encountered a complex mix of interpretations with both negative (e.g. the superior Self) and positive (e.g. flexibility in projects) tendencies. This diversity of interpretations and their non-exclusive nature can be a fruitful ground for ethical development cooperation on the level of policy as well as practice.

Finally, coming back to the question whether and how the interpretations of the Other and the images of the Self inform the strategies for action of NGOs with respect to CA, we first have to conclude that in this research no clear-cut relations could be identified. That is, no strict correlations between different ideal-types are found. However, on a more conceptual level, it can be concluded that notions such as superiority and engagement both come back in the interpretations of the Self and of the strategies for action and arguably these can also be related to how NGOs interpret the Other. For instance, the more autonomous the intended beneficiary is seen, the more the images of the engaged Self and flexible strategies for action are foregrounded. On the contrary, where conservativeness and fears are identified in the Other, the Self is regarded as superior or responsible and the project becomes more rigid. In conclusion, the diverse interpretations of the Other and the Self can indeed inform the strategies for action because of the conceptual linkages, but the typologies of interpretation are not fixed and are employed by different organisations and different persons in each organisation in distinct, perhaps ambiguous ways.

6. The Ultimate Horizons of interpretation

Following the analysis and discussion of the interpretations of the Other and the Self with the strategies for action, we now move on to examine the ultimate horizons of interpretation of the diverse NGOs in this research. As noted in the theoretical introduction of this notion in paragraph 2.3, this notion refers to the idea that everyone interprets the world around him/her along a certain horizon. In principle, this ultimate horizon is a central and final point of reference which provides meaning to interpretations and strategic choices on the more practical level. Thus, even when NGOs see CA as a 'neutral' effective technique to be promoted amongst their intended beneficiaries, the way in which they design such an intervention is influenced by their interpretation of the ultimate – or to use Hoksbergen's (1986) terminology: . Therefore, in this chapter we provide a meta-analysis[39] of NGOs' interpretations of the Other – including norms and customs – and of the Self – including strategies for action. The ten organisations in this research can be linked to one of the following three ultimates: Economic Prosperity, Human Autonomy, or (the Christian) God. Below we will show how these concepts are grounded in the research data by means of quotations, while we also provide some conceptual linkages[40] to the ideal-types of interpretations presented above.

6.1 Economic Prosperity

Two of the organisations that were interviewed clearly have economic prosperity as their ultimate horizon of interpretation. Typically, these organisations evaluate all issues, from norms and customs of the Other to the strategic actions of the Self, in economic terms. As in the ideal-type of the autonomous farmer, this ultimate horizon assumes business reasoning to be at the heart of a farmer's life and central in development. What is more, beyond farming – which arguably is economically qualified – they also interpret other aspects of their beneficiaries' lives, such as gender or education, to be serving economic prosperity (Document D, n.d.; Document J, n.d.-b). Consequently, these organisations frame successfulness of their projects in terms of financial sustainability, as shown by the following quote:

> "So we have to set [the project] up in such a way that when [we] do not put money in
> it anymore, it survives. That's real development. If you're talking about a project in

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[39] That is, this analysis did not follow the stepwise methodology which served as the basis of the previous chapters. Since the ultimate horizon is on a very 'basic' level, such a structured way of analysis would not make sense. Still, as seen by the quotes that are also used in this chapter, the aim was to stay as close to the collected data as possible. These quotes, however, are not all new as they may be mentioned above in this thesis, which in fact shows the linkages between the ultimate horizons of interpretation and intepretations at a more practical level.

[40] Similar to the conclusions in the previous chapter, it is to be noted that these references to the ideal-types above are not fixed linkages that are true for every organisation. Rather, it is argued how the ultimate horizons are connected to the ideal-types on a conceptual level.

> which you have to keep putting money because otherwise it dies, it doesn't do
> anything good we think" (Respondent D, 2017)

Moreover, the impacts which these organisations want to realise are not necessarily on the level of the individual but on national or international economic level. This is shown by the vision of one of the organisations, which refers to 'resource production', 'prosperity for all', 'farmers as providers and suppliers' and 'efficient production' (Document J, n.d.-b). As explained in section 4.2.1, the discourse is that the constrained farmer should be unlocked by such processes of economic transformation.

Thus, development for these organisations is about progressing the world towards prosperity for all and global market forces are crucial in this process. Indeed, there are certainly linkages between this understanding of the ultimate and the interpretation of strategies for action as progress. One respondent said:

> "In our programme we try to consider closely which business models can survive
> when our project ends (…) So therefore we look at how we can ensure that this
> happens in a phased manner, and we have to carefully look at the wishes of the
> companies that we are cooperating with. Because if they do something that they
> actually do not want, they will stop it when the projects ends. That's why we choose a
> step-by-step approach in this case (…)". (Respondent D, 2017)

Interestingly, the two organisations with economic prosperity as ultimate horizon seem to automatically link progress to the involvement of private companies in their visions. For example, one organisational document states: "The change we seek is a market process driven by the private sector" (Document J, n.d.-b). From the linkages to the ideal-typical images the Other, the Self and strategies for action, it can be concluded that economic prosperity is a prominent notion in the interpretations of NGOs. However, the two organisations quoted in this paragraph very prominently show that this is the reference point for all other interpretations, their ultimate horizon.

6.2 Human Autonomy

The three other secular NGOs interpret the ultimate horizon as human autonomy, which is closely connected to notions such as freedom (of choice) and independence. In this humanist understanding, everyone is free – or should be freed – to follow his/her desires and make his/her own choices. From this horizon, norms and customs are thus typically interpreted as belonging to the individual farmer, who can best decide him/herself on what to do with this in the light of CA adoption, as shown by the respondent who said: "We actually do not have one particular type of agriculture that we try to promote very much. What is paramount for us is that the farmer has as much freedom of choice as possible and governance over his own business management" (Respondent I, 2017). Evidently, this is related to the ideal-type of autonomous farmers, which emphasises these characteristics as well. Somewhat less obviously, the constrained farmer also links conceptually with this ultimate horizon, as

these farmers are still considered to be able to make choices themselves, only they should be set free from their constraining environment. This refers back to farmers' agency, which is assumed to be present in the case of the constrained farmer, but only the impeding (social) structures should be removed (see also section 4.2.3). One organisation formulated this process as follows: "We also do a lot of gender training: Just getting people think about how their own position in daily life or their political situation, both men and women" (Respondent G, 2017). This implicitly shows how the individual is stimulated to think about how his/her own environment is constraining for following personal desires.

In line with this, the organisations with the ultimate horizon of human autonomy envision the aim of development cooperation to be opening-up possibilities and enhancing freedom of choice for the Other. It focuses on engagement with the individual farmer instead of primarily on larger economic structures. On the other hand, following from the interpretation of the Other as being constrained, these humanist organisations also feel responsible to influence the government, by virtue of their commitment to unlocking the potential of their intended beneficiaries. One respondent complains: "Sometimes I think like: Guys, government, what are you doing?" (Respondent G, 2017) and another organisation writes: "Without improved advocacy skills, organisation, and local political decision-making, vulnerable farmers may be unable to successfully demand such investments, and will remain marginalised" (Document I, n.d.). We can see very clearly here the implicit interpretation or assumption of human autonomy underlying the intervention strategies of these organisations.

6.3 (The Christian) God

Finally, the ultimate horizon of interpretation of all FBOs is God, in Whom all things originate through His creation, and to whom all things will return in the coming Kingdom. These organisations explicitly state this as their reference point for their vision, mission and their interventions: "We make Gods lifechanging Kingdom visible through banning poverty and injustice" (Document H, n.d.). As noted above, the ideal-type of the fearful farmer is represented very prominently in the interpretations of these organisations. With this ultimate horizon of interpretation their reaction to this ideal-type could then be similar to this respondent:

> "I want to see people freed from their fears, so that they can trust in God and say "Whatever happens to me, I trust in God". (…) People have to learn to make their own steps, beyond their own comfort zone. (…) I think God wants them to go through that process of fear. (…) We have to facilitate people in that complex process. (…) I think hunger is one thing, but I think that the fear in which people live has much more impact on their lives than the physical challenge". (Respondent F, 2017)

However, it should be noted in this respect that different strategies for actions and underlying ideal-typical interpretations are possible, even when organisations have the same ultimate. That is, not

every organisation with God as ultimate horizon, necessarily interprets intended beneficiaries as fearful farmers. Neither do these organisations agree on strategies for action: whereas one interprets the promotion of CA from a superior standpoint (Respondent H, 2017), others adopt a much more flexible approach (Respondent C, 2017).

Something that is uniformly recognised among FBOs is that development is about bringing (signs of) Gods Kingdom and restoring the image of God in the lives of others. This clearly relates on a conceptual level to the ideal-type of the engaged Self, as shown by this core value of an FBO: "Compassion: close to and alongside people who suffer" (Document B, n.d.). In addition, responsibility is also strongly present in the reasoning of FBOs, more specifically the idea of being responsible in the light of God's call to love and take care for others. This is shown by this quote: "A [biblical] perspective (…) urges us to advance reconciliation and restoration to its full potential, as visible signs of God's call to do justice and be faithful to those who need our support" (Document E, n.d.). Thus, the ultimate horizon of interpretation of FBOs can be conceptually connected to various ideal-types and '(the Christian) God' informs much of their interpretations.

6.4 Conclusion: the Ultimate Horizons of Interpretation

In sum, the organisations that participated in this research either have 'economic prosperity' or 'human autonomy' or '(the Christian) God' as an ultimate horizon of interpretation. These three notions are grounded in the research data and can be conceptually linked to the ideal-typical interpretations in the previous chapters. One important result of this analysis is that no strict correlations exist between the ultimate and the ideal-types of interpretation presented above, but that the combination of interpretations of the Other, the Self and the ultimate differs for each organisation. This either points to the diversity of the field of NGOs – even within the category of FBOs – or to the fact that all interpretations are (to some extent) present in each organisation[41]. Another remark, related to this, concerns the gap between discourse and practice which is evident in this chapter. For instance, while an organisation's vision and mission might clearly state that human autonomy is its major concern, their interventions might still lead to dependency, or while an FBO commits itself to (the Christian) God, this might not be visible in all of their activities.

Importantly, with regards to ethical development Hoksbergen noted in his discussion of world- and lifeviews and the ultimate understanding of 'the good' that "many (…) differences arise not because one or the other side has not carefully examined the available evidence, nor because one side or the other is infected with "false consciousness" or unscientific ideology, but because all three

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[41] The latter option here is more probable as only one person per organisation is interviewed, instead of the entire staff. The debate on validity of this method was addressed in paragraph 3.2.

approaches simply start from different premises about what life is all about and how the world is put" (Hoksbergen, 1986, pp. 296–297). Nevertheless, it is important to realise that such faith-horizons are by definition mutually exclusive as can be seen in the three ultimate horizons above. For instance, if one perceives economic prosperity to be the ultimate good within a programme, it might be the case that humans lose their autonomy (e.g. by becoming dependent on their employers) and the kingdom of God might not be served (e.g. because secularisation increases) but still it is evaluated as successful if people gain more income. Consequently, Hoksbergen (1986) concluded that conflicting understandings of the ultimate could lead to 'ideological' conflicts between organisations. However, it should be discouraged and avoided that NGOs see their own interpretation or approach as 'objective' and attempt to ignore or silence other narratives and critiques (Hoksbergen, 1986). In contrast, keeping in mind the diversity of interpretations and room for cooperation as referred to in the previous chapters, another option than mere conflict is possible: explicit recognition of different standpoints and cooperation on the basis of mutual understanding.

Figure 6.1 Overview the Three Ultimate Horizons of Interpretations of NGOs
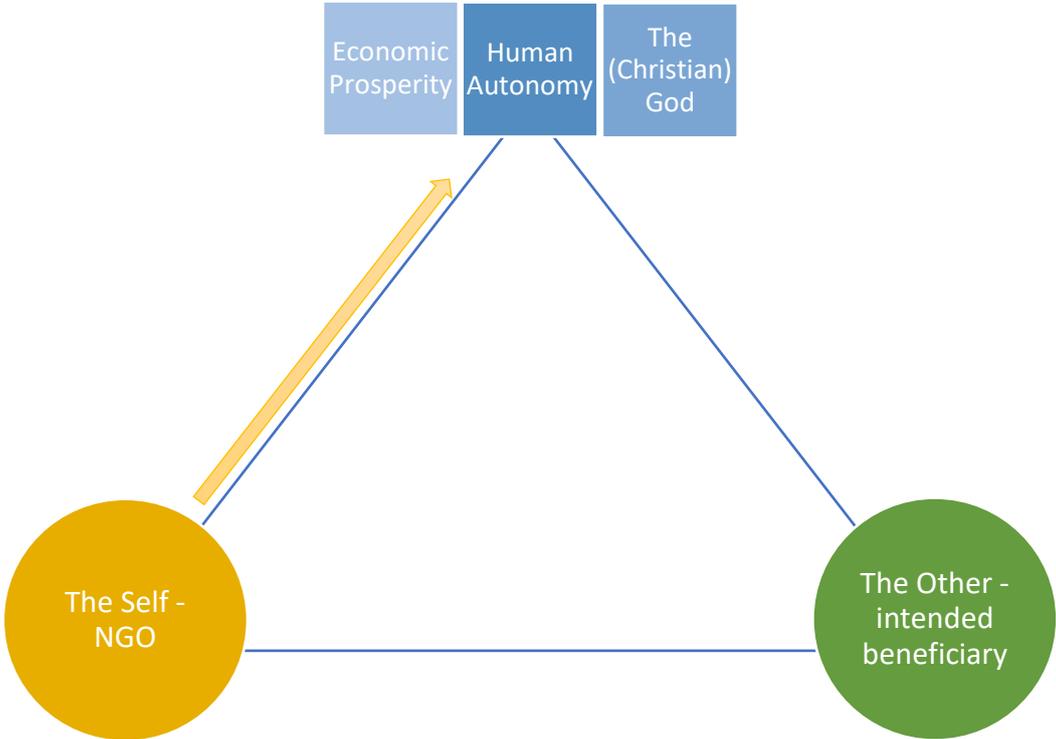
7. Conclusion and Discussion

In the last chapter of this thesis we will conclude the findings above and situate this in the context of current academic debates. Firstly, we will answer the research questions as formulated in the introductory chapter. Subsequently, we will reflect on the methods used in this thesis and discuss some strengths and limitations of this design. In the third paragraph, we provide a discussion of the content of the different ideal-types found in this study and explore how they are grounded in broader development studies literature. In doing so, we will focus on the implications of this study for ethical development, as this is one of the main objectives of this research. Thereafter, we will conclude with the respective discussion of possibilities for future research and several recommendations for development practice.

Figure 7.1 Overview of results of this research
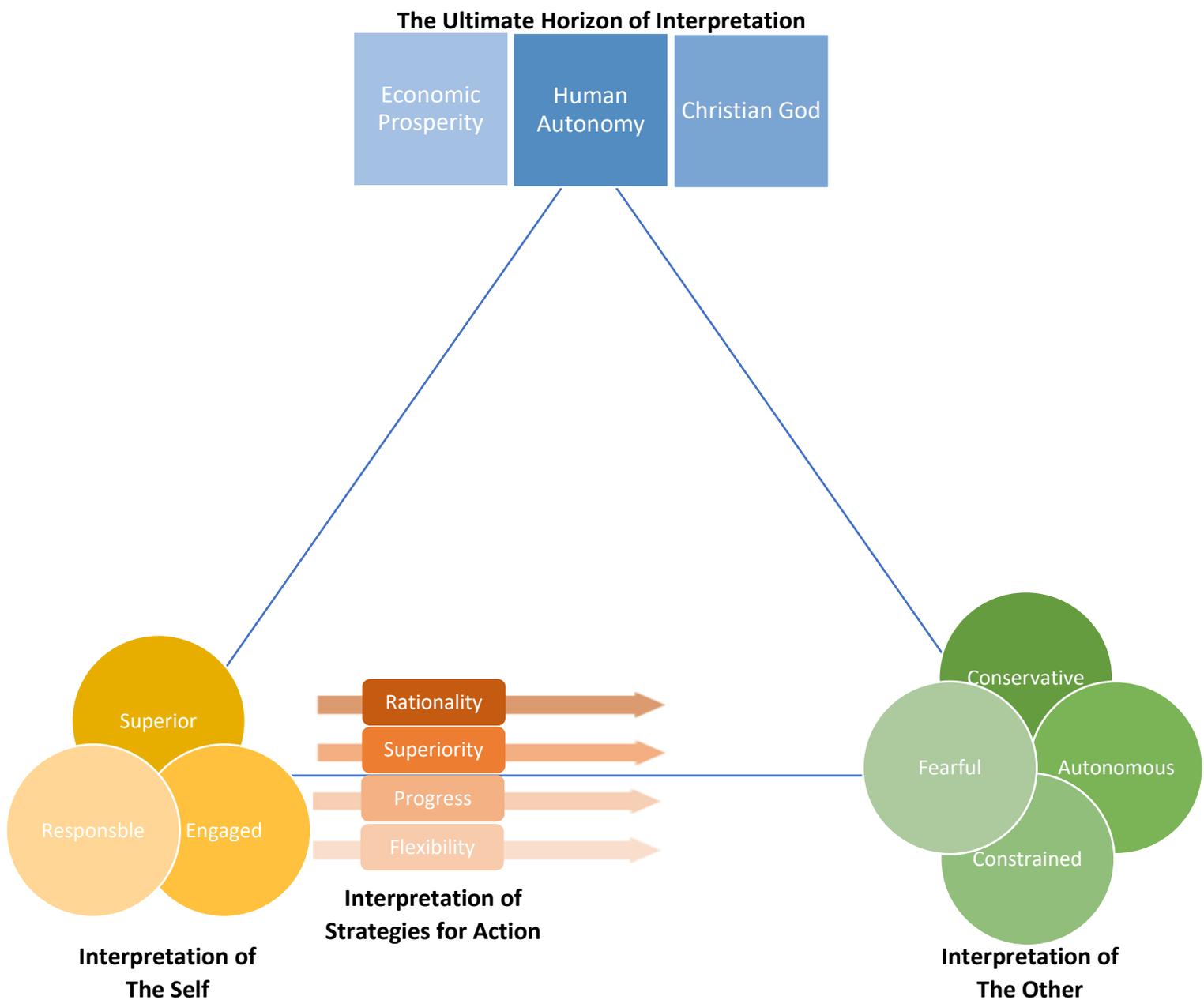
7.1 Conclusion: Answering the Research questions

In the final paragraph of the introduction the three research questions were formulated which together answer the overall question: **How do the interpretations of northern NGOs inform their strategies for action?** In this concluding paragraph we will synthesise the findings and present the overall conclusions.

In order to fully understand the conclusions that we draw here, it is good to briefly recapitulate the findings of this thesis. The first question was formulated as follows: **How do northern NGOs interpret their intended beneficiaries and their norms and customs in their promotion of CA?** Through a literature review the sub-question on relevant norms and customs in the promotion of CA was answered. This resulted in a multi-facetted view on the lifeworlds of farmers. It informed the study of NGOs' interpretations of the Other, which can be summarised in the four ideal-types: *the conservative, autonomous, constrained and fearful farmer.*

The second question to be answered was: **How do northern NGOs interpret their own position and their strategies for action with respect to the promotion of CA?** With the same methodology we discovered three ideal-typical images of the Self: *the superior, engaged and responsible NGO*. The second part of this chapter was answered with a four-legged typology of strategies for action to promote CA adoption: *rationality, superiority, progress and flexibility*.

The final question was: **What is the ultimate horizon of interpretation of NGOs in their promotion of CA?** Through a meta-analysis of the data presented in the other chapters, three 'ultimates' were defined, namely: *economic prosperity, human autonomy and (the Christian) God*. This information is depicted in figure 7.1

Turning to answering the overall question of this research, it should first be noted that strict correlations could not be identified through this research between images of the Self and the Other on the one hand, and strategies for action on the other. However, when considering the more conceptual level it can be concluded that indeed the interpretations of northern NGOs inform their strategies for action. Most clearly this is visible in the interpretation of the conservative Other, the superior Self and superiority in strategies for action. In addition, a link was identified between the autonomous farmer and flexibility in projects[42].

From these answers to the research questions it follows that a complex array of interpretations of the Other and the Self is present amongst NGOs promoting CA. As repeatedly emphasised, the ideal-types are not mutually exclusive, thus it could be that each interpretation is to some extend present in every NGO. However, interestingly, the ideal-types of interpretation are not equally presented in

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[42] Other minor conceptual relations were also identified but there is no need to repeat these conclusions here as they were mentioned in earlier concluding paragraphs.

each organisation, neither are there fixed relations between interpretations of the Other, the Self and strategies for action. In the light of ethical development, both positive and negative tendencies are identified, which provides opportunities for fundamental improvement. Moreover, despite the diversity of interpretations of the Other and the Self, room for cooperation in (ethical) development remains significant since they are not mutually exclusive, and because fixed relations amongst interpretations do not exist. This is, however, different in the case of the ultimate horizons of interpretation, which are by definition mutually exclusive and potentially conflicting. Such tensions further increase the importance of recognising and acknowledging organisational ideological backgrounds in development cooperation in order to be clear about underlying motivations. This enables organisations to foster cooperation in the areas where agreement and mutual understanding is existent. These and other recommendations will be further elaborated upon in paragraph 7.5.

7.2 Reflection on Methodology

After having drawn these conclusions, it is good to reflect on the methodological design of this research, both to acknowledge and communicate the strengths and limitations of this study and for future improvement of academic procedures. Firstly, as a research with interpretative methods this study had several strengths, most notably the in-depth study of phenomena and the so-called 'thick description' of the ideal-types (Schwartz-Shea, 2004). That is, the rich information collected by means of the interviews and document analysis was not reduced to numbers through statistical analysis but was elaborately discussed and described in the analysis chapters. Simultaneously, this was not an at random exercise as the principles of grounded theory were followed throughout the process and systematic procedures were developed as discussed in chapter 3. Importantly, the interviews were informed by a solid literature review and the data obtained could be triangulated through the text analysis. A final important strength of this research was the use of the ideal-typical methodology as this provided a clear and structured view on the complexity and diversity of interpretations present, hereby informing an (initial) ethical evaluation of these interpretations.

Nevertheless, evidently this research also contained various limitations. A first limitation was that the exact relevance and salience of the ideal-types within each organisation remains unclear. This is a result from our interpretative, non-quantitative approach as well as the focus on wider tendencies among NGOs promoting CA instead of distinguishing individual organisations. Related to this, one could ask the question whether the small amount of NGOs researched does not reduce the validity of this research or what this specific sample of organisations means for the results, but, as mentioned above, the research population of Dutch NGOs promoting CA is not large. Nevertheless, the fact that half of the researched organisations were FBOs might have had an influence on the results. Therefore

one should indeed be cautious with generalising the conclusions of this study to the entire category of Dutch development NGOs beyond those promoting CA. However, in the next paragraph we will also re-address all ideal-types by situating them in the broader development studies literature, in order to increase their validity in terms of generalisability. A last limitation could be that triangulation through participatory observation was not possible in this research. Ideally, the on the ground interaction between NGO staff and intended beneficiaries should have been observed, which was beyond the time and budget scope of this research. Alternatively, different meetings, conferences, discussions on the promotion of CA could have been attended to observe processes of interpretation in discourse. Unfortunately, not enough significant and relevant possibilities were identified during the data collection period.

Finally, the design of this research also raises new questions and opportunities for future studies. One potentially interesting option would be to conduct further in-depth research in a limited number of NGOs on the specific presence and salience of the interpretations found in this research as well as potentially additional interpretations. Such a study could use ethnographic methods with primarily participatory observation (See for instance: Schia, 2013). This will not only be valuable for these organisations but would reveal more about the daily practices and discourses and the exact ways in which interpretations lead to certain strategies for action. Another interesting design is a comparative study of NGOs' images of intended beneficiaries versus their images of partner organisations. Moreover, in order to understand the full relevance of this study, it is necessary to further research the interpretations of non-CA promoting NGOs, both organisations promoting other agricultural innovations and development NGOs in general. In sum, various different strengths, limitations and future improvements and opportunities with regards to the research design of this study were identified.

7.3 Reflection on the Ideal-types

The most relevant results of the analysis conducted in this thesis are the typologies of the Other, the Self and the strategies for action. Through the eyes of Dutch NGOs we have explored how they interpret their intended beneficiaries, themselves and their approaches to projects. In this paragraph we will reflect on each of the ideal-types, in order to situate the interpretations found amongst Dutch NGOs promoting CA, in the broader context of development studies. In addition, as noted above these ideal-types are not fixed in time and can change and can be adapted when new interactions occur, which evidences the need for a verification with literature published in the last few decades. Furthermore, in line with the principle of reflexivity it is important to provide critically reflect on findings and identify questions and opportunities for future research. Therefore, below we will discuss

each of the images of the farmers, the NGOs and their projects, by focusing on references to other development literature and critical reflection.

The conservative farmer has been discussed in this thesis in terms of risk aversion, stubbornness and community pressure. In the context of the adoption of new agricultural technologies, these attitudes and constraints are often recognised (Boone, 2016; Thierfelder et al., 2016). As Sturdy et al. note, "investing in agricultural innovations is inherently risky, particularly in semi-arid regions prone to drought or dry-spells. Farmers may be viewed as being slow or unwilling to invest in their own livelihood by development agents who do not understand the decision-making processes or investment options available to community members" (2008, p. 860). As suggested by these authors, conservative farmers do act rationally, but NGOs appear not to be able to follow the logic underlying the different priorities. In this sense, in development cooperation it is important to always keep in mind that the rationality followed by intended beneficiaries might be based on different arguments then known *a priori* by NGOs.

Secondly, the central criterion for the autonomous farmer is his/her rational reasoning, often based on economic principles, that is understandable for NGOs. Importantly, this results in more confidence and more flexible approaches. This is also reflected in farmer-centred research emphasising individual freedom instead of external guidance (de Wolf, 2009). Interestingly, this perspective on farmers can both be seen as a positive contribution to ethical development and as potentially undermining it. That is, on the one hand NGOs' awareness of the individuality of the farmer and respecting their freedom is positive, however when autonomy and rationality is only defined in economic terms this interpretation may neglect important aspects of the multi-aspectuality of farmers' lives.

The third ideal-type of the constrained farmer was slightly different as it focuses on the environment of the farmers instead of their inherent attitudes. An important reflective remark on this ideal-type is that it can also be presented in a different, more critical way. When taking a critical (post)structuralist perspective, the 'constraints' might be identified as evidence for oppressive structures and power imbalances. To some extent this could indeed be recognised in the interpretations of NGOs in quotes such as: "It is about dominance. I think that men try to be sort of dominant (…). There are many women who are submissive to their men – if I may say so. (…) That has grown a bit into the African system" (Respondent H, 2017). Another respondent spoke about 'the global power game' which inhibits equal development and the fact that smallholders often do not profit from private investments in agriculture (Respondent I, 2017). However, we can still conclude that the interpretation of the constrained farmer is predominant among the majority of NGOs. Moreover, this type of farmer is often referred to in academic literature both with regards to CA (Andersson & Giller, 2012; Naudin et al., 2012; Scheba, 2017) and development in general (Long, 1997;

Long & Van der Ploeg, 1989, p. 228; Olivier De Sardan, 2004; Pretty, 2011). In addition, the image of the constrained farmer links to the interpretation of strategies for action in terms of progress, through which NGOs aim to unlock the potential of farmers. Finally, as gender was identified as an important constraint, the 2011 FAO report on 'The state of food and agriculture' mentioned: "Women are farmers, workers and entrepreneurs, but almost everywhere they face more severe constraints than men in accessing productive resources, markets and services" (2011, p. 3). This indicates that gender relations are indeed important in this respect, implying that this deserves attention in development interventions, in particular those targeted at agricultural innovations.

The final ideal-type of the intended beneficiaries in CA promotion was the fearful farmer. While arguably this image of farmers is underrepresented in academic literature, various authors refer sideways to these issues of fear, faith, religion and 'traditional beliefs' (B. Jones & Petersen, 2011; Long, 2001; Olivier De Sardan, 2004). Some others have discussed these more specifically, most notably Erica Bornstein in her book 'The Spirit of Development: Protestant NGOs, Morality, and Economics in Zimbabwe'. She states, "in an African religious context, faith is a form of power: not to be taken lightly, often to be feared, and sometimes to be called upon for assistance" (2003, p. 7). An example of the role of fear and faith in CA promotion can be found in Boone (2016) who emphasises their role in farmers' networks. In addition, in the current research the relevance of this interpretation is manifested in the fact that also secular NGOs recognise issues such as traditional beliefs and widespread adherence to world religions. Therefore, as Ellis and Ter Haar argued (2004), it is still necessary to further integrate thinking about religion into development studies. More particularly, as Rademaker and Jochemsen (n.d.) argue, it is important to move beyond discussing instrumental uses of faith and religion, by acknowledging the role of ultimate horizons of interpretation present in every (development) practice. After having reflected upon thee four interpretations of the Other found in this research, it could theoretically be possible that more ideal-types are present amongst NGOs, which could be researched in a theoretical exercise with the theory of modal aspects as a framework. However, this moves beyond the scope of this thesis to discuss in detail.

Following the images of the Other, three ideal-typical interpretations of the Self were identified. The first of these was the superior NGO, manifested in (potential) cultural impositions from the Western side. This image can both be found in in-depth ethnographical studies on development encounters (Eriksson Baaz, 2005; S. Rist, Chiddambaranathan, Escobar, & Wiesmann, 2006), and in more structural analyses of international development cooperation (Escobar, 2015; G. Rist, 2007). Although the paragraph on the superior Self addressed mostly gender issues identified in the interviews and documents, other issues can be mentioned as well. Eric Posner (2016), for instance, argues that human rights approaches in development often carry implicitly western notions. While this might not be true in every case of human rights incorporation into development programmes, it is a

danger that through such ideas, carrying strong beliefs concerning freedom, life and the individual, local views and convictions are too easily set aside as outdated, inferior and bad. In general, this reminds us that no development intervention is neutral, even if it is seen as strongly technical.

The next image of the Self was characterised by engagement, explicitly referred to in the language about respect and tolerance – a language that is very familiar to NGOs. This is indeed recognised as one of the potential strengths of NGOs, while also being critically assessed on the quality of this engagement (Kamruzzaman, 2012; Mansuri & Vijayendra, 2013; Pretty, 2011). With Giri and Van Ufford (2004), we note that engagement with the Other is closely related to a critique or 'care of the Self'. From a Levinasian ethics standpoint these authors note that engagement "involves practices of self-cultivation including spiritual mobilization of self and society" as well as "looking up to the face of the other". Because of this inherent connection between engagement and self-critique, we did not include a separate ideal-type of the 'critical Self'. This does not mean that critical self-reflection is absent amongst NGOs as shown by the NGO employee who ironically stated: "Enforcing [women participation] won't work. We tried it for a long time, saying: "Ok, we want a board with 50% females". Then you have those 50% women in a meeting, but they won't open their mouth for the whole meeting. So that just does not work" (Respondent I, 2017). Finally, as Banks et al. conclude in their article on NGOs, states and donors: "Donor expectations and their demands for measurable outcomes within short and pre-specified time frames are ultimately incompatible with innovation, which requires a fundamentally different approach to development that is "flexible, long-term, self-critical, and strongly infused with a spirit of learning by doing" (Banks et al., 2015, p. 712). Crucially, such an approach or organisational culture should not only be heard in the discourses of NGOs, but also be fundamentally embedded in their strategies for action.

The final interpretation of the Self concerns a sense of responsibility, towards God, nature or the Other. Because of the FBO's in the research sample the first is not surprising, whereas the second can be related to the increasing impacts of climate change and the last is a general human concern present among development NGOs. Important with this ideal-type of the Self is the way in which it is acted upon in terms of strategies for action. On the one hand, it can be the core of an ethical engagement with the Other, then it should involve responsibility for 'self-cultivation' as mentioned above as well (Giri & van Ufford, 2004). Contrarily, this sense of responsibility might give root to the superior imposition of the norms and customs of the Self, in the belief that the Other should become similar to the Self. This points out the importance of relating these interpretations to the strategies for action of NGOs. Thus, for a more in-depth understanding, future research could focus on the sense of responsibility of NGOs (or their employees) and specifically trace the connection to strategies and actions. The interpretations of strategies for actions, reflected upon below, found in this research could serve as input for these investigations.

The first ideal-type of strategies for action was that of a rational project, in which logical reasoning, market forces and linear upscaling are central. In fact, such an interpretation of development interventions have their roots in modernisation theory, popular in the period following the Second World War (Dawson, Martin, & Sikor, 2016; Hulme, 2013; B. Jones & Petersen, 2011). Due to fierce criticism towards this modernisation thinking, few NGOs will literally acknowledge their modernisation approach or beliefs. Still many refer to step-by-step intervention models, which are implicitly based on similar assumptions. With regards to ethical development, whereas it might be effective and efficient in a certain (short-term) sense to have this reasoning underlying projects, it also carries inherent dangers. For instance, the linear trajectory of development processes is questioned considerably in much academic literature (Jakimow, 2016; Manfre et al., 2013; Myers, 2011; Olivier De Sardan, 2004; Wall et al., 2013). As Long and Van der Ploeg already noted in 1989, the linear model from policy idea to an achieved outcome "is a gross over-simplification of a much more complicated set of processes which involves the reinterpretation or transformation of policy during the implementation process". Similarly, the crucial role of market forces to achieve impacts is debated (Mansuri & Vijayendra, 2013; Sumberg, Thompson, & Woodhouse, 2012). This is made explicit in the extreme definition of 'development' by Gilbert Rist: "the general transformation and destruction of the natural environment and of social relations in order to increase the production of commodities (goods and services) geared, *by means of market exchange*, to effective demand" (2007, p. 488 emphasis added).

Secondly, we encountered the superior strategies for action, emphasising rigidity and fixedness of projects, adhering to the project plan. Many of the criticisms to rationality also apply to superiority in development interventions (Giller, Witter, Corbeels, & Tittonell, 2009; Pouw et al., 2017; van Niekerk, 2005). Importantly, such practices are in great contrast to the language of the engaged Self and the autonomous Other. Considering this discrepancy, it might be suspected that (back)donor money or internal structures strongly influence the extent to which northern NGOs truly reckon with the norms and customs of their intended beneficiaries. For instance, when money is accepted to increase adoption of CA with twenty per cent, institutional pressure is established to do so, no matter what farmers do, think, feel or believe. While much research is done on an institutional level about aid financing and the power dynamics related to that (Banks et al., 2015; Elbers & Arts, 2011; Kamruzzaman, 2012), future research could incorporate ethnographic data on the ways in which this influences individual persons – on management and implementation level – to make strategic decisions (see for an example: Mosse, 2013).

The third ideal-typical interpretation of strategies for action was progress, typically moving forward toward some end goal or desired society. Early examples of such reasoning can be found in Rostow's economic model of 'stages of growth' – starting with traditional societies progressing

towards high mass consumption (Rostow, 1960). However, as evidenced by this thesis – reinforcing other literature (see for instance: Bornstein, 2003; Long, 2001) – understanding development as an evolutionary, teleological process is not only present in economic development, but also relates to norms and customs of intended beneficiaries. Interestingly, how the future image is coloured depends on the NGOs' ultimate horizon of interpretation. However, this ideal-type is not about the content specifically, but concerns the way in which the process of a project, in this case CA promotion, is interpreted. Indeed, in a conceptual sense it is closely related to and critiqued in similar ways as the superior and rational strategy for action, while at the same time being fundamentally different as NGOs in this research emphasised the crucial role of partnerships, as well as long-term efforts, thereby acknowledging the complexity of development processes.

Flexibility in strategies for action is the last ideal-type to be discussed. Being linked to ideas of adaptive programming and co-creation, this interpretation most closely adheres the hopeful discourses about how development interventions should be planned (Mansuri & Vijayendra, 2013). This is what Pouw et al. concluded in their research on participatory assessment of development interventions, namely: "'Good' agencies are perceived to have a long-term commitment, take their time, dare to experiment, and dare to fail, and they are characterized as honest and dependable. (…) They are *flexible* and can change from a structural to a more disaster-oriented approach when the need arises (…)" (2017, p. 54 emphasis added). Future research could therefore focus on revealing ways in which these agencies and their flexible approaches can overcome the (perhaps donor-driven) attitudes of superiority and rationality in projects. In this way, a dialogue should be started on questions concerning goal-rationality, quick win projects and top-down accountability.

From this paragraph it can be concluded that each of the ideal-types is backed up by academic literature on development cooperation or NGOs specifically. Throughout this discussion the specifications of the ideal-types were further clarified by underscoring how they differentiate from each other (e.g. rationality, superiority and progress). In addition, their implications for ethical development were explored and possibilities for future research were suggested. For purposes of clarity, in the next two paragraphs we will respectively provide concrete recommendations for future research in development studies and ethical development practice. Finally, it is good to reiterate that this study did not primarily aim to investigate the interpretations of particular individual organisations, rather to discover the overall tendencies. In doing so, it serves as a starting point for further research and improved practices of NGOs and simultaneously provides insights in NGOs' current interpretations of intended beneficiaries of CA promotion.

7.4 Recommendations for Future Research

Multiple suggestions for further research have been mentioned already in this chapter, both with regards to improved research design and for more insights into the ethics of development. In this paragraph we will point out six important recommendations that will contribute to the formulation of an ethics of development.

Ultimate horizon: A theme which has not yet been discussed elaborately in this concluding chapter are the ultimate horizons of interpretation. Still, for further research it is important to acknowledge the way in which often 'hidden' ultimates can inform or determine the content of the concrete interpretations of organisations. Therefore, we suggest with philosopher Geertsema (2000) that the interpretation of the Other and the Self, in any context, should not be disconnected from the ultimate horizon of interpretation.

Faith and religion in development cooperation: To discuss the role of faith and religion in development interventions it is important to move beyond studying instrumental uses. Relating to the previous recommendation, it should be acknowledged that each organisation or practice has an underlying horizon of interpretation or faith aspect. Therefore future research could focus on identifying a broader spectrum of ultimates amongst development NGOs and subsequently investigate how they inform practice.

Sense of responsibility: In a similar vein NGOs' or their employees' sense of responsibility could be studied more in-depth. As mentioned above, such research should trace the connection to strategies and actions. The interpretations of strategies for actions, reflected upon below, found in this research could serve as input for these investigations.

Partners: Further research should also study the linkages between NGOs' images of intended beneficiaries and their images of partner NGOs in southern countries. Such research could have a similar design as this research, but more specifically aim for the interpretations of partner organisations.

In-depth ethnography: One very insightful study would be to conduct further in-depth research in a limited number of NGOs on the specific presence and salience of the ideal-types found in this research and potentially other interpretations. Such a study should use ethnographic methods with primarily participatory observation (See for instance: Mosse, 2013; or Schia, 2013). This will not only be valuable for these organisations but would reveal more about the daily practices and discourses and the exact ways in which interpretations lead to certain strategies for action.

Money-driven accountability: With a similar research design, focusing on ethnography amongst development NGOs, more insights could be gained in the way in which accountability is driven by financial incentives. When conducting a study on management and implementation level, it is

possible to trace the way in which (back)donor money travels through organisation (levels) and influences (or not) strategic choices.

To sum up the discussion of this study: future research should combine the in-depth, embedded study of images of interpretation and ultimate horizons, with the way in which these inform and are informed by the structural components of development cooperation.

7.5 Recommendations for Development Practice

Finally, we turn to the implications of this study for NGOs and development practitioners. Various recommendations have already been touched upon, however below we will address five specific points for consideration or improvement.

Acknowledge multi-aspectuality: With regards to CA promotion specifically, it is of crucial importance to acknowledge the wide range of aspects of farmers' lives that are influenced when adopting CA.

Encourage the positive, suppress the negative: As noted in the concluding paragraph 7.1, the ideal-typical interpretations have both positive or negative tendencies. One task for NGOs is to recognise these in their own organisations – among staff and particularly strategies for action – and actively work towards enlarging the positive sides while diminishing the negative.

Care of the Self: A prerequisite for the first recommendation, as well as for ethical development in general, is to adopt a self-critical attitude. That means to not only care for the Other (i.e. intended beneficiary), but also include the side of the Self (i.e. the NGO and western society). Only in this way moral responsibility for ethical development is taken serious.

Cooperate: In case ultimate horizons of interpretations (economic prosperity, human autonomy or (the Christian) God) are mutually exclusive, this does not imply that cooperation in practice becomes impossible. Moreover, this research shows how the interpretations of NGOs (of the Self and the Other) can serve as a common ground for cooperation. An example of this is the 'engaged Self' which is strongly present in the interpretations of both humanist and faith-based organisations. Importantly, an enabling factor in such partnerships can be the two-way acknowledgment of organisational ideological backgrounds, in order to recognise each other's underlying motivations.

Flexibility despite donor pressure: In the context of development cooperation which is often donor-driven, NGOs should aim to reconcile flexible approaches with the strong directives of donors. Hereby they can overcome the attitudes of superiority and rationality in projects and a dialogue could start on questions concerning goal-rationality, quick-win projects and top-down accountability.

In sum, this research can be a starting point for a critical self-assessment by NGOs which, together with more in-depth and embedded research, can advance the ethics of development cooperation.

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9. Appendices

Appendix 1: List of literature reviewed

Table 9.1 shows that literature that was reviewed for the content of the literature research in paragraph 4.1. It shows the names of authors of the documents and in what way these were found.

Table 9.1 Literature Research: Forward and Backward Referencing

	Author of document	Found through:
1	Andersson, J. A., & D'Souza, S. (2014).	Scopus (norm*)
2	Grabowski, P., & Haggblade, S. (2016).	Scopus (norm*)
3	Lalani, B., Dorward, P., & Holloway, G. (2017)	Scopus (norm*)
4	Lalani, B., Dorward, P., Holloway, G., & Wauters, E. (2016).	Scopus (norm*)
5	Moore, K. M., Lamb, J. N., Sikuku, D. N., Ashilenje, D. S., LakerOjok, R., & Norton, J. (2014)	Scopus (norm*)
6	Sumner, D., Christie, M. E., & Boulakia, S. (2017)	Scopus (norm*)
7	Van Hulst, F. J., & Posthumus, H. (2016).	Scopus (norm*)
8	Scheba, A. (2017)	Scopus (custom*)
9	Ndah, H. T., Schuler, J., Uthes, S., Zander, P., Traore, K., Gama, M.-S., … Corbeels, M. (2014).	Scopus (value*)
10	Umar, B. B., Aune, J. B., Johnsen, F. H., & Lungu, I. O. (2013)	Google Scholar (norm)
11	Amelia, D. F., Kopainsky, B., & Nyanga, P. H. (2014).	Google Scholar (norm)
12	Farnworth, C. R., Baudron, F., Andersson, J. A., Misiko, M., Badstue, L., & Stirling, C. M. (2016)	Google Scholar (norm)
13	Knowler, D., & Bradshaw, B. (2007).	Google Scholar (norm)
14	Knowler, D. (2015)	Google Scholar (norm)
15	Wall, P. C., Thierfelder, C., Ngwira, A., Govaerts, B., Nyagumbo, I., & Baudron, F. (2013).	Google Scholar (norm)
16	Umar, B. B. (2013)	Google Scholar (norm)
17	Andersson and Giller (2012).	Forward: (Andersson and D'Souza 2014)
18	Baudron, F., Andersson, J., Corbeels, M., & Giller, K. (2012).	Forward: (van Hulst and Posthumus 2016)
19	Boone, N. (2016).	Forward: (Andersson and D'Souza 2014)
20	FAO. (2011). The state of food and agriculture. Rome.	Forward: (Amelia et al. 2014)
21	Giller, K., Andersson, J., Corbeels, M., Kirkegaard, J., Mortensen, D., Erenstein, O., & Vanlauwe, B. (2015)	Forward: (Lalani et al. 2017)
22	Apina, T., Wamai, P., Mwangi, P., & Okelo, K. (2007)	Forward: (Wall et al. 2016)
23	Tittonell, P., & Giller, K. (2013)	Forward: (Lalani et al. 2013)
24	Halbrendt, J., Gray, S. A., Crow, S., Radovich, T., Kimura, A. H., & Tamang, B. B. (2014)	Forward: (Sumner et al. 2017)
25	Ohja, Paudel, Banjade, McDougall, & Cameron, 2009	Forward: (Andersson and D'Souza 2014)
26	Hachiboola, P. (2016)	Backward: (Umar et al. 2011)
27	Baudron, F., Jaleta, M., Okitoi, O., & Tegegn, A. (2014).	Backward: (Knowler and Bradshaw 2007)

Appendix 2: Example of interpretative analysis

This appendix serves as an example of the interpretative analysis that was at the basis of the ideal-types presented in this thesis. The table shows various stages of the process, starting with the coding of the interviews on the right and the interpretative analysis in the left columns. This table shows the codes associated with the interpretation of 'the Other', a similar excel-file was generated with the interpretation of 'the Self'.

Interpetative analysis in different phases. Analysis was done from right to left, from specific to more general labels.					Counts in various interview(s) (categories)														Coding in Atlas.ti
Core-label	Topic / Sublabel	How do NGOs interpret Other + norms/customs	("Dimension")	Explanation ("lading")	TOTALS:	Counts interviews	Counts NGO	Counts FBO	A	G	J	D	I	H	B	C	E	F	Code (ATLAS.ti: Normal code (see Code comments for explanation)
Attitudes	Integrative	Attitudes supportive	Integration	Farmer approaches things from different angles (family, agriculture, other income)	1	1	1	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	AGRI: Farmer thinks integrated
Techniques	CA promotion	Techniques are not logical	Not consistent	Farmers are not consistent in following (all) CA principles	5	3	1	2	0	1	0	0	0	2	0	0	2	0	AGRI: Farmers are not consistent in following (all) CA principles
Techniques	CA promotion	Techniques are backward	Not technically sound	In the technical sense farmers are not farming in a good way	5	2	0	2	0	0	0	0	0	3	0	0	0	2	AGRI: Farmers are not good farmers (technically)

Attitudes	Adaptation	Attitudes supportive	High Adaptation capacity	Farmers are ready to change quickly and can adapt (towards CA)	2	2	1	1	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	1	0	AGRI: Farmers have high adaptation capacity
Techniques	Field	Techniques are not logical	Clean field	Farmers want a clean field, besides issues of burning (crop retention is not in line)	2	2	1	1	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	1	0	AGRI: Farmers want a clean field (in general)
Techniques	**CA promotion**	**CA constraint**	**Mulching is difficult to promote, negative effects**	**It is difficult to persuade farmers about the use of mulch because it also has negative effects.**	**9**	**6**	**3**	**3**	**0**	**2**	**2**	**0**	**1**	**1**	**2**	**0**	**1**	**0**	**AGRI: Mulch practice is difficult to promote**
Economy	Results of CA	CA constraint	Slow	CA is only really beneficial after a few years of practicing it	2	2	2	0	0	0	1	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	AGRI: Slow results of CA
Techniques	Burning	Community restrictive	Social norm – encourage	Burning is socially accepted and assumed to be good, necessary by community	3	2	1	1	0	0	0	0	2	0	0	0	0	1	Burning: is the norm - people WANT it
Techniques	**Burning**	**Techniques are backward**	**Sign of backwardness**	**Burning is a sign of non-advanced farming**	**4**	**4**	**2**	**2**	**0**	**0**	**1**	**0**	**1**	**1**	**0**	**0**	**0**	**1**	**Burning: sign of backwardness**
Techniques	**Burning**	**Techniques are logical**	**Simple / workable solution**	**Burning is just a way to cope with weeds, animals**	**8**	**6**	**3**	**3**	**0**	**1**	**1**	**0**	**1**	**2**	**1**	**0**	**0**	**2**	**Burning: simple/workable solution**
Techniques	Burning	Community supportive	Social constraint - discourage	Burning is not accepted by community	2	2	1	1	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	Burning: social constraint to burn
Economy	Livestock	Livestock logical	Conflict increase	Conflicts (e.g. arable VS livestock) increase because of pressure of climate (e.g. diff rains)	1	1	1	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	Climate Change: Livestock vs. Arable conflicts increase due to Climate Change
Social relations	Community	Community restrictive	Community centred (conform)	Farmers want to conform to the norm of the community (even when it means being poorer)	2	2	1	1	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	1	CULT: conformity belief
Attitudes	Proud	Attitudes supportive	Proud to practice CA	Farmers are proud when they practice CA (e.g. see it as modern farming)	2	2	1	1	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	CULT: Farmer proud to practice CA

Category	Subcategory	Type	Label	Description															Final
Attitudes	**Pragmatism (cost/benefit)**	**Attitudes supportive**	**Pragmatic Agricultural choices**	**Farmers are pragmatic in their choice**	10	4	2	2	0	0	0	2	2	0	4	2	0	0	**CULT: Farmers are Pragmatic**
Attitudes	**Stubborn**	**Attitudes restrictive**	**Stubbornness in general**	**Farmers are seen as stubborn**	7	6	3	3	2	0	0	1	1	1	0	0	1	1	**CULT: Farmers are stubborn**
Attitudes	**Focus in life**	**Attitudes restrictive**	**Short term focus**	**Farmers think about the short term consequences, income etc.**	5	4	2	2	0	0	0	1	2	0	0	1	1	0	**CULT: Farmers have short term focus**
Social relations	**Community**	**Community restrictive**	**Following Others**	**NGOs say that farmers continue their forefathers' (or others) practices without evaluation**	7	5	3	2	1	0	0	1	1	2	0	0	0	2	**CULT: farming as their forefathers did / others do**
Attitudes	Inferiority complex	Attitudes restrictive	Idea of inferiority hampers CA adoption	Farmers do not adopt CA because they feel they cannot do it, white supremacy/own inferiority	4	2	1	1	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	3	CULT: Inferiority complex --> No belief in CA / No adoption
Knowledge	Lack of knowledge	Knowledge restrictive	Low education results in bad practices	Because farmers have low education they do not reflect on knowledge / practices	1	1	1	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	CULT: Low Education --> No reflection/evaluation
Attitudes	Pragmatism (cost/benefit)	Attitudes restrictive	Pragmatic Economic value of relations	Farmers choose their relations on the basis of economic value	2	1	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	2	CULT: Many relations based upon economic value (FFF)
Attitudes	Focus in life	Attitudes supportive	Open minded necessary for CA	It is necessary for CA adopters to be open minded (change of life)	2	1	1	0	0	0	0	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	CULT: Open-minded of Farmer is necessary
Attitudes	**Risk Aversion**	**Attitudes restrictive**	**Only believe when they see**	**Farmers only believe new techniques when they see the result**	13	7	4	3	0	1	1	1	5	1	0	0	3	1	**CULT: Seeing is Believing (= Difficult to deal with)**
Knowledge	Traditional Knowledge	Knowledge supportive	Traditional knowledge has value	Explicitly valuing and incorporating traditional knowledge in programmes	2	1	1	0	0	0	0	0	2	0	0	0	0	0	CULT: Valuing Traditional Knowledge
Social relations	Community	Community restrictive	Jealousy hampers development	Jealousy increases fear and mistrust, diminishes cooperation, reduces development	2	2	1	1	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	1	DEVELOPMENT Jealousy <--> Fear/Mistrust --> No

																			Cooperation --> no development
Economy	CA promotion	CA constraint	Only for the best	Only the 'best' farmers are eligible for CA practices	3	1	1	0	0	0	0	3	0	0	0	0	0	0	DEVELOPMENT: CA only suitable for the best Farmers
Knowledge	**Lack of knowledge**	**Knowledge restrictive**	**Knowledge necessary for progress**	**Farmers lack knowledge and progress will result from information dissemination**	**15**	**6**	**5**	**1**	**7**	**1**	**1**	**2**	**3**	**0**	**0**	**1**	**0**	**0**	**DEVELOPMENT: Progress through information dissemination / lack of knowledge**
Beliefs	Negative	Religion restrictive	Hampers Development	Religious beliefs can hamper development	3	2	2	0	0	0	1	0	2	0	0	0	0	0	DEVELOPMENT: RELI hampers development
Attitudes	Motivation	CA constraint	Should be high for CA adoption	Farmers require great motivation when adopting CA	1	1	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	ECONOMIC: CA requires great motivation to really work
Economy	Inputs	Necessary	Pragmatic: inputs necessary for upscaling	Chemical inputs seen as necessary when a farmer wants to scale up	5	3	0	3	0	0	0	0	0	1	1	0	3	0	ECONOMIC: Chemical inputs necessary when upscaling
Economy	Diversification	Resilience	No Specialisation	Farmers should diversify for resilience (not specialise for vulnerability)	1	1	1	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	ECONOMIC: Economic specialisation is bad/does not fit
Economy	Equipment	CA constraint	Equipment	Special equipments are necessary for CA adoption	2	2	2	0	0	0	1	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	ECONOMIC: equipment constraint (for CA adoption)
Techniques	**CA promotion**	**Techniques are logical**	**Freedom of choice for farmers**	**Farmers are free in to decide on own agricultural practices**	**8**	**4**	**1**	**3**	**0**	**0**	**0**	**0**	**2**	**0**	**3**	**1**	**2**	**0**	**ECONOMIC: Freedom of Choice for Farmers**
Economy	**Labour**	**CA constraint**	**Labour**	**Labour is an important constraining factor for adoption of CA (it increases a lot)**	**7**	**5**	**2**	**3**	**0**	**0**	**1**	**0**	**2**	**2**	**1**	**1**	**0**	**0**	**ECONOMIC: Labour Constraint (for CA adoption)**
Economy	Labour	CA constraint	Labour increase manual weeding	Labour demand for manual weeding will increase when no pesticides are used	4	3	2	1	0	1	1	0	0	2	0	0	0	0	ECONOMIC: Labour increase because of no pesticides
Economy	Commercial Farming	CA constraint	Maize preference	In more commercial farming, maize is preferred as it is the staple crop	2	1	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	2	0	ECONOMIC: Maize preference when getting commercial

						1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	
Economy	Commercial Farming	CA constraint	Only strong survive	In commercial farming/markets, it is about survival of the fittest	2	2	1	1	0	0	0	1	0	0	1	0	0	0	ECONOMIC: Marketing, Farmer must be Strong: Survival of the fittest
Economy	Residues	CA constraint	Residues have other value	Crop residues have value for farmers for other purposes than retention on the field.	4	3	1	2	0	0	0	0	2	0	1	0	1	0	ECONOMIC: Residues have value
Economy	**Resources/Financial**	**CA constraint**	**Resources/Financial**	**Resources / Money are an important constraining factor for adopting CA**	**7**	**4**	**1**	**3**	**0**	**0**	**0**	**2**	**0**	**0**	**2**	**2**	**1**	**0**	**ECONOMIC: Resource Constraint (for CA adoption)**
Attitudes	**Risk Aversion**	**Attitudes restrictive**	**Farmers risk aversion**	**Farmers are risk averse**	**14**	**9**	**5**	**4**	**1**	**1**	**2**	**1**	**4**	**2**	**1**	**1**	**1**	**0**	**ECONOMIC: Risk Aversion**
Attitudes	**Risk Aversion**	**Attitudes restrictive**	**Because CA is new way of life**	**Risk aversion is because CA is a new way of life**	**10**	**7**	**4**	**3**	**1**	**0**	**1**	**3**	**2**	**1**	**1**	**1**	**0**	**0**	**ECONOMIC: Risk Aversion <-- Large step, New way of life**
Social relations	Gender	Gender - Roots	Biology	Belief that gender relations and tasks are biologically determined	1	1	1	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	GENDER --> biologically determined
Social relations	**Gender**	**Gender - Roots**	**Culture**	**Gender relations are based on culture**	**12**	**8**	**4**	**4**	**0**	**2**	**1**	**2**	**1**	**1**	**1**	**3**	**1**	**0**	**GENDER --> culture**
Social relations	Gender	Gender - Roots	Education	Belief that gender relations are based on difference in education	2	2	1	1	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	GENDER --> Education
Social relations	Gender	Gender - paternalistic society	Cultural hierarchy/authority beliefs	Explaining gender issues as of societal/cultural systems of hierarchy/authority and worldviews	8	3	1	2	0	0	0	0	4	1	0	0	0	3	GENDER --> hierarchy/authoritarian/military system/worldview
Social relations	Gender	Gender - Roots	Religion	Gender relations are perceived to be influenced by religious beliefs/norms	6	2	2	0	0	0	1	0	5	0	0	0	0	0	GENDER --> RELI connection
Social relations	**Gender**	**Gender is context-specific issue**	**Context specific**	**Gender issues/relations are very dependent on the context**	**8**	**7**	**4**	**3**	**1**	**0**	**1**	**2**	**1**	**1**	**0**	**0**	**1**	**1**	**GENDER: Context Specific**
Social relations	Gender	Gender is imbalanced	Dialogue stimulated	Gender issues/relations should be improved through conversation / dialogue	3	3	1	2	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	1	GENDER: dialogue

Social relations	Gender	Gender is imbalanced	Women empowerment	Empowerment of women, leading to more confidence	4	3	1	2	0	2	0	0	0	0	0	1	1	0	GENDER: Empowerment
Social relations	**Gender**	**Gender - Family**	**Family**	**Gender issues concern the whole family**	**6**	**4**	**1**	**3**	**1**	**0**	**0**	**0**	**0**	**1**	**2**	**0**	**2**	**0**	**GENDER: Family Approach**
Social relations	Gender	Gender is context-specific issue	Free to choose participant (F/M)	Let farmers choose if man or woman joins NGO training	3	3	1	2	1	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	1	GENDER: Freedom to choose men/women participation
Social relations	Gender	Gender is imbalanced	Low position of Children	Deteriorated position of children (especially girls)	5	2	1	1	0	0	0	0	2	0	0	3	0	0	GENDER: Girls/Children position
Social relations	**Gender**	**Gender is imbalanced**	**Better balance necessary**	**Family relations are not in balance**	**15**	**8**	**3**	**5**	**3**	**1**	**0**	**0**	**2**	**1**	**2**	**1**	**3**	**2**	**GENDER: Imbalance in Family relations**
Social relations	Gender	Gender - Jealousy	Jealousy from men	Men are jealous when wifes receive training / do better	1	1	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	GENDER: Jealousy from men
Social relations	Gender	Gender - Jealousy	Bad marriages	Marriages are characterised by mistrust, fear and low cooperation	3	1	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	3	GENDER: Marriages bad <-- mistrust, fear, no cooperation
Economy	Gender	Gender is logical social construct	Different roles	It is normal and good that men and women have different roles	4	3	2	1	0	1	0	2	0	0	1	0	0	0	GENDER: Men and Women have their own role (is good)
Social relations	**Gender**	**Gender - paternalistic society**	**Men have more authority**	**Men traditionally have more authority in the family + community than women**	**8**	**5**	**3**	**2**	**0**	**2**	**1**	**0**	**3**	**1**	**0**	**0**	**0**	**1**	**GENDER: Men have more authority**
Economy	**Gender**	**Gender - paternalistic society**	**Men deal with resources/money**	**Men receive the money that is earned with agriculture**	**7**	**5**	**2**	**3**	**0**	**1**	**0**	**0**	**1**	**1**	**0**	**0**	**3**	**1**	**GENDER: men receive the money (opp. to women)**
Economy	**Gender**	**Gender - paternalistic society**	**Men income generation**	**Men work more for income generation (e.g. for cash crop farming)**	**8**	**6**	**2**	**4**	**0**	**1**	**0**	**0**	**2**	**1**	**0**	**1**	**1**	**2**	**GENDER: Men role in Income Generation (e.g. cash crops)**
Social relations	**Gender**	**Gender is imbalanced**	**Participatory approach**	**Gender issues/relations should be addressed with participatory approaches**	**6**	**4**	**2**	**2**	**2**	**1**	**0**	**0**	**0**	**0**	**2**	**1**	**0**	**0**	**GENDER: participatory methods**

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Social relations	Gender	Gender is imbalanced	Love/Care in relations promoted	Other misses love and care in relations in the family	1	1	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	GENDER: promotion of loving/caring relationships
Social relations	**Gender**	**Gender is logical social construct**	**Social construct**	**Behind (most) gender issues are social reasons**	**5**	**4**	**2**	**2**	**0**	**1**	**1**	**0**	**0**	**0**	**0**	**0**	**1**	**2**	**GENDER: Social reasons behind gender issues**
Economy	**Gender**	**Gender - paternalistic society**	**Women more labour**	**Women do more work**	**1 0**	**5**	**2**	**3**	**0**	**2**	**0**	**0**	**1**	**1**	**0**	**0**	**5**	**1**	**GENDER: women do the work (opp. to men)**
Attitudes	Gender	Gender - women are better	Women are faster adopters than men	Women adopt new techniques (CA) faster than men	3	3	1	2	1	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	1	GENDER: women faster adopters than men
Knowledge	Women's value	Gender - women have know-how	Women have more Agricultural know-how	Women's knowledge of agricultural and food security issues is valued	3	1	1	0	0	0	0	0	3	0	0	0	0	0	GENDER: Women have agri-knowledge
Economy	**Gender**	**Gender - women have different priorities**	**Priorities are different**	**Women think different and have different priorities than men (in diverse circumstances)**	**5**	**5**	**2**	**3**	**0**	**1**	**1**	**0**	**0**	**0**	**1**	**0**	**1**	**1**	**GENDER: Women have different priorities then men**
Economy	**Women's value**	**Gender - women important for food security**	**Food security**	**Women have an important role in food security**	**1 5**	**7**	**4**	**3**	**0**	**3**	**2**	**1**	**2**	**0**	**0**	**3**	**2**	**2**	**GENDER: women role in food security**
Economy	**Livestock**	**Livestock as unimportant**	**NGO values CA above Livestock**	**CA adoption is more important for NGO than owned livestock / pastoralists**	**1 0**	**7**	**4**	**3**	**3**	**1**	**1**	**0**	**1**	**2**	**0**	**1**	**1**	**0**	**LIVESTOCK: CA is more important than livestock**
Economy	Livestock	Livestock cultural	Livestock conflicts from old-times	Conflicts are often originating from very old histories	2	1	1	0	0	0	0	0	2	0	0	0	0	0	LIVESTOCK: Conflict (livestock / arable farming) is from old-times

Category	Sub 1	Sub 2	Label	Description															Notes
Economy	Livestock	Livestock logical	Initial mutual benefit	Farmers and livestock had initially mutual benefits from interaction (manure/feed)	1	1	1	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	LIVESTOCK: Interaction had initial positive effects (manure)
Attitudes	**Pragmatism (cost/benefit)**	**Attitudes supportive**	**Rationality is followed**	**Farmers follow logical, rational reasoning**	**14**	**8**	**4**	**4**	**1**	**1**	**0**	**2**	**2**	**1**	**4**	**2**	**1**	**0**	**Logic, Rational thinking (Farmers)**
Social relations	Community	Community restrictive	Weaknesses	Community and project groups downside is that it goes slow, not business-like	1	1	1	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	NGO intervention: Weakness of Project/community groups - Slow
Attitudes	Slow	Attitudes restrictive	Social and spiritual issues take more time	Social and spiritual issues take more time than learning farmers technical principles of CA (only FFF)	3	1	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	3	NGO intervention: Agri-principles are simple to train but Spiritual/RELI and Social aspects take more effort
Attitudes	Risk Aversion	Attitudes restrictive	Long term CA promotion	The way to full CA adoption is long	4	3	1	2	0	0	1	0	0	2	0	0	0	1	NGO intervention: CA promotion is a long term process
Social relations	Community	Community restrictive	Jealousy model farmer	Demo-plots / Model farmers can lead to jealousy in community	1	1	1	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	NGO intervention: Demo-plots --> jealousy
Attitudes	**Risk Aversion - cure**	**Attitudes restrictive**	**Demo-plots effective cure**	**Demo-plots are effective in promoting CA to overcome risk aversion**	**12**	**9**	**4**	**5**	**1**	**1**	**2**	**0**	**1**	**1**	**1**	**1**	**1**	**3**	**NGO intervention: Demo-plots efficient effects**
Social relations	**Community**	**Community restrictive**	**Intervention is not contained to target group**	**NGOs see an effect beyond the project in the community. either negative or positive**	**9**	**5**	**2**	**3**	**4**	**0**	**1**	**0**	**0**	**0**	**1**	**0**	**2**	**1**	**NGO intervention: Effect beyond the project**
Economy	Empowerment	Self-reliant	Economic empowerent	Farmers are empowered by intervention (economic sense) (not CA / Gender)	2	2	1	1	0	1	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	NGO intervention: Empowerment (general)
Economy	Empowerment	Poorest	Focus on empowering the poorest	Poorest farmers are the most in need	5	3	1	2	0	0	0	0	3	1	0	0	1	0	NGO intervention: focus on the poorest farmers
Economy	Inputs	Self-reliant	Critical of dependency	Giving inputs to farmers is bad for development according to NGOs	5	3	1	2	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	2	2	NGO intervention: Input support bad

			through input support																
Economy	Inputs	Farmers are dependent	Dependency	(Model) Farmers are given inputs, seen as positive	2	2	2	0	0	0	1	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	NGO intervention: Input support good
Techniques	CA promotion	Techniques are not logical	Opposite of farmers' customs	Acknowledging that NGO promotes the opposite of farmers agricultural customs	1	1	1	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	NGO intervention: promoting the opposite of agricultural customs
Social relations	**Community**	**Community supportive**	**Self-spreading**	**After initial training, the trained farmers SHOULD spread CA techniques further**	**9**	**6**	**3**	**3**	**1**	**2**	**0**	**0**	**3**	**1**	**0**	**1**	**0**	**1**		**NGO intervention: self-spreading**
Social relations	Community	Community supportive	Groups have strong autonomy	Community and project groups are a strong entity that can do a lot independently	11	3	1	2	8	0	0	0	0	0	0	2	1	0		NGO intervention: strong and Resilient Community/Project Groups
Attitudes	Trust	Attitudes supportive	Farmers should trust NGOs	Farmers should trust NGOs in adopting CA	2	1	1	0	0	0	0	2	0	0	0	0	0	0		NGO intervention: Trust is important for CA adoption
Knowledge	**Lack of knowledge**	**Knowledge restrictive**	**Practices/beliefs as stupid - unknowledgeble farmer**	**Farmers beliefs/practices are really not understood**	**16**	**7**	**3**	**4**	**4**	**4**	**0**	**0**	**1**	**3**	**0**	**1**	**1**	**2**		**Our Logic VS Their (il)logic (Incomprehensibility of farmers' beliefs/practices)**
Beliefs	Roots	Religion Close to nature - dependency	Religion Nature	Religion is explained because farmers live close to nature and are dependent on nature	4	3	1	2	0	0	1	0	0	0	1	2	0	0		RELI --> living close to nature
Beliefs	Impact	Religion has impact	Connection between actors	Religion fosters a connection amongs NGOs, partners and farmers	2	2	0	2	0	0	0	0	0	1	1	0	0	0		RELI: = connection between actors
Beliefs	Negative	Religion restrictive	Conservative Religion impact Agri and Gender	Conservative religion has negative effect on agriculture and gender	5	1	1	0	0	0	0	0	5	0	0	0	0	0	0	RELI: conservative religion --> negative effect on Agri and Gender

Beliefs	Motivation	Religion has impact	Creation as connection to work	Belief that God created the world having an influence farmers work	3	3	0	3	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	1	1	0	RELI: Creation
Beliefs	Impact	Religion has impact	Everyone very religious in life and thinking	Religion plays a very large role in farmers' lives and thinking	3	3	2	1	0	1	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	1	RELI: Everyone is very religious
Social relations	Impact	Community restrictive	Fear worse than hunger	Living with constant fear is worse than living with hunger	1	1	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	RELI: Fear is worse than Hunger
Beliefs	Impact	Religion has impact	God's influence on life	NGOs/Farmers see that God has a direct influence on the life of farmers	7	3	0	3	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	1	5	RELI: God's influence on life
Beliefs	Impact	Religion has impact	Project	Religion of Farmers has an relatively direct impact on NGO project	3	3	0	3	0	0	0	0	0	1	1	0	0	1	RELI: Impact on project
Beliefs	Negative	Religion restrictive	Misuse of power position	Religious leaders and important men misuse their position	1	1	1	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	RELI: Misuse of power position by leaders/men
Beliefs	Roots	Religion Difficulties of life	Religion Necessary for difficulties	Religion is needed to cope with the difficulties of a farmers' life	4	3	1	2	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	1	0	RELI: Needed to cope with harsh circumstances
Beliefs	**Impact**	**Religion no impact**	**Not so much impact in Agriculture**	**NGO sees no impact of religion in agricultural development projects**	**9**	**5**	**3**	**2**	**0**	**1**	**1**	**0**	**4**	**1**	**0**	**0**	**2**	**0**	**RELI: Not so much impact in agriculture**
Beliefs	Impact	Religion restrictive	Difficult to change	(Issues that are connected to) Religious/Traditional beliefs are very hard to change	2	2	0	2	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	1	0	RELI: Religious/Traditional Beliefs beliefs difficult to change
Beliefs	Impact	TB restrictive	Difficult to change	(Issues that are connected to) Religious/Traditional beliefs are very hard to change	2	2	0	2	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	1	0	RELI: Religious/Traditional Beliefs beliefs difficult to change
Beliefs	Impact	Religion has impact	Transformation for Development	Spiritual transformation (beyond own fears) brings about real development	4	2	0	2	0	0	0	0	0	3	0	0	0	1	RELI: Transformation of Self (without fear) brings about real development
Knowledge	Science and Farmers	CA constraint	Not valuable for farmers	Farmers do not value scientific research	1	1	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	SCIENCE: Farmer does not care about science

Knowledge	Science and Farmers	Knowledge restrictive	Low education - science not useful	As farmers have low education science is not useful for them	1	1	1	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	SCIENCE: low education --> not useful for farmers
Knowledge	Science and Farmers	CA constraint	Embedded in practice	Scientific innovations only work when embedded in practice	2	2	2	0	0	0	1	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	SCIENCE: only effective when joined with practice
Beliefs (Traditional)	Roots	TB Culture	TB Culture	Is a cultural issue	3	3	0	3	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	1	1	0	Traditional Beliefs / Witchcraft = Culture
Beliefs (Traditional)	Roots / Impact	TB Necesarry as explanation	TB Necesarry as explanation	Farmers need TB to explain events that they do not understand	4	3	0	3	0	0	0	0	0	0	2	0	1	1	Traditional Beliefs / Witchcraft: As Explanation for not understood events
Beliefs (Traditional)	Impact	TB restrictive	Relations	Distorts how people look at life, family and income	1	1	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	Traditional Beliefs / Witchcraft: Distorts view on life/family/income/relations
Beliefs (Traditional)	Roots / Impact	TB Fear	TB Fear	Traditional beliefs or witchcraft are caused by and result in Fear	10	2	0	2	0	0	0	0	0	3	0	0	0	7	Traditional Beliefs / Witchcraft: Fear
Beliefs (Traditional)	Impact	TB restrictive	Hampers Development	TB and witchcraft hamper development	5	2	1	1	0	0	0	0	2	3	0	0	0	0	Traditional Beliefs / Witchcraft: hampers development in general
Beliefs (Traditional)	**Impact**	**TB has impact**	**Impact Local Community**	**Traditional beliefs and witchcraft have a (large) impact on communities**	**8**	**4**	**1**	**3**	**0**	**0**	**0**	**0**	**1**	**3**	**1**	**0**	**0**	**3**	**Traditional Beliefs / Witchcraft: Impact Local Communities**
Beliefs (Traditional)	Roots / Impact	TB Jealousy	TB Jealousy	Is caused by and results in jealousy	3	2	1	1	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	2	Traditional Beliefs / Witchcraft: Link with Jealousy
Beliefs (Traditional)	**Roots**	**TB lack of education**	**TB Lack of Education**	**TB issues are related to lack of Education.**	**5**	**5**	**1**	**4**	**1**	**0**	**0**	**0**	**0**	**1**	**1**	**1**	**0**	**1**	**Traditional Beliefs / Witchcraft: More Education--> More Westernisation-->Less (belief in) Witchcraft**
Beliefs (Traditional)	Impact	TB restrictive	On agriculture	Traditional beliefs have a negative effect on agriculture	2	2	1	1	0	0	0	0	1	1	0	0	0	0	Traditional Beliefs / Witchcraft: Negative effect on AGRI
Beliefs (Traditional)	Impact	TB restrictive	Helplessness	Farmers need help to get out of the vicious cycle of TB and witchcraft	1	1	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	Traditional Beliefs / Witchcraft: people need help

																			(to overcome S / W) from outsiders
Beliefs (Traditional)	Impact	TB supportive	Positive on Agri	Can have positive effect (e.g. spirits in the trees)	1	1	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	Traditional Beliefs / Witchcraft: Positive effect on Agri
Beliefs (Traditional)	**Underst ood**	**TB is understan dable**	**Understanding/ Comprehension**	**The others' beliefs (traditional) are understood**	**8**	**4**	**0**	**4**	**0**	**0**	**0**	**0**	**0**	**3**	**1**	**0**	**1**	**3**	**Traditional Beliefs / Witchcraft: Understanding/Comprehendi ng of NGO**