Development Intervention on the Ground

*Inherent rationales of aid and their encounter with
local dynamics in three Cambodian villages*

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ABSTRACT

The study is motivated by the maintained needs to scrutinise and critically reflect upon interventionist rationales in development assistance, to put development intervention in perspective by regarding it as part of the context where it is implemented, and to bring these two perspectives together. The starting point is an indication of a common mismatch between what is intended when aid is formulated and what happens when it is implemented. In the study, aid is regarded as an instance of intervention and as based on commonly non-articulated assumptions about societal change and different actors' roles, which help explain interventionist practice – though few would assign to those assumptions when made explicit. Local contexts are regarded as living settings with certain specifics and dynamics with which a development intervention comes to interact, which helps explain why things do commonly not evolve as anticipated. The purpose is to investigate how such inherent rationales relate to such local dynamics, and the research problem is formulated thus: *How do interventionist rationales unfold as a development intervention is implemented in a local setting?*

The inherent rationales are traced by situating development aid in the context of other sorts of intervention aimed at creating societal change and improving human welfare. Explorations of high modernist and colonial welfare intervention, along with an outline of trends in post-Second World War development aid, lead to the delineation of some underlying rationales. The implementation interplay is explored through empirical case studies in three Cambodian villages where a governance intervention is being implemented. Starting in a comprehensive and explorative manner with an ethnographic approach, the case studies are gradually narrowed down to focus on how development intervention is perceived, related to and accommodated, guided by four research questions.

The findings suggest that development intervention is apparently based on flawed assumptions of societal change as technical and makeable and on futile ambitions to predict and control. The study suggests that there are remaining reasons and room to intervene in poor societies, but that assumptions and ambitions need to be altered and local appropriation endorsed.

Keywords: development intervention, development aid, development cooperation, local development, local dynamics, local governance, interplay, Cambodia

CONTENTS

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ABBREVIATIONS

ADB	Asian Development Bank
ADRA	Adventist Development and Relief Agency
ARC	Australian Red Cross
ASEAN	Association of Southeast Asian Nations
Ausaid	Australian Government Overseas Aid Program
CARERE 1	Cambodia Resettlement and Reintegration
CARERE 2	Cambodia Area Rehabilitation and Regeneration
CDC	Commune Development Committee
CDP	Commune Development Plan
CDRI	Cambodian Development Research Institute
CFDS	Cambodia Family Development Services
CG	Consultative Group
CGDK	Coalition Government of Democratic Kampuchea
CIAP	Cambodia-IRRI-Australia Project
CMEA	Council for Mutual Economic Assistance
CPP	Cambodian People's Party
CRC	Cambodian Red Cross
CRD	Cambodian Researchers for Development
DAC	Development Assistance Committee
DCC	Danish Cambodian Consortium
DFT	District Facilitation Team
DFID	Department for International Development
FAO	Food and Agriculture Organization
FUNCINPEC	Front Uni National Pour un Cambodge Indépendant, Neutre, Pacifique et Coopératif
GAD	Gender and Development
ICORC	International Committee for the Reconstruction of Cambodia
ICRC	International Committee of the Red Cross
IDE	International Development Enterprises Programme in Cambodia
IFI	International Financial Institution
ILO	International Labour Organisation
IMF	International Monetary Fund
IRRI	International Rice Research Institute
IWDA	International Woman's Development Agency
KPNLF	Khmer People's National Liberation Front
LCB	Local Capacity Builder
LDF	Local Development Fund
LFA	Logical Framework Approach
Licadho	Cambodian League for the Promotion and Defence of Human Rights

LPP	Local Planning Process
LWS	Lutheran World Services
MDGs	Millennium Development Goals
MRD	Ministry of Rural Development
NADK	National Army of Democratic Kampuchea
NCDD	National Committee for Management of the Decentralization and Deconcentration Reform
NFE	Non-Formal Education
NTFP	Non-Timber Forest Products; Cambodian NGO
NRM	Natural Resource Management
ODA	Official Development Assistance
OECD	Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development
PDRD	Provincial Department of Rural Development
PFT	Province Facilitation Team
PLG	Partnership for Local Governance
PRA	Participatory Rural Appraisal
PRDC	Provincial Rural Development Committee
PRK	People's Republic of Kampuchea
PRSP	Poverty Reduction Strategy Papers
RDS	Rural Development Structure
Repsi	Resources Policy Support Initiative
RGC	Royal Government of Cambodia
SEI	Stockholm Environment Institute
TPO	Transcultural Psychosocial Organisation; Cambodian NGO
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UNESCO	United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization
UNHCR	United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees
UNICEF	United Nations Children's Fund
UNTAC	United Nations Transitional Authority in Cambodia
VDC	Village Development Committee
VDP	Village Development Plan
WFP	World Food Programme
WB	World Bank
WID	Women in Development
WRI	World Resources Institute

KHMER/KAVET TERMS

aachaar	a respected male villager with connections to the pagoda
angkaar	term commonly used for 'organisation'
aphiwat	development
Aphiwat Strei	'Women's Development'; Cambodian NGO
chamkar	in lowland Cambodia, land for garden cultivation; in highland areas, land for swidden cultivation
gong	music instrument
Hathakasekor	'the arms of a farmer; Cambodian NGO
Issaraks	resistance movement, fighting for Cambodian independence during the 1940s and 1950s
kah	a kind of grass growing in water
kapas	rattan container used for carrying things on the back
koh yun	vehicle used for transport and ploughing
kramaa	traditional scarf
krob krong	'govern'
krom samaki	groups for collective work or farming in the 1980s
kru Khmer	traditional healer
neak thom	'big people'
njaat	formal complaint/petition to the authorities
o	tributary
paddy	wetland rice cultivation
paot	local measurement, the equivalent of a gasoline container
Phteas Tuek Duong	'House of coconut water'; Cambodian NGO
prohok	paste of fermented fish
provas dei	traditional form of labour exchange
saen koun	simple wedding ceremony
sangkat	the urban equivalence of a rural commune
sneyr som	'request'
soen	in highland areas, land for garden cultivation
thnak leu	'higher levels'
tradaok	drum used for warning others in case of danger

1. INTRODUCTION

This thesis is set to study some of the difficulties in creating or supporting development in poor countries through international aid. This is done through analysis of the research problem: 'How do interventionist rationales unfold as a development intervention is implemented in a local setting?' The analysis is based on empirical case studies in three Cambodian villages where a major governance programme has been implemented. In this chapter, the purpose and research problem will be introduced and justified, and the example of intervention aimed at improving local governance will be presented, as will the context of rural Cambodia.

1.1 Purpose and problem

President Truman's speech in 1949 is often referred to as the start of the development era (e.g. Rist 1997: 71). More appropriate would perhaps be to talk about the aid era. While the idea of progress is as old as human history, the institutionalised and large-scale practice of international assistance to poor countries emerged after the Second World War (Hettne 2008d; cf. Nisbet 1980).[1] The practice sprang from a determination to alleviate poverty and develop poor countries, and a belief that it would be possible to do so fairly quickly. Truman had in his speech pointed out the direction by asserting that rich countries should play an active role in the improvement and growth of underdeveloped areas. The speech reflected the view of poverty as a technical problem which certain input would solve as, according to Truman, it was a matter of making available scientific advances and technical knowledge (Rist 1997: appendix 1; Riddell 2007: 24f). Post-Second World War mainstream development thinking[2] has continued to be largely focused on finding implementable remedies to problems of underdevelopment, and development assistance[3] has expanded into a comprehensive enterprise, reaching all corners of the globe and constituting a key

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[1] Aid was not a completely new phenomenon in the post-Second World War era, but it was at that time that the notion of development aid as an institutionalised international activity came to be clearly and strongly rooted (e.g. Riddell 2007: 24; see 3.3).

[2] Hettne, among others, uses 'development thinking' as a more inclusive concept than 'development theory', referring not only to academicians but also to ideas and views of planners, administrators and politicians. The notion thus includes aspects of development theory, strategy and ideology (Hettne 1995: 16; 2008c; Potter 2002; Nederveen Pieterse 2001: 42). For a discussion on the 'mainstream' in development thinking and its counterpoints, see Hettne 1995: 28f; 2008c and Nederveen Pieterse 1998b.

[3] As will be noted, the vocabulary has changed over the years. In this thesis I use development assistance, aid and cooperation interchangeably, all representing a continued though continuously adjusted practice. What I refer to are disbursements, defined by OECD as ODA. For a discussion on what should be included in aid, see Riddell 2007: 17ff.

component of international relations, costing large amounts of money, employing large numbers of people and affecting many more.[4]

Problems of poverty and lack of development have gradually come to be regarded as more complex, and the expected solutions as less of technical fixes. Due to internal learning as well as more or less harsh critique, aid practices have been continuously refined, with the adoption of new approaches manifested in ever new notions such as help to self help, integrated rural development, sector wide approaches, participation, institution building and good governance (e.g. Dahl 2008). Despite thorough learning and constant refinement, however, experience shows that aid activities rarely work as intended. A range of scholars have pointed to various levels of failure, with examples ranging from complete fiasco and negative effects to results below expected and results not sustaining after external resources have been withdrawn (e.g. Easterly 2008; 2006; Riddell 2007: 253ff; 1987; Corbridge 2007; Vries 2007; Gastel and Nuijten 2005: 87; Green 2002: 52; Edwards 1999; Upphoff 1996; Ferguson 1994; Porter et al. 1991; Kothari 1988). Perhaps paradoxically, such shortcomings help explain why aid has become so firmly established. What was intended as something temporary to overcome urgent problems, failed to fulfil that ambition and was instead transformed into a permanent part of North-South relations. Continuous lack of success and still burning problems have also caused a revival during the last few years, with aid being a central focus of attention of world leaders and a top agenda item, manifested in a series of top meetings on international aid policy (e.g. Riddell 2007: 1f, 22; Li 2007).

The purpose of this thesis is to contribute to a better understanding of some of the difficulties and weaknesses in the efforts to intentionally create or support development in poor countries through international aid. The starting point is an indication, from continuous shortcomings despite continuous refinement, that there is commonly a mismatch between what is intended when aid activities are formulated and what happens when they are implemented. Things do apparently not unfold as anticipated, and I am curious about the nature of this mismatch.

My perspective, then, is to regard development assistance as an instance of external intervention into local settings.[5] Throughout the changes of approach, aid has remained a matter of introducing new features. Brought in from outside are material resources, technical expertise, economic policies, political structures etc, along with attached norms and values. Such introduction inevitably implies interference in existing systems with the apparent, though often non-articulated, aim of changing or replacing prevailing features and thereby achieving certain societal change. In the

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[4] According to Riddell, hundreds of thousand of people work professionally and as volunteers in aid, and over 35,000 separate official aid transactions are carried out annually (Riddell 2007: 356, 360; cf. Cowen and Shenton 1995: 27).

[5] As will be argued in 1.2.1, regarding development assistance as an instance of intervention is not uncommon. However, the interventionist aspect is rarely explicitly discussed.

words of Preston: 'Intervention in a social system might be understood as deliberate action whose objective is to bring about a particular change in some set of circumstances and thereby achieve a preferred state of affairs' (Preston 1996: 196; cf. Nederveen Pieterse 1999: 85).

Intrinsic to mainstream development thinking and practice is thus the expectation that problems of poverty and underdevelopment can be solved through such intervention, which allegedly builds on certain rationales (cf. Li 2007). My supposition is that aid practice is based on the usually implicit assumption that it is possible, desirable and rightful for external actors to intervene in poor societies in order to change or replace prevailing features. This assumption in turn, I will argue, implies certain thinking and views regarding the workings of societal change and different actors' roles in it, and such commonly non-articulated rationales could help explain interventionist practice.

Returning to the mismatch between intentions at formulation and proceedings at implementation, implementation of a development intervention necessarily takes place in a particular context at a particular time. My perspective, then, is to regard such a site as a living setting containing a range of specific features and a range of actors with disparate interests and resources (e.g. Olivier de Sardan 2005: 186; Long 2001; Richards 1985). When a development intervention is implemented, it meets with a variety of locally adjusted and highly dynamic traits, some of which it is intended to change or replace. My supposition is that such local specifics and dynamics and their encounter with development intervention could help explain why things commonly do not unfold as anticipated.[6]

In this study, I will investigate how interventionist rationales relate to the specifics and dynamics of a local setting at implementation. *The research problem* is formulated thus: *How do interventionist rationales unfold as a development intervention is implemented in a local setting?* To study this research problem, and following the above, I will trace and illuminate the rationales behind development intervention regarding societal change and actors involved, and I will empirically study the proceedings at implementation. I will then analyse how the traced rationales and the found proceedings relate, if they mismatch and, if so, on what aspects and in what sense. The tracing of rationales is dealt with through literature studies and analysis in chapter 3, where the treatment of aid as an instance of intervention is also further elaborated and motivated. Meanwhile, the implementation proceedings are dealt with in an empirical study guided by four research questions which are motivated and formulated in chapter 4. First, however, I will justify the choice of research problem and perspectives outlined above.

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[6] As will be argued in 1.2.2 and chapter 4, expecting local specifics and dynamics to influence development intervention in unintended directions is not uncommon. Such expectations are however rarely seriously considered when designing development interventions.

1.2 Justification of problem and perspectives

The study derives from the notion that the interventionist aspect of development thinking and practice is rarely illuminated and scrutinised, and the underlying rationales rarely considered or related to what happens at implementation. Investigating development aid/assistance/cooperation as an instance of intervention is therefore a matter of emphasising an aspect of conventional practice, which I believe is fundamental but rarely elucidated. International intervention has increased in cases of genocide, large-scale violence and human rights violations as well as in post-conflict areas, and this proliferation has given rise to a large and growing body of research, also manifested in the notion of 'new interventionism' (Duffield 2001; 2007; Paris 2004; Rotberg 2004; Chandler 2002; Clarke 2002; Chesterman 2001; Mayall 1996). Such intervention and the related research, however, are mainly focused on peace-building, reconstruction and reconciliation and, though socio-economic development is brought forward as a component, development aid is not considered as an instance of intervention in itself, and the shared interventionist traits not elaborated. Meanwhile, the complexity and vitality of local settings around the world have been extensively and thoroughly researched, especially within anthropology. 'Development anthropologists' also emphasise the need for a 'bottom-up' or 'from within' perspective in development cooperation.[7] This is rarely linked, though, to the ideational premises or underlying thinking and views of aid. The aspiration of this study, then, is to combine these two features of development thinking and practice, i.e. to illuminate and elaborate on underlying interventionist rationales and relate them to what happens at implementation in a local setting. This ambition will be further elaborated on and motivated below.

1.2.1 Interventionist rationales

Following from the above, the study is partly motivated by a maintained need to scrutinise and critically reflect upon interventionist rationales in development assistance, i.e. the thinking and views behind the widespread and largely taken for granted phenomenon of introducing new features in various local settings in order to change or replace existing features and thereby create certain societal change.

Intervention taken as a given

Such benevolent intervention was not a new phenomenon when the aid era started. Rather, as Edwards points out, intervention is the approach that has characterised attempts to help on the international stage over the last 200 years (Edwards 1999: 4).

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[7] A distinction is commonly made between 'development anthropology' and 'the anthropology of development', where the former is concerned with reforming development practice from the inside and the latter remains outside, commenting on aid discourses and practices (e.g. Crewe and Harrison 1998: 16).

Though intervention to achieve certain societal change is not limited to such activities by external actors in poor countries, what is dealt with in this thesis is activities formulated and financed by international agencies and implemented in developing countries in the form of development aid.[8]

Labelling and regarding development aid as 'intervention' should not be controversial. A range of scholars and practitioners with different background and ideologies have done so over the years. In a World Bank publication, first published in 1985, Cernea states that '/p/rojects are purposive interventions used for accelerating and targeting economic growth and social development', and then, throughout, talks about development assistance as 'intervention' (Cernea 1991: 5). So do for example Porter et al. some years later, also asserting that northern donors believe that NGOs do tranformational interventions, while governments do palliative ones (Porter et al. 1991: 157). While the highly development-critical Escobar claims that the third world was created as a needy object of international development intervention, the more nuanced Simon holds that there is scope for improving the nature of intervention made by northern and southern development workers and agencies, both official and non-governmental ones (Escobar 1995; 1997; Simon 1997: 183). More recent examples are long-term development practitioners Eyben, who discusses how to improve the practice of aid intervention, Easterly, who argues that aid agencies must be constantly experimenting and searching for interventions that work, and Riddell, who also widely uses the intervention vocabulary, for example talking about 'aid interventions', 'NGO development interventions' and 'governance interventions' (Eyben 2006; Easterly 2006: 327; Riddell 2007: 130, 172ff, 259, 373).[9] Used in this sense, the term intervention does not imply coerciveness.[10] Rather, aid is commonly accepted and welcomed, maybe even invited, by the recipient state or community. Neither is the term intervention intended to deny the good intentions or the strong humanitarian incentives of interfering in other societies in order to mitigate certain problems and sufferings, or the potentially positive outcomes.

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[8] What is external, and to what, is indeed debatable. The state in a developing country could conduct some of the same activities as international agencies, as could local NGOs. Societal change in industrialised countries, too, is often achieved through intervention, mainly by the state. As will be seen, however, interventionist thinking and practice, as well as underlying attitudes and relations, are blunter, clearer and more easily observable, when done by an international agency in a different – and poor – country. Some of the findings on intervention in the form of aid to poor countries may thus be relevant also for other instances of intervention.

[9] Among others who talk about aid as intervention are: Tomasevski 1989: xvi; Ferguson 1994; Hettne 1995: 118; Cowen and Shenton 1995; Mikkelsen 1995; Crush 1995; Preston 1996; Cooper and Packard 1997; Engberg-Pedersen 1997; Crewe and Harrison 1998; Edwards 1999; Nederveen Pieterse 1999; 2000b; 2001; Long 2001; Cooke and Kothari 2001; Mosse 2001; 2005; Harrison 2004; Bebbington et al. 2005; Harriss 2005; Bernstein 2005; Olivier de Sardan 2005; Craig and Porter 2006; Lewis and Mosse 2006.

[10] With aid conditionalities/advice and few alternative sources of revenue, however, actual voluntariness by the recipient is often limited.

Though the term is thus commonly used, the interventionist aspect of development assistance is rarely brought forward and the underlying postulates commonly remain non-articulated. There is an abundance of studies of various aspects of and approaches to aid, and there are sometimes vivid debates within the development sector as different actors favour and denounce different approaches. Riddell notes that books, articles and detailed studies on different aspects of aid have expanded exponentially, with 'aid literature' today consisting of a vast array of different sub-literatures (Riddell 2007: xviii). Such studies and debates, however, rarely focus on the idea and practice of intervention as such, but rather takes it as a given that can be conducted in more or less successful ways. Related is the massive outpouring of literature on the performance of specific aid activities, with a vast number of studies of discrete activities as well as evaluation reports outlining lessons learnt and recommendations on how to proceed (Riddell 2007: 4f, 170). As will be argued (3.4), however, monitoring and evaluation are intrinsic parts of interventionist practice, working on the same basic assumptions. While outputs, efficiency, impact etc are looked into, the appropriateness of interventionist rationales is rarely scrutinised. When programmes fail, remedial changes are therefore introduced without addressing the underlying principles of the intervention model itself (Long 2001: 37). Rather, the mainstream assumption remains that external intervention can and should be used to achieve societal development. Established and widespread interventionist assumptions and practices even make many actors equate development with development assistance, reflected in the common distinction between (long-term) development and (short-term) emergency relief, both implying various forms of intervention. Duffield maintains that 'in some respects/the notion of development/has become little more than whatever aid agencies choose to do', while Nustad, too, notes that development builds on the assumption of the agency of an outside intervening body (Duffield 1998: 89; Nustad 2001: 487).

The implicit assumption of intervention as possible, desirable and rightful points to an inherent confusion and contradiction within mainstream development thinking, elaborated by Cowen and Shenton, i.e. the paradox between development as an endogenous process and as externally induced change, or between immanence and intention. On the one hand, there is the idea of an immanent, almost inevitable, process from traditional and underdeveloped to modern and developed. On the other hand, there is the expectation of purposive intervention in order to initiate and direct that process, reflecting the assumption that modernisation – as opposed to evolution – may require outside stimuli. The emergence of this apparent paradox is explained by Cowen and Shenton, writing that the premodern view of development as a cyclical and organic process of growth and decay whose immanent dynamics were beyond intervention was modernised by the cross-fertilisation with the Enlightenment idea of progress and the dynamics of linear and upward social trajectories. Development has thus become linked with the imperative to intervene, and the notion of 'intention' has come to dominate over 'immanence'. In development practice, a partial explanation of

the confusion is that, as noted, the input/intervention of external expertise, technology, capital, attitudes etc has been expected to provide a short, initial push in order to get the inherent process started, while as this has failed and the practice has become more permanent, theory has been influenced. As Cowen and Shenton note, the subject matter of modern development studies has been the intention to develop rather than the immanent process of development itself (Cowen and Shenton 1995; 1996; cf. Hettne 2008; Ikeotuonye 2002; Baaz 2002: 131f, 209; 2005; Nederveen Pieterse 2001: 18ff; Liedman 1997).

Intervention rejected and refined

Parallel to taking development intervention as a given, there has been a range of more and less fundamental objections to such mainstream development thinking and practice. As Vries notes, critiquing the development industry has become an industry in itself, with radical objections coming from as diverse directions as post-development and neo-liberalism, or what Cooper and Packard call 'ultra-modernism' (Vries 2007: 26; Easterly 2006; 2008; Cooper and Packard 1997: 2; Craig and Porter 2002: 2).

Within post-development, scholars basically reject the whole notion of development, including the desirability, possibility and rightfulness of aid (e.g. Vries 2007: 28; McGregor 2007; Nederveen Pieterse 2000b).[11] Especially in the 1990s, there were fierce attacks on every single aspect of 'development', portraying it as an apparatus of control and surveillance and an 'alien model of exploitation' (e.g. Escobar 1992: 419). Development intervention is deemed an immoral extension of a western project, based on arrogance, power abuse and neo-colonial hegemony and separating people of developing countries from the rest of humankind (Cooper and Packard 1997: 3). Development is rejected, not only because it does not work but also because of its intentions, its worldview and its mindset (Nederveen Pieterse 2000b: 175). Even the kind of changes that development is intended to bring to poor people's lives are sometimes discarded, illustrated by the strong tendency within post-development to glorify and romanticise local traditions and forms of life, including 'convivial, voluntary and moral forms of poverty' (Rahnema 1992: 171).

Meanwhile, neo-liberals also reject development intervention, though for different reasons. At its strongest and most extreme in the 1980s, neo-liberalism deems private capital better suited than development intervention to solve most problems. Government and outside intervention assumingly implies distortions to the market, which should rather be left as undisturbed as possible (Cooper and Packard 1997: 2; Craig and Porter 2002: 2; Harrison 2004b: 157). There is thus an elective affinity between post-development and neo-liberalism. Though by different routes, they both

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[11] Among the post-development writers are Nandy 1988; Apffel-Marglin and Marglin 1990; 1996; Ferguson 1994; Sachs 1992; Esteva 1992; Escobar 1992; 1995; Crush 1995; Rahnema and Bawtree 1997.

arrive at severe agnosticism, sharing the abdication of development (Nederveen Pieterse 2000b: 184ff; 1998: 364). In both strands, development intervention is considered harmful – in post-development because donors are rich, powerful and arrogant, and due to idealisation of local features and even local poverty; in neo-liberalism because intervention distorts market mechanisms that will otherwise ensure optimal allocation of resources.

Apart from outright rejection of intervention, there has been a continuous flow of less harsh critique, which has – often in a moderated form – been incorporated into and led to the refinement of mainstream thinking and practice.[12] Much of this refinement springs from recognition of inherent difficulties in aid relationships (e.g. Eyben 2006a). Shifts over the years in vocabulary and approaches reveal a continuous ambition to move away from one-sided and top-down help by active donors to passive recipients towards more mutual and equal relations. What used to be 'aid' turned into 'assistance' and then into 'cooperation', what used to be 'donors' and 'recipients' turned into 'partners', and current development language remains full of relationship words such as participation, ownership and partnership (Dahl 2008; Arora-Jonsson and Cornwall 2006: 80). Such ambitions are related to the widely recognised importance of respecting and taking local practices into account, of more actively involving intended beneficiaries, and thus decreasing donor imposition and control. Over the years, efforts have been made to replace or complement top-down approaches with popular participation, imported high-tech with locally appropriate technology, external expertise with stakeholders' perspectives and empowerment, circumvention of the recipient state with institution building, and donor control with national ownership (e.g. Crewe and Harrison 1998; Chambers 1983; Schumacher 1993). Such shifts have basically pointed towards a development practice that is less imposing, more nuanced and socially sensitive, and with more ideas coming from 'below'. It has however also been argued that such rhetoric and practice serve to deny and conceal the inherently unequal aid relationship, to be manipulative by pretending ideas to come from the recipients, and to serve to maintain northern control over development processes in southern countries by more subtle means. According to Duffield, despite repeated reinvention and repackaging, underlying assumptions and relations remain unchanged (Duffield 2002: 1068; Eyben and Napier-Moore 2009; Cornwall and Brock 2005; Crawford 2003; Cooke and Kothari 2001).

Intervention to be scrutinised and critically reflected upon

As noted, a point of departure of this thesis is that, even with ambitions and manifestations of more mutual and equal relationships, development aid/assistance/

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[12] For a discussion on the incorporation of critique into the mainstream, see Hettne 1995 and 2008. Others after him have written on radical alternatives being watered down and adopted by the mainstream, thereby modifying and giving it a progressive and responsive image (Simon and Närman 1999: 271; Kothari and Minogue 2002b: 9ff; McGee 2002: 112).

cooperation remains a matter of intervention, i.e. of introducing features from outside, aiming to change or replace prevailing features. It may be worth again emphasising that labelling and regarding development assistance as 'intervention' is not to deny the sometimes good reasons for and good outcomes of such intervention. Taking them as a given is however problematic, as is blunt denunciation. While neither post-development nor neo-liberal rejections, nor mainstream refinement, elaborate on the underpinnings of development intervention, I believe that there are inherent qualities of interventionist practice that need to be scrutinised. There is something intrinsically problematic about intervening in poor societies by introducing something assumingly better to change or replace something assumingly lacking, and of expecting certain societal change to follow. And I believe that much of the problematique is to be found in some of the commonly non-articulated rationales behind such intervention. Viewing the introduction of new features and the change/replacement of prevailing ones as possible, desirable and rightful, supposedly rests on certain thinking and views regarding how societal change happens and what role various actors have in it. Such thinking and views, I believe, explain and make possible interventionist practices, while without them the same practices would be difficult to motivate. The fact that aid activities commonly do not proceed as intended, then, is reason to suspect that, as Nustad claims, 'some of the premises on which development interventions are based do not hold', which is of course reason to critically reflect upon the underlying rationales (Nustad 2001: 480). Referring to the tendency to not question broader underlying assumptions in development practice, Pasteur points to the need of deepening the level of questioning. Values, beliefs and assumptions – what she calls 'governing variables' – upon which actions and strategies are based need to be explored, interrogated and challenged. Such broader and more fundamental questioning will help build a better understanding of the bigger picture, which may lead to fundamentally new ways of looking at things (Pasteur 2006: 31ff; cf. Rist 1997).

Accordingly, part of my intention is to deconstruct the interventionist aspect of development aid. Rather than taking the notion of intervention as a given, apparently in need of no further motivation or justification, I aim to scrutinise implicit assumptions and underlying rationales. What are the views on which development intervention is based regarding societal change and actors involved? After illuminating the overall idea of intervention that runs through different approaches of development thinking and practice, the next step will be to analyse how such thinking unfolds at implementation in a local setting.

1.2.2 Local dynamics and implementation interplay

The study is also motivated by a maintained need to put development intervention in perspective by regarding it as part of the context where it is implemented.

Local accommodation of intervention

As noted, implementation of aid activities takes place in a particular setting at a particular time. Much of the critique of mainstream thinking and practice emphasises the complexity of local life-worlds and the agency of local actors, and points to how these affect the proceedings and outcomes of aid activities. The critique is that, though practices have been refined, local specifics and vitality are not enough taken into account when formulating an intervention and evaluating its outcomes (Scott 1976; Chambers 1983; Richards 1985; Long 2001; Olivier de Sardan 2005).

This is partly explained by a narrow focus on aid activities. Critics point to an inclination within development thinking to put intervention at the centre of analysis and to exaggerate its importance. In the words of Gentil and Dufumier: 'the natural tendency of any project is to assume that history begins with the project, to underestimate everything that came before and to overestimate its own impact' (Gentil and Dufumier 1984: 25, quoted and translated in Olivier de Sardan 2005: 139). The narrow focus is in turn related to the conceptualisation of development intervention as discrete and clearly localised activities. According to critics, an intervention is regarded as detached from the context where it is implemented, thus visualised as a separate set of activities that take place within a defined time-space setting.

However, when implemented in a local setting, aid activities cannot be confined to specific spaces and functions delimited by official policies and plans. Rather, externally introduced and locally prevailing features inevitably come to influence each other. Local actors/intended beneficiaries may also not perceive any clear beginning or final cut-off point of an intervention. To them, aid activities may be peripheral or entirely irrelevant and they do in any case not limit their perceptions of reality and its problems to those defined by intervening agencies as constituting a project or programme (e.g. Long 2001: 34; Crewe and Harrison 1998: 1, 24). Rather, features that are introduced with development intervention come to be perceived among other features of the setting and acted upon in relation to those.

The encounter between features that are introduced with an intervention and those that already exist locally has by Long and others been defined as an 'interface', while Olivier de Sardan prefers the metaphor of an 'arena' (see 4.2). At this interface/arena, a more or less vivid interplay takes place, as the new features are locally interpreted and accommodated. Li talks of how improvement schemes intersect with other processes and with the world that they are intended to transform. Rather than detached, the intervention becomes embedded in the local context, and comes to form part of larger continuous chains of events, flows of social life and ongoing relations. While intervention features affect the local setting, they are also reinterpreted and thoroughly transformed by prevailing features. As Olivier de Sardan notes, what is said about a project at the stage of formulation has got little in common with the project once it gets into the hands of the people to whom it is destined (Olivier de Sardan 2005: 4; Li 2007: 1, 27; Long 2001: 4, 32f; Long and Ploeg 1994; Long and Villarreal 1993; cf. Hirschman 1967).

Implementation processes to be studied

It is neither surprising nor a new claim that the implementation of a development intervention involves interactions and mutual influences between newly introduced and prevailing features. It has often and for a long time been argued and illustrated that local contexts and actors affect the proceedings and outcomes of aid. Following the so-called impasse in development theory from the mid-1980s, a lot of detailed empirical case studies of implementation processes have also been conducted. Post-impasse research includes work with emphasis on agency and on the social construction of development situations (e.g. Gastel and Nuijten 2005; Long 2001; Vries 1997; Booth 1994). However, though local specifics and influences are recognised, in most studies of development aid, focus remains limited to the intervention and its immediate effects, and when an intervention is formulated, the implementation interplay is rarely considered. According to Nederveen Pieterse, it has not penetrated development thinking that efforts to change social dynamics have minimal benefits due to the complexity of local settings (Nederveen Pieterse 2001: 144). Other critics of conventional studies and aid evaluations, too, claim that objectives, obstacles and results are described according to formal, preconceived and external frameworks echoing planners' words, concerns and understandings, while it is not considered what an intervention might mean to the intended beneficiaries, or what implications their agency might have on proceedings and outcomes (Villarreal 1992: 265).

This has made Long and others call for deconstruction and demythologisation of development intervention, by regarding it as what it actually is, which, considering the local dynamics and implementation interplay, is an ongoing socially constructed, negotiated and meaning-creating process (Long 2001: 4, 30ff; Preston 1996: 296, 302; Long and Ploeg 1994). With such a view, and if the interface/arena and the implementation interplay are emphasised, the aim will be to understand the processes by which an intervention enters local life-worlds. In order to understand its unfolding, and how and why proceedings and outcomes may deviate from plan, we need to study the dynamics and the accommodation that take place at the implementation interface. As Cernea pointed out already in the 1980s, neglect of the social dimensions in intervention-caused development always takes revenge on the outcome (Cernea 1991: 6). Arce et al. have therefore suggested detailed studies of the social life of rural development and analyses of the ways people operate in their everyday life, while Olivier de Sardan has pointed to the lack of case studies of how popular conceptions of development operations are localised and linked to specific contexts. Nustad, too, emphasises the need to examine how development interventions are reinterpreted and utilised by affected communities, and thereby transformed, reformulated, adopted or resisted in their local encounters. Actors' conceptions, practices and strategies must be investigated, as must the interplay of relationships, institutional contexts and contextual constraints in development situations (Arce et al. 1994; Nustad 2001: 485; Olivier de Sardan 2005: 3, 70; Lewis and Mosse 2006b: 1).

This calls for an open-ended way of looking at intervention scenarios. In order to avoid the common focus on the intervention, the local setting needs to be moved up front. Aid activities should then be brought in as they become part of the picture, and thus studied from the points of view of local actors/intended beneficiaries, with attention to how the new features are perceived and accommodated. This is in line with what Long has made known as an actor-oriented approach, and which he and others have been promoting for several decades (see 2.2). Grounded in the everyday life of local actors, the actor-oriented approach emphasises their agency and elucidates how their interpretations and strategies influence the proceedings and outcomes of a development intervention (Long 2002; 2001; 1992; 1977; Preston 1996: 301f).

I find such actor- and process-oriented approaches highly valuable. To my mind, however, the actor-oriented approach as promoted by Long and others is too narrowly focused on intentional and calculated behaviour (cf. Baaz 2002: 65; 2005). Long et al. repeatedly argue that local actors consciously strategise, organising in the face of planned intervention, creating room for manoeuvre and devising ways for dealing with interveners so that they might appropriate, manipulate, subvert and dismember particular interventions (Long 2001; 1992). In a similar vein, Lewis and Mosse talk about beneficiaries as 'consumers' of development who instrumentally manipulate in order to turn an intervention into opportunities and maximise benefits (Lewis and Mosse 2006b). Though Rossi, for example, recognises unconscious appropriation, she is very focused on conscious and strategic action, stating that local people are aware of available opportunities, unfold strategies and manipulate externally crafted policies in order to achieve locally relevant ends (Rossi 2006: 28ff, 41). Bending and Rosendo, too, throughout emphasise the calculated features of various actors' behaviour, talking about strategic responses, strategic translations, strategic adoption of certain discourses and strategic silence, all aimed to seek and secure international intervention (Bending and Rosendo 2006). Moving away from the local level, but staying with the issue of transformation and reinterpretation at implementation, Stålgren has studied national level responses to the international regime of integrated water resources management. Here, too, what are dealt with are strategic responses by what Stålgren calls 'political entrepreneurs' (Stålgren 2007). My supposition is that much of the implementation interplay happens without people consciously planning and calculating their responses. As will be discussed (4.1), there are obvious and severe limits to people's room for manoeuvre, which makes Kabeer talk about 'agency within boundaries' (Kabeer 2000: 4). Even within those boundaries and when not able to consciously strategise and oversee the effects of their behaviour, however, people have to somehow understand and relate to externally introduced features in their life-worlds. Such non-calculated responses, too, affect the proceedings and outcomes, i.e. the social process of a development intervention, and should therefore to my mind be included in an actor-oriented approach.

1.2.3 Interventionist rationales related to implementation interplay

In addition to the maintained needs to scrutinise interventionist rationales in development assistance and to regard development intervention as part of the context where it is implemented, there is a maintained need to bring these two perspectives together.

Long and Villarreal criticise the abstractions of development thinking for being far removed from the detailed workings of everyday social practice, and for therefore failing to explain the differential outcomes of structural change. Rather than focusing on intervention *models*, by which Long means ideal-typical constructions by planners, implementers or clients, he contends that it is important to focus on intervention *practices*. Preston, too, argues for shifting away from rational models of plan-making, followed by plan execution (Long 2001: 30; Preston 1996: 296; Long and Ploeg 1994; Long and Villarreal 1993: 141).

Agreeing that ideal-typical constructions do not explain the proceedings and outcomes of development intervention, I find it problematic that interventionist rationales and implementation interplay are commonly studied separately from each other. As Mosse points out, surprisingly little attention has been paid to the relationship between policy models and the practices that they are expected to generate in particular contexts (Mosse 2004a). Li, too, argues for analysing intervention programmes as well as their messy consequences, i.e. both the rationale of such programmes and what happens when they entangle the world that they are intended to transform (Li 2007: 27f, 270). In line with this, and since interventions are designed and implemented following the models but then reshaped in practice through interplay with the local setting, I find it vital to study both models and practices, as well as how they relate. Accordingly, the purpose of this study is to relate interventionist rationales to implementation interplay, and the main contribution will be the combination of revealing implicit rationales and elucidating local dynamics and implementation interplay, relating the two and discussing the implications. This will contribute to a deeper and more nuanced understanding of why development intervention commonly does not proceed as intended, and potentially open up for new ways of thinking.

1.3 Case and context

In order to investigate the research problem of how interventionist rationales unfold at implementation, a specific intervention will be studied. The intervention chosen is the UNDP project 'CARERE', aimed at improving local governance in rural Cambodia by initiating and supporting the governance reform programme 'Seila'. The implementation interplay of this intervention will be researched through three empirical case studies in a village each where CARERE/Seila has been operational. In this section I will motivate the choice of development intervention aimed at improving

local governance and briefly describe some features of governance intervention.[13] I will also motivate the choice of rural Cambodia and briefly present this context by describing the Cambodian experience of development intervention, including governance intervention, and discussing some relevant aspects of socio-political conditions and culture. The specific governance intervention will also be presented and some delimitations of the study outlined.

1.3.1 Intervention to improve local governance

The intervention to study should be one which clearly involves the introduction in a local setting of new features intended to change or replace existing ones, and where the new features meet and come to interact with a range of prevailing ones. A wide variety of intervention meets these criteria. It could, for example, be the introduction of agricultural technology, modern medicine or certain values of equality that meet with local practices and norms. An intervention aimed at improving local governance is expected to be illustrative since it is a complex and wide-ranging sort of intervention (see 3.3.3). It is clearly a matter of introducing (aspects of) a new political model in numerous local settings, where it will meet with local specifics and dynamics. An intervention aimed at improving local governance commonly involves the setting up of new decision-making bodies and procedures, establishing new rights and responsibilities and implying new roles and relations. Resources are also commonly provided to be used for certain purposes and allocated according to certain criteria, all clearly reflecting certain ideals and expectations. These features inevitably come to meet with existing formal and informal institutions, practices, perceptions, norms etc. At implementation, for example, local leadership and power differentials, political climate and culture, socio-economic conditions and relations, as well as people's experiences, expectations and habits, will affect how the new features are perceived and accommodated, while also being affected by them. Addressing complex issues on a wide range of aspects, an intervention aimed at improving local governance is thus expected to give rise to a vivid interplay with an array of local features.

The intervention to chose should also be of a sort that is widely used and believed in, and a specific case that is considered reasonably successful, so that the findings are not deemed irrelevant because the sort of intervention is outdated or the specific case a failure. As noted, and as will be further discussed, governance is a relatively recent and still dominant approach within development thinking and practice. The discourse of 'good governance' currently influences much development intervention around the world, with reform of (local) governance widely promoted and adhered to by a diverse range of 'mainstream' as well as 'alternative' actors, involving agencies from the largest multilateral ones to small local NGOs (e.g. Craig and Porter 2006; Potter 2000; Abrahamsen 2000; Cornwall 2000; World Bank 1997; Tendler 1997). Decentralisation

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[13] 'Governance intervention' is a widely used concept (e.g. Grindle 2007). What I mean – and use it interchangeably with – is a development intervention aimed at improving governance.

is an important part of the governance agenda, with much – though very different – hope attached to stronger and more active local governance (e.g. Yusuf et al. 2000a; b; Hines 2000; Burki et al. 1999; Manor 1999; Crook and Manor 1998; Tendler 1997; Kothari 1996). Regarding the successfulness of the specific intervention, as will be seen, CARERE/Seila has been deemed very successful, providing some sort of 'best practice' (e.g. Evans 2000; Rudengren and Öjendal 2002).

Aiming at democracy as a goal in itself as well as a means for poverty alleviation and reconstruction/reconciliation, governance intervention also fits with other recent trends in development thinking. A (local) governance intervention is often (as in the Cambodian case) an extension and consolidation of other sorts of intervention such as peacekeeping, election observation and post-conflict reconstruction, all related to the introduction of liberal democracy. The governance agenda has also emerged alongside terms such as 'partner' and 'partnership', and usually includes popular ideals such as 'participation', 'ownership', 'empowerment' and 'institution building' (e.g. Crewe and Harrison 1998: 70). Moreover, a (local) governance intervention corresponds with trends of providing policy support rather than project aid, building capacity of the recipient government rather than bypassing it, and fostering a vivid civil society and a supportive environment for it.

Intervention aimed at improving local governance is thus expected to be illustrative of a recent and widely believed in sort of development intervention, and of multifaceted implementation interplay. Considering the aims and approaches of governance intervention, much of the dynamics and interplay revealed will naturally concern local socio-politics, including power differentials, leadership roles etc. Had a different sort of intervention been studied, emphasis would have been on partly different local features and interactions. As noted, however, the study's main relevance and contribution is its focus on the interventionist aspect, on the assumptions behind introducing an externally designed model in a local setting, and on the ensuing interplay. These are features that go also for intervention aimed at improving other things than governance. Also, since governance intervention is used as an illustrative sort of development intervention, the purpose is not to provide an in-depth study of various aspects of governance, public sector reform etc. Much has been written on theoretical and ideological underpinnings of governance, on intentions and shortcomings, on its practice within development assistance, and on the links between governance and development. The intention here is not to further elaborate on such theories or ideas of governance, but to provide a brief overview of the governance issue on the aid agenda as a background to the tracing of interventionist rationales and to the study of interplay between a specific governance intervention and a number of local settings.

Emergence, ambitions and means

From the early 1990s, the relationship between democratisation and economic development was increasingly emphasised among aid donors, while it was also

recognised that impact and effectiveness of their aid crucially depend on political structures and processes in recipient countries. Reshaping and improving 'governance', partly through conditionality, therefore quite suddenly emerged as a major aid strategy and as part of the liberal agenda. Unanimously agreed as desirable among donors, 'good governance' was soon established as something of a new aid orthodoxy (Riddell 2007: 7, 357, 372ff; Craig and Porter 2006; Minogue 2002: 117, 123f; Turner and Hulme 1997).[14]

In the late 1990s, with the 1997 World Development Report as a watershed, there was a dramatic and rapid shift in governance reforms (World Bank 1997). A strong and capable state, it was emphasised, is a prerequisite for the neo-liberal agenda. Thus aimed at reinventing the role of the state and changing institutional structures, the new governance reforms were more long-term than previous ones, implying deep institutional intervention. Liberal conceptions of good governance and the need for stronger institutions came to dominate development and poverty reduction programmes, and between 1996 and 2000 the World Bank initiated over 600 governance related programmes in 95 countries, along with focused governance reforms in 50 countries (Craig and Porter 2006: 7, 13, 73, 98f, 103). In these second generation governance reforms, decentralisation had a central role, representing quite a sudden (re)emergence of decentralisation on the aid agenda, also reflected in the 1997 World Development Report (see 3.3.2). With decentralisation as part of the development discourse, the focus on governance has come to involve widespread promotion and practice of enhanced local governance and reinvention of the role of the local state.[15] Meanwhile, in conflict and post-conflict states, the importance of governance is emphasised in establishing peace, pursuing state reconstruction and preventing conflict. Especially in failed and failing states, there is an imperative to construct new institutions or reconstruct weakened or collapsed ones, and a sense of urgency to do so quickly (Brinkerhoff 2005: 3; Öjendal 2005: 291).

Governance – also emphasised in the UN Millennium Declaration – is promoted by various actors, in various contexts and for a wide variety of reasons. Accordingly, there is no general agreement among donors on how to define governance, and the term has rather been used for different things (e.g. Riddell 2007: 373f). In a couple of widely used definitions, however, governance is defined by the World Bank as 'the

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[14] The sudden dominance of governance on the aid agenda has been described in various ways, for example including it in 'the latest philosopher's stone of official aid agencies' and labelling it 'the new shibboleth of the global development discourse' (Riddell 2007: 207; Anders 2005: 37).

[15] There is a large body of literature on decentralisation and local governance. What is said on the subject in this thesis draws mainly on the following sources: Craig and Porter 2006; Yusuf et al. 2000; Hines 2000; Kato et al. 2000; Cornwall 2000; Burki et al. 1999; Diamond 1999; Crook and Manor 1998; Davies 1998; Robinson 1998a; b; Robinson and White 1998b; Tendler 1997; Turner and Hulme 1997; Schuurman 1997; World Bank 1997; Aziz and Arnold 1996; Kothari 1996; Stoker 1996; ADB 1995; Martinussen 1995.

manner in which power is exercised in the management of a country's economic and social resources for development' and by the UNDP as 'the exercise of economic, political and administrative authority to manage a country's affairs at all levels' (World Bank 1992a: 3; UNDP 1997). This makes governance more encompassing than government, embracing both governmental institutions and non-governmental mechanisms, as well as how the government connects and relates to other sectors and to individual citizens. Governance thus includes relationships between and activities by the government, the private sector and civil society that contribute to the representation of popular interests and the management of national and local affairs (Blunt and Turner 2005: 78; Anders 2005; Minogue 2002: 117; DFID 2001; ADB 1995; Rosenau 1992: 4ff). The term decentralisation, then, has come to be used for diverse arrangements of sharing power and allocating resources, i.e. transfers of authority, government functions, resources and responsibilities from the central state to subordinate or quasi-independent local authorities (e.g. Craig and Porter 2006: 105; Cornwall 2000; Aziz and Arnold 1996a; b; Martinussen 1995).[16]

Thus promoted by disparate actors and with various definitions, good (local) governance is associated with a range of ambitions and ideals. Among the beliefs are that new institutional arrangements will create downward accountability, better representation of disadvantaged groups and redistribution of power. Transparency, predictability, responsiveness, legitimacy, competence, respect for the rule of law and protection of human rights are also promoted (and required) as part of the governance agenda. The assumption is that such 'good governance' measures will endorse sustainable livelihoods by improving the management of a country's resources (e.g. Riddell 2007: 376; Craig and Porter 2006: 64, 73ff; Minogue 2002: 117, 123f; Wescott 2001; Turner and Hulme 1997; Stoker 1996: 188; Blair 1985). Governance intervention is, however, also promoted for purely economic reasons. The governance agenda emerged partly from neo-liberal critique of the interventionist state. While poor governance is assumed to weaken the effectiveness of markets, 'good governance' is expected to create more efficient resource allocation. Aiming at less state control and a freer market, neo-liberals regard political legitimacy and stability as means to promote economic growth and export (Anders 2005: 44; Wescott 2001). Meanwhile, in post-conflict states, governance reforms are aimed to reconstitute legitimacy, re-establish security and rebuild effectiveness, along with restoring (or in some cases creating) service delivery capacity and initiating economic recovery (UNDP 2000).

Decentralisation, then, holds many positive connotations, such as proximity, relevance, autonomy, participation, accountability and democracy. Since it does not contradict any particular political ideology, decentralisation has been deemed an easy

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[16] Such political decentralisation should be distinguished from administrative deconcentration, which means delegation of power to sub-national governments (e.g. Rusten et al. 2004: 25; Wescott 2001: 14).

reform and become a popular remedy, sometimes presented as a panacea for all kinds of problems. Decentralisation and enhanced local governance are largely intended to promote democratic transformation as well as socio-economic development and sound resource management. Since localised governance is assumed to be cheaper than centralised governance, decentralisation is by some perceived mainly as a way to do more with constrained resources. Others, however, emphasise that local governments are more sensitive to popular pressure and to the needs of poor people, and therefore more responsive and better at adapting policies and providing services according to local demands, which leads to a more fair and efficient use of resources. Related to this, decentralisation is also regarded as an instrument for social and economic transformation towards increased justice. By bringing decision-making closer to the population and distributing power to grassroots level, a structure is assumed to emerge where people are at the centre of power and participate in decision-making (e.g. Öjendal 2005: 291ff; Turner and Hulme 1997; Aziz and Arnold 1996: 22, 35).

Intervention aimed at improving governance typically involves the establishment of new institutions, new positions with defined mandates and responsibilities, and new lines of influence and accountability. Training and capacity building of civil servants at various levels are other key components. When it comes to decentralisation, there has been a huge diversity of practices and local authority arrangements. The local state is commonly assigned new roles in problems identification and resource mobilisation, including planning, budgeting, service delivery, coordination, monitoring and more (Craig and Porter 2006: 25, 106; Aziz and Arnold 1996: 15). Intervention is also locally scaled and civil society given an important role, with the governance agenda often manifested in various representative bodies such as village committees, participatory planning and decision-making processes, and sometimes devolved development funds (e.g. Crewe and Harrison 1998; Cousins 1997; Leach et al. 1997a; 1997b; Uphoff 1996; Blair 1985). Local development funds (LDF) are usually small, typically between 1 and 5 US$ per capita and year, usually piloted in a few communes or districts, and commonly framed as policy experiments for later national level reform. With new ways of allocating resources, the funds are intended as means both to getting resources quickly into palliative social services and basic community infrastructure and to getting local authorities to listen and be accountable to local needs. Receiving the funds depends on compliance with certain procedures, such as participatory planning procedures, contracting by tender and special audit requirements, which has made local development funds popular for 'building local governance capacity' (Craig and Porter 2006: 112, 145f).

The funds are also designed to rapidly engage local communities in identifying their own needs, solutions and priorities through 'participatory rural appraisals' (PRA).[17] Underlying the governance discourse, and its local manifestation of

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[17] PRA, championed by Robert Chambers, provides a set of participatory techniques and research methodologies, including transect walks and various sorts of mapping, designed to

'participation', is an assumption that people will gradually be 'empowered', with a sense of involvement and the desire as well as the capacity to be politically active also on issues not directly related to development intervention. The idea is that poor people will learn how to use available mechanisms, start exercising their choice, and eventually maybe even take over to make local governments meet their needs. Decentralisation thus apparently offers a smart and dignified way of institutionalising the empowerment of communities and kick-starting community participation (e.g. Craig and Porter 2006: 106, 135; Cleaver 2001; Cornwall 2000; World Bank 1999a).

1.3.2 Rural Cambodia

Aid intervention to improve local governance is conducted in various parts of the world. The geographical context of rural Cambodia was chosen considering the experience of development and governance intervention, and considering local circumstances related to the approaches and aims of governance intervention.

Cambodia has a long history of various sorts of intervention, by neighbouring kingdoms, by colonial France, by super powers and their allies during the Indochina and the Cold Wars, and – in different forms and to different extent – by international development agencies. After decades of war and international isolation, from the early 1990s, Cambodia quite suddenly received large and increasing amounts of aid. The country has been a donors' favourite, but also met with suddenly decreased enthusiasm and generosity. Meanwhile, it has moved from quick impact humanitarian or emergency intervention towards longer-term development intervention. At a fairly early stage of the governance trend in development thinking and practice, an encompassing and well-funded governance intervention was also implemented in the country, including decentralisation. At the time of the research, development intervention was thus part of the picture in large areas of Cambodia, though not all, while intervention aimed at improving local governance had started in selected areas. Meanwhile, Cambodian villages are expected to provide challenging contexts for intervention aimed at improving local governance in line with liberal democratic ideals. Political culture and climate in Cambodia are traditionally very different from what is promoted through governance intervention, and the context is therefore expected to clearly illustrate interplay between prevailing features and those newly introduced.

In this study, Cambodia thus provides the context where a governance intervention is being implemented in a number of local settings, and an illustrative example of how its local manifestations are accommodated. While certain features and aspects of the interplay may be specific to the country, or to a village, overall patterns and dynamics of interplay will be relevant also to different sorts of intervention at different places and times. Using Cambodia as an illustrative context, the purpose is not to contribute

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elicit local people's voices and concerns around the issues of need (Chambers 1983; Feeney 1998; Narayan 2000; Craig and Porter 2006: 130, 135).

thorough ethnographic research on rural Cambodia, and what follows is neither an in-depth study of Cambodian local socio-politics nor a comprehensive study of development or governance intervention in the country. Rather, this section provides an overview of the history of development intervention in Cambodia and a discussion of some aspects of rural areas, relevant as background to the study of implementation interplay of a governance intervention at village level.

Development intervention

After the ousting of the Khmer Rouge regime in early 1979, a state of emergency was declared in Cambodia due to famine. The international response was delayed both by chaos inside the country and by mutual animosity between the Vietnamese backed regime and western donors. After brief assessment missions by UNICEF, ICRC and Oxfam, however, agreements on emergency programmes were made by the government and a number of international agencies. NGO appeals and reports of enormous human suffering also triggered a massive response in western countries, and between 1979 and 1981 UNICEF and ICRC coordinated relief operations that were among the largest ever of its kind. Due to resentment towards the regime, western donors tried to limit their assistance within the country to essential materials required to meet food and medical needs. In practice, however, emergency aid could not be strictly distinguished from rehabilitation assistance, and donors generously funded a broad range of programmes that included rehabilitation activities. In all, nationwide rehabilitation was supported on such a scale that had rarely been done before in the name of emergency assistance. Still, most western aid was not used for rebuilding physical and human infrastructure in the country, but for relief to Cambodian refugees in Thai camps. Meanwhile, Vietnam and other East bloc countries continued to provide mid-term capacity building, political support, military assistance, commodity aid, training and infrastructure development (Kao Kim Hourn 1998: 188; Bernander et al. 1995: 18; Curtis 1989; Kamm 1998).[18]

After the harvest in 1981, the state of emergency was declared to be over, and assistance from the West drastically decreased. The little aid that was provided from western donors was channelled through a few NGOs and two or three UN agencies.[19]

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[18] In all, official bi- and multilateral humanitarian assistance from western donors between 1979 and 1981 amounted to US$ 370 million, and NGO programmes to more than US$ 100 million. Apart from food, clothing and basic medical supplies, UNICEF, ICRC, WFP, FAO and major NGOs provided a wide range of supplies, such as rice seed, fertilisers, pesticides, agricultural equipment, vehicles, spare parts, fuel, hospital equipment, pens, books and typewriters. They also helped re-establish over 100 clinics and hospitals and 6,000 schools. In the same period, assistance from the Soviet Union amounted to US$ 300 million (Kao Kim Hourn 1998: 188; Bernander et al. 1995: 18, 25; Curtis 1989: 18).

[19] By the mid-1980s, UN assistance to Cambodia amounted to about US$ 7 million a year, while a dozen NGOs provided an estimated US$ 2 million (Bernander et al. 1995: 26; Curtis 1998: 71; 1989: 19).

Throughout the 1980s, the world outside the East bloc remained seemingly indifferent to the conditions in Cambodia. While not providing much assistance inside the country, however, western donors, along with Japan, China and the ASEAN countries, offered to resettle refugees in third countries and continued to provide for the basic needs of 375,000 refugees along the Thai border (Bernander et al. 1995; Kao Kim Hourn 1998: 188; Curtis 1998; 1989).[20] In the late 1980s, Soviet aid to Cambodia and Vietnam was also cut down, and when many socialist donor countries applied for IMF loans in early 1991, they were not allowed to provide aid to third parties (Hughes 2003: 31, 92).[21]

Aid from the East bloc was not immediately replaced by increased aid from western donors. As the Cold War competition ceased, however, in the words of Caroline Hughes, Cambodia became 'the target of, and testing ground for, interventionary policies of multilateral conflict management, peace building, democratic enlargement, good governance and poverty alleviation' (Hughes 2003: 87, 96). The intention was to bring Cambodia into line with liberal internationalist and free market principles, and as the People's Republic of Kampuchea (PRK) government initiated some changes in that direction, some donor countries responded with increased assistance. Expectations of an agreement to end fighting between the factions and of Vietnamese withdrawal also made several countries and international organisations establish official representation in Phnom Penh, though still not giving the regime diplomatic recognition. The UNDP liason office opened in 1989, followed by the Office of the Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Cambodia that was to lead the UN and other agencies in the country, while the number of international NGOs also increased (Bernander et al. 1995; Curtis 1989).[22] Meanwhile, a steady flow of missions were sent to the country. Between 1989 and 1991, about 50 technical and programming missions visited to review Cambodia's needs from their particular vantage points. UNDP, UNHCR, UNICEF, WFP, FAO, ADB and others also started various operations, such as receiving, repatriating and reintegrating

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[20] Sweden was one of very few western countries that provided aid inside Cambodia in the 1980s, using UN agencies as intermediaries (Bernander et al. 1995: 3, 9).

[21] Until 1989, donor states' aid policies reflected the Cambodian political stalemate. The PRK government as well as the resistance groups in the Coalition Government of Democratic Kampuchea (CGDK) which enjoyed diplomatic recognition by western states, were dependent on external aid and arms (Hughes 2003: 2ff). While western states provided humanitarian aid mainly to the opposition parties FUNCINPEC and KPNLF, and China and Thailand assisted the Khmer Rouge faction (NADK), the PRK regime received aid from the Soviet bloc. Financial and technical assistance, including reconstruction and military aid, and budget support was crucial for the Cambodian state economy, amounting to about US$ 100 million a year. In 1983, the figure was US$ 85 million, and by the end of the decade US$ 120 million (Kao Kim Hourn 1998: 188; Curtis 1989). Until 1990, CMEA aid provided 80 per cent of the government budget (Hughes 2003).

[22] By the late 1980s, about 25 NGOs provided aid to Cambodia, amounting to about US$ 15 million a year (Bernander et al. 1995: 19ff; Curtis 1989).

returning refugees, which included quick impact infrastructure projects in the villages where they settled. Internally displaced people also received assistance, commodity aid was provided, demining started and an emergency rehabilitation loan was prepared (Bernander et al. 1995: 10f, 26f).

With the political settlement of the Paris Peace Accords in October 1991, the UN took over the administration of Cambodia until the elections planned for May 1993, and there were further calls for international assistance.[23] During the UNTAC operation, which was the largest, most expensive and most sophisticated post-Cold War UN intervention at that time, a dynamic aid market was established and significant flows of aid poured in, funding up to 50 per cent of the government's budget.[24] In all, the long period of indifference by the western international community was followed by a sudden flood of aid and a dramatic increase in the number of NGOs present in the country (Etcheson 2006: 1; St John 2005: 407; Hughes 2003: 39; Curtis 1998: 71, 73; Findlay 1995; Bernander et al. 1995: 29).[25]

At a conference in Tokyo in 1992 among donors and the Cambodian government, the International Committee for the Reconstruction of Cambodia (ICORC), made up of donor countries and international organisations, was established to provide a more permanent coordination mechanism and continuity beyond the UNTAC mandate. ICORC was later replaced by the Consultative Group (CG) meeting (Etcheson 2006; St John 2005: 406f; Kao Kim Hourn 1998: 189, 196). Until the 1993 elections, donors remained unsure of what kind of intervention they could support and UNTAC discouraged work to plan for sectoral development over the longer term in favour of more immediate rehabilitation activities (Bernander et al. 1995: 28f). After the elections, however, with a new coalition government and a new constitution, in the words of Chandler, there was a 'façade of stability sufficient to placate most donor nations' and substantial aid continued to pour into the country (Chandler 1998: 43ff; Hughes 2003: 2).[26] With a national development plan in 1994 then, from the mid-

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[23] Part of the Peace Accords was the 'Declaration on the Rehabilitation and Reconstruction of Cambodia', in which the importance of external aid to achieve peace and reconciliation was recognised and key sectors for immediate attention were defined.

[24] The United Nations Transitional Authority in Cambodia between 1992 and 1993 involved multinational forces of 6,000 officials and 16,000 troops, with a total of US$ 2 billion allocated for the operation. Among the aims were to stop all outside interference and military aid to the various factions and to establish an effective international control mechanism to monitor, supervise and control the peace process (Curtis 1989: 21).

[25] Official Development Assistance (ODA) from western countries and multilateral agencies to Cambodia increased from US$ 18.5 million in 1988, to US$ 41.6 million in 1990, and US$ 90.9 million in 1991 (Wescott 2001: 11; Kao Kim Hourn 1998: 188; Bernander et al. 1995: 22). By 1998, 300 international and Cambodian NGOs were involved in more than 500 projects, with total disbursement to NGOs amounting to US$ 83 million, of which 10.6 million was distributed by Cambodian NGOs (Wescott 2001: 11).

[26] In April 1992, the Secretary-General had appealed for US$ 595 million to strengthen the peace process and start the economic recovery. This included US$ 150 million for major

1990s there was a shift in emphasis among donors away from emergency and rehabilitation towards longer-term development (Curtis 1998: 78; Kao Kim Hourn 1998: 198).

Soon, however, blatant political violence and human rights abuses decreased donors' enthusiasm. Before the 1996 ICORC/CG meeting, the IMF had frozen its assistance because the income from sales of state assets did not go to the state. At the meeting, then, the IMF and the World Bank for the first time insisted on a more transparent forestry policy, and later suspended their financial support. Though other donors did not use aid conditionality, there was an emerging 'compassion fatigue', a sentiment that Cambodia had been given enough support and that other countries deserved it more and would be more capable of using it effectively. This was underlined by the 'events' in July 1997, which led to many expatriate development workers leaving the country for several months, Cambodia losing its favoured position with several donors, aid levels being reduced and from some donors completely suspended.[27] After these drawbacks, however, things gradually returned to normal and aid increasingly flew into the country, so that by 2000, international aid again

infrastructure, US$ 119 million for essential services in rural areas, such as health, education, water and agriculture, US$ 116 million to repatriate all refugees, US$ 112 million for commodity and balance of payment support, US$ 83 million for resettlement and reintegration, and US$ 14.5 million for capacity building. When donors then met in Tokyo in June 1992 at the Ministerial Conference on Rehabilitation and Reconstruction of Cambodia to give political expression to the commitment of the international community, they pledged US$ 880 million for 1992/1993. However, donors made their own priorities, so while some items among the stated needs were more than covered, others remained uncovered. At the next ICORC meeting in September 1993, further pledges were made up to a total of US$ 1 billion. And in March 1994, when the Cambodian government presented its National Programme to Rehabilitate and Develop Cambodia, representatives from 30 nations and 12 multinational bodies pledged US$ 773 million (St John 2005: 410, 419; Kao Kim Hourn 1998: 188; Bernander et al. 1995: 27f). As is very common, however, disbursements came to lag behind commitments. Out of the committed US$ 2.29 billion for 1992-1995, US$ 1.394 billion was disbursed. 28 per cent of disbursements were used for investment projects, and almost as much for food aid and emergency relief. Social sectors and restoration of rural service were also prioritised, while 20 per cent of expenditures were used for technical assistance (Curtis 1998: 77; Bernander et al. 1995).

Food rations continued to be provided to returnees by WFP and the Cambodian Red Cross, and essential roads, schools, clinics, wells etc were restored (Bernander et al. 1995). Overall, the donor community was exceedingly generous, with the main donors being Japan, US, France, Sweden and Australia, along with the UN, the World Bank and the IMF, regional development banks and a big number of NGOs (Curtis 1998: 75; Kao Kim Hourn 1998: 189). There were various reasons for this generosity. Apart from obvious needs, Curtis among others argue, with the tragic history of Cambodia and long time of international neglect, it was a sense of guilt that made the international community respond so massively (Curtis 1998: 71f).

[27] It has been debated whether to call what happened in July 1997 a coup or not. There was fighting in the capital between forces of the different ruling parties, and Prime Minister Ranariddh was ousted from office.

constituted up to half of the Cambodian state budget (St John 2005: 411, 419f; Hughes 2003: 53; Curtis 1998: 103; Chandler 1998: 45; Kao Kim Hourn 1998: 190).

As governance emerged on the international development agenda, and as Cambodia got more or less ready for it, aid intervention also moved in that direction. The national development plan that the Cambodian government had presented at the 1994 ICORC meeting included state reform, and UNDP, the World Bank and ADB started moving their support towards management capacity and civil service reform. Though donors well into the 1990s continued to avoid making the provision of aid conditional on meaningful state reform, from the mid-1990s, they increasingly emphasised governance issues (Hughes 2003: 100; St John 2005: 406, 410; Bernander et al. 1995: 29). After genocide, international isolation and prolonged insecurity caused by Khmer Rouge insurgents, all areas of the country were secure for the first time in over 30 years, which created new opportunities as well as needs. As Blunt and Turner point out, post-conflict states are usually weak in the sense that they to varying degrees lack political, administrative and technical capacity (Blunt and Turner 2005). Cambodia was an extreme case of this. Not only institutions and social services had to be rehabilitated, however, but also social cohesion and trust among the population and between the population and the authorities. To develop and consolidate functioning and legitimate governance at all levels required thorough public sector reform and some donors gradually took on the task to push for it. At the CG meeting in 2000, a working group for administrative reform was formed and, in line with liberal democracy, far-reaching reforms have been formulated, while implementation has been weaker. As donors have tried to build capacity, increase participation, and promote public administration reform, one of the most significant initiatives has been decentralisation. In order to improve public service delivery as a means for poverty alleviation, participatory democracy and local development have been supported along with the delegation of decision-making power to the lowest level of government. In 2001, i.e. after the empirical research of this study was finished, a comprehensive and radical decentralisation reform was formally launched (Öjendal 2005: 287, 294; Blunt and Turner 2005; Brinkerhoff 2005: 9; Horng et al. 2005: 157; Rusten et al. 2004: 25; Hughes 2003: 52f, 109f).

A challenging socio-political culture

Cambodia provides a context that is in many ways challenging for development intervention aimed at improving local governance in line with liberal democratic ideals. Historically, the Cambodian state is institutionally weak. Under the French protectorate, little was done to develop state institution or the rule of law (Chandler 1998: 43f). The first constitution was signed in 1947, stating that Cambodia is a monarchy with a National and a Popular Assembly. Though a second constitution was signed in 1957, the Cambodian government was still a weak institution during the 1960s, with officials lacking the commitment to involve poor people in their own development and development rather perceived as a royal beneficence (Bernander et

al. 1995: 18). With the Lon Nol regime in the early 1970s, there was again a new constitution, reflecting democratic principles and a multiparty system, general elections for a National Assembly and a Senate, and a president holding all executive powers. The civil war, however, rendered the regime unstable, and during the Democratic Kampuchea period from 1975, an extreme form of collectivism was implanted and the three branches of government were unified under a single institution, the Central Committee (Wescott 2001: 6).

After four years with the Khmer Rouge, all state institutions had to be reinvented. During the 1980s, the communist Cambodian People's Party (CPP) increased its control. Towards the end of the decade, however, liberalisation started, and in 1989 a new constitution was amended. Cambodia was also included in the democratisation wave after 1991 and became, in the words of St John, the location for one of the post-Cold War attempts to implant western democracy where there was little democratic tradition. With the UNTAC elections in 1993, a liberal, multiparty system was established, a coalition government formed, the sixth constitution promulgated (amended in 1999 to establish the senate) and the transition to a market economy further accelerated (Blunt and Turner 2005; St John 2005: 422ff; Hughes 2003: 3; Wescott 2001: 6ff; Chandler 1998: 33).

Whatever the nature of the regime, centralisation and hierarchy have remained persistent organisational principles of the Cambodian state. As discussed by Chandler, Sihanouk from 1955 disregarded laws that impeded his power, and none of his successors have apparently felt that they owed much to the electorate. Few Cambodian leaders have thought it necessary to be popular, flexible or responsive. Rather, Lon Nol, Pol Pot, Ranariddh and Hun Sen have all tended to identify the welfare of the nation with themselves. State institutions have been politicised and personalised, with weak capacity and limited professionalism. Power has historically not been decentralised or democratically distributed in any meaningful way and communal participation has been weak. Cambodia is traditionally dominated by a patrimonial culture and patron-client relations, along with a habit among the population of keeping a low profile in relation to the authorities. Upward accountability has remained strong and people's loyalty has been assumed to be unquestioning (Chandler 1998: 43f; Blunt and Turner 2005; Brinkerhoff 2005: 9; Öjendal 2005: 288; Horng et al. 2005: 159, 176).

Accordingly, Cambodia has been deemed culturally and institutionally non-conducive for decentralisation and largely unreceptive to some of its essential values, such as popular participation, local autonomy, bottom-up decision-making and special consideration of the most vulnerable. Other concepts, too, that are common in governance intervention are apparently alien in Cambodian governance, such as empowerment, gender equity, predictability, transparency and downward accountability (e.g. Blunt and Turner 2005; Rusten et al. 2004: 29). It is also widely argued that the democratisation that took place in Cambodia from the early 1990s came in response to the imperatives of aid dependency rather than to local pressure,

that democracy was not taking root and the 1993 elections did not spark the intended change in political culture, and that UNTAC left without having created political stability (Hughes 2003: 3; Blunt and Turner 2005: 77f; St John 2005: 423).

Hughes, however, objects to the common view that it is the supposedly conservative and reactionary nature of Khmer culture that has worked against international democratisation efforts. According to her, Cambodian actors have rather manipulated for their own ends new opportunities that arise from the opening of the economy and from interventionary policies of international democracy promotion (Hughes 2003: 214; cf. Öjendal 2005: 288; Öjendal and Kim 2006). The commitment of the Cambodian political elite to democracy and decentralisation reforms has been debated. Though the Cambodian government has firmly expressed its commitment to public administrative reform, it has been claimed wrong to assume that the elite has the political will to initiate such reform and only lacks the expertise. Rather, according to critics, central actors are reluctant to delegate and have refused to accept central elements of the democratic process, such as power-sharing, dissent and loyal opposition. Key state actors are claimed to have little real interest in democratisation and the creation of a developmental state. Rather, the main political parties are said to be mainly interested in dividing and defending the spoils, and the government mainly focused on ensuring stability and consolidating political power, i.e. party interests (Blunt and Turner 2005; St John 2005: 418, 423; Hughes 2003: 88; Wescott 2001: 12; Öjendal 2001).

Related to this, it has been argued that donors and the government have parallel agendas behind decentralisation, playing to different audiences. According to Blunt and Turner, the Cambodian government has only rhetorically endorsed donor interests in order to ensure the flow of financial and technical assistance and satisfy its own political agenda. This is problematic since the government's interests can be achieved through limited forms of decentralisation, which is also what happens with the kind of strong policy statements and far-reaching reforms, but weak implementation, that has taken place. While Cambodian legislation gives an impression of democratic devolution of wide-ranging powers, in reality central control has been retained (Blunt and Turner 2005: 76, 85f; Brinkerhoff 2005: 9; St John 2005: 423).[28]

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[28] The potential unconduciveness of political culture and lack of political will have led to the questioning of the appropriateness of far-reaching donor initiated reforms. It has been argued that efforts to decentralise administration and deconcentrate powers to the level of the commune are best seen as an attempt at a 'technical fix' to a problem that is deeply rooted in the nature of the state, where core instincts are conservative, secretive, keen to retain and expand power and control over resources rather than decentralise, deregulate and delegate (Murshid and Ballard 2005: 18; the view of societal change as technical and non-political is discussed in 3.4). According to Blunt and Turner, the donor agenda of participatory governance at the local level as a basis for democratic governance is unlikely to be realised in Cambodia in the short term (Blunt and Turner 2005). Rather, donors' interests may be unfulfilled, with reduced funding as a consequence. If political reform is stronger on form than substance, public confidence may also

At the local level, too, there are obstacles and challenges to liberal democracy and decentralisation. Below the national level, Cambodia is administratively divided into provinces, districts, communes and villages. In 2004, there were 1,510 communes and 111 *sangkats* (the urban equivalence) and 13,694 villages in the country. A commune usually consists of between eight and fifteen villages, and a village of between fifty and a couple of hundred households, though there are smaller as well as larger communes and villages (Rusten et al. 2004: 96; Blunt and Turner 2005: 82). The communes have historically dealt mainly with policing and security issues and not delivered other public services. After the Khmer Rouge regime, the local authorities' occupation with security arrangements has continued, including recruitment of local defence militia, along with collection of population statistics and issuing of birth, death and marriage certificates, for which semi-formal fees are charged (Rusten et al. 2004: 93, 142, 159; Öjendal 2005). Before the commune elections in 2002, Commune and Village Chiefs were appointed by higher authorities, and most Commune Chiefs, who have in many cases been in office since the early 1980s, are perceived as obedient to higher authorities (Horng et al. 2005: 162; Rusten et al. 2004: 117).[29] Village Chiefs have, at least since the PRK regime from 1979, played a crucial role in village life. Despite unpopular tasks (see below), the Village Chief and his[30] possible deputies have usually enjoyed high social respect and a privileged position, though not highly paid.[31]

As discussed by Hughes, the local government network has throughout been highly politicised and antipathetic to pluralism at the village level, with the rural political terrain monopolised by partisan state authorities, i.e. the Cambodian People's Party (CPP). Local officials have also been permitted to run their localities with little

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erode. According to St John, the international community has largely sanctioned what he calls Cambodia's failures by continuing to provide massive amounts of aid and being complicit in creating and sustaining the current autocratic order. Past political practices have however been reasserted. Prime Minister Hun Sen has resorted to violent, undemocratic means to consolidate his position, and the 20 parties that ran in the 1993 election were ten years later reduced to three. No amount of technical assistance, St John states, could overcome the reality that, in fact, the political order has been determined to retain political power (St John 2005: 423). This has made Blunt and Turner question the wisdom of embarking on a complex and expensive national decentralisation programme. Limited expectations and pragmatism, based on context and realistic assessment of government interest, may be better suited to inform governance reform than grander ideologically driven donor ambitions (Blunt and Turner 2005: 79).

[29] In some places, though, there have been symbolic elections between a few appointed candidates. As will be seen in one of the case study villages, for example, the Deputy Village Chief claims to have received most votes in such an election, but says that, since he was younger than the other candidate, he chose to be Deputy instead of Village Chief (6.2). For Commune Chiefs, too, there have been occasional elections (e.g. Öjendal 2005: 301).

[30] There are virtually no female Village Chiefs.

[31] Village Chiefs used to receive no official salary but a salary supplement of 20,000 riels per month (Rusten et al. 2004: 124).

interference from the centre, which has enabled them to use their political power, backed by local militarization, to enrich themselves, with economic power and resources being increasingly concentrated in their hands. Accordingly, state reform is likely to encounter significant resistance from the rural local state and international intervention has had limited penetration and impact beyond urban centres. Scarcely reaching into rural villages to disrupt the monopoly of resources held by local authorities, the efficacy of any international effort to promote democracy has been significantly limited (Hughes 2003: 53, 67, 86, 114, 215, 217, 220).

Meanwhile, with largely bad experiences, Cambodian villagers' relation to local authorities is commonly dominated by distrust and fear, or at least no positive expectations.[32] Historically, there is little presence of the state at the village level, with the exception of occasional extraction of taxes. In order to establish such presence and strengthen local administrative governance in remote areas, the commune was established by a royal decree in 1908, i.e. during the colonial period. The commune, however, remained secondary to the village as a source of identity and is historically a weak administrative level with very limited technical and administrative capacity. Since the 1980s, it also has a bad reputation. Following the collectivisation of land during the Khmer Rouge regime, an important task of the local authorities was to allocate land to individual households. The allocation was in many cases perceived by villagers as unfair, which created or added to views of officials as favouring themselves and their relatives. The authorities also organised a kind of more or less forced working and farming groups, *krom samaki*, which were not popular.[33] With private ownership in 1989, village and commune leaders' power further increased, as they could allocate land ownership rather than user rights. Privatisation and exploitation of timber, fishery and land in the 1990s, then, further benefited the local authorities and scarce rural resources got further monopolised. Another major task of the local authorities in the 1980s was recruitment of soldiers and labourers. As will be noted in the empirical case studies, there are still frequent stories of how male villagers used to leave the village to avoid recruitment. Those who were recruited had to leave their families to work in remote areas, mainly cutting trees and constructing roads, or as soldiers. Many of them came back with malaria, and their families, and the widows of those who died, did in many cases not receive the compensation or help that had been promised. Such recruitment thus definitely had the potential of rendering commune officials as well as Village Chiefs further unpopular. In the early 1990s, then, the role of the commune decreased sharply, with less resources and staff and

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[32] In the north-eastern provinces, inhabited by ethnic minorities, relations are further complicated by mutual suspicions between lowland authorities and upland populations and remaining prejudices about highland lifestyle and livelihood systems, which will be seen in one of the case studies (chapter 7).

[33] Formally, the collective land use of *krom samaki* was abolished as late as 1989. In practice, however, farmers in most areas started growing their individual fields during the first few years after the Khmer Rouge.

with the main remaining tasks of collecting statistics and mediating in conflicts (Öjendal 2005; Öjendal and Kim 2006; Hughes 2003: 14, 39ff; Bernander et al. 1995: 21).

Relations among Cambodian villagers are also assumed to impede local participation, political involvement and overall good local governance. As noted, social relations in Cambodia are characterised by patron-clientism, which Scott has defined as 'a special case of dyadic ties involving a largely instrumental friendship in which an individual of higher socio-economic status (patron) uses his own influence and resources to provide protection and/or benefits for a person of lower status (client) who, for his part, reciprocates by offering general support and assistance, including personal service, to the patron' (Scott 1972: 8). Traditional patronage involves ad hoc personal and particularistic mechanisms, including gift exchange and dyadic relations, for promoting harmonious relations between rich and poor in a village, and for ensuring reinvestment in the economic, social and cultural life of village resources.[34] Such hierarchical relations, however, largely contradict the values and aims of liberal democracy.

Social cohesion, too, is commonly said to be lacking in Cambodia. Before the war, community arrangements such as labour-sharing for rice production tasks were common in Cambodian villages. In the late 1960s, however, as tension and conflict increased, social cohesion gradually eroded. During the Khmer Rouge regime, then, the fragile trust that existed was destroyed and community cohesion further severely damaged (Chandler 1991; 1998: 33; Bernander et al. 1995: 19). Cambodian social relations are commonly regarded as of separate entities with not much trust or cooperation between them, i.e. 'every household is an island' (Ovesen et al. 1996). In many areas, however, monks and elder people who frequently visit the pagodas and celebrate the Buddhist holidays still enjoy high respect and esteem, and there are pagoda committees responsible for social service delivery and fund mobilisation for village development (e.g. Rusten et al. 2004: 162; differences in patterns of

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[34] With modernisation and reforms, Hughes argues, patron-client relationships have been modified within and around the state. State employees have been co-opted into networks of rent-seeking and corruption, and patronage relations have been transposed out of the village sphere. Alongside new procedures, underlying informal structures of government remain in the form of networks of personal allegiance, offering security and opportunities for rent-seeking in return for loyalty (Hughes 2003).Traditional relations are thus manipulated for own ends, and under the CPP umbrella, patronage has been harnessed to modern tactics of political power, turned into a coordinated, systematic and nationwide policy of exclusion, with the rural population as an exploitable resource. From being based on personal ties, patron-client relations have changed to mass surveillance by CPP, and thus from something familiar to something much more threatening. Meanwhile, the state portrays such co-opted and transformed patron-client relations as traditional, claiming customary legitimacy for new exploitative practices – clearly conflicting with liberal democratic governance principles of transparency and accountability (Hughes 2003: 19, 76, 171, 215, 217).

community cohesion and the role of monks and elders will be illustrated by the empirical case studies, chapters 5-7).

According to Hughes, there is little sense of civil space in Cambodian villages. A winner-takes-all political culture based on endemic distrust has impeded the development of a civil society and increased people's tendency to distrust and fear those in power.[35] As local authorities' influence increased in the 1990s, poor people got further dependent on their goodwill and further vulnerable to exploitation. Popular resistance to state monopolization of control in rural political arenas is thus unlikely, due to poverty and due to the prevailing social fabric. The high level of militarization also makes resistance dangerous. The absence of pressure from people, then, further weakens the prospects for transparency, downward accountability and other aspects of governance and decentralisation intervention (Hughes 2003: 14, 39ff, 172; Horng et al. 2005: 163; Chandler 1998: 43; Hasselskog 2009).[36]

1.3.3 CARERE/Seila

Governance and decentralisation in Cambodia are closely linked to CARERE/Seila. The CARERE project, funded by UNDP and a number of bi- and multilateral donors, in itself contained different trends in development thinking and practice as well as different phases of development intervention in Cambodia, i.e. the shifts from quick impact to longer-term and more participatory development and to local governance. During the first phase of the project – Cambodia Resettlement and Reintegration (1992-1995) – the main purpose was to facilitate for returning refugees and internally displaced people to integrate in the communities where they settled. After a few years of quick impact, emergency type intervention, the project shifted towards longer-term development. CARERE 2 – Cambodia Area Rehabilitation and Regeneration (1996-2000) – then, had a completely different approach, emphasising local participation and empowerment, and also moving towards a closer partnership with the Royal

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[35] Despite a large number of NGOs, Cambodian civil society is weak. With NGOs largely created through external support, the degree of voluntary participation is low, structures are undemocratic, and the external dependence heavy. NGOs are often centralised and hierarchical, many are determined by international power and resources, while some are strongly influenced by political parties. Though some provide much needed development services, others abuse their NGO status. Largely based in Phnom Penh, emphasis is on transmission of foreign knowledge, and issues tend to be displaced outwards into the international community rather than attempting to enforce direct scrutiny of the state by local actors. While civil society development has been supported internationally, it has thus been undermined by elitism in the formation of NGOs, and by the power of CPP in rural political arenas, which counteracts public debate (Blunt and Turner 2005: 79; Hughes 2003: 171, 218; Wescott 2001: 11).

[36] Lack of resources for independent political action has also largely thwarted attempts to create a new public and institutionalised form of politics. It is thus difficult to harness ideas into meaningful political action on the village level, which according to Hughes, reflects the emergence of democracy in Cambodia as mainly a set of national procedures (Hughes 2003: chapters 6-7).

Government of Cambodia through the emerging Seila programme.[37] Though Seila was initiated, financed and driven by donors through UNDP/CARERE, CARERE 2 gradually turned into a support project to the government programme (UNDP 1995; Horng et al. 2005: 157; RGC 2000a).

The goal of CARERE/Seila was to contribute to poverty alleviation (which was also expected to contribute to peace) through good governance. The idea was to promote rural development through decentralised planning, financing and management of investment in basic services and infrastructure (RGC 2000a; UNDP 1995; Blunt and Turner 2005: 81; Wescott 2001: 14). It was a hugely ambitious intervention with an experimental approach, working at all levels of government. A new administrative set-up was developed and tried out, with new mandates and chains of responsibility and accountability, implying an institutionalised flow of resources from the top towards the bottom. Supportive capacity building and other technical assistance were provided. Complex, comprehensive and continuously changing, Seila was interchangeably regarded as a programme for 'integrated rural development', for reconciliation and for capacity building (Öjendal 2005: 299; Rusten et al. 2004: 29; Kao Kim Hourn 1998: 199f).

CARERE/Seila was popular among donors. Poverty alleviation in a post-conflict society with emphasis on local participation and good governance encompassed many recent trends in development thinking. Organisational strength, non-threatening nature and output delivery effectiveness and efficiency – mainly small-scale infrastructure projects – also attracted donors' confidence and funds.[38] As the most ambitious decentralisation initiative in Cambodia in the late 1990s, CARERE/Seila came to dominate development intervention aimed at governance, tying much of donors' decentralisation funding to this approach (Blunt and Turner 2005: 85; Wescott 2001: 14). Its large scale and dominance, partly ruling out other approaches, however, at times made CARERE/Seila controversial within the 'development community' in Cambodia. Especially among NGOs with smaller-scale approaches, the critique was sometimes harsh of CARERE's large-scale sort of community development. In the

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[37] Seila is the Khmer word for 'foundation stone', reflecting the idea that decentralised and participatory rural development would lay the foundation for peace and socio-economic development.

[38] Apart from reflecting changing circumstances in Cambodia, from emergency needs to possibilities for sustainable development and good governance, as well as recent trends in development thinking, CARERE's popularity also illustrates the increasing preference among some donors to fund multilateral rather than bilateral intervention. Moreover, CARERE was an example of a multilateral agency doing typical NGO activities, such as participation and empowerment, on a large scale. At times, the project attracted half of UNDP's budget in Cambodia, and its size and disparateness allowed for adjustment to different donors' different and changing priorities. If one donor wanted to emphasise gender and another infrastructure, the budget could be tailored so that their respective contributions were shown to be used for just that within the overall CARERE project.

end, though, CARERE was generally deemed successful. Widely held to be a good example of a local development approach tailored to Cambodian conditions, and gradually adopting much of the latest development trends, CARERE provides some kind of 'best practice' (Evans 2000; Rudengren and Öjendal 2002; Horng et al. 2005: 157).

During its first years of implementation, CARERE/Seila was increasingly presented as a 'policy experiment'. Covering a limited area, it prepared for and developed into a blueprint for major reform on national scale. Though initially driven by external agents, governance and decentralisation reforms were increasingly adopted by the Cambodian government and as donors as well as the government became more inclined to enhancing local governance, the Seila programme provided the main source of inspiration (Kato et al. 2000; Smoke 2000; Charny 1999). In 1999, a government policy was adopted to establish rural development committees at province, commune and village levels, as already practiced in the Seila area (see below).[39] In early 2001, then, laws were passed on commune election and administration, paving the way for a nationwide commune reform in February 2002, including elections of Commune Councils with a considerable mandate (RGC 1999; 2000a; b; 2001; cf. Wescott 2001: 14; Blunt and Turner 2005; Öjendal 2005: 300).[40] The CARERE project was ended in 2000 and replaced by another UNDP multi-donor financed support project, Partnership for Local Governance (PLG). Seila, then, was finished by the end of 2006 and its activities were taken over by the National Committee for Management of the Decentralization and Deconcentration Reform (NCDD) (Horng et al. 2005: 158).

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[39] According to the 1999 policy of a Rural Development Structure (RDS), rural development committees were to be set up at village, commune and province levels. The Village Development Committees (VDCs) were elected by villagers, while the Commune Development Committees (CDCs) should consist of commune officials and village representatives who were to meet at regular meetings plus when the Local Development Fund (LDF) was allocated (RGC 1999).

[40] The establishment of elected Commune Councils is a significant political reform, though still representing a mild form of decentralisation. The Councils are intended to represent and encourage deepening and widening popular democracy and accountability. The hope is that accountability in local governance will make it more responsive to demands and more effective in delivering services. With development planning as one of their major functions, the Commune Councils are intended to help address poverty more directly, effectively and efficiently, assuming major responsibility for delivering basic public services. The central government has declared its commitment to devolve selected powers and functions to elected Commune Councils, along with corresponding resources, with a Commune Fund allocated to the Commune Councils. By 2004, the allocation was around US$ 8,000 per year. However, all financial procedures are handled by a clerk, who is provided (appointed and paid) by the Ministry of Interior to every Commune Council (Blunt and Turner 2005; Horng et al. 2005: 157, 162; Wescott 2001: 9f, 14, 18). The workings of the Commune Councils, however, are beyond the scope of this study.

At the local level, CARERE/Seila aimed at changing the role of local authorities, and thereby improving the relations between them and the local population. The commune gradually got a key role in the CARERE/Seila set-up. Among the main news were that its security tasks were giving way for provision of infrastructure and other services, and that some responsibilities and procedures became more regulated. With the idea of establishing the commune authorities as service providers, accountable to the local population, CARERE provided capacity building for the establishment and operation of the commune as a level of government and for this new role (UNDP 1995; cf. Blunt and Turner 2005). Among the intentions were also to 'empower people to be fully participant in the development process' by increasing their say in decision-making regarding development activities and improving representativeness in local bodies, including along gender lines. 'Participation' in development activities, then, was intended to motivate and enable villagers for more far-reaching political involvement, for example demanding their rights and objecting when the authorities do not fulfil their obligations.

Village level manifestations of CARERE/Seila included the introduction of development related bodies and positions, and the assignment of selected villagers for new tasks. New processes were also established for planning, decision-making and allocation of resources. CARERE/Seila was instrumental in setting up and training development committees at village and commune levels in target areas, alongside other bodies and positions initiated by CARERE and other development agencies. Village Development Committees (VDCs), which had to be approved by the Provincial Department of Rural Development (PDRD), were elected in order to create a sense of being represented among the population, while gender quotas were intended to guarantee the involvement and influence of women.[41] The role of the VDC was to plan and coordinate development activities in the village and to offer forums for village-level participation in determining development priorities, and to provide village-level control over the spending of resources that entered the village (Hughes 2003: 55f; referring to a study by Ledgerwood and Vijghens 2002).

At the time of the empirical research, which was before the elections of Commune Councils, there was also a Commune Development Committee (CDC) in every commune in the CARERE/Seila area, led by the Commune Chief and supposedly made up of two VDC members from every village and a few commune officials. An important component of the commune's new mandate was to allocate resources for rural development. A Local Development Fund (LDF) was disbursed to all communes in the target area, for the CDC to decide on its use after a participatory Local Planning Process (LPP), which was a central element of CARERE at the local level. The LPP consisted of a number of predefined steps, including meetings, workshops and PRA

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[41] Two out of five or three out of seven VDC members should be women. As a comparison, in the 2002 commune elections, when there were no gender quotas, eight per cent of the elected councillors were women (Rusten et al. 2004: 97).

exercises. The intention was to involve villagers in discussing and deciding on priority needs, and thereby create a sense of involvement, responsibility and ownership. Every village was to come up with a Village Development Plan (VDP) indicating development needs and priorities. The CDC was then to formulate a Commune Development Plan (CDP) and decide how to use the commune's LDF. A requirement for getting any resources from the LDF was that a local contribution in kind and cash was collected, covering a share of the project cost, with the purpose of further increasing the sense of ownership and responsibility. The LPP and the LDF allocation were facilitated by CARERE staff (Local Capacity Builders; LCB) and government employees with a salary supplement from CARERE (District and Province Facilitators; DFT, PFT). For various reasons, local infrastructure projects came to take precedence among the activities funded by the LDF, and in addition to the projects that came out of the Local Planning Process, CARERE also carried out sectoral activities in target areas, led by CARERE advisors within agriculture, education, health and water and sanitation (UNDP 1995; Rusten et al. 2004: 91).

1.3.4 Specifications and delimitations

CARERE/Seila, as a development intervention aimed at improving local governance in Cambodia, is deemed interesting in its own right as well as illustrative of wider phenomena. As discussed, a governance intervention is used to illustrate development intervention in general, and its implementation is used to illustrate the complexity, dynamics and specificity of local settings and the ensuing interplay. CARERE/Seila, then, is used as illustrative of development intervention aimed at improving local governance. As noted, CARERE/Seila was a hugely ambitious project/programme, introducing new administrative structures from national to village level, trying out new resource allocation mechanisms and providing input to various sectors, aiming to build capacity among government officials as well as to empower local populations. The empirical part of this study, however, is about the proceedings at implementation in a number of villages and thus limited to village level manifestations of CARERE/Seila, though with some glances at what happened at the commune level, as it affects the villages.

The study is also limited to a certain stage of implementation. The empirical research was conducted between June 1999 and November 2000, i.e. before the national governance reform and commune elections. A follow up, or several, would have provided interesting and valuable information – and a different kind of study. For practical and personal reasons, however, no further empirical research could be conducted, and the writing up of the thesis was delayed. The empirical parts of the thesis could therefore be read as if written soon after the empirical research was concluded. The fact that the empirical material is several years old does not necessarily have any detrimental effects on the overall value of the study. The purpose is not to evaluate a specific development intervention, nor to assess its long-term impact, nor to provide up-do-date empirical findings on the socio-politics of local Cambodia. Rather,

the purpose is to explore what may happen in a local setting when a development intervention is implemented. Most likely, villagers' perceptions and responses, and the ensuing patterns of accommodation in the case study areas, were different some years later. While such differences are related to issues of continuous appropriation and unpredictability that the study deals with, the actual content of the differences in these cases is outside its scope.

Though part of a big, ambitious and well-funded project, based on certain ideas and with certain aims, the concrete manifestations of CARERE/Seila in many cases resemble those of other development interventions. In many villagers' understanding, different aid activities are not clearly separated and people's experiences and perceptions of CARERE/Seila cannot be clearly distinguished from those of other interventions. As will be seen, the experiences and proceedings of certain aid activities also affect the perceptions and appropriation of others. Therefore, villagers' perceptions of and responses to other interventions are considered and discussed when deemed relevant, though focus remains on CARERE/Seila.

The focus of the empirical study is also on 'stakeholders'' perspectives, rather than on those of development workers, i.e. intervention designers and implementers. What is studied is the interplay that takes place in the local settings where intervention is implemented, the processes of negotiation, contestation, appropriation and accommodation as villagers encounter new features in their life-worlds. This is done through ethnographic research, involving extensive interviews with local actors. Meanwhile, interventionist rationales are traced and elaborated through literature studies and analysis. Other methods, such as in-depth interviews with development policy formulators and 'practitioners', would have provided other, and indeed interesting, perspectives. The intention is however not to reveal such actors' personal beliefs and motivations. As will be discussed, a fair guess is that most development 'practitioners' would not claim to hold the rationales that are traced in chapter 3. As noted, however, the point of departure is that intervention keeps being designed and implemented *as if* these were the rationales, and that they are therefore well worth making explicit.[42]

1.4 Outline of the thesis

In the next chapter, the research approach, design and methods are presented. The notion of intervention in development thinking and practice is discussed, and the study's placement within the field of development studies is defined. The choice of qualitative case studies for the empirical research is also motivated and the methods are described.

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[42] Digging deeper into why practice continues as if these were the rationales could be a next step, and in-depth interviews with experienced development 'practitioners' could be a method. Research on the inner workings of major development agencies have been done by, among others, Bebbington et al. 2005, Mosse 2004b, Wade 1997; 2003.

In chapter 3, interventionist rationales in development thinking and practice are traced and illuminated. The approach when searching for inherent qualities and underlying assumptions of post-Second World War development intervention is to situate it in the context of other sorts of intervention aimed at societal change and improvement of human welfare. I start with an explorative discussion of the sort of large-scale social engineering that was part of 19th-20th century high modernism. Largely based on Scott's accounts of various efforts to design cities, revolutions, scientific forestry and more, some ideational, almost philosophical, underpinnings of high modernist intervention are illuminated (Scott 1998). Moving on to a concrete predecessor to current development intervention, I look into intervention aimed at improving human welfare by colonial powers in their colonies, especially towards the end of the colonial era. In order to better understand the development intervention that followed after decolonisation, the means, motives and underlying logics of what I call 'colonial welfare intervention' are explored. The next step is to enquire into the history of post-Second World War development intervention, in terms of motives, means and extent, also elaborating my argument that the practice remains a matter of intervention. Preparing for the empirical part, emphasis is throughout on governance intervention and how it represents and reflects the interventionist discourse. Against the background of high modernist social engineering, colonial welfare intervention and post-Second World War aid history, some of the thinking is delineated behind current development – and especially governance – intervention. The analysis focuses on apparent assumptions about societal change and the roles, rights and responsibilities of different actors involved, which help explain the interventionist discourse and the widespread practice of development intervention.

In chapter 4, some views are presented of the qualities of a local setting as well as some arguments of what may happen as development intervention is implemented. This leads to the formulation of a number of research questions regarding the implementation interplay that guide the empirical study, asking into certain topics, focusing attention and organising the findings.

In chapters 5-8, the empirical findings of local dynamics and implementation interplay at the case study sites are presented and discussed. While chapters 5-7 start out from the respective cases, in chapter 8 findings are brought together and systematised following the research questions presented in chapter 4.

In chapter 9, then, findings and analysis of interventionist rationales from chapter 3 are compared to those of local dynamics and implementation interplay from the empirical study in chapters 5-8. Returning to the research problem of how interventionist rationales unfold at implementation, conclusions are drawn on the grand idea of intervention, implications are discussed and further research is suggested.

2. RESEARCH APPROACH AND METHODS

Development research can have different focuses and be conducted in different ways. In order to locate the study of how interventionist rationales unfold as development intervention is implemented in a local setting, in this chapter I will situate the phenomenon of intervention as I see it within development studies. I will also motivate the choice of qualitative case studies for the empirical part and describe the design and methods of the empirical research.

2.1 Development studies and intervention

Development research, as I know it, is normative, problem oriented and multidisciplinary. It is partly driven by values and oriented towards desirable change, and it takes its point of departure in a problem that is deemed relevant to research rather than in a particular discipline or method. Over the years, certain issues have caught my interest as worthy of concern and enquiry. Some of these can be merged into the phenomenon of development intervention, which is the starting point of this study. Setting out, then, to research this phenomenon, it is valuable to be able to use methods and findings from various scientific disciplines. Though the thesis is grounded in the tradition of the Department of Peace and Development Research (now integrated into the School of Global Studies) at the University of Gothenburg, it also draws on sociology and anthropology as well as on ethnographic methods.

Intervention is a key notion in mainstream development thinking. There is an old and ongoing debate within the discipline on where development studies should be located on the continuum from intellectual analysis and interpretation of processes of change to being mainly concerned with policy formulation and technical/practical measures required to implement change. The debate involves different views on whether the main task is to analyse or to 'do' development, also reflected in the distinction between anthropology of and in development (Kothari 2005b: 3-7; Lewis and Mosse 2006c: 2; cf. Schuurman 2009).

On the one hand, it has been claimed that what justifies development studies as a specialism is the presumption that it is dedicated and equipped to generate applied knowledge of practical benefit in the formulation and implementation of development policies and interventions (Bernstein 2005: 111). Meanwhile, Booth has pointed to a gulf between academic research and practice, claiming that crucial real world questions are not being asked (Booth 1993). Edwards, too, has pointed to the weak link between understanding and action, claiming that development studies does not present any pertinent solutions and has no positive influence on poor people's lives, and that research and practice should therefore be brought closer together (Edwards 1989: 123ff; cf. 1994).

On the other hand, the close connection between development studies and aid practice has been deemed problematic. Development researchers tend to get close to

development practice through consultancies and research funding, which highlights the difficulty of combining disengaged critical analysis and constructive engagement, i.e. of being both a critical researcher and a policy adviser (Bernstein 2005; Lewis and Mosse 2006c: 6). According to Kothari, the imperative to achieve development goals and targets makes the field of study unreflexive (Kothari 2005: 2ff). The common call for policy relevance also brings to mind the issue of distance to what is being studied, which is normal in social science. Bernstein, for example, points out that intellectual work requires distance from the agendas of official development discourse and practice, while Corbridge talks about 'the dirty worlds of policy-making' that development studies cannot escape, and which lends it a reason for being, while also rendering it impotent, apolitical and supportive of a series of interventions that disempower and even infantilise 'the poor' (Bernstein 2005: 127; Corbridge 2007: 202f).

The debate is thus on the importance of practice in relation to theory. Whether arguing for policy relevance or critical analysis, however, the idea of intervention is present, explicitly or implicitly, i.e. societal change/development is assumed to happen through intervention from the outside into various local settings. Efforts to understand processes of development and underdevelopment are geared towards how to intervene in less developed areas in order to steer those processes and create desirable change, or towards analysing such intervention.

The normative point of departure of this study is to keep an analytical distance, in order to judiciously investigate interventionist thinking and practice.[43] I find the call for real world relevance natural considering the burning problems dealt with, and the aim should reasonably be to contribute to the understanding of real world problems and thereby to the possibilities of improving living conditions around the world. This, I believe, makes development studies worthwhile. I do not believe, however, that every piece of development research could or should be 'policy relevant' in terms of short-term applicability. Relevance is not only about suggesting 'better' practice, but also about questioning the established practice and assumptions. In my view, it is crucial – for the scientific discipline as well as for the real world – that fundamental questioning of established thinking and practice is allowed and welcome, also without simultaneously presenting full-fledged alternatives. Part of social research should be to examine what is commonly taken for granted. As Lewis and Mosse note, critical ethnography of development policy and practice is increasingly important (Lewis and Mosse 2006c: 2). Illuminating deep-seated difficulties may create better understanding, which, even without 'solving' the problem, may contribute to fundamental – and relevant – rethinking. In this study, mainstream interventionist thinking and practice are examined and reflected upon, without formulating an alternative to intervention, and indeed without rejecting intervention per se.

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[43] This calls to mind my relation to the project under study, see 2.3.1.

Tracing implicit assumptions and postulations in a dominant discourse is a matter of deconstruction, which has a touch of post-modernism/post-colonialism/post-developmentalism. It may become a matter of picking apart established thinking and practice, with all their vested interests, and perhaps pulling away their fundaments. As touched upon, findings may also point to fairly futile assumptions and rationales that, when made explicit, few people would assign to. Claiming, then, that widespread practice is built on these assumptions may not seem credible, but could be regarded as the building of a strawman in order to criticise aid practice. Finding that the assumptions are futile could, on the one hand, be deemed trivial – everybody knows already and nobody holds those assumptions anyway. On the other hand, however, such awareness does apparently not steer practice. As touched upon, and recognising the risk of being accused of building a strawman, the point of departure in this study is that interventionist practice goes on *as if* based on certain – perhaps futile – assumptions and rationales. Tracing and making visible beliefs about societal change and different actors' roles, which help explain prevailing interventionist practice, is therefore valuable – even if, when made explicit, it may be difficult to find someone who claims to hold them.

Examining non-articulated assumptions is not easy. As Jørgensen points out, it is difficult to analyse one's own discursive foundation, such as the prevailing culture of development (Jørgensen 2006: 6, 21). With intervention, then, constituting such an intrinsic part of development thinking and practice, it is difficult to pull it out for analysis and for revealing underlying beliefs. This partly explains why the interventionist aspect of aid is rarely discussed. I remain concerned and curious, though, to understand the rationales that motivate and make possible the widespread and rarely questioned idea and practice of intervening in distant societies in order to achieve certain societal change. Recognising the difficulty, this therefore remains my ambition.

Another risk in social science, pointed out by Alvesson and Sköldberg, is that of reducing findings and knowledge to common sense (Alvesson and Sköldberg 1994: 91). Research is often a matter of restructuring available knowledge so that certain issues can be better understood. During the course of such research, however, much of the emerging findings may come to appear self-evident. Arguing, as in the introductory chapter, that an interplay emerges between a development intervention and a local setting and that local conditions therefore matter for the proceedings and outcomes, may be perceived as coming up with well-established and common sense knowledge, and the contribution of such findings may be doubted. Again, however, such perhaps self-evident notions are apparently not taken into account when aid activities are designed and implemented. Proceedings at implementation are therefore well worth illuminating, and analysing them from the point of view of underlying rationales is valuable.

As noted, a conclusion from a critical (post-modern/post-colonial/post-development) stance could be to reject the whole idea of development intervention as

being inherently based on futile assumptions and failing to take local dynamics and implementation interplay into account. Meanwhile, critical questioning of interventionist thinking and practice could also be interpreted as support to a neo-liberal view, rejecting state intervention as mainly a distortion of market principles. This is not my intention. I have no desire to throw out the baby with the bathwater, in neither the post-modern nor the neo-liberal direction. In my view, the conclusion from deconstructing interventionist rationales is not to rule out the possibility of actively engaging to improve living conditions around the world. Rather, illuminating what is implicit in established practice and revealing perhaps fundamental difficulties may contribute to a more nuanced and comprehensive understanding and point to the need for thorough rethinking. Beyond critical deconstruction, and though not a short-term goal of this thesis, findings may in the longer run open up for engaging on different premises, with different ambitions and expectations, giving selves and others different roles.

2.2 Qualitative case studies of local dynamics and implementation interplay

For the empirical research, the choice of making qualitative case studies was an easy one. Qualitative research is based on the assumption that the world is holistic, containing many dimensions and continuously changing. A qualitative case study, then, is an intensive study of a certain entity or event which is treated as a meaningful whole. Many variables are explored and many different sorts of empirical material can be used, with the aim of describing and analysing a delineated phenomenon in qualitative and complex terms. Case studies are suitable for studying contemporary phenomena in real-life contexts. Based in such real situations, they are particularly useful when there are no clear boundaries between a phenomenon and the context, and when the researcher has little control over events. At case level, events and processes depend on and are placed in their context, and sense can be made of seemingly unrelated phenomena. Qualitative case studies are by their nature sensitive to complexity. Oriented towards actual events, human agency and process, they are suitable for answering 'how' and 'why' questions rather than finding causal relationships. By producing rich materials, thick descriptions and in-depth, detailed analyses, a qualitative case study can catch a whole situation and environment, allowing every case to tell its story, illuminating its heterogeneity and particularity, and thus contributing to holistic and deep understanding (Yin 2009; Ragin 1991; 1987; Merriam 1994; Alvesson and Sköldberg 1994; Casley and Lury 1986).

In qualitative research, the world is also regarded as subjective, which makes qualitative case studies suitable for actor-oriented research, the essence of which is that it is grounded in people's everyday life experiences and understandings. Focused on the ongoing social constructions of reality, the aim of actor-oriented research is to understand the dynamics and processes that people's actions give rise to. The ambition is therefore to catch people's perspectives, perceptions and meanings, to see reality the

ways those who live in it do, to understand what it means to people to be part of a specific context, how they interpret it and how they operate in their everyday life (Olivier de Sardan 2005; Long 2001: xii; 1992a: 5; Bernard 1995: 390; Merriam 1994: 19, 23ff, 30ff, 44ff, 178; Alvesson and Sköldberg 1994: 66, 99ff; Arce et al. 1994; Bryman 1995).

This makes qualitative and actor-oriented case studies well suited for analysing what happens as a development intervention is implemented in a number of local settings, i.e. when there is no clear and single set of outcomes and the presumed causal links are too complex for surveys (Yin 2009: 20). With a non-linear and non-deterministic interpretation, qualitative and actor-oriented case studies provide an open-ended way of looking at intervention scenarios, with the aim of creating an ethnographic understanding of the intervention's 'social life' and the socially constructed processes that take place. Implied is an analysis of the 'interface' situations that emerge as an intervention is implemented.[44] Comprehending the intervention as an issue of intercultural exchange and an arena of competing interests, Long and others call for a dynamic approach, which stresses the interplay and mutual determination of 'internal' and 'external' forces and relationships, and which recognises the central role played by human action and consciousness (Long 2002: 6; 1992b: 20; Nederveen Pieterse 2001: 67). Close attention is therefore paid to different actors' experiences, interpretations and responses. Acknowledging the existence of multiple socially constructed realities, focus is on different actors' life-worlds and the complex interlocking of their various practices which is involved at implementation of a development intervention. As people try to handle the situations they face, development processes come to have different significance for different actors, and throughout, the idea is to explain differential responses (Lewis and Mosse 2006b: 9ff; Long 2002: 1ff, 11; 2001: 14f, 21; 1992a: 5f, 20, 27, 271; Davies 1999; Booth 1994b: 16f; Alvesson and Sköldberg 1994: 101f; Arce and Long 1992: 214).

As noted, my intention is to empirically explore the interplay that emerges as a development intervention is implemented. The actor-oriented approach calls for a detailed ethnographic understanding of everyday life and, in order to understand the various processes involved, the idea is to learn from the local settings in which people develop their own strategies and cope with their own problems. In-depth case studies will therefore be conducted in a few villages, without initially focusing on the intervention, but rather looking at a wide range of issues and variables. Starting out from the local context, and including the intervention only as part of the setting and of people's life-worlds, will help illuminate and understand the dynamics around a development intervention as it evolves in its context. A wide understanding of local settings and dynamics will also make it possible to illustrate how external factors are

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[44] As noted, Long talks about an 'interface' where different life-worlds or social fields meet and interact, such as at the encounters of planned intervention. Olivier de Sardan instead uses the metaphor of an 'arena'. See 4.2.

internalised and have come to form part of local resources and constraints and thus of people's strategies.

Ethnography is commonly associated with anthropological methods, which usually involve an extended stay in a local society. Also shorter stays, however, can be defined as ethnography when the methods build on close and extended contacts with the society or group under study (Alvesson and Sköldberg 1994: 109). Findings can then provide a nuanced picture of the interplay in that particular setting and an ethnography of the socially constructed processes involved can be critical in understanding how events actually unfold and why intervention does or does not work as intended (Lewis and Mosse 2006b: 15; Mosse 2005). As Crewe and Harrison note, detailed ethnographic material provides a messy but accurate view of reality (Crewe and Harrison 1998: 5). As will be noted, the approach also results in far more extensive empirical material than strictly motivated by the research problem. The idea is to give a more holistic picture of the setting, before selecting and pulling out what is needed to answer the specific research questions. Focus will therefore gradually move towards villagers' perceptions, experiences and behaviour in relation to development intervention, and towards how such intervention is accommodated in their minds and lives as well as in local socio-economics and socio-politics (Long 2002: 2, 10; 2001: 25; Long and Ploeg 1994; Long 1992b: 35; Merriam 1994: 46).

The aim of qualitative case studies is commonly to find underlying patterns that are valid also outside the specific case and ideas that help explain those patterns. Though qualitative research does not lead to statistical generalisations, an illustrative example can have general implications. By focusing on a particular case, something is illuminated about a phenomenon and a general problem. A case study can give rise to concepts and hypotheses – though these will be continuously changing – and help generate general theoretical statements about regularities in social structures and events. If more case studies are conducted, then, they can be compared. The analysis is likely to be easier and the findings are likely to be more robust with several cases than with one. Discovering what exists in several cases helps create abstractions, build general explanation and perhaps make more far-reaching generalisations. A common process, therefore, is to first intensively study a limited reality and then compare the findings with other cases. A way of simplifying complexity is by examining similarities and differences among a limited number of cases. In a holistic, qualitative comparative analysis of cases, a combination of internal and external analysis is used, i.e. analysis of events and processes within a case is combined with analysis of patterns across cases. Every particular case is interpreted as within an overall pattern, and the interpretation is strengthened by new cases (Ragin 1991; 1987; Yin 2009: 156; Bernard 1995: 360ff; Merriam 1994: 25ff, 61, 165; Alvesson and Sköldberg 1994: 40, 64-69, 85). This is well in line with the methods used in this thesis. Three village case studies are conducted and, as will be seen, patterns and meanings within every case are presented and analysed before findings from all three cases are pulled together and similarities and differences analysed.

This manner of gradually looking for and interpreting underlying patterns and generating meanings, is part of an abductive approach which is commonly used in qualitative case studies. Such an approach implies starting out from and returning to empirical data, but also rising above them and not rejecting theoretical preconceived ideas. It thus promotes intense cross-fertilisation and feedback between theory and empirical analysis, where empirically informed theory and theory-loaded empirical evidence alternate, both being reinterpreted in the light of the other. This makes it possible to dig gradually deeper along a learning spiral where induction and deduction, in combination, strengthen each other, and theory as well as empirical facts are gradually reinterpreted. This gives rise to what Alvesson and Sköldberg call 'empirically grounded fantasy', reminding of what Bernard describes as developing, testing and modifying ideas. Though empirical facts should not completely determine the research, the analysis is throughout grounded in empirical data. According to Merriam, the more grounded the results are in empirical data, the more credible they are (Alvesson and Sköldberg 1992: 40ff, 92; 328, 358; Merriam 1994: 72f, 135; Bernard 1995: 360).

The abductive learning spiral takes place during as well as after data collection. Since qualitative research soon gives rise to vast amounts of material, the analysis must start while data is still being collected, in order for the material to not get unmanageable. The researcher must continuously go through her or his field notes, make reflections and ask analytical questions. As the empirical material is collected and analysed, research issues as well as methodology are continuously modified, and decisions made on what further data to collect. Emerging ideas can also be tested with respondents, and the study gradually steered and delineated by findings as they are made. The abductive approach then allows for such flexibility and adaptability, and for turning newly encountered situations into opportunities, rather than threats (Yin 2009: 69ff; Alvesson and Sköldberg 1994: 84f; Merriam 1994: 133, 137f). This poses high demands on the researcher and, according to Yin, makes case study research among the hardest types of research to do. In the absence of routine procedures, the researcher is the most important instrument for data collection as well as analysis and throughout relies on her or his own judgement and capacity. She or he must have a firm grasp of the issues being studied and, considering the open nature of qualitative case studies, must also be flexible, able to tolerate ambiguity and comfortable in addressing uncertainties and change direction during the course of research.

Recognising all of this, to me it seems both difficult and highly rewarding to conduct good qualitative case studies. The lack of absolute rules and exact procedures leaves a lot of responsibility and difficult decisions with the researcher, but also a lot of room for manoeuvre – necessary for the kind of initially open-ended research that I conducted. Largely empirically grounded, the research questions in this study emerged as material was collected and preliminarily analysed, which again points to the compilation of a much larger empirical material than what was eventually used for strictly analysing the research problem. New findings and insights continuously

inspired to new analysis and new issues to be followed up, while the research questions helped focus attention, ask into certain topics and organise findings. The first case study provided most new information, which could be partly confirmed and partly contradicted/complemented by the following two cases, pointing to emerging recurrent as well as divergent patterns. With the first two case studies conducted in parallel, as noted above, I also constantly compared them and explored at one site what had been found at the other. The third case, then, gained from the previous ones, and could, thanks to the preliminary findings and research questions, be more focused – though still adjusted and modified (cf. Yin 2009: 95). Findings and preliminary analysis were also continuously tested with villagers (see 2.3).

As noted, an aim of qualitative and actor-oriented case studies is to understand how the world is perceived by people who live in it, which involves discovering how people categorise their experiences and analysing the meanings that they attach to various features. To find out what other people think and are concerned with requires personal involvement and the ability to get close to and familiar with what or whom is being studied. The researcher must therefore have empathy and be good at communicating and creating rapport with the respondents, at asking the right questions and listening carefully to many individuals and various opinions. In order to understand inside perspectives, a case study researcher must however combine such involvement and observation with being distanced enough to be able to observe and analyse, and to describe to an outsider. There are also obvious limits to how 'close' – or how much 'inside' – a researcher can get. Though aiming to understand local actors' perceptions and experiences, the researcher must be aware of her or his values, biases and preconceived ideas. All observations and analysis are filtered through her or his worldview and interpretations, and the researcher must therefore discipline her or his subjectivity, continuously questioning and reappraising underlying assumptions. Throughout, it is also important to keep in mind that you remain an 'outsider' with the task to analyse local perspectives from a distance (Alvesson and Sköldberg 1994: 110; Merriam 1994: 32f, 47ff, 107f, 179).

Though analysis thus goes on throughout the empirical research, it is when the data collection has finished that the most intensive analytical work starts. Abduction however continues and the analysis still implies moving between concrete information and abstract concepts, between description and interpretation (Merriam 1994: 139, 158). For interpretation of qualitative data, too, there are no obvious rules or procedures, and the researcher's judgement remains central. Though simple categorisation and sorting of data is not encouraged, the vast material must be organised so that specific data can be found, and reduced so that the contents can be communicated. In comprising, creating meanings, interpreting and drawing conclusions, the researcher's intuition and capacity to see things in the material and to point them out are crucial. A common difficulty in qualitative research, then, is that the researcher is very close to the data, which may make it difficult to verbalise why

something is important or to think in speculative ways (Alvesson and Sköldberg 1994: 325, 366; Merriam 1994: 139, 142f, 152f, 163).

This is well in line with considerations made during this study. As noted, I and my colleagues (see 2.3.2) inevitably remained 'outsiders' – for good and bad. Striving to understand villagers' relations and perceptions, repeated and extended stays along with my colleagues' thorough familiarity with rural Cambodia created a certain level of personal involvement and 'insideness'. As noted, however, in order to interpret and communicate the findings, it is also necessary to distance oneself from what is being studied. In this study, as mentioned, the main analysis and writing up were delayed and – though an unintended consequence and though more up-to-date empirical material would have been valuable – the time lag helped me take a step back and view the empirical material from more of a distance, summarising and drawing out the main points.

Emphasising actors' perspectives also creates a risk of trivialising results. Rather than just revealing informants' spontaneous categories and uncritically accepting their analysis, the researcher must switch between listening and being critical to what is being said. When analysing replies and perceptions, it must also be considered for example whether something was said in public or private, in order to give a good impression, spontaneously or probed by the researcher etc. On the other hand, not fully accepting or believing in respondents' replies and analysis may imply a know-all attitude. According to Alvesson and Sköldberg, social sciences traditionally moralise about people's common knowledge, and by overlooking a respondent's self-image, the researcher claims authority over her or him (Alvesson and Sköldberg 1994: 95, 104, 343, 346; Merriam 1994: 181; Bernard 1995: 361f, 388-392). Related to this is the much discussed issue of claiming to give voice to marginalised and silenced people. While societies consist of various voices, ethnographies limit them. What is conveyed is obviously determined by the researcher's selection and interpretation and many voices are not being heard. Moreover, while societies are changing, descriptions are static (Alvesson and Sköldberg 1994: 251ff). Recognising these difficulties, this study is in no way aimed or claimed to give voice to Cambodian villagers, or to the population of a certain village, in a full or 'fair' manner. I have used what I have heard and seen to illuminate and analyse the research problem and questions that I have defined. Also, the picture conveyed of local dynamics related to development intervention are, as noted, from a limited stage of intervention, and does therefore not represent the continuous changes that keep going on.

Another, but also related, risk of qualitative research is that of stopping at a superficial level of description. As touched upon, qualitative case studies may result in naive empiricism and common sense interpretations, with findings being overly simplified or exaggerated, and the analysis trivial, misleading or even false. A case study report should however be an interpretative presentation. If the researcher does not make clear the kind of links and connections that she or he has made, but leaves to the reader to draw conclusions, crucial points may be missed and nothing new may be

said (Merriam 1994: 47, 143, 208, Alvesson and Sköldberg 1994: 74, 87, 91, 113). After extensive empirical research and reading of related literature, it may be difficult to draw the line between common sense and appropriate analysis, determining what is obvious to a reader and what needs to be pointed out. What to the researcher have turned into fairly expected answers and fairly evident interpretations may, if pointed out, be revealing to the reader. What level of analysis is most appropriate also differs, largely depending on the kind of material to be presented. While raw data need a specific description, patterns are conveyed through general description, and higher levels of abstraction require more comments from the researcher. Anecdotes and extracts from interviews can also make the reader quickly understand what has taken a long time for the researcher to figure out, illustrating the researcher's ideas as well as patterns that have emerged. According to Merriam, the results of qualitative case studies should be qualitatively presented. As noted, qualitative data are deep and detailed, and descriptions need to be thick and exhaustive enough for the reader to decide whether the conclusions are sensible. Details are thus necessary, both to convey an experience and to show on what grounds the analysis has been made. Using direct quotes is also appropriate since the ambition is to illustrate respondents' perceptions and perspectives, and to convey a picture that is consistent with their views. Quotes are however never exact, but should, as Bernard emphasises, be edited. Spoken language is always quite rough and would look bad in writing, which would also create an imbalance in relation to the parts written by the researcher. The need and value of providing a rich and vivid picture of the context studied must however be weighed against the risk of ending up in too long and detailed descriptions (Merriam 1994: 22, 47f, 83ff, 133f, 204, 207f; Bernard 1995: 363ff). Recognising the difficulty of striking the right balance between description and analysis, between conveying a 'sense' of the people and places under study, and an interpretation that makes the reading interesting in a more general way, I have used a lot of quotes and 'stories' in the case study presentations, but I also portray overall patterns.

2.3 Design and methods of the empirical research

Over a period of 18 months, qualitative case studies were conducted in three villages where CARERE/Seila was operational. In this section, I will discuss my relation to the project under study, the general set-up of the empirical research, the selection of case study villages and the more detailed methods used.

2.3.1 My relation to UNDP/CARERE

Two of the case studies were undertaken while I was associated to the CARERE project, while the third was conducted afterwards, though while still in close contact with CARERE managers and staff. For three years (June 1997-June 2000) I held a

trainee position at UNDP to work for CARERE.[45] The first two years I was mainly occupied with information and donor reporting, based at the Phnom Penh office, though with frequent visits to the five provinces where the project was operating. For the third year, a special agreement was made, according to which I was to conduct an independent study on experiences and perceptions of development activities among villagers in the project area. I was thus still employed by UNDP, and offered generous office and logistical support by CARERE in Phnom Penh as well as in the provinces where the studies were conducted (Hasselskog 2000a). This support continued during the third case study, which I did as part of a different research project (Hasselskog 2000b; Öjendal et al. 2001).[46] During all three studies, I and my colleagues presented preliminary findings to CARERE managers and staff and received their feedback.

The initial intention of the PhD project, then, was to conduct further extensive research in the same three villages. As noted, this became impossible and the thesis thus builds on empirical material that was collected during and soon after my association with CARERE. The close connection to the project under study gives rise to questions of how it might have influenced the research questions and analysis as well as villagers' and local officials' views of me. I believe that the connections have not had any detrimental effects on the results. My and my colleagues' prolonged and repeated stays in the case study villages (see below) and our inclination to learn from villagers about a range of issues apparently made villagers regard us as very different from project staff – though still 'outsiders' and still people who it may be best to stay well with. Two years of work at CARERE previous to the studies, including visits to numerous communes and villages across five provinces, had also given me thorough knowledge of the intentions and workings of the project and familiarity with issues of concern. On the one hand, it could be suspected that the connections would make me uncritical of shortcomings within the project. During my UN employment and throughout the work with the thesis, I have withheld my view of CARERE as representing some of the latest trends within development aid and something of a 'best practice'. On the other hand, the thesis could be read as a thorough critique of interventionist aid practices, of which CARERE is an illustration. The main analysis, however, concerns interventionist practice generally, and not CARERE specifically.

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[45] This was part of the Junior Professional Officer (JPO) programme, within which Sida recruits and funds young people with an academic degree for between one and three years, with the aim of increasing their international experience and the Swedish presence in the UN system.

[46] In late 2000, I had a short-term assignment with Stockholm Environment Institute (SEI) to conduct a village case study within the framework of the Resources Policy Support Initiative (Repsi). Repsi was a research collaboration between the World Resources Institute (WRI) and a number of local and international organisations, looking at natural resource management and decentralisation among highland indigenous people in Southeast Asia.

2.3.2 General set-up

The first two case studies were conducted with the help of two Cambodian research assistants, both women, while in the third study only one of them participated. These women's professional and personal qualities contributed hugely to the study. One of them was an employee of the Ministry of Rural Development, with extensive experience of field studies, mainly from her attachment to the Cambodian Development Research Institute (CDRI). She is also the daughter of a District Governor in a different province, brought up in the rural areas and therefore very familiar with village life and local politics. Her insights and manners helped me understand village and commune politics, and ensure that we behaved appropriately in relation to both local officials and villagers. The other research assistant was a former (and afterwards again) employee of the International Red Cross in Phnom Penh, where she was brought up (apart from her early childhood during the Pol Pot regime). In addition to excellent English skills and a capacity to work extremely hard, she has an extraordinary capability to adjust and come on good terms with people in villages – and to genuinely enjoy spending time there.

As noted, the first two case studies overlapped in time, while the third one was conducted after the first two were finished. We visited all villages three times over a period of between six and ten months in each case. The visits were between two and three weeks long, except for the first stay in the third village which was only a few days. Doing repeated visits proved extremely valuable, as 'coming back' made a huge difference both to villagers' attitudes towards the research team, and to our ability to interpret what we saw and heard. The second and third times we arrived to each of the villages, people received us as old acquaintances, eager to tell us what had happened since last time and much more open on sensitive issues. Visiting the villages over extended periods also allowed us to follow certain events as they developed, which came to provide illustrative stories of key issues. As noted, the emerging and preliminary analysis also gained a lot from switching between the first two villages (as well as the provincial towns and the national capital).

The selection of the case study villages was done in collaboration with CARERE provincial staff, and in the third case it also included discussions with province officials and staff from a local NGO (see 2.3.3). When a village had been preliminarily selected, in the two lowland provinces, one of the research assistants went ahead for a few hours visit to introduce the team and the task to the Village Chief and others, ask for their agreement and make practical arrangements. After such a visit, we once had to select another village since the first one was deemed too insecure. In the highland province, I and my colleague went together for a few days acquaintance visit to the village before the first longer stay. In the lowland provinces, a CARERE driver took us all the way to the villages, while in the highland case, we arranged with villagers to take us by boat between the district centre and the village. In all three villages, we lodged with a family and arranged with someone to cook most of our meals, bringing some food items and paying for additional food and firewood. Within the villages we

walked, sometimes long distances. To go outside, however, for example to the commune centre or a nearby pagoda, we occasionally took a motorcycle taxi.

Both research assistants had previous experience of interpretation and field research, and during the first two case studies, they took turns interpreting for me and conducting their own interviews. They were thus deeply involved in the study and we developed very good cooperation during the interviews and the preliminary analysis. My colleagues helped me understand much more than the words that were being translated, explaining implications and connotations of what had been said and how it had been said, that would otherwise have remained largely hidden to me. They guided me through village life and politics and picked up information and examples from informal conversations that we could follow up in interviews. The set-up of them taking turns interpreting and making own interviews also proved valuable in various ways. It disciplined us to report and discuss findings on a daily basis, it helped ensure that we were on the same track and compare findings from different sorts of interviews and observations, it brought out preliminary analyses, and it varied my colleagues' tasks.

In the third case study, I and my colleague worked together most of the time, though she also spent several days in the village while I conducted interviews in the provincial capital (partly with the help of another interpreter). In this village, we were joined most of the time by a woman from the village who interpreted between Khmer and Kavet when necessary and provided valuable information and explanations between interviews (see 2.3.4). An associate from Cambodian Researchers for Development (CRD) also joined us for one day, when he conducted two PRA exercises which verified and added to previous information.

2.3.3 Selection of case studies

As discussed, a case study is per definition focused on a particular case, which is studied in depth in order to help understand a wider phenomenon. The research process therefore goes from defining a question to selecting a case, and the case is not selected in order to be representative, but to illuminate the research questions – because it is interesting in itself, and because knowledge about it will contribute to a holistic understanding of the phenomenon (Yin 2009; Merriam 1994: 24, 58f, 164). My aim when selecting case study villages was thus to find illustrative examples of how governance intervention may be perceived and accommodated in a local setting, in order to illuminate the research problem of how interventionist rationales unfold at implementation. As Ragin notes, cases should be similar enough and separate enough to permit treating them as comparable instances of the same general phenomenon (Ragin 1992). I was looking to ensure contrasts on certain aspects that emerged as likely to influence local perceptions and responses, while having cases as similar as possible on other aspects. With two lowland villages inhabited by Khmers and one highland village inhabited by people of the Kavet ethnicity, the most striking differences are between the two former on the one hand and the one latter on the other.

As will be seen, however, the two lowland villages also differ from each other on a range of aspects, while the third one is illustrative of patterns that occur in lowland areas too.

The only initial selection criterion was that the case study villages were to have been included in the CARERE project for several years, in order for people to have experienced and accommodated some of its manifestations. When selecting the first case, I was looking for quite an 'ordinary' Cambodian village, which I believed would make a good starting point. I went for a more than average remote and poor village, however, which I thought would make influences of and reactions to development intervention clearly perceptible. The first village thus selected, in a poor but relatively peaceful province, is an old and demographically stable village where the same families have been living for generations and where the CARERE project has operated for several years.[47] It is the smallest and most remote village in the commune and was first touched by international development intervention in 1993, after which a few other agencies have entered. There were indeed special – and tempting – alternative villages with more exceptional features of different kinds. Though they would have provided interesting information, I believe that the village selected was an appropriate first case.

When the second case was to be selected, the preliminary findings pointed to a few factors as important for the issues under study. It was apparent that social cohesion, partly related to demographic stability, affected people's thinking and behaviour in relation to governance intervention, and I therefore went for a village where the population had been less stable than in the first case. I was also looking for a village where – in contrast to the first case – many different development organisations had been working before CARERE, as that was likely to influence people's perceptions of and responses to current intervention. The second case study village thus selected, in a richer but for a longer time insecure province, is, like the first case, the smallest and most remote in the commune, but has experienced extensive development intervention before and after the CARERE project. The village is demographically less unified than the first case, with almost 20 per cent of the population being returnees, mainly from the refugee camps on the Thai boarder, who settled at the outskirts of the village in the early 1990s. With no previous links to the village, most of these people have remained largely detached from the original village. The criterion of demographic instability was still only partly met, since the rest of the population turned out to have been very stable. Even so, I decided to continue working in this village, partly because social cohesion was nevertheless markedly lower than in the first case, also within the original village. The village had also turned out to be illustrative on other aspects, not least regarding village leadership and the commune's role in development, which had emerged as crucial issues, and which differed a lot from the first case.

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[47] For detailed descriptions of the case study villages, see 5.1, 6.1 and 7.1.

The third case study was conducted in a mountainous, forested and sparsely populated province, inhabited mainly by around ten different ethnic highland minority groups, in addition to lowland Khmers and Lao. CARERE started operating in this province in 1996, but only in eleven villages. Most villages in this province have less experience of development intervention than the two lowland case study villages, are more remote from administrative/trade centres and have lower material living standards. Related to governance issues, most of the population also has far less contact with the state authorities. Accordingly, the third village selected is less integrated in the Cambodian state and the market economy than the first two, but is, like them, the smallest and most remote village in the commune. It is inhabited by indigenous Kavet people with different language, culture and livelihood systems from lowland Cambodians. The population has been repeatedly relocated since the 1950s due to government policies and, most recently, as a consequence of CARERE activities. Since then, a local NGO has also started development activities at the new location. This third village turned out to provide very distinct illustrations of what 'development' and development intervention may imply, being an ethnic minority village undergoing substantial changes in terms of location, livelihood systems, leadership and contacts with the Cambodian state and the market economy. Though such factors are specific to every particular context of place, time and culture, and though this village has a 'longer way' to go from 'traditional' to 'modern', the findings are relevant and revealing also for other communities where changes are slower and less drastic, but where there are similar processes of integration and modernisation, partly induced by governance and other sorts of development intervention.

In summary, the three case study villages were all included in the CARERE 2 project from the start, but have experienced other sorts of development intervention to very different degrees. They are all the poorest and most remote ones in their commune, but differ for example in terms of social cohesion, village leadership, the role of social institutions and the relation to local authorities. With their individual specifics, the three case study villages are expected to illustrate variations in responses and accommodation as a governance intervention is implemented. Using cases that are distinctly divergent on certain aspects is part of the point (Merriam 1994: 60ff). Though, as will be seen, similar patterns can be clearly distinguished, development intervention has also been received and accommodated differently across the cases.

2.3.4 Field methods

During the process of selecting villages, I studied available commune and village data from PRA exercises conducted within the CARERE 'Local Planning Process' (see 1.3.3). In the highland case, the research also gains from a review of studies on livelihood and natural resource management in the same province and partly the same commune. During the stays in the villages, then, I and the research assistants conducted numerous interviews and made extensive observations. Apart from long working hours, we spent leisure time with villagers. Especially after the evening meal,

people gathered where we were staying and evenings turned into long and very pleasant get-togethers. We also joined villagers to nearby pagodas and to a distant lake area and participated in a village funeral, a wedding and other festivities. 'Being there' is part of an ethnographic approach, and what I saw and heard at such occasions contributed to my comprehension. Throughout, informal encounters deepened my understanding and provided opportunities to discuss, cross-check and fill in the preliminary findings and analysis.

The research process went over time from a very open approach to a narrower and more focused one. In order to gain a wide understanding of the settings and of the issues at stake, I started in a comprehensive manner. During the first phase of extensive and explorative interviews with a range of villagers and observations of a range of situations, I quickly assembled massive amounts of information on various topics. This way of working suited the purpose very well as it enabled me, in a short time, to gain wide knowledge on the village and its population and to pick up what was mainly on people's minds. I could also gradually expand and deepen my understanding on issues that could not have been defined and delineated from the start. The approach did, however, soon require strong self-discipline and conscious selection, since so many potentially interesting matters kept emerging while the study had to be narrowed down. As my understanding and analytical ideas developed, the research questions were defined. The second phase of the empirical research, then, consisted mainly of more structured interviews with selected people, along with deliberate investigation of events and 'stories' that had been defined as illustrative of the research problem.

Interviews

Interviews in qualitative case studies can range from strictly structured, over semi-structured in order to catch respondents' ways of viewing things, to unstructured in order to explore a wide area. Not being too structured allows for being flexible, not missing crucial issues as they emerge, and not breaking the line of thought of a respondent. The main purpose of an interview within a qualitative case study is, according to Merriam, to view things from the respondent's perspective, to get to know what she or he knows, thinks and wants, and to understand her or his feelings, intentions and meanings (Merriam 1994: 86ff; Kvale 1996). Interviews may thus take the form of guided conversations rather than structured inquiry, following a fluid rather than rigid stream of questions. The phrasing of questions and style of answers then emerge in the process of interaction between researcher and respondent, which is fine as long as the researcher is aware of what she or he wants to achieve and uses a checklist of topics. For respondents to feel at ease, the setting should also be as natural as possible and interviews may develop into fairly informal social interactions. If an individual interview is not kept secret, it also easily becomes a collective one as others involve as they please (Yin 2009: 106; Mikkelsen 1995; Olivier de Sardan 2005: 193; Närman 1995: 50; Eyles and Smith 1988: 8).

This study builds on semi-structured interviews (as noted, from initially less structured to gradually more), ranging from individual ones at an agreed time and place to more or less spontaneous conversations with people who we happened to meet.[48] Though individual interviews are probably easier to conduct than group interviews, or at least easier to steer and analyse, I mostly found relaxed conversations with a group of people appropriate for my purpose. Since most of the interviews were conducted 'in public', it would have been odd to stop family members, friends and neighbours from involving. Instead, even if something started as an individual interview, I always allowed others to engage, and many interviews turned into group interviews and discussions. I also sometimes started with a small group, and it usually worked very well to let people join and leave as they liked. This created a comfortable atmosphere and made the situation enjoyable for everybody involved, while also providing good information. These kinds of spontaneous and flexible gatherings allowed for various views to be expressed and for immediate reactions and discussions, thus also providing opportunities to observe people's interactions.

While these situations allowed for quite sensitive issues to be brought up in a relaxed manner – by interviewers or respondents – certain issues require privacy. Individual interviews are good for private information and for the respondent not to be interrupted. For interviews on more personal issues and experiences, I therefore made appointments and arranged for more privacy. This was always with individuals that I had identified as having valuable information and with whom I had already established a certain level of rapport.

In each of the lowland villages, we also conducted a couple of arranged focus group discussions, mainly in order to access community attitudes and perceptions, and especially the views of marginalised groups such as poor women and youth (cf. Barbour and Kitzinger 1999). At these occasions, one of my colleagues conducted the interview, while the other interpreted parts of it for me. These interviews were especially valuable at an early stage of the research for identifying issues and individuals for later interviews.

During the course of research, the interview guide changed, from covering a number of wide topics to explore towards more specified issues to investigate and particular questions for verifying, invalidating or supplementing previous findings. The more narrow issues and focused questions largely followed the research questions, and thus concerned villagers' socio-economic strategies and arrangements, village leadership and social relations, experiences and notions of local authorities, and of

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[48] Since the empirical case studies build on a very large number of different sorts of interviews, I have chosen to indicate in the presentation, after each quotation, what category of person is quoted – i.e. an 'ordinary' villager or someone with a special position and of what sex. If something was said during a focus group discussion or a meeting with the 'Village feedback group', this is also indicated. Meanwhile, the interviewees are not coded with numbers and no list of all interviews provided, since this would not have provided any further valuable information.

various development activities and actors. I also continuously identified events and examples that would help answering the research questions and illuminate the research problem. Issues and 'stories' were traced and followed up that were on people's minds and that revealed something about their concerns related to village leadership, local authorities or development intervention. These stories included conflict cases within and outside the villages, various and varying income opportunities and expectations, encounters with local officials and with development activities.

Selection of interviewees

Since, as noticed, qualitative research does not aim at statistical generalisation, the selection of interviewees should be strategic rather than representative. In this study, semi-random snowball sampling was mainly used. In the first phase of empirical research, we generally talked to people whom we happened to meet, though making sure to visit all areas of the villages. As the work became more focused, then, I was looking for verification and illustrations of emerging patterns, as well as for variations and exceptions. In this, what I heard from some respondents helped identify further suitable respondents – with similar as well as divergent experiences and stories to tell. Meanwhile, I continuously made sure to talk to people from different areas of the villages, different age groups and different economic standards, and to both women and men.

Throughout, the main criterion was to interview people who were happy, or at least did not mind, to be interviewed. As Merriam points out, however, searching for respondents' perspectives makes it crucial to consider that replies can be anything from facts to opinions, and to be aware of the risk of being misled by respondents who are interested but not knowledgeable (Merriam 1994: 64, 91ff). I did experience that the most willing informants were not always the best ones – a few sentences from a less talkative person could be more valuable than long conversations with more talkative ones. I therefore also consciously approached people who were not among the most talkative ones in spontaneous conversations.

In addition, as noted, I continuously identified individuals with especially valuable experiences and perspectives, and throughout did repeated interviews with the same respondents, thereby continuing to build valuable rapport. I for example went back to people whom I knew had been involved in certain events or arrangements to fill in gaps in their stories, update something from the previous visit, cross-check what I had heard from other sources etc.

As I spent extensive time over extended periods at the case study sites, most issues that were identified as relevant to the research problem could be explored until the sample was saturated, i.e. until additional interviews did not provide new information or perspectives.

Since my Khmer skills never got good enough for more than very simple conversations, all my village interviews were conducted with interpretation between English and Khmer. As noted, in the highland village, we mostly worked together with a Kavet woman from the village who interpreted when necessary. Though I encouraged villagers to speak Kavet when the Khmer language seemed to constrain them, some, especially men, preferred to try in Khmer. Some interviews were thus conducted with double translation between English, Khmer and Kavet, some between only English and Khmer. Others, when I was not present, were translated only between Khmer and Kavet or conducted solely in Khmer, and have later been translated to English.

Most of the interviews were documented by note-taking. Despite the obvious disadvantage of losing information, in most situations I found note-taking more appropriate than tape-recording. The sort of information and analysis that most of the interviews were used for do not require detailed transcriptions. Spending several weeks in the villages, written notes were also convenient since they could easily be gone through, filled in and discussed soon after an interview. It was then also easy to go back to the notes from an earlier interview to check or compare something. Though taking written notes during an interview may distract respondents and make them uneasy, most interviewees did not seem to mind. Here, interpretation also proved helpful, as respondents often turned to the interpreter, which allowed me time to take notes while the two of them were focusing on each other. Sometimes, however, making notes after an interview or a spontaneous conversation is the best alternative. So, when informal chats got into really interesting issues, I usually resisted the temptation to pull out my note book. As touched upon by Merriam, not writing down all details but only main impressions along with your own reflections, may actually make the notes of more immediate use at later stages of analysis (Merriam 1994: 96f).

A number of individual interviews were however taped and later transcribed. Some of these were with commune, district and province officials. Others were conducted towards the end of the case studies with villagers who, as noted above, had been identified as having something particularly interesting to tell and not minding to tell it, and with whom rapport had been established. Though the recording sometimes initially made the respondent slightly uneasy, she or he usually seemed to soon forget about it. Only in one case did a Commune Chief deny to have an interview taped since he was afraid of saying 'something wrong'.

Obviously, translation and note-taking have filtered the information. Despite my colleagues' good language skills and sensitivity to unspoken meanings, nuances have inevitably been missed or lost in translation, as have individual language 'styles' among respondents.

Observations

Qualitative case studies naturally involve extensive observations, which are especially suitable for studying things that people are reluctant to talk about. Bulmer and Warwick, for example, point out that it is important not only to ask who holds power, but also to watch who wields different sorts of power on different occasions (Bulmer and Warwick 1993: 283f). Throughout, people's various roles, activities and interactions can usefully be observed (Merriam 1994: 101f, 104). Our prolonged and repeated stays allowed for observing how different issues were dealt with as they emerged, by whom, and how others reacted. I could also to some extent map social relations, and during the course of research note certain changes in them. Overall, what I saw in the three villages gave me a much better understanding of rural Cambodia than I would have been able to gain from merely conducting interviews and then leave, or from reading other people's reports. This kind of understanding has also helped me interpret and analyse my own and others' findings.

Feedback and cross-checking

When it comes to cross-checking for ensuring inner validity, triangulation is usually recommended – through several researchers, several sources of information or several methods. Merriam also talks of making repeated observations over an extended period of time, and of having participants scrutinise the results. As stated, one of the strengths of qualitative case studies is that they allow for using various methods. The fact that cross-checking usually makes findings less straightforward and analysis more complex, should obviously not stop anyone from doing it. Rather, rich and varied data are preferable to well-confirmed ones, even if they produce less unanimous results (Merriam 1994: 179f; Alvesson and Sköldberg 1994: 111).

For feedback and cross-checking in this study, groups of knowledgeable and well-reputed villagers ('Village feedback groups') were established with whom I and my colleagues met at the beginning and end of each stay. At these occasions, I informed the group about the purpose of the research and how it proceeded. These gatherings proved very valuable, especially for feedback on preliminary findings and analysis, which were sometimes confirmed and sometimes objected to. Towards the end of the first two case studies, I also arranged five-days 'cross-visits'. Four or five villagers from one village came with us to the other, and vice versa. These visits evoked vivid discussions and further stimulated villagers' input into the analysis. As part of the third case study, then, two villagers spent a few days with us in a different village and in the provincial town, which prompted rich reflections from them and gave me another opportunity to check my understanding and analysis of their village. As mentioned, in this village we were also briefly joined by a researcher from CRD, whose PRA sessions largely confirmed my findings. As noticed, frequent informal encounters during walks, meals and evenings also provided valuable opportunities to deepen my understanding of things that I heard of during interviews, and for discussing my interpretations with villagers.

The credibility and reliability of interviewees' responses can always be questioned, due to for example constraints in what people remember and in what they dare or want to share with an interviewer (or interpreter). Regarding the highland case, another researcher with knowledge of the area has claimed that natural resources touch upon sensitive issues in that commune and that many villagers do not dare to say anything that deviates from the 'government line'. When villagers for example say that they like the kind of livelihood and lifestyle that the government is promoting, they would therefore not necessarily mean it. My perception is that villagers here were probably somewhat constrained in what they immediately said on issues directly related to the authorities. However, during the course of the research, I believe that I heard reasonably honest opinions regarding changes in livelihood systems and desires for the future. One reason is that most villagers did not unequivocally promote either the 'government line' or its opposite. Rather, almost every villager easily mentioned both advantages and disadvantages with the different lifestyles and livelihood systems that they knew of, which indicates that they were not just saying what they thought they 'should' say. It also indicates that there were no easy answers, no simple 'good' or 'bad' in the current situation, and that people were highly ambiguous regarding the changes that they had experienced and their desires for the future.

The influence of the researcher

In qualitative case studies, the researcher inevitably influences the situation that she or he is studying and with an actor-oriented approach becomes an actor among others in a complex web of interactions. The researcher may for example make respondents reflect and see things in new ways, which can deepen their understanding and help develop explaining concepts. Such reflection can also be the start of changing a situation, as people act on their new insights. As Booth points out, a researcher must therefore be aware of that she or he is part of the process being described (Preston 1996: 303; Booth 1994b; Merriam 1994: 174f, 190f). This clearly goes for this study. Just as a development intervention enters the life-worlds of villagers, I and my colleagues did. Our presence and questions gave rise to thoughts and talking that would otherwise not have occurred, and people expressed opinions that they would otherwise not have done. On certain issues raised by us, villagers also continued talking intensively among themselves. During the last feedback session in the first case study village, for example, intense discussions among villagers did not require much prompting from our side. During the year of the empirical research, people here became increasingly dissatisfied with the village leadership and, after the research was finished, eventually brought formal complaints to the commune and district authorities. It is reasonable to believe that not only increasing – and increasingly blatant – power abuse by the leaders contributed to this, but also thoughts and discussions inspired by my questions. Some villagers were also questioned by local officials after we had left, which points to the risks that qualitative research may involve for respondents that they may not be in a position to assess, and which in turn

raises ethical considerations in relation to data collection as well as publication (Merriam 1994: 189). People may feel pressured or tempted to share certain information or opinions, and, as noted, a researcher's presence and questions may make them openly express anger and disappointment, which may be dangerous. There are also issues of how the information is used – by the researcher, or by others whom she or he cannot control – and whether the identity of respondents can be concealed. Recognising these concerns, I always tried to make it as clear as possible what our research was about and for, and what it was not, and that nobody had to talk to us. Also, all names of individuals as well as villages have been changed. This does however not solve the problems of the research, making villagers feel pressured to answer or making them share thoughts that they in hindsight prefer that they had not shared.

Outside the villages

Outside the case study villages, I interviewed a few commune officials in each case, some of them at several occasions, which contributed to my understanding of villagers' relations, experiences and expectations in relation to the local authorities, as well of local officials' opinions and approaches. In the highland case, where the relations between highland commune officials and lowland district officials are crucial, I also did some revealing interviews with the District Chief and other district officials. For background information, I interviewed province officials as well as staff and managers of CARERE and other development agencies. Throughout the research, province officials as well as CARERE managers and staff were briefed on the purposes and progress, while I also had many long discussions with CARERE and NGO staff, especially in the highland case.

3. INTERVENTIONIST RATIONALES

As argued in the introduction, the practice of development intervention is based on the assumption that it is possible, desirable and rightful to intervene in poor societies by introducing new features with the aim of changing or replacing existing ones, and thereby create a certain kind of societal change. Such an assumption in turn implies certain thinking and views of the workings of societal change and of various actors' roles in it, which help explain interventionist practice, while, as argued, without such thinking and views, the same practice would be difficult to motivate.

In this chapter, I will explore the usually non-explicit rationales behind the practice of development intervention. This is done in order to consider, in chapter 9, how these relate to the implementation interplay that will be empirically investigated in chapters 5-8. Following Edwards' line of thought that intervention has characterised attempts to help on the international stage over the last 200 years, this will be done by situating aid practice in the context of other sorts of intervention aimed at creating societal change and improving human welfare (Edwards 1999: 4). The chapter starts with explorations of high modernist intervention and colonial welfare intervention respectively, both of which have links to and similarities with contemporary development intervention. This is followed by an outline and discussion of post-Second World War development intervention and, drawing on these three sections, a delineation of some rationales behind development intervention.

3.1 High modernist intervention

From the 18th century, and at its strongest in the early 20th century, there were more or less far-reaching ambitions and more or less large-scale efforts to redesign physical, biological and social features in order to improve human welfare. Such ambitions and efforts were part of what has been called high modernism. The term is largely associated with political scientist and anthropologist James Scott, and in his use implies a critique of modernist thinking and practice and various associated features (Scott 1998).[49] The sort of high modernism dealt with by Scott implies deep and wide-ranging intervention in natural as well as social systems, redesigning or replacing various features, which he amply exemplifies and discusses. In the name of progress, emancipation and reform, high modernist intervention has been made in order to bring

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[49] This section draws significantly on Scott's 'Seeing like a state' (1998) and largely follows his efforts to explain the thinking and beliefs behind large-scale intervention schemes. The 'high modernism' discussed by Scott is similar to the centrally planned and bureaucratic social engineering criticised by Nobel price winner Hayek and the Austrian school of economics, though they draw different conclusions regarding the role of the state and the market (Hayek 1935). Bauman has also written extensively on the issue (e.g. 1998; 2002), as has Giddens (e.g. 1996). In other contexts, however, 'high modernism' is used with reference to for example arts and literature, and then usually not in the pejorative sense implied by Scott.

about thorough changes in for example agriculture, forestry and city planning, as well as in people's behaviour, habits, living patterns, moral conduct, world views etc (Scott 1998: 88f, 343). In order to better understand the rationales behind post-Second World War development intervention, it is therefore useful to explore high modernist thinking and views, and in doing so, Scott's work provides a valuable distinctive optic through which the logics of high modernist intervention can be viewed.

3.1.1 Engineering for human needs

High modernist intervention is grounded in Enlightenment ideas (e.g. Liedman 1997). With unprecedented progress associated with industrialisation from around 1830 until the First World War, expectations arose of an expansion of production and an ever-growing satisfaction of human needs. There was also a strong faith in science and technology, and optimistic beliefs that the benefits of scientific and technical progress could be applied in every field of human activity. Such ambitions reflect a natural science ideal, i.e. an aspiration that social sciences will be like physical sciences, which connects high modernist thinking to a functionalistic view of society. During the 19th century, the notion emerged of society as a carefully balanced organism with its own laws and internal forces, as described by Andersen and also noted by Conklin when writing about colonial France. A social system was assumed to consist of functional parts governed by social laws, where the city, for example, was thought of as a large, efficient machine. With such an organic perception, it should be possible to study the social world as one studies the physical world (Andersen 1996: 214f; Conklin 1997: 8, 22; Scott 1998: 91).

This is linked to what Scott sees as a keystone of high modernism, i.e. the belief that it is man's destiny to tame nature, along with the almost limitless ambitions to master and transform nature to suit his interests. The idea was that comprehensive and large-scale intervention would make resources more efficiently used, reflecting Enlightenment rationalism and utilitarianism and the aim to take in charge physical and human resources for the sake of improving human conditions. Such ambitions were not new. Agriculture, for example, has always been a matter of reorganising and simplifying flora to increase production. What was new, however, was the scale and range. Scott shows how for example scientific forestry, too, implies reorganising, turning the forest into an economic resource to be managed efficiently and profitably. From the 19th century, such thinking was embraced with great enthusiasm, and the same kind of utilitarian and abstracting logics gradually applied in other fields, and from mid-century to the design of society as a whole. Discovering the laws that govern social systems, it was assumed, would make possible the active management and manipulation of the social order. Accordingly, and borrowing the legitimacy of science and technology, high modernists made prescriptions for a new society, envisioning a sweeping, rational engineering of all aspects of social life. Habits and practices that were not based on scientific reasoning were to be re-examined and redesigned, and the social order became the subject of active management. While city planning, such as by

Le Corbusier, is held forward as a school example of high modernism, Scott compares it to Lenin's design of the revolution, to planned settlement schemes and the reorganisation of rural life into collective farms in Soviet Russia and ujamaa villages in Tanzania, but also to early American industrial farms. He also discusses large-scale intervention in terms of public health measures, vaccination, sanitation, sewerage, education, political surveillance, taxation and relief for the poor, all aimed at improving human welfare. Just as nature was to be tamed, society was to be remade through intervention, reflecting an ambition to control nature – including human nature – and a firm belief in the perfectability of social order, i.e. that societal change can be rationally designed, planned and imposed (Scott 1998: 2ff, 11ff, 50f, 88ff, 115, 219; Andersen 1996: 214f, 223, 227).

3.1.2 Requiring and creating legibility from outside

Throughout, Scott shows how intervention in and manipulation of natural and social systems require legibility. A precondition for effective social engineering is that society is seen as a reified object that can be scientifically described and that there are visible units, be they citizens, villages, trees, fields, houses etc. If, for example, people are to be recruited, taxed or educated, they must be discernable (Scott 1998: 4, 78, 18, 91, 183).

Legibility, in turn, requires simplification. The full complexity of any real, functioning social order and pattern is in its raw form bureaucratically indigestible and cannot be represented in official observation. Rather, what Scott calls an 'intellectual filter' is necessary to reduce the complexity to manageable dimensions. This is done partly by narrowing the field of vision. Focusing only on those aspects that are of interest to the observer, certain elements of instrumental value are represented – reflecting high modernist logics of rationality, utilitarity and efficiency – while anything that seems unrelated to efficient production falls outside the sharply defined field of vision. Another sort of simplification, on which the power and precision of high modernist schemes depend, is standardisation. Those things that do come under observation are abstracted, approximated and aggregated. An actual tree, for example, is replaced by an abstract one representing a volume of lumber, while citizens, too, are regarded as uniform and interchangeable.

High modernist observation thus implies reduction of reality, depriving it of context and particularity. Local knowledge, practices and specifics are considered irrelevant or at best an annoyance to be circumvented, and local varieties of flora, species, social uses etc are largely ignored, as is everything touching on human interaction. Such deprivation of context and particularity is a necessary premise of high modernist observation and schemes. Through narrow focus, standardisation and abstraction, high modernist observation reduces chaotic and constantly changing social realities to fit more legible and administratively convenient formats. Narrowing the field of vision also makes the high modernist optic clear, since what is in focus becomes more legible. Such clarity is strongest when something is viewed from

outside and above. High modernist typifications are always made at some distance from the reality that the abstractions are meant to capture. Moreover, and perhaps paradoxically, the narrow focus creates a synoptic view, making it possible to take in the entire forest, the entire city etc by one single optic, reminding of Foucault's writing on hierarchical surveillance (Foucault 1987; Scott 1998: 3, 6, 11ff, 15, 22, 46f, 57, 76, 80f, 117, 201, 346).

A major means of simplifying, standardising and creating a clear overview is the map. Designed to summarise those aspects that are of interest to the mapmaker and ignore the rest, the map is a powerful technique for grasping large and complex realities by seeing them through approximations and at some distance. The same goes for cadastral lists, standard units of measurement and population statistics, which can also be elaborated into social laws, commensurate with scientific understanding of natural laws. For making people visible, then, according to Scott, permanent surnames are to the legibility of populations what uniform measurement and cadastral maps are to the legibility of real property. Replacing local naming practices with an overall system of surnames makes it possible to identify people without having met them and thus represents a step towards making individual citizens officially legible, followed for example by finger prints, personal numbers and DNA analysis (Scott 1998: 4, 18, 36, 64-71, 77f, 87ff, 183; Harvey 1990: 35).[50]

The thus achieved legibility offers new possibilities for control and management. With the functionalist assumption that society consists of separate parts with delineated, functional roles, the step is small from observing and describing to making prescriptions. High modernist observation creates an endless scope for authoritarian transformation through planning, design and intervention, and in this process, simplification and narrow focus reinforce the high modernist tendency of implementing activities for unique purposes. The sharply focused interest provides clear-cut answers to single questions, and in any activity only one thing is going on. The hierarchically designed forest, for example, is there to fulfil the single purpose of efficient timber production (Scott 1998: 15, 81, 92, 183, 219, 347).

High modernist logics and legibility can also be imposed. Apart from observing, describing and mapping, interventions are made that reshape people and landscapes to fit the techniques of observation. High modernist scientific forestry and city planning, along with large-scale agriculture, collectivisation, villagisation etc, serve to make the actual terrain, its products and its populations more legible with standardised characteristics. Cowen and Shenton talk about creating order out of social disorder, and Bauman, too, has described the modern tendency of mapping territory in order for it to be legible to outside administration, while also reshaping territory in order to attain the perfection of the map (Cowen and Shenton 1995: 29; Bauman 1998: 36f).

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[50] As Scott points out, the imposition of permanent surnames on colonial populations implied the telescoping of a process into a decade or less that in the West had taken several generations (Scott 1998: 68f).

Part of the goal is thus to reduce chaotic, disorderly, constantly changing realities to something more closely resembling the administrative grid of high modernist observation and techniques. Forest science and geometry, for example, were used to transform the real, diverse and chaotic old-growth forest into a new, more uniform one, where rationally ordered arrangements of trees, through careful seeding, planting and cutting, created an efficient order and legible terrain that facilitated further outside monitoring, manipulation and experimentation. In the same vein, and in what Scott calls the urban equivalent of scientific forestry, high modernist city planning was aimed at making urban geography transparently legible. Again, an efficient order was created that could be monitored and directed from above. Throughout, the greater the intervention intended, the greater the legibility required. The perhaps most far-reaching means of creating legibility, then, is what Scott calls miniturisation, i.e. the design and creation of model cities, model villages, model farms etc, providing microenvironments of apparent order and conformity that can be easily managed. Such controlled environments facilitate experimentation and sometimes become ends in themselves, substituting for the complex reality. Apart from utilitarian reasons for legibility and ensuing manageability, scientific forestry, city planning, miniturisation and the like also reflect high modernist aesthetic ideals of uniformity and straight lines (Scott 1998: 2ff, 13ff, 18, 55, 81ff, 125, 183, 196, 225; cf. Uphoff 1996; Parsons 1991; Hirschman 1967).

3.1.3 External experts defining technical solutions

Focusing, as seen, on a few instrumental aspects and single purposes made it unnecessary to pay consideration to what already existed, or to consult local actors. Their knowledge, practices, traditions, history, received taste etc were repudiated or considered irrelevant, reflecting high modernist contempt for history and scepticism about local specifics. In high modernist schemes, citizens have no gender, no taste, no history, no values, no opinions, no original ideas, no traditions, and no personalities to contribute, i.e. those intervened at have none of the particular, situated, contextual attributes that are assigned to elites. Rather, and following the logics of standardisation, they are uniform and interchangeable. The high modernist idea was to take a blank piece of paper and start calculations from zero. High modernist agriculture, for example, tended to ignore local contexts, while neither the science of designing cities nor that of designing revolutions was considered to have much to learn from existing practices or the values of intended beneficiaries. Accordingly, in his grand urban plans, Le Corbusier made no compromises with the pre-existing city. There were no references to history, traditions or aesthetic tastes of the place, and a high modernist planned city betrays no context but could in its neutrality be anywhere (Scott 1998: 6, 104, 115ff, 157, 201, 226, 305, 346).

Such disregard of local contexts is based on the high modernist faith in science and technology and in functional systems ruled by social laws. With this came a conviction that there exist single unitary answers and correct solutions, which external

experts can discover and execute. Human needs were thus scientifically stipulated, abstract and schematic, defined far away from the local settings in question and using standardised models of people and other units. The key actors, and those who gained in status, power and wealth from high modernist intervention, were bureaucratic intelligentsia, technicians, scientists, planners, architects and engineers, who were celebrated as the designers of the new order. These actors alone were assumed to know the needs of local people and how to organise a more satisfactory, rational and productive life for them. Accordingly, external experts were considered to have the ability as well as the right to impose their solutions on others, and actually saw it as their mission to drag technically backward, unschooled, subsistence-oriented populations into the 20th century. Their superior knowledge, authoritarian instruction and social design, it was assumed, could transform entire societies. High modernists have indeed been accused of hubris, and Scott states that those behind the grand plans regarded themselves as far smarter and farseeing than they really were, and their subjects as far more stupid and incompetent than *they* really were.

Solutions were thus assumed to be purely technical, while politics would only frustrate the solutions defined by specialists and were therefore devalued or banished. Scott gives the examples of how Le Corbusier and Lenin believed that there were scientific truths about how cities should be designed and how revolutions should be conducted, and that this entitled Le Corbusier to replace what he perceived as chaotic urbanism with a utopian city, and the communist party to claim leadership of the working class. Following the single purpose approach, and ignoring local stuff and politics, the high modernist expectation was that intervention would lead to an almost mechanical step-by-step process with predictable outcomes. The communist party, for example, had a blueprint for the entire new structure and Lenin acted as if the proceedings of the revolution and the road to socialism were mapped out in detail. Such expected mechanisms and the disregard of local specifics also made it possible to apply the same solution everywhere. One and the same order, based on a few elements, could be imposed in different places. The plans for villagisation in Tanzania, for example, became generalised and uncritically applied in widely divergent settings (Scott 1998: 5ff, 76ff, 94ff, 113ff, 125, 148, 152, 157, 174, 178, 228, 247, 253, 342f, 352).

3.1.4 Well-intended and still influential western ideas

Many high modernist schemes have gone tragically awry, causing human and ecological disasters. As repeatedly illustrated by Scott, livelihoods have been destroyed, environmental resources have been severely damaged, social ties have been ruined and people have been enslaved with authoritarian methods. Despite such common outcomes, Scott urges for tempering the condemnation of high modernist social engineering. As Karlsson emphasises, there is both an emancipatory and a manipulative side of social engineering – on the one hand aiming to increase human freedom of manoeuvre, on the other hand trying to control and manipulate human

behaviour. It is also important to remember that there have been good intentions behind most high modernist interventions. Aimed at the population's welfare, they have included vaccination and literacy campaigns, universal schooling, taxation, production of goods and catching of criminals. High modernist schemes have in many cases been designed to supplant unjust and oppressive social orders and often come with egalitarian, emancipatory ideals. The designers have been driven by a genuine desire to improve the human condition and a genuine belief in a rational order that makes it possible to do so. The publicly stated rationale for planned settlement, for example, was development and provision of social services such as health, sanitation, housing, education, water and infrastructure (Karlsson 2001: 186f; Scott 1998: 191, 342, 352).

High modernism has since the 19th century also had many positive outcomes from which we still benefit. Various public facilities have hugely improved human conditions, and in many cases, centralised intervention is the most efficient, equitable and satisfactory. Without legibility and reliable knowledge, effective intervention is difficult and crude, while if society is legible, services are more easily provided and finely tuned and possibly lifesaving intervention thus facilitated. Stylised facts, for example, make it possible to intervene early in epidemics. With high modernist observation and intervention, human welfare has therefore improved in ways and to extents that would not have been possible with a different approach (Scott 1998: 58, 77f, 221, 340).

Moreover, though high modernism, as noted, has had its peak, it is important to recognise that it is still influential, not least in the West, as is the functional thinking behind it. As pointed out by Andersen, functionalism has been a very common way of thinking in industrialised societies, and during the 1950s and 1960s it gained a prominent position in sociology. Since then, structural functionalism has often been declared to have withered, and high modernism may be dismissed as outdated. Extreme forms of social engineering and planning have indeed been abandoned, and there is post-modern scepticism about any totalising discourse. Still, academics from different disciplines, as well as politicians and managers, continue to use functional approaches and perspectives and many still search for general laws of social behaviour. Social democratic Keynesianism and the welfare state, for example, have clear traits of social engineering and, as Liedman shows, faith remains strong in science, technology, reason and rationality. High modernist assumptions also still permeate much of our thinking and acting, with things that we take for granted, and with which we routinely apprehend the social world, having their origin in projects of standardisation and legibility, such as permanent surnames (Liedman 1997; Karlsson 2001; Andersen 1996: 231ff; Scott 1998: 64-71, 90; cf. Everett 2006).

As noted, the ideas behind social engineering schemes are thoroughly western, with aspirations to finely tuned social control to be traced back to Enlightenment. Still, social engineering schemes have taken their most destructive toll in the former socialist bloc, and high modernist models that have worked in the West, such as

scientific agriculture, have in many cases failed in the South. High modernist intervention could also appear in any political disguise, with both left- and right-wing variants. Educated elites with completely different political ideologies have believed in the same traditions of Taylorism etc, and Scott points to a direct connection between Soviet and American high modernism in the belief in huge, mechanised, industrial farms (Scott 1998: 87f, 91, 99, 164, 193, 199, 263, 343).

Though thus politically disparate, high modernist intervention is closely linked to the emergence of the modern state, and the ambition of engineering whole societies and citizenries is almost exclusively a project of the nation-state.[51] While, according to Scott, legibility provides the capacity for large-scale social engineering, and high modernist ideology provides the desire for it, it is the authoritarian state that provides the determination to act on the desire. Until fairly recently, the inclination of the state to impose schemes was limited by modest ambitions as well as limited capacity. Partially blind, the pre-modern state knew little about its subjects and its interventions were commonly crude and self-defeating. The 18th century European state was largely a machine for extraction, lacking the coercive power, the fine-grained administrative grid and the detailed knowledge that would have made possible more intrusive social engineering. Gradually, however, the state got a handle on its subjects. Standardisation and surveys made central recording and monitoring possible, which increased legibility and enhanced state capacity. By the mid-19th century in Europe, and early 20th century elsewhere, the state machinery was equal to the task, society could be mastered and full rein could be given to the ambitions of state officials. Along with state capacity, the role of the state also changed and came to include the improvement

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[51] High modernist intervention can, however, be traced further back, with thinkers looking forward to finely tuned social control before the tools were there. High modernist planning is familiar to the legibility and standardisation by kings in the 15th and 16th centuries. Also, though what Scott describes is large-scale social engineering and experimenting by the modern state, he claims that much of the ideas are equally valid for the free market. Commercial and bureaucratic logics are the same, both striving for legibility. The market also promotes standardisation, with large-scale capitalism just as much an agency of simplification and uniformity as the state, illustrated for example by scientific farming and industrial agriculture, and with global capitalism as the perhaps most powerful force of homogenisation. The logics behind the reorganisation of rural Russia, i.e. collectivisation, were not unlike the management scheme at McDonald's: modular, similarly designed units producing similar products according to a common formula and work routine. The best examples of powerful institutions and sharply defined interests using high modernist forms of knowledge and manipulation are thus state bureaucracies and large commercial firms, and the conclusions that can be drawn from the failures of modern projects of social engineering are, according to Scott, as applicable to market-driven standardisation as to bureaucratic homogenisation. However, while the state does not have monopoly on utilitarian simplifications, it does on the legitimate use of force. And though the carriers of high modernism could also be capitalist entrepreneurs, they required state action and were thus found especially among those who wanted to use state power to bring about huge changes in people's work habits, living patterns, moral conduct and worldview (Scott 1998: 5, 8, 11, 18, 87f, 91, 217, 342).

of the population's welfare in terms of health, education, longevity, productivity, moral, family life etc (Scott 1998: 2f, 5, 88ff).

The high modern state thus had enormous ambitions, made prescriptions for a new society, and intended to impose them. Scott discusses how certain circumstances have at times and places further enhanced state capacity for relatively unimpeded planning and intervention. War, post-war reconstruction, economic depression, revolutionary conquest and colonial rule all provide good soils for high modernist ideologies, while an incapacitated civil society further facilitates large-scale planning and social engineering. Where there is no resistance, the social terrain is levelled for intervention and a powerful state can impose itself and its standardised solutions. Colonial regimes with social engineering aspirations and the ability to resist popular opposition, as well as authoritarian states with elites making revolutionary designs for their people, have been hospitable to high modernism. Particularly during late colonialism, colonies were sites of extensive social engineering experiments, with colonial regimes' authoritarian power encouraging ambitious schemes to remake native societies, and ruthlessly wielded in transforming populations that were found backward. Many post-colonial elites, then, also favoured high modernist intervention as a way to achieve quick changes. Hence, much of the massive, state-enforced social engineering and the ensuing calamities of the 20th century has been the work of rulers with grandiose utopian plans for their society (Scott 1998: 4f, 49, 89f, 97; Easterly 2006).

Scott also discusses the case of high modernist development plans, noting that the history of Third World development is littered with the debris of huge agricultural schemes and new cities. Beginning during the Second World War, and especially after it, the British in East Africa for example turned to planning large-scale development projects like plantations. As Nederveen Pieterse notes, in the name of 'development', monuments to modernism have been erected, such as vast dams and other infrastructures. Post-war schemes usually had pre-war precedents but were far more ambitious, including large-scale mechanisation and resettlement. Similar schemes have been undertaken with aid money as mechanisation and economies of scale have been part of the international development discourse, while there are also striking similarities with colonial policy. Villagisation, for example, with its long colonial history, continued in Tanzania and other places as a development/welfare project in the 1970s. High modernist models have thus been pressed by colonial modernisers, independent states and international aid agencies. Though the most large-scale social engineering kind of development schemes are largely outdated, as will be discussed, there are still clear links and similarities between high modernist intervention and current aid practice (Scott 1998: 3, 96, 223ff, 247, 263, 341; Nederveen Pieterse 2000b: 178f).

Before turning to development intervention, though, I will elaborate on another instance of intervention aimed at improving human welfare that also has clear links to and similarities with current development intervention.

3.2 Colonial welfare intervention

Colonialism is associated with and was indeed based on evident and crude self-interests. Natural resources were accessed through plundering, and increasing demand in Europe for such resources and for markets continued to provide economic motives for colonial expansion. Initially, attention was not even rhetorically being paid to the well-being of colonised people (Ferro 2003b: 23f; Brocheaux 2003: 407; Coquery-Vidrovitch 2003: 760). During early colonialism, however, welfare related activities, mainly within health and education, were carried out by missionaries parallel to colonial undertakings. And later in the colonial era, at different times on different continents, such activities were undertaken as an integrated part of the colonial enterprise. These activities were not only of the large-scale, high modernist sort discussed above. Other activities, too, implied the introduction of new features, aimed to change or replace prevailing features and traditions and thereby create a certain kind of societal change and improve the population's well-being. These activities are what I will call 'colonial welfare intervention'. When aiming to understand the rationales behind post-Second World War development intervention, undeniable similarities make it useful to explore such 'colonial welfare intervention'.

3.2.1 The right and the duty to intervene

Colonialism and its various activities were gradually motivated by a combination of motives. While the obvious self-interests remained, a perceived need also arose to legitimise the colonial enterprise and explain it by more noble purposes. In the late 19th century, strict national self-interests were added to by the French policy of 'constructive exploitation'. Neglected resources in the colonised territories were to be activated for the general benefit of the world economy, while colonisation was also to bring gains to and serve the advancement of colonised people and societies. Though the claimed noble purposes served to justify less noble behaviour, the altruistic motivation was also partly genuine. Native societies were deemed deficient and it was assumed needed and possible, through colonial welfare intervention, to create material as well as moral improvement in the colonies. Colonialism was thus always meant to be profitable for the colonisers, but that was regarded as justifiable since the colonised were assumed to be benefiting even more (Brocheaux 2003: 401; Osterhammel 2002: 107; Conklin 1997: 11; Blaut 1993; Havinden and Meredith 1993; Lancaster 2007; Li 2007: 13f).

Enhancing conditions in the colonies was even regarded a moral duty, reflecting the idea of what has become widely known as the 'civilising mission' and 'the white man's burden' (Kipling 1899). These conceptions denote the colonisers' views of themselves and of colonised people, i.e. a conviction of own superiority and others' inferiority, and of the right and responsibility of civilised and advanced societies to promote material and moral improvement in uncivilised and less advanced ones. By the mid-19th century, Africans were for example viewed as 'cruel savages', and Chinese and Indian civilisations as displaying Oriental despotism. Pointing to the

doctrine of trusteeship, Cowen and Shenton state that those who saw themselves as developed also believed that they could act to determine the process of development for those deemed less developed. European expansion in the colonial era was thus depicted as the fulfilment of a universal mission, i.e. a mandate to 'civilise' the 'barbarians', a burden that the white man was privileged to carry, all premised on a belief in European cultural superiority, reminding of high modernists' conception of themselves as smarter and more advanced than the people and societies that they were to transform (Mann 2004a; Ferro 2003b: 23; Brocheux 2003: 406f; Osterhammel 2002: 16; Liedman 1997; Cowen and Shenton 1995: 28; Blaut 1993: 3; Nederveen Pieterse 2000c: 198; Nustad 2001: 481; Li 2007: 15).

The British were the first to link imperialism to civilisation, viewing themselves as entitled and duty-bound to educate and improve their colonial subjects. Indians, for example, were to be civilised, which meant less like what the colonisers imagined as the lazy, inefficient, unruly and impulsive Indian, and more like the idealised productive, efficient, ordered and rational European – reminding of high modernist ideals discussed above. Gradually, then, all European colonial powers claimed to be carrying out the work of civilisation in overseas territories. It was only in France, however, that 'la mission civilisatrice' was elevated to an official imperial doctrine. Like the British, the French were convinced of their superiority in various spheres and of their special obligation to colonise and civilise. In addition to the scientific and technological superiority of the West, the French believed that they had achieved supremacy in the moral, cultural and social spheres. It was assumed that aspects of French civilisation were universally applicable and that, if exported, all humanity could benefit from it. By the time of the French revolution, it was taken for granted that the entire non-western world was in need of French civilisation, and that the French had a specific duty to liberate and uplift the oppressed of the earth and to defend the individual rights of man wherever they were threatened. The Third Republic, it was assumed, had a right and an obligation to remake 'primitive' cultures to resemble France culturally, politically and economically. The Enlightenment belief that barbarians could be civilised had thereby been transformed into the imperial doctrine that France should be civilising deprived peoples everywhere (Mann 2004a: 4; Mills 2004: 189; Ferro 2003b: 23; Conklin 1997: 2ff, 12, 16f, 102, 213).

Justifying European colonialism at a time when democracy was on the rise in Europe could be perceived as a contradiction in terms. However, French republicans did not identify any inconsistency between their democratic institutions and the acquisition and administration of their empire. Paternalistic attitudes reduced the colonial subjects to a childlike status in need of guidance by benevolent parents. Colonised people were viewed as not knowing what was best for them and as too backward to govern themselves. The French colonial administrators, for example, had a self-perceived role as tutors to the 'childlike' races of West Africa. Progress thus remained the preserve of colonial administrators who assumed that they could determine the basic interests of local people, reminding of high modernists' views of

their role and capabilities. Categories like 'civilisation' and 'barbarism' also preserved the difference between colonisers and colonised, which was necessary in order to justify and maintain the colonisers' hegemony overseas. The French conviction was also that pre-colonial political power in West Africa conflicted with civilisation. Thus, viewing Africans as barbarians unfit for voting rights and excluded due to their natural inferiority made democracy and colonialism compatible (Frenz 2004: 67; Mann 2004a: 6, 14; Brocheux 2003: 405; Osterhammel 2002: 108; Conklin 1997: 1f, 9f, 105, 113; Havinden and Meredith 1993: 21).

Colonialism was thus partly based on and upheld by an ideological construct, and it remained important to endorse a belief system that would rationalise, justify and assist the colonial enterprise. Colonialism was a main reason for the rapid crystallisation of beliefs about non-Europeans and a lot of information was produced, which, reminding of high modernist strategies discussed above, served to make the colonised areas legible and controllable. There were also practical, political and economic interests in proving certain things to be true and others untrue about the world and people outside Europe. As the colonial enterprise evolved and changed, so did the ideas, and a variety of doctrines of justification and imperial visions were produced. Along with the idea of a civilising mission, theories about race helped justify political ambitions and international strategies (Ahuja 2004; Mann 2004a; Coquery-Vidrovitch 2003: 760; Osterhammel 2002: 107; Blaut 1993: 10, 20, 23f, 41).

By portraying themselves as 'torchbearers upon the path of progress' without whom there would be no progress, colonisers rarely questioned their right to intervene in the colonies. According to French colonial policy, non-intervention would actually have been an abdication of France's important duties as a superior civilisation to ensure that some kind of evolution took place as a result of France's presence in Africa. Thus respected as humanitarian intervention, colonial rule was glorified as the gift and act of grace of civilisation. Until the First World War, the colonies were also regarded as a career, and the duration of the civilising mission was unclear. It was only said that the burden of the civilising task was heavy and that it would therefore take long, which created a sense of permanent colonial rule (Mann 2004a: 25; Osterhammel 2002: 110; Conklin 1997: 87).

3.2.2 A range of means

The means used to improve well-being in the colonies varied and changed over time and place due to new circumstances, new administrators and not least new policies and trends in the colonial powers. At times, there was heavy emphasis on the transfer of technology. Science was crucial in creating and maintaining the myth of European civilisation's superiority, and with technical innovations in Europe, progress in the colonies also came to be connected with technology. What Ahuja calls 'engineering imperialism' resulted in monuments that powerfully symbolised the superiority of European civilisation, with the colonial engineer celebrated as the incarnation of the civilising mission. Steamboats, railways and telegraphs all served as icons of

improvement, and though many European innovations were involved – specialised agricultural research, scientific laboratories, modern sanitation and health facilities etc – railways always received most funds. Apart from obvious economic self-interests of the colonial powers, modern communications were deemed necessary for the colonies, and railways were regarded as an indispensable first step. They were the means from which all other forms of progress would follow, by for example opening up India for civilisation and delivering Africa from barbarism caused by insufficient commerce with the West (Ahuja 2004: 95f, 115; Mann 2004a: 14; Conklin 1997: 43, 53, 66, 70).

Gradually, there was more emphasis on developing human resources. Modern medicine, like prophylaxis against tropical diseases, was increasingly seen as a crucial means to improvement in the colonies. Hygiene, which the colonisers assumed was lacking, was also made a key to bringing material improvement, implying a direct intervention in physical, social and cultural aspects of the lives of the population. At various stages and places of colonialism, western specialists came to investigate the colonial environment, and local medical assistants were trained in western medicine and then expected to fight the influence of traditional doctors (Mann 2004a: 14; Conklin 1997: 7, 21, 39, 43, 49f, 62).

Education of the population became another cornerstone of colonial welfare related activities. In French West Africa in the early 20th century, education of all African subjects was made an official civilising object. Here, the colonial educational strategies reflected the French ideology and philosophy of how to move Africa towards civilisation, which embraced practical considerations as well as idealistic ambitions for social change. Emphasis was on practical training, with village primary schools providing basic skills for the masses to help raise their productivity, while the elite was trained at regional schools to form a new literate auxiliary class (Mann 2004a; Conklin 1997: 75ff, 134, 139).

It was also deemed important to introduce other western institutions, like ministerial offices and courts. Colonisers believed that they had uncovered a chaos and needed to impose order, and civilisation came to be measured against good government and the rule of law. Along with free trade, a cheap and efficient government was considered the best means to set off modernisation and, reminding of high modernism, there was a tendency of depolitisation with the aim of establishing an administration free of politics. Accordingly, the French declared that it was their duty as civilisers to guarantee the rule of law and to institute a fair and humane system of justice throughout West Africa, while the British wanted to establish good government in order to firmly rule their colonial subjects. Administrative reforms were thus undertaken, with communities transformed into new administrative entities, new local institutions established, and the mandate of various local authorities defined (Mann 2004a: 8ff, 12; Osterhammel 1997: 110f; Conklin 1997: 7, 86, 197f; Apthorpe 1970b: vii).

As indicated, the civilising mission also included the obligation to uplift the colonised morally. Colonial administrators were expected to persuade the colonised to

change their way of life and alter their mind-set, reflecting the colonial assumption that poverty in the colonies was caused by moral deficiencies. Moral improvement, however, proved more difficult than material improvement. Christian missionaries obviously regarded the spread of Christianity as the best means to civilise people and enhance moral standards. Other means included forced labour, which the French colonial authorities believed was temporarily necessary in order for the Africans to internalise such supposedly absent values as self-discipline and temperance, and to inculcate a hitherto absent work ethic. A colonial belief was also that without forced labour, Europeans would have to leave the colonies, and without the Europeans, no progress of any kind would take place. Coercion was thus assumed to benefit the colonised. Sports were also promoted as a means of improvement towards imperial civilisation. In India, for example, football – believed to carry with it moral lessons, hard work, perseverance, team loyalty, obedience to authority etc – was used as a key weapon to win over local populations and begin transforming them from 'uncivilised' and 'heathen' to 'civilised' and 'Christian' (Dimeo 2004: 165ff; Mann 2004b: 7, 17ff, 47; Conklin 1997: 7, 25, 43, 50, 74, 86, 130, 213f, 233).

As the colonisers gradually perceived a need to better organise the enhancement of the colonies, colonial development plans were formulated. At places, a development 'programme' was also part of an economic framework to justify colonial rule. Gradually, ideas emerged of respecting existing practices, of local participation and of 'development from within'. French colonial administrators, for example, claimed to have no intention of forcing its own institutions upon the colonised. Rather, Africans were to progress and evolve within their own cultures, and education as well as the administration of justice was to be adapted to the local environment. The colonisers therefore consulted local elites and allowed the population to participate in their own government. In practice, however, the respect for existing institutions and traditions was limited and the opinions of indigenous people were not accorded high priority. As Conklin notes, if the colonised did not spontaneously cooperate in the colonisers' plans, they could be forced to do so. And if, for example, traditions in the colonies were contrary to civilisation, as defined by the French, French law would apply and the colonisers would have an obligation to eradicate and replace such traditions (Mann 2004a: 16; Conklin 1997: 74f, 87, 94, 119, 130, 211ff, 238; Havinden 1993: 1).

Carrying out this range of activities to improve human welfare in the colonies reflects the assumption that it is possible, desirable and rightful to achieve material and moral enhancement by introducing new features that will change or replace prevailing ones. Colonial welfare intervention also reflects a possibility and tendency to boldly execute new and shifting policies in ways that would not have been possible at home, partly reminding of the high modernist tendency of regarding and managing things from outside and above. Especially late colonial rule involved extensive social management, turning the colonies into arenas for early modern social planning and engineering, sometimes to the extent resembling social experimentation. Medical advances in France, for example, made French reformers wish for domestic urban

planning and social legislation. The opportunity for experimentation, however, was much bigger in the colonies. Also facing a more hostile disease environment, colonial policy-makers had far greater freedom than hygienists back home and could simply decree programmes into existence. Such experimentation was possible due to, among other things, obviously unequal relations between colonisers and colonised and a lack of interest in colonial issues among the population in the colonial powers. In the words of Cohn, the colonies were seen as theatres for state experimentation and according to Conklin, they served as either 'laboratories' or outposts for policies formulated at home, while Havinden and Meredith argue that India was sometimes used as an experimental laboratory for policies later to be tried out in other colonies (Scott 1998: 5, 9, 226; Conklin 1997: 4, 8f, 39, 63, 71; Cohn 1996: xi; Havinden and Meredith 1993: 3, 311).

3.2.3 Progress by diffusion and transformation

Inherent in colonial welfare intervention and the ideas of a 'civilising mission' and 'white man's burden' are Enlightenment notions of progress and perfectibility, which, as noted, also form some of the corner stones of high modernism. While the notion of progress is probably as old as human history, the conception of 'improvement of humankind' emerged and became common in Europe by the end of the 18th century, implying mainly material and economic advancement, but also moral. Societies were assumed to follow stages of evolution, and continuous improvement became regarded as one of the principle duties of the modern state (Hettne 2008d; Mann 2004a: 8; 2004b: 47f).

A related idea, which served to justify colonialism and motivate its welfare interventions, was that of Eurocentric diffusionism, i.e. the notion that progress derives from innovative ideas spreading from Europe to other parts of the world. Diffusionist thinking is based on spatial elitism. Some people and communities are assumed to be smarter than others, some are perceived as inventive, while others are not. Accordingly, the world is divided into two main sectors, an Inside which innovates and an Outside which receives innovations.[52] The theory, then, describes the essential processes that take place within and between these two sectors, the most crucial aspect being the inner-to-outer diffusion of progressive ideas, people and commodities. The central notions of Eurocentric diffusionism are thus European progress and expansion

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[52] The discussion on diffusionism is largely based on Blaut (1993). Throughout his book, Blaut analyses and criticises Eurocentric diffusionism and what he terms the myth that the West has a special quality that gives it superiority over other communities. Step-by-step, he undermines the theory of the autonomous rise of Europe, arguing that Europe was not superior to other regions before 1492 and that colonialism was the main process that developed Europe and underdeveloped Asia, Africa and Latin America. He also maintains that there is still a strong belief in Eurocentric diffusionism. Though parts of diffusionist beliefs have been questioned, the basic propositions remain, i.e. the belief in a dynamic Inside and a receiving Outside (now admitting Japan and a few East Asian societies into the former).

of the European civilisation. The assumed explanation was that Europe, as an inheritance from pre-colonial times, was more advanced and progressed than other regions before the late 15th century. Forging ahead of all other civilisations far back in history, its internally generated superiority explains what happened after 1492, i.e. European modernisation, rise of capitalism, and conquest of the world. Diffusionism, then, developed as a belief system appropriate to the powerful and permanent European interest of colonialism, conceptualising European expansion and explaining why it was natural, desirable and profitable (e.g. Mann 2004a; Blaut 1993: 2, 12ff, 20, 26, 41f, 50ff).

The evolutionistic perception of eternal progress of civilisation also implied that the more advanced races drive the process and assess the progress of lower races (cf. Ferro 2003b: 30). Inherent in colonial welfare intervention and diffusionism, and again reminding of high modernism, are assumptions of masterability and transferability. Societal change can allegedly be steered and certain achievements and features can be transferred from one place to another. While the progress of Europe depended on internal qualities, it was colonial control that would enable non-Europeans to rise to a level of civilisation near that of the Europeans. As noted, according to colonial assumptions and rationales, people in the colonies were primitive, naturally inferior, less brave, less freedom loving and less rational. With some help, it was assumed, they could be uplifted and follow the same stages as the progressive societies had done. As focus of colonial welfare intervention varied and shifted between technology, infrastructure, health care, education and institution building, social milieus were to be transformed and systems of agriculture, communication, administration etc were introduced from outside and expected to work in various local settings, as were patterns of consumption and other behaviour (Conklin 1997: 1; Blaut 1993: 4, 20, 28; Andersson 1989: 9).

Colonialism and its welfare intervention thus implied the receipt-by-diffusion of European civilisation and modernisation, with those responsible behaving according to a 'civilising' logic, which was internally coherent and made perfect sense to contemporaries. The notion of a civilising mission, based on paternalistic attitudes and assumptions of progress and Eurocentric diffusionism, was a powerful idea, both genuinely believed in and used to legitimise colonialism. The colonisers' model of the world successfully assisted colonialism and its civilising/welfare interventions for a long time. Colonisers were profoundly convinced that their mission was to diffuse their own civilisation, while in the colonies people were being saturated with the message that progress must come through the spread of modernisation from the colonising power, and thus depended on acceptance of European domination. In the era of classical colonialism, European expansion was so swift and profitable that European superiority seemed almost to be a law of nature, which diffusionism turned into a general theory about European historical, cultural and psychological superiority, non-European inferiority, and the inevitability and absolute righteousness of the

process by which Europe and its traits diffused to non-Europe (Ahuja 2004: 101; Conklin 1997: 248; Blaut 1993: 2, 20, 26ff).

The above discussions on high modernist and colonial welfare intervention point to clear links to post-Second World War development intervention and similarities in terms of means and motives. As argued, both sets of practice are based on the assumption that it is possible, desirable and rightful to introduce new features from outside in order to change or replace prevailing ones and thereby achieve certain societal change. That assumption in turn implies certain thinking and views of the workings of societal change and the roles of actors involved, which are valuable to consider when searching for the rationales behind post-Second World War development intervention, to which we now turn.

3.3 Post-Second World War development intervention

With decolonisation and the emergence of new states, i.e. former European colonies, followed what has been called 'the Age of development' and what has involved the widespread practice of development intervention. As noted, intervention is a key notion and dominant feature of post-Second World War mainstream development thinking and practice as international development assistance became an increasingly established practice from the late 1940s.

As noted in previous sections, there were high modernist development schemes both during and after the colonial era, and also other sorts of intervention to promote human welfare as part of the colonial enterprise. Though development intervention in its post-Second World War form is a distinct feature, intervening in distant parts of the world to promote societal and human improvement was not a new phenomenon in the 1940s (Edwards 1999: 4). There had been discussions and initiatives similar to those by President Truman before he held his passionate speech, and apart from welfare intervention by colonial powers in their colonies, the US had for example provided aid in Latin America in the 1930s. Earlier too, there had been attempts at international aid through the League of Nations. For China, a development plan had been formulated and support provided to rural economy, road construction, communications, health care and international advisors and educators. This came to serve as a model for later aid activities, while the Marshall plan after the Second World War was another origin of development assistance. From 1948 to 1952, the US allocated large amounts of money to a number of European countries, mainly in the form of tied import support. This worked largely as intended – European states were quickly rebuilt and their economies recovered, in addition to US ideological, economic and security interests being served – and the expectation was that similar development would happen in poor countries, which were largely former colonies (Riddell 2007: 24ff; Andersson 1989: 14, 19f; Stokke 1996c: 20).

Occasional international aid efforts were replaced by more organised and concerted ones, mainly by the UN. With the Marshall Plan, the first administrative aid

machinery had been set up and institutionalisation of official aid continued in the 1950s. Institutions were gradually established, first at the international level, then followed by separate national agencies designed to deal with issues of economic development and channelling of aid. It was within international fora and organisations, however, that the notion of development aid as an institutional international activity was most clearly and strongly rooted, with the whole concept of international cooperation emerging from various UN foundation documents, such as the UN charter and the declaration of human rights (Riddell 2007: 24f, 28; Hveem and McNeill 1994: 11f; Hawkins 1970: 22f). Thus institutionalised and brought to the level of national and international policy, development aid was established as a distinct phenomenon. Since the mid-1950s, the amounts of official development assistance (ODA) have kept increasing – with short-term volatility but long-term expansion. While new donors have kept emerging, no country has stopped providing aid. In 2005, there were about 100 major official aid donors, over 180 recipient countries and a total of US$ 106 billion being provided as ODA by DAC countries (Riddell 2007: 22f, 26f, 52, 55, 359; Lancaster 2007: 29ff). As noted in the introduction, what was intended as a temporary input to solve an urgent problem has thereby become a key part of the architecture of international relations and a permanent part of North-South relations (e.g. Närman 1995: 40).

Aid intervention is inevitably related to welfare intervention in the preceding colonial era, with clear chronological and geographical links, as well as similarities in terms of provided inputs and stated motives. The relations between an imperial power and its colony are indeed different from those between two politically independent states, and colonial welfare intervention indeed partly served to legitimise a colonial enterprise, which was nurtured by different interests and views than those of aid donors. Still, aid relations came to partly replace colonial relations. For several decades, almost all aid recipients were former colonies, and allocations from especially France and the UK, but also Portugal, Spain, Belgium and the Netherlands, have remained profoundly influenced by former colonial ties, though such influence has recently decreased. Eyben also notes that the British Department for International Development (DFID) is the direct lineal descendent of the former Colonial Office (Eyben 2006b: 6; Dossa 2007; Riddell 2007: 64, 93, 97; Kothari 2005: 47ff; Harriss 2005: 17; Olivier de Sardan 2005: 177; Cooke 2003; Duffield 2001; Edwards 1999: 36; Scott 1998: 9, 97, 226; Hawkins 1970: 22; Apthorpe 1970b).

Colonial development plans and programmes came to constitute forerunners to development intervention and some of the technical work from the colonial era continued in the form of aid. In many cases, the activities were even carried out by the same people, previously called 'colonial technical officers', now 'foreign advisors' or 'UN experts' (Blaut 1993: footnote 34). Like the colonial enterprise, development assistance has also created a more or less distinct profession, a line of career and an international staff of specialists. Just as colonial engineers and high modernist technical experts were celebrated as specialists, those who are most concerned and

involved in development aid have their professional identity and status as well as personal satisfaction and gratification in it. Professional identity and interests, including career opportunities, from the colonial era could thus be substituted within the development sector. In the words of Easterly: 'the development expert was soon born, the heir to the missionary and the colonial officer' (Easterly 2006: 21; Lancaster 2007: 41).

3.3.1 A combination of motives

In addition to chronological and geographical links, and despite obvious differences, there are similarities between development intervention and colonial welfare intervention in underlying interests and motives. Like colonial activities aimed at material and moral improvement, development assistance is based on a combination of altruism and self-interests.[53] While aid is naturally associated with solidarity and a genuine wish to 'do good', this has always been mixed with various less altruistic motives, which have become increasingly explicit and accepted. Public support for aid in donor countries, too, is based on moral and humanitarian as well as self-interested motives. On the one hand, there are urges among donors to help address emergency needs, achieve development and show solidarity. On the other hand, donors wish to promote own political, strategic and commercial interests and retain historical ties. The particular mixes of these sorts of motives differ sharply between donors and over time, with individual donors conceiving very differently their reasons for providing aid.[54] Though donors' stated motives usually relate to circumstances in recipient countries, King and McGrath claim that it is mainly the economic and political situation in the North that actually shapes aid policies and donor countries' so-called 'enlightened self-interests' and particular domestic circumstances have kept changing, sometimes very fast. Competing pressures have thus kept the pendulum of motives swinging between altruism, solidarity, poverty and need on the one hand and different forms of self-interests on the other (Riddell 2007: xvii, 89-163; Lancaster 2007; King and McGrath 2004: 18).

The core purpose of aid is to save lives in emergencies and to contribute to development, growth and poverty eradication. Out of solidarity and ethical values (in combination with statistics and knowledge about poverty and human suffering, which boosted with decolonisation and has continued to increase) comes a sense of moral

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[53] As touched upon, the Marshall plan, too, was motivated by both altruistic generosity and 'enlightened self-interest', suiting US ideological aspirations as well as economic and security interests (Andersson 1989: 14, 19f; Stokke 1996b: 20).

[54] Riddell clusters the main interests that have historically influenced donor decisions to provide aid, while Stokke distinguishes between two categories of donors: major powers seeking a hegemonic position and small or middle powers with no such ambitions, but mainly motivated by what he calls 'humane internationalism' (Riddell 2007: 91f; Stokke 1996b: 27).

obligation to contribute to human welfare in poor countries.[55] According to Rydén and Anell, altruistic and moral reasons are the only reasonable ones – rich people should help poor people. Until the late 1970s, very few also challenged the moral case for aid (Riddell 2007: 1, 11, 91, 119-162; Karlström 1996: 30; Rydén 1984b).[56]

Only Sweden, however, has ever – during the early 1960s – appealed solely to moral and solidarity reasons for providing aid, while in all other cases other criteria than developmental and humanitarian motives matter greatly (Riddell 2007: 105, 140). For former colonial powers, cultural concerns and maintaining their influence in former colonies have been crucial motives, though they are weakening. Meanwhile, national economic and commercial interests are significant features for all donor states, with strong links between aid allocation and trade relations. Japan, for example, emerged as a major donor around 1990, largely driven by economic interests in the Pacific region, and Japanese aid remains mainly motivated by national security and prosperity to be achieved through peace and development of the international community. Also among Scandinavian donors, commercial interests have been gradually accentuated. In Sweden, for example, moral appeals have been explicitly added to by self-interests, and Andersson summarises the Swedish motives as 'solidarity, peace and trade' (Riddell 1987: 3, 6ff, 59, 93, 98; Närman 1995: 21; Stokke 1996b: 4; Stokke 1996c: 16ff, 50; Andersson 1989: 34, 41; Rydén 1984b: 17; Anell 1984: 30).

Moreover, aid has always been part of donor states' domestic political processes and used for pursuing foreign policy objectives. As illustrated for example by President Truman's speech, poverty was early perceived as a threat in rich countries. At its start, aid policy was thoroughly affected by the emerging bipolar system, and later by the transformation of it. Constituting an instrument in the power play between the East and the West, the main justification for western donors' aid in the 1940s and 1950s was explicitly to promote democracy and an open market economy and to contain communism. For some donors, strategic and security motives remain important. US aid was from the start used for defending geopolitical interests and recruiting allies, and is still aimed to protect national security and foster democracy and freedom, as well as to create growth and job opportunities for US Americans. Soviet aid policy was also initially dominated by political, strategic and security concerns. From the late 1950s, the Soviet bloc used aid to compete for influence in the South and to spread non-capitalist development, while from the 1960s, economic motives increased. The end of the Cold War, then, in many ways altered the rationale for providing aid. With the end of superpower competition, the main motive for aid

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[55] Riddell discusses whether there is actually a moral obligation to provide aid, which according to him remains unclear. Though most donors claim some kind of perceived obligation or duty, aid-giving remains in essence a voluntary act (Riddell 2007: 142-154).

[56] For a discussion on the moral case and ethical motives for aid, see Riddell 2007, chapters 8 and 9.

from the US and some other western states was gone. As the Soviet bloc disintegrated, a major group of aid providers also disappeared, many recipient countries lost economic and political support and new countries came to compete for aid resources, while some previous recipients became donors (Lancaster 2007: 45; Riddell 2007: 56ff, 94; King and McGrath 2004: 22; SOU 2001: 96; Karlström 1996: 30; Stokke 1996b:1, 3; 1996c: 17ff, 21, 29, 44ff, 60f; Andersson 1989: 30, 129f; Anell 1984: 19, 23f).

Meanwhile, the pendulum swung towards humanitarian and development concerns, more recently illustrated by donors' commitment to the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs). The political dimensions of aid, however, remained central also after the Cold War, and Lancaster points to the emergence of new purposes for aid as its diplomatic relevance lessened, including support to economic and political changes in former socialist countries and to post-conflict rehabilitation, promotion of democracy and tackling of global problems (see below; Lancaster 2007: 44ff, 48). September 11th, then, led to a new wave of more overtly politically driven aid. Strategic considerations were again clearly important, aid was more closely intertwined with wider political agendas and many donors were influenced by changes in US aid policy and the 'global war on terror'. According to Brinkerhoff, the rationale for international intervention has expanded beyond humanitarian and development objectives to encompass national and global security. Security concerns have indeed always been part of the rationale. Already in the UN foundation documents, development cooperation was understood as contributing not only to rising living standards, but also to peace and security. According to Eyben, however, by late 2005, security was beginning to replace the MDGs as the focus of international aid policy (Riddell 2007: 5ff, 25, 39, 93f, 97; Eyben 2006b: 3; Brinkerhoff 2005: 2).

Strengthening global public goods[57] and reducing the effects of global evils have recently been added to the previous mix of donors' motives. Aid was early motivated as a means to promote global economic growth in cases of international recession, and during the 1980s, international interdependence was a strong motive for aid. In addition to various national self-interests, the notion of global common goods, then, provides a kind of collective self-interests, which are increasingly present in the motivations and formulations of development assistance. Comparable to the colonial idea of 'constructive exploitation' for the general benefit of the world economy, aid is assumed to promote a number of globally shared concerns, such as combating terrorism, promoting economic stability and preventing transmittable diseases, illegal migration and ecological destruction, including global warming. Moreover, what could be perceived as a moral self-interest may be traced among some donors. The responsiveness to development needs in the South is partly an extension of domestic

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[57] Global public goods ('globala gemensamma nyttigheter') are since 2003 part of the Swedish 'policy for global development'. For a discussion on the role of public goods, see Andersson 2008.

socio-political values and norms, and relatively generous development assistance may be necessary in order to uphold self-respect and a desirable perception of the domestic society (Riddell 2007: 34f, 91f; Lancaster 2007: 26f; Stokke 1996b: 3; 1996c: 18, 25, 29, 49, 107, 111f; Hveem and McNeill 1994: 37; Anell 1984: 29; Hawkins 1970: 22).

Over the years, and within this mixed framework of motives, aid policies have often been inconsistent as the importance of recipients has differed. The geopolitical and strategic position of developing countries during the Cold War, for example, varied. Not all were equally attractive as potential allies, and therefore as aid recipients. And while the trend lately has been towards more open and more human rights friendly societies as aid recipients, countries of economic, geopolitical or strategic importance have not been abandoned despite the lack of such openness, or such friendliness.[58] In the words of Stokke: 'donors in the North might apply brinkmanship towards small, weak and aid-dependent governments in the South in order to attain the symbols of democracy […] however, they were not willing to apply the same mechanism vis-à-vis China…' Hughes also notes that the new humanitarianism has been criticised as tending to promote ethical objectives that accord with great power interests while de-emphasising those that are costly, inconvenient or simply irrelevant to the pursuit of power (Hughes 2001: 90; Riddell 2007: 91f; Stokke 1996c: 20, 52; Andersson 1989: 30).

Aid is thus provided for a range of reasons and there are sometimes hidden agendas, with a growing gap between donors' asserted motives and actual practice. Though self-interests are more open and explicit than previously, no major donor, with the potential exception of Japan, would claim to provide aid solely on the basis of narrow self-interests. Rather, non-developmental motives and foreign policy influences are underplayed in most public statements. While declared altruistic motives therefore potentially disguise more selfish ones, according to Anell, it is much more difficult to explain altruistically motivated aid than that which is closely tied to donors' self-interests (Anell 1984: 23, 27; Riddell 2007: 11, 94, 144; Lancaster 2007). Among donors, it is however commonly maintained that solidarity and self-interests are compatible. Though aid is supposedly first and foremost for the sake of the intended beneficiaries, it is meant to be beneficial for intervening parties too, for example through domestic economic growth or global common interests. Reminding of colonial reasoning, it is thus generally recognised that donors benefit from the aid that they provide, which is justified with the assertion that recipients benefit much more. Critics, however, argue that altruism and self-interests are not compatible. Hancock harshly claims that the very mix of humanitarianism, commercial self-interests, strategic calculation and bad conscience is 'a perfect recipe for all the contradictions, confusion and pathological disorders with which aid-giving is afflicted'

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[58] Riddell identifies another recent cluster of aid motives: the recipient governments' human rights record, which mainly implies that aid is reduced when there are serious deficiencies (Riddell 2007: 91f).

(Hancock 1989: 72; cf. Lancaster 2007: 54, 61). In a less stark vein, it has been maintained that the dual character and different kinds of motives within development assistance create contradictions, conflicts and policy dilemmas. The efforts to combine altruism and self-interests tend to blur the boundaries between aid and military support or business. Also, throughout the changes of emphasis, Tarp and Hjertholm maintain, the development objective has been constantly distorted by the use of aid for donor commercial and political advantage. Riddell also points to a major mismatch between the way aid is allocated and humanitarian and development needs, with political, strategic and commercial influences on aid significantly reducing its potential development impact (Riddell 2007: 358; Tarp 2000: 80; Stokke 1996c: 88; Hveem and McNeill 1994: 22; Rydén 1984: 20).

3.3.2 Ever-changing – and returning – policies, approaches and means

Throughout the post-Second World War aid era, means and approaches have kept shifting, with predominant paradigms varying over time and place and with ideological setting.[59] This continuous revision reminds of colonial welfare intervention discussed above, as do the activities implemented (e.g. Lancaster 2007; Li 2007: 274; Duffield 2002: 1068).

When post-Second World War development assistance started, optimism and expectations were high, with the modernisation paradigm shaping the worldview of the main policy actors. Development was perceived as an endogenous process, following the same almost automatic stages everywhere. The long post-war boom in the North strengthened the assumption that similar modernisation was feasible in the decolonised South. The idea was that underdevelopment was caused by unequal trade and population growth, and the main function of aid was to get the modernisation process going by filling gaps and overcoming bottlenecks along the way through provision of mainly physical equipment and education. Early aid was dominated by technical assistance, i.e. international staff and experts, aimed to address shortages in skills and know-how and weak institutional capacity. Aid activities were largely driven by donors, and focus was on large-scale 'modernising projects' like infrastructure, public institutions, population control and training of high-level personnel to eventually replace expatriates. The new bilateral and multilateral institutions were also seen with enthusiasm and immense expectations. Along with trade and investment, aid was expected to give rise to self-generating development, while the 'trickle-down' effect would ensure that everybody benefited from it (Simon 2009; Riddell 2007: 26ff, 202; 1987; Thorbecke 2006; Odén 2006; SOU 2001: 96; Hveem and McNeill 1994: 19, 27f; Andersson 1989: 16ff).

The expectations were however not matched by results. By the late 1960s, pessimism in the North grew about its further economic boom, and the dependency

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[59] Hettne has formulated a useful framework of a number of development discourses (2008c). It focuses, however, on development more generally, and not specifically on aid approaches.

school contributed to the awareness that aid might create dependence. The idea of 'trickle-down' was also questioned, as was the idea of 'development' as such. In response to the pessimism, the World Bank presented the 'partnership approach', implying mutual obligations and donor responsibility, and the 'war against poverty' (King and McGrath 2004: 19f). From the mid-1970s, prominence was given to aid as discrete projects, aimed to reach and help poor people directly. Particular groups and sectors were targeted, and social aspects of development emphasised, with focus on health and education. Acknowledging the complexity of poverty led to complex approaches such as 'integrated rural development'. Towards the end of the decade, it was also increasingly recognised that aid had ignored women's special situation, and efforts were made to integrate 'women in development' (WID) by aid targeting. Respect for human rights, with focus on civil and political rights, was added as a criterion for receiving aid, and while an increasing number of expatriate advisers and volunteers were involved, there was also an almost general emphasis among donors on the 'participation' of local stakeholders (Riddell 2007: 32ff; Thorbecke 2006; Crewe and Harrison 1998: 162f; Stokke 1996b: 5; 1996c: 41, 71ff; Hveem and McNeill 1994: 34; Rondinelli 1993: 71).

From the late 1970s, conditions worsened in many developing countries, with increasing debts and structural economic crises. Meanwhile, neo-liberalism started to dominate in the North and was established by the World Bank as the new development orthodoxy. Aid policy in the 1980s came to be dominated by macro-economic concerns, with the main objective of managing crises and getting the economic balance right. 'Balance of payment support' was developed in order to alleviate the liquidity crisis and reduce the debt burden. A large and increasing share of aid also came to be used for promoting domestic policy reform. The economic systems in the South were to be radically restructured through an essentially uniform and detailed set of reforms, i.e. 'structural adjustment', defined by the IMF. Moreover, donor states were increasingly coordinated in their approaches and attached far more firm and overt conditions than previously. Short-term relief from the IMF, and gradually aid from all major donors, were made conditional on specific reforms towards a neo-liberal market economy in what has been called 'the first generation conditionality' (Riddell 2007: 34f, 235ff; Lancaster 2007: 44; Thorbecke 2006; Payne 2005; King and McGrath 2004: 20f; Cammack 2002: 157f; SOU 2001: 96; Serageldin 1993: 27f; Stokke 1996c: 43, 73f, 92).

The late 1980s and early 1990s brought new objectives into development assistance. Macro-economics remained prominent, but emphasis shifted towards political values, social aspects and 'human development', and the reform programmes came to include social safety nets, with education and health identified as strategic areas. Donors also increasingly recognised that the impact and effectiveness of their aid crucially depended on recipient countries' political structures and processes, with weak state structures and institutions providing major impediments to the economic policies promoted. Aid practice was therefore redirected towards promoting a

particular model of state-society relations and building institutions. The idea was that state institutions should be made to create beneficial conditions for economic development. Democracy, human rights and 'good governance', in many cases including decentralisation, therefore came to be linked to economic development and to dominate the policy discourse. As donors' governance concerns increased in scope and intensity, there was an explosion of activities in capacity building and institutional strengthening and reform, which in the words of Riddell has become 'the latest philosopher's stone of official aid agencies'. Distinguished from previously known economic conditionality, political conditions – of democracy, human rights and certain policy reforms – were also attached to aid and credit, representing the 'second generation conditionality' (Hout 2007; Riddell 2007: 41, 47, 207, 247ff; Thorbecke 2006; Anders 2005: 42f; Gastel and Nuijten 2005: 88; King and McGrath 2004: 22; Minogue 2002: 122, 135; McGee 2002: 102f, 112; SOU 2001: 96; Stokke 1996b: 2, 5; 1996c: 50, 75, 81, 84).[60]

Along with state reform, support to NGOs continued as part of the privatisation philosophy of the 1980s. There has been a massive expansion in donors' funding of NGOs, the number of NGOs involved in development intervention has hugely increased, and their role and range of activities have expanded.[61] While earlier dominated by small-scale relief and traditional service delivery activities, NGOs now work as implementers and intermediary support and umbrella organisations. Apart from service delivery, they are used for direct implementation of official aid, often focused on empowerment, strengthening and building the capacity of poor communities – thus applying their expertise in participatory techniques and bringing their legitimacy – while also increasingly involved in advocacy and lobbying. A growing number of NGOs also identify the solutions to human suffering and extreme poverty as partly lying in the wider structures, processes and institutions that are believed to cause or perpetuate poverty, and are therefore involved in governance like activities (Riddell 2007: 37, 157, 259ff, 303; Lancaster 2007: 36ff; Craig and Porter 2006: 88; King and McGrath 2004: 28).

The political values and objectives of aid in the 1990s initially and partly downgraded objectives more directly related to poverty, moving intervention away from the welfare agenda towards formal democracy and civil and political rights (Stokke 1996c: 92). Aid selectivity also came to imply that aid was largely provided to countries with good governance and good policies (Hout 2007). Soon, however, along with the emphasis on political values, there was a return to poverty alleviation,

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[60] Most recipient governments have since then expressed a dislike of both policy advice and conditions, and the popularity and use of policy conditionality has decreased since the early 1990s (Riddell 2007: 364).

[61] Meanwhile, from the early 1990s, donors' support to NGOs has been partly replaced by support to the wider 'civil society' (Riddell 2007: 259ff; McGee 2002: 112). For a discussion on the notion of 'civil society' and the idea of strengthening it through aid, see Riddell 2007: 264, 301ff, 310.

expressed not least in the Millennium Development Goals, declared by the UN in 2000 (in which governance is however also emphasised; UN 2000). Poverty reduction was re-emphasised as the overarching goal, the structural adjustment programmes were replaced by (or renamed) 'Poverty Reduction Strategy Papers' (PRSPs) and there were calls for radically increased aid. Within this new poverty agenda, poverty alleviation is closely linked to governance, democracy and human rights, with recent anti-poverty efforts focusing on partnership and ownership and PRSPs constituting the current form of aid framework agreements, emphasising recipient-based development strategies intended to be produced, owned and implemented by recipient countries with consultation of different population groups (Amsden 2007; Riddell 2007: 10, 39ff, 46f, 221; Cameron 2005: 138; Gastel and Nuijten 2005: 88f; Gould 2005; Abrahamsen 2004; King and McGrath 2004: 22ff; UNDP 2003; McGee 2002: 102; Burnell 2002). Connected to the ideals of national ownership is also the move away from the details of small discrete projects towards sector-wide approaches, state-level partnerships and for some recipients towards policy-based budget support (e.g. Riddell 2007: 47, 195, 198ff; Mosse 2004a: 640; Nederveen Pieterse 2000c: 209).

Poverty alleviation, human rights and human development are also increasingly linked to the notion of 'human security', with aid for poverty eradication overlapping with aid for wider political objectives, including security. In the 1990s, natural disasters and local conflicts resulted in increasing amounts of humanitarian aid,[62] while in the early 2000s, poverty was largely connected to instability and war. Conflicts have thus come to be addressed by aid and the distinction tends to get blurred between development and emergency intervention. Meanwhile, development assistance is in many cases implemented in post-conflict areas and explicitly aimed at reconstruction. A continuum of aid intervention can therefore been discerned, from relief through to rehabilitation, restoring livelihoods and eventually to development (Riddell 2007: 7, 39f, 47, 321).

Meanwhile, from the late 1990s, development has been recognised as a global and universal issue (Payne 2005; Hettne et al. 1999) and there has been a surge in the interest in development assistance, with a number of major conferences on international aid, the most important of which was in Paris in 2005, followed by Accra in 2008. At such conferences and through joint declarations, donors have repeatedly committed to improving their coordination and collaboration, to harmonising and making their procedures more coherent as well as aligning them to be consistent with recipient states' procedures and policies. Aid effectiveness and result orientation, partnership and capacity development, alignment, country based approaches/action plans and national leadership, ownership and responsibility, coherence and division of

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[62] The assistance provided when disasters strike is technically known as humanitarian aid, though more widely referred to as emergency aid. The amount and share of ODA used for humanitarian aid have increased, in 2004 arising to US$ 12.4 billion, representing 14 per cent of all ODA (Riddell 2007: 311, 317).

responsibilities among donors, along with increased total amounts, are all important components of what has come to be called 'the new aid architecture' (OECD 2008; 2005; 2003; UN 2002, e.g. Riddell 2007: 7, 10, 41ff, 361; Lancaster 2007).

An era of trends

In retrospect, the aid era is thus full of trends involving a wide range of approaches and means. Focus has been on primary health care and population control, on provision of infrastructure and integrated rural development, on basic education and vocational training. Poverty alleviation has been emphasised, as have basic needs and targeting of the poorest. Women, too, have been targeted and 'women in development' (WID) has been stressed, after some time replaced by 'gender and development' (GAD). Sustainable development appeared as a key concept, originally meaning ecologically sustainable but later used also for social, political and other sorts of sustainability, as well as for a development intervention being economically sustainable, i.e. carrying its own costs. Ideals and ambitions have been expressed in concepts like help to self-help, counterparts, ownership, participation, empowerment, partnership, harmonisation and alignment. Democracy, good governance and decentralisation have been stressed and policy reform pursued, along with institution and capacity building, while macro-economic as well as political conditionality has restricted recipient states' room for manoeuvre. Focus has been on human development, human security and human rights, usually implying civil and political rights but sometimes including economic and social rights. Aid has been divided into technical and financial assistance, where technical means foreign staff and advisors, while financial means transfer of cash and kind. Focus has also moved between credits, import support, balance of payment support, debt relief and budget support, all representing various forms of financial transfers on various conditions and with various goals (e.g. Karlström 1996; Stokke 1996c: 37f ; Serageldin 1993; Andersson 1989; Hägerhäll 1988).

Though many of the shifts have implied substantial modification and refinement, changes have usually been far greater in rhetoric than in practice. Aid policy is full of buzzwords and ever-changing 'fads and fashions', and though fine-sounding ideals may be genuinely meant, there are everyday constraints to putting them into practice (Arora-Jonsson and Cornwall 2006: 80; Cornwall and Brock 2005; Riddell 2007: 87, 188, 221, 236, 240; Francis 2002: 71; Sbacchi 1994). Also, despite – or due to – continuous changes, policy ideas in development aid are rarely new, but tend to be re-presented as part of an ongoing 'reinvention of the wheel'. Throughout the years, supposedly new approaches and catchwords have resembled earlier ones. Accounts of aid have tended to be ahistorical, with notions and practices following a series of

pendulum swings as past ideas have unconsciously been recreated.[63] Over the decades, previous approaches have also tended to linger on or to reappear slightly revised, while new approaches are added on rather than replacing old ones. Accordingly, paradigms usually overlap, with old and new ones influencing simultaneously (Gastel and Nuijten 2005: 100f; King and McGrath 2004: 2, 18; Stokke 1996b: 4; 1996c: 30; Hveem and McNeill 1994: 38).

Current trends, too, resemble earlier ones. The recent debate on poverty, in connection to the World Bank inculcated Poverty Reduction Strategies and the Millennium Development Goals, is very familiar to the 'war against poverty' in the late 1960s and early 1970s. At that time, direct focus on poverty was something new, while already in the late 1980s it was a matter of rediscovery as poverty alleviation was again made the primary purpose of aid (Riddell 2007: 32, 39; King and McGrath 2004: 19f, 26, 28). Ambitions of donor coordination and coherence, and of recipient ownership, also reflect old ideals. In his speech, President Truman recommended that donors cooperate and pool their resources, for recipients to use as they see fit. Similar ideals were then expressed in the Pearson report in the late 1960s as well as in the Brandt reports in the early 1980s (Rist 1997: appendix 1; Easterly 2006: 167f; Riddell 2007: 43). The widely adhered to concepts of 'partnership' and 'participation' also clearly represent the re-emergence of previous discourses. Partnership was a new notion of donor-recipient relations in the late 1960s, as expressed for example in the Pearson report, while participation can be traced back to notions of popular participation in the 1960s and 1970s, then redeployed in the 1980s (e.g. Freire 1972; Chambers 1983; Cernea 1991; Riddell 2007: 30; Vries 2007: 30; King and McGrath 2004: 19f, 26ff; McGee 2002: 94; Cornwall and Gaventa 2000; World Bank 1992b; 1999). Related to participation are also respect for local practices and ambitions to build from within, resembling ideals expressed already during the colonial era (see 3.2.2).

Another recurrent pendulum – of special interest when focusing on governance intervention – is that of the role given to the recipient state. Though policies of good governance and ownership have lately been presented as new agendas, they possess long histories. Aid has traditionally been channelled through governing structures on the recipient side, partly with the objective of institution building and management

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[63] There may be various reasons for the seemingly bad internal learning within the aid sector with previous approaches reappearing (e.g. Riddell 2007: xvii, 362; Carlsson and Wohlgemuth 2000; Roe 1991). The severity of the problems to be addressed creates a natural sense of urgency to 'do something' and to try something (supposedly) new instead of something that does not work. Agencies have also been eager to develop new ideas and to gloss over past failures, thus quickly moving on to formulate the next plan, develop policies for the future and implement the next project (King and McGrath 2004; Kothari and Minogue 2002: 12). Not least, and as this thesis shows throughout, development assistance is an exceptionally difficult undertaking, with no clear-cut answers as to what approaches are best, which also contributes to ever-changing policies.

training. At times, however, donors' perceptions of especially the African state as corrupt, inefficient and incompetent have made them circumvent the recipient state and take over implementation by establishing parallel administration. Meanwhile, NGOs have sometimes been supported because they have been considered more efficient than the recipient state, and partly as a means of bypassing it. Problems with this approach – such as undermining the capacity and legitimacy of the state – have then been recognised and focus has shifted back to the state, as the importance of good governance have supposedly been 'discovered' as a critical factor contributing to aid effectiveness. As noted, the ambition is again to have aid activities integrated in recipient countries' own strategies, and resources channelled through governing structures. The related resurgent interests in decentralisation and budget support, too, represent revivals of earlier approaches (Riddell 2007: xvii, 173, 198; Craig and Porter 2006: 105; SOU 2001: 96; Stokke 1996b: 3, 8; 1996c: 81, 99f; Andersson 1989: 115). It may also be worth noting that much of the thinking behind current policies of governance support resembles the stated intentions of certain colonial activities of administrative reform, not least at the local level, setting up new institutions, clarifying mandates, training civil servants, promoting the rule of law etc (see 3.2.2).

3.3.3 Increasing complexity and more extensive intervention

Looking back over the post-Second World War aid era and its trends, international development intervention has become increasingly complex. This is partly made possible through access to increasingly sophisticated data, statistics, poverty measurements etc (e.g. Thorbecke 2006). The understanding has also deepened of the complexities of poverty and development, and that problems of underdevelopment cannot be efficiently addressed through separate projects. As noted, the heavy reliance on projects in development aid has therefore been reduced and partly replaced by programme aid through for example sector-wide approaches and budget support. Preferred practice has also continued towards policy reform, involving recipient countries' whole economic as well as political systems and practices.[64] As touched upon, aid activities by NGOs have also grown larger and more multifaceted, with many NGOs focusing on activities beyond the project, including capacity building and aiming to influence wider structures, processes and institutions (Riddell 2007: xvi, 47ff, 70ff, 157, 195f, 266, 282; Green 2002: 69; McGee 2002: 102).

Aid no longer implies mainly providing goods and services or transferring financial resources in order to fulfil short-term tangible objectives. Rather, more complex intervention is implemented to achieve less tangible aims. As touched upon, current reform agendas go beyond economic and financial management to 'governance' more generally, including aid packages for public sector management, support of civil society, and promotion of consultative and participatory mechanisms

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[64] As Riddell notes, however, the majority of ODA is still used for specific projects (Riddell 2007: 180, 188, 200).

for development planning. 'The new aid architecture' thus consists of a complex, diverse – and perhaps contradictory – set of policy goals and practices. Along with increasing complexity, the vision of what to be achieved has been scaled up to encompass the enormously ambitious goal of eradicating poverty – for which policy frameworks are seen as a prerequisite. Meanwhile, however, aid strategies have become more result oriented. Through the practice of 'targetry', ends have been narrowed to a set of quantified targets on poverty, ill-health etc, illustrated by the emphasis given to the Millennium Development Goals. Programmes are thus refocused on a number of specified poverty-reduction goals, while the means have expanded from the management of economic growth and technology transfer to the reorganisation of state and society needed to deliver on those targets (Riddell 2007: 170; Eyben 2006c: 49; Mosse 2005: 2ff, 22, 29: note 6; 2004a: 642; McGee 2002: 102). Meanwhile, development thinking and policy have become increasingly reflexive. Though ideas and policies have always emerged as reactions to and reflections on the failures and limitations of previous development practices, according to Nederveen Pieterse, they are now increasingly concerned with the management of development intervention itself (Nederveen Pieterse 1998b: 367f).

The growing complexity and the move from projects to programme aid and policy support reflect changes in the extent of intervention implied. According to Stokke, the shifts of emphasis in development aid over the years, from the local to the national level and from the economic to the political sphere, represent increasing levels of external interference in domestic affairs. In the 1950s and 1960s, emphasis was on the intervening state, with projects being planned and implemented by donors. However, an intervention was limited to a specific activity and a defined purpose, and did not have much influence on domestic policies in the recipient country. In the late 1960s and the 1970s, then, the role of the recipient state was stressed, and state-to-state intervention was supposed to form part of its national development plan (Stokke 1996c: 33, 93ff). With the re-emergence of neo-classical economics in the 1980s, established notions of public intervention in the economy were profoundly undermined. The role of the state and of inter-state intervention was de-emphasised, privatisation and market solutions were stressed and development was to mean the freeing up of the market. Meanwhile, there was less reservation about external interference in domestic policy, pointing to an emerging break with two long-standing principles of inter-state relations, i.e. self-determination and non-interference. Though an intention of structural adjustment was to reduce the level of intervention and let the market work more freely, policy reforms, structural adjustment and attached conditionality usually implied more far-reaching intervention than previous approaches. Intervention in the internal politics of recipient countries had thus expanded from specific activities that were directly supported to overall economic policy (Bernstein 2005; Harrison 2004b: 157; Blyth 2002; Duffield 2002; SOU 2001: 96; Stokke 1996c: 43, 51f, 95; Riddell 1987: 4, 148).

While the 'first generation conditionality' reduced inhibitions about interfering in domestic politics in the economic room, and recipients had to accept external administration, it also prepared the ground for intervention in the political room. Apart from economic reforms and conditions implying thorough interference, further intervention was needed for the market and the structural adjustment to work as intended. As noted, governance reform is largely motivated by a need to make state institutions create beneficial conditions for economic development. Such governance support and conditionality, then, have implied a kind of re-engineering and design of state institutions in developing countries through more radical reforms in shorter time than in any western donor country. According to Vries, the discourse of democracy and institution building provided an opportunity to expand the field of aid operations, thereby legitimating new kinds of intervention. Though, in the words of Stokke, 'intervention from the outside at the administrative level is probably as old as aid itself', 'good governance' and the 'second generation conditionality' represent something new in terms of interference in internal politics and administrative structures and processes. Others, too, argue that the emphasis on governance from the early 1990s heralded a more assertive, interventionist line than in any previous aid approach, which is especially evident in relation to weak states. By the mid-1990s, the World Bank and others made deep interventions into the social relations of indebted states, donors had opinions about what recipient governments should do on a large range of themes, and intervention into areas of national policy expanded (Vries 2007: 39; Mosse 2005; Harrison 2004b: 159; King and McGrath 2004: 21; Stokke 1996c: 52, 75, 83).

With these trends towards more complex and wide-ranging intervention, attitudes to 'intervention' as such have also changed. The failings of ruling regimes are no longer deemed internal matters, but central to the concern of external donors. As opposed to the previous strict respect of internal affairs, new international agreements acknowledge an obligation of the international community to intervene. The motivation may be to stop ongoing genocide, human rights violations or military conflict – which have since long been perceived legitimate reasons to intervene. But it is also increasingly accepted and expected that donors impose – through advice and/or strict conditionality – certain programmes and policies, favoured by them and claimed to lead to poverty alleviation. Meanwhile, though social engineering has had a bad connotation, it has become more acceptable. Barriers against interference have thus been radically lowered, interventionist practice has become more socially acceptable and politically correct, and intervention in internal political and administrative structures has increased at an unprecedented rate. According to Mosse, the new global aid frameworks involve an 'unprecedented level of intervention and social engineering in developing countries' (Riddell 2007: 6; Lewis and Mosse 2006c: 7; Anders 2005:

43; Mosse 2005: 5, 8f; Cameron 2005: 145; Duffield 1998: 101; 2007; Köhler 1996: 21f ; Stokke 1996c: 99; Cernea 1991: 29ff).[65]

As touched upon, an intrinsic part of the high degree of intervention involved in current development aid is the firm and far-reaching conditions attached to it. Donors have always attached conditions to their aid. Still, the conditionality that was applied in the 1980s was a largely new approach as it was done more formally and overtly, implying that provisions were made in return for explicit commitments to policy reform. Though 'policy advice' may sound softer, it may also imply a requirement to pursue a given set of policies. As noted, the nature and degree of conditionality tightened in the 1990s as it was first attached in the economic sphere and later also in the political sphere (e.g. Riddell 2007: 231, 235ff; Anders 2005: 37). Conditionality entails thorough intervention in recipient countries' domestic policies and stands in contradiction to national sovereignty (Easterly 2006: 128). Along with firm and far-reaching conditions and increased acceptance of intervention, however, aid relationships have been reframed in the language of ownership and partnership.[66] Such reframing, representing progressive policies and possibly a moral resurrection of aid, may reflect a perceived need to respect recipient countries' economic and political sovereignty. Combining conditionality and ownership/partnership thus apparently points to a paradox. Notions of ownership and partnership are partly intended to mean less intervention, but they also facilitate for donors to make demands on recipients and place responsibility with them. Making aid and loan disbursements conditional on the implementation of certain policies, however, reasonably places the ultimate responsibility for those policies with the donors, who could be blamed for detrimental outcomes of their conditions or policy advice (Riddell 2007: 363; Mosse 2005: 1f, 4, 10, 22; Anders 2005: 37, 47; Abrahamsen 2004; King and McGrath 2004: 27; Stokke 1996c: 84).

This is probably partly why explicit policy conditionality has been largely abandoned. Instead, policy agendas are to be drawn up and owned by recipients. Proponents argue that ownership is necessary in governance reforms, and that it can be guaranteed and combined with conditionality as conditions are set by recipient governments. Critics, however, claim that ownership may in fact conceal greater

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[65] Budget support could point in the opposite direction, towards less intervention, as the recipient state is supposedly free to use the provided resources according to own priorities. However, budget support constitutes a very small share of total aid resources and only few developing countries qualify for it. Also, general budget support is complex and involves the recipient having to accept a range of conditions as well as a donor-driven emphasis on short-term poverty problems (Riddell 2007: 201). Moreover, in practice, donors expect/demand influence on decisions of allocation, and misconduct by the recipient state often gives rise to calls for increased donor control and has in many cases led to withdrawal.

[66] For a discussion of the ambiguities of partnership, see for example Baaz 2002 and 2005, Crawford 2003 and Abrahamsen 2004. For a critical discussion on partnership in PRS, see Gould 2005.

intervention in the internal affairs of developing countries through donors' surveillance and monitoring in combination with recipients' self-discipline. Much old-style, donor-driven policy conditionality persists, it is argued, and the core policies of the international financial institutions remain rooted in and aligned to the traditional conditionalities of the past. Poverty reduction strategies are said to be externally formulated and driven, with recipient governments trying to guess what the financiers will approve, and donors are claimed to outline in detail how aid ought to be spent to achieve the goals. From this line of reasoning follows that global policies are translated into intentions, goals and ambitions of aid recipients, though these cannot shape actual practice. Rather, through internalised disciplines, local actors come to assume responsibility for externally engineered policies. This makes Riddell explain ownership, as understood by the World Bank and IMF, as the process whereby recipients come to accept – i.e. 'own' not as possession but as admitting as valid – the respective financial institution's programmes, policies and approaches (Boughton 2003: 4; Riddell 2007: 44f, 47, 238ff, 251; Easterly 2006: 129; Anders 2005: 49; Mosse 2005: 1f, 8f, 13, 23).

Again, looking back over the post-Second World War aid era, there is also a move towards similarity in policies across donors, with different agencies using similar approaches. The most influential policies are usually formulated within multilateral agencies such as IFIs and UN bodies, with the World Bank largely behind the structural adjustment policies of the 1980s and the UN behind the governance policies of the 1990s. National agencies have tended to soon follow the same policies, while NGO activities, too, tend to increasingly converge with those of multilateral and bilateral aid agencies. This is partly due to major donors promoting typical 'NGO approaches', such as local planning, participation and 'empowerment', and to NGOs moving into activities affecting wider economic and political institutions and processes.[67] Official donors also widely contract NGOs to implement parts of their aid programmes, while the number and scale of NGOs' own development activities have grown immensely, largely funded by official aid. The aid sector is thus increasingly homogenised, with different actors being informed by similar discourses, and the consensus within international development aid summarised as neo-liberal reform, democratisation and poverty reduction within a framework of 'global governance' (Mosse 2005: 1, 4; Craig and Porter 2006: 65; Baaz 2002: 18; Stokke 1996b: 11f; Lancaster 2007: 49f). The unity is partly motivated by the need for coherence among donors, as agreed in the Paris declaration, in order to make aid more efficient and facilitate for recipients to relate to a large number of donors. However, global demands on third world governments for improved democracy and legitimate rule also block any attempts to formulate radical strategy alternatives (Närman 1995: 27, 40).

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[67] The UN project CARERE in Cambodia, which is the intervention empirically studied in this thesis, is an example of such convergence and of the UN using NGO type approaches like participation and community development on a large scale.

Coherence among donors can thus be expected to make intervention more forceful, as the approach and policy favoured by the united donor community is in practice the only available option.

3.4 Rationales in development intervention

Despite differences from high modernist and colonial welfare intervention, and despite changes since the beginning of the aid era, as argued, there are similarities and links between current aid practices and those of high modernist and colonial welfare intervention. As Duffield notes, throughout continuous reinvention and repackaging, underlying assumptions and relations remain unchanged (Duffield 2002: 1068; cf. Li 2007: 274). Reflecting certain thinking and views of societal change and different actors' roles, the interventionist practices are based on the assumption that it is possible, desirable and rightful to introduce new features from outside in order to change or replace prevailing ones and thereby achieve certain societal change. In this section, in order to pull out some underlying rationales that explain and make possible the widespread practice of development intervention, I will therefore draw on the previous discussions on means, motives and ideas of high modernist and colonial welfare intervention and on the trends of post-Second World War development intervention. Since the empirical case studies are conducted where a governance programme has been implemented, special consideration is paid to governance intervention.

3.4.1 Societal change as spreadable and makeable

Implicit in post-Second World War development intervention are certain ideas of the workings of societal change. Like high modernist and colonial welfare intervention, it is grounded in the Enlightenment idea of continuous progress, now commonly called modernisation. After some dark decades in the first part of the 20th century, in the post-war era previous optimism was remarkably quickly restored and the emerging practice of aid was rooted in an expectation of eternal improvement of societal and human conditions that would follow an evolutionistic, almost automatic route (Hettne 2008c: 16f). Such ideas of progress are currently less explicit than in the early aid era. But they remain. Though extreme versions of evolutionism and strict modernisation theory have been outlived, the idea of continuous progress is ingrained in modern society. Even when modernisation theories are not explicitly adhered to, 'development' is implicitly expected to follow a well known path from traditional, rural and agrarian to modern, urban and industrialised (e.g. Liedman 1997).

Development intervention also reflects the expectation that progress can be deliberately spread. There is a fundamental belief behind development intervention that various features from one place can be introduced and used in another. As seen, emphasis of development intervention has shifted over the decades between for example technology, infrastructure, expertise, values, institutions, capacities etc. Throughout, the idea and implication is that something is transferred from the donor to

the recipient, giving the image of development aid as the delivery of material or organisational features. What Long calls the 'cargo' image of intervention reflects the notion of material and organisational input of supreme quality being delivered from outside, which 'target groups' are assumed to be lacking (Riddell 2007: 203; Olivier de Sardan 2005: 72; Long 2001: 33ff, 175).

A common line of critique is that conventional development models, be they liberal or radical, are tainted by determinist, linear and external views of social change. Modernisation theory has it that progress towards the modern society is set in motion and maintained through increasing involvement in commodity markets and through a series of interventions involving the transfer of technology, knowledge, resources and organisational forms from more to less 'developed'. Meanwhile, Marxist/neo-Marxist theories of political economy (which are indeed also modernist) focus on the inherent expansion of and increased integration into world capitalism. In both models, development is seen as emanating from centres of power, following the same broadly determined development path. This points to colonial diffusionism being carried over into the aid era. Innate in post-Second World War development aid is the view that the West/North is 'ahead' of the South, and that external input is required for the South to catch up (e.g. Long 2001: 10f, 35; Nederveen Pieterse 1991: 10). In the late 1940s and the 1950s, with the modernisation paradigm and as part of the modern project, a new form of diffusionism emerged. Developed nations were expected to bring prosperity and advancement to underdeveloped ones. Diffusion of modernisation was different from the kind of diffusion that served colonial interests in that it explained western superiority differently. Instead of genetic inferiority/superiority, the fact that some lag behind was explained by what had happened long before: Europe had arrived earlier at a stage of development that all other people could aspire to reach in the future. The assumption was that, whatever in the past had led to Europe being ahead, it could be diffused into non-Europe. The purpose of aid was thus to assist those areas to catch up. In other words, third world countries would gain economic development and prosperity by accepting a continuous spread of different kinds of rewards from the North, which in the diffusionist belief system is right, rational and natural, as well as profitable for everybody (Blaut 1993: 27ff, 52).[68] Diffusionism and the assumption of transferability have not disappeared with current aid policy. Governance intervention, for example, reflects the view that donor societies have attained the most advanced and appropriate economic and political systems and institutions. Through policy reform and institution and capacity building, these can and ought to be introduced in recipient countries, and the market economy as well as liberal democracy thus spread throughout the world.

The assumption of transferability is complemented by the notion of 'makeability', which is central to the modern project and also ingrained in development intervention

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[68] As touched upon, when some former colonies opted for a socialist system, diffusion of modernisation was also used as a tool to hinder that (Blaut 1993: 29, 53).

(Schuurman 2001b). Reminding of high modernist assertions to design cities, forests, revolutions etc, development aid is based on the idea that society can be remade and societal change directed according to a manmade drawing.[69] The pretension of such designing and the assumption of such makeability in turn build on the view that societal problems and processes can be rationally understood through systematic analysis and solved through comprehensive planning (Rondinelli 1993: 3f, 15). Reminding of high modernist faith in science and technology, which is allegedly politically neutral, development intervention is based on strong beliefs in technical solutions and causalities. Societal change is viewed as something non-political and development issues are turned into questions of efficiency, which has made Ferguson and others talk about the 'technicalisation of development'. According to Eyben, in the mindset of many aid practitioners, society is a predictable machine, which creates a tendency to look for implementable technical solutions to development problems. Such views of societal change as something technical that can be rationally understood, planned and directed, makes it possible to intervene, with development practice commonly understood as the systematic application of a universal rationality. As Li notes, rendering matters technical is necessary for identifying deficiencies that are amenable to calculated solutions and devised intervention, which in turn may create a tendency that only problems and deficiencies are identified that can be rectified by such intervention. Regarding societal change as technical and makeable also reflects ideals similar to those of high modernism, i.e. of efficiency, order and rationality, and turns the formulation and implementation of development intervention into a rational and more or less mechanical problem solving process. Such a mechanical view is reinforced by the notion of 'policy and project cycles', ranging from symptom identification and problem formulation, over identification of causes and alternative solutions, to implementation and evaluation of results (Li 2007: 2, 6f, 123ff, 240; Corbridge 2007: 187; Eyben 2006b: 1; Desai 2006; Lewis and Mosse 2006b: 4; Mosse 2005: 12; Long 2002: 5; 2001: 33; Crewe and Harrison 1998; Ferguson 1994; Porter et al. 1991: 93; Cernea 1991: 7).

Moreover, the practice of development intervention is rooted in a belief in what society ought to be like, and that such social ideals should be actively realised. In line with colonial ideas of mastery, development intervention reflects the view that it is not only possible to rationally remake society, but that the world also requires management. Existing practices, that are frequently deemed ill-suited and de-legitimised, should be replaced by more appropriate ways of doing things. The aim is thus, through development intervention, to restructure existing social forms and practices, and thereby bring about 'ideal worlds'. This reveals strong managerialist undertones to development intervention – or what Duffield calls 'the will to govern' – with ambitions to order and reshape economies and societies, including social practice

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[69] As noted (1.2.1), this points to an apparent paradox in development thinking between development as immanent and as intentional.

and the relationship between people and things. As Corbridge points out, most development policy holds the idea that people can be remade, i.e. 'they' can be made like 'us', which informs for example the agendas of structural adjustment and good governance. Whatever specific means and approaches are being used, designing and implementing a development intervention implies an endeavour to engineer social change (Corbridge 2007: 189; Olivier de Sardan 2005: 72; Nederveen Pieterse 2001: 105; Long 2001: 34, 89; Porter 1995: 84; Long and Villarreal 1993: 160; Ferguson 1994).

Ideas of makeability and managerialist approaches remain with recent aid policies. Partnership and budgetary assistance, for example, have according to Mosse not made aid less managerial, but he rather talks of the 'new managerialism' (Mosse 2004a: 640ff). As noted, the complexity of development is acknowledged, and it is rhetorically recognised that development is not a simple technological issue, but a politically sensitive one, bound to specific contexts and cultures (King and McGrath 2004: 25). Though explicit policies have been modified and address more complex issues than previously, underlying thinking and views remain and the means and approaches used are still limited and mainly technical. Critics argue that development intervention transforms the essentially political nature of development into a sanitised object of expert knowledge, rendering planning a process of rational design and transforming potentially explosive questions about rights, entitlements, decisions etc into technical questions of efficiency and sustainability (Ferguson 1994; Mosse 2005: 12). Porter et al. also talk about 'rituals' for establishing certainty within development practice, such as cost-benefit analysis. Other control-oriented techniques are also still embraced by governments as well as international organisations mainly concerned with efficiency and regulation (Porter et al. 1991: 191; Craig and Porter 2006). Rationalistic methods of analysis, planning and management still dominate and are still perceived to be effective methods of reducing uncertainty and increasing efficiency, reminding of high modernist striving for control, regulation and efficiency.

When technicalisation is combined with unrealistic, overambitious objectives, which have always been present in development intervention, hopes are turned into goals and targets. The core development problem of poverty, for example, is – though recognised as complex – treated as a technical engineering problem, with quantified targets attached to its solution, clearly illustrated by the attention and commitment bestowed to the Millennium Development Goals. According to Easterly, however, the aim of ending world poverty shows all the pretensions of utopian social engineering (Easterly 2006: 5, 13; Van den Berg and Quarles van Ufford 2005: 203, 206). Even values like participation and empowerment, critics argue, have been turned into simplistic technologies for the management of change, with support to empowerment rendered a technical matter of instructing people in the proper practice of politics. Due to the preoccupation with technicalities, a set of tools, such as participatory appraisals, have also been developed and are more or less mechanically applied, which has led to warnings that participatory processes have become 'routinised' (Li 2007: 25, 269;

Vries 2007: 30, 34; Arora-Jonsson and Cornwall 2006: 81; Mosse 2004a; McGee 2002: 107; cf. Lazarus 2008; Friedmann 1992).

In development intervention aimed at political reform, there is also a technical approach. According to Kiely, governance represents yet an elitist, technocratic approach to development. Though the political nature of development is rhetorically recognised, donors are expected to refrain from political intervention, and policy prescriptions are presented as technical instruments based on objective scientific methods. It has, for example, been clearly stated that ADB will avoid any involvement in the political aspects of governance. Accordingly, governance, too, is rendered technical and a range of instruments have been developed to operationalise good governance, reminding of some of the means and rationales of colonial welfare intervention. Craig and Porter give the example of how British colonial policies in the 1920s and 1930s were regarded as a practical technical manual of governance, a travelling rationality deemed 'suitable for export'. Some of the current governance intervention, they claim, implies that depoliticised, administrative, executive or technical means are used to achieve what is difficult through political channels, which at times has resulted in what they call technical and institutional overreach. While governance intervention is thus seen as a way to address political issues by technical means, according to Jørgensen, decentralisation was invented as a more technical and less political term than democratisation. Overall, governance reform packages, widely agreed on among donors, are legitimised by scientific rationality and presented as instrumental and inevitable solutions or tools to address technical problems (Li 2007: 240; Craig and Porter 2006: 16, 38, 69f, 73ff; Anders 2005: 45, 47, 55; Jørgensen 2006: 78; Wescott 2001: 1; Kiely 1998b: 38).

3.4.2 External experts separated from local contexts

Fundamental to the practice of development intervention are also certain views of various actors' roles and relations in societal change. The external expert/planner/ adviser has a central role in development aid, with external knowledge and competence deemed appropriate for solving local problems – reminding of high modernist views of superior outside knowledge and the key function of bureaucratic intelligentsia, technicians, scientists, planners, architects and engineers, as well as of the celebration of technical engineers in colonial welfare intervention. Regarded as the social scientific equivalent to the natural scientist, i.e. neutral and 'above politics', aid experts are assumed to know what is needed and be capable of designing correct solutions (Li 2007: 2; Easterly 2006: 5; Preston 1996: 296, 300; Rondinelli 1993: 159).

In contrast to such high regard of external expertise, local actors' experience and knowledge are largely devaluated and deemed irrational (e.g. Desai 2006). Despite widely expressed respect for local matters, Olivier de Sardan points out that development thinking and practice are still shaped by simplistic and mistaken images of target societies and populations. Though, for example, the colonial view of the African society as primitive and backward is not legitimate and outspoken any more,

there are other biased conceptions and stereotypes about local societies that partly serve to justify outside intervention (Olivier de Sardan 2005: 69, 73ff, 204; Edwards 1999: 31, 43). Despite claimed ideals and efforts of 'participation', 'ownership' and 'partnership', in practice, local ways and agency are not highly regarded or respected and poor people are still at some level perceived and treated as less capable objects, needing someone from outside to help develop them.[70] Related is a common implicit assumption that moral improvement is needed among aid beneficiaries (Dahl 2008; Nederveen Pieterse 2001: 102; Wolf 1997; Porter 1995: 65, 70; Crush 1995: 15; Porter et al. 1991: preface, 50).

Development aid thus still conveys an image of benevolent and more knowledgeable and 'powerful outsiders' helping less knowledgeable, needy and 'powerless insiders'. Like during colonialism, the intrinsic view can scarcely be denied of the intervener being in some sense superior to those intervened at, knowing best and being best able to define and 'make' societal development in the society intervened at. The apparatus of development is thus, as discussed by Cowen and Shenton and reminding of a colonial doctrine, built on the idea of trusteeship, with experts/trustees diagnosing deficiencies in others, claiming to know how they should live and what they need (Cowen and Shenton; 1996; Li 2007: 4ff, 15; Nustad 2001). As discussed already, development aid also builds on the idea that donor societies have something that recipient countries lack and need, be it technology, expertise, equality or democracy. It has been argued that, despite the claimed respect for local people and knowledge and despite rejections of colonial racism, development intervention involves a large element of arrogance. Hatch noted more than 30 years ago that 'the development profession suffers from an entrenched superiority complex with respect to the small farmer' (Hatch 1976: 75, quoted in Porter et al. 1991: 58). Others after him have stated that a core problem is still a lack of humility within the aid sector towards poor people, reflected in the pretentiousness and arrogance of intervening in their lives. According to Hettne, the whole rationale of development intervention is actually a paternalistic attitude towards non-European cultures (Hettne 1995: 64; Long 2002: 9; Nederveen Pieterse 2001: 145; 2000: 182; Crewe and Harrison 1998: 69; Edwards 1989: 120).[71] Such attitudes are prevalent in recent and current aid approaches, too. According to Li, for example, the will to empower hinges upon positioning oneself as an expert, diagnosing and correcting someone else's deficit of power, while Crewe and Harrison state that explicit conditions and structural

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[70] Illuminating such an attitude is not to deny that it is difficult for poor people to actively influence many of the factors that are depriving them. Still, regarding and treating poor people as beneficiaries rather than actors, risk reinforcing and being reinforced by an assumption of development being done by 'us' to 'them' (e.g. Porter et al. 1991: 210).

[71] Hettne here talks of the modernisation perspective, which dominated social sciences in the 1950s and 1960s, but also states that the modernisation theory still constitutes the popular image of developing countries. I would therefore claim that currently dominating aid practice is based on largely the same rationale.

adjustment, as well as the 'governance' agenda, convey the idea from donors that 'we know best' (Li 2007: 275; Crewe and Harrison 1998: 69).

Paternalism, high regard of external knowledge and competence and disregard of local specifics and agency are further underlined by a separation between aid experts and local settings, or in other words a boundary between trustees and those who are subject to expert direction. Such separation between an 'inside' and an 'outside', similar to the assumptions behind diffusionism already discussed, is central to standard aid policy models. Long et al. extensively argue that the planner is not part of the context that she/he is planning for, and that those who 'bring' development to a place are not part of its history and geography, or of the respective life-worlds of people living there. Instead, development professionals and 'beneficiaries' remain partially sealed off from each other, with the formers' abstractions far removed from the details of local people's everyday life. The dominating view is also that there are no conflicts of interests between the 'inside' and the 'outside'. Rather, in mainstream development models, aid is conceptualised as an uncomplicated, harmonious process (e.g. Li 2007: 7; Long 2001: 34; Long and Villarreal 1993: 152; Burkey 1993).

Such views of the roles and relations of aid experts and beneficiaries are clearly linked to the colonial idea of a civilising mission. With the end of colonialism and the emergence of new, politically independent but poor states, 'development' came to be used as the modern term for 'civilisation'. What used to be 'savage peoples' became the 'third world', and rather than spreading civilisation, the purpose was to share progress (Easterly 2006: 21). Attempts to redesign rural life and production, for example, that had previously been described as a 'civilising process', came to be called a 'development process'. Like during colonialism, there is thus not much questioning from the part of the interveners of their right to intervene. Rather, development intervention/aid has become a self-inflicted duty and moral obligation of prosperous countries. As a continuation of the 'white man's burden', the 'mission to develop' has emerged (Riddell 1987). Also reminding of colonial welfare intervention, there is not much of a plan for development intervention to end, but the duration of the aid enterprise remains unclear.

3.4.3 Requiring and creating legibility from outside

The technical approach to societal change and the aspiration of external experts to define and design solutions make reduction of reality necessary, reminding of the high modernist approach. As noted, simplification increases legibility, which is a prerequisite for planning and designing societal change. In development intervention, too, simplification is partly done through abstraction and fragmentation, which facilitate expert regimes and technocratic intervention. A fundamental idea is that problems are best tackled by dividing up a complex whole into independently given

realities.[72] Legibility is further facilitated by strictly focusing on the intervention. Aid activities are often disembodied, viewed as discrete sets of activities, isolated and working independently from their social context and taking place within a defined time and space setting (Olivier de Sardan 2005: 4; Nederveen Pieterse 2001: 137; Long 2001: 32; Crewe and Harrison 1998: 1; Preston 1996: 29). Especially in difficult contexts, such as where recipient commitment, ownership, capacity and governance are weak, donors may find it attractive to 'ring-fence' their aid and isolate it in stand-alone activities (Riddell 2007: 378). A natural focus on the future and on quantified targets also helps avoid the messy and problematic present (Kothari and Minogue 2002: 12). Overall, increased access to increasingly sophisticated data, statistics, poverty measurements etc makes increased legibility possible (e.g. Thorbecke 2006).

As pointed out by Scott regarding high modernism, isolation, narrow focus, simplification and fragmentation, and thus legibility, are facilitated by observing from outside and above (Scott 1998). Porter et al. give the example of how external agronomists were incapable, by prejudice, to seek order in local soil patterns and existing agriculture which to them looked chaotic (Porter et al. 1991: 51ff). From outside, however, details of real life can be left out and local complexity reduced. According to Li, too, it is only from outside that deficient subjects can be identified and improved (Li 2007: 15). Considering the key role of external experts in development intervention, and their separation from the local contexts of intervention, legibility from outside is also what is required. Like during the high modernist and colonial eras, information about areas of intervention is richly produced. Maps and statistical knowledge are still important means for making local settings legible to outsiders and providing the sort of data considered necessary for intervention. In aid, widely used participatory exercises such as village mapping and data collection, though supposedly conducted for other purposes, also serve to make visible and orderly from outside and have been criticised for extracting data for external use.

As noted, high modernist intervention was often aimed at also *creating* legible terrains, such as planned cities, scientific forestry and ujamaa villages, that could be easily managed. Reminding of high modernist miniturisation, there is a tendency in development aid to create more or less ideal models, possible to oversee and control from outside. Among many other examples, Anna Lowenhaupt describes a group of migratory indigenous people in Indonesia. Living in an area that eluded the clarity and visibility required for model schemes, they were viewed as pagans and considered a 'tough case for development'. Their inaccessibility was perceived as an index of backwardness, and in order to 'develop' them, state spaces must be created where their society and economy could be reconfigured. As a way for the government to make them visible, by creating a fixed, concentrated population that officials could see and

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[72] This idea is not limited to development intervention in poor societies. Part of modern rationality is to separate life in bits, which can be manipulated to create controlled change (cf. Liedman 1997; von Wright 1986).

instruct, the indigenous group was concentrated in planned villages near the main roads (Lowenhaupt 1993; cf. Li 2007: chapter 2). As Scott notes, such planned settlement – be it by the state or by international agencies – reflects the discourse of development, progress and civilisation, usually with the publicly stated rationale to improve the provision of social services. Setting up models, however, also clearly reveals an ambition to control and bring order in unruly terrains, with 'proper' villages providing administrative regularity, tidiness, legibility and Cartesian order (Scott 1998: 187ff, 240).

Though it may be argued that such modelling practices are outdated, they exist in contemporary development intervention too. As will be seen, one of the case study villages in this study, included in a governance programme, shows striking similarities with the Indonesian case of planned villages discussed by Lowenhaupt, and even with high modernist aesthetic ideals of straight lines (see chapter 7). In other cases, too, various manifestations of governance intervention serve to make matters legible and orderly from outside. Newly designed and introduced political structures with clearly defined election procedures, decision-making processes, mandates, lines of accountability etc are easier for an external expert to grasp than locally prevailing ones. The new features are also commonly presented in formats easily understandable to outsiders, such as neat organisational charts. Overall, external legibility – through maps, statistics, models, charts etc – creates a sense of order and control (Eyben 2006b: 1; 2006c: 48; Van den Berg and Quarles van Ufford 2005: 202; Porter et al. 1991: 92ff, 126f).

Even when models are not created, the need for legibility is related to the urge reflected in development practice to construct an arena that is amenable to management and calculation and thus appropriate for intervention. An intelligible field is circumscribed and a domain demarcated that can be governed. By thus drawing boundaries around a knowable, manageable, technical domain, developers construct the field in which they want to intervene and order reality so that intervention is possible (Li 2007: 2, 7, 235, 270, passim; Nustad 2001: 482ff; Ferguson 1994).

3.4.4 Empty stages for standard models and experimentation

Notions of societal change as makeable and controllable by external experts are closely linked to certain views of places and people where interventions are implemented. Inherent to the practice of development intervention is – again, despite recognition of local diversity and claimed respect for local agency – to regard and treat the local setting more or less as an empty stage. In the somewhat harsh words of Olivier de Sardan: 'development operators […] readily act as if they were arriving on unfilled ground' (Olivier de Sardan 2005: 69). Variations over place and time and local specifics in terms of for example socio-economics, politics, history and culture are commonly overlooked, local modes of production assumed to be permanent and peasant conceptions ancient and stable. The local setting is thus treated as a neutral arena for externally designed intervention, reminding of high modernist approaches,

such as Le Corbusier paying no attention to the pre-existing city (Nederveen Pieterse 2001: 102; Wolf 1997; Porter 1995: 65, 70; Porter et al. 1991: preface, 131).

Meanwhile, part of the aspiration to engineer societal change, and reminding of high modernist standardisation of units – be they trees or people or something else – is also to regard and treat people as uniform and as pawns in the intervention. Part of the view of societal change as technical and makeable is the assumption that, at various stages of an intervention, people will behave as intended by those who designed it. Intervention implies placing a bet on how people will behave, which usually implies that they will devote time and interest to intervention activities and use various inputs in predicted ways, so that implementation will proceed according to plan and get the expected outcomes. As Li notes, intervention is designed to direct people's conduct and form their desires. Groups are for example created that can hold meetings and make plans, and Mosse, among others, notes that such participation provide instruments to advance external interests and agendas while also concealing them. Linking back to the key role of external experts, an over-determined view of what local people do also serves to put developers at the centre of analysis (Li 2007: 235; Mosse 2004a: 643; Olivier de Sardan 2005: 206; Kiely 1998b: 38; Crewe and Harrison 1998: 24, 156; Rondinelli 1993: 22).

Reduction of reality with narrow focus on the intervention and disregard of local specifics, and views of societal change as technical and local people as uniform, also makes possible the use of standard intervention models. Despite the stated respect for local conditions and commitment to participation and ownership, in practice – and probably for pragmatic reasons – development agencies still tend to look for routines and universal rules. 'Blueprints' for external intervention are still designed with the same set of objectives, outputs and indicators for a range of locations. Pressure to appear infallible adds to the tendency of seeking single solutions and 'one best way' (Pasteur 2006: 35; Cooke and Kothari 2001; King and McGrath 2004: 4, 30; Roe 1991; Rondinelli 1993: 3, 7, 14f). This goes for recent aid approaches, too. Critics contend that governance reforms have been dominated by the imposition of undifferentiated and abstract blueprints for institutional reform. One of the characteristics of IMF and World Bank policies is their assumed universal applicability, with the same tools used to promote good governance everywhere (e.g. UNRISD 2005; Anders 2005: 41).

Using standard models and preset indicators of success, then, reflects the assumption that the same intervention will work in different settings with the same outcomes. Implementation is assumed to imply the simple unfolding of a well-reasoned, time-bound sequence of predetermined activities. From the introduction of something qualitatively new, further step-by-step moves will be set in motion, and certain inputs will lead to certain predetermined outcomes. Critics contend that development intervention reflects views that are overly definitive in areas of uncertainty, overly specific and detailed, overly assured in their assertion that

something will happen as projected (Craig and Porter 2006: 54; Nederveen Pieterse 2001: 138; Porter et al. 1991: preface, 185; Ayres 1983; Hirschman 1967: 1).

Prediction of results and preset indicators also manifest an inherent urge to ensure beforehand the more or less specific outcomes of a development intervention (Long 2001: 25, 31ff; Porter et al. 1991: 64, 72). As noted, there is an intrinsic wish to manage and control, maybe even a sense of obligation to do so since the world is assumed to need management and external experts are assumed best suited to provide it. It is widely argued that development aid is very control-oriented and focused on notions of order, based on certainty, rationality, predictability and cause-and-effect linkages. Rondinelli, for example, more than 15 years ago, described the rationalistic planning and management methods used to control development activities. Certain tools then, such as the logical framework approach (LFA),[73] embody the linear logic and elimination of unpredictability (Lancaster 2007: 41; Pasteur 2006: 35f; Eyben 2006b: 1; 2006c: 48; Van den Berg and Quarles van Ufford 2005: 202; Rondinelli 1993; Porter et al. 1991: 92ff, 126f).

Rondinelli also pointed to a tendency over time towards even more comprehensive and detailed controls, and even more rigid and routinised procedures for the planning and management of development intervention. There has been a belief that rules and regulations must be strictly adhered to, and that deviations would be detrimental. Lack of success has been attributed to inadequate design, analysis and administrative control, and to failure to conform to prescribed methods. The solution has commonly been to initiate more ambitious projects, thus escalating the scope of intervention and development workers tending to increase their efforts to achieve the targets next time (Long 2001: 35, 37; Easterly 2006: 10f). If an intervention does not unfold as planned, there is also a tendency to try harder to control in more detail, partly through new forms of project planning and follow-up. Rondinelli already in 1993 talked about 'overdesign', while increasingly sophisticated planning techniques, such as multiple objective planning, have continued to be developed, and programme planning and budgeting systems have resulted in what Pasteur calls overspecification of plans. The Millennium Development Goals also manifest increased efforts to control more strictly through quantified and time defined targets, while the Paris declaration explicitly aims at better control of the way towards set targets (Rondinelli 1993: 4f, 90f, 115; Pasteur 2006: 35; Ferguson 1994; Craig and Porter 2006: 53; OECD 2005).

This tendency, when an intervention 'fails', to escalate its scope and try harder to achieve its goals, makes it difficult to stop an intervention once it has started. Not reaching the stated objectives is taken as a reason to try again and failure thus operates as a motor for reproduction with the same goals being reaffirmed and reinforced,

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[73] LFA is a format for detailed project planning. A 'logical framework' defines, among other things, preconceived goals and objectives, delineates intended outputs, and identifies objectively verifiable indicators and means by which the indicators will be verified (e.g. Rondinelli 1993: 75).

and/or new intervention initiated to correct newly identified or created deficiencies. Olivier de Sardan discusses how the project language essentially serves to reproduce a project by ensuring financial flows, protecting the professional identity of developers, and meeting the evaluation criteria. Meanwhile, Crewe and Harrison point to various 'rituals', such as PRA and cost-benefit analysis serving to legitimate the intervention and its original goals. The evaluation stage of the project cycle, too, plays the self-fulfilling role of confirming that interventionist policies are sound, as pointing out errors and suggesting improvements form an integral part of continuously justifying and legitimating intervention. Big efforts may also be made to redesign an intervention rather than abandoning it, and a programme can continue with the justification that the established goals have not yet been reached (Vries 2007: 34; Li 2007: 19; Corbridge 2007: 187; Olivier de Sardan 2005: 178-184; Long 2001; Crewe and Harrison 1998: 24; Porter et al. 1991: 105, 125, 191; Ferguson 1994: 285).

Views of local settings as empty stages and of local people as standardised also help explain why more radical reforms are implemented and more radical means used in development intervention than would be feasible in donor countries' domestic policies.[74] As noted, and illustrated by the constant changes in means and approaches, it has been possible to engineer and experiment with societal change through development aid, reminding of both high modernist and colonial welfare intervention. Edwards has for a long time criticised development intervention for serving as northern thinkers' testing ground for social, economic and political experiments which they are unable or unwilling to conduct in their own societies (Edwards 1999: 44; 1989: 124). Development aid has provided opportunities to design and try on different models and, when something has not worked, to try something else, with examples ranging from drastic family planning methods in the early aid era, over villagisation and resettlement schemes, to far-reaching economic and political restructuring more recently.[75]

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[74] It could be argued that there are strong reasons for more radical reforms and means in poor countries than in rich ones, since the needs and for example the deficiencies in political institutions are so big. The purpose here is not to determine whether more radical approaches are justified or not, but to discuss what makes them possible.

[75] More and less radical experimenting can be partly explained by a number of reasons, largely reminding of circumstances in the high modernist and colonial eras. As Scott discusses, social engineering is easier where there is no strong resistance. Just as experimenting was possible in the colonies, it is facilitated in aid recipient countries where neither the state nor target populations are usually in a position to resist donors' requirements in any real sense. Related to this, and as discussed at length by Easterly, donors are not effectively accountable to recipients (Easterly 2006). Designing and executing new policies is also easier in a social system that is viewed from outside and above, and from which you are separated, while paternalistically regarding people as needy and not capable of defining what is best for them further justifies and facilitates bold experimenting. Moreover, and again reminding of colonialism, low levels of interest and knowledge among the public in donor states give greater freedom to act and to implement more radical reforms than at home (Cernea 1991: 29ff). As Riddell puts it, the

While the sort of high modernist large-scale social engineering that Scott discusses is assumingly outdated and over with, development experimenting thus continues. It has been argued that changes in aid policy and approach since the 1980s have made practices even more managerialist. Social engineering experiments of the high modernist sort applied from the 18th century are said to have shown up again in the 1980s and 1990s. New institutional economics also allow new management techniques in development aid, which, despite market ideals, imply thorough planning, design and control of societal change (Easterly 2006: 13; Lewis and Mosse 2006c: 6; Van den Berg and Quarles van Ufford 2005: 203; Mosse 2005: 5; Rondinelli 1993: 4).

Summing up some of the rationales behind the practice of development intervention, like in high modernist intervention, societal change is regarded as something technical and makeable, while, like in colonial welfare intervention, the 'donor' is regarded as having something that the 'recipient' lacks and needs.

High modernist intervention was based on firm ideas about the workings of societal change, which was assumed to be technical, non-political and makeable, i.e. possible to design and direct. Along with strong beliefs in science and technology, this reflected a high esteem of utility and rationality. Natural and social systems were to be useful, i.e. to serve human needs and interests, and high modernist intervention was intended to remake those systems to do so efficiently. In this, then, external scientific expertise was deemed appropriate, with bureaucratic intelligentsia, technicians, scientists, planners, architects and engineers capable of defining needs as well as solutions. While the view of societal change as technical and the celebration of rationality and certain expertise were up front, the thinking that certain societies have something that other societies lack was more implicit and non-articulated.

Meanwhile, colonial welfare intervention was based on firm ideas of the qualities, capacities and roles of the people and societies of colonial powers and colonies respectively. Civilised societies were assumed to carry superior material as well as moral qualities and to be morally obliged to implant those in uncivilised societies. The idea that 'we' have something that 'they' lack and need was fundamental and quite outspoken, while the idea that societal change, in the form of material and moral improvement, can be achieved through intervention was more implicit and non-articulated.

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extremely high level of public support for foreign aid is combined with an extremely high degree of ignorance of what it does (Riddell 2007: 107, 111). Development aid is rarely an important issue in the political debate in donor states, and there is not much questioning or active demand for accountability regarding aid policies. Huge needs and good intentions also counteract criticism. Aid experts thus partly enjoy professional freedom, similar to that of high modernist experts and colonial administrators. While trying out new models and approaches is highly stimulating, they rarely risk anything on their own part since, if an 'experiment' fails, they usually suffer no professional consequences (Olivier de Sardan 2005: 142).

Both high modernist and colonial welfare intervention were thus aimed at improving human welfare, as defined by the interveners. Both approaches also required legibility from outside, which was achieved by ignoring much of local complexity and focusing narrowly on the intervention.

Development intervention, then, builds on views and rationales that can be traced from both the above approaches. Its main, and fairly explicit, motivation is the idea that something is lacking and needed in 'recipient' societies that is present in 'donor' societies. Less articulated but equally fundamental is the idea that this 'something' can be shared and implanted, i.e. that desirable societal change – 'development' – can be achieved through intervention. Implicit are also strong beliefs in science and technology, in external expertise and the capability to define local needs and solutions, and in the appropriateness of simplifying local complexity and focusing on only those aspects deemed relevant for intervention.

4. LOCAL DYNAMICS AND IMPLEMENTATION INTERPLAY

To recall, the research problem of this thesis is how interventionist rationales unfold as a development intervention is implemented in a local setting, and among the motivations is a maintained need to regard such intervention as part of the context where it is implemented. In this chapter, I will therefore outline some features of local settings in general and peasant societies in particular, as well as some related aspects of how new features may come to be accommodated in such local settings. This will lead to the formulation of four questions regarding the implementation of CARERE/Seila in three Cambodian villages[76] that will guide the empirical research and analysis (chapters 5-8) and help illuminate the research problem (chapter 9). Some notes on the empirical research and analysis will also be made.

4.1 Local living settings

As pointed out in chapter 1, implementation of a development intervention necessarily takes place in a particular setting at a particular time. In this section I will argue, as discussed by numerous scholars, that a local setting has its own unique physical, economic, social, political and other characteristics, all contributing to its own continuous and shifting dynamics.[77] This means, in some sense, arguing the obvious. Still, considering the interventionist thinking and practice – the focus of this thesis – the reasoning is apparently not always taken into account and therefore worth pinpointing.

The assertion of uniqueness goes for any local setting. What this thesis deals with is a number of rural peasant communities, which is also what much development intervention is targeted at. There are various well known interpretations and analyses of peasant societies. According to the 'moral economy' approach, developed by Scott, peasants are subsistence-oriented, prioritising safety and reliability over long- or short-term profit. Aiming to make a living, they try to minimise risks and disadvantages rather than maximise returns (Scott 1976). Popkin makes different assumptions about peasants' goals and behaviour, claiming that individual interests and concerns are more important than collective ones. Using a political economy approach, he argues that peasants continuously strive to raise their subsistence level through investments,

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[76] As will be discussed, the manifestations of a development intervention become embedded parts of the local setting, and aspects of one intervention can not be clearly distinguished from those of others. As mentioned, other interventions in the case study villages will therefore also be considered, though focus remains on CARERE/Seila.

[77] Talking about local settings is not intended to give the impression of clearly defined locations with fixed boundaries. On the contrary, as will be argued, interactions and influences with near and far away features are vital aspects of such settings being 'living'.

and therefore do take risks (Popkin 1979). Hydén, too, claims that peasant production has logics of its own and points out that there is no contradiction between a moral economy and rational peasants. He finds, however, that what he calls the 'economy of affection', i.e. a reciprocal model providing a safety net, prevails over what he regards as strict economic rationality (Hydén 1980; 1983).

Despite varying views and values and differing conclusions about peasant production and socio-economic systems, in looking for the principle rationality of subsistence peasants, these and other scholars argue that peasants are rational and pragmatic and solve problems in ways that make sense from their point of view. Scott points out that peasants have good reason to be cautious. Though taking more risks could give higher average return over a long period, it could also mean not surviving a bad year. Scott argues that similar concerns – i.e. ensuring a stable subsistence – shape much of peasants' social and political life, too. Pragmatically adapting to the situation they face, they make resistance only when deemed rational and then choose the forms of resistance that are most useful (Scott 1976; 1985). According to Hydén, peasants' economic decisions are embedded in social and other non-economic conditions and such decisions, made within the confines of affection criteria, are perfectly rational, though perhaps based on a different rationality than the western 'economic man' (Hydén 1983: 9ff). Popkin, too, though from a different approach, views peasants as rational problem solvers, who intelligently innovate and develop practical solutions to complex problems and, based on their rationales, try to make the most out of the circumstances (Popkin 1979).

Even when regarding peasants as rational agents, searching for overall principles and rationalities risks homogenising peasants and their behaviour in ways reminding of interventionist views of local actors, discussed in 3.4.4. Olivier de Sardan also rejects comprehensive descriptions of peasant production and conduct, what he calls clichés and stereotypes, including views of idyllic consensual communities, of peasants as entrepreneurs, as passive, or as uncaptured rebels. It is not reasonable, he argues, to try to define the economic essence of peasantries in terms of just one principle, such as 'safety first', which can then be used to support very different views. Also, though the subsistence logic regulates most of peasants' economic actions, defensive strategies aimed at subsistence and security are not incompatible with offensive strategies aimed at growth and accumulation. Moreover, though peasants usually search for safety, they are highly exposed to risks, actually and by necessity risking their security on each harvest (Olivier de Sardan 2005: passim; cf. Scott 1976: 25).

Richards is among the researchers who have drawn attention to the long-term and continuous fine-tuning of local systems – agricultural, economic, political, social, cultural ones etc (Richards 1985). Vividly illustrating the complexity of local systems, with examples from West Africa, he shows how extremely well-adjusted farming and social practices are to prevailing and changing specifics such as weather, ecology, soil erosion, fertility, labour assets and needs. Complex conditions make variety in

practices necessary in order to spread risks. Scott, too, keeps pointing to the complexity of local conditions and the ensuing value of local knowledge and skills. The worth can scarcely be overestimated of what has been called 'metis', i.e. practical experience and skills, required through practice and developed over generations. A wide range of poly-cropping strategies and an 'infinite diversity' of rural production relations, for example, provide crucial complementarity, and people continue to use their pragmatic and cognitive resources to vigorously adjust to changing circumstances. Peasants' strategies are thus highly flexible, with hugely inventive farming practices responding to variable environments and adjusted through on farm experimentation and selection. Traditions of seed varieties, planting techniques and timing, for example, stem from long-term trial and error. Locally developed and grounded, such complexities are comprehensible and make a lot of sense to those who live in the setting (Scott 1976; 1998; cf. Shiva 1997).

A local setting also involves certain social and political structures. Leadership roles and power relations, including along gender lines, differ from place to place, as do socio-economic arrangements and norms, such as practices of labour exchange and mutual assistance and sense of solidarity. People are organised in their everyday life and, as with agriculture methods, such habits and traditions have been designed over lengths of time and continue to be established and reinterpreted with changing circumstances. Peasants readily adopt different systems of values and legitimacy according to the context and to their own interests. Property relations, too, are continuously adapted and people keep engaging in various kinds of relationships that form multiple local-social networks and provide the basis of their identity (Voisey and O'Riordan 2001: 35ff; Cherni 2001; Long 2001: 49f; Scott 1998; Nuijten 1992).

Implied in the view of peasants as rational problem solvers, making the most out of available options, is that they are in active engagement with external influences and pragmatically alert to knowledge from anywhere if it serves their purposes. It is in interaction with new and changing external features that local forms of knowledge are being reworked and peasant societies and conceptions keep changing. Local rationales, values and norms, based on local circumstances and legacies, are continuously being produced in ongoing local discussions, enabling people to for example reject, modify or adopt technical improvements. Unsurprisingly, peasants are social agents who process their lived experiences and act upon them. They have their own agendas and priorities, and as they encounter new circumstances, they improvise with 'old' and 'new' constraints and opportunities, reacting and responding as well as they can and as they find appropriate according to their rationales and needs. Thus incorporating new features, peasants keep adjusting to varying economic, social, political, cultural and ecological conditions, continuously revising their strategies and forming their relationships. In the attempt to reap the benefits of emerging opportunities, people also develop new forms of organising. Rural life is thus highly dynamic and always provisional, and peasants who keep refining old practices and discovering new ones that work should be understood as lifelong experimenters, making mistakes and

recovering from them, as well as from random disturbances – and generally 'coping' in a world full of surprises (Li 2007; Jørgensen 2006; Olivier de Sardan 2005; Long 2001; Scott 1998; Ellen 1996; Ingold 1996; Nuijten 1992).

This is not to suggest a romantic, idealised view of village life, of peasants, of local tenure systems etc. There are indeed lazy, stupid and dishonest peasants, as well as those who for example gamble and take what could be deemed as irrational risks, and local relations and institutions may indeed be highly discriminatory, oppressive and exploitative (Scott 1998: 34). Rationalities also differ between people, places and times, as do norms, priorities and experiences that form people's behaviour. Peasants try in different ways to resolve their livelihood problems and organise their resources depending on diverse opportunities, abilities, inclination to try new things and take risks, to obey and object etc. They are sometimes entrepreneurs, sometimes traditionalists, sometimes submissive, sometimes in consensus, sometimes rebellious. Also, what is for good reasons expected and regarded as rational in one place may not be so in another. Each case is therefore unique (Olivier de Sardan 2005: 81ff).

Moreover, there are obvious limits to people's room for manoeuvre when facing new conditions, and within any local setting and any population, there are various socio-economic strategies. Not everybody is in a position to consciously choose how to respond to external influences. Economic givens as well as political relations and inequalities within a local setting affect people's possibilities to act. Access to land and other resources, levels of knowledge, skills and social status, along with local power and gender structures and conflicts of interest may for example limit people's abilities to adjust to and take advantage of new opportunities. Everybody has some agency, though, and the responses to changing conditions are far from always the result of strategic, conscious choices. With variety in status, skills, personality etc, and within the economic, political and other limits to their freedom to act, people – with individual variations and self-consciously or otherwise – shape their behaviour, which makes a village the jointly created, partly unintended product of many hands (Long 2001; Scott 1998).

4.2 Social processes of intervention

As argued in the previous section, local fine-tuning, complexity and continuous adjustment turn a local community into a unique living setting with its own particular dynamics. And this is the kind of context in which a development intervention is implemented. What is implemented, then, are the local manifestations of an intervention, i.e. concrete features intended to realise the overarching goals. In this section I will argue that, at implementation, such manifestations of a development intervention meet and come to interact with a range of local traits. Through a diverse interplay between locally prevailing and externally introduced features, intervention manifestations are accommodated in local structures and strategies. This may again be arguing the obvious, but, as noted, considering interventionist thinking and practice, the reasoning is worth emphasising.

The encounter between intervention manifestations and local qualities and dynamics implies what Long and others have defined as an 'interface', and which is described as the point where different life-worlds and social fields intersect. Though the term may convey an image of a two-sided face-to-face confrontation, the development interface is complex and multifaceted in nature (e.g. Long 2002: 6; 2001: 65ff; Long and Villarreal 1993: 147).[78] Olivier de Sardan prefers the notion of an 'arena' which occurs within a 'local space', since it emphasises the political and interactive aspects involved (Olivier de Sardan 2005: 185ff). The meeting between what is designed and introduced from outside and what prevails locally inevitably gives rise to a big and complex set of social interactions, and already in 1967, Hirschman stated that a varied interplay emerges between the structural characteristics of a development project and the social and political environment (Hirschman 1967: 186).

Those who design an intervention and those who live where it is implemented have different agendas, based on different experiences and perceptions of reality, different logics and systems of meaning, and not least different resources and abilities. Thus motivated by dissimilar norms and needs, and using divergent means and strategies, they run different projects, pursuing more or less compatible interests. As diverse goals and rationales are thus brought into contact with each other, and the various projects interlock, there is likely to be a clash of expectations. Inherent to the idea of an interface/arena is that it commonly involves contradictory interests and rationales. These come to be pitched against each other and the meeting is often conflictual, entailing struggles over social meanings and practices. Long et al. therefore also talk about 'encounters of horizons' and 'battlefields of knowledge', while Olivier de Sardan regards the 'arena' as providing a social space for confrontations and competitions between the various logics and strategies of those who initiated the intervention and those who live in the local setting (Lewis and Mosse 2006b; Olivier de Sardan 2005: 137f, 185ff; Long 2002; 2001; Long and Long 1992; Crewe and Harrison 1998: 156ff; Long and Ploeg 1994; Porter et al. 1991).[79]

Unsurprisingly, however, peasants' perceptions are not limited to the manifestations of such intervention, or even usually focused on them. Rather, a development intervention may be peripheral or irrelevant to people who are busy making a living, using various opportunities and overcoming various constraints. As can be expected, local people's actions are formed and influenced by all sorts of circumstances, many of which are unconnected to development intervention, and –

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[78] The concept of interface has however also been deemed inadequate since it is said to involve compartmentalisation and to insufficiently describe the various types of exchanges, adaptation and translations that a development intervention contains (Lewis and Mosse 2006b: 10; Rossi 2006).

[79] According to a range of scholars, in the linear mainstream model, the conflictual nature of development situations is however downplayed and conflicts of interest commonly not recognised (e.g. Olivier de Sardan 2005: 89f).

following their own priorities within the context of their own worldview – they will continue operating their projects and pursuing their strategies. Whether peripheral or not, intervention manifestations come to form part of available opportunities and constraints. As with other new features and changing circumstances, people take them into account, considering them among other factors, weighing costs and benefits and trying to make the most out of them according to their needs and rationales (Li 2007: 29; Long 2001: 31; Porter et al. 1991: 210).

As noted, not all local actors are in a position to consciously choose how to use and respond to various features. Rather, there are conditions that constrain people's choices and strategies, including economic realities, power differentials, gender roles and social relations. As also noted, however, most people have some room for manoeuvre, within which they tend to act, and also less conscious and strategically chosen behaviour affects the proceedings and outcomes of development intervention. Within the limits that they face, target populations construct their own patterns of dealing with intervening agencies, almost always holding some resources that enable them to influence its proceedings, if only by ignoring or disparaging it (McGregor 2007; Olivier de Sardan 2005: 185ff; Long 2001: 28; Crewe and Harrison 1998: 4; Booth 1993: 55).

The manifestations of development intervention are thus acted out in the local context of social, economic and political structures, strategies and norms. According to Long, external influencing can only be achieved by shaping people's everyday life experiences and perceptions. All forms of intervention necessarily enter existing life-worlds where they must be somehow understood and related to and where they come to be mediated by local actors and structures (Long 2001: 13). People conceive of and react to new features depending on their own experiences, expectations and needs, as well as on local social, economic and political circumstances. External influences are therefore locally interpreted, contested and negotiated. Like other external phenomena, development activities come to be appropriated and used according to local logics and powers as well as personal priorities and positions. This happens for example when a new technology is introduced into an existing farming system. As Darré points out regarding cattle rearers, local users do not apply new techniques, but construct them (Darré 1997: 57, translated in Olivier de Sardan 2005: 11). External advice, too, is filtered through people's perceptions and technological systems. When locally interpreted, the categories imposed on a local society may be modified, subverted, blocked and even overturned, and overall development policies and programmes translated into different logics. External knowledge, rationalities and practices are thus reworked, appropriated and accommodated, and the new features come to be transformed and manifested in diverse specific forms, endowed with localised meanings and uses (Lewis and Mosse 2006b; Olivier de Sardan 2005; Appadurai

1995; Acharya 2004; Long 2001; Voisey and O'Riordan 2001; Cherni 2001; Preston 1996; Miller 1995; Arce and Long 1992; Mulder 1992).[80]

Within the arena of struggle and negotiation, internal and external domains are thus merged and the manifestations of an intervention are accommodated in socio-economic and socio-political structures and relations, in people's life-worlds and in overall local dynamics. The influences are mutual, with externally induced change affecting as well as being affected by the locality and its actors. Just as local conceptions have the capacity to absorb and rework external models, the latter necessarily incorporate localised ideas and representations. Such cultural accommodation is vital for different worldviews to at all interact (Long 2001; Long and Long 1992). The ongoing interpretation, negotiation and contestation also turn a development intervention into a socially constructed process with lots of factors at play – in the words of Long and Ploeg, a 'set of social practices arising out of the interlocking of actors' strategies and intentionalities' (Long and Ploeg 1989: 237). It is an experimental and meaning-creating process of continuous reinterpretation and transformation of policy ideas, where the intervention is constantly reshaped by its own internal organisational, cultural and political dynamic and by the specific conditions it encounters or creates.

Thus intermingling with the local context, development intervention becomes embedded in broader processes of social change, and in these messy and overlapping processes, proceedings are continuously shaped, which turns each case of implementation into a unique constellation, with transformation and internalisation continuously shaping its practice. Through local interpretation and appropriation, external intervention is incorporated and translated into new, innovative and unexpected outcomes with a socially negotiated character and made up of complicated mixes of intended and unintended, anticipated and unanticipated, direct and indirect results. This means that similarly formulated development intervention gets different results in different settings while it is also difficult to directly link certain outcomes to a particular intervention (Li 2007; Pasteur 2006; Green 2002; Long 2002; 2001; 1999; Long and Ploeg 1994; Long and Villarreal 1993; Crewe and Harrison 1998; Preston 1996; Ferguson 1994; Arce et al. 1994; Hirschman 1967).

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[80] Localisation highlights the initiative and contribution of local societies in response to and as responsible for the outcome of culture contact; in other words, it is the receiving culture that absorbs and restates the foreign elements, moulding them after its own image. In the process of localisation, foreign elements have to find a local root, a native stem onto which they can be grafted. It is then through the infusion of native sap that they can blossom and fruit. If they do not interact in this way, the foreign ideas and influences may remain peripheral (Mulder 1992: 217f).

4.3 What does the interplay look like? Research questions

So, if there are particular qualities and dynamics in every local setting, and if implementation of a development intervention gives rise to an arena/interface of diverse interactions, what does this interplay look like? In this section, four research questions will be delineated that will help investigate the interactions between old and new features as CARERE/Seila is implemented in three Cambodian villages. As discussed in chapter 2, the questions emerged during the course of empirical research and preliminary analysis in order to cover some major aspects of the implementation interplay that were found. As will be noted, the specific development intervention and local settings were thus important for the formulation of the questions.

4.3.1. Notions of intervention actors and activities; research question 1

As noted, when a development intervention is implemented in a local setting, people must form some kind of understanding of it. As also noted, what villagers encounter are the concrete manifestations of the intervention intended to realise overarching goals. With CARERE/Seila, new actors have entered the villages, including agency staff and seconded government officials in new roles. CARERE 'Local Capacity Builders' (LCB) and district and province staff (DFT, PFT) facilitate during elections of Village Development Committees (VDC) and the Local Planning Process (LPP). They also support the VDCs, while CARERE advisors within agriculture, education, health and water and sanitation provide resources and training. Development related positions have also been established for which villagers are elected or appointed. While the VDC is intended to coordinate various development activities, other position-holders – such as village health workers, mental health trainers, veterinarians and members of credit committees – should, after being trained and equipped, perform certain tasks and provide certain services to their fellow villagers.

Moreover, with CARERE/Seila, certain activities and methods have been introduced, intended for certain roles, relations and attitudes to emerge. Village meetings and participatory exercises are intended for villagers to discuss, come up with suggestions and make joint decisions on local development needs and priorities. When a local project is implemented, then, villagers' contribution in cash and labour is intended to create a sense of involvement, ownership and responsibility. Throughout, a range of new concepts have been introduced, as development related actors and activities are presented and referred to. Among other terms, villagers have met with and must make sense of the notion of 'development'.

These new features meet and come to interact with the prevailing thinking and practice. When new traits and terms that are introduced from outside are internalised, they are necessarily locally interpreted depending on previous experiences, prevailing expectations, perceived connotations etc. Just as those who design an intervention have conceptions about the meaning and value of various activities and methods, those who live where the intervention is implemented develop their own conceptions of such meanings and values. As Long points out, the implementation interface often involves

miscommunication, clash of rationalities and normative struggles over the definition of development and the role of different actors. According to Olivier de Sardan, there is usually no communication between the linguistic worlds of designers and intended beneficiaries respectively. Rather, though different vocabularies meet, they do not reach each other, and as the project language may not penetrate the local language, respective worldviews often remain intact and apart. Therefore, as villagers try to make sense of various manifestations of a development intervention, these go through their sense-making filters of logics, experiences and expectations. In this process, villagers naturally talk among themselves, which helps form their perceptions. Through local experiences, interpretation and talking, meanings are socially produced and transformed. Meanwhile, villagers also come to develop certain attitudes and approaches to various features of development intervention, continuously influenced by local discourses and practice (Long 2002: 7, 10; 2001: 41, 80, 87, 176; 1999: 11, 19; cf. Olivier de Sardan 2005: 70, 178-184; Lewis and Mosse 2006b: 2; Preston 1996: 300; Villarreal 1992: 266).

How people come to understand and make sense of development related actors, activities and concepts, and what attitudes and approaches they develop, is expected to depend on, among other things, previous experience of development intervention and of features that are similar to its manifestations. As noted, the history of development intervention differs between the case study villages, which is likely to affect people's perceptions of and responses to CARERE/Seila. Villagers' understanding, attitudes and approaches, then, will affect how the development intervention is appropriated and accommodated. The first research question is therefore: *What perceptions, attitudes and approaches do villagers have to the activities and actors of the governance intervention under study, and how do they understand 'development' as such?* (chapters 5-7, 8.1)

4.3.2 Livelihood strategies and community arrangements; research question 2

In addition to forming perceptions and attitudes, people must also in very concrete ways relate to and deal with the manifestations of development intervention when continuously forming and adjusting their socio-economic strategies and relations. CARERE/Seila has implied the pouring of resources into local settings, partly in the form of development funds for local projects, intended to improve local living conditions and commonly focused on infrastructure. Certain methods have also been introduced of collecting additional resources, mobilising people, organising work etc. As noted, local projects sometimes imply requirements of villagers' money and unpaid work, i.e. cash and labour contribution. As will be seen, however, projects also sometimes imply income opportunities for individuals and households through payment for unskilled labour in cash or kind (in addition to different sorts of handouts). Meanwhile, village meetings and development related tasks and responsibilities require villagers' time. Apart from poverty alleviation and improvement of living conditions, the intention is to actively involve villagers in

decision-making and implementation and thereby create a sense of ownership and responsibility.

The new resources, methods, requirements and opportunities come to meet and interact with prevailing community practices and norms as well as individual priorities and perceived prospects and constraints. When shaping and reshaping their livelihood strategies, villagers take the new features into account along with other available options. The ensuing interplay and accommodation are expected to depend on for example how attractive the development resources are, how the new income opportunities compare to others, and what other time and labour constraints there are. How villagers come to perceive and respond to the new methods of collecting resources, mobilising people and organising work also depend on existing socio-economic arrangements and norms for community mobilising, assistance, solidarity etc. Moreover, encountering and dealing with development intervention in terms of socio-economic resources, opportunities and requirements continuously shape the community as well as individual experiences and expectations, and thus continuously influence how people relate to and deal with further development intervention.

As will be seen, there are differences between the case study villages regarding socio-economic conditions, income opportunities, wealth disparities and community organising, which are expected to affect the implementation interplay and how the new features come to be accommodated in socio-economic strategies and institutions. The second research question is therefore: *How do people relate to and engage in the opportunities and requirements of the governance intervention under study in their socio-economic strategies, and how do these features compare to and interact with prevailing socio-economic institutions?* (chapters 5-7, 8.2)

4.3.3 Village leadership and political climate; research question 3

Apart from being accommodated in villagers' minds and local socio-economics, dealt with in research questions 1 and 2, the manifestations of a development intervention must also be accommodated in village socio-politics, as villagers as well as village leaders make sense of and act upon the new features related to how the village is run (e.g. Li 2007). With CARERE/Seila, new institutional arrangements and new roles and responsibilities have been introduced. As noted, there are procedures for how to locally decide upon the use and allocation of development resources and benefits, and there are development related positions for which villagers are designated through election or appointment. Apart from coordinating development activities, VDC members are to represent and be accountable to their fellow villagers who should have the option of not re-electing them, while other local position-holders are to improve local access to services such as basic health care, animal care, credit and education.

Intended to contribute to a certain kind of village democracy, and with gender quotas intended to ensure that women's interests are represented, the establishment of such procedures and positions come to meet and interact with prevailing socio-political roles and relations. Long has described intervention practices as political

struggles over access and distribution of certain critical resources (Long 2001: 41). Deciding on the use and allocation of development resources is an obvious source of power and wealth, and holding a development related position also potentially provides such a source, while also implying various sorts of duties and work.

When entering a local setting with its particular dynamics, then, these new features get involved in interplay with socio-political features and dynamics. Local communities involve economic, social and political disparities with some being better able than others to make their voices heard and get access to and make use of new opportunities. It is also widely recognised that externally induced development activities often favour the locally powerful, who can capture the sources of power and wealth that are provided and thus increase their privileges. People with a high profile locally tend to get development related positions even if they are intended for the poorest, and development related community groups thereby tend to be dominated by higher-income, better-connected households. While development intervention thus opens up space for negotiation and initiative for some people, the interests, ambitions and political agency of others may be blocked and they may be isolated and alienated from the externally induced development process. Participatory tools, such as PRA, have also been criticised for being blind to issues of dominance and practices of social exclusion, and therefore serving to conserve power structures. Processes of participation thus often legitimise or strengthen local elites while other people's participation may get lost in local power relations (e.g. Lewis and Mosse 2006a; Long 2001; Crewe and Harrison 1998). Also, intervention that has the potential of actually changing power structures is commonly resisted by local elites. As Chambers points out, for intervention to be locally acceptable, the degree is crucial to which local elites gain or lose from it (Chambers 1983: 163ff; cf. Li 2007: 4; Cooke and Kothari 2001a; Crewe and Harrison 1998; Leach et al. 1997a).

Such tendencies of reproducing local power structures, and of local elites resisting real change, are particularly relevant to development intervention aimed at improving local governance, commonly through decentralisation. It has been argued that local governments are not inherently more responsive or better than central ones at tailoring services to people's needs. Decentralisation may rather transfer power from national to local elites and is thus not necessarily pro-poor. It may result in 'local centralisation' and increase the opportunities for corruption, with local elites capturing public resources and opportunities, ignoring the interests of those unable to command or influence resource allocation etc (Craig and Porter 2006: 105; Burki et al. 1999: 31; Tendler 1997: 143; Turner and Hulme 1997; Kothari 1997).

Through implementation interplay, development related procedures and positions thus come to be accommodated in formal and informal power structures, including gender relations, in attitudes and approaches to leadership and in the political culture and climate. As touched upon, and as will be further seen, socio-political relations, practices and norms differ between the three case study villages, which can be expected to affect the interplay and accommodation of new features. The third

question is therefore: *How do the distribution of development resources and benefits and the establishment of development related positions of the governance intervention under study interact with local power structures, political culture and climate, and attitudes to leadership?* (chapters 5-7, 8.3)

4.3.4 Outside authorities and political involvement; research question 4

Another aim of CARERE/Seila is to give the commune a major and previously unknown role in 'development' and thereby improve the relations between villagers and the local authorities. With CARERE/Seila, a commune level Local Development Fund (LDF) has been introduced. Through the participatory Local Planning Process (LPP), every village is to suggest projects to be financed through the fund, while it is the Commune Development Committee (CDC), consisting of commune officials and village representatives, that decides on the allocation and use. The idea is that if the commune is involved in and responsible for 'development'/service provision, villagers will gain positive experiences and develop positive expectations on the local authorities. And if villagers are involved in and can influence decisions that are relevant to them, they will become more politically active. 'Participation' in development activities generally aims at wider emancipation, and being 'fully participant in the development process' in CARERE/Seila is intended to motivate and enable villagers for more far-reaching political involvement (UNDP 1995; e.g. Chambers 1983; Cornwall 2000).

These features come to meet and interact with prevailing experiences of and expectations on the local authorities as with prevailing political strategies and behaviour. The new tasks and procedures can thus be expected to get involved in interplay with established roles and relations and with villagers' as well as local officials' attitudes and approaches. How the commune's 'development role' is shouldered and what expectations emerge depend for example on how realistic and plausible the new role seems, while people's political involvement also depends on the perceived value and risks of engaging in socio-politics outside the village (cf. Scott 1985; 1990).

As will be seen, villagers' experiences, expectations and approach in relation to the local authorities are partly similar, partly different across the case study areas, which is expected to affect the implementation interplay and thus the accommodation of the new features in prevailing perceptions and practices. The fourth question is therefore: *How do the commune tasks and allocation procedures of the governance intervention under study interact with villagers' experiences and expectations of the local authorities and with villagers' political involvement?* (chapters 5-7, 8.4)

4.4 Some notes on the empirical study

In the coming chapters, it will be empirically studied what the implementation interplay and accommodation look like at the aspects outlined in the four research

questions. As noted in chapter 2, this will be done through qualitative case studies in three different local settings.

There are different ways of using data from qualitative case studies. Here, the empirical findings will be analysed both on a case-by-case basis, i.e. within the context of each case (chapters 5-7), and by bringing the cases together and systematising the findings (chapter 8). In order to understand what happens as a development intervention is implemented, we need to start out from where it takes place, i.e. to study the unique characteristics and dynamics of the local setting and bring the intervention in as it has come to constitute part of the picture. In the individual case studies, a wide range of local features and qualities will therefore be presented, and an attempt made to convey a 'sense' of every village. Again, the research questions emerged during the course of the empirical research and analysis, which explains why the collected material is richer than strictly motivated by these questions. Thick descriptions are also an integrated and necessary part of the research approach. This means that not all aspects of the local settings that are investigated and described turn out to be directly relevant to the research questions and problem. However, leaving those aspects out from the presentation would not give the holistic picture and not make the sort of contextual analysis aimed at possible. This approach also means that focus and emphasis of the presentations will vary between the cases, depending on the importance of various issues that are described in order to help understand the implementation interplay. During the empirical research, different things turned out to be of more concern to people in the different villages and therefore received more of our attention and came to make up more of the collected data. For the sake of clarity, the case study presentations follow the same structure, though different things are emphasised. In the highland village, for example, natural resource management, and the state authorities' role in it, are crucial and therefore given more space.[81] Meanwhile, in the first case study, the role of the traditional leadership and its involvement in development intervention is more of an issue, while in the second case, clear tendencies of development fatigue caught our attention.

As development intervention is brought into the picture, then, the research questions will help ensure that the case studies include aspects of how (1) villagers understand and interpret various intervention features and concepts as well as the idea of 'development', (2) how intervention manifestations are incorporated into people's livelihood strategies and local socio-economic institutions, (3) how village leadership and socio-political climate affect and are affected and (4) how the role of local authorities and people's political involvement influence and are influenced. Though the four sets of issues are thus covered, the case-based and integrated approach means that they cannot be clearly separated. The issues at stake are closely related to each

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[81] It should be emphasised, though, that it is a social research study, aiming to understand how villagers perceive their livelihood and related natural resource issues, rather than, for example, a technical or agricultural study of food production or ecological sustainability.

other and to other local features, so when local dynamics and implementation interplay are described and discussed case-by-case, the presentations do not strictly follow the research questions. Also, since the detail and breadth of findings on the respective issue vary between the case studies, the responses will be given different space.

While the three case studies therefore differ regarding the weight given to general features as well as to the findings on the research questions, all three case studies follow the same structure. In the first two sections, local features and dynamics are presented, largely socio-economic and socio-political respectively. In the third section, development intervention is brought in and its accommodation in villagers' life-worlds and village socio-economics and socio-politics discussed. In the fourth and last section, then, the role of and relations to authorities outside the village are discussed, including the accommodation of development intervention.

While in chapters 5-7, each case is thus allowed to speak 'in its own right', in chapter 8 findings from the three cases are brought together and systematised. What is of most relevance for each research question will be pulled out from the detailed material in the individual case studies, and the questions will be responded to through an analysis of similarities and differences in patterns of interplay. The analytical findings will also be illustrated by bringing some of the empirical material back in. Here, the analysis will be structured around the four research questions.

This quite rigorous treatment of the research questions is done in order to return, in chapter 9, to the research problem, connecting the empirical findings on the implementation interplay in chapters 5-8 to the theoretical findings on interventionist rationales in chapter 3.

5. EMPIRICAL FINDINGS: SVAY EI

5.1 Some basic facts on the case study village

As discussed in chapter 2, among the criteria for selection of case study villages, apart from having been included in CARERE 2 for some time, were the level of poverty, remoteness and demographic stability/instability. These are aspects of the local settings and dynamics that are expected to affect the interplay as CARERE/Seila is implemented (as is the presence of other development intervention, which will be described in 5.3.1). In this section, therefore, the first case study village will be presented in terms of population, history, livelihood and access to services.

5.1.1 Location, population and living standards[82]

Svay Ei is one of the twelve villages in the commune, twelve kilometres from the provincial town. There are 134 families and 655 people (364 women, 291 men). In 28 households, there is no male head of household, and four families are returnees who settled in the village around 1992. Svay Ei consists of six distinct parts, the farthest ones about three kilometres apart. Poorer and better off villagers live somewhat separately. The population in one of the six parts is clearly better off (and largely labelled 'Chinese' by other villagers), another part is clearly the poorest, while the biggest and most central part has a mixed population of poorer and better off people. About two thirds of the houses in the village are made of wood, and one third of bamboo. There are two big and clearly better standard houses, but no latrines. Six families have their own well, seven have a black-and-white TV and about 100 have a radio. There are more than 120 bicycles and almost 20 motorbikes in the village, but no cars.

5.1.2 History

The six separate parts that Svay Ei currently consists of used to be separate villages. The biggest and most central part, *Krang Knong*,[83] is also the oldest one, where people have probably lived for more than 100 years.

During the French colonisation, villagers had enough land and grew rice and vegetables as today. They paid taxes in cash and some worked on the main road that was being constructed, for which they got paid in French currency. For a couple of

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[82] Data are taken from Village Data Books and Commune Inventory Data Bases, compiled as part of the CARERE/Seila project, and from interviews with villagers.
[83] The name refers to a place 'inside' where people went temporarily to herd their cattle, as opposed to the 'outside' area, *Krang Krauw*.

years, Issarak[84] troops caused fear in Svay Ei, as they came to recruit villagers to fight the French and to capture young women to be dancers. Those who joined the Issaraks were equipped with arms, but, according to old villagers, there was no fighting in the village. During the Sihanouk regime from the 1950s, people still had enough rice land. They still paid taxes and were mobilised to dig a large nearby dam and to construct and maintain the road, now without payment. Old villagers still talk about when the King came to inaugurate the dam.

During the war in the early and mid-1970s, Svay Ei was at the frontline. The government had a camp on one side, from where soldiers came to recruit villagers, while the Khmer Rouge soldiers were staying in the forest on the other side, from where they came to persuade people to join them. At first, male villagers were hiding to avoid being recruited. Women and children could remain in the village and the men could spend the night there. Later on, as the village came to be right in the middle of the battlefield, it was evacuated. Most villagers went to the government controlled area, but some went to the Khmer Rouge side.

As the Khmer Rouge won, some villagers were told to return to Svay Ei, but most stayed and worked at different places around the province throughout the Pol Pot regime. When the Vietnamese forces came closer, villagers were forced to leave with the Khmer Rouge. But from 1979, people slowly started coming back to the village, which had been completely destroyed. Land had to be cleared for rice and vegetable cultivation and people also collected palm juice to make sugar. During the first few years, they came only at daytime, since Khmer Rouge soldiers in the area made it too dangerous to stay overnight. After a few years, though, there were no more security problems and people settled permanently in the village, first in small shelters and gradually, as they could afford it, in better houses. As people arrived, they started using all the land and buffaloes that they wanted. During a year or two, then, there was collective rice farming, but from 1983, individual land holdings were distributed.

Villagers' main worry during the 1980s was forced soldier and labour recruitment, conducted by the local authorities. People were not motivated to fight the Khmer Rouge, so male villagers got the habit of keeping away during daytime, and some of those who were recruited escaped by paying the recruiters. The village also had to send workers to clear forest in the mountainous areas. At first, people volunteered, but as they started to fear getting malaria, they tried to escape from that, too.

Now, Svay Ei villagers apparently think that they have quite a happy and easy life – no fighting and no forced recruitment. Instead, the main worries are water for the rice cultivation – will there be enough rain, but not too much or at the wrong time? – and cattle thefts.

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[84] The Issaraks were a resistance movement fighting for Cambodian independence during the 1940s and 1950s.

5.1.3 Resources and livelihood

Svay Ei villagers make a living mainly from wet season rice cultivation and extensive vegetable growing. There is no dry season rice cultivation. There are 105 hectares of rice land, all non-irrigated, but some villagers own rice land in another village where they can pump water from a canal (three of those families own a water pump). There are about 230 draught cattle and 140 non-draught, almost all of which are buffaloes. In the dry season, villagers go to the flooded forest areas around the Tonle Sap to herd their cattle. There are about 100 oxcarts but no tractors or *koh yun*,[85] though one family has a *koh yun* which they use on their land far from the village.

There are eleven hectares of land used for other crops than rice, and vegetable growing is a very important supplementary source of livelihood for most families. In the rainy season, people grow for example tomato, cabbage, eggplant, cucumber, winter melon, pumpkin, sweet potato and bitter melon. Fruit is another, though much less important, supplementary income. Palm sugar is an important income for several families, with some people renting palm trees from others. Pig raising has become an important income, mainly for somewhat better off families, and is what villagers perceive as the main way to become better off. There are currently about 350 pigs in the village. Several of those who raise pigs also produce rice wine, as they can use the waste from it to feed the pigs and thus combine two profitable activities. People also raise and sell chickens.

Mainly in the dry season, most families go fishing at some nearby lakes and in a river 17 kilometres away. Many also fish in the Tonle Sap area where they stay for a while herding their cattle. Catching and selling frogs is another source of income in the season when the frogs are most expensive, from December to May. The fish is mainly for own consumption, but people also sell to villagers who do not fish for themselves and sometimes at the district and province markets. Recently, a man who just moved to the village started going around on his motorbike to buy fish and frogs from other villagers and sell to a trader at the province market. There, another trader buys earthworms from a merchant who buys them from Svay Ei villagers. People rarely collect beetles or catch snails or crabs to sell since the price is low. They do catch snakes and turtles if they happen to come across them, but only for own consumption since there are no merchants who buy them. Villagers also catch birds with traps, for eating and because the birds destroy rice plants.

The nearest forest is less than a kilometre away. There, villagers get enough firewood for themselves and some sell firewood to others, especially to those who need a lot for their rice wine production. In the forest, people also get materials for fences and poor villagers collect wild potatoes to sell. Around the lakes and in other nearby areas, people collect other wild crops such as morning glory, water lily and tamarind leaves. Palm leaves are also collected to make mats, which for a few poor

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[85] A *koh yun* is a vehicle used for transport and ploughing.

women is the main income during parts of the year. In some distant fields, villagers get thatch to make roofs for themselves and to sell. They are worried, though, that there will soon not be enough thatch as people have started clearing those fields to grow rice.

Some villagers employ others for ploughing, transplanting and harvesting. During the busy seasons, a good worker can choose between employers in Svay Ei and neighbouring villages. Very few go out from the village, though, to look for other kinds of employment. A few villagers make extra money from driving a motorcycle taxi, while the teacher and the Village Chief are the only ones with a regular salary.

5.1.4 Access to services

Svay Ei is located five kilometres from the commune centre and seven kilometres from the district centre. Within the village, there are 2,200 metres of reasonably good paths. There are eight communal ring wells and two pump wells, of which all except one or two provide clean water throughout the year, and three communal ponds.

For health care, villagers prefer to go to the nearest health centre, which is about three kilometres away, or to call for a health worker from there. There is also a clinic in the district town and a provincial hospital twelve kilometres away. In the village, there is a traditional midwife who helps with almost all deliveries. Two or three villagers have been appointed village health workers, but they are not confident in their role and other villagers do not consult them (see 5.3.1). There are also a few village vets, but villagers rarely consult them either. Two *kru Khmer*[86] sometimes help with complicated deliveries, with snakebites and with treatment of sick animals.

There is a primary school with six classrooms in the village. Four teachers teach 150 students in grade one to four (70 in first grade, 27 in second, 30 in third and 23 in fourth). There are classes only in the morning, and during the busy agriculture seasons, most children do not attend. Five or six children go to a different primary school three kilometres away, where they can continue to grade six. The nearest secondary school is five kilometres away. One boy in the village goes to high school in the provincial town, currently in grade ten. There have been literacy classes in the village a few times, most recently attended by about 25 women aged between 15 and 20 and a few slightly older men.

There are about ten small rice mills and one larger in the village. All villagers mill their rice in the village, either letting the mill owner keep the rice husk or paying a cash fee. Five or six villagers have a small shop at their house with a very limited selection of mainly food items, and one woman sells Khmer noodles. The nearest market, where most villagers go, is three kilometres away. Sellers very rarely come to the village.

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[86] A *kru Khmer* is a traditional healer.

A villager runs a small bike/motorbike repairing shop, while it is three kilometres to the nearest blacksmith and twelve kilometres to the nearest carpenter. There is a tailor two kilometres away and a hairdresser three kilometres away. Before Khmer New Year, however, several hairdressers come to the village from the provincial town and one young man in the village recently started cutting other men's hair. Two families run a video shop each, and at two other villagers' houses, people gather to play cards and other games. The nearest pagoda, where most villagers usually go, is two kilometres away and there is another one three kilometres away, where some people sometimes go.

The largely socio-economic features described so far are part of the local setting and dynamics which are expected to get involved in interplay with various manifestations of development intervention. Other important aspects of the dynamics and interplay concern village socio-politics, to which we now turn.

5.2 Village leadership and socio-political culture

Vital parts of any local setting and its dynamics are socio-political roles, relations, culture and climate. These can be expected to interact with the manifestations of any development intervention, and are especially crucial when the intervention is aimed at improving local governance. In this section, therefore, formal and informal village leadership and neighbour relations will be presented.

5.2.1 Friendly but increasingly monetarised neighbour relations

A first general impression of Svay Ei is an overall friendly atmosphere. Though the village is widely spread out, villagers generally know, or at least know about, each other quite well, seemingly caring about their neighbours and helping those who are old and sick. A few villagers, however, who are known for drinking and not 'working hard', are not well-regarded by others and blamed for their own poverty.

There is an apparently well-working pots and plates association, the purpose of which is that villagers have access to plates, dishes, pots and cutlery when there is a ceremony, such as a wedding or a funeral, and a meal needs to be served to a large number of people. Most villagers have contributed utensils or money and everyone can use the items without charge.

Villagers help each other, but the traditional kind of work exchange where people take turns to work on each others' fields has become less common, as have long-term patron-client relationships. Both are replaced by especially poorer villagers working for cash payment on especially better off villagers' fields. This partly reflects the ongoing monetarisation and increasing economic differentiation, and the increasing acceptance and expectation of such differentiation, as well as an apparently decreasing sense of responsibility for those who are worse off. Villagers who can afford to employ others prefer such occasional and less personal arrangements to more long-term and personal relations of mutual assistance. However, an employer-employee

relationship can still in some ways resemble a more personal and long-term patron-client relationship. There is for example a poor and landless widow who works on the same family's rice fields every year and, apart from her salary, also receives help with school fees etc from her employer.

5.2.2 The gentle father and the feared strongman

> The Village Chief is very good! He's honest, he's got a good heart. (---) He gives advice when someone makes mistakes. When Sokha[87] is drunk and others don't like it, he gives advice to her (Villager (f) Group of poor women, October 1999).

In Svay Ei, two people stand out as the clearly perceived leaders: the Village Chief and the Chief of commune militia, who most villagers also refer to as the Village Policeman or Deputy Village Chief, though his formal position remains unclear (see below).

The Village Chief is an old and low profile man who villagers generally like as a person (at least at the beginning of the research; see below). He is regarded as soft and kind and said to rarely use harsh words or force villagers to anything. The relationship between him and the villagers is highly personal, with villagers widely referring to him as their 'father', and he sometimes talking about them as his 'children'.

Villagers generally describe the Village Chief's job as to 'govern' (*krob krong*). He is said to receive plans from 'higher levels' (*thnak leu*)[88] and to send reports back, mainly population statistics, and to call villagers for meetings. His main tasks in the village are perceived as to help resolve conflicts and, to a less extent, to ensure security and give advice to people who do something wrong.

> The Village Chief's role is to tell villagers to not have conflicts with each other, to tell people to try hard to earn an income, and to help poor people become better off. He solves conflicts in the village and protects the security. He tells villagers to have night guards and he walks around the village to see the guards (Villager (m) Group of young boys, October 1999).

Thefts, especially cow and buffalo thefts, are a major concern among villagers and something that both the Village Chief and the militiaman claim to be strongly determined to do something about.

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[87] Sokha is among the poorest in the village. She has no rice land and no house of her own, but stays at different people's houses. She is often drunk.

[88] People in the lowland villages widely talk about the higher levels (*thnak leu*) referring to all official matters beyond the village. See 5.4.

> Chickens and ducks used to be stolen every month. Now there are fewer thefts than before. I arrested a thief and gave him advice. There used to be four thieves, but now they've stopped, they've become good people after I gave them advice. We made a contract with thumbprints and they promised to stop their bad activities. (---) One year, two people put their thumbprints [on that kind of contracts] and the following year another two (Village Chief (m) October 1999).

The informal and paternalistic atmosphere makes the Village Chief's job resemble running a family rather than doing a specified job or fulfilling an official's task. He also conducts his main task – mediating in conflicts – in a highly personal manner, which includes expecting some small gift from those he helps, but no actual payment.

> Last Sunday, some buffaloes had been eating rice plants on somebody's land. The landowner caught the buffaloes and brought them to me. I guarded them during the night. Then the buffalo owner came to get his buffaloes back. I called the landowner and discussed with both of them. The landowner demanded 50,000 riel (US$ 13). I asked the Village Policeman [the militiaman] to measure the land where the buffaloes had eaten. It was four times four meter. The buffalo owner wanted to pay only 10,000 riel and I said 'please, increase it a little bit'… At last they agreed on 20,000 riel. (---) Conflict resolution in the village doesn't cost anything. I just get a package of cigarettes from the person who gets the compensation, and we all share the cigarettes (Village Chief (m) October 1999).

The Village Chief lives in the most remote part of the village. As a result, for very long periods many villagers do not see him at all. During our first visit, he claims that he walks around the whole village every night to guard against thieves. This is not completely true at that time, and during our last visit, ten months later, he spends even less time in the parts of the village where he does not live. When he does come into the central village, he often asks somebody to provide food and drinks for him and the guests that he might bring.

Beside this soft and low profile Village Chief, the above-mentioned militiaman strongly dominates the atmosphere in the village as well as villagers' perceptions of the village leadership. This village 'strongman' is feared and disliked by most villagers. 'People are afraid of the local authorities in the village – not the Village Chief, but others, such as his Deputy [the militiaman]' (VDC member (f) June 1999). There is, however, also a small group of people who support him. As opposed to the Village Chief, who is perceived as not very interested in assisting the villagers or very available, the militiaman is more accessible. He is seen and heard a lot around the village, and clearly wants to know what is going on.

> He's very proud, he wants villagers to be afraid of him. Since the Village Chief appointed him… he's become proud. Maybe he thinks that the law is in his body, but if he thinks so, he should be Hun Sen (Villager, *aachaar* (m) Village feedback group, March 2000).

The general perception is that the militiaman is in charge of local security, but also takes on other tasks such as conflict resolution, partly because the Village Chief transfers such issues to him. Though this man is keen to be involved, most villagers hesitate to consult him, since they do not trust him and since he is widely known for charging for any kind of assistance.

> For conflicts, people go to Phan [the militiaman]. He is eager to bring conflict partners together. One party gives him money. The Village Chief doesn't want to take any money. (---) If villagers have a conflict, and go to see the Village Chief, he transfers it to that man (VDC member (f) October 1999 and March 2000).

The main reason for villagers' bad feelings about the militiaman is his violent appearance and his way of talking. He is said to be 'strong' and use harsh words. Living in the biggest and most central part of the village, he frequently walks around carrying a gun. He for example visits friends, makes announcements on the loudspeakers or generally checks what is going on around the village, all of which may involve heavy drinking. He often brings friends from outside for parties at his house and is often drunk, which makes him even more menacing and adds to villagers' fear.

Despite this man's undeniable power, it remains unclear what position he actually holds, apart from being a militiaman. The Commune Chief, however, clearly appreciates having this 'strongman' helping to control the most remote village in the commune, praising him for being determined and strong in speech and action, as opposed to the 'weak' Village Chief. The Village Chief and the Commune Chief repeatedly make firm but contradictory statements about the man's appointment, with the Village Chief claiming to have picked his own Deputy/militiaman.

> In late 1996, it was determined that Svay Ei is a remote area, so the Commune Chief asked me to get a Chief of militiamen in the village. When I chose a good one, the Commune Chief agreed. But I could have chosen someone else and he would have accepted it (Village Chief (m) March 2000).

While the Village Chief apparently wants to give the impression of being strong and in charge, the Commune Chief claims that he was the one who selected and appointed the 'strongman'.

> When he [the militiaman] wasn't elected in the VDC election [see below] I was very disappointed. I didn't want him to do nothing. So I asked him to be Assistant Village Chief. The Village Chief is too soft and the village is remote. Phan [the militiaman] has experience of dealing with enemies and

thieves. That's why I asked him to be Assistant Village Chief. I appointed him on the election day last year[89] (Commune Chief (m) March 2000).

Adding to the confusion, another quite well reputed and respected man is by many villagers referred to as Deputy Village Chief. This man himself gets bewildered and worried, and suddenly changes his mind during an interview:

> No, no, no, I'm sorry, I'm not Deputy Village Chief. I forgot! (---) I left my position because I knew that nobody wanted me. (---) Phan [the militiaman] is Deputy Village Chief. He's been that since 1994. The Village Chief had a meeting with a few people. He said that he needed a Deputy and that he wanted Phan to be the one. I was there and I agreed, I thought that they were disappointed with me (VDC member (m) October 1999).

Whatever his formal position is, the militiaman is apparently more powerful than the Village Chief, and definitely more active and eager to be involved in village affairs. He therefore tends to take over tasks from the Village Chief.

> The Village Chief gives a lot of responsibility to Phan [the militiaman], so the Village Chief has become Deputy and the Deputy has become Village Chief (VDC member (f) October 1999).

This is not appreciated by most villagers, though, who tend to like the soft Village Chief and regret that he is not strong in relation to the militiaman. 'I've told the Village Chief to not let that man do whatever he wants. People don't hate the Village Chief, they only hate Phan' (VDC member (f) Village feedback group, March 2000). The Village Chief is aware of what villagers think, and is apparently ambiguous about the militiaman. The two are actively working together and, again trying to appear strong and in control, the Village Chief denies that he is being dominated by the militiaman. He for example claims to consciously choose to delegate to the militiaman.

> He's responsible for security in the village. He isn't involved in conflict resolution or marriage certificates. People don't consult anyone but me about conflicts. If I'm not here, I transfer the job to the Deputy, and if the Deputy cannot solve it, I do it when I get back. (---) He doesn't seem to know anything about the village, and I'm the one who obeys the law. When I've been away, villagers report to me that he's taken money from them (Village Chief (m) March 2000).

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[89] The second VDC election, to which the Commune Chief is referring, was held in December 1998.

Despite his efforts to appear in charge, however, the Village Chief largely agrees with villagers' complaints.

> He's not the Deputy Village Chief, but villagers started to call him Deputy.[90] You'd better ask them why… He's working above his position. (---) Villagers tell me that the militiaman is becoming my boss, and there's always some truth in what the villagers say. But I just let him do it. My job is still my job (Village Chief (m) March 2000).

The main reason why the Village Chief does not dare to go against the will of the militiaman is that the Commune Chief supports the militiaman, which is confirmed by a CDC member from a different village.

> The Village Chief gives the right to Phan [the militiaman] to do everything. When I came to Svay Ei, Phan blamed me for belonging to another party and thought that he could demand money from me. The Commune Chief and he get along well because they both belong to CPP. The Commune Chief knows very well what villagers think about Phan, and in which parts of Svay Ei people dislike him. But he doesn't mind what Phan does, Phan probably reports to him, that's why he knows so well (CDC member from a different village (f) March 2000).

The militiaman renders influence from close and informal contacts also with other officials in the commune and the district, who often come to his house to eat and drink.

> Phan has power because he has much contact with commune and district people. He has money, and he spends his money for parties with high officials. When they come to the village, they go only to his house. They see that he's good at talking and can control those who have positions in the village. The position of a Deputy Village Chief was initiated for him to do the Village Chief's job. That's why he's stronger than the Village Chief. (---) It's villagers' mistake too, if the Village Chief transfers them to the Deputy Village Chief, they should go to the Commune Chief instead. But the higher levels support him, they always listen to Phan (Villager, *aachaar* (m) Individual interview and Village feedback group, March 2000).

While a CDC member is concerned about the leadership problems in Svay Ei, several commune officials spontaneously express their approval of the militiaman. The Commune Chief, too, is aware of villagers' discontent, but is very clear about whom he supports.

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[90] The Village Chief himself also frequently talks about the 'Deputy Village Chief'. When once jokingly confronted with this, he is embarrassed and hurries to correct himself 'no! I mean the Chief of militiamen'.

He's such a good person – brave and good at talking. The Village Chief is too soft, people don't listen to him. When Phan [the militiaman] is there, they listen. (---) People say that, if I want to win the commune election, I need to get rid of him. But he hasn't done anything wrong, he's never injured anyone, so I hesitate to get rid of him. If I did, I'd miss him (Commune Chief (m) March 2000).

This may indicate that while the Village Chief is reluctant to recognise that the local authorities back up the militiaman, the Commune Chief, too, may be afraid of going against the will of the militiaman, who claims to know people also at province and national levels, who like him and to whom he talks about his concerns in the village.

I've got two friends, one works at a provincial department and one is a soldier in Phnom Penh. They've both offered me jobs, but I have not accepted them. (---) I know Lee Sok and Sao Viasna [province officials]. We were struggling together during Pol Pot and we were in jail together (Militiaman (m) October 1999 and March 2000).

This village 'strongman' thus heavily influences the socio-political climate in Svay Ei and, as noted, his fearful appearance is not balanced by the softer Village Chief due to his low profile. Despite the Village Chief's claim that villagers frequently consult him for conflict resolution, according to most villagers, they very rarely go to see him. The general perception is that the only reason to consult the Village Chief is if there is a conflict. And even then, villagers hesitate, since he is regarded as not interested in helping, but rather transfers matters to the militiaman. Most villagers claim that they therefore try to solve their problems and conflicts among themselves. Regarding domestic conflicts, for example, which are a major concern to villagers and the most common kind of conflict, villagers rarely consult the village leadership. Women whose husbands regularly beat them commonly hesitate to report it since they do not want to risk a divorce. Neither do neighbours dare to intervene in domestic affairs.

In order to get married or divorced, however, villagers need the approval of both the Village Chief and the Commune Chief. The Village Chief usually takes care of both, but some villagers do not bother about either due to the costs involved.

When I arranged my daughter's wedding, I only went to see the Village Chief and he worked for me. I had to pay 15,000 riel because he needed to see the Commune Chief. Everybody has to pay 15,000. They don't care that some are poor. They say that if villagers are poor, they should not get a proper marriage. If villagers have a *saen*,[91] they only inform the Village Chief. But if they go to see Phan [the militiaman], even for a *saen* they have to pay (Villager (f) March 2000).

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[91] A *saen* or *saen koun* is a more simple wedding ceremony.

As indicated in this quote, the militiaman is partly taking over even the issuing of marriage certificates. During our last visit, the father of a man in a neighbouring village who wanted to marry a young widow in Svay Ei came to inform and ask the Village Chief about this. As the Village Chief was not at home, however, the visitor went to the militiaman, who was more than happy to take care of the issue, and then spent the afternoon drinking with the bride's and bridegroom's relatives.

Though it may appear nice to have such a soft and gentle Village Chief, who is generally liked as a person and who regards the villagers as his 'children', it causes severe problems. Since he is so passive and unavailable, and the militiaman so feared – and expensive – villagers sometimes have nowhere to turn, which is illustrated by an old widow's recent encounters with the two leaders:

> Doung, who is among the poorest in the village, lives with her 17 year old daughter and son-in-law. Her husband died ten years ago. As her daughter was getting married, Doung went to inform the Village Chief, following local rules and expectations. After walking the two or three kilometres to his house three times, just to find that he was not there, she gave up.
>
> Some time later, a neighbour accused Doung's son-in-law of having stolen rice from his rice store. This time Doung went to see the militiaman who lives nearby. But he refused to help if she did not first give him 5,000 riel.

5.2.3 A history of changes and confusion

In Svay Ei, the composition and role of the village leadership have changed several times during the last 20 years. This continues to create confusion, among villagers as well as leaders, about who actually has what position and what tasks. Regarding the current Village Chief, there is no doubt, since he has held his position since the mid-1980s. The previous one started sometime between 1979 and 1981. The two of them, as well as others, however, state different dates and different reasons for the change, and also make contradictory statements about who else has been part of the leadership at different times.

The tasks involved in different positions have also changed considerably. A recurring theme, however, is that holding a position entails implementing unpopular authority decisions, and all those who have been part of the village leadership throughout the 1980s and 1990s claim that they wanted to quit. During the 1980s, the leadership's main tasks were to assist the local authorities in land distribution and recruitment of soldiers and labour force, and to collect money from villagers. Old villagers complain that the land allocation was unfair, since the Village Chief at that time favoured his friends and relatives. As noted, there are also frequent stories of how male villagers used to run away, sometimes for several days, in order to avoid being recruited. The former Village Chief recalls the difficulties that he faced.

> It was hard to be Village Chief at that time. Land was distributed, there was recruitment and we had to collect money for the soldiers. The main responsibility was to recruit strong, young men to be soldiers and to go to

K5[92] to clear forest and oust the Khmer Rouge. The district and commune could for example ask for five names. We gave them the names, but then nobody turned up. Then the commune or district would come to get those five men, but they ran away (Villager, former Village Chief (m) June 1999).

Some village leaders also sometimes helped villagers avoid recruitment by warning them when there had been instructions to recruit a number of workers or soldiers.

> I used to have a position in the village.[93] My responsibility was to recruit soldiers and people to clear forest. I went for meetings in the commune, and then came back and told the villagers to run away for a while (Villager, *aachaar* (m) June 1999).

During the 1980s, a few villagers – two at a time, three women and one man altogether – were appointed Representatives of the Associations of Women and Youth respectively.[94] They reported to the commune, collected money and building materials from villagers, and led people to rehabilitate a couple of different dams.

> I was the Representative from 1983 to 1985. I had to go for meetings at the commune every day, meetings about all kinds of things. It was so hard to walk there, it was muddy and I had to go through water up to the chest. (---) They wanted me to collect palm leaves and money from the villagers. It was difficult. I didn't know what it was for, and sometimes I took my own money instead. I was afraid that they would recruit me or my son as labourer or soldier, so I didn't dare to complain. But when they asked me to be a Representative again, I said no. I didn't want to do it any more! Another woman replaced me, but she has left the village, so there is no Representative of Women any more. Now there's only the Village Chief, the Deputy and the Village Development Committee (Villager (f) October 1999).

Here, too, there is uncertainty in the village about when, how and why these positions ceased. The same goes for Group leaders. During the 1980s, there were about eight appointed Group leaders in the village, all men. According to the Village Chief and several Group leaders, the system of Group leaders was officially abolished in connection to the national elections in 1993.

> The Group leaders had to call people for meetings and recruit soldiers. At that time, nobody dared to complain about plans that came from higher levels. Group leaders were active because it was a communist regime. Orders came from higher levels and lower levels had to follow. But now it's

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[92] K5 was a fortified defence line along the Cambodian-Thai border.
[93] This man was Deputy Village Chief in the early 1980s.
[94] In Svay Ei, these are perceived to have been two separate associations, while in Kompong Loung they were apparently combined in one (see the next case study, chapter 6).

democracy so they are less active. (---) After UNTAC, they disliked the job, they could not mobilise people, so they stopped by themselves. (---) During the communist regime, it was serious work. Now the Village Chief can do it alone, because it's not so serious (Villager (m) Village feedback group, October 1999).

Some villagers, however, claim that a new Group leader system was introduced in 1997, with partly the same people and partly new ones holding the posts. Thus, there is currently some confusion about whether there are any Group leaders in the village and, if so, who they are and what tasks they have. As land distribution and labour/soldier recruitment ceased, what remained for the Group leaders was to spread information and call villagers for meetings. Now, however, not even that is needed.

When Phan [the militiaman] gets information from high-level people, he uses the loudspeakers to tell villagers. I don't understand why he does that. When he does, there's no work for the Group leaders. So, why should there be Group leaders? In this village, only two people do everything, Phan and May [the Village Chief] (Villager (m) March 2000).

As noted in the quotes above, there is a sentiment that being a village leader is nowadays a fairly light task, also clearly expressed by the former Village Chief.

For May [the Village Chief] it's easy. When he started, everything was already done. There was no more land distribution. Today it's not difficult to be a Village Chief. He goes for meetings and gets money, and he goes for trainings and gets money (Villager, former Village Chief (m) June 1999).

The current Village Chief, however, firmly declares that he wants to leave his position because he is too busy. He claims that villagers will not let him quit, though.

Even the strong and eager militiaman claims that he was reluctant to accept the position as Deputy Village Chief, and that he dislikes resolving conflicts since the losing party will not be happy. He has grown committed to the task though, he says, and is dedicated to solving the problems of law and order in the village which he thinks that the Village Chief does not accomplish. The villagers' lack of appreciation, however, disappoints him.

First, when I became Deputy Village Chief, I didn't want to do it. I didn't believe in myself. But the higher levels had already appointed me, so I wanted to try. My role now is to make sure that Svay Ei has good security. But I don't want to do it any more. If I do something right, it's okay. But if I do something that doesn't satisfy people, they scold me. I have a plan for the year 2000, I want to get rid of all robbery, violence and bad actions. After that, I want to continue [i.e. do something else], find another job, maybe as a police or a soldier or something in the commune. If there are no problems in 2000, someone might say that I'm not needed any more (Militiaman (m) October 1999).

Monks, *aachaars* and old people have strong informal leadership roles in Svay Ei. The nearby pagoda has a central role in village life and there is a group of about 15 old, well known and esteemed women and men who go there almost every holy day, which is four times a month. Monks from the pagoda also come to the village about once a week and most villagers then provide food or money.

> They are respected and honest. They don't scold people, they don't use big words, and they don't use violence. You get good deeds if you work with the monks (VDC member (f) Village feedback group, March 2000).

Four old *aachaars* who live in the village, some of whom are members of the pagoda committee, are the links between the village and the pagoda. They collect money from villagers for ceremonies and they pass on information to the monks. Though definitely respected and valued, their significance and status have declined. Young people are less clear than adults about who the *aachaars* are and what they do, and as several of the *aachaars* are becoming less active due to age and sickness, younger people are reluctant to take over.

> When somebody is dying, the *aachaars* must go there to pray until the person dies. Sometimes it takes a long time, some people take 15 days to die! The *aachaars* must stay all the time, they have no time to work, so nobody wants to be an *aachaar* (Villager, *aachaar* (m) June 1999).

Traditionally, monks, *aachaars* and old people also fulfil a crucial role in mobilising villagers for communal activities such as maintaining local infrastructure, helping the poorest etc. They are still to varying degrees expected to lead villagers in certain ceremonies, and also – but less than in the past – to initiate and mobilise them to undertake communal work.

> After the monks, the *aachaars* are the respected people. They only think about the pagoda. If they go along the road and see that it's destroyed, they inform the monks. Then, the monks bring the loudspeakers and the *aachaars* call people to help repair the road (Villager (f) June 1999).

In addition, there is a well known, widely consulted and generally liked midwife in the village, who was recently also chosen by the School Director to be the leader of the parents-teachers association and by the monks and *aachaars* to be the leader of the pots and plates association mentioned above.

The socio-political picture of Svay Ei is thus one of close and concerned, though not only friendly, neighbour relations, of informal and quite unclear leadership, and of a group of highly respected elder people (in addition to the monks from the nearby pagoda). As will be seen, these are among the features that come to interact with the

manifestations of CARERE/Seila and other development intervention, to which we now turn.

5.3 Development intervention as part of the picture

So far, socio-economic and socio-political dynamics of the Svay Ei local setting have been presented, making up crucial parts of the interplay with development intervention, which in this section will be brought into the picture. After a brief overview of past and current development intervention in the village, villagers' perceptions of and approaches to development activities and actors will be discussed, as will the interplay with village leadership.

5.3.1 The local history of development intervention

Development intervention in Svay Ei had up to the time of the empirical research been largely dominated by CARERE/Seila. In 1993, CARERE 1 was introduced and during the first few years, five ring wells were constructed, with the Australian Red Cross (ARC) supplying the material and villagers supplying the labour, without getting paid. Four of the wells provided clean drinking water throughout the year until the flooding at the end of 1999. Since then, the water in one of them is not clean. In 1994-1995, CARERE together with World Food Programme (WFP) organised food-for-work for the construction of three ponds, with villagers getting paid for their labour in rice from WFP and some money from CARERE.[95] One of the ponds still provides drinking water, while the other two are only used for vegetable and rice seedling irrigation.

In 1994, CARERE and WFP set up a village rice bank, for which an elected village committee was in charge. WFP supplied 25,000 kilos of rice and CARERE supplied fertilisers. Villagers could borrow up to 200 kilos of rice per family, which was to be paid back with 20 per cent interest. The first year, villagers also received fertilisers, half of which was a gift and half of which should be paid back in unmilled rice after the harvest. At the same time, the CARERE agriculture sector provided training on fertiliser use. During the following three years, the total amount of rice that was paid back decreased from 20,000 kilos to 8,000 kilos to nothing. By then, the Village Development Committee (VDC; see below) had taken over, and in 1999 the VDC members decided to turn the rice bank into a fertiliser bank. The remaining 3,000 kilos of rice were sold and 50 sacks of fertilisers were bought. Villagers who had land and who paid a membership fee of 10,000 riel (US$ 2.50) could borrow up to three sacks of fertilisers, which would have to be paid back with 20 per cent interest. In March 2000, only a few villagers had paid back. In 1995, WFP organised food-for-work for the construction of 3,500 metres of road towards the provincial town. The following year, the road was destroyed by floods, but it can still be used by oxcarts.

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[95] Food-for-work means that villagers get paid for their labour in basic food items, usually in connection to a local infrastructure project.

In 1996, the Seila programme was introduced in the commune and a Village Development Committee (VDC) was elected in Svay Ei. The first year of the Seila Local Planning Process (LPP) resulted in a village project for the construction of two kilometres of road towards the pagoda. Villagers contributed labour at the value of 20 per cent of the total cost, but no cash. Those who worked in addition to the labour contribution received a payment of 2,000 riel per cubic metre. The second LPP cycle resulted in the construction of two culverts along the same road. Again, villagers contributed labour but not cash and this time there was no payment for unskilled labour. The third year, the village got US$ 4,450 from the Local Development Fund (LDF) for another culvert and laterite for the road. This time, 3 of the 20 per cent local contribution (about US$ 150) should be paid in cash, but still in March 2000, only part of that amount had been collected.

In 1996, the Provincial Department of Agriculture trained some village vets and in 1999, the CARERE health sector supported the Department of Health to train two village health workers. In 1997, the CARERE education sector funded six months of literacy classes organised by the local NGO Samaki Toar and in 1999, the Department of Education set up another literacy class. In early 2000, the Department of Education supplied building materials for a library in the village. VDC members were in charge of the construction and one of them would then go for training in the province on how to use a library. In 1999, CARERE funded mental health training in the village, organised by the local NGO Transcultural Psychosocial Organisation (TPO). Five villagers went for training in the provincial town and then led several groups of villagers (women and men separately) who met ten times to discuss and get advice on domestic violence and other problems.

On two occasions, the Cambodian Red Cross (CRC) and WFP have supplied emergency relief in Svay Ei. After the floods in 1995-1996, CARERE first helped to survey the situation and after the floods in 1999, an emergency committee (consisting of all NGOs in the province, CARERE and various provincial departments) cooperated to assess the needs and discuss who would supply what. 70 Svay Ei villagers then received a 'voucher' from WFP and CRC, which they could exchange at the commune resource centre for a package containing 20 kilos of rice, two bottles of soy sauce, two packages of biscuits and some canned fish. Later the same season, 17 villagers received a tent from the international NGO Adventist Development and Relief Agency (ADRA), and in a third distribution, some families received a set of tools and household items from CRC.

5.3.2 *Aphiwat* by *angkaar*

As seen above, a variety of development activities has been implemented in Svay Ei. Roads have been built and maintained, including culverts, bridges and laterite, and sometimes involving food-for-work. Rice and fertilisers have been lent. Village veterinarians and health workers have been more or less trained and more or less active. There have been mental health and literacy classes. Emergency relief has been

distributed. Staff from a few development organisations – UN agencies as well as local NGOs – has visited the village, as have Seila district and province facilitators. Still, development intervention is a relatively limited phenomenon in Svay Ei, not constituting a major part of village life or people's life-worlds, and with no major expectations of such intervention. While Svay Ei villagers generally have a positive, in some sense innocent, attitude to development related activities, many of them have also become highly critical about the way certain activities are managed (see 5.3.3).

With the introduction of development intervention, villagers have widely adopted the term *aphiwat*, which is the Khmer term for development. The most known development activities among Svay Ei villagers are road construction and the rice bank, which had been turned into fertiliser lending the year before the field research was conducted. Provision of food and utensils after the floods is also well known, and widely debated. *Aphiwat*, then, is used for and understood as such concrete activities, unseen before development intervention started. 'Before, there was no development' (Villager (f) March 2000).

Svay Ei villagers also have firm perceptions of who is behind development intervention. With such intervention, a new understanding has developed of the word *angkaar*, which is what the quite enigmatic and much feared state was called during the Khmer Rouge regime. Villagers do however apparently not reflect on that it is the same term that is now being widely used for something quite different. It is not completely clear what or who *angkaar* is, but in a kind of circular definition *angkaar* is regarded as the primary development agent, and activities that are labelled *aphiwat* are by villagers perceived as initiated and managed by *angkaar*. The term thus usually translates to development organisations. People in Svay Ei are not very familiar with different agencies, but struggle to remember the name of one or two. They rarely mention CARERE, but more often 'DP' or something similar for UNDP. Most of them know the face and a few know the name of the CARERE Local Capacity Builder (LCB) – 'the guy with the big motorbike' – and one or two district facilitators (DFT) who according to villagers mainly come to see the Village Chief. VDC members rarely use the word Seila. They have heard it but are not able to distinguish this government reform programme from activities by other development agencies.

The development related positions that have been introduced in Svay Ei, and the holders of them, are also largely unknown to villagers. As seen, the first positions were created in 1994, as a committee of five people was set up to be in charge of the rice bank supported by CARERE 1 and WFP. Two years later, the Seila programme was introduced and a Village Development Committee (VDC) elected, which also came to replace the rice bank committee. Four of the five members of the rice bank committee were among the first seven VDC members. Since then, one member has died, one has left for Phnom Penh, and in 1998, there was a new election in which one member was replaced. At the time of the research, there were four men and two women in the VDC.

In 1996, the Village Chief appointed two women and two men to be trained as village veterinarians by the Provincial Department of Agriculture. The following year,

the CARERE Education sector funded six months of literacy classes organised by a local NGO, for which the Village Chief appointed himself to be the teacher. In 1999, the Department of Education set up another literacy class and recruited a teacher from the commune. The same year, a woman and a man were also selected for training as village health workers by the Department of Health. There are conflicting reports of whether they were appointed by the Village Chief or elected by the villagers. In 1999, mental health classes were introduced by an NGO, and the Village Chief appointed three women and three men to be trained as leaders. There is also a male Red Cross volunteer in the village. In all, at the time of the research, there were 17 positions related to development in Svay Ei, filled by six men and four women, who have been either appointed by the Village Chief or elected by the villagers, sometimes it is unclear which.

Most villagers do not know the VDC as a body with overall responsibility for development activities in the village. Several individual VDC members are however sometimes referred to as 'development workers' or just 'workers' and known for specific tasks such as leading the road construction, running the rice bank or – most frequently mentioned – calling for meetings. 'Their role is to have meetings among themselves. Then, they have a big meeting with the villagers, like a meeting about a road' (Group leader (m) March 2000). Other development related positions, apart from the VDC, are even less well known among Svay Ei villagers, which can largely be explained by a very low level of activity. At the time of the field research, only two of the four trained village veterinarians were at all active, and one of the mental health leaders had never worked as a leader. Meanwhile, the village health workers had, more than seven months after being selected, still not received any training and the only work they had done was to collect some basic population data.

5.3.3 Villagers accepting but avoiding perceived rules

As indicated, villagers in Svay Ei have got used to being called for meetings about development activities. Such meetings are widely talked about as 'going to learn', and perceived as forums for development or authority actors to inform villagers about something that has been decided, or ask them to choose between a few different options.

> The Village Chief requests the commune and the commune requests *angkaar* to build a bridge or a road or culverts. The Village Chief decides where to build it. When it's been approved to build something, the Village Chief and the VDC have a meeting with the villagers (Villager (m) March 2000).

This sense of decisions being taken elsewhere and the view of meetings as instances for telling villagers about upcoming development activities are largely confirmed by VDC members.

> For example a road or a health centre, which do villagers want? The two alternatives come from *angkaar*… from PDRD… from the district, the CDC. They ask me and I pick one of the two. Then I go to tell the villagers (VDC member (m) October 1999).

Villagers generally claim that they do not speak in meetings. 'We don't dare to have ideas in a meeting because we're afraid that our ideas might be wrong' (Villager (f) Group of poor women, October 1999). Though a few villagers mention the possibility of 'requesting' (*sneyr som*) something, the expectation is that different agencies only provide certain things, and the tendency is to take what is apparently being offered.

> When the villagers needed a road, wells and ponds, they went to see the Village Chief. The Village Chief sent a request to the higher levels, and the higher levels made a decision. There are different *angkaars*, like road *angkaar*, well *angkaar* and pond *angkaar*. So, some people got their needs met and some didn't. People accept whatever is provided (Villager (m) Small group of villagers, March 2000).

Even when villagers are asked to come up with suggestions or choose between different options, their assumption is that it has been decided beforehand within the organisation what will be done. With that in mind, villagers told us with amusement and pride, some of them had figured out what to request, and spread it to others.

> Some clever people in the village understood [what the agency wanted to provide] and told other villagers what to ask for. It would match the ideas of the higher levels. What we get depends on the ideas of *angkaar* who comes to have a meeting. [When a villager says what they want to hear] they say 'Oh, what this person says seems right' (Villager, *aachaar* (m) March 2000).

Though not a major feature in their lives, villagers thus try to get as much as possible out of various development activities. This is done also by largely accepting what they perceive as the organisations' rules. Policies and procedures differ between organisations and have altered over time. Villagers in Svay Ei have experienced a change in road construction, from getting paid in basic food items for their labour (food-for-work) to getting paid in cash (payment for unskilled labour), to having to contribute their labour for free (labour local contribution), and finally to contributing labour as well as cash (labour and cash local contribution). At the year of the field research, they were back to food-for-work and no local contribution. Generally, villagers have adjusted to such changes and for example paid cash contribution once, for the 1999 laterite.

The motive for requiring local contribution is that it will create a sense of ownership and responsibility among villagers for what they have built and paid for. This has apparently not been realised, though. Rather, the Village Chief and others have given their own explanation as to why cash contribution is essential – 'All

villagers are like bait. We need to get the fish here' (Village Chief (m) Village meeting, October 1999) – and accordingly, it has been generally accepted as a condition by the organisation that should be followed in order to attract available resources. At the time of the research, however, not even the cash contribution for the 1999 laterite had been fully collected. This was not a matter of open disobedience, but of villagers and village leaders jointly and silently trying to get around the rules.

> *Angkaar* and villagers help each other. Villagers paid for the laterite, between 5,000 and 10,000 riel. In reality, villagers paid only 2,000 or 3,000 riel, but they [those who collected the money] wrote 5,000 riel in the list. I haven't paid yet, because I spent my money to pay for the fertilisers from the fertiliser bank (Village health worker (f) March 2000).

This way of apparently accepting but silently avoiding, rather than openly disobeying, perceived rules calls to mind how some village leaders used to help villagers avoid forced recruitment in the 1980s (see 5.2.3). Moreover, the general assumption is that the development organisation could afford to pay the whole cost, which was reinforced by the fact that the money was largely collected after the laterite had been bought and used. This also fed into suspicions about some of the leaders.

> When the laterite was there, some villagers thought that they had got it for free. They didn't trust those who collected the local contribution, and that view spread among the villagers (Villager, *aachaar* (m) Village feedback group, March 2000).

Though a general sense of ownership and responsibility has thus not been created, many villagers do say that the road belongs to everybody in the village and that they will help maintain it if the monks call. As noted, monks, *aachaars* and old people are highly regarded in Svay Ei, largely acting as informal community mobilisers. There are signs, however, that what used to be a kind of informal leadership is being partly surpassed by more formally organised development institutions and arrangements. Development agencies partly do what monks, together with *aachaars* and old people, used to do, i.e. mobilising funds and labour for infrastructure construction and maintenance. The income in cash and/or kind that has often been involved is highly welcome and needed, but has apparently rendered traditional forms of mobilisation more difficult. 'The monks are less involved in road building now, because *angkaar* provides payment for the villagers' (Villager (f) March 2000). There are thus indications and testimonies that the monks have withdrawn from village work, which is left to development agencies, and instead confine their activities to the pagoda compound – giving rise to expressions like 'the monks have taken a break'.

On the other hand, there are testimonies that monks are consciously and crucially involved in village development projects, especially for community mobilising. The changes in policy mentioned above – from food-for-work to payment for unskilled labour, labour contribution and labour as well as cash contribution – apparently went

reasonably well, very much due to the monks' involvement. There is wide agreement that if there is no payment, village leaders cannot mobilise people the way they used to. Neither can the VDC. If the monks or possibly the *aachaars* call, however, villagers will come.

> *Aachaars* and monks helped to get the school and led young people and other villagers to build the road. They ran the generator and put up lights. If it's difficult to mobilise villagers for communal work, the *aachaars* come to do it, because they are honest and people like them. Villagers don't like people who have a position and drink and forget about their work when they get money (VDC member (m) March 2000).

While locally respected people's traditional roles may thus be undermined – and the monks in some aspects may be 'taking a break' – their status and mandate might also be preserved and widened because of their involvement in development activities. Meanwhile, as the respect they carry is brought into the activities, intervention may be rescued by this very involvement, without which it would not have worked.

As can also be noted in the quote above, villagers are discontent with certain leaders' conduct. Looking at those who hold development related positions in the village, then, as with village leaders, they all claim to not want their position. The perception is, though, that you have to accept a position when the Village Chief has appointed you or villagers have elected you, even if you have not volunteered.[96]

> We were called for a meeting. Som Vunn [CARERE LCB], the Commune Chief, the DFT… Big people were there. At that time, I didn't know that there was development in the village. When they came, they were looking for twelve candidates and all were called together. They called educated people, the Village Chief was also there. They said my name and people clapped their hands. The Village Chief registered my name and mentioned the name of my son-in-law, 'is this name possible?' and villagers said 'yes!'. The candidates had no choice (VDC member (f) VDC group, March 2000).

The main reason for the VDC members' reluctance is a notion that other villagers are unhappy with them, not appreciating their efforts and believing that they get benefits from their positions.

> They scold us because they think that we get paid. (---) I will absolutely not be a candidate [run for election] again. I'm working for people, but when I ask villagers for something, or when they see me, they scold me. They say that I have gold to wear because of the road building (VDC member (f) VDC group, March 2000).

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[96] On the other hand, there is a certain competition about development related positions and trainings when allowance is provided. See below.

The way the emergency relief from WFP and CRC was distributed after the flooding late last year also created a lot of suspicions and bad feelings among villagers, which added to the discouragement and discomfort among some VDC members.

> They provided gifts. I didn't know about this, and the other workers [VDC members] didn't know. Then we were blamed. The VDC was not involved at all. But people who don't know keep using bad words about the workers. (---) During the flooding, higher levels came to provide gifts. Those who didn't get any gifts got angry with those who work because they thought that we provided the names [of those who would receive 'gifts'] (VDC member (f) VDC group, March 2000).

The alleged reluctance among development position-holders clearly reminds of the reluctance declared by current and previous village leaders (see 5.2.3), which indicates that prevailing experiences and expectations of being a leader are carried over into development activities. Holding a development related position implies partly similar tasks as village leadership, such as calling for meetings and collecting cash and labour contribution. Being a leader has also in both cases implied an unpleasant position between outside authorities/agencies and fellow villagers. Other factors that contribute to the reluctance to holding a development related position are that the tasks are not clear and not enough training is provided. Accordingly, a young village health worker is far from confident in his role and afraid that he will not be able to meet other villagers' expectations.

> I got to know on the election day that my name was among the candidates. I told villagers that they shouldn't vote for me. I'm not knowledgeable, and I didn't want to be a village health worker. But now, when people have voted for me, I have to do it. (---) The Village Chief asked me to do this work [collecting population data]. I don't know what it's for. When I went to every house, people asked me 'what is the census for?' and I answered 'I don't know. I got the task from Him'. (---) I've only been for a meeting, there hasn't been any training yet. The teacher said that when we've worked for a long time, we'll get a paper confirming that we are village health workers. Then, when I come with someone to the clinic or the hospital with that paper, they won't charge. (---) I haven't taken anyone to hospital. If someone came to ask for help, I wouldn't know what to do, since I don't have any paper (Village health worker (m) March 2000).

In Svay Ei, the reluctance among development position-holders is also related to the dominance of the Village Chief and the militiaman, which discourages others and will be discussed next.

5.3.4 Two men's dominance reinforced – and challenged

The various positions that have been introduced with development intervention in Svay Ei have been concentrated to a group of people, many of whom hold more than

one position and many of whom already had some kind of leadership position in the village. Five of the six men with long or short-term development related positions also hold or have held a formal leadership position, while among the four women, one is a well known midwife and another used to be the representative of the Women's association during the PRK regime. More striking than this concentration of development related positions to a small group of people is, however, the heavy domination of development activities by the two leading men in the village (see 5.2.2).

From what villagers say, at the time of the two VDC elections, it has apparently been beyond questioning that the Village Chief should also be the VDC leader. The paternalistic atmosphere in Svay Ei, with the Village Chief largely acting as if running a family rather than fulfilling certain obligations, apparently enables him to do whatever he likes, in whatever way he likes, without informing or justifying it to the villagers. This spilled over into the formation of a development leadership, with the Village Chief handing out positions and tasks largely as he finds appropriate.

> The first reason [why I became VDC leader] was that I got most votes. The second reason was that the DFT [district facilitator] and Som Vunn [CARERE LCB] saw my characteristics. They decided that I should be the leader. In another village, the person who got most votes doesn't have good characteristics, so he was not asked to be the leader. (---) The VDC leader decides [who gets the other positions within the VDC]. He can see their characteristics. It doesn't depend on the votes. Yonn is Deputy. (---) No! Yonn is Finance, Iew is Deputy. According to the votes, Yonn should be Deputy, but Iew couldn't be in charge of money, so I swapped them (Village Chief (m) March 2000).

With all the men in the VDC holding previous leadership positions, the composition of the VDC largely reflects the existing leadership structure. As indicated in the quote above, the division of tasks within the VDC is however quite unclear, reminding of the general confusion discussed in 5.2.3. Also reminding of the Village Chief's overall leadership, as with other tasks he is fairly passive regarding development activities, apparently lacking relevant commitment and competence. In combination with the paternalistic structure, development intervention has also created new opportunities for favouritism, with the Village Chief widely using his position to distribute new benefits to relatives and friends, including the militiaman.

The militiaman, too, has been able to extend his informal but heavy influence into the area of development activities. Though he is not a VDC member, his powerful appearance and influential contacts outside the village enable him to exercise control over development activities in the village, which he claims is necessary and his obligation.

> Though I've quit from development work, I still have the right to bring complaints about the development actors. I say 'you're on the development side, but you stay under my authority. If anyone does something wrong, I

have the right to complain because you live under me.' (---) If there was no government work, it would be difficult for the development work to use labour [i.e. to get villagers to contribute labour]. I must absolutely participate if any work is to be implemented. If there was a VDC meeting and I was not there, it wouldn't be possible. I participate in meetings with the VDC members because they invite me. The VDC leader must ask me to participate because any work in the village… If there was development alone and no government work, no authority work… I must absolutely join them to solve problems (Militiaman (m) March 2000).

This man's quite unclear role in development activities is thus also an extension of the lack of clarity in the village leadership, in this case based on informal sources of power and villagers' fear. When the VDC members, including the Village Chief, are gathered, nobody strongly objects to the militiaman's participation in development work, and his involvement is recognised in for example making announcements on the loudspeakers.

He involves a bit. He helps to announce, for example that villagers need to build a road. It's on the authority side. He isn't involved with the VDC, but with authority. He helps us too, for example to see what's right and what's wrong. It means that the VDC doesn't do development alone, the local authority helps to announce. (---) When a proposal has been raised, we contact the authorities to get people to work. So, the authority like Phan definitely joins when people need to work. It means that he's involved with the committee, but he's never involved in a committee meeting like this (VDC member (m) VDC group, March 2000).

However, the concentration of information to a passive and uninterested Village Chief/VDC leader and the undeniable influence of a menacing and feared militiaman make other VDC members discouraged. They feel prevented from doing the kind of work that they claim that they would like to do, which they vividly express when the Village Chief is not present.

If a person with a position wants to do something good, 'someone else' [the militiaman] wants to do something else. (---) That man always interferes. Others work very well, but he destroys for them (VDC member (f) Village feedback group, March 2000).

This situation clearly adds to the VDC members' reluctance and discouragement, which is especially true for the two women in the group. Since they do not enjoy the Village Chief's confidence, he tends to delegate fewer responsibilities and less important tasks to them than to their male colleagues, which the Village Chief confirms. 'No [a woman has never been in charge of finance]. The finance person must have education and ability' (Village Chief (m) March 2000).

As the two most powerful men in the village have been able to grab positions and influence for themselves, the prevailing power relations have thus been reinforced by development intervention. Perhaps paradoxically, however, this has also rendered the village leadership more vulnerable. Though, as noted, development intervention is not a major part of villagers' lives, they have come to form firm opinions about how development resources should be handled and distributed. The dominance and behaviour of the Village Chief and the militiaman in connection to development activities have evoked strong reactions and led to new or increased tensions within the village. Behind the approval of the Village Chief that villagers express at first instance, during the time of the field research there was an increasing unhappiness with him, or at least increasingly open expressions of it.

Among the concerns is that with development intervention, too many tasks are concentrated to the Village Chief. The VDC work has come to depend on him, for example for information from the local authorities. As touched upon, however, like with other leadership tasks, he is fairly passive. He for example rarely goes for meetings in the commune, and when he does go, he often does not pass on any information to other VDC members, and when he does not go, he seldom sends somebody to replace him. Important information does thus in many cases not reach the VDC or the village. During the time of the research, this is increasingly expressed as a problem.

> People didn't think that it would be a problem. Before [the VDC election], he [the Village Chief] had only one position and people thought that he could do one more. But in practice… (Village health worker (m) Village feedback group, March 2000).

> The Village Chief is strong, he does everything. But he's also weak – he holds many positions, but he's not active (Villager, *aachaar* (m) Village feedback group, March 2000).

It is thus a perceived problem that the Village Chief neither fulfils certain tasks himself nor delegates them to others. Therefore, while development intervention has implied new opportunities, the Village Chief is perceived as not making use of them, and available resources are thereby not attracted to the village.

> The Village Chief is not good at contacting higher levels as other Village Chiefs are. *Angkaar* has given cows, buffaloes, pigs, chickens, ducks and materials like hoes, knives and axes to people in other villages (Group leader (m) March 2000).

Another main complaint is that the Village Chief favours his relatives and friends while those who do not enjoy his sympathy become disaffected. As noted, the informal and paternalistic atmosphere in the villages enables the Village Chief to act according to his own preferences, which has been fed into by the resources and influence that

come with development intervention. The Village Chief is apparently using his strengthened position to use and distribute new opportunities pretty much as he likes, and thus reap personal benefits from development activities. Along with the reluctance to having a position, discussed above, there is a certain competition around going for trainings etc when there is allowance involved. The general view is that when there is cash allowance or other benefits involved, the Village Chief selects himself and his friends for positions and trainings. The literacy class in 1997 is a striking example, as the lowly educated Village Chief appointed himself to be the teacher – which got him the monthly allowance but not many students. 'I didn't attend the literacy class, because the teacher didn't seem to have more education than I' (Village health worker (m) Village feedback group, March 2000). The Village Chief also appointed both himself and the militiaman to be village veterinarians as well as mental health leaders. A VDC member, who is not among the Village Chief's favourites, initially went for the village vet training. On the last day of training, however, when materials were to be provided, he claims to have been bypassed.

> I was invited for the training, and attended it for several days. It was provincial people who decided that I should go, they know me through the commune. But then on the last day, when they would hand out the materials so that we could work as village vets, it was not my name… The Village Chief asked the militiaman to go instead of me. He received needles and serum (VDC member (m) October 1999).

Villagers' perceptions of how development resources and positions have been used have also increased their discontent with the village leadership. Apart from the Village Chief appointing himself and his friends for trainings and positions when allowance and/or material is provided, money is assumed to have been available for a high quality cement bridge, but instead a poor quality wooden one was constructed and the remaining money put in private pockets. The dubious selection of beneficiaries of emergency relief strongly added to villagers' bad feelings. While not completely clear how the selection was actually done, it did create rumours and accusations, also against people who claim not to have been involved.

> Phan [the militiaman] provided the names to *angkaar* of those villagers who should get gifts. But he only provided the names of his relatives. Only people in Phom Tnot [the part of the village where people went to register for donations] and development workers got gifts (Group leader (m) March 2000).

Such perceptions and rumours have also negatively affected villagers' inclination to contribute labour and/or cash to development activities or infrastructure maintenance, and accordingly, the wooden bridge has been left to gradually fall apart. 'If there's a plan to repair the bridge or the road, I won't participate and I won't pay any

contribution. I'm angry about the gifts, about who got them' (Villager (f) February 2000).

Most complaints about the Village Chief, however, refer to his cooperation with the militiaman. Villagers are disappointed that the Village Chief fails to tone down this man's menacing behaviour, and rather allows him to dominate so much, including in development activities.

When development related positions and structures have met and been accommodated in existing socio-political structures, the two most powerful men have thus assumed control over the new resources, which has created discontent among villagers with the Village Chief and added to the already widespread discontent with the militiaman. An explanation is that the introduction of development resources have made the two leaders' power abuse more obvious and more relevant to people's well-being, since relatively large resources are involved that are intended for everybody's benefit. Also, development related tasks and responsibilities have increased the need for certain competence and commitment, and thereby rendered the Village Chief's lack of such qualities more visible.

The perceived mismanagement, injustices and unfair use of development opportunities among the leaders have also created opportunities for an alternative leadership to emerge. Despite the fact that others with a development position have been marginalised and discouraged, a few alternative or additional leaders were emerging during the time of the research. A couple of VDC members, and a few others with no formal development position, were apparently gaining personal commitment as well as other villagers' trust. As villagers increasingly turned to these individuals for help and leadership on various issues, they were initially reluctant to take on such a leadership role, or any tasks outside their mandates.

> Some come to tell me about conflicts, but I tell them that I don't work with conflicts, only with wells and ponds and… Some report everything to me, they ask for my advice, but I say that I don't have the skills. I don't dare to do things that don't belong to my position, like conflicts (VDC member (m) March 2000).

Gradually, however, a few of these individuals gained determination and confidence, which, in contrast to what had been beyond questioning at the first two VDC elections, made it seem unlikely that the Village Chief and VDC leader would be elected next time. 'I wouldn't vote for the old leaders, they are corrupt. But there are others' (Village health worker (m) Village feedback group, March 2000).

Accumulated anger with how the two leaders manage development activities and abuse development resources, along with the emergence of potential new leaders, have also given rise to the idea of trying to replace the leaders. The research team's questions, or just the bringing of some concerned people and potential leaders together, probably contributed to making this happen. During the course of the research, people came to talk increasingly openly about their discontent, and during

the last meeting with the Village feedback group, there was immediately a suggestion to submit a formal complaint (*njaat*) about the village leadership to the commune. An intense discussion followed that did not require any input from the research team. Some people still hesitated and worried that a complaint would not work, though.

> They [villagers] know that Phan [the militiaman] does wrong. But nobody dares to protest, because they think that he's got friends at higher levels, and high-level people only need money. Villagers are afraid of Phan's money power (Villager (f) March 2000).

There were also people, however, who were willing to take the lead and who believed that they could succeed.

> We can send a *njaat* to the commune. (---) If all villagers agreed, I'd take the letter to the commune and the district to get their signatures. If the villagers want to withdraw the Village Chief, they can, just as you pull out cabbage (Villager, *aachaar* (m) March 2000).

As the manifestations of CARERE/Seila and other development intervention have met and come to interact with village socio-politics, prevailing power structures have thus apparently been reinforced as well as rendered fragile, due to the deep and widespread dissatisfaction and ensuing emergence of alternative leaders. Soon after the field research was concluded, a *njaat* was submitted to the commune authorities. Regardless of the outcome of the formal complaint, CARERE/Seila has thus apparently contributed to seriously challenging the village leadership and fundamentally changing the socio-political landscape in Svay Ei, though not the way intended.

Village level dynamics and interplay discussed so far are related to the role and relations of the authorities outside the village, to which we now turn.

5.4 Relations to authorities outside the village

While the commune authorities have a key role in the CARERE/Seila approach, their role and relations are also part of the local dynamics and of the interplay that emerges with development intervention. In this section, therefore, villagers' prevailing experiences of and expectations on the commune are described, including its involvement in development activities and villagers' political behaviour.

5.4.1 'Whatever they say, we do'

> I know what happens in the village, but I don't know what higher levels do. Higher levels don't know what happens in the village. Lower levels report. Higher levels give instructions, for example to build a road, complete the white soil [laterite]. There's a plan from higher levels, so that lower levels know when it will start. (---) For example, if someone wants to clear land for

chamkar, lower levels ask and higher levels decide (VDC member (m) October 1999).

Most people in Svay Ei are aware of a number of levels of authority. Over the village is the commune, over the commune is the district, over the district is the province. Villagers, however, do usually not distinguish between various bodies of authorities but rather regard them all as part of the wider and quite blurred notion of 'higher levels' (*thnak leuk*), inhabited by 'big people' (*neak thom*). While the role and mandate of these bodies and officials are unclear to most villagers, they are definitely perceived as powerful and necessary to obey.

> The authorities don't understand villagers' feelings, and they use words that villagers don't understand. But all villagers follow what the authorities say, even if they don't understand (Villager (m) October 1999).

Most villagers, though far from all, know the name of the Commune Chief, who has worked in the commune since 1979 and held his current position since 1986. Very few, however, know where the commune office is. When some families went to receive emergency relief after the flooding the year before the field research, for almost all of them it was the first time that they were there, and they tend to say that they received the 'gifts' at the commune kindergarten. This kindergarten is located next to the new commune resource centre, which has come to be used as commune office as the old office has been abandoned.

Villagers perceive the authorities as distant and inaccessible and the predominant sentiment is that they cannot themselves approach the commune or higher authorities. To get married or divorced, and for various ceremonies, villagers do need the commune's approval. They are not allowed, however, to go there straight, but must 'go through the network', which means that they go to the Village Chief, who goes to the commune, who goes to the district.

> When somebody wants to get a marriage certificate, they need to see the Village Chief and pay 10,000 riel because he needs to go to the commune and it's faster than if they do it themselves. The Village Chief knows where to go to get the marriage certificate signed (Group leader (m) March 2000).

This is confirmed by the Village Chief and the Commune Chief, who, however, believes that villagers do not hesitate to approach him if they have a problem.

> People come to the commune to ask for permission to hold a ceremony. But they cannot forget about the Village Chief. It has to pass him first, otherwise I send them back to get his permission. (---) People dare to come to the commune now. If there's a problem with a Village Chief, they come straight to me. (---) Now, the authorities cannot do something wrong. People know very well about their rights (Commune Chief (m) March 2000).

Villagers are, however, not inclined to consult the authorities outside the village. While conflict resolution is the mostly mentioned reason to do so, for most villagers it remains something that they only hear about, partly because of the costs involved. Everybody agrees that taking a conflict case to the local authorities implies high costs and most of the cases that have been taken beyond the village involve a few richer and related families. What follows is the case of Sophie's divorce and her former husband's remarriage, both of whose families are quite well-off. The case, which was thought to have been settled in the village but ended up in the provincial court three years later, illustrates how a villager feels intimidated by the local authorities whose rules and procedures she does not understand, and thus suspects that the other party won because he paid and she did not.

– My married life lasted only one year.

Sophie was brought up in the richest part of Svay Ei. When she was 24, she married a man from the same area. But when she a year later had a miscarriage and could not work, they decided to divorce.

– I don't know why he wanted a divorce, she says. Maybe because I was sick. But I knew that he didn't care about me, so I agreed.

The man went to inform the Village Chief, and the Village Chief asked them to come to see him together the following day.

– Husband and wife came together on a bicycle, the Village Chief recalls. I could see that they didn't have a conflict. The problem was that the mothers didn't like each other.

So the Village Chief tried to persuade Sophie and her husband to stay together. But the man's mother did not accept that.

– She told the Village Chief to do anything he could to arrange a divorce, Sophie says. If he did that, she would give him 20,000 riel.

The Village Chief called them a second and a third time, when the mothers were also present. The couple still claimed that they wanted a divorce.

– I could not force them to stay together, so I agreed on a divorce, the Village Chief says. The man and the woman and the two mothers all put their thumbprints. But I was not involved in the sharing of their belongings. I just went there to make a list of the things, which they signed.

Three years later, the man wanted to marry another woman. It was a relative of Sophie and Sophie did not at all like the idea.

– I didn't want him to marry someone who is my relative, and I wanted to make him ashamed. So I went to the commune and asked if there was any law if I wanted to stay with him. They said that there is a law – if the husband wants a divorce, but the wife doesn't, then the man must pay.

Sophie says that the militiaman encouraged her to make a complaint, because he expected to get some benefits out of a conflict case. At the commune, she claimed that she and her husband were not properly divorced. For that, both of them need to get a certificate at the commune, which she had not done. So when the man came to get a marriage permission, the commune officials did not approve.

– He gave money to the commune to get the permission, Sophie says. But they still didn't dare to say whether he should stay with me or get the permission.

Instead, the man was called to the commune and asked to pay compensation to Sophie.

– But he preferred to pay to the commune, Sophie says. He gave money to the Commune Chief to keep quiet. And the commune changed their minds. Now they said that there is no such law.

– We asked him to pay to make her happy, the Commune Chief says. But he had no money, so we couldn't solve the case. If a couple don't agree, the commune cannot decide on a divorce.

So, the commune sent the case to the provincial court, attaching Sophie's request to stay with her husband and his request to marry another woman. They were called to the court three times. The first time, the man was asked to pay compensation to Sophie. He did not agree. The second time, she was asked to agree on a proper divorce. She did not agree. The third time, the Village Chief was called too.

– She didn't tell me, but went straight to court, the Village Chief says. She confused the court. But when I brought the divorce agreement with the thumbprints and the list of their belongings, the court said 'good'.

Today, the man is married to Sophie's relative, and Sophie claims that he won the case because of his money and because she did not realise what happened.

– First the Village Chief said that I was right and 'you have to do like this'. The next time, he had changed his mind. I could have given him money too, and he would have changed his mind again. But I only brought a package of cigarettes when I went to see to the Village Chief and the Commune Chief. The court cheated me. They wanted us to get a divorce, and said that if either of us didn't agree, please go to the court in Phnom Penh. I wanted to do that, but they made me put my thumbprint on a paper. I thought it was in order to get the case to Phnom Penh, but it was an agreement on divorce. It's difficult for me to understand, it's all in their hands.

Apart from a villager's sense of being exposed to incomprehensible and unjust procedures, the case also illustrates how lack of clarity in a simple divorce case in the village complicates things later on. While domestic conflicts can still assumingly be handled in the village, according to the Village Chief, land conflicts cannot. He tells about one such case, involving two brothers in the richest part of the village, which he referred to the district but that has still not come to a resolution:

I cannot solve land conflicts in the village. A man had borrowed land from his elder brother and built a rice store on it. Then the older brother wanted the land back and asked the younger to remove the store. But the younger refused and instead built a fence around it. So, the older brother came to see me and I called the younger to agree on a compromise.

The younger brother didn't agree, however, so he made a case to send to the district justice. I wrote a letter to the district and enclosed both sides' notes.

Then, a committee from the district came to see the land. They were from the district police, district justice, district soldiers, and some topography people. They didn't say anything, just went back to the district office. Later, they called all those who had been here for a discussion. They decided that the younger brother was wrong and asked him to move the rice store within 15 days. Otherwise, district people would do it and he would have to pay them.

The younger brother has not removed the store, though, and the district people have not come back.

One single conflict case has been brought to court in Phnom Penh. It happened about two years ago and involved the same two brothers. The Village Chief tells:

The younger brother has been using an oxcart road that goes into his plot since 1979. Now, the older wouldn't allow him to use the entrance any more. I called both sides to make a compromise, but they didn't agree. So, I sent a report to the district justice. Again, district police and topography people came to see the place, and they found that the older brother had blocked the entrance. After a week, both sides were called to the district centre to agree on a compromise. The older brother was asked to open the barrier, and he agreed. During the conflict, however, the older brother had dug a hole at the entrance and the younger had filled it again. Now, the older didn't open the barrier as agreed, so the district people came to open it.

Then the older brother brought a complaint to the provincial court, which called both parties three times. The first two times, they were called to agree on a compromise, but they didn't. The third time, they called me too, and I was asked to explain the situation. I told the truth, that the younger brother has been maintaining the entrance since 1979 and that the older came to the village later on. The court decided that the younger brother was right.

Then the older brother brought the case to court in Phnom Penh. Both parties were called, but I wasn't. The records were sent to Phnom Penh with documents from the district and the province. Phnom Penh also judged that the younger brother was right, and this time the older accepted.

Though most villagers never approach the authorities, commune and higher level officials sometimes visit Svay Ei. As mentioned, the militiaman frequently has commune and district people eating and drinking at his house. Education officials may also visit the village School Director, and other government staff may come to see the villagers for various reasons. District health staff, for example, comes to distribute medicine and vaccinate children. Villagers, however, seldom know in advance when such visits will happen, but may suddenly have to hurry to get access to certain services or pay certain fees – or to run away. One day, a young man is relieved that his wife was at home at the right moment.

Phan [the militiaman] just passed on his bicycle and shouted 'if you want your children to get an injection, you'd better go now!' My wife rushed there with our son (Villager (m) March 2000).

Sometimes, villagers are not sure who the visiting officials are, but still follow their instructions. Though villagers usually do not show any obvious fear of the authorities, the strongly dominating attitude is to not question anything that comes from 'them', but to accept and obey – which includes serving lunch when the visitors require so. Despite claimed disapproval, people talk about such authority visits in a somewhat joking tone, reflecting a sense of distance and of having no idea what the visitors will come up with. 'Whatever they say, we just let them do it. If they tell me to go to prison, I'll go' (Villager (f) October 1999). One day, however, villagers are quite upset that district people have suddenly come to tell them to pay 10,000 riel (US$ 2.5) for new family cards. People are not sure what the cards are for, and apparently do not trust the intentions. Still, and despite the cost, nobody wants to risk being without a card.

> If you don't have a card, you're not included in a group, in the village or in the commune. You live outside the society. (---) With the old Governor, we needed one family card. With the new Governor, we need a new card. With the next Governor, maybe we'll need a new card again (Villager (f) Small group of villagers, October 1999).

Someone has seen on TV that a card should cost only 6,000 riel, but nobody asks or complains openly. Rather, villagers are convinced that if they wait, the price will go up even further. So those who can hurry to get the money and pay the same day, some for example using what they have kept for fertilisers.

> People try hard to find money, they even borrow money. If they don't pay for the card now, next time it will be more expensive – next time they [district people] come to the village, maybe 15,000 riel. Then, next time villagers will have to go to the commune and there it will cost 25,000 riel, then more and more (VDC member (f) June 1999).

People also come to Svay Ei to collect taxes and fees. The two video shop owners in the village pay tax, as do rice mill owners and rice wine producers. Villagers claim to not know the purpose of the taxes or who the collectors really are. Rice mill owners allegedly pay 8,000 riel (US$ 2) per month, while the initial fee to get the permission is US$ 150 for a big mill and US$ 50 for a small one. In villager's understanding, however, the amounts and rules vary and change quite arbitrarily, and they are eager to tell the research team how people 'from the Ministry' recently came to collect the rice mill tax.

> Suddenly, seven men arrived on four motorbikes. They were here from seven in the morning until six in the evening! They went from house to house of the rice mill owners. They know who has a mill, they can hear the sound. But even those who don't have any rice to mill had to pay. Villagers ran away to hide! (Villager (m) Small group of villagers, October 1999).

Other people collect tax from the wine producers. According to villagers, the amounts range from 15,000 to 25,000 riel (US$ 4-6.5) per month, while an official from the Department of Industry and Mines states that the tax for small production is 5,000 or 6,000 riel per month. One day, when three men had come to collect the wine production tax, one of the major producers was not at home, and the following day she does not know that they have been there. This woman, who has worked her way from poor to reasonably well-off by raising pigs and producing rice wine, is completely dependent on these incomes, and apparently accepts whatever fees and rules are introduced.

> Previously, the tax was 15,000 riel per year. Now it's 15,000 per month. The commune comes to collect tax every month. (---) Maybe they come from the province… or from the district… I don't know who they are. It started in August this year. Last time they were here was a month ago, so they will soon come again. I'll pay 15,000 riel (Villager (f) October 1999).

According to an official from the Department of Industry and Mines, rice mill owners and rice wine producers must pay 180,000 riel (US$ 50) to his department for a license, and then they will get all the necessary signatures from commune, district and province authorities. Every following year, they will have to pay 40,000 riel to renew the license. During our next visit, the woman above remains uncertain of what to expect.

> They came here a few days ago and told me that I need a license to produce rice wine. I don't know if they were from the commune or the district. They've been here twice now, but I only met them once. I didn't pay because I don't have any money. So, they might cause me problems! I'll just wait and see. Maybe they'll come back to give me the license. They said that I'll have to pay 180,000 riel. But I don't know if I'll have to pay every year or just once. I just do what they tell me (Villager (f) March 2000).

Meanwhile, the most well-off couple in the village, who are major wine producers and rice mill owners, have heard that you can pay a lower fee to the provincial department, but then you will have to get the signatures yourself – for which you need money and contacts.

> You can either pay 180,000 riel to the Department of Industry and Mines and get the license from them. Or you can pay 80,000, but then you need to go to the District and Provincial Governors to get their signatures, and pay for it. We couldn't do that because we don't know anyone there (Villager (f) Village couple, March 2000).

Another mill owner claims that he has never paid any actual tax, since the commune lets the militiaman in the village handle some of it.

> You must have a permission to have a rice mill, and you must pay to get the permission. Then, you also have to pay a regular fee. But I don't pay any tax, I never did. I just give some money to the Village Police, Phan. He and the commune divide the right to charge tax between them. If, for example, the commune charges tax for eight mills, Phan charges for two. I pay less to Phan than I would to the commune. (---) The tax collectors who come to get tax from other mill owners, also take lunch or dinner, they kill chickens to eat (Villager (m) February 2000).

The Commune Chief, however, emphasises that the commune does not get any benefit from the tax or licenses, apart from for his signature.

> People pay tax for rice mills and rice wine production to the provincial Tax Department. But the commune gets nothing. People get a license, that's the responsibility of the Department of Industry and Mines. They go to the villages to find out where there are rice mills and who owns them. Then, they give a paper to the owner for the Commune Chief and the District Chief to sign. Villagers come to the commune and pay between 5,000 and 10,000 riel for the signature. Then they go to the district, and pay for the signature, then to the province, and pay for the signature. (---) During the State of Cambodia, the commune could charge rice for soldiers and labour force. But now, the commune never involves in taking rice from the mill owners (Commune Chief (m) March 2000).

Indications are thus that commune officials sense that their behaviour has changed, or that they must say that it has, while villagers still perceive the authorities as powerful and necessary to obey.

5.4.2 The commune not perceived as a major actor in 'development'

As noted, the commune plays a key role in the CARERE/Seila set-up. Commune officials state that the commune's role has expanded considerably, that they are now 'very busy with development', and when various officials have occasionally visited Svay Ei recently, it has commonly been in connection to development activities. 'The Commune Chief came for a meeting. He told villagers to build a road, so that they would have a better road to walk on' (Villager (f) Group of poor women, October 1999).

This partly goes for authorities above the commune, too. Though villagers have very vague ideas of the district authorities, many of them know that there was recently a major shift of District Chiefs between districts. The current one is already better known than the previous one, and better liked. Villagers vividly talk about when he visited as the road was being constructed, appreciating his commitment to stopping illegal fishing methods and cutting of trees, and maybe even more his friendly manners and the fact that he seemed 'simple', dressing and walking like ordinary people.

> The District Chief is new, he was transferred from a different district. I don't
> know why, maybe the old District Chief didn't care about the forest, but just
> let people cut the trees. That's why he was transferred to another place. (---)
> We never saw the previous District Chief. But the new one once came for a
> meeting in the village before the road was built. He told villagers his name
> and age. And he told villagers to not cut trees because he's afraid that the
> forest might disappear. (---) The new District Chief is friendly and simple. He
> doesn't think of who he is, sometimes he wears a *kramaa*[97] and walks as
> villagers. Some people almost didn't recognise him (Villager (f) Group of
> poor women, October 1999).

The new provincial Governor, too, has made a stronger impression on Svay Ei
villagers than his predecessor. Most villagers have not seen him, but they know that he
was the one who introduced the rule that every family must have a *tradaok.*[98] The third
Deputy Governor has also become more familiar as he came to the village with 'gifts'
after the flooding in late 1999. 'Big people' in general are known for such distribution.

   Through occasional visits in connection to development activities, a few local
officials have thus apparently become slightly more familiar to villagers and perhaps
slightly associated with such activities. Still, Svay Ei villagers do not perceive the
commune or other local authorities as major development actors, and are not aware of
the existence of a Commune Development Committee or a Local Development Fund
managed by the commune. Rather, such resources are perceived as belonging to
angkaar.

> I don't know where *angkaar* comes from, but I don't think that the commune
> or the district has any money for that kind of things [wells, ponds, road].
> Only *angkaar* has money (VDC member (m) March 2000).

Apart from the lack of resources, the local authorities are also not perceived as
committed to villagers' welfare or to providing services.

> If villagers didn't request *angkaar* to build something, the Commune Chief
> would never come. He comes to see the road building because he gets
> benefits from it. He never thinks of the well-being of villagers. The
> government never thinks (Villager, *aachaar* (m) Village feedback group,
> Svay Ei, March 2000).

While development activities are thus perceived as managed by *angkaar*, villagers'
main contacts with the commune and other authorities outside the village remain
related to other issues, with the commune still perceived as dealing mainly with

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[97] A *kramaa* is a traditional scarf worn by many villagers.
[98] A *tradaok* is a drum used for warning other villagers in cases of thefts and other dangers.

security, conflict resolution and marriage certificates. This perception is confirmed by a CARERE employee.

> The authorities' main task is security, and what's related to political parties. At the district they have a schedule with different topics. Sometimes they talk about development, but not very often. Usually they talk about security. The Commune Chiefs are busy with security. The District Chief and Deputies are not in charge of development. They go to the communes and villages to talk about the party, about security, and a little bit about development. They convince people to support their party. (---) When CARERE staff is in the villages with commune staff, they don't talk about party politics. But when CARERE staff leaves, they do (CARERE employee (m) October 1999).

More surprising than villagers' vague ideas of the commune authorities' role in development, is the Village Chief's apparent lack of familiarity and comprehension. VDC members, too, have very little contact with the commune and are far from sure of its development role. They have heard about a Commune Development Committee (CDC), but regard it as a small group of commune people. They are familiar with two female CDC members from the village where the commune centre is located, who are very active in development work, but apparently regard them as commune officials (which they are not). When the VDC was new, all members went for meetings and trainings, and thus became more familiar with the commune officials. Since then, however, there is far less contact.

> Only the leader goes for meetings in the commune every Monday. If the leader is busy, he hands it over to me. I went for a meeting once, but it was a long time ago (VDC member (m) VDC group March 2000).

Though the Village Chief claims to go for the weekly meetings in the commune, it is obvious that he is frequently absent. While villagers, including VDC members, believe that he has attended the last few commune meetings, he gives the research team various reasons for why he was not there last Monday, or the week before. It is also clear that he is not confident about commune affairs.

> I don't know about the commune! I only know the village. (---) The Commune Chief controls and governs all the Village Chiefs. Every Wednesday, he goes to the district to get a plan, and every Monday he reports to the Village Chiefs. Those meetings are the only contact I have with the commune. (---) I don't know what the District Chief does. But I know him, I had a chat with him once. He comes from a different district. There was a plan from the province, they want every district to progress, so they swapped the District Chiefs. The district is only for authority affairs, such as fighting and robbery. (---) I don't know the province! They are too big!!! I don't know what the Governor does. He's new, from a different province. Sometimes, province officials come to the commune, that's the only time I see province people (Village Chief (m) October 1999 and March 2000).

Though people from district and provincial departments do sometimes come to see the Village Chief at his house, he apparently mainly waits for 'big people' to come with information or instructions. Meanwhile, as noted, the militiaman is far better informed and more familiar with the authorities. He also frequently attends meetings at both commune and district levels, which is partly recognised by villagers and adds to the impression that he is more influential than the Village Chief.

> The Village Chief has no motorbike, so he needs that man's help to go to the commune meetings. All information from the meetings, he also knows. Sometimes he knows more than the Village Chief (Villager (m) Village feedback group, March 2000).

The situation of a Village Chief who is passive and apprehensive in relation to the authorities, and a militiaman who is far more active and assured, is thus clearly brought into the area of development activities, and apparently reinforced.

The sense of subordination that the Village Chief and VDC members express in relation to 'higher levels' is not restricted to the village, however. The Commune Chief, too, is quite distressed by 'big people'. As the research team is having lunch at a CDC member's house, together with the District Chief and the head of a provincial department, the Commune Chief is clearly uneasy with the company and tells one of the Cambodian research assistants that he does not want to go near 'big people'.

> I'm under the supervision of the district. (---) The most difficult part of my job is authority, especially security. If I cannot prevent robberies, I'm a weak Commune Chief. If there are robberies, higher levels will blame me, so I have to be careful. (---) I never talk directly with the Provincial Governor. When I went for a conference, I just saw him. The previous Governor, I went to report to him, for example about flooding. But after the last flooding, we haven't seen the Governor, because he's new (Commune Chief (m) March 2000).

As mentioned, however, the commune authorities are involved in the activities of various development organisations, which the Commune Chief claims has heavily expanded their workload.

> Before, I was only responsible for authority. Now, with development programmes, I have more responsibilities. I need to be chief of the development agencies. For example, I'm responsible for the buffalo raising in all villages. It adds to my work. Since Seila started in 1997, I've got more responsibilities. I pay attention to the needs of the villagers, for road construction etc. I'm most busy making proposals, the commune can get US$ 25,000 (Commune Chief (m) March 2000).

The Commune Chief is however apparently not confident about the role of the CDC. He gives contradictory reports on whether the Village Chiefs who are not VDC leaders

are members of the CDC or not, and on whether there are regular CDC meetings. The situation is probably that occasional development issues are dealt with at the weekly authority meetings, which means that the VDC leaders who are not Village Chiefs may not attend. A CDC member also complains that the Commune Chief leaves most of the work to her and another woman, and that he is not even at the commune office any more. It is widely known that he takes a much larger interest in the NGO credit scheme, which he runs from home and which renders him an extra income, than in CARERE/Seila activities.

> The Commune Chief thinks only about the credit scheme because it earns him money. When Seila started, the Commune Chief often went to the villages, but since Hathakasekor [the NGO that runs the credit programme] started to work in the commune, he never goes (CDC member from a different village (f) March 2000).

This is partly confirmed by the Commune Chief who justifies his involvement in the credit scheme interchangeably by the authorities needing to control the NGOs and the NGO having appointed him to work for them.

> I'm also busy with NGOs that want to work in the commune. I have to spend time with them. (---) It's best if NGOs work directly with the villagers [not through the authorities]. Because NGOs have full skills, the authorities don't have the skills. But we still keep our eyes on the NGOs. (---) The commune is especially involved in Hathakasekor. I'm the CD [community development] worker. Hathakasekor appointed me to be director of the community. The borrowers come to my house to pay. (---) First they thought about percentage and we [the Commune Chief and the accountant] earned four or five dollars a month each. Later, the scheme increased and now we get US$ 50-60 per month (Commune Chief (m) March 2000).

Villagers' scarce contacts and low level of familiarity with the authorities outside the village have thus clearly affected the comprehension and perception of the commune's role in development activities. The experience and expectation of the commune dealing mainly with security, and the tendency of keeping a low profile, have affected how the CARERE/Seila set-up has been perceived and accommodated.

5.4.3 Villagers still protesting

Parallel to the inclination to not approach the authorities, soon after the field research was concluded, a formal complaint about the village leadership was, as noted, brought to the commune. Previously, some better off villagers had also participated in a protest against the authority decision to ban village wine production.

The case of wine production was apparently a matter of relatively well-informed and better off villagers objecting when an important source of income was threatened and when a wine producer in a village closer to the provincial capital initiated a

protest. Phiep, who is the most educated person in Svay Ei and one of the larger wine producers, was the most active person in Svay Ei:

> – A private company bought the rice wine factory in the province, Phiep says. And they didn't want anyone else to produce wine, so they paid US$ 1,000 to the state for the production right.
>   There were about ten families in Svay Ei who produced rice wine. Some of them stopped, but when they saw that others continued, they started again. Then one day, Phiep got a letter from a wine producer in the district centre. It was a written protest against the banning of wine production which the wine producers in Svay Ei were asked to sign. Phiep took it to the others, including his relative Saan who had stopped producing wine since she could not risk the 300,000 riel fine that she had heard of. Phiep got all their thumbprints on the protest letter.
> – Phiep put my thumbprint and name instead of me, Saan says. I agreed to it, because he helped me. If I cannot produce rice wine, I've got no income.
>   Phiep took the letter back to the man in the district centre, who had come to represent all village wine producers in the district, and who took it to the province.
> – I'm not sure whom he took it to, Phiep says. But it was passed from the administration section to the third Governor to the second Governor to the first Governor.
>   The protest was reasonably successful. The production ban was cancelled, but a heavy tax introduced, which made at least one woman in Svay Ei stop producing rice wine.
> – Villagers had suggested that they could pay some small tax, Phiep says. The state thought about it and realised that it would earn them more than the US$ 1,000 that the company paid.

While this case of protest was apparently not related to development intervention, the efforts to replace the village leadership (see 5.3.4) were. In that case, the leaders' mismanagement and power abuse have, through interplay with development resources and procedures, become more evident and relevant, villagers' sense of injustice has been evoked and alternative leaders have emerged.

To very briefly sum up the findings from the first case study: As a fairly new and limited phenomenon, development intervention does not constitute a major part of Svay Ei villagers' life-worlds or socio-economic strategies. However, with such intervention, they have come to form a firm understanding of 'development' as the tangible activities initiated and determined by development agencies.

Through interplay with close and concerned social relations, development intervention has also generated positive expectations among villagers. While they rarely have any expectations of substantial influence on development activities, they try to figure out what to say and do in order to attract as much resources as possible. Therefore, but also in line with old strategies of keeping a low profile, villagers largely accept what they perceive as development agencies' rules, though also silently

avoiding them when possible. Certain manifestations of development intervention have come to interact with prevailing socio-economic arrangements, and the pattern of interplay is ambiguous. As those who used to mobilise villagers for community work have been partly surpassed and partly consciously involved in development activities, their role has been partly undermined and partly strengthened. Meanwhile, the main local power holders have in the short run been strengthened, as their influence has enabled them to control the distribution of development resources.

The way these leaders handle development intervention has however evoked strong and widespread dissatisfaction among villagers, and development intervention, again in interaction with the close and concerned social relations, has given rise to a partly negative social climate. Villagers' disapproval has come to include some of those who hold development related positions in the village, and their experiences of being suspected and blamed by fellow villagers have fed into an old reluctance to holding a leadership position. The undeniable mismanagement of development resources, the open and engaged talking about it and the ensuing emergence of alternative leaders have in the longer run rendered the previously unchallenged village leadership fragile. Meanwhile, development intervention has not thoroughly affected villagers' perceptions of and relation to authorities outside the village, possibly with the exception of the dissatisfaction with the village leadership, which made them bring a formal complaint to the commune.

6. EMPIRICAL FINDINGS: KOMPONG LOUNG

6.1 Some basic facts on the case study village

In the second case study village, too, the level of poverty, remoteness and demographic stability/instability are aspects of the local settings and dynamics affecting the interplay as CARERE/Seila is implemented (again, along with the presence of other development intervention, which will be described in 6.3.1). As with the first village, therefore, this one will be presented in terms of population, history, livelihood and access to services.

6.1.1 Location, population and living standards[99]

Kompong Loung is one of the eight villages in the commune, 15 kilometres north of the provincial town. There are 171 families and 854 people (431 women, 423 men). In 78 households, there is no male head of household, and 29 families are returnees, most of who came to Kompong Loung in 1992.

Villagers talk about the 'old' and the 'new' village, or the 'inside' and the 'outside'. When the returnees (originally 74 families) arrived, they received plots along the road, some of them as far as two kilometres from the original village and much closer to the neighbouring one. Since then, these plots have become attractive for people who do not have enough village land in the 'old' village, so an increasing number of non-returnees live in this 'new' area. Within the 'old' village, better off people live in certain parts, while some poorer villagers live clearly separated from the more central area.

Most houses are made of wood, about half of which have a thatch roof and half a zinc roof. There are at least ten big and clearly better standard houses, while about 15 families live in bamboo shelters. 19 families have a latrine, two have a generator and at least 30 have a TV (three of which are colour TVs). There is one truck, more than 20 motorbikes and 100 adult bicycles, while an increasing number of better off children have their own mountain bikes.

6.1.2 History

According to the legend, Kompong Loung village was created by three old women at least 100 years ago. The three women – Yiey Ieuw, Yiey Aow, and Yiey Aw – loved each other dearly and decided to settle together with their families on the forested land, which they had to clear for rice fields. Old Kompong Loung villagers have experienced a number of shifting regimes. 'First it was the French, then it was the

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Thais, then it was the French again; after the French it was the Issaraks, then it was Khmer Rouge…' (Villager (m) January 1999).[100]

French colonial rule is remembered as a good time. People made a living from growing rice and vegetables, fishing and collecting beetles. Some also did waged work on the main road and the railway that were being constructed across the province. Then, during a few years, the area was governed by Thais. This, too, was apparently a good and peaceful time. There were Thais staying in the village and teaching villagers in Thai. But the Thais left, without any fighting, and the French came back. Then came the time of conflict between the French and the Issaraks, which villagers recall as a time of fear. Issarak troops were staying at the river some kilometres away, and came to the village to get food and recruit followers. The French were also recruiting soldiers among the villagers, and both sides came to look for the enemy's supporters among them. A few villagers joined each side, but most of them did not support either. When people were at the rice fields, they were afraid of being caught, and sometimes there was fighting in or near the village, so they had to escape temporarily.

During the Sihanouk regime from the 1950s, life in the village was apparently comparatively comfortable again, and villagers talk about it as a peaceful time when it was easy to make a living. From 1972, there was heavy fighting in the area and people had to leave the village at night-time. Throughout the Lon Nol regime, however, villagers could continue to live in the village. Though there was fighting in the fields five kilometres away, there was no actual fighting in the village. Both sides came to recruit soldiers among the villagers, however. The village was within the government controlled area, with soldiers stationed in the village, and a few villagers were government soldiers in other parts of the country, while others were militiamen helping to protect the village from the Khmer Rouge and temporarily going to nearby areas to fight them. Three young men also left to join the Khmer Rouge in the Tonle Sap area, and the Khmer Rouge burnt down houses in the village a couple of times. As the Khmer Rouge were winning, then, villagers who had been Lon Nol soldiers or held other positions in the village had to leave for other places where nobody knew them. During the Pol Pot regime, most villagers stayed in the village or at the surrounding rice fields, while a lot of people from Phnom Penh and other areas were relocated to stay there. Strong people worked in distant fields, growing rice and digging canals, and came to the village to visit only every three or four months. Old and less strong people worked in the village. As the Vietnamese arrived, there was no fighting in the area between them and the Khmer Rouge, and only few villagers were forced to go with the Khmer Rouge as they fled.

In the early 1980s, there was frequent fighting between the Khmer Rouge and the Vietnamese. On several occasions, houses were burnt and the Khmer Rouge came to recruit villagers. A few young people also joined and went to stay with them at the

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[100] As noted in 5.1, the Issaraks were a resistance movement fighting for Cambodian independence during the 1940s and 1950s.

Thai border. Villagers therefore got used to having dinner early, and then leave the village to hide over night. In 1986, again, a couple of houses were burnt and Khmer Rouge soldiers frequently came into the village to ask for food and tobacco. Villagers could remain in the village, but were always prepared with two cans of rice and a package of tobacco for the Khmer Rouge. At that time, villagers went to the camps at the Thai border. Some stayed, but most just went to get rice to take back home. Groups of 50-60 people from Kompong Loung and neighbouring villages went together. The trip took three days and nights by foot, and a few villagers did the trip several times. Far into the 1990s, there were Khmer Rouge soldiers in the area, and villagers were afraid to use their distant fields. To go there, or to collect beetles in distant lakes, they had to pay to the Khmer Rouge.

For a short while in the early 1980s, people grew rice collectively and had to provide rice to the government troops. There was a station in the district for Vietnamese soldiers, who also came into the village to ask for food. Some villagers had to go with the government soldiers to carry their weapons, ammunition and food. They did not get involved in shooting – 'we let the soldiers do the fighting' – but some were killed when they could not flee fast enough. From 1983, there was also recruitment of soldiers and labour force. At first it was apparently quite easy to find volunteers in Kompong Loung. People had strong experiences of the Khmer Rouge and were motivated to fight them. Later on, however, people got more reluctant and recruitment more compelling. For a while, most young men were gone from the village as soldiers. It was hard for those who remained to manage the rice farming, and there are frequent stories of how soldiers' families did not receive the help that they had been promised with ploughing and harvesting. Meanwhile, many of the labourers who went to the Thai border to cut forest and stone and build roads as part of the national defence came back with malaria. During soldier as well as labour recruitment, therefore, people tried to hide or paid the authorities not to be recruited, sometimes after having sold both rice and cattle.

As noted, in 1992, 74 families from the border camps settled in Kompong Loung and the population as well as the residential area thus considerably increased. At most, there were 210 families in the village. From around that time, security gradually improved. Though the Khmer Rouge did not come into the village any more, villagers were still afraid due to fighting in surrounding areas, and they could still not use their distant rice fields. At least since 1997, however, Khmer Rouge soldiers have not caused any security problems in the area.

6.1.3 Resources and livelihood

Kompong Loung villagers make a living mainly by wet season rice cultivation and fishing. There are about 250 hectares of rice land, but no dry season rice cultivation. There is a 1,200 meters long irrigation canal, but only a few villagers can pump water from it to their fields. There are about 100 draught animals, all cows except two buffaloes, and roughly another 150 cows, which cannot be used as draught animals.

About 40 families have an oxcart and a few have a trailer. There are no tractors or *koh yun*, but about ten better off families rent a tractor every year to plough one or two hectares each.

There are two hectares of land for other crops than rice, but lack of water makes it difficult to grow vegetables. In the rainy season, some villagers do grow some cabbage, cucumber, eggplant, pumpkin, winter melon and chilli, but almost only for own consumption. There are fruit trees such as banana, mango, coconut and milk fruit, but some trees die in the dry season and the soil is not good enough for oranges and lemons, as in other parts of the province and even in the same commune.

Raising animals is also problematic, as they tend to get sick and die. There are about 60 pigs, but chickens and ducks do not provide an important income for anyone. Fishing, on the other hand, is a very important source of livelihood and income, especially during the months after the harvest. The nearest river and lakes are about five kilometres away. Between 15 and 20 villagers have a wood or palm tree boat, but there are no motorboats. During the last few years, villagers' access to parts of the fishing area has been severely restricted as businessmen have bought the sole fishing right and stopped villagers from going there (see 6.4).

Collecting beetles in the lakes is another main activity for most villagers during the dry season. Some also collect frogs. Fish, beetles and frogs are sold to a few merchants who are specialised in their respective commodity and who come to the village every day. When there are no more beetles nearby, the merchants take groups of villagers to some distant lakes, where they stay for up to two weeks, and the merchants come every or every second day to get the beetles. Mainly poor women collect *kah*[101] to weave mats, which during parts of the year is their main occupation. As with fish, beetles and frogs, the mats are always sold to a few specialised merchants who come to the village. There are also some wild water crops such as lotus, morning glory and water lily that mainly poor women collect to eat and to sell. A few villagers catch snakes and during a couple of months in the dry season, some attract and catch birds, mainly water chickens, by imitating their sound. This is illegal and villagers are sometimes fined by the police, but there are also specialised merchants who buy the snakes and birds.

The nearest forests are about eight kilometres away. After the harvest, those who have an oxcart go there every day to collect firewood for themselves and to sell to those who cannot go, and thus make a good daily income for several months. After the harvest, some villagers collect thatch in the fields to make roofs, mainly for themselves but also for selling.

Better off villagers employ others mainly for harvesting. Poorer people sometimes also work for others to dig a small dam or canal, to fill up a village plot with soil, to build a house, or to carry water from the only well in the village that provides drinking water throughout the year. A few villagers work temporarily in the provincial town as

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[101] *Kah* is a kind of grass that grows in water.

construction workers or at the market. Many more, especially among the returnees, go to the Thai border as agriculture or factory workers. Some pay people to help them get there and get a job, and some never come back. Others go temporarily to the southern parts of the country to work at sawmills.

A few men drive motorcycle taxi more or less regularly. At least 13 families run a shop in the village. One of them also has a video shop, a karaoke bar and a dancing place. One man makes a living mainly from buying and selling chickens, others make some extra money from occasionally buying and selling cows. There are between five and ten civil servants who have a regular salary. Three or four widows whose husbands were soldiers have the right to a monthly pension, but a better off family in the village has allegedly bought this right from all of them.

6.1.4 Access to services

Kompong Loung is located five kilometres from the commune centre and eight kilometres from the district centre. Within the village, there are more than 3,000 metres of good paths. Lack of domestic water is a major problem. There is an old handdug well and a ring well which do not dry up. The water from the ring well is not good for drinking, though. There are also four large communal ponds, but they all dry up during three or four months every year. In the returnee area, there are two pump wells that reportedly do not dry up. One has never been used, though, and the other one is used only for washing since the water is not good for drinking. When the family ponds in the returnee area dry up, people get water from a dam in front of the pagoda, which is nearer than the handdug well in the old village.

There is a health centre in the commune, but most villagers very rarely go there, and there is a clinic in the district. The nearest hospital is in the provincial town, 15 kilometres away. Health workers from the commune health centre come to the village to give vaccinations, and there is a village health worker. There is also a traditional midwife and two *kru Khmer*[102] who help with complicated deliveries, snakebites etc. There is no active village veterinarian. Vets from the district and province sometimes come to the village, but villagers are reluctant to have their cattle vaccinated.

There is a primary school with three classrooms in the village. Four teachers teach 166 students. Two of them teach grade two and three (33 and 38 students respectively) in the morning and the other two teach grade one and four (70 and 25 students) in the afternoon. There is another primary school (grade 1-4) at the pagoda about three kilometres away, where about 20 children from Kompong Loung go, mainly from the returnee area. At the pagoda, UNESCO also runs a kindergarten, a primary school (grade 1-2) and vocational training such as literacy, sewing and weaving. About five children go to secondary school, five kilometres away, and one girl goes to high

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[102] As noted in 5.1.4, a *kru Khmer* is a traditional healer.

school, seven kilometres away (though there is a short cut, which makes it three kilometres to walk).

There is a rice mill in Kompong Loung, but most villagers use it only for small amounts of rice and take the major share of their harvest to a larger mill two kilometres away. There are at least 13 shops, several of them with a wide range of food items, textiles and even radios. There is a Khmer noodle and porridge place and several women walk around the village selling cooked food. Sellers also frequently come to the village selling clothes, bread, soybean juice, ice cream and other things. It is four kilometres to the nearest market and seven kilometres to a bigger one.

A man runs a bike/motorbike repairing shop in the village, while the nearest blacksmith is 2.5 kilometres away and the nearest carpenter 5.5 kilometres away. A woman has set up a tailor shop, and in a neighbouring village, less than two kilometres away, there is a hairdresser, while another one comes regularly to the village. A family runs a video shop, a karaoke bar and a dancing place, which attract people from other villages. There is an old boule course and at least five snooker tables where people tend to play throughout the night. There is organised – and illegal – gambling (card, dices, bingo etc) at several houses, also attracting people from other villages. The nearest pagoda is about three kilometres away. There used to be two Christian churches in the village, but they are not used any more.

These socio-economic features are expected to get involved in interplay with the manifestations of CARERE/Seila and other development agencies, along with a range of socio-political aspects of the local setting and dynamics, to which we now turn.

6.2 Village leadership and socio-political culture

Socio-political roles, relations, culture and climate are integral parts of the Kompong Loung dynamics, also expected to interact with the manifestations of any development intervention, and especially crucial when the aim is to improve local governance. As in the previous case study, and before bringing development intervention into the picture, a presentation will therefore be made of formal and informal village leadership and neighbour relations.

6.2.1 Distance and suspicions among neighbours

A first general impression of Kompong Loung is a less friendly and welcoming atmosphere than in Svay Ei. Some villagers are suspicious or even hostile towards outsiders, including the research team. Community cohesion and solidarity have apparently not been as strong as in Svay Ei, or have eroded much further. A pots and plates association was formed two years ago, but is less well-established and known than the one in Svay Ei.

The village is clearly divided between the 'old' and the 'new' parts, with long-term villagers and returnees having very little contact. Also within the 'old' village, many neighbour relations seem fairly distant. While villagers express less willingness

and expectation to help each other and those in need than in Svay Ei, relations are more monetarised and there are bigger economic disparities, which are apparently accepted and expected. Overall, the village is more characterised by business relations, with villagers employing and selling things and services to other villagers, as well as external businessmen and vendors coming to the village.

Widespread and largely illegal gambling, and the drinking and noise that come with it, also create hostility between those who are involved and those who are not, along with suspicions about each other (and, again, about the research team).[103] In contrast to an overall feeling in the village of disinterest and passivity, however, among some smaller groups of neighbours and friends, there is a lot of friendliness and care.

6.2.2 The gentle Chief and the educated deputy

> He's a good Village Chief. He never exploits the villagers. For example, he goes fishing himself, and never asks for fish from anyone else (VDC leader (m) November 1999).

Kompong Loung villagers are apparently very fond of their Village Chief. He and his deputy are perceived as the main leaders, but there are another two men – former Representatives of the Youth Association and currently members of the Aphiwat Strei and Village Development Committees – who many villagers also regard as part of the village leadership (see 6.3.4).

The chiefmanship here is run in a somewhat less personal manner than in Svay Ei. Being a Village Chief is apparently a more professional role, involving more limited chores rather than overall 'parenthood'. The specific tasks that villagers mention are however largely the same as in Svay Ei, mainly obtaining plans and reporting to higher levels, issuing marriage certificates, 'guiding' people and mediating in domestic conflicts.

> He receives plans from higher levels and announces them to the villagers. He asks them to work, for example to dig a canal or build a road. If villagers have a problem, they go to see him. They also go to see him about marriages. He never makes people disappointed. (---) He discusses with people before he decides anything (Villager (f) January 2000).

While villagers appreciate the Village Chief for being honest, fair and unselfish, they regret that he is not educated and seems a bit tired and passive. Meanwhile, the Deputy Village Chief is also quite highly regarded, but for different reasons. He is educated and efficient, and people, who commonly refer to him as the Village Policeman,

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[103] The more active gamblers clearly do not like the presence of the research team, partly because they have been told by village leaders not to gamble while we are there.

describe his role mainly as to solve conflicts, to approve and sign land transactions and to help villagers write letters. He is often busy at the pagoda, and some villagers regard him as an *aachaar*. While appreciating his knowledge and skills, acknowledging that he is better at paper work and more efficient than the Village Chief, villagers also complain that he is less fair, is too concerned about his own work and charges for everything he does.

> When making a judgment, the Village Chief doesn't make quick decisions like Leum [the Deputy Village Chief]. The Village Chief is honest, he always talks about the law, and before he makes a decision, he uses the law to help him decide. Leum makes quicker decisions if either side gives him some money, then he can turn the person who is right into being wrong (Group leader (m) January 2000).

The returnees who live along the road some distance from the original village, however, have quite different experiences and perceptions of the village leadership than people in the 'old' village. They are not at all familiar with the Village Chief, who allegedly only passes through their area. 'I don't know who the Village Chief is. He's never been to this area' (Villager, returnee (m) November 1999). People in the 'new' village are far more familiar with the Deputy Village Chief, whom they consult mainly for land transactions. Apart from a minimal fee for the paper used, they have no experience of having to pay for his assistance.

> For selling and buying land, you need to go to Leum [the Deputy Village Chief]. You don't need to pay anything. (---) He also calls returnees for meetings (Villager, returnee (f) January 2000).

People in the returnee area usually try to solve conflicts among themselves, which the Deputy Village Chief confirms.

> The newcomers don't come often. They rarely have conflicts, and they are located far from the old villagers. So when they have a small conflict, they don't think it's necessary to come to me (Deputy Village Chief (m) November 1999).

With this important exception of the returnees, the leaders in Kompong Loung are thus more accessible than in Svay Ei. Most villagers meet, or at least see, the Village Chief and the deputy quite frequently as the two move around in the village, or in to and out from it. While here, too, conflicts are perceived as the only reason to see the village leaders, since the two are more highly regarded and more able and willing to assist than the leaders in Svay Ei, they are much more consulted, even concerning quite minor issues. As in Svay Ei, a common cause of conflict is that somebody's cattle eat somebody else's crops. The village leaders' role, then, is mainly to urge people to keep an eye on their animals and to forgive each other.

> The Village Chief announces on the loudspeakers 'don't let your cows eat on the rice fields'. When a landowner catches a cow that is eating his rice, he brings it to the Village Chief. And the Village Chief calls 'Whose cow is this? Come and get it!' He then gives advice to the owner – 'don't let the cow do it again'. But there is no payment, it's hard for the cow owner to pay, he knows his mistake, and won't do it again (Villager (f) November 1999).

Sometimes, however, the village leaders also need to settle an agreement about compensation. As in Svay Ei, cattle thefts are a major concern and thieves are sometimes made to sign a contract holding them responsible for future thefts. Regarding domestic conflicts – though women here too hesitate to bring complaints about their husbands, and neighbours hesitate to interfere – the village leaders are more consulted, and again their role is mainly to encourage reconciliation. For those who do not have a conflict and who are not selling or buying land, the one reason to approach the village leaders is to get a marriage or a divorce approved. When villagers come for a divorce, however, the leaders first urge them to reconcile, for as long as it seems feasible.

> Whenever my husband hit me, I would run to see the Village Chief and get help. Then, the Village Chief would suggest a compromise. He warned him [the former husband] by making him put his thumbprint on a contract stating that he promised to not do it again. (---) But when he had beaten me so that I had a miscarriage, the Village Chief didn't suggest a compromise again, since my husband hadn't kept his promises. (---) I asked help from the Village Chief to get a divorce once and for all (Villager (f) November 1999).

There are people, however, though apparently fewer than in Svay Ei, who do not approach the village leaders even for marriages and divorces, because they do not want to pay for a certificate, or because they simply cannot be bothered.

> They [another couple] have divorced many times. They stay together, then divorce again…. I've tried to give them advice, but they don't listen. The Village Chief has tried to suggest a compromise, but they don't agree. They decide on their own to divorce, they've never gone to the Village or Commune Chief, though they should get their approval (Group leader (m) November 1999).

Pre- and extramarital affairs are apparently much more common in Kompong Loung than in Svay Ei, which adds to the issues that the village leaders need to deal with.

> I asked Leum [the Deputy Village Chief] to solve the problem with my daughter and Sam. I brought a complaint, but I didn't want to make it too serious. I just wanted to know if he would agree to recognise that the baby that my daughter was expecting was his. When Leum called Sam to be questioned, he agreed to recognise the baby, and I asked him to pay 5,000

baht[104] to raise the child, so that the problem would be solved. I paid 100 baht to Leum for his help (VDC member (f) January 2000).

Yet an issue for the village leadership is the widespread gambling, which takes place at various more or less hidden places in the village. Kompong Loung has turned into something of a gambling centre attracting people from neighbouring villages, with the Village Chief and the deputy allegedly unable to stop it – or undetermined since they benefit from it. 'The Village Chief and the deputy get 4,000 or 5,000 riel per year from every player, and more from those who organise the gambling' (Villager (f) Village feedback group, February 2000).

The division of tasks between the Village Chief and the deputy is reasonably clear to villagers (except, as noted, those in the 'new' village). Unlike in Svay Ei, the two leaders' degrees of activity and influence have more to do with skills and capacity than with informal contacts, though whom villagers turn to for assistance also depends on the two men's personalities and interests. The younger and more educated deputy takes on tasks that the Village Chief cannot or does not want to handle. For land transactions, for example, people normally see the deputy, while for solving a conflict or settling an agreement, they can see either of the two.

> Neither is the stronger of the two. Villagers can go to either of them. But Leum [the Deputy Village Chief] is educated. When they need to write a letter, they go to see him. Reoum [the Village Chief] is not educated, he can only write his signature (Villager (m) Village feedback group, February 2000).

The Village Chief and the deputy themselves claim to cooperate, maybe more than they actually do. A general perception is that the deputy sometimes takes over and knows more about what happens in the village. As the Village Chief is getting old and tired and the deputy is more eager to be involved, this situation seems to suit both of them and their division of tasks largely works well. The Village Chief denies, however, that the deputy is more active.

> My responsibility as a Village Chief is to govern and guide all villagers. I know about villagers' difficulties and report to the commune. I report about vegetable and rice production, about rice plants that are destroyed. For conflicts, villagers come to see me or the deputy. Sometimes we discuss with each other. (---) If I'm away, I give the responsibility to the deputy. Then he can go to the commune instead of me (Village Chief (m) January 2000).

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[104] In this part of the country, the Thai currency is widely used. At the time of the research, 1 baht amounted to about 1,000 riel.

While the Village Chief thus apparently wants to seem in control, the Deputy Village Chief has a slightly different perception of who does what.

> The Village Chief is bigger than I am. District and commune people go to the Village Chief, and then the Village Chief informs me. But I'm the only one in the village who can write a report. As a Deputy Village Chief, I write reports about the number of militiamen, how many quit, and about the rice yield, how much is destroyed by flooding etc. (---) People bring complaints to me rather than to the Village Chief. He's not educated, he cannot solve problems, so they come to me. If it's a big problem, I consult the Village Chief, but with small issues I just go ahead. The Village Chief doesn't mind, he wants me to solve the conflicts. When people go to him, he refers them to me (Deputy Village Chief (m) November 1999).

The Commune Chief largely approves of the Kompong Loung Village Chief and recognises his popularity. While not at all as familiar with, or favourable of, the deputy, he confirms the two men's alleged qualities and the division of tasks between them.

> Kompong Loung has a good Village Chief. Villagers love him. He's a good leader. He's not educated, but his deputy helps him. (---) People really should see the Village Chief, but some like to see the deputy instead. When people want to make a complaint, they go to the deputy. He's more educated and he knows some work better than the Village Chief. But the Village Chief is fairer and more correct (Commune Chief (m) November 1999 and February 2000).

Apparently, villagers thus prefer the Village Chief, but need to consult the deputy more often. During our last stay, however, the unhappiness has increased with the Deputy Village Chief, and with his wife, who is claimed to think mainly about private incomes.

> When you sell or buy land, you have to go to Leum, and you pay 100 baht. That's what I did when I bought this plot. (---) The Village Chief and his wife are kind. But if you don't pay to Leum, his wife will come to your house to get the money (Villager (f) January 2000).

According to several villagers towards the end of the research, the deputy is well aware of villagers' discontent and has therefore largely 'withdrawn' from village work, instead spending most of his time at the pagoda (where he gets paid for what he does). The political climate and personalities in Svay Ei and Kompong Loung respectively apparently affect how village leaders respond to such unhappiness about their leadership. While the Deputy Village Chief in Kompong Loung responds by partly withdrawing and spending more time away from the village, the militiaman in Svay Ei rather increases his involvement. This difference is also related to the two

men's different relation to the commune authorities, and the two Commune Chief's differing values and needs. As noted, while the Svay Ei militiaman enjoys strong support by the Commune Chief, the Deputy Village Chief in Kompong Loung does not and, as will be seen, the Commune Chief there is concerned that villagers know their rights.

6.2.3 A history of stability and clarity

In Kompong Loung, the village leadership has been much more stable than in Svay Ei, and villagers – again with the important exception of the returnees outside the village centre – are clearer on who holds what position and what tasks are implied. Kompong Loung is the only village in the commune where the Village Chief and the deputy have remained the same since 1979. They were selected in an election among appointed candidates, which both of them claim to have won, perhaps reflecting a desire from each of them to seem stronger than he actually is.

> When the Vietnamese came, they asked the villagers to vote for a Village Chief. I got most votes, but I didn't accept the position. I transferred it to Reoum. He was second in the election, and he's older than I am. It wouldn't be appropriate that the Village Chief is younger than the deputy (Deputy Village Chief (m) November 1999).

Until two years ago, there was also a third member of the leadership. As in Svay Ei, during the 1980s, the village leaders were busy with land allocation. In Kompong Loung, however, almost all villagers firmly claim that land distribution was correct and fair, following detailed rules with no room for anyone to cheat.

The system of Group leaders has apparently been, and still is, better organised and known in Kompong Loung than in Svay Ei. In the 1980s, there were eight Group leaders and here, too, their main tasks were to recruit soldiers and labour force and to collect money. Until 1993, there were also two Representatives of the Women's and Youth Association, who helped with recruitment and also mobilised people for communal work in the village.[105] Recruitment was apparently more thorough than in Svay Ei and, as indicated, partly easier.

> Apart from this [recruitment of soldiers and labourers], when there was a plan from higher levels to dig a canal, I accompanied young people to construct it according to orders from higher levels. And if a road needed to be repaired, I would lead the young to do it. They would put up a lamp and work at night-time, for maybe four or five nights. Young people were happy to do this work. People who visited from other villages also helped (VDC leader, former Representative of youth (m) November 1999).

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[105] As noted, in Kompong Loung, this is perceived to have been one combined association, as opposed to Svay Ei, where there was one association for women and one for youth.

Though initially well-motivated, villagers later got very disappointed – and are still upset – that the families of soldiers and labourers did not get the assistance that they had been promised. Those who could therefore tried to pay themselves away from being recruited.

> My husband was a soldier when others' husbands went to K5.[106] The Village Chief had promised to help me with the rice cultivation, but he didn't. Later on, my husband wanted to quit, and I had to pay for a soldier in the commune. I paid 300,000 riel, I sold my cow and unmilled rice to be able to pay. It was all agreed in the commune office with thumbprints and sealed paper. But later, they still came back to recruit my husband. He had to flee until there was no more recruitment (Villager (f) November 1999).

As in Svay Ei, most Group leaders and Representatives of the Women's and Youth Association claim to have been very reluctant to hold their positions. Recruitment and collection of money made them unpopular, and they frequently had to go as labour force themselves in order to set a good example. They all had the firm perception, though, that you could not refuse a position.

> I didn't want to be a Group leader. But I was called for a meeting in the commune and couldn't refuse. As a Group leader I was not nasty, I was very kind. But villagers still scolded me. (---) I worked very hard to recruit soldiers and labour force. I always went myself. If someone was sick, I had to go. (---) Then the Village Chief wanted me to be a commune militiaman too. But I didn't want to. My relatives got very angry with me. They wanted me to be a big person. But I didn't want to, because I felt sorry for my wife and children, and if I became a big person, villagers would hate me. (---) Today, there's not as much work for a Group leader. Sometimes they call me to go to learn. The commune tells the Village Chief and the Village Chief tells the Group leaders 'There's training in the commune, two or three hours, you must go'. But I don't go. Sometimes people from the district come to have a meeting in the village, and then I must tell the group members to participate and write their names in the list (Group leader (m) November 1999).

For a while, there was a special Interim or Deputy Village Chief to help the Village Chief in the returnee area. He left the village, though. When the returnees settled, three or four new groups were also formed and Group leaders appointed. While the Village Chief is very familiar with the Group leaders in the old village, however, he does not know the name of any of those among the returnees – who have all apparently left the village or given up their positions.

> My husband was a Group leader. But he quit, because it was useless to be a Group leader. He got no salary, and other villagers scolded him. They

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[106] As noted in 5.2.3, K5 was a fortified defence line along the Cambodian-Thai border.

accused him of getting rice from higher levels. So he quit, and nobody blames him for that (Returnee (f) November 1999).

As in Svay Ei, the Group leaders now have fewer and easier tasks, but they are still more well known and consulted than in Svay Ei, and they are still reluctant.

Now there's not much work, the Village Chief can do it alone. When I'm angry, I let the Village Chief collect money himself. The Village Chief gets a salary, 30,000 riel per month. I don't get a salary, but villagers blame me and hate me (Group leader (m) January 2000).

Though their tasks, too, have become easier, the Village Chief and the Deputy Village Chief also both claim that they want to resign, but that villagers do not allow them to, which is confirmed at least regarding the Village Chief.

I wish that I could go and stay at the pagoda instead! I want to flee from this job. I don't want to do it, I'm bored with it. When there's a conflict, and I make a judgement, one side hates me. And sometimes when there's a plan from higher levels and I announce it on the loudspeakers, people don't agree with what I say and get upset. Sometimes I tell villagers to drop me – 'if you don't agree, please withdraw me'. But they won't agree to do that (Deputy Village Chief (m) November 1999).

He [the Village Chief] wants to quit, but villagers won't let him. He thinks that he's old and that his eyes are not good, but villagers think that he's good (Villager (f) January 2000).

Monks, *aachaars* and old people do not enjoy the same respect and do not play as important leadership roles in Kompong Loung as in Svay Ei. Only four or five old people – women and men – go to the pagoda on most holy days, and they do not help mobilise villagers for community ceremonies or communal work. There is, however, a 36 year old man who has been an *aachaar* since he was 22 and who is in charge of the pots and plates association, which he initiated two years ago. This man is relatively well-educated and well-off and does not go the pagoda on every holy day since he is busy working. He claims that there are no old people in the village who know the Buddhist ceremonies well enough to be *aachaars*, and talks of himself as 'modern' and 'a new generation'. Though apparently fairly well known and appreciated, however, he is not respected the way that older *aachaars* are in Svay Ei. When there is a ceremony in the village, a couple of monks from the nearest pagoda are asked to participate, but they are not involved in any other activities in the village. 'The monks' only task is to come to the village to pray' (Village Chief (m) November 1999). According to villagers, two monks also come to the village early every morning to

collect food, but only few people claim to give them something.[107] 'Young people are in the fields, so they don't give anything. Only old people who cannot walk far prepare food for the monks' (Villager, *aachaar* (m) November 1999).

While social relations are thus generally less close and concerned than in Svay Ei, village leadership is somewhat more formal and functional, and the role of monks and elder people weaker. In this case, too, such socio-politics come to interact with the manifestations of CARERE/Seila and other development intervention, which will be discussed next.

6.3 Development intervention as part of the picture

The socio-economic and socio-political features of Kompong Loung that have been presented in the previous sections constitute vital parts of the dynamics that the manifestations of development intervention meet and come to interact with. As in the first case study, development intervention will now be brought into the picture with an overview of past and current development intervention, followed by discussions on villagers' perceptions and approaches, and on the interplay with village leadership.

6.3.1 The local history of development intervention

Development intervention in Kompong Loung has been implemented by a wide range of agencies using a wide range of approaches in a largely uncoordinated way, giving the impression of a disarray of scattered activities. At the time of the research, 20 international and local organisations were active in the commune. The first one in Kompong Loung was Oxfam UK/Ireland, which in 1991 started a community development programme. As the returnees settled in 1992-1993, other agencies also initiated various emergency and development activities. Meanwhile, Oxfam continued with a rice bank, supplying material for the store, while WFP supplied 9,200 kilos of rice. Five villagers formed a committee to be in charge of the rice bank, and 81 families borrowed rice the first year. The first two years, the interest was 50 per cent and everybody paid back what they should. Then, during a couple of years, people could not pay back due to floods and the interest was decreased to the current level of 30 per cent. The rice bank is still running, and altogether 107 families, including three returnee families, have borrowed a total of 44,000 kilos.

Oxfam also constructed a new ring well and provided rings for an old one. While the older one does not work, the water from the new one is not good for drinking. As the returnees arrived, the International Labour Organisation (ILO) constructed a laterite road that connects Kompong Loung to the main road, and CARERE 1 in cooperation with the UN High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) built a three-

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[107] During our two months in the village, however, most of the time, no monks visited, which villagers said was because they were busy at the pagoda.

room primary school. The following year, the school was badly damaged by a storm and provincial authorities and some high rank officials from Phnom Penh helped rebuild it.

Most of the returnees received a plot of village land and materials for a house when they arrived. The local authorities also supplied some floating rice land, while UNHCR supplied seeds and tractors and engaged old villagers to train the returnees in cultivating floating rice. The following year, however, since there was no more support, the returnees could not continue the rice cultivation and they no longer have access to the land. During the first year, the returnees also received rice to eat and Oxfam organised food-for-work in which people received basic food items for digging family ponds and a canal in front of their houses to prevent flooding. The soil was used to fill up their plots so that vegetables and fruit trees could be grown.

In 1993, Oxfam helped villagers construct a road in the 'old' village together with the Danish Cambodian Consortium (DCC), which provided skills and gravel. The same year, Oxfam also organised food-for-work to dig a communal pond, while International Woman's Development Agency (IWDA) financed another two communal ponds. In 1994, Oxfam started a cow-raising programme, intended for people (land owners as well as landless) with no cows and mainly households headed by women. Another committee of five villagers was formed to be in charge of the programme. Oxfam provided a cow each to 26 families who received training and then raised the cow until it got a calf, and then gave the cow to another family. The committee sold old cows and bought new ones for the programme. In order to get young cows into the programme, in 1998 the set-up changed so that four families received two cows each that they raised until they each had two calves, and then kept two calves and gave the other two away along with the cows. The programme is still running and the cows still circulating.

In 1995, the local NGO Phteas Tuek Duong helped a woman in the village build a house, provided her with vocational training, and then lent her money to start a business. The woman does not live in the village any longer. The following year, as the local NGO Aphiwat Strei was formed and Oxfam handed over their activities to them, they set up a credit scheme. A committee of five villagers, this time led by returnees, was formed. Oxfam provided US$ 1,700, and 67 families (48 old villagers, 19 returnees) borrowed in the first round. The scheme is still running. In 1997, Aphiwat Strei also set up a social relief fund for poor people in emergency situations. Members of the credit scheme pay a fee, which is put into this fund and paid to members who meet difficulties such as when a relative dies, someone is seriously ill or a house burns down. The fund is still running.

In April 1997, the three separate committees (for the rice bank, the cow-raising and the credit scheme) were merged into one committee with seven elected members managing all Aphiwat Strei activities in the village. In 1998, there was a new election, this time for only five members. Currently, there are four active members. Aphiwat Strei failed to get the Provincial Department of Rural Development (PDRD) to

recognise this committee as a Village Development Committee (VDC), and in December 1997, a separate VDC with seven members was elected as the commune was included in the Seila programme.

The first year of the Local Planning Process (LPP) resulted in US$ 2,500 from the Local Development Fund (LDF) to rehabilitate 1,200 metres of an old irrigation canal. Villagers provided labour, partly paid, partly as labour contribution, but paid no cash contribution. Currently, since there is not enough water, only four or five Kompong Loung families can use the canal, along with a few from a neighbouring village. In the second LPP cycle, Kompong Loung did not get any money from the LDF as most of the commune's allocation was used for a water pump benefiting all villages except the two most remote ones, including Kompong Loung.

In 1998, PDRD supported 19 families to construct family latrines, funded by CARERE. The same year, PDRD and Oxfam organised various food-for-work to dig an irrigation canal, to build two roads in the 'old' village and two communal ponds in the returnee area. That year, Aphiwat Strei also started an agriculture programme, mainly in the returnee area but also for some in the 'old' village. Food-for-work was organised to dig small canals and ponds for household irrigation in the returnee area, and to fill up the plots for vegetable and fruit cultivation. Then, those who had been active received water jars to use for composts for growing vegetables. CARERE has also trained people to grow fruit trees and supported rice field demonstrations by the Provincial Department of Agriculture, Ausaid has provided agriculture information at the nearby pagoda and at least one villager has attended agriculture training by CIAP (Cambodia-IRRI-Australia Project) in the provincial town.

At the pagoda, LICADHO (Cambodian League for the Promotion and Defence of Human Rights) has also provided human rights training for selected villagers, and in 1999, the outreach project of Cambodian Development of Human Rights conducted training in the village for some VDC members and other villagers. In 1998, the Provincial Department of Education organised a literacy class with support from UNESCO. Meanwhile, Aphiwat Strei does informal health education as its staff visits villagers or hold meetings. In the end of 1996, the Provincial Department of Health, with support from CARERE, trained some village health workers, but only one remains active. A midwife has also been trained. During 1998 and 1999, four villagers received training from the local NGO Transcultural Psychosocial Organisation (TPO) and then held mental health classes for a group of ten men who drink too much and a group of ten women with alleged psychological problems. During 1999, Aphiwat Strei bought eight hectares of rice land in the village, which they allocated the following year to eight returnee families who have taken part in their agriculture programme. The families will have to pay 500-1,000 riel per day during five years, and the land will then belong to them. There will also be the option of renting the land, but then it will remain 'community property'.

In February 2000, the International Development Enterprises Programme in Cambodia (IDE) came to install nine treadle pump wells in the village, paid for by

somebody from a neighbouring commune who lives in the US. Various organisations (as well as officials and politicians) have also handed out a wide range of gifts at different occasions. In 1993 and 1994, Aphiwat Strei provided medicine from the district health centre for diarrhoea, fevers, cold etc. From 1993 to 1996, widows among the returnees received a house, monthly provisions of rice, school uniforms for their children etc from Cambodia Family Development Services (CFDS). After a storm in 1995, the same organisation provided blankets, mosquito nets, sarongs, rice and tents to some of the returnees, while Lutheran World Services (LWS) supplied vegetable seeds. During 1994 and 1995, five old families/couples (three old villagers, two returnees) received a house from HelpAge as well as a latrine, plates, pots, rice and money. At the end of 1998, Aphiwat Strei provided mosquito nets to families with small children. Since 1996, the same NGO has celebrated International Women's Day, first by inviting 15-20 poor villagers to the neighbouring village, where there was a quiz and gifts were handed out; then, after a break in 1999 because there were no funds, by gathering 200 people from three villages in Kompong Loung. Children were posed questions about health and received soap, tooth paste and tooth brushes, while adults were asked about women and received buckets, kettles and sarongs. Aphiwat Strei also visited poor families in the village, handing out washing bowls, blankets and noodles.

6.3.2 *Aphiwat* by *angkaar*

As is clear from the above, development intervention is an older and more extensive, as well as more scattered, phenomenon in Kompong Loung than in Svay Ei. Over a longer period, a larger number of actors have initiated and funded a wider range of activities, using very different approaches. Like in Svay Ei, villagers talk about *aphiwat* as the specific activities that various development agencies – *angkaar* – undertake. Kompong Loung villagers, however, have a less enthusiastic and more disillusioned attitude to such activities. Among groups of villagers, there are clear signs of development fatigue, i.e. a tiredness of and negative stance to aid. Some candidly describe their experiences and express their disenchantment, while others show a more general attitude of disinterest and even hostility regarding development actors and activities. This apparent lack of interest in and expectations on development activities are related to previous disappointment, as there are frequent testimonies of perceived promises that have not been fulfilled.

> They say that there's a shortage of this and a shortage of that. *Angkaar* says that it will be built this year or that year. Then they say that the budget is not enough. It's been going on for several years already (Villager (f) April 2000).

Though some villagers are thus quite antagonistic about development agencies and their activities, the reaction is in many cases resignation, and even ridicule, rather than anger.

> Bii [NGO staff] came to ask what we need. I said that I've got everything
> already, I need a car. Then she got stuck. Later, she listed people who wanted
> a big water jar. My name was listed, but now I've waited for five years
> (Villager (f) January 2000).

Despite the lack of enthusiasm, Kompong Loung villagers know the names of a
number of development organisations, and some are fairly familiar with people from
Aphiwat Strei, the NGO that has worked in the village since 1996. Only a few have
heard the word Seila, though, and villagers are not familiar with district or province
facilitators who, when they pass on their motorbikes or appear in a meeting, are
perceived as people from *angkaar*. VDC members, however, are more familiar with
the DFTs than those in Svay Ei, referring to them as 'the district side'. A few VDC
members, as well as a few other villagers, also perceive a difference between the major
development agencies in the village depending on respective activities and approaches.

> There are different programmes. That's why they set up different committees.
> One is *angkaar*, one is government programme, one is *angkaar*, one is Seila.
> (---) *Angkaar* Aphiwat Strei develops the rice bank, credit and cows. Seila
> also does development, but only canal or road construction. And they ask for
> local contribution, ten per cent (VDC leader, Member of NGO committee (m)
> April 2000).

A few of the most involved and informed villagers also sometimes, though not
consistently, distinguish between the government programme Seila and activities by
development agencies, which they refer to as *angkaar*. This is illustrated by the young
and knowledgeable *aachaar*.

> The rice bank, cows and money are non-governmental. The VDC is in
> harmony with the government. For example, if they plan to do something, it
> has to go from the village to commune to district to province before it can be
> achieved. If it's outside the government, you just request to the staff and the
> staff takes it to *angkaar*, that's it (Villager, *aachaar* (m) April 2000).

Like in Svay Ei, development positions and position-holders in the village are largely
unknown. As seen, in Kompong Loung various committees have been formed, and re-
formed, and a number of other development related positions introduced. The first
committee was set up by Oxfam in 1992, as five villagers were to be in charge of a
rice bank. Two years later, a cow-raising programme was started and another five
member committee formed. The same year, Oxfam handed over their activities to a
newly created local NGO and a committee of five was set up to be in charge of a credit
scheme. In 1997, then, the three committees were merged into one committee of seven
elected members, which with re-elections the following year was reduced to five
members. As this committee failed to get recognition as a Village Development
Committee (VDC), a separate VDC was formed in December 1997, made up of seven

elected members (three women and four men). At the time of the research, all seven VDC members were still reasonably active, while there were four active members of the NGO committee (two women and two men).[108] In 1996, three women and two men were elected to be village health workers, though at the time of the research only one woman remained active. Two women and two men have been selected leaders for mental health classes. There have also been some efforts to institutionalise village veterinarians, but at the time of the research nobody was active as such. One of the female health workers was also a Red Cross volunteer. In all, at the time of the research there were 21 positions related to development in Kompong Loung, filled by six men and four women.

Like in Svay Ei, the VDC is not known as a group. Here, a possible explanation is the low level of activity. The only visible result since the VDC was elected in December 1997 has been the canal repair in 1998, from which only a few families benefit, while after that, the VDC has not had any tangible tasks. Other development position-holders, too, are largely unknown. Though selected several times, the village veterinarians have never actually started to work and are accordingly not recognised as such, while hardly anyone knows that there is a Red Cross volunteer in the village. Some committee members, however, are known for specific tasks, mainly related to activities by the local NGO or health care. The most well known development activity is the rice bank, which is also what the two men who are members of both committees are mainly known for, though some villagers mention that one of them is also in charge of canals. The other two members of the NGO committee are usually associated with the rice bank, while other VDC members may be recognised as current or former health workers. Whether involved in rice or cash credit, cow-raising, road or canal construction or health care, however – and again like in Svay Ei – what villagers mainly know those who hold a development position for is 'calling for meetings'.

6.3.3 Villagers counting on the income

With the history and range of development intervention, Kompong Loung villagers have got used to being called for meetings, and their perceptions of such meetings reflect a sense of disillusionment. 'They tell people to go for meetings. I sometimes go, sometimes not. There are meetings about poor people, but nothing happens, only meetings' (Villager, returnee (f) April 2000). Like in Svay Ei, villagers perceive the meetings as mainly for dissemination of information, as the organisations are assumed to have decided beforehand what they are to provide. When villagers are asked what they need or want, they do thus not perceive it as a real choice, but assume – and have

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[108] The group of people who run the rice bank, the credit scheme and the cow-raising programme will be referred to as the NGO committee, while the committee set up by PDRD will be called the VDC. Villagers usually refer to the NGO committee as the 'rice store people/workers', while members of the committees talk about the 'community committee' (NGO) and the 'canal group' or 'Seila group' (VDC).

allegedly experienced – that there is something specific that the development workers want to hear.

> *Angkaar* asked the villagers to sit down at different places – if you want this, you sit there, if you want that, you sit there. Then they whispered to somebody 'if you ask for cows, you'll get it' (Group leader (m) Cross visit discussion, April 2000).

Accordingly, most villagers seldom express any ideas or opinions, and with the prevailing lack of enthusiasm and perceptions of broken promises, many do allegedly not expect what is announced at the meetings to be realised.

Kompong Loung villagers are also apparently less inclined than in Svay Ei to accept development agencies' requirements. There is wide agreement that villagers are not prepared to work without payment. At the time of the research, labour contribution had been provided once, but only by those who also got paid for part of their work. This was in the first LPP cycle in 1998, when there was a village project to repair parts of an old canal and the Local Development Fund (LDF) was used to pay villagers to do the job. By paying them for nine out of every ten metres they did, and labelling the tenth metre local contribution, the contribution was effectively disguised as lower payment. The following year, the rules had been changed and villagers would no longer be paid for unskilled labour. Instead, the option was to receive money to rent a machine for the job (again, canal repair) and to pay three per cent cash contribution. Villagers said no. If there was no waged work, they were not interested, while the lack of payment was also perceived as yet another broken promise, which fed into prevailing disillusionment.

> Villagers were promised that they'd continue to dig the canal the following years, until it reaches the river. But they [i.e. CARERE/Seila staff] changed their plan. They said that if people dig, it's too slow. They wanted to rent a machine to do the work, and villagers would have to contribute money. But villagers didn't agree. They didn't find it useful if they wouldn't get paid. (---) We didn't agree to rent the machine, and so the money was transferred to another village (Villager (m) April 2000).

Some villagers now regret that they did not accept the offer in 1999, talking about how good it would be to have the canal completed. Commonly, however, villagers have been far more concerned about the potential income than about what is being constructed. As noted, there have been frequent food-for-work projects of different scale and kind in Kompong Loung, and many villagers have clearly come to count on it as a recurrent source of income. During the research team's last visit, villagers were waiting for a food-for-work project, but again prevailing disillusionment was getting reinforced. 'There was a plan to build a road. They said that it would be built in March. I had prepared my basket to go and carry soil, but nothing happened' (Group leader (m) April 2000). There were differing reports on whether the project would be a

road or a canal, or both. While it did not seem to matter much, some villagers were concerned that objections may result in no project at all.

> Villagers complained that the canal [from 1998] has not been completed, so why start on a new road? But I said to them 'keep quiet, don't complain, then we might not get anything (Villager (f) April 2000).

When WFP staff then came to the village and the news spread that the road/canal construction would finally start, villagers were frustrated that it was so late. Now, people were busy ploughing and only the landless would benefit from the paid work.

With the experiences of waged labour as well as food-for-work, nobody believes that the Village Chief, the VDC or the local authorities would be able to make villagers work for free.

> Now it's hard to build something without payment… In the past, they did, like this road [through the old village]. (---) Before, there was no *angkaar*, and villagers did it for free. Then *angkaar* came to help villagers and provided payment. Later on, villagers wouldn't work for free. *Angkaar* provided payment and people got addicted (Villager (f) April 2000).

The road referred to in the quote was constructed in 1993 as the local NGO provided gravel. As noted, monks, *aachaars* and old people do not play the kind of mobilising role in Kompong Loung as in Svay Ei, and such lack of functional community mobilising along with development fatigue apparently makes it difficult to motivate villagers. Though the road trough the old village has been well maintained, it has not been a matter of general mobilising but rather of the Village Chief, the VDC leader or the young *aachaar* asking a small group of villagers to repair parts of it when needed.

As noted, the array of development activities in Kompong Loung has also included a variety of handouts, not only in cases of emergency but on other occasions as well, which has also apparently interacted with the negative social climate. Along with the alleged lack of expectations due to broken promises, returnees are sometimes blamed for having got 'used to being fed', which indicates that receiving things for free runs against prevailing norms.

Among VDC members and some villagers, local contribution is known as a feature distinguishing CARERE/Seila from other development agencies. 'Non-governmental organisations never ask villagers to pay local contribution, but here, it's government work and they ask for contribution' (VDC and CDC member, Village health worker, Mental health leader (f) April 2000). This CARERE/Seila approach, then, is also known for having come to involve other agencies, too, and the result is not appreciated.

> World Food Programme is slow now because they work with the government. They follow the Seila procedure. Seila asks for contribution from the villagers, World Food Programme also asks for contribution.

> *Angkaar* is faster. When rice is provided to the government structure, it takes a long time, because the government thinks about it in detail. (---) And they take some for their own pockets! (Villager (m) April 2000).

Still, cash contribution has never been collected and VDC members doubt that it would be possible since villagers would be suspicious about those who collect it, believing that *angkaar* has enough money to pay the full cost. Such expected difficulties are confirmed by another villager.

> The Village Chief and Hieb [the leading development person] said that it's hard to get local contribution because people are poor. Then the Village Chief and the seven members would have to pay with their own money (Group leader (m) April 2000).

The assertation that position-holders have to pay themselves rather than convincing villagers to contribute clearly reminds of when Group leaders failed to recruit as many labourers and soldiers as they should in the 1980s. Villagers' negative attitudes to development activities have also come to include their view of development position-holders. Among these position-holders, then, two men stand out as the by far most active ones. While these two are deeply engaged in their tasks, others who hold or have held a position related to development activities claim to be very reluctant. The main reason in this village is that such positions involve too much – unpaid – work, with several villagers talking about those with a development position as being 'used'. Not even the prospect of getting allowance when going for trainings etc seems to tempt people as it does in Svay Ei. Like there, though, people feel obliged to accept a position if asked. Especially if villagers have elected you, you cannot refuse. And once you have started, you cannot quit until the work is finished.

> Bii [NGO staff] and the Village Chief asked me to be a candidate [for the VDC]. First I refused. I said that I already have two positions and I don't want another one. But they said to me 'just be a candidate, villagers won't vote for you because you already have two positions'. Unfortunately villagers did vote for me (VDC member, member of the NGO committee, Village health worker (f) April 2000).

The only perceived ways to avoid a position are to convince others to not vote for you or to leave the village during elections, which several people claim to have consciously done.

> The others want to quit. They want to escape. But they don't have a choice, because if there's an election, they'll be elected. The only way is to run away during the election. If we remain as candidates, villagers will vote for us (VDC member (m) April 2000).

Like in Svay Ei, this reminds of how people used to run away to avoid recruitment in the 1980s. There are, however, at least two men, both liked and respected, who have quit from former leadership and/or development positions, and who were asked to stand as candidates in the VDC election, but who successfully claimed their right to say no. For one of them, however, his stepson was persuaded to replace a VDC member who had left – before his stepfather could stop it.

> If I had known, I wouldn't have let him. He's easy to use. He's good, but he's stupid, he does what they [the Village Chief and the two leading development people] tell him. They use him for everything. For example, when the Village Chief didn't dare to tell the gamblers to not gamble when you [the research team] are here, he asked my son to tell them instead (Group leader (m) April 2000).

Others who have been selected for a development position have instead apparently simply refrained from fulfilling the tasks. One of the village veterinarians explains

> My name was on the list of candidates [in the VDC election]. But [on the election day] I went to the fields, because I didn't want to [be a VDC member]. Nobody wanted to, but villagers voted, so they had to. (---) I had a position from 1979, so it's easy to use me. But now I let others do it instead of me. (---) I was a village vet too. I gave injections to cows and chickens. But how could I do the job? I didn't get any salary, they only gave me money to buy medicine. In a whole evening, I could only finish three houses, because there were so many chickens. I got no money, and I used my own cigarettes. (---) Let's say that I'm not a village vet any more. If I am, I'll be used (Group leader (m) April 2000).

The pattern of a few being deeply engaged in development activities while others are reluctant to involve has emerged through interplay with the prevailing socio-political roles and climate, and relates to how development intervention is accommodated in village power structures, to which we now turn.

6.3.4 A development elite and a disinterested majority

Unlike in Svay Ei, development intervention in Kompong Loung has created tasks and responsibilities for people largely outside the formal leadership structure. At the time of the research, only three men with a development position also held or had held a leadership position. Two of these have, however, (re)gained undeniable leadership status from their involvement in development activities, with villagers often mentioning one or both of them as leaders along with the Village Chief and the deputy (the returnees mentioning one of them more than the other and more than the Village Chief). These men were both Representatives of Youth until the early 1990s, while one of them was also a Group leader. Now members of the NGO committee as well as the VDC, they are by far the most active and well known development people in the

village, which is confirmed by the Commune Chief, who also regards them as 'second leaders'.

Other development related positions, too, and especially the more important ones, have been concentrated to a small group of people. Apart from the two leading men, one woman is also member of both the NGO committee and the VDC. Four of the (former) village health workers are also members of the VDC, and one of these four also of the NGO committee. When the mental health leaders were selected, three out of the four already held one or several development positions.

Regarding the composition of the VDC, in this province the policy has been to not allow the Village Chief and deputy to be members. Instead, the Village Chief is automatically an 'advisor' to the VDC. There are no clear guidelines for what this advisory role should imply, but in Kompong Loung it apparently works very well with mutual respect and appreciation between village leaders and the main development position-holders, largely depending on the people and personalities involved. Unlike in Svay Ei, the Village Chief is not inclined to expand his influence into other areas, or to use his position to get benefits for himself or his friends. Rather, he is relieved that others are taking responsibility for development activities and also taking over some of his tasks, such as collecting village statistics. The development position-holders, on their side, appreciate and sometimes need the Village Chief's approval and support.

> The Village Chief is like a referee. When there's something that the development team cannot do, we go to the Village Chief. We consider him as an old person who we can get ideas from (VDC member, Village health worker (f) April 2000).

The development position-holders thus keep the Village Chief informed about their activities and he sometimes asks for their assistance. Also, when they need his power of authority behind their words, they get it.

> We never forget about each other. In their work, they come to see me. And when there's work related to the village, I ask the committee. I'm a consultant to the development group. For example, when there is road or canal construction, if it affects villagers' rice land, they need me to facilitate. I ask permission from the landowner. Sometimes, people in the committee ask, but sometimes it's so serious that they need my help. The development committee is under the authorities, so they need the authorities to witness and approve what they do (Village Chief (m) April 2000).

The Village Chief also signs the loans in the NGO credit scheme, and when people do not pay back what they have borrowed, he is the one who announces it on the loudspeakers so that the message can be heard all over the village. The notion of different sorts of leaders dealing with different sorts of tasks is also recognised by villagers.

> If Hieb and Phal [the two leading development people] want to do something, they discuss with each other. Then they ask advice from Reoum [the Village Chief]. Reoum is the biggest in the village, under the commune. They work in different sectors. One side is the village committee, the other side is the *angkaar* committee. The village committee solves conflicts, like rice land conflicts. In the *angkaar* committee, they do their own work (Villager (f) April 2000).

In Kompong Loung, the introduction of development positions and activities, and their encounter with local socio-political institutions and relations, have apparently fed into and consolidated an already fairly solid village leadership structure and given rise to a kind of power balance, division of work and good cooperation.

The two men who have (re)gained status as leaders due to their involvement in development activities may have been chosen in the first place due to their previous roles in the village leadership. Their development related work during the last eight years has, however, strongly added to their capacity and confidence – and to villagers' trust and recognition of them. Though these two men are apparently committed and hard-working, the heavy concentration of development work and responsibility to them may be problematic. While they have gained experience and commitment, the vast majority of Kompong Loung villagers are not involved – and allegedly not interested – in development activities. Other members of the two committees are also far less known and active than the two leading figures. When the VDC was new, all members went for meetings and trainings. Since then and since the first year's canal project, however, there have not been any tangible VDC activities. The two men thus to some extent dominate development work at the expense of others. The concentration of information, initiative and responsibility to them implies an obvious risk that the capacity of others, particularly women, is wasted. Especially one of the four women with a development position is well known and liked among the villagers. And especially another one is allegedly committed and capable to take on more work and responsibility than she has. The two men's dominance apparently hinders these women from gaining more experience and engagement, and from developing leadership skills and recognition.

While the Village Chief has thus retained, or even strengthened, his status, and two men have gained influence, the significance of Group leaders has decreased – which they scarcely regret. As development position-holders help the Village Chief collect population data and call for meetings, and are getting known among villagers for doing so, most of the Group leaders agree that their remaining tasks have ceased. Some of them, however, help with various development activities, such as measuring for the new road construction, not in their capacity as Group leaders but because they are trusted and interested people. Meanwhile, the relatively young and 'modern' *aachaar* may have gained increased recognition due to his commitment to 'development'. As noted, monks and *aachaars* do not enjoy the same respect and do not play the same mobilising role as in Svay Ei, and have thus not been possible to

'use' for mobilisation for development activities as in Svay Ei. This man, however, though he is not a member of either of the development committees (he was not in the village during the elections), is perhaps more knowledgeable about various development activities in the village than anybody else. He also claims to be committed to improving the conditions in the village and willing to work for free, and may thus be creating a role for himself related to development activities.

Socio-economic and socio-political village dynamics, and their interplay with the manifestations of development intervention, are also related to the role and relations of outside authorities, to which we now turn.

6.4 Relations to authorities outside the village

As noted, the role and relations of the commune authorities are crucial in the CARERE/Seila approach, and also part of the local dynamics and of the interplay that emerges with development intervention. Like in the first case study, therefore, prevailing experiences of and expectations on the commune will be described, including its involvement in development activities and villagers' political behaviour.

6.4.1 'I only see him on his motorbike'

> Whatever the higher levels want the Village Chief to do, he has to do. The Group leaders are small, low level. Then it's the Village Chief, then the commune, then the district, then the province – that's big. (---) I don't know what the commune does. I'm low level, I only listen to them. I don't know the new Commune Chief. I knew the old one who ran away, because I used to go to learn. Now I don't go (Group leader (m) November 1999).

In Kompong Loung, as in Svay Ei, villagers are aware of a number of levels of authority above the village, and like there, they usually do not separate the commune from other 'levels'. The ideas of what the authorities do are also vague, with the most common notions of 'sending plans', 'calling for meetings' and 'solving conflicts', and the dominating attitude of waiting for and accepting whatever the local authorities do.

The Commune Chief is less well known personally among villagers than the Commune Chief is in Svay Ei. There have been several changes on the post, and while most villagers know the story of how the previous Commune Chief left with a new wife, they are less familiar with the current one who has been in office since 1997. 'I don't know the Commune Chief's name. I only see him on his motorbike along the road' (Villager (f) January 2000).

Despite this lack of familiarity with the Commune Chief, there is a stronger sense than in Svay Ei that villagers can approach the authorities if needed, for example if they for some reason do not want to contact the village leaders. Thus apparently perceiving the commune authorities as more within reach, more people than in Svay Ei also know where the commune office is. Still, villagers generally state that they

usually have no reason to approach officials outside the village and in practice it is mainly the Village Chief, the deputy and the VDC leader who are in touch with the commune or other authorities. 'Before, the commune called villagers to come for meetings. Now they only call the Village Chief' (Villager (f) January 2000).

The one occasion when people in Kompong Loung do consult the commune is when they, or rather their children, are getting married. Though the Village Chief will bring the issue for them if they ask him, unlike in Svay Ei, most villagers go straight to the commune, and they have not experienced any heavy fees.

> To get a marriage certificate for my child, I asked approval from the Village Chief, the Commune Chief and the district. But it was the man in the commune who took the letter to get the approval from the district. The commune people didn't charge anything, but sometimes villagers give a package of cigarettes to be kind (Villager (f) November 1999).

According to the Commune Chief, divorces should also be approved and signed by commune officials, though that does not always happen. The young woman previously mentioned, who had experienced enduring domestic violence, knew what she was doing when she finally decided to get a divorce. 'I went to the Village Chief, to the commune, and to the district, and got thumbprints, because I don't want any problems in the future' (Villager (f) November 1999). The young and very poor couple, however, who have separated and moved back together several times, usually do not inform the authorities, which, according to the Commune Chief, is problematic.

> When people want a divorce, they come to the commune. But when they want to live together again, they don't tell me. So I don't know and suddenly I'm surprised to hear that they have had another child. (---) I want villagers to know their rights. Before, people who only had a *saen koun*[109] didn't get a marriage certificate. That created problems when they wanted a divorce, since they had no paper confirming the marriage. Now, I've changed this practice. Even those who have a *saen koun*, I ask them to get a marriage certificate so that they can get a proper divorce (Commune Chief (m) November 1999).

Apart from marriages and divorces, as in Svay Ei, the most frequently mentioned reason to see the local authorities is conflict resolution. Villagers also point out, however, that very few cases are actually taken outside the village, mainly because 'the higher you go, the more expensive it gets' – and because the Deputy Village Chief prefers to keep conflict cases within the village where he is the one who benefits.

> Conflicts normally go from village to commune to district and so on. But Kompong Loung is special, no conflicts go to higher levels. The security man

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[109] As noted in 5.2.2, a *saen koun* is a more simple wedding ceremony.

[the Deputy Village Chief] tries to compromise, otherwise he has to go to the commune and then he has no time for private work (Villager (f) January 2000).

Land transactions, too, should be approved by the commune. In practice, however, usually only the Deputy Village Chief signs them, which the Commune Chief claims creates problems.

The commune is informed only about some land transactions. Most people don't inform the commune. Only people who know the law do. Then, there's a problem because they have no land titles and there are conflicts (Commune Chief (m) February 2000).

Commune officials assert to do whatever they can to help with conflicts, but they are aware of their limitations and also allow people to take a case to court if needed.

The commune people are open-minded. We let villagers come with any kind of problems. There's always at least one person in the office to receive complaints from people. (---) Villagers can 'jump', there's no need to see the Village Chief first. They can even go straight to court. (---) The commune can only suggest compromises, set up a contract with the person who has done something wrong, stating that 'in the future, I won't do like this'. (---) If the parties don't agree, the commune has to send the issue to court. We mustn't keep a case in the office more than 15 days (Deputy Commune Chief (m) November 1999).

As noted, there are no major complaints among Kompong Loung villagers about the informal fees at the commune office. The commune officials are also very open about the issue.

I spend my brains and intelligence in the office. But I don't have enough time to work as a farmer and I cannot go outside to do business. The Commune Chief earns 30,000 riel (US$ 8) a month and the deputy earns 20,000 riel. But sometimes we don't get the salary on the 30th, but two or three months later. So how can commune people survive? When people come to get a marriage certificate, or to move out, or to transfer land, they always pay something, maybe 10,000 riel or 100 baht. There's no rule, and they are not asked to pay, they just give some money. We take some for private spending and keep some for office supplies. I see what we need in the shelves, someone doesn't have cigarettes, the Commune Chief needs fuel for his motorbike… People get their certificates even without payment. But recently there was a man from the US; we know that he's got money, so we asked him to pay a truck full of gravel (Deputy Commune Chief (m) November 1999).

At higher levels, though, the fees become a problem, which is confirmed by the Deputy Commune Chief. 'To bring a case to court, people need to pay, not official

fees, but both sides have to pay to people at the court' (Deputy Commune Chief (m) November 1999). The general perception among villagers is that 'the higher you go, the more you'll have to pay'. This is illustrated by the following case, which involves intensive and prolonged negotiations about compensation, where the decisive reason to accept a lower compensation is that continuing to higher levels would imply higher costs.

A boy from the village was riding his motorbike and hit a boy from a neighbouring commune in another district so badly that his leg was broken. The injured boy's parents brought a complaint in their commune, and all those involved were called. Vuen, who is a friend of the family of the boy who had been riding the bicycle, also helped since the boy's father was away. It took them three days to come to an agreement
– That was an appropriate time, Vuen says. If they had continued, it would have cost more.
    The first day, the victim's side demanded 80,000 baht (8 million riel; US$ 2,100) in compensation. But Vuen claimed that was far too much – even if they saved for the rest of their lives, they would not be able to get that much money. They could only pay only 10,000 baht, they said. After all it was only a broken leg and 10,000 baht would be enough to cure it. So, the victim's side reduced their claim to 65,000 baht, but Vuen still refused and asked them to go home and think about it.
    The next claim was 25,000 baht, but the others maintained that they could not pay more than 10,000. So, the victim's side tried with 15,000 baht.
– I again insisted on 10,000 and added that if they didn't agree but wanted to bring the complaint to higher levels, like the district or the province, they would get even less, because we would have to spend a lot of money, and only pay them what remained.
    When the victim's side heard this, they agreed on 10,000 baht.
– They were afraid that they would lose money, Vuen says. If they had gone to higher levels, they would have got only 2,000 or 3,000 baht.

Land conflicts are apparently more common in Kompong Loung than in Svay Ei. An example is a case of neighbours who accused their Group leader of using their communal rice land for private use and claimed it back. It illustrates how villagers first hesitated to bring a complaint, and how then one person mobilised most of them, while others were scared off from participating. It also illustrates the expectation that you need money to win, but that in fact the group members reached a result that they were happy with without paying.

In the 1980s, the Village Chief allocated land to each of the nine groups in the village to use communally. Nary, the woman who later came to lead the protest against their Group leader, claims that they never jointly cultivated the land and that the Group leader soon started using it for himself.
    For many years, the eleven group members kept observing the Group leader. They are not clear about what actually happened to the land at different times. The leader might have swapped the 2.5 hectares to 1.8

hectares at a different place, he might have sold some and maybe rented it back, and he might have given some to his two children as they got married.[110] In 1998, when the group members heard that he had sold some of the land, they wanted to protest, but did initially not dare to.

– I was not afraid, Nary says. I went straight to the Group leader and asked him who controls the communal land. He said that he didn't know, that it depends on the Village Chief, that he had handed over the land to him.

As they stood there, the Village Chief came by, so Nary asked him, and he also claimed to not know.

– It seemed like the Village Chief had a stake in it. Then, the Group leader said something to try to hurt me. He said 'if you don't agree, bring a complaint'. He thought that, as he has money, he would get away with it.

The same day, Nary convinced all the group members to bring a complaint to the commune.

– First I said 'the complaint is not correct, please do it again', the Commune Chief recalls. Then they came back with the correct sheets, complaints and thumbprints.

The Group leader and the Village Chief were called to the commune.

– Then other Group leaders and villagers asked me not to do it, Nary says. They said that I don't have any money for bribes, but that the Group leader does. They tried to persuade all members not to go, but only three listened.

So, the following day eight group members, the Group leader and the Village Chief went to the commune.

– I asked the Village Chief to tell the story about the communal land, the Commune Chief says. And he told it very well.

The group members did not demand any compensation for the years that the Group leader had been using the rice land for himself, they just wanted the land back. The Commune Chief on his side thinks that the Group leader is a good man since he had not sold the rice land as other Group leaders have, and he therefore suggested that the eight families should get one hectare of the land and the Group leader the remaining 0.8 hectare.

– First, the Group leader didn't agree and we kept talking for hours, Nary says. I tried to think of something threatening, and said that if the Commune Chief couldn't solve it, I'd ask him to write a complaint to the district. If the Group leader didn't agree, I'd demand a lot of money. The Commune Chief also kept explaining that he couldn't get all, that communal land is for all the members. He kept begging him 'please…' The Group leader was alone, the members were many. So, finally he agreed to give the communal land back.

The members also made a contract with the Group leader in the commune office, stating that if anyone of them faces a problem or danger, the Group leader will be held responsible. The eight members are happy with the settlement and are now waiting to sell the land and share the money.

– We didn't pay anything to the Commune Chief, he's got his salary, Nary says. I don't know if the Group leader gave him any money.

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[110] Giving the group's communal rice land to newly established families within the group was a common way of distributing land when communal rice farming was abandoned.

Overall, this case points to well-working procedures at commune level with no requirement of payment for services, as opposed to the neighbouring commune where the previous case of the motorcycle accident was handled. Yet another conflict case illustrates how villagers in Kompong Loung take what seems like a minor conflict between neighbours to the village leaders and on to the local authorities, how seriously it is dealt with, and how the parties negotiate and agree on compensation.

> Wii, who comes to stay with different people in Kompong Loung every now and then, is widely regarded as a thief. When another woman, Laa, urged and warned her 'please don't steal from us. There are people from the province who want to arrest you', Wii got upset and told Vireak whom she was currently staying with. Vireak also got angry and scolded Laa for accusing Wii of being a thief. Soon there was a big quarrel and afterwards, Laa brought a complaint against Vireak to the Deputy Village Chief, who called Vireak to his house.
>
> – Through my observation and listening, I understood that Vireak had been scolding Laa first, the Deputy Village Chief says.
>
>   Laa asked for compensation, but Vireak did not agree to pay and when the Deputy Village Chief tried to persuade him, Vireak scolded him for being stupid and not knowing the law.
>
> – Then I told him to go home and that 'from now on, we don't have any contact', the Deputy Village Chief says. 'You didn't listen to me, so now if you have a problem, you cannot count on any help from here.'
>
>   Laa still wanted compensation, though, and asked the Deputy Village Chief to take the case to the commune. The Deputy Village Chief wrote a letter, Laa put her thumbprint on it and went to the commune office where she also reported verbally.
>
> – Laa should have won the case in the commune, the Deputy Village Chief says. But maybe Vireak had paid some money because the two seemed to be even. So I asked the commune to 'please, work correctly'.
>
>   The Commune Chief went to the village to look for witnesses and find out what had happened. Then Vireak and Laa were called to the commune one by one, then together, and then with three witnesses. This time Laa asked for much higher compensation, because Vireak had not agreed to pay in the village.
>
> – The Commune Chief suggested that she should not ask for any compensation at all, since they live in the same village and need to be good neighbours, the Deputy Village Chief says.
>
>   But Laa insisted and Vireak asked to pay less than what she demanded, so the Commune Chief helped them agree on an amount.

Despite the above examples, most villagers, as noted, never approach the authorities outside the village. However, they often see the Commune Chief on his motorbike on his way to the Village Chief or the VDC leader. The returnees have had more contact than the old villagers with the commune and higher authorities, and are actually more familiar with the Commune Chief than with the Village Chief. This reflects the fact that the Village Chief has never taken any strong interest in the returnees in the 'new'

village, while the new Commune Chief is very concerned about them and has been trying to get rice land for them. Meanwhile, he does not have much pity with those among the old villagers who have sold the land that they received in the early 1980s.

Two district and province officials are residents in Kompong Loung, one is Head of the district soldiers, one works for the provincial police. Apart from them, however, officials from levels above the commune are less seen and known than in Svay Ei. 'Sometimes there's a letter from them, and sometimes they come here. I don't know who they are, people from higher levels. It's Mr This and Mr That' (Villager (f) November 1999). Local officials are also less known than in the past, which villagers explain with changes in the political system.

> In the past, people got regular training. Even small children knew the Commune Chief and the District Chief. Now it's democracy, so people don't know the leaders (Villager (m) Village feedback group, February 2000).

Like in Svay Ei, however, the general attitude among villagers is to not object to instructions from officials.

> When district people came to ask villagers to give up some of their land for the returnees, villagers said yes, because they thought that they couldn't say no to the district. They were scared (Deputy Village Chief (m) November 1999).

Also reminding of Svay Ei, district medical staff sometimes comes to Kompong Loung to hand out medicine and vaccinate children, and policemen come to issue family cards and collect various unofficial fees. Villagers give varying reports on family books and cards, claiming to have obtained them at different occasions and paid different fees. People are not sure what the cards are for, but do not want to risk being without them.

> I don't know why they need family cards. But what the Village Chief asks villagers to do, villagers follow, because the Village Chief was told by the commune or the district (Villager (f) January 2000).

As in Svay Ei, the cost is assumed to increase the longer you wait. 'The commune police went from house to house, and increased the price. I paid 8,000 for the family card, it had been 5,000 for those who paid at once' (Villager (f) January 2000). Villagers also expect the authorities to keep introducing new cards.

> When I got the book and the card, I was told that it would be valid for ten years, but I think that it can be used only for two or three years. Then it will be changed as the previous ones (Villager (m) January 2000).

Though the returnees generally paid much less than the old villagers for their family cards, they share largely the same perceptions. Moreover, they are disappointed with the local authorities and feel cheated, as they had the impression that once they had a family card they would receive rice land.

> The commune police came, Reoum and Leum [Village Chief and deputy] called people to the meeting place, and there, villagers were told that they need family cards. I don't know what they are for. But to be sure, we got both [family book and the yellow card]. At that time, I had money from making mats. We do whatever they ask us to do, and just keep it [the documents] because we live under their order. Those who couldn't pay the first time would have to pay more next time, maybe twice as much. Some still don't have a family card. They said that those who have a family book will get land, but we haven't got anything (Villager, returnee (m) January 2000).

With more business related relations than in Svay Ei, there are also more informal fees in which local authorities are partly involved. The only person in Kompong Loung who pays regular tax is the video shop owner. Other shop owners, however, pay a daily fee to the market owner in the commune who comes – or sends two friends of his – sometimes every day, sometimes just once a week. Everybody knows about this and usually nobody objects. 'The shop owners pay 100 riel a day. It's a daily fee to big people. In the past, only sellers at the market had to pay' (Villager (f) Small group of villagers, January 2000). As seen, Kompong Loung has turned into something of a gambling centre, and district people also come to collect informal fees from the gamblers.

> Villagers who organise gambling pay 10,000 riel to the police every year. The police also come to get a chicken or some other gifts or maybe 5,000 riel from the gamblers (Villager (m) January 2000).

The Village Chief on his side, and as opposed to the Svay Ei Village Chief, is very familiar with the Commune Chief who he sees frequently both in the village and at commune meetings, which he seldom misses. If he cannot go, the VDC leader usually goes instead, while the Deputy Village Chief, who, as noted, is also an *aachaar*, sees the commune mainly regarding issues related to the pagoda. The Village Chief, however, rarely approaches any authorities above the commune, and in relation to them he is loyal and dutiful, but not very knowledgeable or outspoken.

> I live under the higher level authority. I go to the commune to receive plans. (---) I met the previous Governor quite often. He came to the commune or the district to teach villagers to build roads etc, or to provide gifts to victims. Now, he's in a different province. I've forgotten the name of the new one. He never comes [to the village]. There are no gifts for victims (Village Chief (m) November 1999).

Commune officials are thus perceived as more approachable and reliable in Kompong Loung than in the first case study area. Like there, however, their conduct is also perceived as quite unpredictable and the approach is to follow their instructions without objections.

6.4.2 The commune not perceived as a major actor in 'development'

In the Kompong Loung case, the Commune Chief apparently takes the commune's newly assigned role in development seriously. Working hard together with a few other officials, he says that he wants villagers to know their rights and sees it as the commune's role to improve their living. Other commune officials, too, assert that the commune's role is considerably different from before, and that they are very busy with development, especially since Seila started.

> In the past we had to recruit labour force. Now, there's no war and we just
> need to think of how to make the commune prosper. We make people not
> worry, not be scared (Deputy Commune Chief (m) November 1999).

As in Svay Ei, however, Kompong Loung villagers do not perceive the commune authorities as major development actors. As noted, the Commune Chief frequently comes to see the Village Chief and the VDC leader. He has also participated in Aphiwat Strei's celebration of International Women's Day the last few years. Though these visits may make villagers associate the commune with development activities, they generally do not know what role the commune has in the funding, decision-making and implementation of such activities. They also still perceive the commune as mainly dealing with other issues, such as marriage certificates and conflict resolution. Meanwhile, Kompong Loung villagers associate development activities mainly with *angkaar*, and are more familiar with a few NGO staff than with the commune officials. Villagers are also not aware of the existence of a Commune Development Committee (CDC), which was confirmed by the Village feedback group, largely consisting of the most knowledgeable villagers, who were all surprised to hear about such a committee.

> Even me, I didn't know that there's a Commune Development Committee.
> Only Hieb and Phal [the two leading development people] know. I only know
> the Commune Chief (Villager (m) Village feedback group, April 2000).

Most VDC members, too, have vague ideas of the development structure, and since the initial contacts and activities when they all went for trainings, they have very scarce contacts with commune authorities.

> The Commune Chief comes to the village when there's a plan and they need
> to have a meeting to tell villagers. He also comes to see the canal
> construction and the culverts. I've never had any contact with the commune
> apart from when I went to learn when the VDC was new. Since then, Hieb
> [the VDC leader] and the Village Chief often go for meetings (VDC member,

Village health worker, Mental health trainer, Red Cross volunteer (f) April 2000).

This woman, who is one of three special women representatives on the CDC (see below), is very knowledgeable on a range of issues. When it comes to the commune, however, she is uncertain.

> I know that there's a Commune Development Committee, but I don't know who's in it. (---) I'm a normal member, so I have no important tasks. When someone comes from Phnom Penh, I just go to welcome them. (---) I don't know about the male members, but the female members have no work to do. Maybe the Commune Development [Committee] is for having men and women together (VDC member, Village health worker, Mental health leader, Red Cross volunteer (f) April 2000).

As indicated, the general perception is that mainly the Village Chief and the VDC leader are in touch with commune officials. This is confirmed by the VDC leader, who claims that while other VDC members lack the courage to approach the commune officials, he sometimes just drops by at the commune office in order to maintain his good relations.

> I just sit and have a chat with him. It's unofficial, I just go to talk to him. Sometimes when I go to learn, I go to see him before office hours. Sometimes I go by bike to talk to him, to persuade him to ask for funds from World Food Programme. I try to please him in order to make him ask again. I have a chat with him and say 'please help the villagers'. I don't know if it helps. (---) I didn't meet the previous Commune Chief often. I had a position already, but I only went there when I was called. Now I can go any time, morning, evening… (---) The other members know him, but they are not brave enough to approach him (VDC leader, member of the NGO committee (m) April 2000).

While he has thus developed close contacts with the Commune Chief, even this leading development figure is not sure about the composition and role of the Commune Development Committee (CDC) or the allocation of development resources. According to a chart on the wall in the commune office, Kompong Loung has three CDC members – the Village Chief, the VDC leader and the female VDC member quoted above. At the time of the research, the idea was that the commune's Local Development Fund (LDF) was to be allocated between suggested village and commune projects, according to a number of criteria, where all CDC members should have a say. What the VDC leader and other CDC members have perceived, however, is that CARERE/Seila staff made some calculations on the whiteboard and came up with a 'result'.

The first year, the whole commune got money and it was shared between the villages. Who got more and who got less depended on the population. Later on, they decided according to the number. I also agreed with them, because it was correct. (---) They made judgements, used certain criteria, and other villages received funds. The third year, they also had criteria, made judgements, and other villages received it again. (---) The facilitators decide, but it depends on the numbers (VDC leader, member of the NGO committee (m) April 2000).

A similar sense of subordination goes also for the Commune Chief. While, as noted, he is committed to the commune's role in development and in 'protecting' the population, he feels constrained by district and province authorities that he claims act against villagers' interests in many cases.

Now the commune doesn't have the right to do anything. We live under the district. (---) The commune has no way to contact the government. One reason is that the commune has no money. A second reason is that they've never had any contact with the government. I'm afraid that higher levels don't pay attention. I'm only low level, they rarely pay attention to us (Commune Chief (m) November 1999 and February 2000).

Among the issues that the Commune Chief wants to do something about are the gambling in Kompong Loung and the informal fees that shop owners pay. Again, however, he finds himself powerless in the authority structure, claiming that the commune cannot do anything since higher levels are involved.

The market owner has bought [rents] the market from the district. He pays 5 million riel (US\$ 1,300) per year. But the commune never gets… the district just gives 500,000 riel for two years. (---) The market owner should not take daily fees from the shop owners. It's not legal. I called the market owner, and told him that he shouldn't charge any daily fees. But he didn't listen. I tell the villagers 'if he asks for 200 riel, give him only 100'. If it becomes the commune's responsibility, we'll reduce the price to 4 million because it's hard for villagers to pay. But now, I cannot do anything because the commune is under the district, and the district supports the market owner. They shouldn't love money more than people. (---) I don't want people to gamble. But I cannot do anything, I cannot stop it. Only when I have a meeting, I ask people to stop or reduce the gambling. It's not my fault. It's the fault of higher levels, it starts from the province. There's a lottery at the market, and the lottery owner uses telecom to spread the results. (---) During the 1980s, officials could steal chickens etc. Now, people know about their rights, they won't let anyone steal from them. But when police or higher level people come to arrest the gamblers, people say 'Please, take this…' (Commune Chief (m) February 2000).

While a group of commune officials are thus allegedly trying to shoulder the commune's assumed role in development, they feel constrained by higher level

authorities. Meanwhile, their alleged commitment and hard work are also counteracted by villagers' experiences that do not make them perceive the commune as a major development actor.

6.4.3 Villagers demanding their fishing rights

Villagers' habit of following local authorities' instructions without questioning does not make them expect influence on development decisions. As noted, however, though most people in Kompong Loung usually see no reason to approach the local authorities, they are reasonably prepared to go if needed, which is confirmed by massive protests during the time of the research against perceived violations of the population's fishing rights among villagers from Kompong Loung and neighbouring villages. The protests included petitions to various levels of authorities and NGOs as well as a demonstration where hundreds of people participated and a man from a different village was injured by the police. As villagers point out, this would scarcely have happened ten or even five years ago.

> In the past, people feared the authorities. Now, people are aware of their rights. It's democracy and people are brave enough to make complaints, to put their thumbprints (Villager (m) Village feedback group, February 2000).

This case of protest – where villagers, the Commune Chief and a local NGO all claim that the initiative came completely from villagers – illustrates that those who did not know where to bring their complaints would probably have stopped or failed if there had not been others, with contacts and knowledge about higher instances, who helped and encouraged them. It also shows that once those leading persons were there, it was not difficult to get other villagers to participate, whether they had a direct personal interest in the issue or not.

> Apart from rice farming, fishing is among the most important incomes in Kompong Loung. For decades, businessmen have paid for the exclusive right to fish in a few nearby lakes. This was not a problem as long as there were other places where villagers could fish, they could fish when the businessmen had finished for the season, and they could fish in secret. The problem emerged as the allotted area gradually expanded and the businessmen hired armed guards to stop villagers from going there at any time of the year. It affected villagers in the whole commune and other parts of the district, and when the research team first discussed the issue with a group of Kompong Loung villagers in November 1999, they saw no way out.
> – We don't have the right to fish in the lakes any more because they've sold the lakes to a man in another village. If we try, they'll shoot us. They are big people.
>   Villagers were not certain who had actually sold the fishing rights, but most blamed the district authorities, who were claimed to be in league with the businessmen. Some of the armed guards had also said that it was the district authorities that had asked them to guard the lakes.

As access to the lakes got increasingly restricted, people got increasingly upset. At first they kept quiet and kept trying to go fishing. But the guards took their nets and threatened them with their guns. The first protests came from a neighbouring village, more than three times as big as Kompong Loung and with higher living standards. It is however also nearer the lakes and people are even more dependent on fishing. A man from there therefore wrote a petition and brought to the province.

In Kompong Loung, Dara was one of those who gradually got involved in the protests.

– I also wanted to make a complaint, he says. But I didn't know what to do, and we were not sure that the higher levels would listen. In the other village, people have relatives at the provincial court, so they know the way. Kompong Loung villagers learned from them.

Dara wrote a complaint but, as he did not know where to take it and was a bit scared, he kept it at home. Then two people from the neighbouring village came to see him and the Village Chief.

– They asked the Village Chief, too, to write a complaint. But he's not educated so he asked me to do it. And they told me to go straight to the province.

Dara collected money for paper and pens from those who used to go fishing, he wrote the letter, he asked villagers to put their thumbprints on it – almost all agreed, also those who did not go fishing – and he took it to the provincial authorities. He then kept writing letters, collecting thumbprints and taking them to the authorities and to human rights organisations.

People in the village from where the initiative had come remained most active, going to the district and the province over and over again. In all, many hundreds of villagers from the whole district put their thumbprints on petitions demanding their fishing rights back. The Commune Chief emphasises that all of the initiative came from villagers. They just asked the commune for advice on how to proceed.

– I encouraged them and said that they should bring a complaint to get the lakes back. Otherwise, in the future their children won't have anywhere to fish. But the idea came from the villagers.

A local NGO also encouraged villagers to write complaints, and one of their employees went with Dara when he brought his letter to some human rights organisations. That support however came after the villagers had initiated the protests, and it was not crucial.

– Without their support, people would still have made the complaints, Dara says.

Nothing seemed to happen, though, and in mid-November, the Commune Chief predicted what would follow.

– Villagers don't want to remain silent. If they stay at home they will die, if they go to fish they may die. When they brought complaints, higher levels didn't pay attention, but if there's violence, they will.

Again, it was the man from the neighbouring village who took the lead in what turned into a massive demonstration. One morning in January 2000, between 200 and 300 villagers went to fish in the deepest and best of the lakes. From Kompong Loung three men participated. Nak was one of them.

– I heard that people were planning to go there. As we met at the rice fields, the message spread from one person to another. I thought that if we don't go

now, next year the lakes will be sold again. If people don't protest, the state will continue to sell the rights year after year.

The villagers walked together to the fishing lake, arrived at eight o'clock in the morning and started fishing. Two hours later, the man from the other village was injured by the police and had to be carried from the place. Two guards at the lake had first told the villagers to stop fishing, but when they didn't, four policemen were called to the place. They took the villagers' nets and when the initiator of the protest asked them not to, one of the policemen shot him in the foot.

At eleven o'clock, the demonstrators were all back at the place where they had gathered. People from the district were there, as were people from human rights organisations. According to Nak, the district people pretended to support the villagers.

– But villagers know that the District Chief supports the businessmen. So they stood up and scolded him. And left.

The following days, villagers continued fishing together. Five days after the demonstration, His Excellency Sar Keng (Deputy Prime Minister, Minister of Interior) who was in the province to close a workshop, came to a neighbouring commune to talk to people from the whole district about the fishing conflict. From Kompong Loung, the Village Chief and the deputy were invited.

– The officials say that they have to sell the fishing rights, that they use the money to develop the country, the Deputy Village Chief says. That's what Sar Keng told the villagers. But big people have to think about villagers' lives. If we cannot fish, how can we make a living?

A month later, the conflict was not yet formally solved, as it had not been decided which lake belongs to whom. But since the demonstration, there had not been any armed guards, and nobody had stopped anyone from fishing. As in the past, there were only four or five lakes that villagers did not have access to.

– It was good that we did it, Nak says. Otherwise we'd still not have access to the lakes. But I'm afraid that the businessmen have just given up this year, and that next year, there will be some tricks. Because businessmen have money.

Neither these protests nor the issue of fishing are obviously related to development intervention. The protests, however, go well in line with the CARERE/Seila ambition of empowerment and villagers' political involvement and it is reasonable to believe that development intervention, through its interplay with socio-economic and socio-political dynamics, has contributed to making the protests possible, mainly through exposure to and increased familiarity with the local authorities.

To sum up the findings from the second case study: With a wider array of development activities by a wider range of actors over a longer time, development intervention is a more established part of the picture than in the first case study village.

Through interplay with a fairly negative social climate, including previous experiences of development intervention, recent manifestations have fed into a sense of disillusionment and fatigue. Due to widely held perceptions of repeatedly broken

promises, villagers do allegedly not expect much positive from development agencies. However, frequent experiences of payment for unskilled labour have made many count on regular instances of waged work in connection to development activities – and be further disillusioned when that is not realised.

Like in the first case study village, villagers understand 'development' as the tangible activities that development agencies initiate, and like there they do not expect any influence on such activities. While disillusionment and fatigue, however, make villagers less concerned to follow various agencies' different rules and requirements, the lack of functional community mobilising makes it further difficult to motivate villagers to participate.

Such lack of motivation and participation points to a socio-political division within the village that development intervention has contributed to. While the majority of villagers are not involved, and allegedly not interested, a couple of men are deeply engaged in development activities and cooperate well with the village leadership, which has thereby been consolidated. Meanwhile, development intervention has not directly affected villagers' attitudes and approaches to the authorities outside the village, and has not created any sense of the commune being responsible for development activities. Possibly, however, development intervention may, through increased exposure to the local authorities, have contributed to the massive protests against the perceived violations of villagers' right to fish.

7. EMPIRICAL FINDINGS: ROUMDOL

7.1 Some basic facts on the case study village

The third case study site is a highland village that differs more from the two lowland ones than they do between them, in terms of for example location, livelihood systems and relations to the state, and of recent changes on these and other issues. These differences will be noted throughout the case study. To start with, in the following presentation of population, history, livelihood and access to services, natural resource management forms a more significant part than in the lowland cases.

7.1.1 Location, population and living standards[111]

Roumdol is one of the four villages in the commune, in a district with nine communes. The district centre is located on the southern bank of a river, about 40 kilometres, or an hour's drive on a good road, north-west of the provincial town in the Cambodian north-eastern highlands.

The commune stretches from the northern bank of the river about 40 kilometres northward to the Lao border, thus covering parts of a national park. Two villages are located on each side of the Srolauv tributary of the river. Roumdol is the most remote of these villages, not far from Da and Srolauv villages but with O Srolauv in between, and several kilometres on a narrow footpath north of Prek Kroch village. The path on the Da/Srolauv side of O Srolauv is better and since early 2000 passable by motorbike.[112] To get to the district centre and market, Roumdol villagers walk just over an hour on either side of O Srolauv and then cross the river, which costs them a few hundred riel.[113] On the northern bank of the river, across from the district centre, is what villagers in the commune call the 'Chinese village', inhabited by ethnic Chinese and with a small shop in almost every house.

In Roumdol as well as in the commune as a whole, about 90 per cent of the population is ethnic Kavet. Kavet people also inhabit a village in the neighbouring

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[111] Data are taken from Village Data Books, Commune Inventories and interviews with villagers. The Commune Inventories, held by the PRDC Secretariat, contain data collected by commune officials after instructions from Seila/CARERE staff. Population statistics from the 1998 and 1999 Commune Inventories have been compared with figures from the 1998 national census and found to not deviate much.

[112] Though nobody in the commune owns a motorbike and very few own a bicycle, this makes the two villages on that side of the river more accessible for people from the district town and further away. A number of businessmen come to Da and Srolauv villages every day to buy commodities from the villagers, while others come 'to have a look'.

[113] During most of the year, it is also possible to go by motorboat on O Srolauv, which takes about an hour upstream from the district town to Roumdol. The fuel for a return trip, however, costs about 10,000 riel and we heard of only two people in the commune who have a motorboat.

commune as well as six villages in a neighbouring province, while the largest Kavet population lives in Laos. The largest ethnic group in the district is the lowland Lao, who constitute 41 per cent of the population and completely dominate the district administration (see 7.4). The Kavet is the second largest group with 21 per cent, concentrated to the five villages, followed by the Kreung with 17 per cent. Brou, Kachok and Tampuen constitute between four and seven per cent each, while the Chinese, concentrated to the one village across from the district market, make up two per cent of the district's population. There are also scattered families or individuals of Khmer, Jarai, Lun, Vietnamese and Cham.

In 1999, there were almost 1,400 people in the commune and more than 14,300 in the district. The district population had then increased by almost ten per cent since the previous year, while the population in the commune had increased by a mere two per cent and remained the same in Roumdol. Roumdol is the smallest of the four villages in the commune, inhabited by just under 200 people composing 27 larger families, who during parts of the year divide into smaller households. According to the Commune Chief, 44 households belong to Roumdol, four of which are living far away from the current village site (interview 14/10 2000). The village is stretched out over a large area with most households having three separate houses – one at the *chamkar*,[114] one at the paddy[115] field and one in the 'development village' (in many cases together with another household forming one larger family, see 7.3.1). Though there are differences within the village, material living standards in Roumdol are well below those in the lowland case study villages. Most houses are smaller and of poorer quality, there are no latrines, no TVs, very few radios, and only two bicycles.

7.1.2 History

The history of the commune is characterised by repeated moves between the upland forest areas, the river and different places along O Srolauv. Most of these moves have implied thorough changes in livelihood systems and natural resource use. Roumdol village originated in the mountainous bamboo forests near the Lao border, where people made a living from swidden cultivation on *chamkars*, which they changed every two years. In the 1950s, as a result of the Sihanouk government policies aimed at bringing the highland population into the mainstream society, the regime resettled villagers at the river, partly motivated by an urge to provide them with education (Baird 1996: 12). Then, as Khmer Rouge insurgents took control of the area and

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[114] *Chamkar* is a Khmer word, which in lowland Cambodia implies land that is used for cultivating other crops than wetland rice, such as vegetables and fruit. In highland areas, however, *chamkar* is the most important agriculture land, where people grow highland rice along with a wide range of other crops through swidden cultivation. Here, another Khmer word – *soen* – is used for garden cultivation of vegetables and fruit.

[115] 'Paddy' is the term commonly used for the kind of wetland rice cultivation that is completely dominating in lowland Cambodia.

during the American bombings in the early 1970s, people returned to the upland forest areas. At the onset of the Khmer Rouge regime, many indigenous people managed to flee to Laos and Vietnam, but the Kavet in the commune did not. Instead, they were called down to the river again, now to grow paddy rice for the first time. As Vietnamese troops dispelled the Khmer Rouge in 1979, Kavet people fled back to the forest areas together with the Khmer Rouge soldiers. There, as they had to keep fleeing from Vietnamese soldiers, they suffered great hardships. So, during the first half of the 1980s, and with the consent of the Khmer Rouge soldiers, most of the civilians gradually gave themselves up to the state authorities and were settled at the river. The authorities continued to bring people down, and the Commune Chief, who at that time was Deputy Commune Chief, proudly tells how he brought the last families down in 1987. By 1989, as the Kavet could not do swidden cultivation and not make a living by the river, they asked for permission to return to the mountainous bamboo forest. As a compromise, they were allowed to settle along the lower O Srolauv close to the current village locations. Gradually clearing new and better *chamkars*, however, they kept moving further north. The above-mentioned Deputy Commune Chief was then among the first who returned southward and settled at the current Srolauv location, where he started to grow paddy rice, fruit and vegetables, also encouraging others to do so as the local NGO Non-Timber Forest Products (NTFP) provided seeds to Srolauv and Da villagers (see 7.3.1). At that time, no Roumdol villagers were living at the current location and nobody was growing paddy rice.

In 1996, the most recent shift of locations started as CARERE/Seila provided funds for buffaloes to be used for paddy cultivation in Roumdol and Prek Kroch villages. The following year, Srolauv and Da were included and buffaloes provided in all four villages. As paddy rice cannot be cultivated where Roumdol villagers had been living, by mid-1998 most of them had moved down to the current site at the lower O Srolauv.[116] This implied a move of about eight kilometres, or almost a day's walk, southward from O Kaung, which is a tributary to O Srolauv, where they had been doing *chamkar* cultivation for a couple of years, living in two groups on either side of the stream. At the current location, which is close to where they were allowed to settle in 1989 before they started drifting northward, there is now a village hall and a house for every larger family, situated in two straight lines on both sides of a path along O Srolauv, in what is called the 'development village' (see 7.3.1). As noted, every household also has a house at their *chamkar* within an hour's walk from the village site, and almost every household has a house at their paddy field a bit closer. Two

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[116] This shift of locations is a debated issue within the 'development community' in the province and a somewhat sensitive issue among Roumdol villagers. There are different opinions on to what extent villagers felt forced and/or urged to move, and to what extent they would be allowed to move back.

families have continued to do *chamkar* at O Kaung, though they also have a village plot and paddy fields at the current village location.

7.1.3 Resources and livelihood

Like other highland people in the province, Roumdol villagers are directly reliant on the key resources of land, forest and water for their livelihood. As with several of the previous shifts of locations, the most recent one has implied thorough changes in people's livelihood systems and use of natural resources.

Agriculture is Roumdol villagers' main means of livelihood, and the latest move caused a change in the modes of agriculture. Moving from O Kaung to the current location, Roumdol villagers shifted from sole *chamkar* cultivation to a mixture of *chamkar*, paddy, village plots and gardens (*soen*). At O Kaung, villagers say, *chamkars* were bigger, people grew a wider range of vegetables and other crops apart from rice, and the yields were higher. At the current location, *chamkars* are smaller and less fertile because they are more difficult to clear and keep cleared due to a kind of tough grass that has to be continuously cut. 'I don't know why, but there I only cleared a small *chamkar* but got a higher yield than here. There wasn't so much grass' (VDC member (f) November 2000).

At both places, the same *chamkar* can be used for two years. After that, at O Kaung, people cleared another plot and left the old one fallow. In the bamboo forest further north, this was an ecologically sustainable system as bamboo regenerates quickly. After five or six years, people could use their old *chamkars* again and did thus not need to clear primary forest. At O Kaung, however, it has been pointed out that the rotational system was not ecologically sustainable since the *chamkar* area kept expanding into a mature forest as more relatively old forest was cleared than what was allowed to recover (Page 1999: 19). It is beyond the scope of this study to determine the sustainability of various cultivation systems at various places. Roumdol villagers' perception, however, is that at O Kaung there was enough land to be cleared. Saying this, they may also take into account the option of moving further north, as they did before reaching O Kaung. At the current location, on the other hand, people think that there will soon not be enough land for *chamkar* cultivation. Some have selected a plot that they expect to clear next year, while others claim that there is already no land available. As people intend to use their current *chamkars* for crops like chilli, vegetables, fruit and cashew even when they cannot grow rice on them any more, it is unlikely that there will be any continuous rotational swidden cultivation at the current location.

Regarding land for paddy cultivation, all but four families in Roumdol have been allotted some land, in most cases between half and one hectare, and people say that there is more land available for those who could clear it. Among the four families that do not have any paddy land, at least one claims that there is no land available for them. This family is however one of the better off ones in the village, apparently doing fairly well with their *chamkar* and garden cultivation. All but three families also have access

to at least one buffalo, which is needed for paddy cultivation (see 7.3.2). However, most people do not cultivate all of their allotted paddy land, since they have not been able to clear it or have concluded that it is not worth the effort. Especially for families/households with no male labour force, it is difficult to clear land for paddy cultivation, and during the three years that Roumdol villagers have at all been cultivating paddy (apart from during the Khmer Rouge regime), yields have been very low. This can be partly explained by the fact that it generally takes a few years before land retains sufficient water for paddy cultivation, while people may also lack the necessary experience or equipment.

Each of the 27 larger families in Roumdol has a 20 by 30 metres plot at the site where the village hall is situated, and many also have garden plots at different places. In most of the village plots, a range of fruit trees and plants have been planted, such as jackfruit, guava, mango, tamarind and pineapple. Nobody has got any fruit yield yet, however, apart from bananas. At O Kaung, too, people widely grew bananas and a few families grew mango and guava. On their current garden plots, people grow for example cucumber and cabbage as they have received seeds from the local NGO NTFP, but they also happily talk about the big cucumbers that they used to grow at their *chamkars* at O Kaung. A few families have planted cashew trees at their *chamkars* or garden plots. However, nobody has got any yield yet, buffaloes have eaten some of the trees and the Commune Chief recently lost 100 trees in the neighbouring village due to floods.

At O Kaung, rice, vegetables and fruit that people grew were primarily for eating, but people claim that they usually had enough rice and vegetables also to sell. At the current location, rice yields have been far below subsistence – many people expect to have enough rice only for a few months – so rather than selling, people try to buy rice (in addition to receiving it from food-for-work projects and food distribution, see 7.3.3). Some people, however, sell vegetables in small amounts.

The lack of suitable agriculture land at the current location thus stops people from cultivating as much rice, vegetables and fruit as they would need to make a living. There is land available along the lower O Srolauv, but floods have destroyed people's crops there the last two years and can be expected to do so again. Another problem that people frequently mention is that animals – buffaloes and domestic pigs as well as wild pigs and porcupines – eat their crops.

> In the mountains, the *chamkars* were far from each other. We released the pigs and they could eat forest potatoes and get fat. In the lowland, we are close to each other and the pigs eat our vegetables (Villager (f) November 2000).

People also say that at O Kaung, it was easy to build fences to keep animals away, while at the current location there is not the right material for strong enough fences, and people rarely had any buffaloes. A 53 year old widow sighs as she shows the meagre rice straws and reports that she sleeps in the field every night to keep the

buffaloes away. 'If it was not for the buffaloes, I could get maybe 30 *paot*[117] of rice. That would be enough for three months' (VDC member (f) November 2000).[118]

The main constraint, however, is lack of labour. Clearing and cultivating *chamkars*, paddy fields and separate gardens at the current location take more time and strength than doing only *chamkar* at the previous place. Families that are big enough therefore often split up between their different fields and houses. Smaller families do not have that option and may have to choose between the different cultivation forms, or to grow much smaller areas than they would need. Paddy cultivation also involves certain labour peaks, while the work required for swidden cultivation is more evenly spread out over the year. This makes agriculture at the current location especially problematic for households that lack male labour (see 7.2.1).

In a livelihood system based on rotational cultivation, agriculture land cannot be absolutely distinguished as a resource separate from the forest, as forest is rotationally cleared to provide agriculture land. The forest also provides an important complement to agriculture, as food crops and other useful crops are collected there. Roumdol villagers' access to forest crops has changed with the shift of locations. Currently, as people run out of rice, they rely on wild potatoes and manioc. Though forest potatoes are available nearby, people claim that there was much more at O Kaung and that, if everybody is out of rice for a long time, there will not be enough at the current location, but they will have to go to O Kaung to get it. Manioc, they claim, cannot be found nearby, but only at O Kaung and further north. When they were living there, people say, they collected lots of food crops and also wild fruits like lychee and rambutan, while at the current location there is only some rambutan. At O Kaung, and especially further north, there are also malva nuts, which people used to collect for own consumption. The last few years, there has been a large demand from businessmen for these nuts and whole families now walk up to and past O Kaung to collect nuts to sell.[119]

At O Kaung, there is plenty of bamboo, rattan and other materials for constructing houses, fences and rafts, and for making baskets and fishing tools. When living there, bamboo was also a major item to sell or exchange. Nowadays, though people can find some of those materials nearby, they sometimes walk all the way up to O Kaung to collect bamboo and other materials. Because of the long distance, most people do not use bamboo for house roofs as before, but only for the walls. Some men also still take bamboo to the market to sell.

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[117] A *paot* is the equivalent of a gasoline container, widely used for measurement in Roumdol village. One *paot* of rice is about 12 kilos.

[118] The fact that the yield would still be far from what this woman's family needs, underlines the argument that people are hoping to increase their production at the current location, even though that might still mean far below subsistence (see 7.3.4).

[119] The issue of people (mainly from outside) cutting down trees in order to collect a lot of malva nuts in a short time is a debated one in the village and the district.

Water is of obvious importance in the commune – for agriculture, for fishing and for transports, all of which have naturally been affected by the shift of locations. Fishing used to be an important complement to people's livelihoods. Nowadays and at the current location, catches are very small, usually less than what a family could eat. At O Kaung and surrounding waters, people say, there was plenty of fish and it was much easier to catch. There, women and children could fish in shallow waters, while at the current location, sometimes it is too difficult and dangerous and sometimes there is no fish. Especially for families with no men, the move has thus decreased the access to fish. A young woman with no male labour in her household explains the impact on her livelihood:

> I eat less fish now, because there I could get fish by using a large, flat basket. Here I eat only vegetables because I don't know how to fish. Here, I cannot fish, I'm afraid of leach. There I could fish myself in small rivers. [---] Living at O Kaung, it was easier for women to make a living. We could fish with baskets and catch mice with traps. The water in the *o* is higher here. When the water is high we cannot fish and when the *o* dries up, there is no fish (VDC member (f) November 2000).

Apart from small daily catches nearby, both women and men therefore walk up to O Kaung after the rice harvest to fish for several days to make *prohok*[120] and dried fish. 'When we have no food, we go to the mountains to fish. There, there's still lots of fish' (Village vet (m) November 2000).

Hunting wildlife is not a major part of Roumdol villagers' livelihood. People say that they ate more meat when they were living at O Kaung, but hunting was apparently not a major activity there either. People rather killed animals, such as deer, monkeys, pangolines and squirrels, when they happened to come across them, and then usually shared the meat among relatives and neighbours, though they could sometimes sell it. Now, though people eat less meat, they do hunt smaller animals to sell. The man who is often referred to as the wealthiest in the village, for example, is said to be so because he hunts and sells pangolines.[121] There is also a growing demand from visiting businessmen for tortoises, and Roumdol villagers try to collect them, but they prefer not to talk about it since it is illegal.

People in Roumdol raise chickens and pigs, and did so at O Kaung, too. They unanimously claim, however, that the animals get ill and die much more at the current location than they used to, which some explain with the climate, while others see no reason at all.

> In the mountains, it was easy to feed the chickens and pigs. People sold more chickens and pigs. Here, some cannot feed the chickens, they don't have rice

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[120] *Prohok* is a paste of fermented fish commonly eaten in most parts of Cambodia.
[121] This is illegal and thus a sensitive issue among villagers.

to give to them. [---] There, not many chickens and pigs died. It was cool and shady. Here in the lowland, it is hot, and almost all animals die (Village vet (m) November 2000).

At O Kaung, people used domestic animals mainly for sacrificing when somebody was ill, and one person reports that such sacrificing is now decreasing due to lack of animals. Obviously, there may be other reasons why sacrificing decreases, for example an increased use of and belief in modern medicine (see 7.1.4, 7.3.4). People also sold chickens and pigs, and still do, both during normal conditions and in emergency situations, like after the floods the last two years, in order to buy rice. It is not common, however, to kill domestic animals to eat apart from at sacrificing – 'people don't think it's appropriate to eat [domestic animals]'.

Roumdol villagers' overall perception when comparing their livelihood at O Kaung five years ago with their current situation is that there was always enough food at O Kaung. They commonly claim that they never ran out of rice, had a far wider variety of vegetables, much more fish and sometimes meat to eat. 'There was always enough food to eat, and often enough rice to sell. In a bad year, there was only enough to eat. Here, it's not enough' (Village vet (m) November 2000). At the current location, the rice lasts only for a few months, after which people have to eat forest potatoes.

> At O Kaung nobody was short of rice and vegetables. I came to live here three years ago. During these three years we've not had enough to eat. Last year we were short of rice. This year we are even shorter (Villager (f) November 2000).

In many places and situations, people tend to glorify the past in various ways and for various reasons. Life at O Kaung was most probably not as easy and plentiful as it may sound at first instance. 'Living in the mountains was easy. We planted rice and got much yield. There was no shortage' (Villager (f) October 2000). There is apparently no doubt, however, that Roumdol villagers are less food secure at the current location than they were at O Kaung some years ago. It is hard to say if this is only because of the shift of locations, or if people would have become less food secure also if they had stayed at O Kaung. A development worker with several years of experience in the province claims that food production is generally decreasing (John, Ashish (m) interview 13/11 2000) and a high-ranking province official firmly states that the decreasing food security in the commune is caused by worsening weather conditions (Second Deputy Provincial Governor (m) interview 29/11 2000). It is clear, however, that the move and shift of livelihood systems have caused new difficulties for Roumdol villagers, for example because of less suitable land for *chamkar* cultivation, and for women who cannot clear paddy fields or fish at the current location.

7.1.4 Access to services

Roumdol villagers have far better access to the market now than when they were living at O Kaung. At that time, some of them went to the district market a few times a year, either by raft on the streams or walking along them. A round trip took at least three days. Women had less access to trading than men, but they could go with male relatives or ask these to trade for them. Businessmen also sometimes came to O Kaung. Now, as noted, the district market is just an hour's walk away on a path on either side of O Srolauv and then a short trip across the river. To get to the shops in the 'Chinese village', people do not even have to cross the river. Especially for women, it is thus much easier to get to the market – 'now, anyone can go – women, children…' Also, as mentioned, businessmen come every day to the two villages just across O Srolauv.

Roumdol villagers' access to modern health care and medicine has also increased with the shift of locations. At O Kaung, as now, there was a trained doctor in the village from whom people bought modern medicine. Now they can also fairly easily reach the clinic and the pharmacy in the district town.

Access to education, too, is in some sense better now than it was at O Kaung five years ago. At O Kaung, there was no organised education, while at the current location, the local NGO NTFP arranges non-formal education (NFE) evening classes during parts of the year. In 1999, a school building was also constructed between Roumdol and Prek Kroch, funded by the Seila LDF. NFE classes are frequently cancelled, however, and at the time of the research the school had not yet been used since there was no teacher (see 7.3.1). Overall, and as will be discussed, physical access to certain services has not necessarily improved villagers' living standards (see 7.3.4).

The socio-economic setting and dynamics presented, crucially involving natural resource management, are expected to get involved in interplay with the manifestations of CARERE/Seila and other development intervention. They are also closely related to village socio-politics, to where we now turn.

7.2 *Village leadership and socio-political culture*

Like many other things, socio-political roles, relations, culture and climate in Roumdol have recently undergone thorough changes. These features, as well as the changes, are part of the local dynamics which are expected to interact with the manifestations of development intervention, and especially so of an intervention aimed at improving local governance. In this section, a presentation will therefore be made of village social relations and leadership.

7.2.1 A partly new village with partly old traditions

At first instance, Roumdol does not resemble a village in the lowland sense. While the population is dispersed over a large area, the houses along the road in the

'development village' are abandoned, at least during most of the year, and largely falling apart. The village is also in some sense a new creation.[122] Those who currently belong to Roumdol have at times been grouped in smaller hamlets, while at O Kaung a few years ago they lived in two groups of 15 or 20 houses. People in Roumdol know each other well, however, and there have been well-established community norms and mechanisms for mutual assistance and support. The changes of livelihood systems that came with the shift of locations and the increased integration into the market economy related to the shift has, however, also affected social relations and such community cooperation.

For *chamkar* cultivation, there is a system of *provas dei*, i.e. people taking turns to clear land and harvest on each others' land. Roumdol villagers also widely claim that families that lack male labour get help with clearing land for *chamkar* cultivation from male relatives – or, if somebody does not have any male relatives, from male neighbours. 'For *chamkar* they can do *provas dei* with their relatives or neighbours. They help each other' (Villager (m) November 2000). There is also a practice of hiring others for agriculture work, and the payment of one *kapas* of rice for two days' work is apparently well-established. Moreover, some villagers state that it is possible to borrow rice from others without interest. However, when someone runs out of rice, others are usually short of it, too. Some of the mechanisms for labour exchange and assistance do not apply at the new site, however, which is partly explained by needs being different. At the previous location, for example, villagers helped each other with selling and buying things at the distant market, which is not needed any more since everybody can get to the market. Fishing and clearing land for paddy cultivation is, as noted, difficult for women and there are no established institutions for community assistance on these issues. There are therefore several women in Roumdol who let someone else use their paddy fields, without remuneration. 'Families with no men cannot grow paddy, only *chamkar* and *soen'* (Villager (f) November 2000). It is not evident why it is more difficult to get assistance with clearing paddy fields than *chamkar*. Possibly, *chamkar* clearance and cultivation are perceived as part of a social and livelihood system with community norms and mechanisms, while paddy cultivation is perceived as part of a different system where those norms do not apply.

7.2.2 A traditional leadership system in flux

In Roumdol, there is a traditional leadership of elder men whose main tasks are mediating in conflicts between neighbours and spouses and deciding about sacrifices at various occasions. 'If somebody wants to do a ceremony or pray, they decide how many pigs to kill' (Villager (f) October 2000). The elders also sometimes help with land allocation and conflict resolution. Like in the lowland villages, common conflicts are domestic animals eating crops and married people not getting along.

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[122] Gordon Paterson, NTFP, in an interview 20/6 2000, even calls it 'artificial'.

> If for example young people do something wrong, old people know since the past how to solve the problem. If I do something wrong, for example hit my wife, the elders decide on the punishment, how much I should pay to my wife (VDC accountant (m) October 2000).

This traditional leadership is combined with the national system of village chiefmanship, with two of the elders being Village Chief and Deputy Village Chief. While the Village Chief is an old man who does not know any Khmer and does apparently not really follow in some of the quick changes that have taken place with and after the move, the Deputy Village Chief is a bit younger, literate and knows some Khmer.

Overall, the group of elders is quite fluid and their role in heavy flux, partly related to the shift of locations. As noted, sacrificing to the spirits has for example become less common, partly due to better access to modern medicine and fewer domestic animals. 'We sacrifice less now when someone is ill because we have no chickens and pigs. We have no rice, no wine, no pigs, no chickens to sacrifice' (VDC member (f) November 2000). At a village meeting, however, one of the elders encourage people to contribute to a ceremony, where a pig or a buffalo would be sacrificed to call the spirits of rice. According to this man, the ceremony was done every 10-15 years before the Khmer Rouge regime, but was then abandoned. Now, because of the severe rice shortage, he wants to try it again, and he wants to do it on a village basis rather than family by family as in the past (VDC accountant (m) October 2000).

In the mountainous areas north of the current location, there are also spirit forests with restrictions on what is allowed and not allowed, continuously defined by elders and well known to all villagers. At the current location, however, such shared knowledge and norms are scarce.

> In the mountains, if there were small spirits or big spirits, it was not a problem. Old people knew and could tell their children where the spirits live. Now they don't tell the young any more. The elders don't know this area, they don't know where the spirits live (Villager, NFE teacher (m) November 2000).

The elders' role in land allocation is also likely to change. Traditionally among Roumdol villagers, every family quite freely selects plots to clear for *chamkar* cultivation, considering mainly how fertile the soil is and how much work the clearing implies. After having picked a site, people take careful note of their dreams. Bad dreams mean that the spirits do not approve of the selection and the family has to choose another plot. If two families have selected the same land, they agree on a case-to-case basis who will have to choose another plot among themselves or, if necessary, with the help of the elders. As there has been an abundance of suitable land, it has usually been easy to come to such an agreement. At the current location, families still

select their plots themselves and this has so far not created any major conflicts within Roumdol village, though suitable land is scarcer than at O Kaung.

Paddy land was initially distributed by the village leaders as people moved to the current location. Depending on the number of members, a family received between half and one hectare of land to be cleared. Families that shared a buffalo financed through the Local Development Fund, usually relatives, were allotted fields near each other (see 7.3.1). People claim that there is more land available that could be cleared for paddy cultivation. Again, there are no formal rules for how to claim a piece of land, though people are expected to inform the village leaders about what land they intend to use.

The village plots along the road, where the village hall is located, were also distributed by the village leaders, again with relatives receiving land close to each other. There is plenty of land for additional gardening, though it tends to get flooded, and there are allegedly no other regulations for allocation of that land than for new *chamkars* or paddy fields.

As noted, however, land is becoming scarcer and traditional land allocation and resolution of land disputes will therefore probably become less adequate. This also goes for the use of other natural resources. Traditionally, there was less demand for natural resources and less effective tools to extract them, and thus less need for the regulation of their use. The demand that was there also came almost exclusively from within the population, and the regulation that was needed could be handled by community norms regarding for example spirit forests and land allocation. Now, there is much more pressure on the natural resources from the population, since they can sell the products to businessmen and at the market, and from outsiders who come to hunt, fish, cut timber and collect malva nuts. A stronger need has thus emerged for restriction of natural resource use, which cannot be handled by traditional and internal means, but increases the reliance on regulation and enforcement by the state authorities (see 7.4).

The socio-political picture of Roumdol is thus one of thorough changes when it comes to social relations and norms as well as leadership. These are also features that come to interact with the manifestations of CARERE/Seila and other development intervention, which will be discussed next.

7.3 Development intervention as part of the picture

The socio-economic and socio-political features of Roumdol village that have been presented in the previous section are part of the local dynamics in which the manifestations of development intervention have also got embedded. In this section, such intervention will be more explicitly brought into the picture. After a brief overview, villagers' perceptions and approaches will be discussed, as will the interplay with social relations and village leadership.

7.3.1 The local history of development intervention

At the previous location, there was no input from development organisations, while at the current location,[123] the local NGO NTFP and CARERE/Seila have provided various sorts of materials and training, using partly different approaches, which has caused some tension (see below). The first NTFP activity was Khmer literacy training. Four male villagers were selected and trained to hold evening classes in smaller groups. Three female village health workers have also been selected and trained, mosquito nets, vaccinations and medicines have been distributed and health education provided through posters, drama and videos. A couple of agriculture trainers have been selected from within the community, and NTFP has provided training on paddy cultivation and distributed seeds for garden cultivation. Moreover, two villagers have been selected to be part of a commune working group on natural resource management.

For CARERE/Seila, 1997 was a pilot year in this province, with only eleven villages included. In Roumdol, a VDC had been established the previous year, consisting of two women and three men. In the first LPP cycle, then, the commune received US$ 2,500[124] which was used to buy 18 buffaloes for Roumdol and Prek Kroch villages to be used for paddy cultivation.[125] Each buffalo was to be shared between two families and the receivers paid a local contribution of 7,000 riel. As noted, paddy cultivation required a shift of locations and at the new site, houses were built in straight lines along the path in what came to be called the 'development village', where a meeting hall has also been constructed. In the commune, a communal rice store has been set up and villagers have been asked to contribute rice, with the idea that the poorest should be able to borrow without interest. In 1998, almost US$ 12,000 was spent on 48 buffaloes for all four villages in the commune, while the following year a public school and a commune resource centre were constructed and another eight buffaloes purchased at the cost of US$ 10,000.[126] As mentioned, at the time of the research, the school had not yet been used since there had not been any teacher available. After the floods and a Seila proposal to WFP, there were food-for-work road constructions during the first half of 2000, first on the western side of O Srolauv, then on the side where Roumdol is situated. The same year, the commune's LDF of close to US$ 12,200 was used for four wooden bridges along the road on the western side of O Srolauv, for which villagers were asked to pay cash contribution.

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[123] As noted and as will be further discussed, the move was connected to the CARERE/Seila intervention and to input that was more or less explicitly linked to such a move.

[124] Figures on the LDF allocation are taken from the Seila LDF Database Allocation Report, while one of the CARERE LCBs provided information on its use.

[125] The amount actually spent to purchase buffaloes the first year far exceeded the allocated commune LDF, as extra resources were added from CARERE/Seila at the provincial level.

[126] In 1999 and 2000, the commune's LDF allocations came from the government's contribution and were 38 million riel and 46.2 million riel respectively.

At a few occasions, especially in connection to floods, food, clothes, household utensils and other items have been distributed.

7.3.2 Kavet adoption of Khmer *aphiwat*

As seen from this overview, compared to the lowland case study villages, development intervention has been a very limited phenomenon in Roumdol with a shorter history and with only two agencies present. Still, such intervention has implied, or been part of, thorough socio-economic as well as socio-political changes and has come to form part of the picture at the new site. Here, like in Svay Ei and Kompong Loung, people have also widely adopted the term *aphiwat*, thus using the Khmer term though most of them know hardly any Khmer, and like in the lowland villages, the term is equated with the tangible activities that have been introduced to them by the two agencies. Those villagers who are most involved also clearly differentiate between the two on the basis of their specific activities and approaches.

> *Angkaar* NTFP helps with agriculture. (---) NTFP thinks about natural resources, education, health. CARERE wants to reduce poverty. CARERE helped the poor by road construction last year. People got rice, canned fish, cooking oil, salt… (VDC accountant (m) October and November 2000).

With such development activities tightly connected to the latest shift of locations, the term *aphiwat* has come to be firmly linked with lowland, majority Khmer lifestyle. Roumdol villagers widely talk about the move, and clearly understand it as motivated by the agency's urge for a certain livelihood system and lifestyle, labelled 'development'. 'They told us to come back to do *aphiwat* such as growing paddy' (Villager (f) October 2000). Villagers also clearly perceive the shift of locations as a requirement – widely articulated in the expression 'development called us down' – or at least as a condition for getting any buffaloes, which is not surprising considering previous experiences of enforced shifts. Some few villagers, however, indicate that the buffaloes were used as a condition the other way around, i.e. a demand by villagers in order to move and do the sort of cultivation that *angkaar* wanted them to.

> *Angkaar aphiwat* asked people to do paddy. People objected and asked how we could do paddy if we don't have any buffaloes. *Angkaar* said that they would provide buffaloes. That's why people came to do paddy (Villager (f) November 2000).

> If they ask us to grow paddy, they must give us buffaloes. If the state helped us with buffaloes, we would go down from the mountains. Otherwise we wouldn't (VDC accountant (m) October 2000).

Paddy cultivation was not the only perceived reason why people were required to move, though. Villagers talk about how they were also encouraged to adopt certain practices, the most important of which was a domiciled lifestyle.

> They came to educate people to be domiciled. The Commune Chief came to
> Roumdol to introduce people to building a village, to be settled, to grow
> crops and vegetables (Villager (m) October 2000).

This urge to have people staying in permanent villages is partly explained by the familiar notion and long-term experience, which Roumdol villagers share with people in the lowland case study villages, that *angkaar* wants to call people for meetings.

> *Angkaar aphiwat* went to O Kaung and urged people to come to grow paddy
> in the village. Because then it is easy for *angkaar* to call people for meetings.
> It is also near the market and the doctor (Villager (m) October 2000).

While villagers keep reiterating the perceived motivations of *angkaar*, they also repeatedly claim that, at that time, they did not want to leave their settlement at O Kaung, but felt forced to.

> Following the Kavet tradition and habit, people did not want to come back
> [i.e. move to the current location]. But following the development plan, they
> suggested people to come back, to build a village like in the lowland
> Khmer/Lao area, to build a permanent village (Villager (m) October 2000).

This is confirmed by the old Village Chief, who apparently finds it difficult to adapt to what is perceived as development actors' desires. 'We want to grow *chamkar* far away, but *angkaar* wants us to live here' (Village Chief, VDC member (m) Village meeting November 2000).

As indicated by some of the above quotes, the notion of *angkaar* is in people's minds apparently more a mix of development agencies and the state/local authorities than in the lowland case study villages. Roumdol villagers have had less contact with both state representatives and development organisations, and even if the issue of moving down from the forest and adopting a lowland lifestyle was motivated by 'development' this time, it is associated with previous similar efforts by the authorities. As the idea of shifting locations met with previous experiences, it was thus both perceived as a requirement and associated with commonly quite hostile state authorities.

Despite their claimed reluctance to moving from O Kaung, villagers have since then apparently largely adopted the state/*angkaar* idea of 'development', frequently stating that they have now seen the lowland way of life and want to adopt it (as will be seen, this claimed desire is however quite ambiguous). Such adoption is clearly illustrated by the new village site, where houses have been built in straight lines along the new road, reminding of the model villages of order and aesthetic ideals described by Scott (1998; see 3.1.2, 3.4.3) and which was praised a few years ago as the 'best development village'. When people from development agencies and the authorities come to educate people on how to use and not use the forest and other natural resources, people also tend to accept the implied view that their traditional ways are

destructive, that they have not been thinking about future generations etc. In other ways, too, villagers frequently make statements that imply low esteem of the traditional Kavet livelihood lifestyle and thinking. 'Ethnic people don't have ideas to make money, to earn an income' (Villager (m) October 2000).

It is difficult to determine how sincere such statements are, and why people's self-esteem possibly decreases. To some extent, Roumdol villagers may be saying what they think that external actors such as development staff, officials – and researchers – want to hear. Though the new village site was intended to be permanent, people have since then drifted away to their dispersed plots, for which they are blamed by village leaders, who strongly urge villagers to adopt the lifestyle that the government and agency staff are promoting. The Deputy Village Chief, for example, is afraid that villagers will not return from their *chamkars* and clear their plots at the village site. At a meeting at the village hall, he reminds them of the praise that they received, and goes on to blame them for having abandoned those houses since then:

> Two years ago, we were the best development village. But now, nobody is living here. As soon as the rice is harvested, you must all come and repair your houses and live here! If we keep moving, it's like monkeys (Deputy Village Chief, VDC member (m) Village meeting, November 2000).

As the perceived requirements and values of development intervention meet with prevailing experiences and expectations, villagers as well as village leaders are thus concerned to do, or at least to say, what *angkaar*/the authorities want them to.

Regarding the introduction of development related positions, as noted, a VDC was set up in Roumdol in 1996, with three male and two female members. Here, the nationwide requirement to read and write Khmer to be a VDC member formally excludes the Village Chief and most traditional elders in Roumdol – in fact, almost every single villager. Still, the Village Chief is the VDC leader and the Deputy Village Chief is a member. Four male literacy teachers have also been appointed as well as three female village health workers, a couple of agriculture trainers, a couple of members of a natural resource management working group and a village veterinarian. Like in the lowland case study villages, the VDC is scarcely recognised and many other position-holders, too, are not active and not known for their development related tasks. Position-holders are also themselves confused about the various bodies that have been set up and about their roles in them. 'Development has appointed all kinds of units – animals, health, doctor… I don't know the meaning of it' (VDC member (f) November 2000). Partly in contrast to the lowland case study villages, however, those who hold a development position tend to dutifully attend what they are required to. 'Yes, [I participate] in all meetings [in the commune]. All five members go, we never miss a meeting' (VDC accountant (m) October 2000). The alleged attitude is also clearly one of doing as you are told.

We are not knowledgeable, we go to learn. (---) [The VDC's tasks are] to build, to lead villagers to do paddy. They ask us to tell villagers to do paddy, road, school… (VDC member (f) October and November 2000).

Apparently, perceiving requests and suggestions from development agencies as givens and adopting the Khmer term and idea of development seem to reflect an attitude of dutiful obedience, almost a development obligation, among villagers as well as village leaders and development position-holders.

7.3.3 Villagers adjusting to what is offered – and aspiring for more

As noted, for Roumdol villagers, development intervention is closely connected to the shift of locations, with various manifestations perceived as part of life at the new site. Accordingly, people's attitudes and approaches to manifestations of development intervention are linked to their overall perception of current life and future prospects at the new site.

As also noted, a common notion among Roumdol villagers is that *angkaar*/the state want them live at the current location so that they can be called for meetings. Though not yet as common as in Svay Ei and Kompong Loung, people in Roumdol have become used to meetings related to development activities. So far, these gatherings are apparently very well-attended and the atmosphere at one such meeting during the research is friendly and very relaxed. As the Deputy Village Chief reads out a long document on various national laws in Khmer, which he himself struggles to understand, people sit or lie in smaller groups, resting, chatting and playing cards. Leaders also give advice on extramarital issues and domestic violence, urge people to obey the law and, as noted, to come and stay in the 'development village'.

As in the lowland case study villages, however, these meetings are clearly not perceived as instances for villagers to come with suggestions or make decisions. Rather, the perception of development activities being determined, or sometimes offered, from outside is even stronger than in the lowland case study villages. 'Bridges, roads, a school, a commune office… – it's the outside that decides' (Villager, returnee (f) October 2000). The perception of *angkaar* offering things is illustrated by how the process of receiving buffaloes is recalled, a frequent description being 'they asked if we wanted buffaloes'.[127]

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[127] Unsurprisingly, the CARERE LCB has a different understanding of what happened. According to him, when he came to O Kaung in early 1996 and asked villagers about their main concerns, they mentioned low food security. When asked how that might be improved, they came up with the idea of growing paddy rice. When asked what would be needed for that, they said buffaloes. The shift of locations came as a consequence since paddy rice cannot be grown at the previous place. This man's and other CARERE and government staff's preferences are however likely to have strongly influenced the outcome of the process, including the building of a 'proper' village at the current location. His preferences are also indicated by his description of

Similar at least to the situation in Svay Ei, then, villagers tend to accept what is being offered, even if not in line with their priorities. 'We need a lot, but development could only give us buffaloes' (Villager (m) October 2000). What has been offered and accepted has not always been beneficial, though, at least not to all. As noted, a widely perceived problem is that buffaloes eat the crops. Meanwhile, several villagers have not been able to use their buffaloes due to various constraints on paddy rice cultivation. They do not reveal any discontent, though. 'Oh, we just feed them!' (Villager (f) October 2000).

Roumdol villagers have paid cash contribution at a few occasions, again apparently without objections. 'We pay for bridges, buffaloes… whenever *angkaar* needs' (Villager (m) October 2000). For the NFE classes initiated by NTFP, then, pupils are usually charged a can of rice to pay for fuel for the lights. Still, and though the village teachers have been asked to hold evening classes from November to March, classes are frequently cancelled because there is no light, because the teacher is tired or busy or, like during the field research, because the blackboard and the battery are with someone else and the chalk is finished (Villager, NFE teacher (m) October; Villager, NFE teacher (m) November 2000). Neither this nor the fact that the new school building has not been used apparently causes any open objections.

Apart from an attitude and approach of acceptance and obedience, this may also reflect perceptions of prospects at the new location that may just not yet have been realised. While Cambodian regimes have repeatedly tried to bring the highland population closer to administrative centres and to make them adopt a lowland lifestyle, every previous time, the commune population has sooner or later resisted the efforts and returned to more distant settlements and a more traditional livelihood system (though probably every time taking new ideas with them, influencing their lifestyle). There are reasons to believe that Roumdol villagers will be less able and/or less willing to resist this time. The nature of the most recent shift, and its implications, apparently differ from previous shifts. Though people perceived a certain pressure to move, it was motivated by an opportunity to get buffaloes, to grow paddy rice and potentially to increase food security and improve the living conditions. Though, as noted, this has not yet been realised, with the shift and the adoption of the lowland idea of development, people have developed new aspirations. When considering future options, other aspects than actual implications of the move so far are therefore taken into account, making people highly ambiguous in their reasoning about current as well as future conditions.

Despite the hardship so far, people hope to increase their incomes at the current location. Many hope to enlarge their paddy fields, that animals will not eat the crops and that floods will not destroy them. Some hope that their cashew trees will provide good yield, others that they will get a lot of fruit and vegetables to sell. It may be

the settlement at O Kaung: 'Houses were not in order, just near each other. It didn't seem properly managed, just built the way they think' (CARERE LCB (m) interview 29/11 2000).

realistic to believe that production will increase. As mentioned, it takes a couple of years before land retains the water necessary for paddy cultivation, and there is more paddy land to be cleared. Fruit and cashew nuts also take several years before giving yield. Still, it is unlikely that food security at the current location will become as good as people remember it at O Kaung. If all families were to clear the paddy land that they would need, there would not be enough land. Fruit and cashew trees have already died and floods are frequent. Also, even if yields were good, to rely on selling a few crops like fruit, vegetables and cashew is scarcely a secure livelihood. The demand for fresh fruit and vegetables in the district is very limited and Roumdol villagers already do not find it worthwhile to take their bananas to the district centre, since they get only 200 riel a bunch. Transporting fresh crops to the provincial capital, where demand and prices are higher, also seems unrealistic, as does the option of developing competitive fruit processing or preservation. Roumdol villagers thus apparently try and hope for the various income options that they can think of at the current location – though some of them not completely rational or realistic – before seriously considering moving back to O Kaung.

It would be easy to imagine that, given the choice, people would opt for the location and the kind of livelihood system that implies least work. So far, Roumdol villagers' workload has not decreased since they moved from O Kaung, but some imagine that it will in the future. Before moving to the current location, people may have perceived lowland cultivation as easier than growing *chamkar* (just as lowland Cambodians may think that 'slash and burn' is less hard work than paddy cultivation). Currently, however, Roumdol villagers quite unanimously claim that they worked less and had more free time when living at O Kaung. As mentioned, it is harder to clear land for *chamkar* cultivation at the current location, and dividing the work force between more different tasks puts pressure especially on small and women headed families – 'now, we have many kinds of work'. Also, limited knowledge and skills probably makes paddy cultivation harder than it would be for more experienced lowland farmers, and perhaps harder than it will be a few years from now. It has been argued that many highland Cambodians are reluctant to grow paddy rice, largely because of the brutality with which the Khmer Rouge regime first introduced it to them (e.g. Colm 1997: 22). The case study does not indicate any general reluctance to paddy cultivation in Roumdol but rather, as noted above, hopes and willingness to invest further in it. A few people also make statements, quite contrary to their current and actual experience, which indicate that they may still believe that lowland cultivation will be easier – once the paddy fields are cleared and the fruit yields are there. 'Paddy is easy, because you don't need to clear new land. (---) For the fruit, we just sit and wait' (Villager (f) November 2000). Despite more and harder work so far, many thus imagine an easier living at the current location in the future. Another strong reason for not wanting to move back is that people have invested a lot of time and labour in their paddy fields and perennial crops, which would be wasted if they left for

good. 'If we moved back now, we'd feel sorry about our paddy' (Villager, elder (m) November 2000).

As noted, the move has implied increased physical access to market exchange, in the district centre and with visiting business people. Being near the market is also among the main advantages at the current location that people mention. This seems in some sense quite irrational, though, since people also claim that they have less to sell than before and can thus buy less. At the previous location, due to the distance, Roumdol villagers had to be largely self-sufficient. Since they were growing and collecting a wider variety of crops, there was also less that they needed to buy. Still, people claim that they had much more to sell when they were living at O Kaung, such as rice, vegetables, bamboo, chickens and pigs, and some could for example afford to buy a *gong*, a music instrument at the price of several buffaloes.

> There we had plenty of rice, vegetables, crops that we sold. That's why we bought more things than here. Here, we don't have enough rice to eat, so we only sell some vegetables. That's why we buy less (Villager, NFE teacher (m) November 2000).

At the previous location, however, products had to be stored until there was enough to make it worth the trip, while now, people say that they can go every day. 'Even if you have only one eggplant, you can go to sell it' (Village vet (m) November 2000). At the current location, access is thus easier, especially for women, to the kind of products that they needed to buy also when they were living at O Kaung, such as salt, MSG, clothes and medicine. With physical access, however, aspirations have also increased. The past abundance that people remember may be partly explained by the fact that there were less felt needs for products from outside, and less outlet for their produce. Now, perceived needs have emerged that cannot be immediately fulfilled. Some villagers may therefore think that they do not have enough, because if they had more things to sell, they could buy more of all the things that there are to buy. Since they moved to the current location, nobody has bought a *gong*, but a few families have bought a radio and many buy for example make-up. People also spend money on medicine, probably more than on salt and MSG and probably more than when they were living at O Kaung. Despite thus perhaps being able to buy less, the attraction and perceived potentials of the market are there, also for those who currently cannot enjoy the pleasures of it, which makes them hopeful and reluctant to move further away from the attraction and perceived potentials.

Development intervention, and the shift of locations that is associated with it, has also made Roumdol villagers much more familiar with and reliant on modern health care and medicine. Though, as noted, there was a trained doctor at O Kaung from whom people could buy modern medicine, the presence of a district clinic and a pharmacy just an hour's walk away makes a big difference. During the research, people very often came back from the district town with a set of tablets, and though traditional sacrificing to the spirits when someone is ill is still widely used, it is always

combined with modern medicine. Improved access to health care is indeed a rational reason for not wanting to move further away from the district. What makes it a bit ambiguous, though, is that people's health status is not necessarily better than previously. Rather, Roumdol villagers widely claim that they were less ill when living at O Kaung, which may well be true, considering the better access to varied food. 'We had plenty of rice to eat, but no base. Now there's a shortage. But we have good access to treatment when we get ill' (Deputy Village Chief, VDC member (m) October 2000). The perception of increased illness may however also be a reflection of the fact that people now go to a doctor and get a diagnosis, while before they to a larger extent referred illness to anger of the spirits. 'Before we thought that it was the spirits, now we have a blood test and get to know if it's malaria or something else' (Villager (m) October 2000). In either case, Roumdol villagers have become reliant on modern medicine, which adds to the perceived difficulties of moving further away from the district centre. 'We want to move back. But if we go alone, we'll be afraid to get sick. Then, there will be nobody there to pray to the spirits' (Villager (m) October 2000).

Roumdol villagers rarely mention access to education among the advantages of living at the current location. When asked, though, they do want their children to gain certain kinds of knowledge, related to the new market opportunities

> I want my children to learn to work as Lao and Khmer. Staying near Khmer and Lao, we need to know how to make business, to be clever enough to make money. I want my children to know how to sell things (Villager (m) October 2000).

The fact that people do not usually mention education is probably partly due to NFE classes being frequently cancelled, and the school that was funded by the 1999 Seila LDF not yet having been used. Many villagers, however, have their NFE books at home and sometimes read in them, and many parents hope for their children to get education. Gradually perceiving the need for certain kinds of knowledge, as indicated in the quote above, is also likely to make people reluctant to moving to a place where there is less prospect of access to such education.

The most commonly expressed motivation for not moving back to O Kaung, however, is the prospect of 'living together in a stable village' as opposed to 'moving year after year'. This is clearly highly attractive to most Roumdol villagers. One of the elders who has experienced many moves firmly states: 'Even if my children go, I'll ask them to bury me here' (Villager, elder (m) November 2000). Similarly, a young woman says with wishful voice as she looks at her *chamkar*: 'If the cashew trees give good yield, I'll stay here for the rest of my life' (Villager (f) October 2000). As seen, Roumdol villagers traditionally shifted *chamkars* every two years, but they also gathered at a village site where they celebrated common ceremonies. The Deputy Village Chief uses that pattern as an argument for remaining at the village site.

> Before, we had a village in a circle with a village hall in the middle. We had meetings there too. But we lived together only for a short while, then moved to the *chamkars* (Deputy Village Chief, VDC member (m) November 2000).

This argument apparently overlooks the fact that people are still moving around. The last two years, most villagers have gathered at the current village site for a few months after the paddy harvest. They are not sure, however, that they will this year, since many houses at the site have been taken down or fallen apart. Also, and as seen, far from 'staying still', people continuously move between their *chamkars* and paddy sites, and in many cases, even families are not living together as they have to split up between the various fields. In addition, some villagers frequently walk all the way up to O Kaung, where they spend several days fishing and collecting bamboo, manioc, malva nuts etc. Still, villagers commonly praise the notion of 'staying still'.

> If I compare living at O Kaung with living here, at O Kaung it was easy to make a living. There was plenty of rice and other things. But we didn't have a stable village. Here, it's hard to make a living. If we want to fish, we need to go far. But we have a stable village. After the paddy harvest, we'll stay in the village for two or three months. Then we start to clear *chamkar* again (Villager, NFE teacher (m) November 2000).

Though people are thus not actually practising a domiciled lifestyle, the idea of it has become attractive enough to make most people reluctant to return to rotational swidden cultivation. What people mainly want to avoid, however, may be the kind of drastic shifts of locations and livelihood systems that they have experienced several times during the last 40-50 years. It is possible that if they were currently living at O Kaung – or any other place – they would just as firmly claim that they would never want to move again.

Something that Roumdol villagers clearly take into account when considering their future prospects at the new site is support from the state and from development organisations. While at O Kaung, there was no development input, here people have at several occasions lately relied on such assistance. The development input that Roumdol villagers perceive as of most immediate importance is the food-for-work road constructions in 2000, following the floods the previous year.

> I got rice from the road construction. First a road was built from the middle of the village to Prek Kroch village. I got six sacks of rice in January. Then a road was built from Srolauv village to Da village. I got 50 kilos of rice. I don't know who decided to build the roads. I saw others work, so I did too (Villager (m) October 2000).

Like in the lowland case study villages, the income is clearly perceived as more important than what was constructed. The need for roads and bridges that can carry heavy trucks, in a setting where only very few own a bicycle, may and has also been

questioned.[128] Meanwhile, food-for-work was a crucial source of income, without which many would not have managed.

> Everybody ran out of rice. People survived by getting rice from the road building. [---] I used the rice from the road building from December to July. Then we collected forest potatoes to survive until the *chamkar* rice was ripe (Villager (f) November 2000).

In contrast to the previously noted tendency of accepting and adjusting to what development organisations are perceived as offering or requiring, people would not be willing to do such work without payment. 'I worked every day (on the food-for-work roads). Without payment people would not do it. Before there was no payment, so we didn't build' (Villager (m) October 2000). Considering the socio-economic conditions, this is a very realistic attitude – villagers would rarely be able to do construction work without payment since they would be very busy making a living in other ways.

With the first experiences of food-for-work, people also undoubtedly expect there to be more such projects. 'The state helps if we're short of food. They help by letting people build roads' (Villager (f) November 2000). As in previous case studies, such reasoning may be rational since development assistance may be a more reliable source of income than for example collecting forest crops, which are scarce at the current location. As noted, more food shortages are to be expected and most people have come to include not only food-for-work but also handouts in their livelihood strategies, perceiving them as recurring sources of income. 'If there's a severe food shortage, I'll ask *angkaar* to help' (Villager (f) October 2000). Since they moved to the current location, Roumdol villagers have experienced distribution of rice and other items. Who really gets what, when and where from is not evident. According to a VDC member, last year the four poorest families – selected by the Village Chief – received rice, a tarp and 60,000 riel from the state (VDC member (m) November 2000). According to others, those who suffered from last year's flooding were listed by CARERE, but did not receive anything. During one of our stays in the village, some people walk to the district centre as they have heard that rice will be distributed. A man comes back and complains, though, that only those who arrived first had received salt, clothes and biscuits, while people from Roumdol had not received anything (Villagers (f and m) October 2000). A couple of days later, however, a woman comes back from the district with 30 kilos of rice, a *kramas*, 20,000 riel, instant noodles, sweets etc. She does not know who the two men who distributed the things were, only that they came from the province, and is apparently not sure of when to expect similar distributions next. 'Sometimes they provide, this year it was due to the floods' (Villager (f) October 2000).

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[128] Critics have, for example, indicated that the roads mainly facilitate for external interests to extract natural resources in the area.

Despite such uncertainty, the experience and prospect of support from the state and development agencies clearly add to Roumdol villagers' reluctance to moving back to more remote areas. 'If I went back to clear *chamkar* in the mountains, it would be hard for me to do communal work, such as road building and to go for meetings' (VDC member (f) October 2000).

Current conditions and future prospects thus cause a lot of ambiguity, with the provision of development input feeding into the attractiveness of what is perceived as a more modern lifestyle. At their current location, people have access to products, services and sources of income that they did not have access to before – partly from development agencies – and they have started to develop a new livelihood system as well as new perceived needs and aspirations. On the one hand, they therefore want to avoid moving back, hoping for conditions to improve at the new location and for some of their aspirations to be met. As will be seen, however, on the other hand, many do consider moving back to where food security was better (7.4).

7.3.4 New social divisions

Related to the new aspirations and perceived prospects, new social divisions have emerged in Roumdol. While, as seen, the change of livelihood systems has implied severe constraints for some villagers, others are more attracted by the new opportunities and better able to take advantage of them. Implied in this divide is the issue of learning how to behave in commercial contacts, which especially young men tend to do. This is illustrated by a 30 year old man who compares to the previous situation: 'There, we didn't know how much to charge, we just exchanged. Now, we know the right prices' (Villager (m) November 2000). As opposed to this man, who has apparently adopted a kind of market thinking, a woman asserts that she does not want to take the pigs that she raises to sell at the market because she is afraid of being cheated. Different inclination and ability to benefit from the new opportunities apparently both reflect and reinforce diverging values and aspirations among villagers. The man quoted above repeatedly states that there are fundamental differences of attitude and approach between old and young people, which have emerged since the shift of locations.

> Old people say that living in the mountains is better. But for our generation, living here is better. [---] They have no ideas, just enough to eat and be healthy. Now, even widows and orphans can make money. [---] Old people can only make enough for themselves. They think about getting enough to eat, that's it. But my generation have ideas, we want to progress, and we think about profit (Village vet (m) November 2000).

Such differences of attitude and approach are likely to increase the economic differentiation among villagers in terms of wealth and occupation. 'Rich people don't need to clear *chamkar*, like poor people. They do business, like the Chinese' (Villager, returnee (f) October 2000).

Various manifestations of development intervention, then, have come to interact with these new socio-economic divisions, partly along generational and gender lines, while the interplay has also come to involve village socio-politics. The experience of development activities has affected villagers' perceptions of leadership roles and made them include previously unknown tasks.

> The role of the Village Chief is to do state work, and to lead people to do state work – construct village roads, do *chamkar*, grow paddy… He leads them (Villager (m) October 2000).

With the Village Chief as leader of the VDC and such tasks included in his perceived role, development intervention has partly come to build on and reinforce existing power structures. Apart from the Village Chief and the Deputy Village Chief leading the VDC, other members and development position-holders are clearly among the better off villagers.

Leadership structures and roles have also altered, however, in line with the new social divisions, largely through interplay with development intervention, which has thus contributed to the socio-political 'flux'. Despite two of the traditional leaders holding major development positions and obediently going for meetings in the commune when called, the elders apparently find it more difficult than a few young men do to understand the institutional arrangements that have been introduced with development intervention at the new location. Accordingly, several elders find themselves sidestepped in development activities, and discredited.

> The four of us are elders, leaders in the village. In the past, when we wanted to pray for the village, the idea came from us. But now I can compare myself to a child. They use only young people. For state work they don't ask me (Villager, elder (m) November 2000).

Previously appreciated knowledge and skills are also being degraded and lost, and according to another elder, certain leadership tasks are not conducted.

> There used to be elders who gave advice to the young, about growing *chamkar* and vegetables, about not begging from outsiders, about not having conflicts with each other. Now there are no elders like before who give ideas to the younger. Now, there is only *angkaar* (Villager, elder (m) November 2000).

While elders thus find themselves bypassed and their traditional tasks degraded, others have gained status by involving in development work. A woman in a neighbouring village has apparently made some kind of development career, starting as an NFE teacher, then being picked for the VDC but soon quitting to instead be on the CDC. A Roumdol villager also perceives working with *angkaar* as an income opportunity.

> If we work with higher *angkaar*, we'll get money. For example, the village environment unit (NRM committee), village committee (VDC) and me as a militiaman, we have no money. NFE teachers also have no money. Only when they go to learn in the district or in the province, they get 10,000-20,000 riel. (---) If my children get knowledgeable, *angkaar* will employ them and give them a salary (Villager, militiaman (m) October 2000).

Even without such a career or employment, development intervention has fed into the new social divisions. As traditional tasks such as leading community ceremonies and sacrificing have been surpassed in importance by previously unknown development related tasks, a new sort of competence is required. A few young men with apparently the right sort of aspirations and attitudes have been involved, gained understanding and confidence, and come to look down on others.

> The two of them [two elders] are out of date. They have retired, they don't work with *angkaar*. They don't do serious work, for example build roads or an information hall in the commune [the commune resource centre], such serious work, they cannot do (Villager, militiaman (m) October 2000).

Socio-economic and socio-political village dynamics, and their interplay with the manifestations of development intervention, are also related to the role and relations of outside authorities, to which we now turn.

7.4 Relations to authorities outside the village

The role and relations of the local authorities constitute vital parts of the local dynamics and of recent changes in the third case study. With a key role in the CARERE/Seila approach, they are also expected to get involved in interplay with various intervention manifestations. In this section, therefore, villagers' prevailing experiences of and expectations on the commune are described, including its role in development activities and villagers' political involvement.

7.4.1 Complexities coloured by history

> If people live in the forest, they are considered outsiders of society. I don't want them to live in the forest. Then they are not like our population, they live like monkeys (Second Deputy Provincial Governor 29/11 2000).

The Kavet population's relation to the local authorities, and to the Cambodian state, is more complex than in the lowland case study areas. As noted, there is a history of enforced moves as the lowland authorities have tried to govern and assimilate the highland population. Such efforts are probably partly a remnant of the previous Khmer Rouge threat and government distrust of the Kavet people, who were known to liaise with the Khmer Rouge.

Though Roumdol villagers currently live in a less remote place and are less self-sufficient than previously, they still have far less contact with the authorities than in the lowland case study villages. There are no Kavet people in the district and provincial authorities, and very few highlanders at all. As noted, very few villagers speak Khmer. The last few years, lowland officials have visited highland communities more often than previously and have perhaps become less prejudiced about indigenous livelihood systems. All district and province officials we talked to express themselves in at least diplomatic, though not quite approving, terms about for example *chamkar* cultivation. Lowland officials also convey an increased concern for the minority population's well-being and acknowledge a responsibility of the authorities to improve their conditions. The cultural distance is, however, still big between the highland minorities and the lowland officials. Implied in the authorities' concerns is an assumption that highland people need to adopt a lowland lifestyle.[129] Despite more or less diplomatic language, government officials at various levels clearly regard highland people's livelihood systems and lifestyle as inferior, and, as also communicated by villagers in the previous sections, strongly want Roumdol villagers to remain at their current location rather than moving anywhere further up the forest.

Roumdol villagers, on their side, are apparently eager to please the authorities (and development organisations, see 7.4.2). Considering the history of government suspicions of Kavet people, prejudices and low esteem of their traditional livelihood systems and the views of them as outside of society, it is not surprising that people want to be recognised and regarded as legitimate by the authorities. Rather than being looked down upon and seen as potential enemies, Roumdol villagers want to be approved of and get access to the services provided by the state and by development organisations. Not wanting to go against the will of the authorities is thus yet a strong reason for villagers' reluctance to leaving the current location (see 7.3.3).

7.4.2 The Commune Chief promoting lowland 'development'

CARERE/Seila has also provided the authorities another argument for having people live in permanent settlements close to administrative centres. Referring to their responsibility for the population's well-being, and as opposed to previous shifts of locations, the latest one was motivated by a need for people to get access to education, health care and other services. In the name of development, and with striking similarities with the case described by Lowenhaupt (3.4.3), the whole population again moved, new houses were built in straight lines along the new road, and people are urged to live in this 'development village' rather than at their dispersed plots of land. Though at least partly well-intentioned, such urges apparently also reflect the remaining lack of respect among lowland officials for highland people's lifestyle and livelihood systems. Continuing previous regimes' endeavours to bring the highland

[129] Such an attitude is clearly similar to, or part of, a mainstream development assumption that non-modern people need to modernise.

population under their control, government officials widely claim that 'development' requires that people live where it is easy to reach and organise them.

> When development starts, they need to work with people at certain places. There's a development plan to build a school, a hospital etc. And those things cannot move with people. It's easy for people to live near, where they can request buffaloes or a road (Provincial Director of Department of Environment (m) 27/11 2000).

Roumdol villagers, then, with the experience of such development input and with their new aspirations, are eager to please the authorities, also in order to get access to the services that are perceived as more or less available at the new site and on which they are partly reliant (see 7.3.3). As noted, in Roumdol villagers' perceptions, authorities and development organisations are more mixed up than in the lowland case study areas (see 7.3.2). Local officials, who recognise the population's low food security and acknowledge the state's responsibility, also express strong trust in various development agencies, which to them, too, are not clearly distinguished from the authorities. 'Seila can help, the government can help, especially with materials, non-governmental organisations can help' (District Chief (m) 22/11 2000).

Regarding the commune's role in the CARERE/Seila set-up, the formal requirement of Khmer literacy in order to be a CDC member would be an obstacle if it was followed (just as the same requirement for being a VDC member would, see 7.3.2). However, in this commune, where all six commune officials are Kavet, the CDC consists of these appointed officials. This has apparently not much influenced the lowland approach to development, though. Like Roumdol villagers, the CDC members show no sense of having made or influenced decisions on how to use a Local Development Fund. Their understanding is rather that 'development provided buffaloes' (as well as a school and an information building, i.e. the commune resource centre).

Lowland lifestyle is promoted not only by lowland officials (and development agencies). As touched upon, the Commune Chief, who is of the same ethnicity as the population, is clearly committed to 'development' and a strong advocate of people settling in permanent villages and growing wetland rice and perennial crops. While frequently visiting the district and provincial towns, he does reportedly not travel much around the commune. 'I saw the Commune Chief once at a meeting. That's the only time' (Villager (m) October 2000). This man is therefore very good at relating to lowland authorities, but scarcely somebody to whom Roumdol villagers readily turn or feel represented by. Rather, the person in the commune who has most contacts with the lowland authorities and could be in a position to promote the population's interests is clearly negative about highland habits and apparently distances himself from the population – perhaps 'getting more Khmer than the Khmers themselves'. Accordingly, Roumdol villagers have come to widely associate the Commune Chief, along with other local officials, with the promotion of lowland development. 'Commune and

district people come to the village to tell people to grow paddy and vegetables, to introduce such crops and to give advice' (Villager (m) October 2000).

Apart from new expectations and the reliance on state services and development input, the increasing pressure on the natural resources has created another previously unknown reliance on the state authorities. As described, paddy land at the current location was initially distributed by Roumdol village leaders. There are no formal rules, however, for how to claim more land, and fertile land can be expected to become scarce while the demand for it will increase – from within the community, from other villages and communes, and from commercial interests. Though there have not been any major land disputes so far within Roumdol, demand for cleared paddy land has led to a border dispute. Villagers, as well as the Commune Chief, assert that when Roumdol villagers moved down from O Kaung, people from the neighbouring commune were growing paddy on land within the Roumdol area. This land is now claimed to be returned to Roumdol and there are different opinions on how the issue can be solved. According to the Commune Chief, the neighbouring Commune Chief has suggested to let the elders in the two communes agree on a solution. The Commune Chief as well as villagers and elders in Roumdol, however, claim that since two communes are involved, only the commune or higher authorities can resolve the issue. According to an expatriate development worker, this may be because traditionally, those from the neighbouring commune would win the dispute since they cleared the land (Paterson, Gordon, 14/11 2000).

The pressure is increasing also on other natural resources, such as timber, fish, wildlife and forest crops. Previously, there was less demand for these resources and less effective tools to extract them. The demand that was there also came almost exclusively from within the population. There was thus less need for regulating the use, and what was needed could be handled by community norms. Now, there is much more pressure on the natural resources, both from the population, since they can sell the products, and from outsiders, who come to hunt, fish, cut timber and collect wild crops. This makes traditional mechanisms inadequate. The increasing demand for natural resources and the changing internal leadership structures and community norms (see 7.3.4) create a growing need for regulation of the use of land and other natural resources, including clear mechanisms for handling internal as well as external disputes. The population is thus likely to become increasingly reliant on the state authorities for the management of natural resources, and for the enforcement of laws.[130]

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[130] Perhaps paradoxically, considering the ongoing decentralisation reform, of which CARERE/Seila was a predecessor, being increasingly integrated into the Cambodian state apparently implies more centralised decision-making compared to when the communities were largely self-sufficient economically as well as politically. Now, more decisions that affect their livelihood and lifestyle are made further away.

7.4.3 Villagers not wanting to go against the will of the authorities

Overall – and partly as a result of the shift of locations related to the CARERE/Seila intervention – Roumdol villagers have become more incorporated in the Cambodian state than previously. Despite the authorities' strong wish to have people permanently settled close to administrative centres, and despite Roumdol villagers' new aspirations as well as their strong wish to please the authorities, villagers may decide to go against the will of the authorities on this very issue.

As discussed, villagers have less desire to return northward than after previous more or less forced moves. It is perceived as neither possible nor desirable to return to self-sufficiency, and people want to keep the advantages of state services and development inputs as well as expected future improvements. It has also been suggested that people in this commune are staying at their current locations because they are afraid that the authorities would not allow them to move. There are indeed rules against clearing land in the core zone of the national park, which stretches north from O Kaung. So far, however, these rules have not been enforced. According to park patrols, by mid-November 2000 there were 29 families in the commune doing swidden agriculture within the park (only one of these was from Roumdol). Other families have continued to do swidden cultivation north of the current village sites but outside the national park, though they have also retained paddy fields and houses in the village and though the authorities do not like it.

A strictly enforced ban on moving is thus apparently not a major reason for villagers to stay at the current site. Rather, villagers as well as officials recognise that, if necessary, the option is there of (partly) moving back. At a village meeting in Roumdol in November 2000, village leaders list the names of seven or eight families that are interested in partly returning to the previous location to do swidden cultivation. The leaders, however, repeatedly point out that they are not thereby giving their permission. 'Okay you can go [to clear *chamkar* in the mountains]. But don't say that we have given permission' (Deputy Village Chief, VDC member (m) Village meeting, November 2000). This indicates that the village leaders do not want the responsibility of having given anyone permission to move northward, but not of having forced them to stay either. Their view is rather that villagers would have to inform the leaders if they intended to move, and that these would not be able to stop anyone. This is confirmed by the District Chief and recognised even by the Commune Chief, who, as seen, strongly promotes a domiciled lifestyle and paddy cultivation. 'The fact is that they have no buffaloes. The Village Chiefs and the Commune Chief don't allow them to move. But if we stop them, who will feed them?' (Commune Chief (m) 18/11 2000).

Roumdol villagers on their side, wishing to be seen by the lowland authorities as legitimate citizens, do not want to move without the knowledge and approval of the leaders. Due to the undeniable food insecurity, however, they recognise that they may have to return to swidden cultivation at O Kaung, at least partly. Villagers as well as leaders point out that, if those families on the list do take up swidden cultivation at O

Kaung, they would not be leaving the current village completely. Everyone would have to come back every year, and for some, the most viable livelihood strategy may be to split the family and combine the potentials of the two locations. As noted, for small households and households without male labour, this is not feasible, which makes it likely for them to remain reliant on support from the government and from development organisations. For larger families, though, the best option may be to keep using the more productive *chamkars* at O Kaung, while not abandoning the paddy fields and fruit trees that they have invested labour and hope in, and also retaining access to the market, health care, education and development inputs. The family of the 75 year old man who wants to be buried at the current village location is one of those that listed their names for possibly moving back (see 7.3.3). The old man still does not intend to go, though. 'If they allow it, my children will go. I'm too old. Even if my children go, I'll stay' (Villager, elder (m) November 2000). Those villagers that are prepared to leave would thus strongly prefer to first get the leaders' approval, commonly using expressions like 'if they allow us…' However, if they cannot make a living at the current location, they perceive no other choice than leaving – if other means are not supplied, even without permission.

> If the paddy doesn't give any yield, I'll ask the Village Chief for permission to go back to clear *chamkar*. And if he doesn't agree, I'll ask him to get rice for me (Villager (f) November 2000).

The determination to do what is required to make a living scarcely indicates an increased inclination to go against the will of the authorities. Roumdol villagers are used to both managing on their own and being disliked by the state. So, when they are now eager to stay well with the local officials, be seen as legitimate and get permission before moving, it rather indicates an increased inclination to comply with the authorities – because it appears rational and worthwhile. In other words, the move that came with development intervention has not empowered villagers to be politically active, but it may force them to be just that because of the socio-economic situation at the new location.

To sum up the findings from the third case study: Here, development intervention has implied, or at least occurred parallel to, a shift of locations, which has implied thorough changes. With development intervention as part of the picture from the start at the new site, its interplay with local socio-economic and socio-political features cannot be distinguished from these features' interplay with other new traits.

With development intervention, highland villagers have come to use the Khmer term for 'development', like in the lowland case study villages, meaning the sort of activities that external agents initiate and determine. As these activities have been in line and come to interact with socio-economic features at the new site, villagers have also adopted the Khmer idea of 'development', perceived as implying a lowland livelihood system and lifestyle. The new perceived opportunities that have come with

the move and with development intervention have also made villagers develop new aspirations, while socio-economic constraints have made them rely on development input. In order to get access to such input, and in order to generally please external actors, villagers have obediently adjusted to the rules and requirements that are perceived as part of development intervention.

Development intervention has also interacted with socio-political changes that have come with the shift of locations. While village elders'/leaders' traditional tasks and abilities are less needed and valued at the new site, these leaders have been partly sidestepped in development activities and their status thus further undermined. As younger men with different qualities and values have been more involved in development activities, and thereby gained certain confidence, development intervention has reinforced new social divisions, partly along generational lines.

Again, in interplay with changes related to the move, development intervention has also affected villagers' relations to outside authorities. At the new site, and with new circumstances and needs regarding natural resource management, villagers are more reliant on the local authorities. New socio-economic aspirations, and the services and input that are perceived as available partly due to development intervention, have also made villagers very concerned to stay well with the authorities and not go against their will – though socio-economic hardship at the new site may force them to.

8. DISCUSSION OF EMPIRICAL FINDINGS: LOCAL DYNAMICS AND IMPLEMENTATION INTERPLAY

As argued, when a development intervention is implemented in a local setting, with its own particular qualities and dynamics, a more or less intense interplay emerges between what has been introduced from outside and what prevails locally. In the preceding chapters, local settings and dynamics of the three case study sites have been described, along with how the activities of CARERE/Seila, and to a less extent of other agencies, have been perceived and accommodated. In this chapter, findings from the three case studies will be brought together, systematised and discussed on a number of aspects, following the research questions outlined in chapter 4. By scrutinising these questions, and bringing some of the empirical material back in, they will be answered quite rigorously. Findings from the three case studies will be put side by side and assessed, and similarities and differences will be searched for and analysed. This thorough discussion of the research questions is done in order to return, in the following and final chapter, to the research problem of how the interventionist rationales discussed in chapter 3 relate to local dynamics and how they unfold at implementation.

8.1 Making sense; research question 1

With CARERE/Seila and other development agencies, certain actors, activities and concepts have been introduced in the case study villages. These manifestations of development intervention meet and come to interact with locally prevailing experiences and expectations, which influences how they are accommodated in villagers' minds. The first research question was therefore: *What perceptions, attitudes and approaches do villagers have to the activities and actors of the governance intervention under study, and how do they understand 'development' as such?*

In this section, findings from the three case studies will be systematised and discussed as regards villagers' perceptions of 'development' and of the actors involved, their general attitudes to development intervention, and their perceptions of and approaches to involving in certain development activities.

8.1.1 'Development' perceived as tangible activities by *angkaar*

With CARERE/Seila and other development intervention, the concept and idea of 'development' has been introduced in the case study villages. As with any new feature, it is necessarily locally interpreted depending on the prevailing context, circumstances, connotations etc. The case studies show that the term *aphiwat*, i.e. development in Khmer, has been generally adopted across the case study areas, which is most striking in the ethnic minority village where people hardly speak any Khmer. The perceived meaning is similar across the villages, with people equating *aphiwat* with the tangible activities that development agencies initiate and fund, such as road or canal

construction, provision of buffaloes or 'gifts', rice or fertiliser lending, and meetings. 'Development' has come to represent everything that development organisations do, and villagers for example talk about 'when development started', i.e. when the first development agency entered the village and initiated the first activities.[131] In the case study villages, like in Cambodia overall and in many other places, development intervention has commonly involved the construction and maintenance of local infrastructure, and, accordingly, villagers largely perceive 'development' as encompassing physical structures such as school buildings, dams and roads (cf. Rusten et al. 2004: 145). Such a comprehension is rarely surprising since what villagers encounter, and what is introduced to them as *aphiwat*, are such concrete features.[132] In a similar manner, Vries found Andean villagers define development as what they had encountered: 'an extentionist who comes to our field and tells us the kind of fertilisers we should apply in order to increase our yields' (Vries 2007: 25). Other terms that external actors use may also acquire specific meanings when adopted by villagers, like in Olivier de Sardan's example of how 'project' was translated and used in the local language, but then with direct reference to the inflow of cash (Olivier de Sardan 2005: 180).

This tendency of 'development' and related terms to acquire very limited and concrete meanings can be largely explained by operationalisation. As Kothari and Minogue point out, the ideas behind an intervention must be translated into a practice of implementable activities, and when this happens, underlying values may not be transmitted (Kothari and Minogue 2002b: 13ff). So, while those who design an intervention choose certain activities and approaches as means to achieve overarching goals, such as improved local governance and empowerment, what villagers encounter are specific activities, such as road construction and meetings. Operationalisation also commonly makes the activities of different development agencies resemble each other despite different underlying values and ideas. And such similarity of village level manifestations apparently reinforces the limited notion of 'development' as certain common activities, such as meetings, infrastructure construction and agriculture extension.[133]

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[131] This points to an interesting parallel between the limited notion of *aphiwat* as tangible activities by certain agencies, discussed here, and the limited notion of 'development' that is common among development practitioners, where it is equated with development aid (as opposed to emergency relief; see 3.1.1).

[132] What is looked into in this section is how people think and talk about the phenomenon which is introduced to them as *aphiwat*. Villagers' comprehension of the term should thus not be taken as an indication of how they perceive human well-being, the fulfilment of human potentials etc which could be implied by 'development'.

[133] Though not a focus of the empirical research, a tendency was also discerned that development staff adopts the limited and concrete meanings of 'development', which can be partly explained as a matter of pragmatism. In order to make themselves understood and get things done within predefined time frames, development workers tend to focus on the activities

The empirical research also points to similar patterns of perceptions across the villages of the positions that have been introduced with development intervention. In none of the villages are people aware of the existence of a VDC as a group of villagers with overall responsibility for development activities, while other development related positions are even less recognised. Individual position-holders are however partly known for the specific tasks that they have come to perform. This, too, is related to operationalisation, but also to the interplay with prevailing experiences and expectations. The idea of fellow villagers having an active role in and responsibility for major resource-demanding activities is unknown and therefore not easily conveyed. Practices of calling for meetings, mobilising villagers for construction work, collecting local contribution, gathering population statistics and distributing rice or fertilisers are however well known and easily recognised.

Scarce familiarity with development related positions and actors in the village is also partly explained by a low level of activity. The empirical research points to a tendency across the three villages that positions are created and someone appointed or elected for them, but then the positions are not filled with any substantial activity. Unsurprisingly, position-holders who do not have any meaningful tasks or responsibilities are not recognised among their fellow villagers and their intended roles not accommodated in their minds.

Also related to the scarce familiarity with local development related positions is the firm perception across the three villages of another much dominating development actor. Villagers' understanding of 'development' is much focused on *angkaar*, to where all activities labelled *aphiwat* are referred and which is perceived as the by far most important actor in development, the one that holds the resources and makes the decisions. In all three villages, the term *angkaar* has a largely positive connotation, and the fact that it was used during the Khmer Rouge regime for the quite enigmatic but feared state does apparently not disturb villagers. The encounter with prevailing notions of a vague and anonymous but powerful external actor, however, apparently stops people from perceiving fellow villagers (or the commune, see 8.4.1) as major actors in 'development'.

8.1.2 Enthusiastic about development intervention, or dejected, or obedient

The empirical research also shows that villagers have developed certain attitudes and approaches to the phenomenon of development intervention, which differ quite markedly across the case study villages, reflecting different patterns of interplay.

In one village, people are, on the one hand, generally enthusiastic about development activities and quite eagerly take what is perceived as being offered. On

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that are to be implemented rather than on underlying values. For example, while the aim of labour and cash contribution to a local infrastructure project is to create a sense of ownership and responsibility, collecting the contribution easily turns into a goal rather than a means, which is illustrated by instances of disguising it as lower payment for unskilled labour (see 8.1.3).

the other hand, however, they expect such activities to be 'fair' and get upset when they are not. Perceived mismanagement, corruption and injustices in connection to development intervention have evoked anger, blame and condemnation among villagers. In contrast to such vivid concerns, there are clear signs of 'development fatigue' in the other lowland village. Here, large groups of villagers are apparently quite dejected, with many asserting to not expect anything positive from the various development agencies that come and go in the village, and a few being cynical and mocking about them. Meanwhile, in the highland case, villagers tend to obediently adjust to what is perceived as suggestions or decisions by development agencies. Here, what has apparently happened is that the idea of 'development', essentially implying a lowland Khmer lifestyle, has been brought, not only but partly through development intervention, and villagers have largely embraced it.

These highly varying reactions and responses to development intervention can be largely explained by the interplay with local dynamics in terms of previous experiences and the prevailing social climate. As scholars argue, local actors' perceptions of and responses to a development intervention are influenced by previous experiences and ensuing expectations. People remember earlier interventions in the vicinity, and the local legacy necessarily structures their reactions and behaviour when facing a new one. So, where development intervention has been part of the picture, knowledge has been accumulated, experiences processed and memories constructed. Through this shared legacy and local memory, people adapt both their language and their behaviour, reacting in accordance with experiences or the reputation of previous intervention in the vicinity. This, then, influences how current development activities are perceived and related to, which in turn affects the continuously emerging experiences and expectations, and potentially influences the social climate (Olivier de Sardan 2005: 69, 139; 2001: 32f; Long 2002: 5; 2001: 32f, 213; Crewe and Harrison 1998: 135ff).

In the village where people are generally enthusiastic about development intervention, it is a fairly new and limited phenomenon, and there are still positive expectations about its potentials. The strong concerns and feelings also indicate that development related activities are perceived as important and worth having opinions and getting upset about. Here, relations among neighbours are quite close – not only warm, but concerned – and as development activities have been included in people's life-worlds and minds, they have fed into and evoked further strong sentiments (see 8.3.1 and 8.4.2).

Meanwhile, attitudes and approaches of dejection and even ridicule in the other lowland village can be partly explained by previous disappointment and disillusionment. This is where there has been most development intervention for the longest time and villagers commonly sense that they have been repeatedly promised things that have not been realised. The fact that intervention practices have differed and changed across agencies and over time – without the reasons for such differences and changes being clearly conveyed – also contributes to misunderstandings and

discontent. Here, social relations in the village as a whole are also less close and concerned, which dejection about development activities tend to feed into, with large groups of villagers not even bothering to get upset.

The attitude and approach in the highland village, then, of cautiously adjusting to suggestions and decisions by development agencies, is partly explained by villagers as well as village leaders being eager to please the external actors. This is where there is least experience of development intervention, but also where it has implied the most thorough changes. With CARERE/Seila came a shift of locations and a whole new lifestyle and livelihood system, which, despite various problems, are clearly attractive to many villagers who have developed new aspirations. The wish to be seen as legitimate by the authorities and other external actors is therefore reinforced by a wish to get access to development inputs and services.

8.1.3 Meetings and contribution perceived as rules to accept, or not to accept

The case studies also show that villagers have come to form perceptions of the meaning and value of various development related activities and methods. As with much of current development intervention, 'participation' is crucial to the CARERE/Seila approach at the village level, largely in the form of meetings and local contribution. The idea is that such participation will create a sense of influence, ownership and responsibility regarding development activities. Again, however, what villagers encounter are operationalisations of ideas, and their perceptions of and responses to meetings and local contribution are influenced by previous experiences of similar practices. The empirical research shows that as villagers have accommodated development related meetings and local contribution in their minds and lives, they have attached to them different meanings and responded differently than intended, and differently across the case study villages.

As noted, throughout the case study areas, villagers have got used to being called for meetings about development activities and come to largely associate 'development' with such meetings. The meetings are however generally not perceived as forums for discussion and decision-making, and have not created a sense of influence on development activities. Such perceptions are not surprising, considering villagers' previous experiences. There is a long history of meetings in rural Cambodia that external actors have called for, and old habits of receiving instructions, but scarcely any experience of having a say in decisions. The empirical research indicates that such experiences are carried over into the expectations and perceptions of meetings and decision-making related to development intervention. Villagers widely claim that they do not express ideas, but rather perceive development related meetings as 'going to learn', i.e. receiving instructions, or being asked to accept what *angkaar* is suggesting. Villagers commonly assume that it has been decided beforehand what will be provided, so when development staff asks what villagers need or want, they do not perceive it as a genuine question but rather assume that there is an expected and 'correct' answer. The perception of development agencies not even presenting

suggestions but giving instructions is particularly clear in the ethnic minority village regarding the shift of locations – 'development called us down'. This is not surprising either, considering the history in this case of enforced moves.

The empirical research also shows that the intention of local contribution, i.e. that it should make villagers sense that a project belongs to them and that they must maintain it, has not been realised, which is again largely explained by previous experiences of similar practices. Cambodian villagers have vivid memories of soldier and labour recruitment, and of collection of money for the families of those who had been recruited. Strategies for avoiding such recruitment have at times been part of people's daily lives, including bribing recruiters and temporarily leaving the village, sometimes at the warning and advice of village leaders. When recruitment could not be avoided, it was only to accept, often without receiving the assistance that had been promised (cf. Öjendal 2000). These strategies of avoiding when possible and accepting when not, have been partly carried over into villagers' approaches to development related local contribution.

In one of the case study villages, the notion of cash contribution for the laterite on the road has been largely accepted, even though it is acknowledged that the development agency could afford to pay the whole cost. Villagers, however, also find ways to partly avoid paying, as money is not collected from everybody, the amounts are commonly lower than stipulated and VDC members report higher amounts than actually paid. Such strategies clearly resemble how soldier and labour recruiters used to help villagers run away, and the overall approach of apparently accepting but silently avoiding reflects old strategies. Paying less money than stipulated and largely after the road construction was completed also confirmed villagers' assumption that their money was not actually needed (cf. Rusten et al. 2004: 49). As illustrated by their alleged approach to family cards and taxes, however, villagers are still used to obeying what they perceive as rules from 'above', even when they do not understand the reasons and rationales. Cash contribution is perceived as part of the rules, and as the strategy of accepting but avoiding it has been fairly successful, the old habit of not openly disobeying but making only hidden resistance is apparently reinforced (Scott 1990).

The empirical research also indicates that the intentions behind local contribution have come to interact with – and be overshadowed by – other interests among villagers. For various reasons, labour contribution has sometimes been disguised as lower payment for unskilled labour, while also alternated, combined and mixed up with food-for-work. Among villagers, the income opportunity has then commonly come to get the upper hand and construction work has been perceived as a source of income rather than as villagers contributing to something that everybody will benefit from, and that will belong to everybody (see 8.2.1). This is most clear in the village where people are least interested in development activities and least concerned about staying on good terms with the agencies. While eagerly waiting for the next food-for-

work project, they have previously not found the offer of a canal attractive enough, but turned it down as they would have had to pay cash contribution rather than being paid.

To apparently accept the idea of local contribution but silently avoid it, is a seemingly rational strategy for villagers who wish to get access to available input and are therefore concerned to be on good terms with those who set the rules. Meanwhile, prioritising paid work and refusing to contribute cash may be rational for villagers who need an income but have the experience of development agencies not keeping their promises. Neither avoidance nor refusal, however, will lead to the intended sense of ownership and responsibility for maintenance. Local contribution is perceived neither as a general responsibility with which come certain rights, nor as a crucial endowment without which a project would not be possible. Rather, strategies of accepting/avoiding, as well as of taking the income but refusing to pay cash, are based on the idea and experience of someone else controlling the resources and therefore having the power to set the rules.

Apart from previous experiences of meetings, cash collection and labour recruitment not related to development intervention, ideas of 'participation' also risk being distorted by recent and current experiences of different development approaches, not geared towards influence, ownership and responsibility. In addition to sometimes being disguised, the practice of labour contribution has also been confusing, changing over time and across agencies, and, along with the requirements of villagers' contribution/participation, CARERE/Seila and other development agencies have commonly provided different sorts of handouts without such requirements. With such varying experiences, villagers have naturally come to compare different activities and agencies, and in the comparison, the CARERE/Seila approach with meetings and local contribution is perceived as slow. This points in the same direction as the findings by Olivier de Sardan, who found that 'participation', with all its positive intentions and connotations among the designers, was perceived as something negative by Nigerien peasants. While previous projects had been helping people, this one, they noted, was emphasising 'participation' and told an old man to make an effort to help himself (Olivier de Sardan 2005: 180). Such notions are confirmed by the empirical research, which unsurprisingly indicates that people prefer not paying for a road or canal rather than paying, and getting paid for their labour rather than working for free. Also, even where 'being fed' runs against the prevailing norms, people who try hard to make a living naturally wish to retain income opportunities which have become part of their socio-economic strategies (see 8.2.1)

To sum up and return to the research question: various features that have been introduced with development intervention have, through implementation interplay, acquired localised meanings. Development activities and actors have come to be interpreted and talked about, and villagers have developed certain attitudes and approaches to 'development' and its various manifestations. The patterns of responses and accommodation have been partly similar and partly different across the three

villages. *As to how villagers understand 'development' as such*, the Khmer term *aphiwat* is widely adopted throughout the case study areas, and the meaning attached to it is that of concrete activities that development agencies are perceived as initiating and managing. *As to villagers' attitude to development intervention*, it differs quite markedly across the three case study villages, from enthusiastic and concerned, to apparently uninterested and dejected, and to obedient and expectant, largely depending on the interplay with varying previous experiences of such intervention and the varying social climate. *As to villagers' perceptions of and approaches to development related meetings and local contribution*, the participation in such activities is perceived as part of the rules set by *angkaar* and is to different extent accepted, avoided, refused or adjusted to. Influenced by previous experiences of similar practices unrelated to development, meetings are perceived as instances for receiving instructions and are attended largely depending on the social climate and the inclination to stay on good terms with those who have called for the meeting. Cash collection and labour recruitment are perceived as something to avoid when possible and accept when not, or to refuse if not found worthwhile.

8.2 Making a living; research question 2

The resources that have been provided by CARERE/Seila and other development agencies, as well as the various opportunities and requirements that come with them, also meet and come to interact with prevailing socio-economic strategies and institutions, which influences how they are accommodated in such village socio-economics. The second research question was therefore: *How do people relate to and engage in the opportunities and requirements of the governance intervention under study in their socio-economic strategies, and how do these features compare to and interact with prevailing socio-economic institutions?*

In this section, findings from the three case studies are systematised and discussed as regards villagers' livelihood strategies and local community arrangements.

8.2.1 Development activities differently included in livelihood strategies

Along with resources for the community, the activities of CARERE/Seila and other development agencies have sometimes implied new income opportunities for individuals and households through handouts and payment for unskilled labour in cash and kind. Meanwhile, some activities have required villagers' time and/or money. As new resources and new ways of determining and organising certain activities are introduced, they meet and come to interact with prevailing socio-economic opportunities and constraints, and the case studies point to partly similar, partly different patterns of interplay.

Across the three villages, as people are busy making as good a living as they can, development activities are rarely their main focus of attention. Rather, villagers have incorporated the new features only to the extent and in ways that make sense to them, and in so doing, they have sometimes come to perceive a different value of certain

activities than intended and to use them in different ways. As noted in 8.1.3, villagers commonly consider the income that sometimes comes with development activities, such as payment for construction work, as of more importance than what is being constructed and have come to include such income opportunities in their livelihood strategies. This is most evident in the village where people are quite tired of the multitude of development activities, but they clearly count on food-for-work to regularly take place during the idlest season, and are upset when it instead starts in the beginning of the busy harvest season. This is also where villagers are most used to various sorts of handouts, but apparently least interested in and expectant of them. Meanwhile, in the other lowland village, people have come to count on recurring food-for-work projects as well as handouts at times of flooding. The reliance on handouts, however, is strongest in the highland village, where development intervention is most recent but where food security is also lowest. Emergency assistance is part of the picture at the new site, without which people would not have managed and with which they calculate when considering whether to remain or move back.

Across the three villages, people have thus come to expect and partly rely on various sorts of development input as more or less regular sources of income, or at least possible ones to compare to other potential sources. Such including of aid in their livelihood strategies may be rational for people who are pressed to choose and combine from among available sources. Approaches, rules and requirements have differed and changed across agencies and over time, and there are no guarantees that there will be paid work next year or emergency relief after the next flooding. As pointed out, however, peasants commonly face high risks and other sources of income, too, are more or less unreliable, depending on for example rainfall, taxes, prices, access to fishing lakes or to businessmen willing to buy their catches. Expecting and relying on payments and handouts from development agencies is thus not necessarily a sign of 'created dependency', with its negative connotation, but could provide valuable additions to other sources of income and livelihood, which it would be irrational to not consider. Also, even when not used the way intended, some of the resources and income opportunities introduced with development intervention have contributed to poverty alleviation. In all three villages, many would for example have managed less well – i.e. would have been poorer and hungrier – the last few years without food-for-work and emergency relief.

Apart from the potential income for individuals and households, with development intervention comes the potential of attracting resources for the community. The empirical research shows that villagers have a more or less clear perception of different development agencies doing different things, in different ways and with different requirements. As noted in 8.1.3, people also tend, though to a different extent, to accept what they perceive as the organisations' rules. It is widely recognised that the intended beneficiaries of development intervention often try to play up to the expectations of developers, adapting their behaviour in anticipation of where they see potential benefits. Salemink, for example, shows how people consciously accepted

various PRA exercises in order to please development workers and get a project. Some people may also learn to manipulate or subvert various kinds of intervention, responding to what they perceive as the developers' wishes and what they may be prepared to offer (Salemink 2006; Olivier de Sardan 2005: 86, 144ff; Long 2001: 233; Crewe and Harrison 1998: 157f). As repeatedly illustrated in the case studies, village meetings are perceived as a major feature of development intervention. Villagers tend to attend such meetings when it seems worthwhile and important to please those who have called for it, while also considering other pressing needs and constraints. The attendance and attitudes to such meetings differ between the villages, though. In the village where development intervention is most recent and meetings still quite rare, people generally turn up and – though the attendance may be reflecting the wish to please external actors – seem to enjoy the occasion. Meanwhile, in the village where there have been most development activities, far fewer people attend, reflecting the largely prevailing attitude of fatigue and disillusionment. At least in the two lowland villages, villagers have also reportedly learnt to discern what development staff wants them to say at such meetings. According to Kao Kim Horn, this goes on at an aggregate level, too, as Cambodians have become familiar with the culture of international development and know what funders want to hear (Kao Kim Hourn 1998: 194). Related to such figuring out of what to request in order to attract as much as possible, is the tendency of taking what is perceived as being offered, whether it is really needed or not, which is most clear in the case of buffaloes that are not used.

As also discussed in 8.1.3, local cash contribution is among the requirements of some development agencies, at least sometimes and for some activities. The empirical research points to different approaches among villagers across the case study sites to such contribution, related to the possibility of attracting resources. In the village where cash contribution is largely accepted (but partly avoided) despite the recognition that the organisation could afford to pay the whole cost, the explicit rationale is that villagers' contribution will attract larger resources – 'we need to pay a little to get a lot'. Meanwhile, in the case where villagers have turned down the offer of a project which would have implied cash contribution, a canal as such was not deemed valuable enough and the construction would not imply any paid work.

In rural Cambodia, accepting perceived rules and requirements may reflect, apart from a habit of obedience, a rational strategy of doing what is needed in order to attract expected benefits. Development activities are recognised as sources of income, so not trying to get the most out of all available opportunities would be fairly irrational for people who are dependent on every source of income every year. The different patterns of response across the case study villages, then, largely reflect differences in the experience of development intervention and in the availability of other socio-economic opportunities and constraints. Where there has been more development intervention, people have learnt to more actively deal with agencies, while where there has been less, people tend to adjust more passively (or obediently).

The empirical research also confirms well known differences among individual villagers, with some of them being able to analyse variations across agencies and activities and how to use available opportunities. This points to what Olivier de Sardan outlines as two principles of behaviour in the face of development operations: selection and sidetracking. Though the intervention comes as a package, people pick it apart and select among the elements proposed. And as people stick to their own objectives when exploiting available opportunities, resources are diverted away from the intended use (Olivier de Sardan 2005: 144ff). Other villagers at the case study sites, however, are not in a position to consciously determine how to respond to various features of development intervention, to analyse, to choose or to at all benefit from them. A number of the poorest villagers cannot go for meetings, or may not know that there is a meeting, and cannot wait for a food-for-work project since they must collect beetles far away or otherwise make a low income. Even those who are characterised as powerless, however, have an account in which they are at the centre, and they continue acting within their own worldview, operating their own projects and following their own logics and priorities. Within their conceptions and capacities, all villagers will try to make the best use of the options available to them. Villagers may thus – depending on their resources and priorities – actively and selectively engage with, ignore or resist certain intervention activities, they may passively accept, or they may more or less unconsciously forgo them. Interplay with and accommodation of external features are far from always the result of rational calculation and conscious strategising, however. Whether a development intervention has come to form an important part of people's life-worlds or not, and whether their responses are strategically chosen or not, their behaviour may imply contestation and negotiation of what has been introduced with an intervention (Long 2001: 27, 32; Crewe and Harrison 1998: 1, 24; Arce and Long 1992: 21, 37, 213).

8.2.2 Community mobilising and assistance being reworked

The new ways of organising community work that have been introduced with CARERE/Seila also meet and come to interact with prevailing socio-economic institutions (cf. Li 2007). The case studies point to more or less well-established and functional practices of neighbours assisting each other and helping those who are worse off, and of certain people or groups mobilising others for communal work and community ceremonies. Such arrangements affect villagers' perceptions of and responses to requirements of labour contribution and opportunities for paid work that have come with development intervention, and the empirical research points to different patterns and intensity of interplay.

In the village where monks from the nearby pagoda play an important role in village life and *aachaars* and other old villagers are highly respected, there is an intense interplay between new and old arrangements. There are signs and testimonies that development agencies have partly taken over the role of mobilising for joint work, which has marginalised and made monks and *aachaars* less active – 'the monks have

taken a break'. There are also signs and testimonies, however, that traditional leaders have been consciously and crucially involved in externally initiated and funded development activities. The monks are said to be decisive for convincing people to contribute labour – 'villagers only come if the monks call'. This could be interpreted as the monks' role being both exploited and revitalised at the encounter with development intervention. While their involvement helps adjust activities to local practices and motivate villagers – and thus to some extent rescues the intervention – their engagement is also extended into new areas which helps preserve and widen their status and mandate. Meanwhile, in the lowland village where monks do not have as strong a role and *aachaars* are fewer and less influential, there is less interplay between development intervention and social institutions. Here, villagers are reluctant to contribute labour and cash or to at all engage with development activities, which, as discussed, could be partly explained by negative experiences and fatigue. It could, however, also be caused by the apparent lack of functioning community mobilising and informal leaders who could motivate villagers. At the intervention's encounter with the local setting, there are no working arrangements to feed into that could rescue the new ones.

These differences in mobilisation potential between the two lowland villages are apparently reinforced by the prevailing patterns of social cohesion and differentiation. In the case where villagers are quite willing to involve in development activities, partly with the help of traditional mobilisers, the general sense of social cohesion is stronger and economic disparities are smaller than where villagers are more reluctant to involve. In the highland village, then, social institutions and norms are undergoing fundamental changes. While arrangements for community assistance are partly lacking at the new site, there are indications of increased social differentiation in terms of values and ambitions. Still, and again apparently reflecting the tendency in this case to obediently adjust, villagers have allegedly without objections contributed labour as well as cash to development activities. In the lowland villages, too, though not as radically as in the highland case, there are indications of long-standing social norms and institutions being reworked. Previously functioning arrangements of labour exchange and community assistance have apparently become less prominent, solidarity within the community less expected and economic disparities more accepted. There are also indications that long-term patronage ties, that used to be mutually useful, have been partly replaced by temporary cash employment, implying less long-term responsibility. This is most evident in the village where the economic disparities are biggest and better off villagers prefer to employ others, also from outside the village, for cash payment. In the other lowland village, too, poorer villagers are less certain than previously to get seasonal employment with the same employer, while at least aspects of patronage remain, illustrated by the poor widow who not only gets a salary from a wealthier family but also help with school fees when needed.

It is difficult to determine if and to what extent changes of social institutions and norms are related to development intervention. A decreased expectation of community

assistance might well be related to the experience of emergency relief, where villagers hope for assistance from development agencies and are therefore potentially less inclined to help the poorest. The experience of development agencies initiating, funding and organising community work may also to some extent have made villagers and traditional leaders expect them to do so, and the capacity of others to mobilise villagers may thereby have declined – while, as noted above, it may also have been strengthened. Meanwhile, payment for unskilled labour has apparently influenced the attitudes and approaches to community work, with villagers widely reporting that they are less willing than previously to work for free. Again, this is not necessarily a sign of 'created dependency'. Rather, the experience of getting paid for their labour and the knowledge that development agencies can afford it make it highly rational not to work without payment for people who badly need an income. As noted, perceived promises by development agencies that have not been fulfilled and unhappiness with how development resources have been distributed and used are other – quite reasonable – reasons for villagers not being inclined to work for free.

So, though there are indications that villagers' experiences from development intervention have affected social institutions and norms, it is still difficult to determine or delimit the causes of such changes. That is part of the point. Development intervention gets embedded in the local setting and its impact cannot be clearly separated and distinguished. Rather, it intermingles with other features and ongoing changes. Social relations are reworked, community cooperation and the sense of responsibility change, new income opportunities appear, economic disparities increase and new values and attitudes emerge. Such changes are related to modernisation, monetarisation, the increasing access to the market and/or the incorporation into the state, but also to the encounter with resources, ideas and arrangements that are introduced with development intervention. It has been pointed out that externally designed and more or less formal ways of organising things may bypass and undermine prevailing local arrangements. It is important not to idealise informal local institutions – they may for example be more or less democratic. It has, however, been claimed that they are often more flexible and more relevant to poor people's livelihoods than externally introduced ones. The case studies indicate that development intervention, then, mainly tends to feed into and reinforce ongoing changes of such social institutions, norms and differentiation (e.g. Hughes 2001: 55; Crewe and Harrison 1998; Davies 1998; Leach et al 1997b: 90; Cousins 1997: 61).

To sum up and return to the research question: *as to how people relate to and engage with opportunities and requirements related to CARERE/Seila in their socio-economic strategies*, various features have in different ways and to a different extent been included in the prevailing strategies across the case study villages and among individual villagers. Resources for the community and income opportunities for individuals and households, as well as requirements of attending meetings and contributing labour and cash, have been accommodated depending on how they

compare to other opportunities and constraints and expected returns. Patterns of interplay with local socio-economics thus vary with for example the availability – at community as well as individual/household level – of other income opportunities and of time and labour constraints.

As to how opportunities and requirements related to CARERE/Seila compare to and interact with prevailing socio-economic institutions, there are again different patterns of interplay. Where there is a strong tradition of community mobilisation, there are indications both of local institutions having been bypassed and undermined, and of such institutions being built upon and strengthened. Meanwhile, the lack of such tradition has apparently made it difficult to mobilise villagers in relation to development activities. Villagers' experiences of development agencies mobilising for community work and assisting the poorest, and of getting paid for their labour, have apparently fed into recent changes of social institutions and norms in terms of a decreased inclination to assist the poorest and to work for free. Still, and throughout, it is difficult to determine or delimit the causes of the recent changes, or the possible influence of development intervention, since such intervention is inevitably embedded in local dynamics.

8.3 Running a village; research question 3

The resources and benefits that come with CARERE/Seila are to be distributed in certain ways and development related positions have been established with certain tasks and responsibilities. Such distribution and such positions, providing potential sources of power, wealth and social status, meet and come to interact with the prevailing formal and informal leadership structures and roles and the political culture, which influences how they are accommodated in village socio-politics. Perceptions and experiences of how the village is run and decisions are made are important, especially for a development intervention aimed at improving local governance. The third research question was therefore: *How do the distribution of development resources and benefits and the establishment of development related positions of the governance intervention under study interact with local power structures, political culture and climate, and attitudes to leadership?*

In this section, findings from the three case studies are systematised and discussed as regards local power structures and attitudes to being a leader.

8.3.1 Local power structures reinforced, or balanced, or challenged

Socio-political dynamics are part of the local settings in which development resources and benefits are distributed and development related positions are established. With local power and leadership structures as well as political culture and climate varying a lot across the case study villages, the empirical research provides rich examples of wide variations in the ensuing interplay.

One of the case studies points to the well known tendency of reproducing and reinforcing unequal power structures by increasing the influence of the already

powerful (e.g. Riddell 2007: 159; Mosse 2005; Cooke and Kothari 2001; Hughes 2001). Here, where village leadership is quite unclear and informal, two men's unrivalled dominance has enabled them to largely control the distribution of development resources and the appointment of development positions. While it was apparently beyond questioning that the Village Chief would also be the leader of the VDC, a militiaman can assert strong influence despite not being a VDC member. Prevailing formal and informal power structures have thus, through their encounter with development intervention, been reinforced, as the sphere of influence of two already dominating men has been extended into this new and resource rich area. This reinforcement may, however, turn out to have an opposite effect. Negative experiences and rumours related to development intervention, in terms of perceived corruption, power abuse and unfair distribution, have created or contributed to a deep and widespread dissatisfaction with the village leadership. This has apparently happened as the encounter with development intervention has made mismanagement more evident and relevant, the Village Chief's lack of commitment and competence more problematic, and his failure to temper the militiaman's forceful involvement more aggravating. The undeniable mismanagement and ensuing dissatisfaction have made villagers criticise the leaders in unprecedented ways, and partly as an outcome of such critical discussions, a few potential new entrusted leaders have emerged, contributing to the idea of actually trying to replace the village leadership. Interestingly and perhaps paradoxically, development intervention may thus, through its interplay with local socio-politics, have strengthened the existing leaders in the short run, while in the longer run undermined and rendered them vulnerable and the whole leadership structure fragile.

Meanwhile, in the other lowland case study village, where leadership is somewhat more formal and functional, its interplay with development resources and positions has resulted in division of work and sharing of power. Two men have (re)gained influence/prominence and leadership status due to their strong involvement in development work, and since the Village Chief is happy to be relieved of certain tasks, but his authority is still sometimes needed, a good cooperation has emerged. Development intervention has thus apparently contributed to broadening and consolidating an already fairly solid village leadership. However, the dominance in the management of development activities by two individuals comes at the expense of others' involvement and influence. Interacting with prevailing power and gender structures, development intervention has given rise to a 'development elite', as the heavy domination of two men has stopped especially a couple of women from playing an active role and gaining the same kind of competence and recognition.

In the highland case study village, then, where leadership and power structures are very much in flux, the interplay with development intervention is deeply embedded in other ongoing socio-political changes. Though some of the village leaders do hold development related positions, a few young men, who are allegedly more enthusiastic, capable and active, have gained confidence and influence due to their involvement in

development activities. Though still a limited phenomenon, development intervention has thus apparently fed into the recent diminishing of the role and status of village elders, as they are unable to perform some of their previous tasks, while also partly sidestepped when it comes to new tasks related to 'development'.

The different patterns of interplay between development resources and positions and local power structures also include the prevailing socio-political climate and culture. It is commonly argued that development intervention risks increasing existing tensions, as described by Long: rather than eliminating social and normative struggles, intervention practices are likely to radicalise them, reflecting and exacerbating differences and conflict between social groups (Long 2001: 41, 88; 1999: 19; cf. Olivier de Sardan 2005: 185ff). This is largely confirmed by the empirical findings. Where village leadership has been both strengthened and rendered vulnerable, social cohesion is strong, with close and engaged neighbour relations, which helps explain the strong feelings and fervent talking evoked by the perceived mismanagement. Meanwhile, where a development elite has emerged, general social cohesion is weaker and the atmosphere largely one of indifference, which has been fed into by development intervention, and helps explain why it has been possible for two men to dominate. In the village where traditional leaders are partly sidestepped, then, the socio-political climate has undergone fundamental changes and the flux is reinforced by the interplay with development intervention, with younger men regarding themselves as 'modern' and expressing themselves in derogatory terms about the elders in relation to development activities – 'such serious work, they cannot do'. Interacting with the prevailing socio-political climate and culture, development intervention has thus in one case contributed to dissatisfaction and strong negative attitudes, in one case created or reinforced a socio-political division between a small leadership group and the majority, and in the third case added to recent economic, cultural and value based gaps, partly along generational lines.

Such tendencies of exacerbated socio-political divisions and conflicts, as well as the different patterns of interplay with local power structures, are partly explained by a common tendency among development agencies to focus attention on one or a few individuals, which will have different consequences depending on, among other things, these individuals' personal qualities and socio-political recognition. The empirical research shows that approaching mainly someone who does not have the relevant competence and commitment may impede the work, while if those who are approached are able and engaged, the work probably gets done. Though focusing on a few individuals may thus be 'efficient' or not, it implies a reliance on these few, while the capacity and commitment of others are wasted. This is related to a tendency, also pointed to by the empirical findings, of women being marginalised in development activities, which is largely explained by the interplay with the prevailing power structures and gender relations. Though women are commonly assigned development related positions through gender quotas, they tend to get less responsible tasks than

their male colleagues since they do not enjoy male leaders' confidence and/or are not expected to play a more influential role.

The effects on local power structures of focusing on a few individuals also depend on village leaders' attitudes and approaches to their leadership tasks, and to sharing them. In all three case study villages, development intervention has contributed to the appearance of alternative or additional leaders. Though this has happened in different ways and for different reasons, it is partly explained by the requirements of new sorts of competence and commitment, which existing leaders may not be able and/or willing to fulfil, while the quality of others may be tested. The Village Chiefs throughout the case study areas are generally tired and not hugely interested in development work. In one case, however, he has welcomed others to take on the new tasks and responsibilities, which has allowed two men to gain leadership recognition. In another case, the Village Chief (along with the influential militiaman) has tried hard to hold on to his power. Though not willing or able to shoulder the new responsibilities, he has also not been willing to hand them over to others, which has apparently had the opposite effect by giving rise to alternative leaders. This Village Chief could behave like a 'father' and be liked, or at least tolerated, as such, as long as the tasks involved were limited. With development intervention, however, his evident lack of competence and commitment made it impossible to retain villagers' confidence, which opened up for others to gain their trust and recognition. In the highland case, then, several traditional elders, including the Village Chief, do apparently not grasp some of the new development related features, and development agencies have instead turned to a few younger men, who have gained confidence, though not (yet) general leadership status.

This illustrates that development intervention, through its various interplay with the prevailing power structures and socio-political climate, provides potential sources of socio-political status and influence – for those who are for various reasons willing, able and/or allowed to tap them. It is widely recognised that those who participate in development activities can gain dominance over those who do not, and who may rather be excluded and alienated. People in many cases wish to be associated with development, allying and identifying themselves with modernity and progressiveness and distancing themselves from others who they may look down upon as backward (Olivier de Sardan 2005: 148f, 185ff; Crewe and Harrison 1998: 134ff, 157, 170, 190, 193; Arce et al 1994). Such a wish to be associated with 'development', along with a tendency to look down upon others, is most clear in the ethnic minority village, where the recent changes are also most thorough. In the lowland case, too, however, where two men strongly dominate development work, there is a big distance between them and the majority of the population. Meanwhile, where village leaders are holding on to their power, others have gained leadership status due to their opposition to how development activities are managed rather than to their involvement in such activities. The two lowland cases also reflect the well known resistance among local elites to real socio-political change (Chambers 1983; Li 2007: 4). This is of course most apparent

where the leaders hold on to their power – and where this may have an opposite effect. In the case where the Village Chief has welcomed two additional leaders, however, his status has been strengthened and village leadership consolidated – and changed only in ways that are very acceptable to formal as well as informal leaders.

8.3.2 Reluctance to being a leader carried over

The establishment of development related positions also meets with locally prevailing attitudes and approaches to being a leader. The case studies point to similar patterns of previous experiences of leadership affecting how the new positions are perceived and related to.

Apart from the two men who have gained leadership status through their involvement in development activities, development position-holders throughout the case study areas express strong reluctance to holding their positions. This may be surprising, considering that involvement in development activities is a potential source of power, wealth and status. The reluctance, however, clearly resembles the prevailing attitudes among village leaders. As noted, the main alleged reason for village leaders' claimed reluctance is that their roles involve a lot of work but no or very low payment. At least since the 1980s, being a village leader has also implied an unpleasant position between fellow villagers and local authorities. Among the leadership tasks has been to implement authority decisions, such as recruiting soldiers and labour force and collecting rice and money. Apart from the obvious risk of this rendering leaders unpopular among other villagers, they have reportedly had to pay themselves if they have not been able to collect what they should, and provide labour force more often than others. In at least one case, land distribution in the 1980s is also perceived to have been unfair, with village leaders favouring themselves and their relatives, which made them further unpopular. Conflict resolution, too, which remains the major perceived task of village leaders, may be unpleasant since it usually implies that at least one party is dissatisfied with the outcome.

Such experiences and expectations are largely carried over into the attitude and approach to holding a development related position. Such a position, too, may imply unpleasant relations to fellow villagers as well as to local leaders and/or development agencies. Here, the main reason for reluctance is a sense of being used and blamed. Several position-holders complain that other villagers dislike and mistrust them, scolding them for getting benefits from their involvement in development activities rather than appreciating their efforts. The suspicions and rumours among villagers regarding development position-holders' role and conduct – and position-holders' ensuing discomfort – are partly explained by a lack of tangible tasks. Several position-holders have not received adequate training or equipment and the level of activity has in many cases been low. Without meaningful assignments, position-holders are not confident in their roles and afraid of not fulfilling their obligations or others' expectations.

The attitudes to holding a development related position are thus clearly influenced by the comprehension of village leadership roles, and the perceived experiences are similar. However, while holding a leadership position, at least in the past, implied certain status and respect and could render certain privileges, the same does apparently not apply for most of those holding a development related position. Apart from a few individuals who have been able to tap the sources of power, wealth and status, development position-holders rather sense that they face heavy work and uncertain responsibilities for which they get no remuneration.

Considering these perceptions and experiences, along with the socio-economic circumstances of poverty and time constraints, it is quite comprehensible that villagers avoid taking on a development position. Meanwhile, villagers generally agree that you have to accept a position when elected or appointed, which partly explains the frequent stories of people asking others not to vote for them, or leaving the village at the time of elections. Apart from resembling the old strategy of running away to avoid solider or labour recruitment, this apparently reflects the common approach of obeying and making only hidden resistance. The claimed reluctance and compulsion could, however, also be reflecting an old habit and strategy of avoiding responsibilities, along with a wish to seem humble. Village leaders as well as development position-holders may want to seem reluctant, in order for villagers to be grateful to them and not too demanding. In a socio-political culture where it pays best to keep a low profile, they may also be concerned not to be perceived as ambitious by fellow villagers or local officials.

To sum up and return to the research question: *as to how the distribution of development resources and benefits and the establishment of development related positions interact with local power structures and political culture and climate*, there has been vivid and highly varying interplay, with examples of the new features reinforcing existing power structures while also rendering them fragile, of consolidating and broadening a solid leadership structure, and of feeding into recent socio-political flux. Throughout, development intervention has contributed to the appearance of alternative or additional leaders, though in very different ways and with very different consequences for village leadership. In one case, CARERE/Seila has apparently contributed to serious challenging of the previously unchallenged village leadership, though not the way intended, while in another case, there have only been changes that are acceptable to, and welcomed by, village leaders. Such vivid and varied patterns of interplay point to local socio-political dynamics limiting the intentional impact on socio-politics that development intervention can have. What has rather happened is that leadership roles, relations and practices are stirred up and around – with highly varying outcomes and impact, in intended and unintended ways.

As to how the establishment of development related positions interact with local attitudes to leadership, the prevailing experiences and expectations of leadership roles and relations have strongly affected how the new positions are perceived and

responded to. There is a strong alleged reluctance to holding a development related position, along with a sense that you cannot refuse when elected or appointed. Such reluctance and perceived compulsion are part of the negotiations and contestation that arise when positions are introduced and that influence how assignments and responsibilities, and the intentions behind them, come to be accommodated in village socio-politics.

8.4 Keeping away or involving in protests; research question 4

With CARERE/Seila, commune authorities have been assigned new tasks and provided resources for local development projects to be allocated following certain criteria and procedures. Apart from the projects as such, the intention is to create positive experiences and expectations among villagers and encourage them to be politically active. The new tasks and procedures, however, meet and come to interact with the prevailing and perceived authority roles and relations, which influences how the new features are accommodated in villagers' attitudes and approaches to the local authorities. The fourth research question was therefore: *How do the commune tasks and allocation procedures of the governance intervention under study interact with villagers' experiences of and expectations on the local authorities and with villagers' political involvement?*

In his section, findings from the three case studies are systematised and discussed as regards the commune's role in development activities and villagers' political involvement.

8.4.1 The commune overshadowed by *angkaar*

The ambition of creating positive expectations by establishing the commune as a major actor in development and villagers' influence on decisions, meet and come to interact with prevailing practices. The empirical research shows that commune officials across the case study areas have taken on the new tasks related to development intervention with varying degrees of commitment and enthusiasm, but points to similar patterns of interplay with villagers' experiences and perceptions – though with the highland case somewhat deviating.

All three case studies point to a scarce comprehension among villagers of the local governance structure, with commune officials and bodies blurred into vague notions of 'higher levels', which are essentially perceived as remote instances inhabited by 'big people', largely inaccessible to ordinary villagers. The general perception is that contacts with local authorities are for those who have done something wrong, while others rarely have any reason to approach them. The case studies also indicate deep-seated expectations of top-down relations and low expectations of fair and professional assistance. Villagers and village leaders are used to receiving instructions from above and do apparently not expect to know beforehand what local officials will do, to understand why they are doing it, and in many cases not even who they are. The general approach among the population, then, is to keep a low profile. Despite stories

of villagers running away to avoid recruitment, people tend to accept and abide the authorities' instructions, even when they are not foreseen and the reasons not comprehended.

This approach apparently reflects an attitude of indifference. The 'whatever they say, we do' is not usually said with much fear or anger, but mainly with a tired sigh, indicating that villagers have more important things to think about, and to be able to concentrate on those, it is best to keep 'them' happy. This tendency of not seeing what the authorities do as of much relevance is fairly similar across the three villages. In the highland case study area, however, relations are more complex and an extent of fear may be involved. Here, the lack of familiarity and positive expectations is added to by cultural distance and a history of mutual suspicions, and, as noted, highland villagers now have a strong urge to be perceived as legitimate among lowland authorities.

These perceptions and approaches influence how the commune's new role is understood and accommodated. Due to their new tasks, some local officials have visited the case study areas in connection to development activities, which has made villagers slightly more familiar with the Commune Chief and, to a less extent, other officials. Though some villagers may therefore associate these officials with certain activities such as road and canal construction, other – past as well as current – experiences still make villagers perceive the authorities as dealing mainly with other issues. In the highland case study area, relations between villagers and local authorities have changed more thoroughly, apparently reinforced by development intervention. Here, villagers have significantly more contact with the local authorities than a few years ago, including a new reliance on external regulation of natural resource use and related conflict resolution, and including a wish to have access to various services that are perceived as available.

Such services are, however, across the three villages, associated with development organisations rather than the local authorities. With development intervention, villagers have developed a new understanding of the word *angkaar* (see 8.1.1). Though the notion of *angkaar* is quite vague, it usually translates to development agencies, from large multilaterals such as UNDP and WFP to local NGOs, and to their staff as well as seconded government officials. It is also definitely perceived as having more influence and resources than the commune, with the LDF allocation, for example, perceived as a calculation exercise conducted by development workers rather than a decision by the CDC. Such perceptions are not surprising considering the long-term experiences and are not easily changed – but instead apparently partly reinforced by the interplay with development intervention. While there is no historical experience of authorities providing services or of public funds being used for public goods, the current development practice, too, makes it reasonable to perceive external agencies rather than the commune as major development actors. Initiative and control over development activities and resources are clearly with agency staff rather than commune officials. Considering the different levels of resources, expecting or hoping for assistance from development agencies, and learning to please and deal with them,

is commonly easier and more rewarding than turning to the commune. The presence and perception of such a supposedly rich and powerful actor counteracts the intention of giving the commune, or other local actors, a key role in development, with the dominance of *angkaar* making it difficult for villagers to imagine others as anything but executors of decisions. The fact that Seila facilitators are actually district and province staff (DFTs, PFTs) does apparently not change villagers' perceptions. Rather, like agency staff, these facilitators are – correctly – perceived as paid and provided expensive motorbikes by the development agency, and therefore associated with this agency rather than with the state.

CARERE/Seila's efforts to give the commune a key role in development also meet with villagers' experiences of other development activities in which the local authorities are not consciously involved. This reflects Li's notion of programmes at cross-purposes with each other (Li 2007: 19). As Rusten notes, donor-funded activities outside the commune structure, and parallel systems of funding that are not integrated into commune development planning, undermine the communes' credibility and weaken their ability to respond to the constituencies' needs (Rusten et al. 2004: 161ff, 210). Moreover, as seen, though different agencies use different approaches, the tangible village level activities may be quite similar – such as funding infrastructure projects, calling for meetings, forming community groups and visiting the Village Chief or the VDC leader. Despite different ambitions, CARERE/Seila may thus feed into and reinforce experiences and expectations of development activities dominated by external agencies rather than the commune.

Though the commune's intended development role is being overshadowed by development agencies, villagers' approach to these agencies is coloured by their experiences of local and higher authorities. Using the same term for development agencies as for the state during the Khmer Rouge terror apparently mirrors a habit and a remaining expectation of receiving instructions from a vague but powerful actor. Considering also less extreme long-term experiences of authorities, as well as the prevailing practice, it is not surprising that villagers perceive what development workers say as instructions, or possibly suggestions, rather than questions. Even less than villagers expect predictability and comprehensibility of what outside agents do, do they expect to have a say in decisions made outside the village. Accepting without questioning, though possibly avoiding, such perceived instructions, then, is also not surprising in a political environment where it has historically paid best to keep a low profile. Accepting what is perceived as being offered and trying to figure out what to ask for may also be rational since development agencies do have their particular focuses and preferences of what to fund. When such strategies are carried over into villagers' approach to development agencies, however, there may be a clash of expectations and the intentions of the intervention may not be realised.

As with village leaders' and position-holders' claimed reluctance, it could be speculated that villagers pretend not to be aware of the local authorities' role and villagers' means of influencing. Exercising your democratic rights is a difficult and

demanding, perhaps risky, task. Especially for people who are not used to it, it may seem rational to minimise your own responsibilities by claiming to not have – or to not know of – any ways of influencing. If the lack of awareness is to some extent pretended and a sign of caution and 'laziness', this is crucial for the possibilities of introducing 'good governance'. If people are 'given' democracy without having fought for it, they may not be motivated to use and protect it. While it is highly rational to accept what is perceived as the development agencies' rules and to take what is being offered, such attitudes and approaches risk stopping people from making independent suggestions, influencing decisions, holding local authorities accountable and gaining positive experiences.

8.4.2 Villagers' political involvement partly related to development intervention

A new role and different expectations of the commune authorities are also hoped to increase villagers' political involvement. An assumption is that villagers' influence on development activities will 'empower' them, by contributing to confidence and capacity also in situations that are not directly linked to those activities. The ambition of wider political involvement, however, meets and comes to interact with villagers' prevailing approaches and strategies, and the findings are ambiguous.

As seen, development related meetings and local contribution have not created any general sense of influence or ownership and responsibility, and villagers still tend to keep a low profile in relation to the local authorities. Parallel to this, however, the empirical research reveals examples of substantial political involvement. In two of the villages, people have defended what they perceive as their rights and protested against what they perceive as unacceptable injustices, while in the third village, people are allegedly prepared to go against the authorities' perceived instructions. In one of the case study areas, hundreds of people have signed petitions and participated in a demonstration when their access to nearby fishing lakes was threatened, and during the course of events, people have approached the commune authorities to get advice on how to proceed. In the other lowland village, the unhappiness with the village leadership has accumulated and, soon after the empirical research was concluded, resulted in a formal complaint to the local authorities, while a number of villagers have also signed a petition against the authorities' ban of village wine production. Meanwhile in the highland village, people are planning to move back to the previous location if necessary, even against the will of the authorities.

Though these instances of political involvement, and what they represent, go well in line with the intentions and ideals of CARERE/Seila, it is difficult to determine if, or to what extent, they are related to development intervention. They also raise the question of what makes people take political action. As discussed by Scott, people tend to resist and protest when it is deemed useful and worthwhile according to local rationalities (Scott 1985; 1990; cf. Li 2007: chapter 5). With the view of villagers as rational agents, it is reasonable to assume that they will take action if what is at stake is of relevance and concern, i.e. if an issue is crucial enough for their livelihood or

otherwise and if the perceived incentives, like expected benefits, are stronger than the perceived disincentives, like risks or loss of income.

This assumption is confirmed by the empirical research, indicating that the level of political involvement does vary with the perceived importance of the issue, and with incentives and disincentives for involving. If and how the perceived relevance and incentives are related to development intervention vary, however. The decreased access to fishing and the threat of a wine tax were both strong enough reasons for villagers to take action. Signing a petition against the wine tax did not involve much danger. Meanwhile, though involving in the fishing protests was clearly risky, villagers eventually reckoned that it was not worse than not having access to the lakes. The issues at stake here are potentially more crucial to people's well-being than development intervention, and have no obvious link to it. Meanwhile, the formal complaint about village leadership is clearly related to such intervention, as it made mismanagement and power abuse more relevant, the Village Chief's apparent lack of commitment and competence more evident and an already feared man's violent behaviour more menacing. Villagers' sense of justice was evoked, their sense of security was threatened and the perceived overall relevance of poor leadership increased. Development intervention, through its interplay with socio-economic circumstances, leadership structures and socio-political climate has thus contributed to creating strong enough incentives for villagers to take action. In the highland village, then, people's determination to do what is required to make a living – i.e. to potentially move back to the previous location – scarcely indicates an increased inclination to protest or claim their rights. Here, villagers are used to both managing on their own and being disliked by the state. So, when they are now concerned to get permission before moving, it rather indicates an increased inclination to comply with the authorities – because it appears rational and worthwhile. In other words, the move that came with development intervention has not empowered villagers to take political action, but it may force them to do so because of the socio-economic situation at the new location.

Another obvious requirement for people to involve politically is that they know of ways to act. The case studies clearly illustrate the importance of access to information and familiarity with the government structure, which is related to the importance of local leaders and mobilisers. Again, whether the instances of political involvement are related to CARERE/Seila or not varies. In the cases of fishing and wine production, the initiative and most participants came from other villages closer to the provincial centres, and the initiators had both strong personal interests in the issue and were more familiar with the authorities than anyone in the case study villages. Without these external initiatives, the protests would not have taken place. In the case study villages, there were, however, people who were committed and trusted enough to follow the external initiatives and to convince others to join. In both cases, these people had, apart from personal interest in the issue, higher education and more experience of the local authorities than most other villagers. In the case of complaints about the village

leadership, then, development intervention and the ensuing dissatisfaction had crucially contributed to the emergence of alternative leaders, while widespread rumours of mismanagement had also prepared the ground, reminding of Scott's notion of gossip as a kind of resistance and democratic 'voice' (Scott 1985: 282). The idea and decision to write a *njaat* emerged from discussions among a small group of villagers who others had started turning to on various issues, and who had gradually taken on a leadership role and become united and determined enough to take action. Meanwhile, in the case of moving without the authorities' permission, it was important that a number of families would do it together. While some were perceived as those who could initiate the move, this perception was apparently not related to development intervention.

At the time of the research, villagers had thus recently been politically involved in ways that they would reportedly not have been a few years ago, i.e. before development intervention started. While many had participated in political actions, even more had seen partially successful outcomes. Across the case study villages and among individual villagers, and to a different extent, people had thereby gained experiences that might prepare the ground for further involvement. As noted, the reasons to protest or otherwise turn to the local authorities can also be expected to grow as land grabbing and commercial fishing and logging increase. Speaking up when your livelihood is being threatened and approaching the local authorities to get assistance if other actors are abusing their power also partly represent the kind of political behaviour that CARERE/Seila aims to encourage. Still and again, it is difficult to determine the impact of development intervention. Socio-economic issues and socio-political roles, relations and strategies would be changing also without externally designed and funded governance and other development intervention. However, even when instances of political involvement are not directly related to the institutional arrangements and participatory activities that have been introduced, it is realistic to assume that some development activities, through their interplay with local dynamics, have helped create some of the conditions. The case studies point to that this may happen in largely unintended ways – for example through the introduction of resources and the abuse of them, through the exposure to local authorities, through the emergence of alternative leaders and through a strengthened sense of justice. The findings thus again illustrate that development intervention cannot be clearly distinguished from the setting where it is implemented, and its impact not clearly predicted. Rather, development related features are embedded in complex dynamics which they may, through various patterns of interplay and often unintended accommodation, feed into and/or counteract.

To sum up and return to the research question: the commune's new intended role has implied a variety of encounters and new experiences, pointing to fairly similar patterns across the three villages, but being ambiguous in terms of emerging relations and behaviour. *As to how the new commune tasks and allocation procedures interact with*

villagers' experiences of and expectations on the local authorities, the interplay has not made villagers perceive the commune as having a key role in development, or to expect influence on development related decisions. The ambition of establishing the commune as a major actor in development is apparently obstructed by the experience and perception of the local authorities as fairly irrelevant for villagers' livelihood and well-being, while also negatively affected by the presence of development agencies with more resources and more influence than the commune. *As to how the commune's new role interacts with villagers' political involvement*, several instances of political involvement point to development intervention sometimes contributing to such action, though in many cases not the way intended.

Before closing the chapter and turning to the research problem, I will once again return to the four research questions in order to converge the responses found in the three case studies.

Throughout, development intervention has given rise to the understanding of 'development' as the tangible activities conducted by development agencies. The general attitudes to such activities differ across the case studies, largely depending on previous experiences and the prevailing social climate. Disillusionment and perceived broken promises have led to fatigue; concern and promises yet to be fulfilled have led to enthusiasm but also objections; far-reaching aspirations and lack of other means have led to compliance and reliance. Throughout, there are rarely any expectations of substantial influence on development activities, and development agencies are perceived as determining various rules and requirements. Meanwhile, villagers' approach to such activities and requirements differ, largely depending on the perceived possibility of attracting development resources and the perceived value of pleasing development agencies. The more or less conscious strategies range from accepting but silently avoiding perceived rules, to not bothering much about them, to cautiously adjusting.

The way and extent to which development intervention has been (more or less consciously) accommodated in villagers' socio-economic strategies vary across the case study sites, largely depending on previous experience and the availability of other opportunities and constraints – from mainly trying to attract resources for the community when the chance arises, to allegedly having no such expectations but counting on regular waged work, and to relying on recurrent input for subsistence. The interplay with local socio-economic institutions, then, unsurprisingly depends on the existence and strength of such insititutions. Where there is strong tradition of community mobilising, this has been both undermined and built upon by development agencies, while the lack of such tradition has made it difficult to mobilise villagers for development work.

Through interplay with local socio-politics, development intervention has affected village power structures in highly different ways: by reinforcing local leaders but also rendering them vulnerable due to their mismanagement of development resources and

activities, by consolidating village leadership and by feeding into recent changes. Throughout, villagers are allegedly reluctant to taking on development related positions, due to negative perceptions of previous leadership roles, which have been fed into by recent experiences.

At the encounter with villagers' long-term perceptions and experiences of authorities outside the village, development intervention has not substantially changed the perceptions and practices – at least not as intended. Throughout, villagers do not perceive the commune or other local authorities as major actors in 'development' and still tend to keep a low profile in relation to them. Across the case study areas, however, development intervention has in various – more or less direct and more or less unintended – ways contributed to instances of political involvement and of villagers approaching the authorities in unprecedented ways.

9. ANALYSIS AND CONCLUSIONS: INTERVENTIONIST RATIONALES AND IMPLEMENTATION INTERPLAY

The starting point of this thesis was a perceived mismatch between the intentions when development intervention is formulated and what happens at implementation. My suppositions were that interventionist thinking and practice are based on usually non-articulated assumptions about societal change and actors' roles, and that local specifics and dynamics, and their encounter and interplay with development intervention, help explain why things typically do not unfold as anticipated. These views led to maintained needs to scrutinise and critically reflect upon interventionist rationales in development assistance, and to put development intervention in perspective by regarding it as part of the context where it is implemented. The purpose was to investigate how interventionist rationales relate to the dynamics of a local setting at implementation, and the research problem was formulated thus: *How do interventionist rationales unfold as a development intervention is implemented in a local setting?*

In this concluding chapter, the research problem will be responded to as the interventionist rationales outlined in section 3.4 are discussed in relation to the implementation interplay found in chapters 5-8, which also leads to a reflection on their viability. I will then point to possible implications of the findings for the practice of development and towards further research.

9.1 The unfolding of interventionist rationales

As argued throughout the study, development intervention is based on the idea that it is possible, desirable and rightful to introduce new features in a local setting in order to change or replace prevailing features and thereby create certain societal change. This idea, in turn, implies certain assumptions about the workings of societal change and different actors' roles in it, which help explain and make possible interventionist practices, while without those assumptions such practices would be difficult to motivate.

Among the rationales traced (see 3.4) is that the societies where development intervention is formulated have something that recipient societies lack and need, be it technology, human resources, values, economic systems, political structures or something else. This something is assumed possible to transfer, i.e. to deliberately introduce where deemed needed. Implied is that there are technical solutions to certain problems of underdevelopment and that external expertise is appropriate for defining these problems and solutions. For the definition and implementation of the solutions, then, i.e. for the transfer/introduction of new features, it is deemed appropriate and necessary to focus narrowly on a few aspects while others can be disregarded in order to make things legible from outside. Implied, too, is that the newly introduced features

will work largely independently from the context, while people will behave uniformly and as predicted. Accordingly and throughout, societal change is regarded as makeable, i.e. as a matter of rational design and management, and the introduction of new features is expected to set in motion a predictable and controllable step-by-step process towards predefined goals.

Unsurprisingly, this is rarely what happens as a development intervention is implemented in a local setting. The empirical case studies of a governance intervention in three Cambodian villages (chapters 5-8) illustrate villagers' understanding of its various features; the incorporation of intervention manifestations in socio-economic strategies and institutions; the influence of and on village leadership and power structures; and the influence of and on local authorities' role and people's political involvement. The findings show partly similar, partly different patterns of more or less intense interplay between intervention manifestations and local features. As the new features meet and come to interact with local contexts, they are somehow perceived and related to and somehow accommodated in villagers' lives and minds as well as in village socio-economics and socio-politics. What the interplay and accommodation look like varies with a range of local specifics and dynamics, including for example social norms and relations, economic conditions and disparities, political culture and climate, and authority roles and approaches. Throughout, as intervention manifestations are appropriated and transformed, they get embedded and come to form part of the picture, though commonly not as intended. The empirical findings thus point to fundamental interventionist assumptions not being realised. Rather, while interventionist rationales say something, implementation interplay does something different. Though this discrepancy is not surprising, it does motivate a discussion on its nature and on the overall possibility, desirability and rightfulness of intervening in order to create certain societal change.

Following the discussion in 3.4, a disregard of much of the local context where intervention is implemented is inherent to interventionist thinking and practice. As illustrated by the empirical research, however, in a local setting – rather than providing an empty stage for intervention – something is always going on, before, during and after intervention. Any local setting has its own specifics and dynamics, different from those of other settings. As new features are introduced, previous experiences and ensuing expectations influence how they are locally interpreted and what attitudes and approaches villagers adopt, which, along with other local characteristics, affect a development intervention's proceedings and outcomes. It is therefore not viable to disregard local contexts. This points to the related assumption of various features being easily transferable. As the case studies show, what works in one place – be it a certain crop or a governance system – may not be appropriate in another, and as all kinds of contextual factors affect in some way, newly introduced features will be remoulded and appropriated, with different outcomes in different settings.

Disregard of the local context is also closely related to the endeavour in interventionist thinking and practice to create legibility from outside. As empirically

illustrated, however, lots of things cannot be grasped by external observers. The complexity of a local setting, which may look irrational and chaotic from outside, is commonly vital for those who live there, representing a highly developed form of order that is locally functional and comprehensible. This goes for continuously adjusted livelihood strategies as well as social arrangements and much more. While there will always be limits to what external observers are likely to know about such local specifics, their categories are too coarse, too static and too stylised to comprise local complexity and dynamics. An externally designed, neat and schematic order inevitably leaves out essential features of any real, functioning social order. Aiming for legibility from outside is therefore not viable.

The aspiration to create legibility from outside is, in turn, linked to the heavy reliance on external expertise inherent in interventionist thinking and practice. The case studies, however, show that such expertise is commonly not appropriate for defining problems and solutions. As noted, due to local complexity and lack of external legibility, lots of things are not knowable to external experts, including for example as disparate things as ecological conditions and informal decision-making processes. Relying on external solutions therefore implies both loosing out on indispensable local knowledge and possibly undermining well-working practices and institutions, and is thus not viable.

Besides the disregard of local contexts, the striving for outside legibility and the reliance on external expertise, another tendency in interventionist thinking and practice is to focus strictly on the intervention, again reflecting the assumption that it will work largely unaffected by the setting where it is implemented. As the empirical research shows, however, this is not what typically happens. Newly introduced features do not operate in isolation, but rather come to interact with prevailing features, get appropriated and form embedded parts of the context. Strictly focusing on the intervention therefore implies ignoring a range of unpredictable but inescapable side effects, and is thus not viable.

Yet another inherent aspect of interventionist thinking and practice, traced in 3.4, is the assumption of abstract, standardised people who uniformly behave as intended and predicted. As unsurprisingly noted in the empirical research, however, real people act according to their own agendas, priorities and experiences. As a development intervention enters their life-worlds, there is therefore likely to be a clash of logics and expectations. Considering local legacies as well as competing interests, opportunities and constraints, the intended beneficiaries may not find intervention manifestations relevant and they may perceive and relate to them differently from predicted. This is clearly and repeatedly illustrated as regards for example meetings, local contribution, food-for-work and development related positions. Also, people within a local setting are different from each other in terms of for example power, wealth, knowledge, personality and their inclination to take risks, to obey, to object etc, and will therefore comprehend and respond differently. Expecting people to uniformly behave as intended is thus not viable.

The tendencies of eliminating human agency are related to a technicalisation and a depoliticisation that are also inherent to interventionist thinking and practice. As the empirical research shows, however, development intervention and the resources that come with it evoke conflicts of interests and political struggles. Societal change is not a technical and harmonious issue, but essentially political, deeply affected by power relations and always entailing diverging needs and priorities. Who gets access to and benefits from various development input, for example, depends on local socio-political relations and culture. As also varyingly illustrated by the case studies, the impact on local power structures and political involvement may be different from intended, depending on for example the prevailing leadership, authority roles and the perceived risks and incentives of engaging politically. Moreover, the intention of transforming reality through development intervention is indeed a political action, and apart from power and politics in the local setting where it is implemented, there are undeniable power disparities and conflicting interests between the designers and the intended beneficiaries. Treating societal change and development intervention as technical, non-political and harmonious is therefore not viable.

Following from the above, a major aspect of the discrepancy between interventionist rationales and their unfolding is that of simplification versus complexity. As seen, throughout development aid – as during colonialism and as part of high modernism – fairly simple interventions have been made into enormously complex systems. Though development intervention, as noted, has become increasingly complex and comprehensive, it is still and necessarily far less multi-faceted than real world societal change.

This is not surprising. Planned intervention cannot be anything but relatively simple, and detailed design/prediction of its proceedings and outcomes must imply a drastic reduction of the real world complexity. As illustrated by the empirical research, however, such a reductionist design is problematic. While the complexity and dynamics of a local setting are crucial for those who live in it, locally adjusted strategies, arrangements, informal processes etc that always go on in the real world cannot be codified and not created or maintained through intervention. While they are plainly too complex to be designed, predicted or controlled, what can be neatly designed is necessarily thin. Going from locally adjusted complexity to externally designed simple order therefore implies severe risks. Vital local arrangements may be undermined by newly introduced stuff, as indicated in the empirical research by the monks 'taking a break' from village work. Local arrangements, agency and appropriation may, however, also be what rescue and make an intervention work despite its thinness, as illustrated by the same monks mobilising villagers to work with the development agency.

The above reflects, on the one hand, the interventionist idea of a designed, predictable and controllable step-by-step process towards a given goal, and, on the other hand, the socially constructed processes that emerge at implementation, with lots of factors at play that are not predictable and controllable. As in any socially

constructed process, there will always be unintended proceedings and outcomes, which will always differ from place to place. Externally designed development intervention thus actually has very little mastery over diverse local situations, over people's behaviour and over the reality that they seek to change. Rather, an intervention is faced by factors beyond its control, on which it partially depends, and the overall interventionist aspiration to design, predict and control societal change is therefore not viable.

So, interventionist rationales do not unfold as intended and the discrepancy is (partly) caused by implementation interplay. As newly introduced features come to interact with prevailing ones, and to be understood and related to differently from intended, they are appropriated and remoulded. Widespread interventionist practice thus builds on flawed assumptions about the workings of societal change and different actors' roles in it, and on futile ambitions to predict and control what cannot be predicted and controlled. These conclusions will have implications for the practice of development, to which we now turn.

9.2 Implications for the practice of development

So, through implementation interplay, newly introduced features are appropriated and remoulded, making proceedings and outcomes unpredictable, which points to the underlying assumptions being flawed and the ambitions to control being futile. As emphasised throughout, however, few people would actually assign to such assumptions and ambitions. It is neither surprising nor unknown that local settings are complex and dynamic, that new and old features come to interact, that people are agents, and that implementation will imply deviations from plans. Still, interventionist rationales keep permeating much of modern society, and development aid keeps being pursued as if societal change could be designed, predicted and controlled.

The reasons for why that practice continues are worth researching (see 9.3). Flawed assumptions, futile ambitions and the failures of development intervention also raise the obvious question of what to potentially do instead, how to handle the situation of burning problems and no easy fixes. Deep and widespread poverty, injustices and human suffering make fundamental changes highly desirable, and we may be convinced that certain norms, values, technology, economic systems, political structures etc would reduce such problems. But we also know that reality and social processes are too complex to allow for the imposition of predesigned solutions. The conclusion is reasonably not that we should give up trying to improve things. As Nederveen Pieterse points out, the failures of aid and the doubts over social engineering, over rationalist planning and over utopian beliefs in the perfectability of society do not alter the necessity of changing the world. Like Li, I also believe that the will to improve is genuine and persistent. Rather than doing 'nothing', which comes down to an endorsement of the status quo, we need to continue relating to poor people's dreams and desires (Nederveen Pieterse 2000b: 182, 187; Li 2007; Vries 2007: 26; cf. Mosse 2004a: 641).

The question is how. Intervening in poor societies could be deemed inappropriate due to the mismatch between inevitable simplification and real world complexity. Rondinelli has pointed to the divergence between the nature of the development process and the practice of development administration, while Nederveen Pieterse states that 'development is too complex to allow partial approaches to have their way – although these lend themselves to technical finesse and managerial intervention'. According to Simon, then, it is not whether to intervene that is at stake, but the basis of intervention. To my mind, too, there are remaining reasons and room for intervening in poor societies. Since proceedings and outcomes cannot be predicted and controlled in detail, however, what is needed is not further refinement of current practices towards ever more sophisticated, comprehensive and complex approaches. As Ferguson noted 20 years ago, pointing out errors and suggesting improvements of development interventions will not change their fundamental character. To my mind, what is instead needed is an alteration of underlying assumptions and ambitions (Rondinelli 1993: 3, 15, 28; Nederveen Pieterse 2001: xii; Simon 1997; Ferguson 1994: 285).

Rather than designing intervention in detail and striving to ensure specific proceedings and outcomes, the inevitable uncertainty and complexity of development/societal change should be recognised and endorsed. The ambition to manage and control proceedings and people's behaviour should be abandoned. Instead, unpredictability should be accepted and more provisionality and contingency allowed for (Gibson-Graham 2005: 6). As Olivier de Sardan notes, deviations from plans and the discrepancy between a development operation on paper and in practice should not be construed as failures. Such sidetracking is an unavoidable outcome of the contact between intervention and reality, a sign that the intervention has been appropriated, and an indispensable normal phenomenon which cannot be eliminated (Olivier de Sardan 2005: 4, 141, 151, 185ff, 203). Again, underlying assumptions and ambitions are key. With the assumption of societal change as makeable and the ambition to design it, deviations from plans are naturally perceived as problematic, while without such assumptions and ambitions there are no predicted proceedings to sidetrack from.

Another key is the ambition in current practice to minimise human agency and appropriation. Rather than trying to predict and direct people's behaviour, such agency and appropriation should be recognised and appreciated. As noted, continuous local adjustment is crucial in local settings, and appropriation/localisation is commonly necessary for vital functions to work when new features are introduced. Related to this, instead of striving for uniformity and looking for one best way and 'correct solution', diversity across settings in proceedings and outcomes should be endorsed.

Also, recognising the limited aptitude of intervention and the limited possibility to design, predict and control exact proceedings and outcomes perhaps speaks for more limited intervention. As touched upon, in my understanding, development intervention can only be fairly simple. Intervening in societal processes is, to my mind, a matter of

stirring things up. Introducing something new into a living setting – be it material, technical, ideational, political or something else – will make something happen. We do not know, however, what processes will be set in motion, or what they will lead to. Rather than more comprehensive and far-reaching intervention with more thorough consequences, more limited approaches could therefore be preferable – though this must not imply a denial of their complex and unpredictable impact. With more limited approaches and different ambitions, features that are valued and deemed beneficial could be introduced, while how they work and what they will lead to must be allowed to depend on local agency and appropriation, and on the prevailing socio-economics and socio-politics.

As noted in the above, the idea of altering assumptions and ambitions towards less makeability and prediction is not new among development scholars. There have also been efforts to use more flexible and less control-oriented approaches in practice, not least among NGOs. Such ideas and practices have, however, been decisively marginalised by opposite mainstream trends towards more sophisticated and more detailed design (see 3.3).

Implied in the endorsement of agency and appropriation is to recognise the political nature of development/societal change and thus repoliticise the development debate, as propagated by Schuurman among others (Schuurman 2009: 839). Rather than imagining development as a technical matter and harmonious process, inevitable conflicts of interests and entanglement with local power relations should be recognised. Again, in my view, there remains scope for intervention, but it should be acknowledged that it will have political implications.

One part of recognising the political nature of development is to not gloss over conflicts of interests and inequalities between interveners and intervened. Development intervention undeniably constitutes an asymmetrical power relationship, which remains throughout changes in vocabulary, policies and approaches. Those who design and fund development intervention clearly have more determining influence on aid policy than the recipients and intended beneficiaries. Scarce attention is commonly paid to this imbalance and it has been called 'the open secret of development' that its character and results are determined by relations of power (Li 2007: 275; King and McGrath 2004: 30; Kothari and Minogue 2002: 13; Baaz 2002; 2005; Crewe and Harrison 1998: 70; Stokke 1996b: 93). Denying or ignoring such power relations between the 'outside' and the 'inside' (and within the 'inside') is part of the simplification on which designing societal change is based, and rather than pretending the aid relationship to be one of equal partners, the power of donors should be acknowledged.

It is also important to be realistic about what can be achieved through intervention in poor societies. As noted (3.4.1) interventionist thinking and practice are coloured by extreme optimism and unrealistic expectations (Easterly 2008: 6; Corbridge 2007: 190; Eyben 2006d: 172; Craig and Porter 2006). The limited scope and capacity of development intervention in relation to other factors must however be recognised.

Though there are, in my view, remaining reasons and room for intervening in poor societies, the expectation should not be that it will in itself alleviate poverty, create democracy, generate reconciliation, achieve ecological sustainability or the like. Rather, development intervention and its possible impact must be viewed in relation to other factors and features that affect the problems addressed. Huge efforts and resources will be needed to come to terms with global problems of poverty, injustices and human suffering. And many of these efforts and resources are not best used for intervention in distant societies. Fortunately, and as for example Matthews points out, such intervention is not the only way of engaging. Affluence, poverty and justice, she notes, are interrelated issues which can be addressed also through for example intervention and political action in affluent societies (Matthews 2008).

9.3 Looking towards further research

As mentioned, flawed assumptions and futile ambitions in interventionist thinking and practice beg the question of *why practice continues*. As repeatedly noted, development practice goes on as if based on certain assumptions about societal change and different actors' roles, and with certain ambitions to design, predict and control the proceedings and outcomes – though when made explicit, few would assign to those assumptions and ambitions. Ethnographic research of the development industry would be valuable for understanding its internal workings as well as the possibilities and constraints for building practice on different assumptions and with different ambitions. Such research could involve in-depth interviews with long-term aid practitioners as well as current policy-makers (cf. Baaz 2002; 2005; Gardner and Lewis 1996: 68ff; Ferguson 1994). It could also search for, and analyse examples of, less control-oriented development intervention with less specified and predefined outcomes.

Intervention per definition includes an aspect of inside/outside. In an increasingly globalised world, however, the distinction between internal and external is eroding (e.g. Hettne 2002: 14). Apart from transnational economic and political issues and influences, people's thinking, identities and solidarity do not necessarily and solely follow state borders. This begs the question of *what globalisation does to the thinking and practice of development intervention*. Does it transform it? Does it change its rationales? Does it make it less relevant due to the erosion of the internal/external distinction, or more relevant due to increased interconnectedness, responsibility and common interests?

Globalisation and localisation are known to unite, compress and de-territorialise (e.g. Hoogvelt 2001; Bauman 1998; 2002). Poverty is less territorially confined than ever and there are increasing, and increasingly recognised, globally shared interests. While, as noted, the idea of global common goods is brought forward as a motive for development aid, it has also been argued that globalisation is profoundly reorienting the context and possibilities of development intervention (e.g. Payne 2005; King and McGrath 2004: 24). In relation to any local setting, most people on the globe are 'outsiders', while in a global context – where most problems of poverty, injustices and

human suffering are ultimately caused – everybody is an 'insider'. This touches upon the distinction between altruistic and self-interested motives for aid, and the discussion on whether they are compatible (see 3.3.1). While poverty is present in all parts of the globe and a number of problems threaten to affect also rich people's affluence and security, it could – more than ever – be regarded as a self-interest of relatively affluent and secure people to contribute to a more decent world, i.e. one of less poverty and insecurity for all.

The increase of certain kinds of intervention (see 1.2) could also be partly explained by an emerging or increasing sense of global responsibility, where the task of protecting citizens is possibly and partly passed on from the state to the international community (Riddell 2007: 147ff). In a truly globalised world, it could be argued, there is less room for the sort of voluntary and arbitrary gifts that development aid constitutes, and some sort of transnational social security system would be more appropriate. Though that idea might be regarded as naive and unrealistic, it is still worth researching. After all, the idea of alleviating poverty through current forms of development intervention never was realistic.

SAMMANFATTNING (SUMMARY IN SWEDISH)

Den här avhandlingen behandlar några svårigheter i försöken att skapa eller stödja utveckling i fattiga länder genom internationellt utvecklingsbistånd. Utgångspunkten är en diskrepans mellan avsikterna då biståndet utformas och vad som händer när det implementeras i en lokal kontext. Det är väl belagt att förlopp och resultat vanligtvis inte blir de avsedda, och jag är nyfiken på vari diskrepansen består.

Internationellt utvecklingsbistånd betraktas och behandlas i studien genomgående som ett fall av intervention. Genom bistånd introduceras något utifrån i en lokal kontext – vare sig det är teknologi, expertis, värderingar, ekonomiska system, politiska strukturer eller något annat – med den uppenbara, om än ofta outtalade, avsikten att förändra eller ersätta något befintligt. Samtidigt som denna praktik av intervention för att skapa/stödja utveckling i fattiga länder har institutionaliserats och ökat i omfattning sedan efterkrigstiden och kommit att utgöra en väl förankrad del av de internationella relationerna, så har tanken på sådan intervention kommit att tas för given, och dess underliggande antaganden belyses eller ifrågasätts sällan. Jag utgår i studien ifrån att praktiken av utvecklingsintervention är baserad på föreställningen att det är möjligt, önskvärt och rättfärdigt att introducera något nytt i en lokal kontext och därmed skapa en viss samhällelig utveckling. Den föreställningen, i sin tur, bygger på vissa antaganden om hur samhällelig förändring går till och vilken roll olika aktörer har. Dessa underliggande antaganden, hävdar jag, bidrar till att förklara och möjliggöra den utbredda praktiken av utvecklingsintervention, medan det utan dessa antaganden skulle vara svårt att motivera samma praktik.

Vidare betraktas och behandlas i studien lokala kontexter som levande samhällen med en rad specifika särdrag och egen dynamik. När en utvecklingsintervention implementeras i en sådan kontext uppstår ett möte och ett samspel mellan det nya och det redan befintliga, och jag utgår ifrån att dessa lokala särdrag, denna lokala dynamik och detta samspel bidrar till att förklara varför interventionens förlopp och resultat vanligtvis inte blir de avsedda.

Dessa utgångspunkter pekar mot det som motiverar avhandlingen: nödvändigheten av att belysa och granska underliggande antaganden; att sätta utvecklingsbistånd i perspektiv genom att betrakta det som del i den kontext där det implementeras; och att föra samman dessa båda perspektiv. Avsikten är att undersöka hur den underliggande rationaliteten förhåller sig till den lokala dynamiken och samspelet som uppstår vid implementeringen, och forskningsproblemet lyder: *hur utfaller den interventionistiska rationaliteten då en utvecklingsintervention implementeras i en lokal kontext?*

För att belysa den underliggande rationaliteten, studeras internationellt utvecklingsbistånd i relation till ett par andra former av interventionistisk praktik som också syftar till samhällelig utveckling och ökad välfärd: "högmodern" (high modernist) intervention, som var starkast i början av 1900-talet och som manifesterades i storskaliga projekt för att omforma sociala system genom exempelvis stadsplanering och folkomflyttning; samt kolonialmakters intervention i sina kolonier,

vilken – uttalat och åtminstone delvis – syftade till att förbättra befolkningens villkor genom exempelvis utbildning, infrastruktur och vissa värderingar, det som i avhandlingen kallas "kolonial välfärdsintervention". Dessa båda former av intervention uppvisar stora likheter med det internationella utvecklingsbiståndet vad gäller bland annat motiv och medel. Ur genomgången av "högmodern" intervention och "kolonial välfärdsintervention", och en genomgång av biståndets skiftningar sedan efterkrigstiden som pekar mot ökande komplexitet och ökande grad av intervention, urskiljs ett antal aspekter av underliggande rationalitet.

För att studera praktiken av utvecklingsintervention i sin kontext, genomförs empiriska fallstudier i tre kambodjanska byar där en så kallad "governance-intervention" pågår. Under tre vistelser i var och en av byarna studeras inledningsvis, genom intervjuer och observationer, lokala särdrag och dynamik i vid bemärkelse. Fallstudierna blir sedan efter hand mer fokuserade på hur befolkningen uppfattar och relaterar till utvecklingsinterventioner och hur dessa kommer att utgöra en del av det lokala samhället. Intervjuerna blir då också mer strukturerade och styrda av fyra forskningsfrågor:

1. Vilka uppfattningar, attityder och förhållningssätt har bybor till de aktiviteter och aktörer som är involverade i den "governance-intervention" som studeras, och hur uppfattar de "utveckling" som sådan?

2. Hur förhåller sig bybor i sina socio-ekonomiska strategier till de möjligheter och krav som kommer med den "governance-intervention" som studeras, och hur mäter sig och samspelar dessa möjligheter och krav med befintliga socio-ekonomiska institititioner?

3. Vilken påverkan sker mellan, å ena sidan, fördelningen av resurser och förmåner och inrättandet av vissa åligganden som kommer med den "governance-intervention" som studeras och, å andra sidan, lokala maktstrukturer, politisk kultur och klimat, och attityder till ledarskap?

4. Vilken påverkan sker mellan, å ena sidan, kommunens åtaganden och metoder för tilldelning av resurser som kommer med den "governance-intervention" som studeras och, å andra sidan, bybors politiska beteende och deras erfarenheter av och förväntningar på de lokala myndigheterna?

Analysen av underliggande rationalitet (kapitel 3.4) visar att utvecklings-interventioner bygger på antaganden om att de samhällen där utvecklings-interventioner formuleras har något som mottagande samhällen saknar, vare sig det handlar om teknologi, expertis, värderingar, ekonomiska system, politiska strukturer eller något annat; att detta något kan överföras dit där det anses behövas; att det finns tekniska lösningar på problem av underutveckling; att extern expertis är adekvat för att definiera dessa problem och lösningar; att det är befogat och nödvändigt att fokusera på interventionen och ett begränsat antal aspekter, medan man kan bortse från annat i den lokala kontexten och därmed göra den lokala arenan åskådlig utifrån; att det som införs utifrån fungerar oberoende av den lokala kontexten; att människor beter sig enhetligt och som förväntat; och därmed att samhällelig utveckling är "makeable", det

vill säga att den kan utformas och styras rationellt, och att införandet av något nytt sätter igång en given process mot förutbestämda mål. I studien påpekas genomgående att få människor skulle ansluta sig till dessa antaganden när de görs explicita, men att praktiken fortgår som om den byggde på dessa antaganden.

Den empiriska studien (kapitel 5-8) visar att det som dessa antaganden säger inte är vad som händer i praktiken. Fallstudierna illustrerar bland annat hur bybor uppfattar diverse nya inslag i byn; hur det nya inkorporeras i befintliga socio-ekonomiska strategier och institutioner; hur byns ledarskap och politiska strukturer påverkar och påverkas; hur lokala myndigheters roll och människors politiska beteende påverkar och påverkas. De tre fallstudierna pekar på delvis likartade och delvis olikartade mönster av mer eller mindre intensivt samspel mellan interventionens olika manifestationer och den lokala kontexten. Hur interventionen uppfattas, relateras till och inkorporeras beror på en rad lokala faktorer så som sociala normer och värderingar, ekonomiska villkor och differentiering, politisk kultur och klimat, och myndigheters roll och förhållningssätt. Det nya omformas genomgående och blir på olika sätt en del av kontexten, dock vanligtvis inte så som var avsett.

Analysen, slutligen, av den underliggande rationaliteten i förhållande till den lokala dynamiken pekar på att medan rationaliteten säger en sak, leder samspelet vid implementeringen till något annat. Denna diskrepans är föga förvånande, men den motiverar en diskussion om det möjliga, önskvärda och rättfärdiga i att intervenera för ett skapa en viss samhällelig utveckling. Diskussionen pekar mot att det inte är hållbart att bortse från den lokala kontexten; att försöka skapa åskådlighet utifrån; att förlita sig på externa lösningar; att fokusera snävt på interventionen; att förvänta sig att människor beter sig enhetligt och förutsebart; eller att betrakta och behandla samhällelig förändring som något tekniskt, opolitiskt och harmoniskt. Genomgående handlar diskrepansen mellan den inneboende rationaliteten och dess utfall om förenkling kontra komplexitet. Interventioner i ett annat samhälle är nödvändigtvis "enkla" och detaljerad design och förutsägelse innebär oundvikligen en drastisk reducering av den verkliga komplexiteten. Detta är problematiskt eftersom denna komplexitet är vital i det lokala samhället, men inte kan skapas eller upprätthållas genom intervention. Vad som däremot kan designas är "tunt", vilket innebär en risk för att lokala institutioner och arrangemang undermineras. Sådana institutioner och arrangemang kan dock också vara det som får en intervention att fungera trots sin "tunnhet".

Studien pekar å ena sidan på en interventionisk föreställning om en designad, förutsägbar och kontrollerbar process mot ett givet mål, och å andra sidan på den socialt konstruerade process som uppstår då en intervention implementeras, med en rad faktorer som inte kan förutsägas eller kontrolleras och vars förlopp och resultat skiljer sig från plats till plats. Utvecklingsinterventioner bygger alltså på underliggande men outtalade antaganden (som få skulle ansluta sig till när de görs explicita) som inte utfaller som avsett, vilket till stora delar beror på samspelet vid implementeringen med lokala särdrag och dynamik.

Slutsatsen av detta är inte att vi ska upphöra med försöken att minska fattigdom, orättvisor och mänskligt lidande. I studien hävdas att det fortfarande finns skäl att intervenera i fattiga samhällen. Vad som behövs är dock inte än mer sofistikerade och omfattande metoder, utan förändrade antaganden och ambitioner. I stället för att i detalj försöka designa och styra processen av samhällelig förändring och människors beteende, bör mindre komplexa interventioner genomföras där människors agerande och de lokala omständigheterna tillåts avgöra förlopp och resultat.

Beträffande vidare forskning pekas det mot behovet av att studera varför det internationella utvecklingsbiståndet fortgår som om det var baserat på vissa underliggande antaganden trots att få skulle ansluta sig till dessa, samt att studera hur den pågående globaliseringen påverkar rationaliteten, relevansen och utformningen av utvecklingsinterventioner.

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