Dialogue and Revolution

Fostering legitimate stakeholder agency in natural resource governance

RASMUS KLØCKER LARSEN

Dialogue and Revolution

Fostering legitimate stakeholder agency in natural resource governance

RASMUS KLØCKER LARSEN

Thesis committee

Thesis supervisor
Prof. dr. ir. C. Leeuwis
Professor of Communication and Innovation Studies
Wageningen University, the Netherlands

Thesis co-supervisor
Dr. N. Powell
Senior Research Fellow
Co-leader of research theme Transforming Governance
Stockholm Environment Institute, Sweden

Other members
Dr. A. J. Woodhill
Wageningen University, the Netherlands

Dr. K. Collins
Open University, Walton Hall, United Kingdom

Prof. dr. ir. D.J.M. Hilhorst
Wageningen University, the Netherlands

Prof. dr. M.J.J.A.A. Korthals
Wageningen University, the Netherlands

This research was conducted under the auspices of the Wageningen School of Social Sciences

Dialogue and Revolution

Fostering legitimate stakeholder agency in natural resource governance

RASMUS KLØCKER LARSEN

Thesis
submitted in fulfilment of the requirements
for the degree of doctor
at Wageningen University
by the authority of the Rector Magnificus
Prof. dr. M.J. Kropff,
in the presence of the
Thesis Committee appointed by the Academic Board
to be defended in public
on Monday 19 December 2011
at 4 p.m. in the Aula.

RASMUS KLØCKER LARSEN
Dialogue and Revolution:
Fostering legitimate stakeholder agency
in natural resource governance, 230 pages.
PhD Thesis, Wageningen University, Wageningen, NL (2011)
With references, with summaries in English and Dutch.

ISBN: 978-94-6173-042-8.

Acknowledgements

This thesis emerges from six years of professional experience, with ideas having grown out of collaboration, conversation and contestation with innumerable people. The greater part of this research journey took place before I entered the Communication and Innovation Studies Group (COM) at Wageningen University as a PhD student. However, the guidance I received in terms of supervision, collegial advice and encouragement was invaluable and supported me in taking a step back from project demands to reflect on my experiences. I am grateful to the extremely competent support I received from my main supervisor, Prof. Cees Leeuwis. (Thanks for believing in this idea, when I first approached you, Cees, and for enabling me to carry it through.) Stephen G. Sherwood generously shared advice about how to build a thesis based on professional work experiences. (Thanks for this, Steve, and for your hospitality during my first stay in Wageningen.) A similar note of gratitude goes to Jessica Milgroom for her useful comments on the structure of the thesis, and for her and her family's hospitality during my second stay in Wageningen. In general, I am grateful for all the support and encouragement I received from the COM group – in particular from Annette Dijkstra, Vera Mentzel and Mirjam Cevat, who helped bridge the distance between Wageningen and Stockholm with their always effective and good-humoured assistance.

A number of colleagues have been directly involved in the work underlying the chapters on specific case studies presented here, and several are acknowledged as co-authors of the respective texts. In these chapters, I also acknowledge the wider network of partners and contributors; further credit can be found in the research and project reports themselves. Still, some people deserve special recognition for their role in the journey described in this thesis:

The research into coastal resource management in the Philippines (Chapters 2 and 7) was initially proposed by Jo Marie ('Jom') Acebes, based on her extensive experiences in the Babuyan Islands with WWF-Philippines. We coordinated the project together, and Alejandro ('Ali') Belen – now with the Department of Natural Resources and the Environment in Cagayan Province – endeavoured to act as local coordinator in the project. (Jom and Ali, thanks for an absolutely unforgettable experience.)

The paper on disaster recovery and early warning in Thailand (Chapter 3) was written with Emma Calgaro and Frank Thomalla. When I first joined the Stockholm Environment Institute (SEI), I received great inspiration from my introduction to vulnerability and resilience research working under the supervision of Frank and Fiona Miller in the SEI Risk, Livelihoods, and Vulnerability programme. I further wish to thank Sopon Naruchaikusol (SEI-Asia), Kannapa Pongponrat (Mahidol University), and Chanyuth Tepa (Raks Thai Foundation) for their contributions to this aspect of the work.

In Sweden, the launch of the network for sustainable agricultural development (Chapter 4) was undertaken with my SEI colleagues Neil Powell (project leader) and Maria Osbeck. Ivar Virgin, Johan Rockström, Katarina Eckerberg, and Atakilte Beyene also contributed to this work.

In Vietnam, I was hosted by the College of Agriculture and Forestry at Hue University in Vietnam through the Swedish-Vietnamese research cooperation on sustainable rural development (RDViet) (Chapter 5). Many people helped make this possible, but I especially wish to thank Mr. Tran Nam Tu for his assistance while undertaking my first field work in South East Asia and Neil Powell, who initially invited me to participate in the project and provided invaluable guidance throughout the process.

The study of accountability of agro-environmental governance in the Baltic Sea region (Chapter 6) is a research paper that grew out of work conducted within the governance and policy adaptation work package in the project Baltic COMPASS (Comprehensive Policy Actions and Investments in Sustainable Solutions in Agriculture in the Baltic Sea Region). Work package coordinator Neil Powell conceived of the approach we – and our partners – are employing. Along with Maria, I feel privileged to have such inspiring, competent, humble and encouraging colleagues as you both.

The Environmental Communication unit in the Department for Urban and Rural Development at the Swedish University of Agricultural Sciences (SLU) in Uppsala was my first workplace when arriving in Sweden, and I am grateful to my colleagues there, several of whom also have become good friends. I also wish to extend a note of gratitude to the master's students in the integrated water resource management programme, whose enthusiasm and friendship contributed to making my time as Assistant Lecturer at SLU enjoyable.

I am grateful to have had the company of many dedicated and competent people at SEI, where I have served as a Research Associate since a few months after I arrived in Sweden. I wish to thank my group leader, Oskar Wallgren, and SEI Stockholm centre director, Johan Kuylenstierna, for their support to this work.

During the process of synthesising my experiences for the completion of this thesis, I have had the opportunity to test both big and small ideas with a number of people beyond those mentioned above. To these, I wish to express my gratitude. With the evident risk of forgetting some, these people include: Sriskandarajah Nadarajah, Richard Bawden, Jim Woodhill, Gerald Midgley, Åsa Gerger Swartling, Lars Hallgren, Cristian Alarcon-Ferrari, Hanna Bergeå, Elvira Caselunghe, Sofia Näsström, Marc Schut, Richard Weiner, Mike Skuja, Sara Johansson, and Inger Dahl-Petersen. I also wish to thank Anna Schmuki for comments on the first draft of Chapter 1, an anonymous reviewer from the Wageningen University philosophy group for undertaking quality control of the last chapter of the thesis, and Mirjam de Haan for provision of the Dutch summary.

One person has played a special role in guiding me during the years of work underlying this thesis. Neil Powell has not only acted as my PhD co-supervisor, but has – since we met in the village of Chilimo, Ethiopia – been an incredible source of inspiration and support. I am grateful for having been permitted to work with a person who has the vision and courage to foster a both critical and dialogical praxis, and who strives to ensure that academic merit never takes precedence over the responsibility we have to the people with and for whom we work. (Thanks a lot, Neil.)

And, of course, this thesis is equally a product of a personal journey and bears the imprint of my family and friends, who in different ways form the foundation of what is my life. I am extremely grateful for your support and encouragement – and for your simply being there.

Finally, the principle of emergence applies also to thesis writing: it is impossible to predict the overall result from any single contribution. Should you find any mistakes – despite the support I have received from so many wonderful people – then the error is naturally mine.

Table of contents

FIGURES

TABLES

BOXES

1
Introduction

1.1 Introduction: Action learning journey

1.1.1 Prelude: A Greenlandic vivencia

Ene Luftens Aander
kender, hvad jeg møder
bag ved Fjældet,
men alligevel jeg kører
mine Hunde videre frem,
videre frem,
videre frem.

Only the spirits of the air
know, what I will meet
behind that mountain,
but yet I lead
my dogs further on,
further on,
further on.[1]

It is hard to attribute to single experiences a direct causative influence over choices or directions later in life. Yet, some stand out as major sources of inspiration. One such experience, or *vivencia*,[2] is also a useful point of reference to clarify my entry into the research that is described in the present thesis. It concerns my second visit to the Greenlandic west coast in 2005 as a master's student from Oxford University, when I witnessed how the engagement of resourceful and well-meaning people can lead to unexpected and undesirable outcomes for both natural resource governance and people's livelihoods.

I embarked on the four-hour flight from Copenhagen to Nuuk, the Greenlandic capitol, one summer morning with the hope that people would be interested in sharing their perspectives on what had then become a hotly contested issue: the future of the beluga whale hunt. My aim was to analyse the underlying reasons for a communicative deadlock between hunters, conservationists, managers and scientists. One year before, I had put on hold my studies in systems ecology and arctic biology at Copenhagen University's Institute of Biology and pursued a one-

---

[1] Freuchen et al, 1934, p. 179. Knud Rasmussen's notes from journey by dog sled in Greenland (trans. by author).
[2] Existential experience or 'inner happening': *sensu* Ortega y Gasset (cf. Fals-Borda & Rahman, 1991).

year Master's of Science programme in biodiversity, conservation and management in England. This decision was based both on a growing realisation that the biological sciences were somewhat restrictive in guiding natural resource management concerns and on an attraction to more interdisciplinary and participatory approaches to science.

The decision to return to Greenland was motivated by experiences during my first visit the year before to the University of Copenhagen's Arctic Station on Disko Island. As part of the Arctic field course, two fellow students and I analysed population dynamics of the trout species, Arctic charr (*Salvenius alpinus*), in selected streams and lakes (Kristensen et al., 2006). We originally planned to include in the study a mapping of fishermen's perceptions about the management of the fish stocks and the problem of illegal netting at river mouths, but did not manage to move beyond the biological population analysis.

In 2005, my study had received the endorsement of the Inuit Circumpolar Conference (ICC), the international NGO representing approximately 150,000 Inuit in the Arctic, and was to focus on the management of the Beluga whale (*Delphinapterus leucas*). Belugas have been hunted as far back as people remember, initially with kayaks and harpoons, later with larger vessels, nets and rifles.

Professional full-time hunters have all but disappeared from the western part of the country with the modernisation of Greenlandic society, but the hunt continues part-time throughout communities both anecdotally and with the distribution of meat, skin and blubber (*mattaq*) among friends and relatives or by means of a commercial chain of custody (Sejersen, 2002).

Over the past decades, biological sciences have cemented the understanding that beluga populations (and many other wildlife species) off the west coast have been experiencing a radical decline. The findings of aerial surveys conducted in 1991 led two transnational bodies for scientific advice– the North Atlantic Marine Mammal Commission and the Joint Commission on the Conservation and Management of Narwhal and Beluga – to suggest a reduction in catch levels to 100 individuals annually. Subsequent surveys in 1993 and 1994 substantiated concerns that these whale populations were overexploited and that continued hunting patterns represented a 90 percent probability that extinction would occur within 20 years (Alvarez-Flores & Heide-Jørgensen, 2004).

The year before I undertook my study in 2005 (Fig. 1.1), legislation was passed that sanctioned a revision in the management of beluga hunting through yearly quotas. This regime shift in Greenlandic wildlife management practices (in which quota-based hunting management was mainstreamed for other animals including reindeer, muskoxen and many sea birds) emerged largely in response to heavy pressure from environmental NGOs. For instance, the World Wildlife Fund (WWF) Denmark had articulated national and international messages that Greenland was ignoring scientific advice to reduce hunting pressure on threatened species. However, swayed by public resistance, the country's policymakers had – until then – refused to act upon the scientific advice of its own research institute and trans-Atlantic scientific bodies. But, fearing long-term damage to its international reputation and reduced tourism revenue, the new regulation was passed.

Figure 1.1: Halibut fishing off the coast of Illulissat, West Greenland. The author joins the crew of fishing vessel *Nuuna* for a day of halibut fishing, with relatives of the fishermen following in their skiff. Halibuts are one of the preferred preys for belugas and other tooth whales).

While the WWF criticised Greenland for ignoring international conservation conventions, the ICC made references to non-compliance with international conventions on human rights, indigenous peoples' rights, and postcolonial independence rights. For people on these two sides, the discussions had grown deeply emotional and were characterised by frequent personal insults in the national media. Struggling with establishing more effective ways of integrating 'user knowledge' into the formal management regime, Greenlandic Home Rule launched an awareness raising campaign in order to convince hunters and fishermen of the credibility of the scientific results. However, this was not easily accomplished – as a quote from one of the hunters interviewed illustrates:

> I think this way of giving quotas will continue as long as the country is under Danish authority. It might change if our government could make decisions. I think it's in deadlock now – they are pressed hard! They will bend for that pressure from the biologists and nature organisations – then it doesn't matter what the hunters say! (Nuuk, hunter and politician, July 2005)

Because the change in the management regime was widely perceived as unjust, compliance was rather low with hunters frequently finding ways to circumvent the new regulations and enforcement procedures.

I started wondering how so many Greenlandic citizens, hunters and fishermen – the ones most directly affected by changes in management – could feel such discontent and distrust of and direct such anger towards others including Danish researchers and NGOs? How could the interventions from so many resourceful national and international actors fail to develop a management regime deemed sufficiently acceptable to those affected by it? Since the people to whom I spoke in Copenhagen had all acted with the best of intensions, these questions seemed to point to some systemic error, some social and institutional failure in the way interactions between people and organisations had occurred.

1.1.2 Sensing a research problem

Experiences in a number of projects, including those presented in this thesis, made it clear to me that the Greenlandic beluga hunting situation was far from an isolated case; in fact, these experiences could be considered archetypal of challenges faced in stakeholder processes for natural resource management. It dawned on me that while resource management and development projects may seek to produce more ethical and democratic change processes, many are incapable of ensuring these ideals are considered in practice. Along with colleagues, I repeatedly witnessed how expert science and 'facilitated' efforts intransparently promoted certain interests while undermining others – thus feeding perceptions of illegitimate governance regimes and perpetuating the unsustainable use of natural resources.

The work that underlies this thesis, therefore, reveals the extent to which narratives of urgency regarding concerns of climate change, international security issues caused by resource conflicts, etc. have compelled development and research communities to support unilateral political and/or ideological directions.

It also shows that notions such as public participation and stakeholder involvement have often been employed instrumentally as a necessary *faut-dire*, behind which people carry on with business as usual. Indeed, it is increasingly clear how research organisations are heavily subject to political directions. Decisions continue to be influenced by the dominant interests of donors or supposed objective scientific arguments rather than by research arising from informed, intelligible and transparent debates among opposing interests and viewpoints seeking to negotiate what a sustainable and desirable societal development actually constitutes.

In essence, these experiences have motivated me increasingly over the past six years to understand the way stakeholders engage in natural resource governance and negotiate legitimate pathways for action. This thesis analyses the practical lessons learned and critiques the efficacy of facilitated multi-stakeholder processes and research interventions so as to foster more legitimate natural resource governance.

1.1.3 Contours of the journey

The projects on which this thesis is based have allowed me to consider stakeholders' engagement in policy processes and the legitimacy of their actions therein. The study on beluga hunting broadened my perspective from systems ecology, and led to an attempt to allow resource users and managers to map out 'visionscapes' (Sejersen, 2002) as a way to dialogue about people's desires for the future management of land- and seascape.

In preparation for this work, I attended in 2005 a workshop about building scenarios of the future in community forestry held in Chilimo Village, Ethiopia, organised by Wondo-Genet College of Forestry, Center for International Forestry Research (CIFOR) and SLU, with the intention of supporting my own master's thesis research. It was here that I met Neil Powell, then senior lecturer with the Environmental Communication unit at SLU in Uppsala. Subsequent communications led to an opportunity to participate in a pilot project implementing the Sustainable Agriculture and Rural Development (SARD) Initiative in Vietnam, led by the United Nations Food and Agriculture Organisation. When funding for this programme never materialised, I began working as an Assistant Lecturer in integrated water resource management at the Department of Urban and Rural Development at SLU. I then became affiliated with the Risk, Livelihoods and Vulnerability Group at SEI, and later the Transforming Governance Theme. From these institutional platforms, I came to participate in the projects that comprise the basis for this thesis (Table 1.1).

Entering these Swedish professional communities brought me into contact with praxis lines that fundamentally shaped my entry into the work of this thesis. At the Unit for Environmental Communication, Professor Sriskandarajah Nadarajah introduced me to the Australian experiential learning tradition and farming systems science of the Hawkesbury School (e.g. Bawden, 2005). Lars Hallgren, Elin Ångman and Per Haglin shared their interpretive approach to conflict management (e.g. Ångman et al., 2011), and Stina Powell helped raise my awareness regarding the need for a critical perspective on social structures also in stakeholder processes.

When recruited for a desktop synthesis of Indonesian and Sri Lankan social vulnerability in aftermath of the 2004 Indian Ocean Tsunami, SEI's Frank Thomalla and Fiona Miller introduced me to recent developments in vulnerability and resilience research (e.g. Miller et al., 2010). During this period, Neil Powell acted as supervisor on several projects and mentor on others until I became officially registered as a PhD student with Wageningen University. Neil gave me pointers about complexity theory and non-equilibrium system thinking, social learning, Soft Systems Methodology and Participatory Action Research (mainly *sensu* Checkland, 1999). He had himself recently participated in the EU research consortium SLIM (Social Learning for the Integrated Management and Sustainable Use of Water at Catchment Scale) (e.g. Toderi et al., 2007); indeed, the SLIM work was a central source of inspiration when I first started my own research (see Section 1.2 below).

Altogether, these influences shaped the lens through which I initially engaged in the projects underlying this thesis.

Table 1.1: Thesis milestones. (An introduction to each project is provided in Table 1.2 below.)

Period		**Milestone**	**Reference outside this thesis**
2004	Aug.	First visit to Greenland, with University of Copenhagen Arctic Field Course on Disko Island, studying population ecology of Arctic charr.	Kristensen et al. (2006)
2005	April	Workshop on building scenarios in community forestry in Chilimo, Ethiopia.	Kassa et al. (2009)
	Aug.	Second visit to Greenland for master's thesis research from Oxford University, examining conflicts and communication in beluga hunting.	Larsen (2005)
2006	Mar.	Initiating four months of field-work in Vietnam for pilot study for SARD, based at Hue Agricultural University in Thua Thien Hue province.	Larsen (2006)
	Aug.	Arrival at Environmental Communication unit, SLU, to work on the SARD-initiative.	n.a.
	Sept.	Joining SEI to work on Sida-funded research programme on sustainable recovery from the 2004 Indian Ocean Tsunami.	Larsen et al. (2010a)
2007	Jan.	Involved as Assistant Lecturer in launching MSc. programme in IWRM at Swedish University of Agricultural Sciences.	Powell & Larsen (Under revision)
2008	July	Field-work with Raks Thai Foundation (Care Thailand) and Asian Disaster Preparedness Center in Sri Lanka and Thailand in the early warning project under the SEI-led tsunami programme.	Thomalla & Larsen (2010)
2008	Dec	Completion of the conservation planning project in Babuyan Islands, northern Philippines. The research team leaves Calayan Island, with the coast guard patrol boat in the headwinds of typhoon Mina.	Larsen et al. (2010b)
2009	Jan.	Completion of three months of stakeholder consultations in Sweden with the Inception Workshop in Stockholm for the SIANI network, a platform for Swedish professionals and their international partners.	Larsen et al. (2009)
2009	Nov.	Launch of the Baltic COMPASS project, strategic Interreg EU funded project with 22 partners in the nine riparian countries to the Baltic Sea.	Powell et al. (2011a)

1.2 Adopting a research lens

The subject of this thesis is the way people exert their agency in policy processes for natural resource governance and how they construct the required sense of legitimacy for their actions. Further, how we as project managers and researchers facilitate and intervene in such processes. In this section, I will conceptualise this phenomenon as a question of *stakeholder agency,* provide a brief outline of its implications and consider how it relates to concerns about legitimacy in natural resource governance.[3] As such, I depart from the current discourse on stakeholding in the literature on natural resource governance and limit myself to positioning the problem definition closely to this body of literature.

1.2.1 Non-coercive policy as a response to resource dilemmas

Within natural resource governance, it has become commonplace to nurture and promote the ambition of policies to orchestrate what is known as 'stakeholder processes': an alternative, non-coercive way of fostering collective action through public policy. In an increasing number of management situations it is thus today accepted to speak of the advent of the 'stakeholder society', as a society which 'seeks to engage all those whose lives are affected by decisions made in public decision making processes' (SLIM, 2004, p. 1).

In this sense, stakeholding forms a response to the critique of planned interventions and 'command-and-control type' management, proposing to replace coercive, hierarchical and/or centralised modes of governance with participatory processes for self-organised collective action and in so doing to improve the effectiveness and quality of change processes (e.g. Holling & Meffe, 1996; Ludwig, 2001; Gundersson & Holling, 2002; Hemmati, 2002; Warner, 2008; Twigg, 2003; Armitage et al., 2008). As proposed within the tradition of interpretative policy analysis – which has increasingly focused on environmental policy during the recent years – commitment to stakeholder processes has

[3] In this thesis, I use the notion of 'natural resource governance' as convenient shorthand to describe the varied activities involved in human interactions with the non-human world as per orchestrating the exploitation, distribution and conservation of so-called 'natural resources'. I do not explicitly distinguish between management and governance, although I tend to refer to 'management' as more localised interactions and to 'governance' as those of a larger scale. There are inherent weaknesses in the use of these terms, especially regarding the underlying instrumentalist discourse of 'management/governance' and the utilitarian discourse of 'resources'. I use these terms as part of a reformist and humanist critique of the political, administrative and scientific mainstream. Further, I propose (see Section 1.3) that the research approach adopted in this thesis will largely – if not completely – redress lacunae associated with this conceptual heritage. In so doing, I am supporting the claim that it is possible to work *from within* an environmental management discourse to reject special interest ideologies in a more negotiated form of environmentalism (e.g. Adams, 2004; Jepson & Canney, 2003; Castree, 1995; Sanderson & Redford, 2003).

replaced the reliance on classical-modernist governing institutions with a re-establishment of policy as a form of practice. Here, the role of contestation between discourses and their interpretation seizes primary significance (Dryzek, 2001; Hajer & Wagenaar, 2003; Hajer, 2003; Conelly et al., 2006).

Despite these ambitions, collaborative forms of management – which espouse strategies of stakeholding – often fail to acknowledge their heritage as specific social projects of neo-liberal capitalism (e.g. Hansen & Sriskandarajah, 2009). The literature on stakeholding in natural resource governance strongly substantiates the extent to which certain types of stakeholder agency is promoted through an intransparent legitimising of already dominant interests. This phenomenon is known under different labels, including the bypassing of established procedures and cooption by powerful stakeholders (SLIM, 2004; Warner, 2005), the appropriation of the process with a predetermined result in mind (Kaspersson, 2006; Gearey & Jeffrey, 2006), and a 'domestication' of public participation (Wakeford & Singh, 2008). In this view, participatory processes in resource management often suffer from totalising truth claims that perpetuate myths and assumptions about people's identity – usually with destructive consequences for dissenting locales (Nadasdy, 2007; Cooke & Kothari, 2001).

A prominent tradition associated with research for integrated natural resource management has a more reflexive and critical approach. It posits stakeholding as a response to 'resource dilemmas'; that is, that many resource problems ought to be approached as 'issues': messy, unstructured, controversial situations with multiple, interdependent stakeholders often positing equally legitimate claims about problem definition and the most desirable solutions. This casts stakeholding specifically as one governance mechanism or policy instrument in a plethora of tools (Fig. 1.2). In this tradition, stakeholder processes are also approached as a process of social learning: that is, an interactive form of learning among interdependent stakeholders in the context of integrated resource management (Ison et al., 2007).

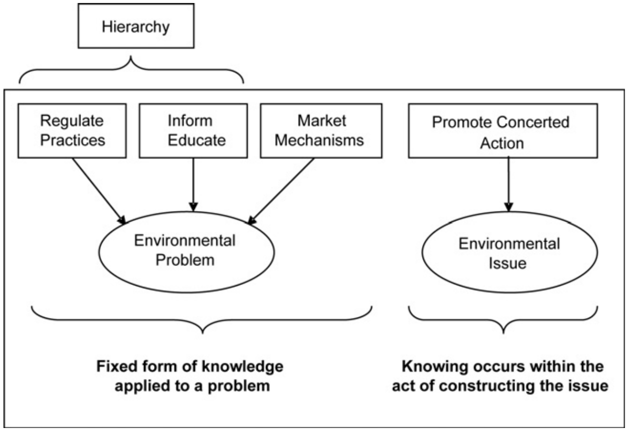

Figure 1.2: Stakeholding as a non-coercive policy instrument. Comparison of policy coordination mechanisms reproduced from Ison et al. (2007). Stakeholding is adopted as a strategy on the right side of the diagram, aiming to promote concerted action through facilitation, in which the problem definition ('issue') is co-constructed during the policy process.

This approach builds on an extensive body of theory, including diverse cognitive, psychological, behaviourist and experiential learning models (Blackmore, 2007), recent decades' developments in extension and farming systems science (Röling & Wagemaker, 1998), innovation studies (Leeuwis & Van den Ban, 2004), post-normal science (Funtowicz & Ravetz, 1993; Luks, 1999), non-linear systems and complexity thinking, and adaptive co-management theories (Powell, 1998), and some of the lessons from the so-called 'participatory paradigm' in development studies (Chambers, 1997).

The central tenet – on which I will focus – is the application of an explicitly constructionist epistemology[4] that defines stakeholders as people, who actively construct their own material stake in an issue through their interaction with the human and non-human environment (e.g. SLIM, 2004). The role of research in such dilemma situations is to help mediate between stakeholders' diverging definitions of the resource problems and their solutions in which uncertainty, controversy and complexity are irreducible characteristics (Blackmore, 2007). This approach seeks to rectify the assumptions of positivism-reductionism[5] that

[4] I.e. an awareness of the method that determines 'how we know what we know'. By contrast to epistemology (how we know the world), ontology denotes a view of the world as it 'really' is. The importance of an explicit interest in epistemology within a research strategy for examining stakeholder agency will be addressed further in Section 1.3 and 1.4.
[5] By employing the positivist-reductionist label, I concur with the pragmatist and constructionist philosophical critique of mainstream philosophy of science research on natural resource management (see Section 1.4). This tradition views the natural world as analytically separable from its human

applies a stakeholding vocabulary within a knowledge prescriptive approach (i.e. imposing an *a priori* problem definition and thus remaining on the left side of the spectrum in Fig. 1.2). As case in point, Röling and Wagemaker (1998) launched their research agenda as an 'epistemological paradigm shift' in thinking about innovation processes in agriculture.

1.2.2 Legitimising governance regimes

The constructionist epistemology is by its very nature highly appropriate for approaching questions of legitimacy because it explicitly focuses on the way people construct a problem and justify their actions in relation to their interests and perspectives. However, despite being an epistemologically innovative approach, the constructionist tradition in stakeholding has, to a large extent, relied on a 'modernity narrative' in explaining phenomena of resource dilemmas. Within this narrative, the central claim is that stakeholding is particularly relevant today because the governable world has been dramatically transformed, including the way natural resources and livelihoods ought to be managed. As such, our efforts for sustainable development are now taking place under significantly increased degrees of complexity and uncertainty, which demand a fundamental recasting of the role knowledge and decision-making play in our world (e.g. Funtowicz & Ravetz, 1993). As a case in point, Ison et al. (2007, p. 502) argued that the advocated constructionist approach to social learning has seized relevance because we have entered '[t]he age of the environment … the realisation that the context of human society has changed in quite specific ways.'

This age and its new conditions, it is argued, reflect the manifestation of what theorists such as Anthony Giddens (1991, 1998) and Ulrick Beck (1992) have described as the contours of late modernity. Owing to processes of globalisation and institutional specialisation, local resource users are confronted with increasingly complex and more rapidly changing conditions in which one's own experiences cannot alone provide guidance. Modernity thus produces an infrastructure of disembedding institutions and abstract codified systems of knowledge associated with public policy, global markets and social movements. Here, stakeholders are seen striving for human self-actualisation through a form of post-traditional life politics while responding to the insertion of phantasmagorical creations (i.e. foreign imaginations) into remote localities (Giddens, 1998, pp. 14-34).

While modernity theory arguably provides a robust framework for positing the relevance of stakeholding, it locates the sources of motivation somewhere

---

conception (positivism) and organises the knowledge-generating process by reducing its 'objective' complexity into discretely knowable objects (reductionism).

external to the recognition of the epistemological process that motivates mediation between competing definitions of the resource issues. It thus does not directly appreciate that the advent of discourses and/or concrete practices of 'stakeholding' must itself be considered as an outcome of continuous negotiation and contestation between different groups and sectors; that is, when we consider stakeholders' roles, we must position our own discourse reflexively in juxtaposition to the purposes of the inherently contested governance situation in which is it nested – thus ensuring a deconstruction (*sensu* Foucault, 1969) of the phenomenon of stakeholder agency itself.

Accordingly, if we indeed are to apply an ontological metaphor of some sort of external/temporal shift to explain the phenomenon of stakeholding, it may be the breakdown of an unproblematic collective understanding of the world and the search for alternative ways of ensuring social cohesion (e.g. Mannheim, 1936, pp. 33-54; Baumann, 1995). This requires us to view stakeholding – as governance processes at large – principally as means mobilised to build a (sufficiently collective) sense of legitimacy for existing governing regimes, their purposes and actions.

There will inevitably be different ascriptions of the causes of such a breakdown of collective understanding in different governance contexts. In the liberal democratic tradition – fundamental to the governance regimes examined in this thesis – the French Revolution (1789–99) is key in that when the God-given (Christiocentric) order was dismantled, the need for legitimacy emerged as an actual concern for governance (Holmes, 1982). In establishing society on the model of a 'social contract' between its citizens and government, the rule of society was separated from religion, monarchy and other absolutist doctrines. In the words of Näsström, the need for legitimisation became grounded in the fact that

> since individuals are free and equal by nature, society can no longer be regarded as a natural or divine state of affairs. It is a human artifice, and as such, it raises a claim for legitimacy (Näsström, 2007, p. 634).

Liberal, capitalist and post-traditional societies have witnessed the dissolution of metaphysical and religious moral orders. Belief in the legitimacy of an existing order is one of the main sources of cohesion, holding back the latent forces, that can tear our societies apart (Habermas, 1973, pp. 95-143). The struggle for legitimacy is thus what Althusser has defined as the dominant instance of society (cf. James, 1985, p. 149).

In one way or another, any consideration of stakeholding in the environment-development nexus must therefore recognise the historical roots of the phenomenon as a manifestation not just of late modernity and its implications for the 'age of the environment', but also the unfolding of the capitalist liberal democratic tradition which shapes our governance regimes and our discourses about this governance.

1.2.3 Radical democratic perspective on stakeholding

Growing out of Enlightenment ideals, liberalism became a governance response to authoritarian rule, serving as an ideology that legitimised citizen revolutions against what was perceived as royal oligarchic and religious tyranny. Prioritising the ideals of individual rights, freedoms and autonomy over the collective, humanity was freed from the traditional and 'mythic'. Soon, however, these tenets themselves became the instruments of vested interests that opposed further social change. The pragmatist philosopher John Dewey summarised the phenomenon aptly:

> …nothing is clearer than that the conception of liberty is always relative to the forces that at a given time and place are felt to be oppressive (Dewey, 2000, p. 54).

As such, it is impossible to dissociate the stakeholding discourse from the global struggle for reorganising risks and vulnerabilities and the social and material divisions of labour between interest groups. Modernity – with its increased globalisation and abstract codification of forms of ownership and control – has inspired new capitalist elites to pursue their imperialistic goals through strong states, corporate actors and/or acclaimed ethical social movements (Petras & Veltmayer, 2001, pp. 11-25; Chomsky, 1996, pp. 94-131; Hobsbawn, 2008, pp. 95-120).[6] Much of stakeholder agency is thus concerned with legitimising the inequitable distribution of surplus social products generated by different capitalist networks (Habermas, 1973, pp. 95-143). In this way, the concept of 'sustainable

---

[6] Capitalist globalisation – with its dominant political, cultural and economic ideologies that support free market economics under a guise of liberal democracy – is often analysed within the tradition of neoliberalism. Recalling the traditional values associated with liberal democracy, neoliberalism offers a post-colonial and modernist interpretation of modern society, upholding the 'liberal rights' of the privileged by promoting privatisation, deregulation and neo-classical markets (e.g. Murray, 2009; Woodhill, 1999). In my opinion, however, neoliberalism has been adopted as a heuristic category of critique by those who oppose it; as such, it rarely resonates with the reality of those who are the alleged subjects of critique. Since this thesis seeks to contribute to the interventionist research tradition – in which dialogue with stakeholders is essential – I have chosen to adopt a more accepted notion of liberal democracy as the entry point for understanding the governance discourse through which we address issues of stakeholding.

development' can be selectively promoted to serve the interest of specific elites. This occurs partly through offering

> easy consumption-based solutions to the environmental crises inherent in late market capitalism … produced and supported by a 'transnational capitalist class' of corporate executives, bureaucrats and politicians, professionals, merchants and the mass media (Igoe et al., 2010, p. 490; see also Brockington & Scholfield, 2009).

An alternative conception of democracy, in responding to the shortcomings of liberalism, has attracted the attention of parts of the natural resource management community. Known as 'radical democracy', this approach can be traced back to, amongst other, the work of Ernesto Laclau and Chantal Mouffe, who formulated an approach to affirming a new social order, constructed by the 'partial limiting of disorder; of a meaning which is constructed only as excess and paradox in the face of meaninglessness' (Laclau & Mouffe, 1996, p. 193).

In contrast to other governance approaches (such as so-called networked/multilevel governance and deliberative democracy, that are popular within research communities addressing natural resource management), radical democracy more explicitly embraces the need for epistemological critique as well as an interest in dynamics, which do not maintain the nation state and formal institutions as the centres of attention (see also Görg & Hirsch, 1998). Radical democracy thus reacts against the tendency of mainstream ideologies such as liberalism and Marxism to assume an objectively validatable ontological nature and physical reality (Castree, 1995). While differing in their aspiration for collective emancipation from the macro-structural and the self-sufficient individual, both liberal and traditional leftist theory and ideology are founded on the assumption of sovereignty of the subject and the unity of consciousness (Devenney, 2004). In contrast, the radical democratic approach to operationalising democracy in concrete terms acknowledges the social construction of consciousness. This was concisely articulated by Dewey:

> [T]he method of democracy – inasfar as it is that of organised intelligence – is to bring … conflicts [of interest] out into the open where their special claims can be seen and appraised (Dewey, 2000, p. 81).

In this regard, Jim Woodhill has provided the most explicit analyses of multi-stakeholder processes from a radical democratic perspective. He showed how stakeholding may undertake a critique of capitalist liberalism and its social relations 'not simply as a contestable theory about social and economic life but as an ideology with distinct political-economic advantage for some groups' (Woodhill, 1999, p. 165). Further, radical democracy supports the questioning of the ideological foundations of the arguments made by those whose interests are being served. As expressed by Noam Chomsky (1996, pp. 94-131), we are then able to challenge ready-made formal institutional accounts of the idealised, modern, constitutionally representative democratic republic and to reject claims that the well-being of people depends on the presence of any single institutional arrangement.

Arguably, the radical democratic perspective may be considered implicit in the constructionist approach to stakeholding referred to above. Yet, I would propose the need for a shift in emphasis regarding how we consider the role of stakeholder agency in relation to people's interests and how we motivate recognition of such agency. In so doing, we will move from a modernity narrative to the more explicitly radical democratic model. The notion of resource dilemma can then be profiled not just as a response to uncertainties and complexities in our modern 'age of the environment' but also as recognition of conflicts of interest inherent to our human condition. This enables approaching the interactions equally as a political process of claims making. This argument is built on past work on power, negotiation and conflict in stakeholder processes and the special requirements for those responsible for facilitating these interactions (e.g. Leeuwis, 2000; Leeuwis, 2002; Edmunds & Wollenberg, 2001; Funder, 2010; Westberg, 2005; Woodhill, 1999).

Perhaps the choice of emphasis we take on stakeholding depends on the person to whom we are speaking. Admittedly, the modernity narrative goes a long way in justifying more inclusive and negotiated approaches to resource governance. It makes the case for stakeholder processes with language that justifies stakeholder agency in relation to its instrumental value and as a response to an externally changing world. This view – at least in abstract terms – matches well with concerns of most governance institutions, whether in the public, private or civil society sectors, that find themselves challenged by new expectations and shifting roles. Yet, it does not offer direct guidance on how to unravel the ways in which various forms of stakeholder agency seize legitimate status in the constitution of contested governance regimes.

Here, the reflexive deconstruction of stakeholding as a phenomenon located in the unfolding of the liberal democratic tradition provides an entry point for radical democracy to critique the legitimacy of stakeholder agency as part of larger ideological struggles. We become interested not only in formally denoted 'stakeholder processes' or so-called 'alternative policy instruments', but the way in which people (‘stakeholders’) continuously pursue their agendas in the governance system (Fig. 1.3). That is, we recognise that stakeholder agency takes place in spaces created and designated for that very purpose as well as in *ad hoc* processes triggered by the presence of governance ambiguity (Powell, 2011). In turn, we become sensitive to how policy processes permit or otherwise harbour phenomena of policy adaptation, manifested in the interplay between a wide number of sectoral policy processes and in the face of diverging stakeholder agendas and perspectives. In this view, policy adaptation denotes the process and outcomes of the manner in which stakeholders exert their agency to revise political goals and to affect their interpretation, navigate institutional ambiguities, and/or engage in rule-bending and self-organised action (e.g. Powell et al., 2011b).[7]

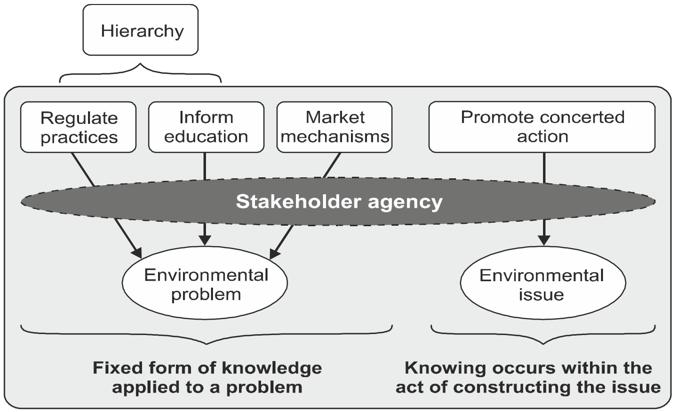

Figure 1.3: Stakeholder agency as an inherent undercurrent in all policy processes. (Adaptation of original reproduced from Ison et al. (2007).)

1.2.4 Theorising legitimacy in policy adaption

While the subject of legitimacy has been covered extensively in disciplines such as sociology, organisational studies and political philosophy, it is not easy to apply the guidelines contained therein to the special conditions associated with natural resource governance. In this final section, I will briefly explain the need for operationalising an approach to legitimacy in the radical democratic model for stakeholding. Although this will not be exhaustive, it will show that existing scientific views on legitimacy are inadequate for guiding natural resource

[7] In recent natural resource management research, there has been a tendency to focus on ‘policy’ as a supposedly more neutral and instrumental process as opposed to the actual ‘politics’ underlying policy implementation. Throughout this thesis, I use the term ‘policy’ in the sense of a social practice, in which the political dimension is always present.

governance. And, in so doing, it will justify this thesis' pursuit of a more coherent theory on legitimacy. Below, I will review the four most recurrent theoretical perspectives that appear in the literature and critique their conceptualisation of legitimacy.

Theoretical perspective 1:
Agency is legitimate when it matches the stakeholder's 'stake'
This tradition actually acknowledges that stakeholding is a relevant formal approach to resource governance. First, the legitimacy of a person's agency is determined by their being recognised as a legitimate stakeholder. Attention is shifted from *a priori* structural and institutional mandates and rights to actual stakes. This represents a fundamental motivation for using tools such as 'stakeholder identification', 'stakeholder mapping' and 'stakeholder analysis' as methods proposed to ensure analytic power and to inform strategic decisions about whose claims should be heeded on specific management issues (Grimble & Wellard, 1997; Ravnborg & Westerman, 2002; SLIM, 2004; André & Simonsson, 2009).

But, what if, as in many cases (Lister, 2003; Poulsen, 2009; van Bommel, 2008; Bäckstrand, 2006; Müller, 2008), stakeholding is just one of many co-existing approaches to governance, the stakes are never formally recognised and legitimacy depends on multiple sources outside the recognised sphere of formal stakeholding? Clearly, as argued by Baumann (1995, pp. 43-50), any negotiated codex is only relevant to those who submit to it.

Theoretical perspective 2:
Agency is legitimate if power is exercised according to justifiable rules
A broader view is provided by sociology in the definition of power – and, by extension, agency – as legitimate when it is exercised according to justifiable rules. This view concurs with Max Weber's (Kalberg, 2005; 177–193) functionalist distinction between power and legitimacy as distinct attributes that combine to create authority (legitimate use of power). In those corporate traditions of stakeholding that rely on this approach, legitimacy has been identified as one of several attributes; in addition to stakeholder power and urgency, these compose the salience of the stakeholder recognition (Mitchell et al., 1997; Friedman, 2002). Even within the paradigm of Critical Systems Thinking, which will be discussed in detail below, sources of legitimacy are also frequently treated an analytically distinct from sources of power (e.g. Ulrich, 2000; see Section 1.4 and Chapter 7).

Beetham (1991, pp. 15-41) has provided one of the most extensive analytical accounts of this view on legitimacy *vis-à-vis* power in indentifying three requirements for legitimate agency: (i) it must conform with formal and informal rules; (ii) these rules must be justified by reference to beliefs shared by both dominant and subordinate groups; and (iii) there must be clear evidence of consent by the subordinate to the particular power relation. Arguably, this view is partly rooted in a classical positivist political theory with its definition of a legitimate democratic order as dependent on a shared conception of justice (Habermas, 2003).

Beetham admitted that this paradigm requires the social scientist be able to stand partly outside the social relations, which are the subject of analysis (Beetham, 1991, pp. 243-250). This is a difficult task when researchers are deeply engaged in actual resource management efforts. Indeed, one need only look at a very few concrete management situations (such as the case of Greenlandic beluga hunting) to see that Beetham's three requirements for legitimate agency are routinely ignored. In fact, it is well appreciated that classical liberal, pluralist assumptions (often found in deliberative democratic approaches to governance) regarding genuineness and equal access to negotiation processes are not maintained in many contexts (Edmunds & Wollenberg, 2001; Benn et al., 2009). Is stakeholder agency, then, generally illegitimate and power the driving force (because it holds governance regimes together), or can legitimacy be explained in a way that more specifically appreciates the inherent fragmentation of stakeholder interests?

Theoretical perspective 3:
Agency is legitimate if it coheres to shared normative structures

The proposition above can be considered a subcategory of an even broader view that, while originally exclusive to the sociological realm, has since found its way into many other traditions. Here, legitimacy is defined as the moral dimension of power relations. Giddens (1984, p. 29) defined legitimisation as one of several structures that is created through the modality of norms and is separate from power. Legitimacy is thus considered a normative structure, associated with the more emotional nature of social relations: it compels us to act in a certain way or to cast judgement on a person and/or action. Indeed, early models of political legitimacy were partly contingent on the normative emphasis in using behaviorist psychology to conceptualise legitimacy as a secondary social reinforcement that relied on symbolic rather than material rewards (Merelman, 1966).

While it may not have been the original intention of Giddens and others, it is not uncommon to find the issue of legitimacy in stakeholder agency treated as a 'normative' problem removed from substantial and/or material aspects of policy adaptation processes. A ‘sleight of hand response’ has been to distinguish between ‘procedural’ and ‘outcome’ legitimacy simultaneously (e.g. Hegtved & Johnson, 2009), thereby coupling the norms of the interaction and the actual results in the equation. However, a separation of the normative and symbolic from the material becomes problematic when natural resource management is focused on the use and distribution of concrete material resources.

Theoretical perspective 4:
Agency is legitimate if it advances collective purposes
Another sub-category of the ‘normative approach’ exists in political theory and political philosophy, focusing on formal institutional structures including states, public polities and administrations. Examined as a characteristic of institutional structures, legitimacy is seen to depend on the normative relationship of a political authority with its subjects. This approach departs from the traditional liberal democratic view of society – premised on the notion of a ‘closed system’ – or, as Terry Macdonald argued, the presumption of a polity as a ‘unified agent of public power advancing collective purposes’ (2008, p. 13). Further, it assumes that authority emerges when the subordinate subjects surrender their judgement (Warren, 1996), seeking sources of legitimacy in

> the resonance of collective decisions with public opinion, defined in terms of the provisional outcome of the contestation of discourses in the public sphere as transmitted to the state or other authorities (such as transnational ones) (Dryzek, 2001, p. 666).

‘Transnational’ stakeholders are typically defined as non-state actors who operate within or between the classical democratic institutions of nation states (Erman & Uhlin, 2010).

Altogether, this perspective reflects a search for optimal governance arrangements as orchestrated by a representative polity. Consequently, it does not appreciate the agency of stakeholders outside formal institutional domains (i.e. the pursuit of roles that are not contained within accepted categories of the state and non-state, or the public, private and civil society). Being too literal a notion of ‘transnational’, it also risks ignoring other transboundary forms of agency (i.e. the trans-sectoral, trans-institutional, trans-cultural).

Summary
Each of the theoretical perspectives outlined above have major lacunae *vis-à-vis* their usefulness in conceptualising stakeholder agency in natural resource governance. Arguably, little theoretical work to date has emerged to grapple with the creation and maintenance of legitimacy under the messy conditions of real-life

policy adaptation in the governance of natural resources and livelihoods. Moreover, it may be suggested that descriptive scientific disciplines focus on aspects of governance that are quite different than approaches which are more concerned with operationalising interventions through concrete project work and actively aim at fostering legitimate agency.

Yet, all these perspectives draw to our attention several common points, namely that stakeholder agency and its legitimacy are an expression of: (i) the nature of the *relationship* between stakeholders; (ii) how this relationship *trades off different interests and purposes*, and (iii) how this encounter is *justified, portrayed* and *comes to be perceived*. Indeed, this relational conception of power and agency shifts our attention from 'causes' (e.g. A has power over B to do X) to an interest in the 'association' between practices (Dahl, 1957, p. 203). Legitimising therefore is an active process of meaning engendered by competing and co-existing discourses under different national and local institutional and bio-physical conditions in the global political economy (Guzzini, 2010). Notwithstanding, it is imperative we bear in mind that legitimacy is not only a normative structure; thus, concurring with the Weberian view that domination is contingent on the ability to cultivate a sense of legitimacy in these very relationships (Kalberg, 2005, pp. 177–193).

It is with this sense of direction we embark on this thesis' research journey. We may be guided by the sentiments of Noam Chomsky when he wrote that

> the methods of control used in the 'most despotic' governments are transparent; those of the 'most free and most popular' societies are far more interesting to unravel (Chomsky, 1996, p. 69).

1.2.5 Research questions

Above, I have argued that stakeholding must be understood as a strategy that seeks to legitimise governance regimes of the liberal democratic tradition struggling with a collapse of collective understanding of their natural resource issues. This approach supports a radical democratic critique of the governance of natural resources and livelihoods *vis-à-vis* stakeholder agency. Further, even though numerous theoretical perspectives may offer some guidance, they are insufficient in dealing with the conditions of stakeholder agency in policy adaptation to real-world natural resource governance situations.

In order to address the deficiency, I have formulated the following three research questions:

1) How do stakeholders exert their agency and construct legitimacy in policy adaptation?
2) How do facilitated multi-stakeholder processes contribute to collective efforts to foster legitimacy?
3) How may research interventions ensure a rigorous critique of stakeholder agency and its legitimacy?

There is an evident progression from understanding the nature of policy adaptation and stakeholder agency to a first-order reflection on how facilitated multi-stakeholder processes contribute to the fostering of legitimacy, to a final second-order reflection on the quality of the research intervention itself (rigorous critique). The third question is not pursued with the intention to present direct conclusions based on the empirical findings from the cases but rather to share some further, meta-theoretical thoughts, which have been stimulated based on the synthesis of this work.

1.3 Research approach: Systemic and Participatory Action Research

As per the above-stated research questions, I have adopted a Systemic and Participatory Action Research (SPAR) approach based on constructionist epistemology and pragmatist philosophy. That this methodological and theoretical research tradition has explicitly evolved to address governance dilemmas associated with stakeholder agency and policy adaptation has informed my decision to use it.

Various research traditions differ in their conception of the science-society contract; that is, its scientific rationale and proper conditions. The SPAR tradition represents a broad grouping of approaches that unite Participatory Action Research and the most recent paradigms of systems thinking, most notably Soft Systems Methodology (SSM) and Critical Systems Thinking (CST). Action Research itself has been described as a ‘family’ of research approaches for the humanist and political associations evoked by this term: indeed, it underlines a plurality of epistemological and ontological approaches (McTaggert, 1997). The way my colleagues and I operationalised Action Research is thus important, as it is inspired by specific systems thinking traditions and the reliance on Participatory Action Research.

The history and roots of Participatory Action Research, SSM and CST have been extensively addressed (e.g. Argyris & Schön, 1996; Fals-Borda & Rahman, 1991;

Greenwood & Levin, 2007; McTaggert, 1997; Checkland, 1999; Midgley, 2000; Ison, 2008). My examination in this section of the underpinnings of SPAR will focus on revealing its relevancy for analysing legitimacy of stakeholder agency. In so doing, I relegate a more in-depth scrutiny of the debate between different strands of SPAR and associated methodological and theoretical ambiguities to Chapter 8.

1.3.1 Praxiology and the revolt against metaphysical universalism

While they developed independently, both the SSM and CST and Action Research traditions are generally committed to human liberation and emancipation through the meaning constructing process (Levin, 1994, p. 26). Further, SPAR shares characteristics with several interventionist and action oriented research traditions. For instance, New Paradigm Research seeks to offer an 'objectively subjective' alternative to empiricism-positivism (Reason & Rowan, 1981, pp. xi-xxiv). Similarly, Alain Touraine's method of Sociological Intervention (*l'Intervention Sociologique*) was launched to explore and support people's struggle to become actors in a world of fragmented experience (e.g. McDonald, 2002).

Here, I will concentrate on justifying the relevance of SPAR as a research approach within the tradition of praxiology. Under the SPAR umbrella in natural resource management, praxiology's research agenda seeks to facilitate sustainable transformations through collective action, appreciating multiple legitimate perspectives and paving the way for inclusion of interactive forms of cognition (Röling & Wagemaker, 1998; Leeuwis & Pyburn, 2002). It also comprises, to my knowledge, one of the most widely adopted of the interventionist and emancipatory research approaches within the governance of natural resources.

Praxiology is foremost a 'collaborative process of research, education, and action explicitly oriented toward social change' (Kindon et al., 2009, p. 90). As a multidimensional strategy, it democratises the research process by inviting stakeholders into collaborative enquiry. In this way, doubt is no longer viewed as individual property but rather as something arising in inherently doubtful (i.e. uncertain, complex, and controversial) situations (Dewey, 1981; Argyris & Schön, 1996, p. 30). It thus offers a research inquiry based on action, participation and research to affect concrete change in the destinies of those involved (Greenwood & Levin, 2007). Praxiology is anchored in pragmatist philosophy, in which the efficacy of theory depends on its practical value. Concurring with Charles Sanders Peirce, beliefs are rules for action (habits of thought); the meaning of a belief is to assert its consequences if carried out into action. That means that our conception of an idea's effects is the totality of our conception of that object (idea/action) itself (Peirce, 1878). In the words of John Dewey, inquiry is

> the controlled or directed transformation of an indeterminate situation into one that is so determinate in its constituent distinctions and relations as to convert the elements of the original situation into a unified whole (Dewey, 1981, p. 226).

There are characteristics of praxiology in Participatory Action Research, which is most frequently traced to Latin America scholarship 40 years ago. The goal then was to replace the dominant reductionist academic rationality monopoly with a dialogue of practical, internal, forms of knowledge and a mobilisation of endogenous knowledge systems, in which reality can only be comprehended through existential experience and an authentic commitment to it. The methodological tradition involved undertaking collective research in which socially validated data is obtained by the participants' recourse with their history and thus the facilitation of critical conscientisation (*conscientização*) (Freire, 1970, pp. 43-124; Fals-Borda & Rahman, 1991, pp. 24-34). This approach represents a social alternative to the definition of human agency within the positivist scientific tradition, where the individual self (akin to the Enlightenment's 'pure reason') is set free from the mysterious, occult and mythic domain of the 'social' (e.g. Flyvbjerg, 2006; Lansing, 2006).

Praxiology also forms part of the applied systems approach through its devotion to actively enabling purposeful transformations in concrete contexts (Ison, 2008). Both SSM and CST offer approaches to improving problematic situations through organised purposeful action. For instance, SSM facilitates an expression of problematic situations through building 'rich pictures' of these situations to yield purposeful activity systems in which implemented actions are organised (Checkland & Scholes, 1999). The CST paradigm was launched later as a 'third wave' (building on 'hard' and 'soft' traditions) of systems thinking in response to a perceived failure of the earlier approaches to address dimensions of power (e.g. Midgley, 2000, pp. 187-210). A central feature of the praxiological approaches to management of so-called 'wicked problems' is that they acknowledge the need for multiple and complimentary methodologies that draw from all waves of systems thinking. For instance, a major genera of approaches is the Total Systems Intervention developed by Flood and Jackson (Flood & Jackson, 1991a; Flood & Jackson, 1991b).

Compared to other forms of Action Research, systemic thinking introduces a particular epistemological – or epistemic – awareness of the collective learning process (e.g. Ison, 2008; Bawden et al., 2007). SSM and CST thus draw on the original systemic tenets of von Bertalanfy, Bateson, Ackoff and Churchman's General Systems Theory (e.g. Bateson, 2000, pp. 309-337) and form responses to the positivist-reductionist object/subject dualisms in systems science. Contrary to the early systems theories, they represent a 'fine-tuning' of an epistemological awareness first introduced through second-order cybernetics that attended to autopoisesis and self-referential systems capacities (Midgley, 2000; Luhmann, 1992; Fuchs, 2003; Fuchs, 2006).

These current systems thinking approaches rely on a shift 'from objective to epistemic science, to a framework in which epistemology – "the method of questioning" – becomes an integral part of scientific theories' (Capra, 1997, p. 40). This form of systems thinking appreciates, in Heisenberg's terms, that 'what we observe is not nature itself, but nature exposed to our method of questioning' (cf. Capra, 1997, p. 40). The systemic dimension in praxiology is particularly evident by the way in which our inquiries come to apprehend the world through 'systems of interest'; that is, the delineation of relevant parts of reality through a distinction between the system of interest and the environment outside this system (e.g. Ison, 2008; Powell & Larsen, Under revision).

Importantly, praxiology also paves the way for operationalising the shift from interpretation (*verstehen*) towards social action in the social sciences as articulated, for instance, within the interactionist paradigm. Interpretive and descriptive approaches to stakeholder agency in natural resource management drew on the work of, among others, George Herbert Mead (in Strauss, 1977), Erving Goffman (1959), and Harold Garfinkel (1967). While being distinct bodies of scholarship which I will not discuss in further detail, they all grew partly as a response to deficiencies in the positivist and structuralist models of rationality, by offering a way to investigate how shared knowledge and norms make situations of interaction between reflexive actors intelligible and accountable (McCarthy, 1992). Despite internal variations, since Harold Blumer's coining of the term in 1937, 'symbolic interactionism' in particular has informed a reaction away from the tension created by the natural and social sciences between internal (biological, psychological) and external (structural, cultural) determinants of human social behaviour. This includes a rejection of the relevance of metaphysical philosophy that supports the existence of any kind of truth outside the realm of human perception (Stryker, 1980; Snow, 2001; Smith, 2009; Burbank & Martins, 2009).

In sum, three interrelated tenets of praxiology (as a tradition within SPAR more generally) motivated my reliance on this research approach:

1) Criticalness:
It is an inherently emancipatory research approach, which aims at a radical democratisation of the knowledge constructing process. Rather, this approach is located in the 'critical' camp, as distinguished from the 'orthodoxy' of science with its naïvety about the realities of power relations. In the post-development vocabulary (Rahneman & Bawtree, 1997; Kothari, 2005), this perspective can be characterised by the qualities of subvertism ('to turn a situation around and look at it from another side'), human-centering ('represents a perception of reality from the perspective of human beings involved in the processes of change'), and radicalism ('in the etyomological sense, going to the roots') (Rahnema & Bawtree, 1997, pp. xi–xii).

2) Axio-onto-epistemological integration:
It rejects the orthodox dualisms of reductionist, positivist and empiricist science: object and subject; mind and body; and the social and the biological. Instead, it offers an integrated inquiry into

> profoundly contestable positions on the nature of nature (ontology), the nature of knowing and of knowledge (epistemology) and the nature of human nature and the role of values (axiology)' (Sriskandarajah et al., 2011, p. 560).

Richard Rorty showed that these dualisms are eroded when we reject the existence of metaphysical universalism:

> The only way to associate the intentional with the immaterial [i.e. maintain the mind-body dichotomy] is to identify it with the phenomenal, and … the only way to identify the phenomenal with the immaterial is to hypostasize universals and think of them as particulars rather than abstractions from particulars … The mental-physical distinction is parasitic on the universal-particular distinction (Rorty, 2009, p. 31).

3) Pragmatism for concrete improvement:
It rests on the pragmatic philosophy of William James, Charles Sanders Peirce, John Dewey and Richard Rorty where the antecedents of consequences provide meaning to theoretical/methodological choices and practical differences are revealed through research (e.g. Barton et al., 2009). The credibility and validity of research thus depends dually on the workability of the results (whether resulting actions can improve the problematic situation identified) and the concrete increase in participants' control over their own situations (Greenwood & Levin, 2007, pp. 55-75). Crucially, praxiology makes sense of the world and seeks to contribute to its improvement by pursuing a desire for solidarity rather than objectivity. The

distinction between appearance and reality is broken down and the need for metaphysics – and the distinction between ontology and epistemology – is removed.

In my opinion, these qualities express – over all – the role praxiology plays in the SPAR methodological framework and as operationalised in this thesis: an emancipatory integration of previous dualisms in a radical democratic project of inquiry which weaves theory and practice to support pragmatic change processes in society. In the pragmatist philosophical tradition, it conceptualises truth as 'justification' rather than 'correspondence', seeking as much unforced intersubjective agreement as possible. Our conception of knowing is hence transformed from a transaction between a knowing subject and 'reality' to justification as a social phenomenon. We move from an epistemological 'problem of reason' (which we accept as irrelevant) to an existential concern for solidarity and personhood in an appreciation of our shared human condition (Rorty, 2009, pp.15-69). [8]

1.4 Generating data and striving for rigour

1.4.1 Constructionist-contextualist case study methodology

As already indicated, this thesis has grown out of a succession and – at times – overlapping projects that have been guided by the praxiological SPAR tradition outlined above. One of the challenges of working under a SPAR umbrella is that many researchers unfamiliar with the approach have difficulty judging the quality of the work. For the purpose of positioning the synthetic product and insights emerging from the different projects and action research processes in a larger transdisciplinary context, I will here discuss how the the research questions were explored using a case study methodology: Chapters 2 through 7 explore five Action Research cases in South-East Asia (Vietnam, Philippines and Thailand) and Scandinavia (Sweden and Denmark) (see Table 1.2). In a SPAR context, labelling concrete projects as 'cases' also underlines how I mobilise our experiences in order to analyse the particular problems of our own practice as regards the research questions.

Case study methodologies were originally developed as a qualitative research strategy, particularly relevant to the examination of complex questions requiring

[8] As is evident, for this thesis, I have drawn on both Dewey's and Rorty's philosophies to motivate and justify the operationalisation of SPAR. However, owing to limitations of scope, I will here bracket the debate on Rorty's reading of Dewey and the controversies between Dewey's experimentalism and Rorty's neo-pragmatism (see e.g. Waks, 1997).

attention to subtle contingencies. In contrast to quantitative research strategies – that seek to produce generalising accounts of reality to motivate rules for future action – case study research is more valuable in coping with continuous learning that appreciates the contextual dependency of stipulated rules (Neuman, 2000; Flyvbjerg, 2006). That is, there are some research problems that can *only* be rigorously approached through a case study approach.

A vast number of scientific traditions have adapted their respective approaches to the case study research paradigm, taking widely divergent positions on, notably, continua between expert and participatory modes of knowledge generation and between realist and constructionist epistemologies. Within Action Research, a language employing the notion of 'cases' often reifies a certain research tradition, namely what Nielsen and Nielsen (2006) termed the 'socio-technical tradition' in which the learning process is considered limited to 'field' experience, and researchers fall back into a traditional extractive and positivist mode once they return to their offices. This reflects the risk that participatory research is proposed as an emancipatory process of knowledge generation without clear guidelines as to the actions once the lessons leave the case context (Khanlou & Peter, 2004). Eikeland built on the Action Research tradition of Argyris and Schön when he suggested that researchers'

> modern theories and other 'head stuff' are like superficial opinions, words, easy to remove … But prejudices … are subconscious and tacit, merged with or submerged in our practices and routines (Eikeland, 2006, p. 205).

Table 1.2: Overview of the five case studies examined in this thesis.

Case	Policy adaptation issue	Methodology	Sources of evidence
Integrated Coastal Management (ICM), Philippines (Chapters 2, 7)	Persistent challenges in implementing the ICM regime as defined by the state and development banks in Babuyan Islands, Philippines.	Participatory conservation action planning process, which led to critiquing the assumptions of the ICM regime through a stakeholder-based narrative (Chapter 2). The second iteration (Chapter 7) undertakes a critique of Werner Ulrich's method of dialogical boundary critique	Work conducted Nov. 2007 to May 2008. Planning workshops, consultations, and key informant interviews with participation from nearly 100 people. Secondary data from review of scientific and policy documents.
Disaster recovery and	Despite the institutionalisation	Participatory policy analysis of disaster risk	Work conducted during 2008.

resilience, Thailand (Chapter 3)	of extensive recovery efforts and international disaster risk reduction measures in Thailand, formal recovery is collapsing and underlying vulnerabilities persist.	reduction measures, and comparative case study analysis of tourist destination vulnerability.[9] Analysis of stakeholder agency through vulnerability and resilience theory in the social-ecological systems tradition.	Stakeholder consultations with 14 implementing actors in Krabi Province, online dialogue with 155 professionals, and review of nearly 500 scientific and 'grey literature' documents and more than 30 web repositories.
Policy coherence in sustainable agricultural development, Sweden (Chapter 4)	The Swedish Policy for Global Development demands improved collaboration for international sustainable agriculture, but is undermined by competition between organisations and sector specific interest.	Establishing a multi-stakeholder platform (network) for agricultural professionals supporting policy coherence in Swedish contributions to international agricultural development. Action learning approach in SSM tradition.	Consultations with Swedish organisations from October 2008 until January 2009, involving 142 people from 91 organisations, inception workshop with 64 people, desktop synthesis. The analysis is also shaped by the authors' experiences prior to and after the inception phase, in total a project period of over one year.
Grassroots democracy in rural development, Vietnam (Chapter 5)	Promulgation of grassroots democracy in rural uplands of Vietnam and contestation between divergent perspectives on the meaning of democracy.	Discursive analysis of the construction of grassroots democracy by rural development professionals. Undertaken through an action learning pilot study for the Sustainable Agriculture and Rural Development (SARD) Initiative.	Four months of field work April to July 2006. 77 consultations with individual professionals, and three field visits to rural upland localities in the central and northern highlands.

[9] The analysis of tourist destination vulnerability was conducted by Emma Calgaro and colleagues without my involvement. This case study represents a synthesis of two research projects of the SEI-led Programme on Sustainable Recovery and Resilience Building in the Tsunami Affected Region. I contributed directly to the sources of evidence section associated with this case as outlined in this table.

Accountability in agro-environmental governance, Denmark (Chapter 6)	Negotiation of nutrient reduction targets and agro-environmental measures in Denmark under the national government's Green Growth Strategy is suffering from intersectoral conflicts of interests and problems associated with trust and collaboration.	Situation analysis of implementability of agro-environmental targets and measures in a multi-institutional Interreg partnership in the Baltic Sea Region. Guided by SSM.	Consultations held in Copenhagen March–April 2010 with 33 professionals from 22 organisations. Circulation of synthesis report and consolidation workshop convened with Local Government Denmark in Copenhagen December 2010. Project experiences of nearly two years (2009–11) provide background for analysis.

Thus, it is important to attempt to achieve transparency about underlying prejudices, especially insofar as I am benefitting from the selected 'cases' – particularly when the engagement of stakeholders in the knowledge generation process invites an erosion of the traditional division of labour between researchers and researched.

In order to position the approach to case study research employed in this thesis, I refer here to a conceptual model developed with colleagues during a comparative analysis of three major multi-institutional research projects on local climate adaptation (Larsen et al., 2011). The model distinguishes four dominant sense-making perspectives, within which case study research is made meaningful (Fig. 1.4). It implements two axes, which use as organising principles the guiding epistemology (the conception of knowledge and knowing) on the vertical axis, and intent of the inquiry, particularly regarding what makes the case study relevant, on the horizontal axis. The axes represent, respectively, a continuum between epistemologies of 'realism' and 'constructionism' as distinct philosophies of science, and assumptions of 'contextual' and 'universal' usage of the work (Table 1.3).

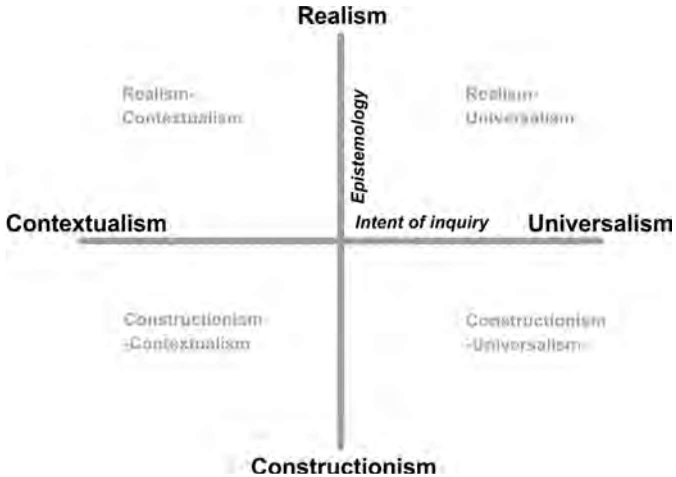

Figure 1.4: Sense-making approaches to case study research. (Reproduced from Larsen et al., 2011.)

Table 1.3: Explanation of the axes of epistemology and intent of research.

Epistemology	**General approach to knowing**	**Use of 'systems' as heuristic notion**
Realism	Views the cases as 'real' settings separable from the human perception of them, which can be made objectively available through investigation and verification (Holliday, 2002). Draws on assumptions of the existence of natural 'objects' independent of the observer, which are used to delineate the case study (McLaughlin & Dietz, 2008).	Within the realist tradition, the view of the world is often contained within the paradigm of immutable or 'hard' systems. This means that the world is construed as a set of interacting systems that exist beyond the domain of perception and that can be modified to improve their functioning – for instance, they can be objectively defined according to naturally given ecological boundaries (i.e. 'eco-system') (e.g. Röling & Wagemaker, 1998).

Constructionism	Seeks to establish a dialogue among stakeholders in the case study so that shared understanding emerges as the basis for collective action. Researchers and participants here are engaged in reality as unfinished and co-created. One dominant influence for constructionist epistemology is the sociology of knowledge in the empirical science tradition (e.g. Nielsen & Nielsen, 2006; Berger & Luckmann, 1966).	The emphasis on 'soft' systems in the constructionist tradition acknowledges that all systems are in fact 'systems of interest' as seen through the eyes of stakeholders. Systemic qualities such as optimality or resilience reflect negotiated outcomes (e.g. Checkland, 1999; Powell & Jiggins, 2003).
Intent of inquiry	**Value of cases**	**Measure of quality**
Universalism	Case study research is valuable in so far as it can be used to examine certain phenomena of interest that have been identified prior to engagement with the context. The purpose here is to generate sufficient insights to draw the necessary type of generalisation that will predicate actions in other localities (Holliday, 2002).	Robustness of conclusions depends on meta-level analysis of a large number of case studies with similarly derived data. This tradition is frequently located in social science empirical research (Yin, 1989; Stake, 2000).
Contextualism	Instead of generalisations, this view values the unveiling of diverse manners in which a phenomenon is expressed in different contexts. Rather than using predefined research questions, the context informs the formulation of hypotheses. Contextualism implies that longer term adaptive strategies and shorter term coping mechanisms always must be considered against a background of general unpredictability and uncertainty of people's agency (e.g. Charmaz, 2006).	Specific case outcomes are considered irreproducible. Higher order patterns are not independent of the perspective of those who generate such analysis. Authorisation of findings depends on scientific and societal rules, based on expected beneficiaries and the acknowledgement made by both researchers and participants that the knowledge is considered 'robust' and useful (e.g. Svensson & Nielsen, 2006).

It follows from the declared adoption of the SPAR inspired research approach that the sense-making perspective used in this thesis is that of the constructionist-contextualist. Cases are not physical or institutional configurations but rather learning ‘platforms’, arenas that provide space and time for new meaning to emerge (Steyaert et al., 2007). The ‘case’ study, therefore, is conceptualised within what Hardwick has termed the ‘intrinsic case study’ methodology: ‘the researcher has a (personal or professional) interest in the project and thus as an “insider” may play the role of a relatively subjective observer’ (Hardwick, 2009, p. 441). The ‘case’ here denoted simultaneously a unit of study as well as a product of investigation and transformation (Anthony & Jack, 2009). The case studies examined in this thesis were chosen because they offered context-dependent knowledge, or nuances and facets of stakeholder agency in natural resource governance (Flyvbjerg, 2006).

The project based engagement in the cases was both pragmatic and strategic: it reflects the unfolding of a research journey and the opportunities offered therein through collaboration with colleagues and project partners. Meanwhile, I also selected those emerging opportunities that would best enable me to pursue my growing interest in the fostering of legitimacy of stakeholder agency. Further, the two different geographical regions allows a comparative analysis of stakeholder agency across continents and serves to counteract the tendency to segregate discourses on sustainable development into clusters of ‘developing’ and ‘developed’ countries. In fact, the case studies will reveal that, in spite of differences in formal institutional structures and cultures, the challenges involved in fostering legitimate stakeholder agency were relatively similar throughout.

In each of the cases, I have – together with colleagues and partners – analysed a distinct issue of policy adaptation, through the lens of a specific research methodology found to be most relevant given the objectives, context and project conditions (Table 1.2). While each case exposed unique issues associated with stakeholder agency and legitimacy, the thesis has attempted to draw common lessons from them so as to inspire future research interventions. The cases spanned in length between six months and two years (Table 1.2), with project activities and termination dates largely determined by available funding. This limited our ability for in-depth engagement and thus to make a meaningful contribution to people’s lives. It also impacted and constrained theoretical insights. Notwithstanding, these short-term engagements reflect the reality faced by most projects and the need to establish meaningful contributions and collaborations with partners, who are already embedded in the context. It is for this reason that I find it particularly relevant to assess the extent to which project based engagements can offer meaningful interventions in the fostering of legitimate stakeholder agency and concrete improvements.

1.4.2 Rigour: Transparent co-construction of knowledge

It is well appreciated that controversies regarding criteria for validity frequently conflate clarity in terms of what constitutes 'quality' in qualitative research (Guba & Lincoln, 2005). In this thesis, I emphasise the *rigour* of the knowledge construction and change processes; that is, the extent to which the research process and findings adequately reflected the complex reality of the context and its human interactions, constructively interpreting and rendering it intelligible for actions (van der Riet, 2008). As discussed by Steiner Kvale (1995), this is a view of construct validity that draws attention to how interpretations are made in negotiation between discourses and requires

> demystification of validity, maintaining that verification of information and interpretations is a normal activity in the interactions of daily life … [thus seeking to] live in ways that go beyond a pervasive distrust and skepticism of social interaction and the nature of the social world (Kvale, 1995, pp. 36, 38).

Since this thesis addresses legitimacy of stakeholder agency, the accountability of the research process warrants particular attention. As such, I have placed emphasis on transparency in the process of collaborative inquiry with stakeholders and in the assumptions underlying the interpretations made in the research. In so doing, I have sought to appropriate the view of Nielsen and Nielsen (2010) that the rigour of research depends on the extent to which it reflects and is made transparent in relation to the situations in which it works. This decision also means that the purpose of presenting findings from the selected cases is not to claim any 'objective validity', but to share a number of insights that were co-constructed with the participants in the course of the research process. Indeed, the research interventions sought to transform people's lived experiences into recognised scientific knowledge (Polkinghorne, 2007; Flyvbjerg, 2006). This is not because I view the scientific method as superior, but because it was hoped that the research process could act as a platform to empower the participants in resolving issues that would otherwise remain ignored and problematic.

The generation and analysis of data has acknowledged each 'case' as an original, situated, learning process for everyone involved, and that the labelling of change processes as 'cases' owed to the intervention by us as researchers. The work was therefore seen to achieve significance through our systemic interventions in reality and where the possibilities for observation were actively constructed (Midgley, 2003). Authorisation of lessons was achieved through a mixture of scientific and societal rules depending on the expected recipients/beneficiaries and differed between cases. Not only should the knowledge be deemed 'robust' by the researchers, but also useful by the participants (Svensson & Nielsen, 2006).

In this way, the interventions were intended to support the emergence of a more inclusive, transparent and rigorous 'interactional *modus vivendi'*, something that evolves when

> together the participants contribute to a single overall definition of the situation which involves not so much a real agreement as to what exists but rather a real agreement as to whose claims concerning what issues will be temporarily honoured (Goffman, 1959, p. 21).

As this thesis is a personal product and I as author have taken the leadership in compiling the evidence and views of participants, findings are invariably communicated through my interpretation. In my view, it is part of the responsibility of the researcher to corroborate and synthesise the complexity and controversy into coherent and intelligible stories. Yet, importantly, this communication also reflects a negotiated process amongst the researchers and partners involved. Project staff and partners rarely shared the same opinions and perspectives about either the methodology or intention of the project or its results. The meditation between these perspectives also provided for a further degree of 'social validation' of the work (Whitehead & McNiff, 2006, p. 103).

The information found in the subsequent chapters has been explored and tested by the people in the respective case study. Moreover, many of their insights have been positioned in a larger context and substantiated by secondary evidence. Those results that obtained the status of generally acceptable insights have been communicated as such, without specific references to sources. But, those claims that remained problematic throughout the project have been referenced to their champions. In order to avoid direct attributions stakeholders have been identified using the most appropriate typology. This has been necessary especially when the cases addressed sensitive issues and the participants communicated insights in confidence or when the 'who says what' was agreed to stay within each unique encounter. It will be apparent from reading the chapters below that my colleagues and I experimented with different ways of narrating the richness of each case. The specific process of validation and the research methodology applied in each is outlined and justified accordingly.

Similarly, the issue of accountability considers the choice of co-author(s) in academic research not only because they obtain intellectual credit for the work, but they have the authority to sanction final interpretations. I have found this a particularly difficult question, as it epitomises the conflict between the requirements of a competitive academic environment and personal professional collaborative commitments. The different projects revealed the extent to which different views exist about the ownership of the intellectual property in the research projects. In this thesis, I have attempted to adhere to a view that recognises research findings in the context of a collaborative process, where ownership lies with everyone who significantly contributed to the implementation of each project. Contributions may be through project conceptualisation, data generation, networking with partners, and/or direct contributions to the written text. Research typically involves a division of labour, with the contributors having different competencies and/or resources. It also acknowledges that, from an Action Research perspective, 'analysis' takes an equal place in the process of project implementation and writing is more a process of pulling threads together. I have therefore striven to prepare the published and submitted articles presented as chapters in this thesis as part of a dialogue with those whom I consider to have justifiable claims to ownership, offering them the opportunity to make interpretative contributions and to be included as co-author. Still, through taking the responsibility – and liberty – to present the experiences in this way, it has also been necessary to choose which arguments be presented for publication without wider prior scrutiny and thus adequately represent the uncensored voices and stories of the projects. A more complete realisation of this problematique only emerged during the work, and I have not always been able to respond as coherently together with my project partners and colleagues as I would have liked.

1.4.3 Justification for synthesis

Synthesising the case findings in Chapter 8, I reconsider what the cases tell us about the phenomena of stakeholder agency in liberal democratic governance regimes. In so doing, I argue that despite their local nuances, all five cases say something meaningful about the 'domain of policy adaptation' as conceptualised above (Section 1.2). Since the cases are not confined by a clearly delineated geographical or institutional boundary, but rather undertake an exploration between project sites in South East Asia and Scandinavia, the work reflects the very phenomenon it is exploring: that is, the transboundary character of stakeholder agency, which is both result and cause of the disintegration of once axiomatic conceptions of place and the emergence of new social and ecological borderlands (Lamont & Molnár, 2002; Gupta & Fergusson, 1992). Particularly characteristic is the mellowing of the notion of nation, an imagined political community with its emotional legitimacy commanded by transplantable cultural artifacts (Andersson, 2003).

The 'unit of analysis' in this thesis concerns the interaction between international organisations such as United Nations agencies, national and sub-national governments, development banks, civil society organisations, private companies, scientists, local communities and individuals. As such, the way stakeholder processes integrate or disintegrate between the micro, meso and macro of radical democratic spaces are considered (Little & Lloyd, 2009). Concurring with Manson (2008), this approach to synthesis appropriates an epistemological – rather than absolute – perspective on scale.

I acknowledge that, owing to temporal limitations, the research has missed significant local processes that constitute the patchwork of dynamically produced spaces for participation, domination and interaction (e.g. Funder, 2010). However, endeavouring to be sufficiently immersed in the concrete change processes, I intend to have discerned degrees of interaction among different levels of agency in each localised case. It has also been a goal of this thesis to facilitate and comprehend the claims-making processes among stakeholders who are all engaged in exerting their agency. For instance, in the case national coastal management regimes in the Philippines (Chapter 2), my examination focused not on the legitimisation of the municipal elite within a supposed 'local' situation, but the forms of agency within an elite that has further been shaped by national as well as international actors.

I have sought to present the research process and assumptions associated with each case as transparently as possible; as such, my synthesis does not make claims beyond the realm of our interventions. I leave to the reader to judge the trustworthiness of the narratives and their relevance to other situations. In this regard, the cases should be read with a view to offer 'a fluid understanding that explicitly or tacitly recognizes the complexity and frailty of the generalizations we can make about human interrelationships' (Thomas, 2010, p. 577).

This thesis attempts to synthesise 'the empirical' and the 'meta-theoretical'. In my view, a particular weakness of much research on stakeholding and governance in natural resource management is that contributions tend to either present scarcely reflected evidence without challenging underlying assumptions; or promote theoretical viewpoints without any clear linkage to empirical justifications. Bridging the empirical and the meta-theoretical, I seek to justify my premises by addressing the underlying theoretical assumptions. Throughout but mostly in this introductory and the final synthesis chapters (Chapters 1 and 8), I trace and critique the construction of legitimate stakeholder agency in the different governance contexts by recourse with various theoretical frameworks. Beyond the SPAR and radical democratic paradigms, this includes symbolic interactionism, pragmatism, constructionism, critical theory, political philosophy, and existentialism in the intersubjective tradition.[10] While commonly perceived as disparate bodies of literature, they all contain theoretical foundations that seek rigorous and ethical praxis (Bernstein, 1971, pp. 1-9). I thus concur with Greenwood's (2007) view that we must locate SPAR outside academic disciplining and feel free to draw on relevant arguments across paradigms and traditions. As such, while my synthesis draws initial inspiration from SPAR, it integrates a variety of other academic disciplines to help inform social change in the interventionist paradigm.

In sum, this thesis is not justified by being yet another contribution to an already large body of literature. Rather, it is an attempt to tell a set of concrete stories that hopefully will resonate with and inspire people involved in related areas of work. Evidently, as a PhD thesis, this text is also intended to play an instrumental role (with the author having striven to obtain an institutionalised imprimatur or 'quality stamp'); as such, there is a risk the inquiry posits universal and academic claims that do not serve any practical purpose. The institutional requirements associated with earning a PhD are also the reason I have maintained a first-person narrative throughout. I hope the reader will see through this convention and hear the voices of the many other people who have jointly created or contributed to the stories.

In writing this thesis, I have been guided by Richard Rorty's observation that 'inquiry that does not achieve co-ordination of behaviour is not inquiry but simply wordplay' (cf. Reason, 2003, p. 104). By making our past experiences and ongoing projects available, I hope this thesis, and the underlying process of synthesis, has led (and will lead) to more than just wordplay.

Indeed, I have a specific agenda: (i) to improve the rigour of my own engagement in current and future projects; (ii) to inspire my colleagues and partners in their efforts to continuously strengthening the rigour and criticalness of our work; and (iii) to raise general awareness of partners and collaborators that most mainstream governance and research efforts have been blind to the many ways stakeholders influence policy processes and seek to negotiate their legitimate agency therein.

[10] Intersubjective existentialists depart from the ontological reality of what is 'between' people, while others (including Heidegger and Kierkegaard) tend to absolutise the self in a 'monological solitude', searching for the relationship of the individual with his own being (Buber, 2002, p. 195; Friedman, 1999; Friedman, 2002; Heidegger, 2000). A similar distinction can be made about linguistic models of communication in the semiotic and structuralist traditions, where some theorists emphasise the transcendence of the sign in favour of active and creative interconnection among people, while others focus on the individual (Finnegan, 2002, pp. 9-32).

1.5 Thesis outline

Each case study hereafter is presented in a separate chapter and includes analysis of its individual problem context, research methodology and results (Fig. 1.5). All of these have been reproduced (with permission) from articles published in or submitted to scientific journals. Since they represent active interventions in scientific discourses, each example responds to the community of scholars/professionals to which it was originally addressed. As such, questions regarding stakeholder agency are explored from a variety of theoretical angles.

As part of the interventionist research approach, each case responds to the first two research questions (i.e. stakeholder agency and the fostering of legitimacy through facilitated multi-stakeholder processes) in different ways (see Table 1.2 above).

The five cases are presented according to the following logic: Chapter 2 (coastal resource management in the Philippines) and Chapter 3 (Thai disaster preparedness and recovery strategies) tackle the actual processes of stakeholder agency directly and seek to conceptualise its significance. Both chapters offer synthetic narratives of stakeholder agency that were developed as part of the project work itself. Chapter 4 (Swedish agricultural development aid) and Chapter 5 (Vietnamese grassroots democracy) more explicitly emphasise the claims-making processes and subtle practices that stakeholders employ to enact and legitimise their agency. Chapter 6 (Baltic/Danish agro-environmental governance) partly responds to the recognition of these subtle practices and questions the chances that the idealised norm of 'accountability' is achievable within a liberal governance regime, especially given the impressive variety of stakeholder practices.

The third research question (i.e. prospects for ensuring rigorous critique) is a methodological introspection that emerges in response to the composite synthesis of all the cases. The ideas herein initially found expression in the second of two chapters addressing the coastal management situation in the Philippines (Chapter 7). It considers the challenges we faced facilitating a conservation action planning process in the Babuyan Islands (Chapter 2) and examines the efficacy of the adopted methodology of critical boundary critique.

Finally, Chapter 8 provides the synthesis and critique of the findings and offers answers to the thesis research questions.

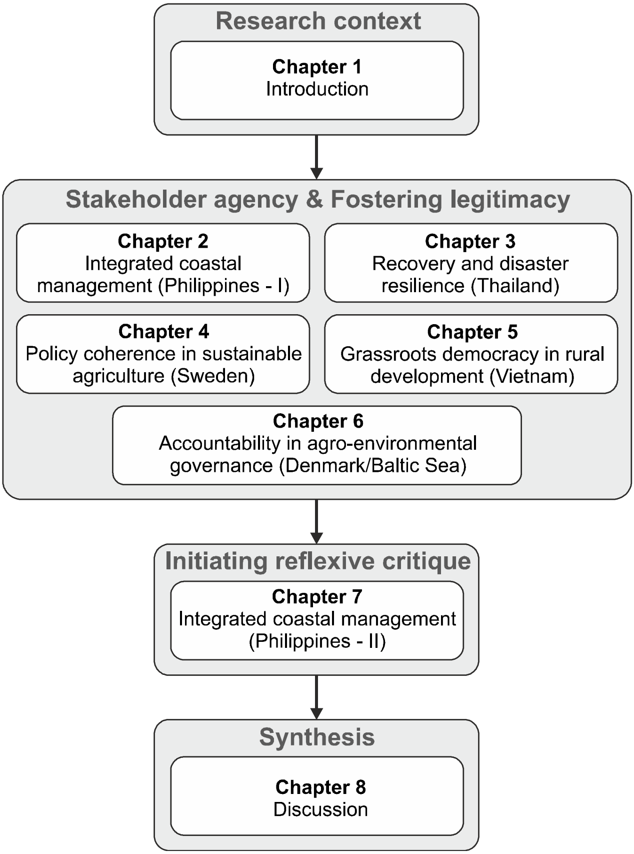

Figure 1.5: Overview of the thesis outline.

1.6 References

Adams, W. M. (2004). *Against Extinction: The story of conservation.* London: Earthscan.

Alvarez-Flores, C. M., & Heide-Jørgensen, M. P. (2004). A risk assessment of the sustainability of the harvest of beluga (*Delphinapterus leucas*) (Pallas 1776) in West Greenland. *ICES Journal of Marine Science, 61*, 274–286.

Andersson, B. (2003). *Imagined communities. Reflections on the origin and spread of Nationalism.* (Rev. ed.). Manila, Philippines: Anvil Publishing.

André, K., & Simonsson, L. (2009). Identification of regional stakeholders for adaptation to climate change. Paper submitted to 9th Nordic Environmental Social Science Conference (NESS): 'Knowledge, learning and action for sustainability', 10–12 June, London.

Ångman, E., Hallgren, L., & Nordström, E.-M. (2011). Managing Impressions and Forests: The Importance of Role Confusion in Co-Creation of a Natural Resource Conflict. *Society and Natural Resources. Online first.*

Anthony, S., & Jack, S. (2009). Qualitative case study methodology in nursing research: An integrative review, *Journal of Advanced Nursing, 65* (6), 1171–1181.

Argyris, C., & Schön, D. A. (1996). *Organizational Learning II: Theory, Method, and Practice.* Wokingham, UK: Addison-Wesley Publishing Company.

Armitage, D., Marschke, M., & Plummer, R. (2008). Adaptive co-management and the paradox of learning. *Global Environmental Change, 18*, 86–98.

Bäckstrand, K. (2006). Multi-Stakeholder Partnerships for Sustainable Development: Rethinking Legitimacy, Accountability and Effectiveness. *European Environment, 16*, 290–306.

Barton, J., Stephens, J., & Haslett, T. (2009). Action Research: Its Foundations in Open Systems Thinking and Relationship to the Scientific Method. *Systemic Practice and Action Research, 22*, 475–488.

Bateson, G. (2000). *Steps to an ecology of mind.* Chicago: University Press.

Baumann, Z. (1995). *Postmodern etik (Postmodern Ethics).* Gothenburg, Sweden: Daidalos.

Bawden, R. (2005). Systemic Development at Hawkesbury: Some Personal Lessons from Experience. *Systems Research and Behavioral Science, 22*, 151–164.

Bawden, R., McKenzie, B., & Packham, R. (2007). Moving beyond the academy: A commentary on extra-mural initiatives in systemic development. *Systems Research and Behavioural Science, 24*, 129–141.

Beck, U. (1992). *Risk society. Towards a new modernity.* London: Sage.

Beetham, D. (1991). *The Legitimation of Power.* Hong Kong: Humanities Press International Inc.

Benn, S., Dunphy, D., & Martin, A. (2009). Governance of environmental risk: New approaches to managing stakeholder involvement. *Journal of Environmental Management, 90*, 1567–1575.

Berger, P., & Luckmann, T. (1966). *The Social Construction of Reality: A Treatise in the Sociology of Knowledge.* Harmondsworth, UK: Penguin.

Bernstein, R. J. (1971): Praxis and action. University of Pennsylvania Press Inc., Philadelphia, USA.

Blackmore, C. (2007). What kinds of knowledge, knowing and learning are required for addressing resource dilemmas? A theoretical overview. *Environmental Science and Policy, 10*, 512–525.

Brockington, D., & Scholfield, K. (2010). The Conservationist Mode of Production and Conservation NGOs in sub-Saharan Africa. *Antipode, 42* (3), 551–575.

Buber, M. (2002). *Between Man and Man.* New York: Routledge.

Burbank, P. M., & Martins, D. C. (2009). Symbolic interactionism and critical perspective: Divergent or synergistic? *Nursing Philosophy, 11*, 25–41.

Capra, F. (1997). *The web of life. A new synthesis of mind and matter.* London: Flamingo.

Castree, N. (1995). The nature of produced nature: Materiality and knowledge construction in marxism, *Antipode, 27* (1), 12–48.
Chambers, R. (1997). *Whose reality counts? Putting the first last*. London: ITDG Publishing.
Charmaz, K. (2006). *Constructing grounded theory. A practical guide through qualitative analysis.* London: Sage.
Checkland, P. (1999). *Systems Thinking, Systems Practice.* New York: Wiley.
Checkland, P., & Scholes, J. (1999). *Soft Systems Methodology in Action.* New York: Wiley.
Chomsky, N. (1996). *Powers and prospects. Reflections on human nature and the social order.* Boston: South End Press.
Cooke, B., & Kothari, U. (Eds.). (2001). *Participation. The new tyranny?* London: Zed Books.
Dahl, R. A. (1957). The Concept of Power. *Behavioral Science, 2* (3), 201–215.
Devenney, M. (2004). *Ethics and Politics in Contemporary Theory. Between critical theory and post-Marxism.* London: Routledge.
Dewey, J. (1981). The Pattern of Inquiry. In McDermott, J. J. (Ed.). The Philosophy of John Dewey. Two Volumes in One. 1: The Structure of Experience. 2: The Lived experience (pp. 223-239). Chicago: University Press.
Dewey, J. (2000). *Liberalism and social action.* New York: Prometheus Books.
Dryzek, J. S. (2001). Legitimacy and Economy in Deliberative Democracy. *Political Theory, 29* (5), 651–669.
Edmunds, D., & Wollenberg, E. (2001). A strategic approach to multistakeholder negotiations. *Development and Change, 32*, 231–253.
Eikeland, O. (2006). The validity of action research – validity in action research. In K. A. Nielsen, & Svensson, L. (Eds.), *Action research and interactive research* (pp. 193–240). Maastricht: Shaker Publishing.
Erman, E., & Uhlin, A. (Eds.). (2010). *Legitimacy Beyond the State? Re-examining the Democratic Credentials of Transnational Actors.* Houndmills, Berkshire: Palgrave Macmillan.
Fals-Borda, O., & Rahman, M. A. (1991). *Action and knowledge. Breaking the monopoly with participatory action research.* London: The Apex Press.
Finnegan, R. (2002). *Communicating. The multiple modes of human interconnection.* London: Routledge.
Flood, R. L., & Jackson, M. C. (1991a). Total Systems Intervention: A Practical Face to Critical Systems Thinking. *Systems Practice, 4* (3), 197–213.
Flood, R. L., & Jackson, M. C. (1991b). *Creative problem solving. Total Systems Intervention.* New York: Wiley.
Flyvbjerg, B. (2006). Five Misunderstandings About Case-Study Research. *Qualitative Inquiry, 12* (2), 219–245.
Foucault, M. (1969). *The archeology of knowledge.* London: Routledge.
Freire, P. (1970). *Pedagogy of the oppressed.* New York: The Continuum International Publishing Group Inc.
Freuchen, P., Mathiassen, T., & K. Birket-Smith (1934). *Rasmussen, Knud. Mindeudgave (Rasmussen, Knud. A Homage)*. Copenhagen: Gyldendal.
Friedman, A. L. (2002). Developing stakeholder theory. *Journal of management studies, 39* (1), 1–21.
Friedman, M. (1999). *The worlds of existentialism: a critical reader.* New York: Humanity Books.
Fuchs, C. (2003). Structuration Theory and Self-Organization. *Systemic Practice and Action Research, 16* (2), 133–167.
Fuchs, C. (2006). The Self-Organization of Social Movements. *Systemic Practice and Action Research, 19* (1), 101–136.
Funder, M. (2010). The Social Shaping of Participatory Spaces: Evidence from Community Development in Southern Thailand. *Journal of Development Studies, 46* (10), 1708–1728.
Funtowicz, S. O., & J. R. Ravetz (1993). Science for the postnormal age. *Futures, 25* (7), 739–755.
Gadamer, H.-G. (2004). *Truth and Method.* London: Continuum Publishing Group.
Garfinkel, H. (1967). *Studies in Ethnomethodology.* Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice-Hall.

Gearey, M., & Jeffrey, P. (2006). Concepts of legitimacy within the context of adaptive water management strategies. *Ecological Economics, 60*, 129–137.
Giddens, A. (1984). *The Constitution of Society. Outline of the Theory of Structuration*. Berkeley: University of California Press.
Giddens, A. (1991). *Modernity and self-identity. Self and society in the late modern age.* Cambridge: Polity Press.
Giddens, A. (1998). *The third way. The renewal of social democracy.* Cambridge: Polity Press.
Goffman, E. (1959). *The presentation of self in everyday life.* London: Penguin.
Görg, C., & Hirsch, J. (1998). Is International Democracy Possible? *Review of International Political Economy, 5* (4), 585–615.
Greenwood, D. J. (2007). Pragmatic Action Research. *International Journal of Action Research, 3*(1 and 2), 131–148.
Greenwood, D. J., & Levin, M. (2007). *Introduction to Action Research: Social Research for Social Change*. London: Sage.
Grimble, R., & Wellard, K. (1997). Stakeholder Methodologies in Natural Resource Management: a Review of Principles, Contexts, Experiences and Opportunities. *Agricultural Systems, 55* (2): 173–193.
Guba, E. G., & Lincoln, Y. S. (2005). Paradigmatic Controversies, Contradictions, and Emerging Confluences. In N. K. Denzin, & Y. S. Lincoln (Eds.), *The Sage Handbook of Qualitative Research* (3rd ed., pp. 191–216). London: Sage.
Gunderson, L. H., & Holling, C. S. (2002). *Panarchy: Understanding Transformations in Human and Natural Systems*. Washington DC: Island Press.
Gupta, A., & Fergusson, J. (1992). Beyond 'Culture': Space, Identity, and the Politics of Difference. *Cultural Anthropology, 7* (1), 6–23.
Guzzini, S. (2010). *Power analysis: Encyclopedia entries.* DIIS Working Paper no. 34. Copenhagen: Danish Institute for International Studies.
Habermas, J. (1973). *Legitimation crisis.* Boston: Beacon Press.
Habermas, J. (2003). On Law and Disagreement. Some Comments on 'Interpretative Pluralism'. *Ratio Juris, 16* (2), 187–94.
Hajer, M. (2003). Policy without polity? Policy analysis and the institutional void. *Policy Sciences, 36*, 175–195.
Hajer, M., & Wagenaar, H. (2003). *Deliberative policy analysis. Understanding governance in the network society.* Cambridge: University Press.
Hansen, H. P., & Sriskandarajah, N. (2009). Stakeholders or Citizens? A probe into the politics of participation in environmental governance. Paper presented at Conference on Communication and the Environment (COCE), Portland, Maine.
Hardwick, S. W. (2009). Case study approach in human geography. In R. Kitchen, & N. Thrift (Eds.), *International Encyclopedia of Human Geography* (pp. 441–445). Oxford: Elsevier.
Hegtved, K. A., & Johnsson, C. (2009). Power and Justice. Toward an Understanding of Legitimacy. *American Behavioral Scientist, 53* (3), 376–399.
Heidegger, M. (2000). *Introduction to metaphysics.* (Trans. by G. Fried & R. Polt). Yale: University Press.
Hemmati, M., Enayati, J., McHarry, J., & Dodds, F. (2002). *Multi Stakeholder Processes for Governance and Sustainability: Beyond Deadlock and Conflict*. London: Earthscan.
Hobsbawn, E. (2008). *Globalisation, Democracy, and Terrorism.* London: Abacus.
Holliday, A. (2002). *Doing and Writing Qualitative Research.* London: Sage Publications.
Holling, C. S., & Meffe, G. K. (1996). Command and control and the Pathology of natural resource management. *Conservation Biology, 10*, 329–337.
Holmes, S. (1982). Two Concepts of Legitimacy: France after the Revolution. *Political Theory, 10* (2), 165–183.

Igoe, J., Neves, K., & Brockington, D. (2010). A Spectacular Eco-Tour around the Historic Bloc: Theorising the Convergence of Biodiversity Conservation and Capitalist Expansion. *Antipode, 42* (3), 486–512.

Ison, R. (2008). Systems Thinking and Practice for Action Research. In P. Reason, & H. Bradbury (Eds.), *The SAGE Handbook of Participative Inquiry and Practice* (2nd ed., pp. 139–158). London: Sage.

Ison, R., Blackmore, C., & Jiggins, J. (2007). Social learning: An alternative policy instrument for managing in the context of Europe's water. *Environmental Science and Policy, 10*, 499–511.

James, S. (1985). Louis Althusser. In Q. Skinner (Ed.), *The Return of Grand Theory in the Human Sciences* (pp. 141–158). Cambridge: University Press.

Jepson, P., & Canney, S. (2003). Values-led conservation. *Global Ecology & Biogeography, 12*, 271–274.

Kalberg, S. (Ed.). (2005). *Max Weber. Readings and Commentary on Modernity.* Oxford: Blackwell.

Kaspersson, R. (2006). Editorial: Rerouting the stakeholder express. *Global Environmental Change, 16*, 320–322.

Kassa, H., Campbell, B., Sandewall, M., Kebede, M., Tesfaye, Y., Dessie, G., Seifu, A., Tadesse, M., Garedew, E., & Sandewall, K. (2009). Building future scenarios and uncovering persisting challenges of participatory forest management in Chilimo Forest, Central Ethiopia. *Journal of Environmental Management, 90* (2), 1004–1013.

Khanlou, N., & Peter, E. (2005). Participatory action research: considerations for ethical review. *Social Science & Medicine, 60*, 2333–2340.

Kindon, S., Pain, R., & Kesby, M. (2009). Participatory Action Research. In R. Kitchen, & N. Thrift (Eds.), *International Encyclopedia of Human Geography,* vol. 11 (pp. 90–95). Oxford: Elsevier.

Kothari, U. (Ed.). (2005). *A radical history of development studies. Individuals, institutions and ideologies*. London: Zed books.

Kristensen, D. M., Jørgensen, T. R., Larsen, R. K., Forchhammer, M. C., & Christoffersen, K. C. (2006). Inter-annual growth of Arctic charr (*Salvelinus alpinus, L.*) in relation to climate variation. *BMC Ecology* 6 (10).

Kvale, S. (1995). The Social Construction of Validity. *Qualitative Inquiry, 1* (1), 19–40.

Laclau, E., & Mouffe, C. (1996). *Hegemony and socialist strategy. Towards a radical democratic politics*. London: Verso.

Lamont, M., & Molnár, V. (2002). The study of boundaries in the social sciences. *Annual Review of Sociology, 28*, 167–95.

Lansing, J. S. (2006). *Perfect Order: Recognizing Complexity in Bali.* Princeton Studies in Complexity. Princeton: University Press.

Larsen, R. K. (2005). Conservation communication: Visionscapes and perceptional habits. MSc. Dissertation, School of Geography, Oxford University, Oxford, England.

Larsen, R. K. (2006). Operationalising the SARD-Initiative in Viet Nam. MSc. Thesis, Department of Urban and Rural Development, Swedish University of Agricultural Sciences, Uppsala, Sweden.

Larsen, R. K., Osbeck, M., King, C., Powell, N., & Virgin, I. (2009). *Inception Report – Swedish International Agricultural Network Initiative (SIANI)*. SEI Project Report. Stockholm: Stockholm Environment Institute. Retrieved from http://sei-international.org/publications?pid=1242.

Larsen, R. K., Thomalla, F., & Miller, F. (2010a). Learning to build resilient coastal communities: Post-tsunami recovery in Sri Lanka and Indonesia. In C. T. Hoanh, B. Szuster, K. S. Pheng, A. Noble, & A. Ismael (Eds.), *Tropical Deltas and Coastal Zones: Community, Environment and Food Production at the Land-water Interface* (pp. 350–366). Wallingford UK: CAB International.

Larsen, R. K., Acebes, J. M., & Belen, A. (2010b). *Philippine Integrated Coastal Management: Diverging stakeholder agendas and elite cooption in Babuyan Islands*. SEI Working Paper. Stockholm: Stockholm Environment Institute. Retrieved from http://sei-international.org/publications?pid=1623.

Larsen, R. K., Gerger Swartling, Å., Powell, N., Simonsson, L., & Osbeck, M. (2011). *Framework for supporting the dialogue between regulatory policy and local climate change adaptation: Insights from case study research in Sweden, Canada and Indonesia.* SEI Research Report. Stockholm: Stockholm Environment Institute. Retrieved from http://sei-international.org/publications?pid=1882.

Leeuwis, C. (2000). Reconceptualizing Participation for Sustainable Rural Development: Towards a Negotiation Approach. *Development and Change, 31*, 931–959.

Leeuwis, C. (2002). Making explicit the social dimension of cognition. In C. Leeuwis, & R. Pyburn (Eds.), *Wheelbarrows full of frogs. Social learning in rural resource management* (pp. 391–406). Assen, Netherlands: Royal Van Gorcum.

Leeuwis, C., & van den Ban, A. (2004). *Communication for Rural Innovation: Rethinking Agricultural Extension.* (3rd ed.). Oxford: Wiley-Blackwell.

Leeuwis, C., & Pyburn, R. (Eds.). (2002). *Wheelbarrows full of frogs. Social learning in rural resource management.* Assen, Netherlands: Royal Van Gorcum.

Levin, M. (1994). Action Research and Critical Systems Thinking: Two Icons Carved Out of the Same Log? *Systems Practice, 7* (1), 25–41.

Lister, S. (2003). NGO Legitimacy. Technical Issue or Social Construct? *Critique of Anthropology, 23* (2), 175–192.

Little, A., & Lloyd, M. (Eds.). (2009). *The politics of radical democracy.* Edinburgh: University Press.

Ludwig, D. (2001). The era of management is over. *Ecosystems, 4*, 758–764.

Luhmann, N. (1992). What is Communication? *Communication Theory, 2*, 251–259.

Luks, F. (1999). Post-normal science and the rhetoric of inquiry: Deconstructing normal science? *Futures, 31*, 705–719.

Macdonald, T. (2008). *Global Stakeholder Democracy. Power and Representation Beyond Liberal States*. Oxford: University Press.

Mannheim, K. (1936). *Ideology and Utopia*. New York: Harvest Books.

Manson, S. M. (2008). Does scale exist? An epistemological scale continuum for complex human–environment systems. *Geoforum, 39*, 776–788.

McCarthy, T. (1992). Philosophy and Social Practice. Avoiding the Ethnocentric Predicament. In A. Honneth, T. McCarthy, C. Offe, & A. Wellmer (Eds.), *Philosophical Interventions in the Unfinished Project of Enlightenment* (pp. 241–260). Cambridge: MIT Press.

McDonald, K. (2002). *L'Intervention Sociologique* After Twenty-Five Years: Can it Translate Into English? *Qualitative Sociology, 25* (2), 247–260.

McLaughlin, P., & Dietz, T. (2008). Structure, agency and environment: Toward an integrated perspective on vulnerability. *Global Environmental Change, 18*, 99–111.

McTaggert, R. (1997) (Ed.). *Participatory action research. International contexts and consequences.* Albany NY: State University of New York Press.

Merelman, R M. (1966). Learning and Legitimacy. *The American Political Science Review, 60* (3), 548–561.

Midgley, G. (2000). *Systemic Intervention: Philosophy, Methodology, and Practice*. New York: Kluwer Academic/Plenum Publishers.

Midgley, G. (2003). Science as Systemic Intervention: Some Implications of Systems Thinking and Complexity for the Philosophy of Science. *Systemic Practice and Action Research, 16* (2), 77–97.

Miller, F., Osbahr, H., Boyd, E., Thomalla, F., Bharwani, S., Ziervogel, G., Walker, B., Birkmann, J., van der Leeuw, S., Rockström, J., Hinkel , J., Downing, T., Folke, C., & Nelson, D. (2010). Resilience and Vulnerability: Complementary or Conflicting Concepts? *Ecology and Society, 15* (3), 11.

Mitchell, R. K., Agle, B. R., & Wood, D. J. (1997). Toward a theory of stakeholder identification and salience: Defining the principle of who and what really counts. *Academy of Management Review, 22* (4), 853–886.
Müller, S. (2008). Accountability Constructions, Contestations and Implications: Insights from Working in a Yolngu Cross-Cultural Institution, Australia. *Geography Compass, 2* (2), 395–413.
Murray, W. E. (2009). Neoliberalism and Development. In N. Thrift, & R. Kitchen (Eds.), *International Encyclopedia of Human Geography*, vol. 11 (pp. 379–384). Oxford: Elsevier.
Nadasdy, P. (2007). Adaptive Co-Management and the Gospel of Resilience. In D. Armitage, F. Berkes, & N. Doubleday (Eds.), *Adaptive co-management: Collaboration, learning and multilevel governance* (pp. 208–227). Vancouver: University of British Columbia Press.
Näsström, S. (2007). The Legitimacy of the People. *Political Theory, 35* (5), 624–658.
Neumann, W. L. (2000). *Social Research Methods. Qualitative and Quantitative Approaches.* (4th ed.). Needham Heights MA: Allyn & Bacon.
Nielsen, B. S., & Nielsen, K. A. (2010). Aktionsforskning. In S. Brinkmann, & Tanggaard, L. (Eds.), *Kvalitative metoder: En grundbog* (Qualitative methods: a foundation) (pp. 97–120). Copenhagen: Hans Reitzel Publishing.
Nielsen, K. A., & Nielsen, B. S. (2006). Methodologies in action research. In K. A. & L. Svensson (Eds.), *Action research and interactive research* (pp. 63–88). Maastricht, Netherlands: Shaker Publishing.
Peirce, C. S. (1878). How to Make our Ideas Clear. *Popular Science Monthly, 12*, 286–302.
Petras, J., & Veltmeyer, H. (2001). *Globalization unmasked. Imperialism in the 21st century.* London: Zed Books.
Polkinghorne, D. E. (2007). Validity Issues in Narrative Research. *Qualitative Inquiry, 13* (4), 471–486.
Poulsen, B. (2009). Competing traditions of governance and dilemmas of administrative accountability: the case of Denmark. *Public Administration, 87*(1), 117–131.
Powell, N. (1998). Co-Management in Non-equilibrium Systems: Cases from Namibian Rangelands. PhD dissertation (Agraria, 138). Swedish University of Agricultural Sciences, Uppsala, Sweden.
Powell, N (2011). Personal communication. June 2011.
Powell, N., & Jiggins, J. (2003). Learning from participatory land management. In H. A. Becker & F. Vancley (Eds.), *The International Handbook of Social Impact Assessment. Conceptual and Methodological Advances* (pp. 42–55). Cheltenhan UK: Edward Elgar Publishing.
Powell, N., & Larsen, R. K. (Under revision). Integrated Water Resource Management: A platform for improving the adaptive capacity of higher education institutions in meeting complex sustainability challenges. *Environmental Education Research.*
Powell, N., Larsen, R. K., Osbeck, M., & Jotikapukkana, S. (2011a). Paving the way for the EU Regional Cohesion Policy in the Baltic Sea Region: Co-Constructing Agro-Environmental Measures through Stakeholder Agency. In Å. Gerger Swartling, C. Lundhom, R. Plummer & D. Armitage (Eds.), *Social Learning and Sustainability: Exploring critical issues in relation to environmental change and governance. Workshop proceedings, Stockholm Resilience Centre, Stockholm, Sweden 1–2 June 2010* (pp. 38–39). Stockholm: Stockholm Environment Institute.
Powell, N., Gerger Swartling, Å. G., & Hoang, M. H. (Eds.) (2011b). *Stakeholder agency in rural development policy. Articulating co-governance in Vietnam.* Hanoi, Vietnam: World Agroforestry Agency (ICRAF). Retrieved from http://sei-international.org/publications?pid=1950.
Rahnema, M., & Bawtree, V. (Ed.). (1997). *The post-development reader.* London: Zed Books.
Ravnborg, H. M., & Westermann, O. (2002). Understanding interdependencies: Stakeholder identification and negotiation for collective natural resource management. *Agricultural Systems, 73*, 41–56.

Reason, P. (2003). Pragmatist philosophy and action research. Readings and conversation with Richard Rorty. *Action Research, 1*(1), 103–123.
Reason, P., & Rowan, J. (Eds.) (1981). *Human inquiry: A sourcebook of new paradigm research.* New York: Wiley.
Rorty, R. (1991). *Objectivity, Relativism, and Truth. Philosophical Papers*. Cambridge University Press.
Rorty, R. (2009). *Philosophy and the Mirror of Nature. 30th Anniversary Edition*. Princeton: University Press.
Röling, N. G., & Wagemakers, M. A. E. (Eds.). (1998). *Facilitating sustainable agriculture: Participatory learning and adaptive management in times of environmental uncertainty*. Cambridge: University Press.
Sanderson, S., & Redford, K. (2003). Contested relationships between biodiversity conservation and poverty alleviation. *Oryx, 37*, 389–390
Sejersen, F. (2002). *Local knowledge, Sustainability and Visionscapes in Greenland*. Eskimologis Skrifter. Copenhagen: University Press.
SLIM (Social Learning for the Integrated Management and Sustainable Use of Water at Catchment Scale). (2004). Stakeholders and Stakeholding in Integrated Catchment Management and Sustainable Use of Water. Briefing no. 2.
Smith, S. J. (2009). Pragmatism/Pragmatist Geographies. In R. Kitchen, & N. Thrift (Eds.), *International Encyclopedia of Human Geography,* vol. 11 (pp. 421–425). Oxford: Elsevier.
Snow, D. A. (2001). Interactionism: Symbolic. In N. Smelser & P.D. Baltes (Eds.) *International Encyclopedia of the Social and Behavioral Sciences* (pp. 7695–7698). Oxford: Pergamon Press.
Sriskandarajah, N., Bawden, R., Blackmore, C., Tidball, K., & Wals, A. (2011). Resilience in learning systems: Case studies in university education. *Environmental Education Research, 16* (5–6), 559–573.
Stake, R. E. (2000). Case studies. In N. K. Denzin & Y. S. Lincoln (Eds.), *Handbook of Qualitative Research* (2nd ed., pp. 435–454). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.
Steyaert, P., Barzman, M., Billaud, J-P, Brives, H., Hubert, B., Ollivier, G., & Roche, B. (2007). The role of knowledge and research in facilitating social learning among stakeholders in natural resources management in the French Atlantic coastal wetlands. *Environmental Science and Policy, 10*, 537–550.
Strauss, A. (Ed.). (1977). *George Herbert Mead on Social Psychology.* Chicago: University Press.
Stryker, S. (1980). *Symbolic interactionism. A social structural version.* New Jersey: The Blackburn Press.
Svensson, L., & Nielsen, K. A. (2006). Action research and interactive research. In K. A. Nielsen, & L. Svensson (Eds.), *Action research and interactive research* (pp. 13–44). Maastricht, Netherlands: Shaker Publishing.
Thomalla, F., & Larsen, R. K. (2010). Resilience in the Context of Tsunami Early Warning Systems and Community Disaster Preparedness in the Indian Ocean Region. *Environmental Hazards, 9* (3), 249–265.
Thomas, G. (2010). Doing Case Study: Abduction Not Induction, Phronesis Not Theory. *Qualitative Inquiry, 16* (7), 575–582.
Toderi, M., Powell, N., Seddaiu, G., Roggero, P. P., & Gibbon, D. (2007). Combining social learning with agro-ecological research practice for more effective management of nitrate pollution. *Environmental Science and Policy, 10*, 551–563.
Twigg, J. (2003). The Human Factor in Early Warnings: Risk Perception and Appropriate Communications. In J. Zschau, & A. N. Küppers (Eds.), *Early Warning Systems for Natural Disaster Reduction* (pp. 19–26). Berlin: Springer Verlag.
Ulrich, W. (2000). Reflective Practice in the Civil Society: The Contribution of Critically Systemic Thinking. *Reflective Practice, 1* (2), 247–268.

van Bommel, S. (2008). Understanding experts and expertise in different governance contexts. The case of nature conservation in the Drentsche Aa area in the Netherlands. PhD dissertation. Wageningen University, Wageningen, Netherlands.
van der Riet, M. (2008). Participatory Research and the Philosophy of Social Science. Beyond the Moral Imperative. *Qualitative Inquiry, 14* (4), 546–565.
Wakeford, T., & Singh, J. (2008). Towards empowered participation: stories and reflections. *Participatory Learning and Action, 58,* 6–9.
Waks, L. J. (1998). Post-experimentalist Pragmatism. *Studies in Philosophy and Education, 17*, 17–29.
Warner, J. F. (2005). Multi-stakeholder platforms: Integrating society in water resource management? *Ambiente & Sociedade, 8* (2), 1–21.
Warner, J. F. (2008). The politics of flood insecurity. Framing contested river management projects. PhD dissertation. Wageningen University, Wageningen, Netherlands.
Warren, M. E. (1996). Deliberative Democracy and Authority. *American Political Science Review, 90* (1), 46–60.
Westberg, L. (2005). Aktörssamverkan i praktiken. Om lärende och makt i samverkensprocesser mellan aktörer i livsmedelssystemet (Actor cooperation in practice. About learning and power in cooperative processes between actors in the food system). PhD dissertation (no. 96). Faculty of Natural Resources and Agricultural Sciences, Swedish University of Agricultural Sciences, Uppsala, Sweden.
Whitehead, J., & McNiff, J. (2006). *Action research and living theory*. London: Sage.
Woodhill, J. (1999). Sustaining Rural Australia. A Political Economic Critique of Natural Resources Management. PhD dissertation. National University, Sydney, Australia.
Yin, R. (1989). *Case Study Research: Design and Methods.* London: Sage.

2

Examining the assumptions of Integrated Coastal Management: Divergent stakeholder agendas and elite cooption in Babuyan Islands, Philippines[11]

[11] This chapter is reproduced with permission from: Larsen, R. K., Acebes, J. M., & Belen, A. (2010). Examining the assumptions of Integrated Coastal Management: Diverging stakeholder agendas and elite cooption in Babuyan Islands, Philippines. *Oceans and Coastal Management*, 54, 10–18.doi:10.1016/j.ocecoaman.2010.10.007

The work underlying this paper was carried out whilst the lead author was affiliated with the Unit for Environmental Communication, Department of Urban and Rural Development, Swedish University of Agricultural Science, Uppsala, Sweden.

2.1 Abstract

In the Philippines, Integrated Coastal Management (ICM) represents the dominant response to narratives of ecosystem decline. However, there are persistent challenges to implementation, manifested in continued resource degradation, questioning of the exercise of stakeholder involvement and rising resource conflicts. This paper examines the implementation process and how the assumptions embodied in the ICM regime meet the local reality in one group of islands in the Philippine archipelago. The evidence shows how the transformation towards a supposed equilibrium state of coastal ecosystems is undermined in the face of diverging stakeholder agendas. Expected actors are disempowered by the incoherence between the policy owners' worldview and reality, paving the way for unethical influence from elite alliances. This is coupled with a deepening of the dominance of state, international development banks, foreign aid agencies, and NGOs in promoting their respective interests. In localities such as the Babuyan Islands, when assumptions of ICM collapse it has destructive consequences for fisherfolk and the coastal environment. We conclude that if ICM is to foster an effective and equitable correction of current unsustainable exploitation patterns, then there is a need to institute improved accountability mechanisms in the devolved governance system as well as taking seriously the espoused commitment to stakeholder involvement in determining the goals and assumptions of ICM.

2.2 Philippines integrated coastal management (ICM)

The national response in the Philippines to narratives of coastal ecosystem decline and degradation has been the institutionalisation of the Integrated Coastal Management (ICM) paradigm (Balgos, 2005; Lowry et al., 2005). Building on former coastal resource management (CRM) programmes, ICM aims to reverse ecological degradation through rehabilitation, reforestation and restocking in coastal zones. The ICM policy regime espouses a procedural shift towards increased stakeholder participation and balanced employment of coercive and non-coercive policy instruments (DENR et al., 2001; Milne & Christie, 2005; Alcala, 1998). This ambition mirrors the global trend in environmental governance and management towards exploring a more diverse set of policy instruments, comprising mixtures of regulation, voluntary measures and economic instruments (e.g. UNEP, 2007). The 2006 Millennium Ecosystem Assessment, in the chapter on marine and coastal ecosystems, recommends both ICM and stakeholder participation in decision-making as one of the response options for policy makers to current resource degradation (UNEP, 2006).

The establishment and promotion of the ICM regime and comanagement is located in a regional South East Asian government trend towards decentralisation and devolution in resource management. The Philippine Local Government Code (LGC) of 1991 (Republic Act 7160) is featured as the most ambitious and complex system of law and programme of devolution of government authority in the country (DENR et al., 2001). It devolves management of municipal waters to the Local Government Unit (LGU) with a consequent localisation of fisheries governance and with general fiscal autonomy of the LGU. It thus embodies the result of a transition from central to local authority over management measures, where the municipality is the primary unit of government (White et al., 2006; Cruz-Trinidad, 2003). The LGC is seen as having paved the way for the opportunity to form formal partnerships between LGUs, NGOs (Non-Governmental Organisations) and POs, (Peoples' Organisations), where the local chief executive, often the mayor, through the municipal legislative council (Sangguniang Bayan or SB) can allocate funds to NGOs and POs (Mungcal, 2007; Fisher & Ulrich, 1999). The Municipal SB and barangay (village) SB are the legislative councils for the two lowest levels of government, to which representatives are elected every four years.

The ICM co-management approach builds on pioneering efforts in community-based coastal resource management converting unregulated open access into co-management regimes (White et al., 2005; Lowry et al., 2005; DENR et al., 2001). Different narratives exist to explain these community-based initiatives. Many initiatives of communities and national civil society groups are seen to emerge in the tradition of social mobilisation ('people power') after years of suppression during the Marcos era (e.g. Chuenpagdee & Jentoft, 2007). The specific proliferation of environmental NGOs after the martial law regime under Marcos, has been explained as a consequence also of international donor interventions promoting ICM and the establishment of Marine Protected Areas (MPAs). Some community-based management initiatives in upland agricultural communities were later pioneered in marine reserves by Siliman University and subsequently by a large number of NGOs (Rivera & Newkirk, 1997).

Development banks, the Bureau of Fisheries and Aquatic Resources (BFAR) and the Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) frequently seek to enhance the coordination and integration of what is seen as scattered community-based initiatives (e.g. World Bank, 2005). Local initiatives are evaluated in the light of the expectations from the national ICM regime, e.g. through awarding municipalities for 'best practice CRM' (LMP & DENR, 2000). In community programmes, local people are considered as public 'guardians' and 'stewards' of the environment, a rationale which has also entered the National Integrated Protected Areas System (NIPAS) regime Law in 1992 and the Indigenous Peoples' Rights Act (IPRA) in 1997 (Snelder & Bernardo, 2005).

Pollnac and Pomeroy (Pollnac & Pomeroy, 2005) describe how more than 100 known community-based projects have been carried out since 1980.

The official ICM project cycle emphasises broadened stakeholder involvement, multi-sector collaboration and the leadership of local governments (White et al., 2005). The paradigm is often presented as a reaction to former command-and-control management, and the colonial imprint on Philippine natural resource management. Under Spanish rule and American administration, state-led centralised schemes led to dissolution of common property regimes in the provinces and de facto unregulated open access in many coastal waters (Abinales & Amoroso, 2005; Dressler, 2006; Barut et al., 2003). Eisma et al. (2005) and Pomeroy et al. (2007, p. 655) thus interpret the ICM regime as a governance shift from regulatory and controlling measures to ‘a broader approach that recognises fisher’s participation, local stewardship, and shared decision-making in the management of fisheries’.

However, despite the promotion of ICM, the Philippines continues in recent years to face a significant decline in the fisheries sector of more than 25 percent in its contribution to Gross Domestic Product (GDP), and the management of declining near shore fisheries have led to rising resource conflicts. This has stimulated calls for urgent, concerted action from a number of government agencies and international bodies (e.g. World Bank, 2005; BFAR, 2003). The degradation of coastal resources through destructive and excessive resource use mirrors trends in the wider South East Asian region, where scientists are arguing for a vital need for improved concerted action at various institutional levels to halt the decline in fish stocks (e.g. Silvestre et al., 2003). Further, there is an increasing questioning of the exercise of stakeholder involvement in the ICM regime. Stakeholder participation in programmes is low and formal recognition of community organisations is problematic (Silvestre et al., 2003; Barut et al., 2003).

With this understanding of the ICM regime as the point of departure, this paper examines the practical implementation of its goals and underlying assumptions in one group of islands in the Philippine archipelago. The analysis is based on evidence from a case study in conservation action planning carried out through a stakeholder dialogue from November 2007 until May 2008 in the Babuyan group of islands, located at 121°360 E and 19°180 N, bounded by the Balintang and Babuyan Channels in northern Philippines (Fig. 2.1). The concrete objective of the dialogue was to develop an adaptive conservation action plan for the Babuyan Islands, focusing specifically on Camiguin Island. The project was originally proposed as a spin-off of a previous project initiated by Kabang Kalikasan ng Pilipinas (KKP) or World Wide Fund for Nature – Philippines (WWF-

Philippines), and was entitled 'Science and Community-based conservation of Humpback Whales and other cetaceans in the Babuyan Islands, Philippines'. Inspired by previous efforts by WWF, the project contained four core activities: Cetacean survey with photo-identification, rapid coral and fisheries assessments, and conservation planning. The survey and two assessments provided scientific inputs to the planning process (Belen et al., 2008).

Figure 2.1 Geographical location of Babuyan Islands in Northern Philippines (Courtesy of Leonard Soriano). The Babuyan Islands consists of the five main islands of Calayan, Camiguin, Dalupiri, Fuga and Babuyan Claro. Calayan Municipality has jurisdiction over the vast majority of the islands and their waters, including Camiguin Island. The Municipality is located in Cagayan Province of Region 2 of the Philippines.

The waters around the Babuyan Islands, particularly Camiguin Island, were verified in 1999 as the only known breeding ground for humpback whales in the Philippines (Acebes et al., 2007). Vessel surveys conducted around the five main islands since 2000 sighted 12 other cetacean species living in these waters (Acebes & Lesaca, 2003). A number of conservation projects have been implemented, including investigating and monitoring of whale stocks and other biodiversity in the islands and recommending the establishment of protected areas regulated by provincial and municipal ordinances (WWF-Philippines, 2001;

Broad & Oliveros, 2004). In 2000,WWF initiated the Humpback Whale Research and Conservation Project (HWRCP) in the Babuyan Islands. As part of the HWRCP, WWF facilitated a conservation planning process which in October 2001 led to the formulation of a first conservation action plan (BFAR, 2003). In 2003, motivated by the research conducted by WWF, Provincial Ordinance 09-2003was passed declaring the humpbacks a protected species within the jurisdiction of the province of Cagayan (PGC, 2003). After WWF pulled out, the only conservation NGO present in Calayan Municipality is Isla Biodiversity Conservation Foundation Inc., which from 2006 has taken the leadership in involving other stakeholders in biodiversity conservation in Calayan Island (Isla Conservation Foundation Inc., 2006).

Cagayan Province is now seeing the implementation of a six-year ICRM initiative funded by the Global Environment Fund (GEF), Asian Development Bank (ADB) and Government of the Philippines (GoP), as part of the Country Strategy and Programme for Philippines in five regions which have not yet benefited from CRM programmes (ADB, 2006). This is the latest of a series of major international bilateral or multilateral donor assisted projects with matching funds from the national government, of which Balgos (Balgos, 2005) lists 10 implemented since 1980. A preceding one, the USAID and GoP sponsored Coastal Resource Management Project (CRMP), institutionalised the ICM worldview in a benchmark system for CRM planning in 2001, which was subsequently adopted by the Philippine government (DENR et al., 2001).

2.3 Research approach and methodology

The conservation planning was facilitated as a process of social learning. Social learning is an alternative policy instrument to environmental problems which views policy itself as a form of praxis, in that it does not exist in isolation from its implementation (Ison & Watson, 2007). This is based on a growing recognition that efforts for sustainable development under conditions of complexity and uncertainty encounter a lack of agreement on what comprises the exact resource problem and its possible solutions. Environmental 'problems' are therefore instead approached as resource 'dilemmas', which are characterised by the existence of multiple legitimate perspectives on what constitutes the actual problem and its solutions (Steyaert & Jiggins, 2007). Resource dilemmas are characterised by subtractability, i.e. that the management utilises and draws upon a number of finite financial, social and ecological resources; multiple stakeholders with potentially competing claims for the resources; high levels of controversy, uncertainty and complexity, and interdependency between stakeholders' perspectives, behaviours and actions (Ison et al., 2007). Just as the ICM paradigm, social learning thus rejects the command-and-control approach which 'implicitly assumes that the problem is well bounded, clearly defined, relatively simple and generally linear with respect to cause and effect' (Holling & Meffe, 1996, p. 329) and argues, with Ludwig, that this 'management paradigm fails when confronted with complex problems' (Ludwig, 2001, p. 758).

A range of theoretical frameworks has been developed in which social learning is approached within a positivist-realist epistemology where it is assumed that the manager and/or researcher can position her/himself outside the system of interest and define what exactly constitutes improvement. However, the approach to social learning used in this planning process relied on a constructionist epistemology or sociology of knowledge in the empirical science tradition (Berger & Luckmann, 1966) which appreciates that human knowledge emerges through people's social interactions and multiple levels of feedback between stakeholders (Röling & Wagemakers, 1998).

The methodology of Dialogical Boundary Critique (Ulrich, 2000) was integrated into a participatory stakeholder planning process guided by Soft Systems Methodology (Checkland, 1999) to stimulate creative thinking about how current stakes are constructed, potential conflicts of interests, scenarios for change, and collective actions (SLIM, 2004). The dialogue followed a methodological pluralism, drawing on communicative tools suitable for the specific meeting or consultation (Billaud et al., 2004), including Venn diagram, mind mapping, brainstorming, force field analysis. The planning process consisted of different facilitated forms of interaction, including workshops, open space meetings, focus groups, semi-structured interviews, and informal conversations (for details on the methodology see Larsen (2011).

The back bone of the planning process was a series of planning workshops in Camiguin and Calayan Islands, and in Tuguegarao City, the capital of Cagayan Province. In addition, individual consultations with key informants explored questions which emerged from the workshops. Close to 100 people participated in these workshops. The interviews comprised 11 people from the three Camiguin villages (barangays) (Legislative Council members (Kagawads), farmers, fisherfolk, parish ministers); four people from the LGU (SB members and administrators); six senior officials from the Provincial Government Unit (PGU) (from offices of environment, agriculture and tourism); nine officials from the regional representations of line agencies DENR and BFAR (directors, programme leaders and field staff); and four NGO staff (local and national). The planning process was implemented in two rounds, the first taking place 25 November to 6 December 2007 in mainland Cagayan, the second implemented 4 to 16 May 2008, in Camiguin and Calayan Islands, and in Tuguegarao City. In the intermittent period between the two rounds, the marine research activities of the project took place, and the outcomes were fed into the second round of planning interactions. Below, the results from the planning process are presented in a narrative form by means of the mnemonic Soft Systems tool referred to as TWOCAGES (*sensu* Richard Bawden[2] (see Box 1).

Box 2.1: TWOCAGES, Mnemonic Soft Systems Tool. (Adapted from Richard Bawden's unpublished lecture notes, in Powell & Osbeck (2010)).

T- Transformation – details of the proposed change (protection and rehabilitation of coastal biodiversity)
W- Worldview – the particular view that makes change meaningful to the 'owner' of the process. (rehabilitate and protect coastal ecosystems and biodiversity, incl. for the benefit of the poor fisherfolk).
O- Owners – have the authority to authorise the change (Ministry of Environment and Natural Resources, and Bureau of Fisheries and Aquatic Resources)
C- Clients – these are beneficiaries or victims of the change (Fisherfolk, elite, investors, patrons).
A – Actors – those implementing the change (Local GU, Provincial GU, NGOs, line agencies BFAR and DENR).
G- Guardians- those who watch or monitor for unintended outcomes of the change (in this case the planning project).
E – Environment – The operating environment in which a change is being undertaken (in this case the governance trends of devolution and co-management).
S- The system of interest bounded by change related issues identified by the clients (to be discussed below).

In the discussion below, the notions, which comprise this framework, are used to analyse the findings. The narrative begins with an outline of the worldview embodied in the ICM regime, notably the assumption of the existence of balanced coastal ecosystem equilibrium state, which can be defined by the policy owners and experts. It then examines how the expected actors are disempowered due to the collapse of the owners' worldview in the face of diverging stakeholder agendas and local innovation from resourceful elites.

2.4 Results and analysis

2.4.1 Worldview and owners: preserving an ideal ecosystem balance

While spearheaded by NGOs, the coastal management activities in Babuyan Islands are to a large part supporting the protection and rehabilitation of coastal biodiversity, sanctioned by the central government, most notably the DENR and

[2] TWOCAGES was developed by Richard Bawden and colleagues at the Centre for Systemic Development at the University of Western Sydney in 1995 as an innovation to Peter Checkland's original tool CATWOE. In our *Ocean & Coastal Management* paper, we mistakenly referred to Peter Checkland rather than to Richard Bawden's unpublished lecture notes. This error has been corrected in the revised version for this thesis.

BFAR, who thus are the owners of the transformation promoted by ICM. The underlying worldview of this process is structured around the aim of rehabilitating and protecting coastal ecosystems to maintain or recover an ideal, assumed equilibrium, ecosystem state with optimal diversity and richness of biodiversity for the benefit of poor fisherfolk. In this section, this assumption and its significance will be outlined.

The 1987 Philippine Constitution explicates the 'right to having a balanced and healthy ecology' of the nation's marine wealth. The LGC stipulates the responsibility of local government units to 'manage and maintain ecological balance within their territorial jurisdiction' (World Bank, 2005). The *Fisheries Code* (Republic of the Philippines, 1998, p. 162) institutionalises the goals of maintaining a sound primordial ecological balance and stipulates the details of autonomy and mandates of different users and management authorities in relation hereto. The ArcDev Framework for Sustainable Philippine Archipelagic Development, developed from the National Marine Policy with assistance from UNDP, departs from similar equilibrium based theory in using the notion of Maximum Sustainable Yield (MSY). It argues that MSY has been exceeded and that the State is obligated to ensure goals of poverty alleviation and livelihoods within 'ecological limits' and 'optimal utilisation' (DENR & UNDP, 2004, p. 163) (for details on 'equilibrium based management' see Powell, 1998).

In these articulations it is assumed that the boundaries around what constitutes the desirable stable state of the ecosystem, including the degree of overfishing and degradation, can be determined via expert knowledge, e.g. prescription of biological sciences. Problem definitions of 'biological overfishing' is thus a common starting point for management plans, and target areas are chosen according to priority ecosystem and biodiversity corridors as identified by biodiversity science (ADB, 2006). Plan International draws on an Ecosystem Approach to enforce the NIPAS zoning rules for ecosystems (van Lavieren et al., 2005). In the management of the Sulu-Sulawesi Sea, WWF is inserting and popularising the notion of Ecoregion as a biogeographic unit of management (Miclat et al., 2006). Ecologically defined boundaries are also evoked in the classification of the national legislation for the delineation of coastal areas into management zones (Batongbakal, n.d.). This is also the case in the ArcDev Framework, which despite claimed to be rooted in 'traditional society', has priority actions defined according to scientifically defined ecosystems.

Mainstream conservation planning frameworks thus draw on the international tradition of expert-led and science-driven systematic conservation planning, legitimated through biogeographical research and data. It attempts to optimise conservation efforts, e.g. representativity of species richness and persistence over time (Pressey et al., 2007; Whittaker et al., 2005) and is also inspired by the tradition of expert-based monitoring in marine fisheries management (Leslie, 2005; Froese, 2004). Such planning and results-based frameworks support the fundraising strategies for the NGOs to attract financial support in competitive economic environments (Chapin, 2004). However, as will be apparent below, this tradition creates the risk that articulations for stakeholder involvement contribute to integrate public discourse into coastal zone management through paternalistic expert decisions rather than opening coastal management to public discourse (Davos, 1998).

In the articulations of the scientific ecosystem management paradigm a metaphysical ontology of nature is evoked which is not disputable (Purdon, 2003). ICM inserts the 'coastal' as a valid unit for organising and integrating knowledge for the purpose as it is made meaningful in the worldview of its owners and in relation to their interests. The definition of what comprises the desirable and optimal stable state of the ecosystem is frequently determined based on economic calculations and accruements, which can be derived for the government or business partners. This reflects that fishery is an economic sector of great importance for the Philippine state, corporations and the trade partners. In the ArcDev Framework this economic value is coupled to interests of territorial integrity, national security and enforcement of the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS). The preferential use of coastal resources is therefore regulated with the goal to attain MSY of resource harvest aiming at maximising economic benefits, resource rents and economic yield. The *Fisheries Code* overlays the ecosystem classification with a system of Exclusive Economic Zones (EEZ), which aims at distinguishing between municipal (artisanal, small scale, traditional) and commercial (or large scale) fishing, which is carried out with different gear and vessel sizes. Only municipal fishing is allowed in the coastal zone, i.e. within the 15 km boundary of the coastline (Cruz-Trinidad, 2003; Barut et al., 2003).

2.4.2 Collapse of the policy owners' worldview and disempowerment of expected actors

In Babuyan Islands, the implementation of the ICM regime encounters a challenge in negotiating progress in the face of significantly diverging perspectives and agendas amongst actors and clients. A 4th class municipality in the national poverty ranking, the constituents depend mainly on small-scale fisheries and backyard farming for their livelihood. The municipal elite does not take interest in humpback whale issues or other biodiversity conservation issues for that matter, and directs preferential attention to tourism development, a process in which conservation objectives must be aligned accordingly. Outsiders' interventions are often met with general apprehension from the municipal elite, who consider that NGO or line agency intervention challenges the LGU autonomy under the LGC. NGO emphasis on whale conservation thus reflects a predetermined problem definition based on a strong conservationist perspective, which excludes the municipal government. The prioritisation of the LGU has in recent years been on production and suffers from an absence of coastal resource management planning and an under-resourced planning office. Previous conservation efforts in the islands have produced a contentious relationship and decreasing trust between the elite and 'outsiders'. Disputes regarding responsibilities for combating illegal resource use such as dynamite and cyanide fishing, metal salvaging from shipwrecks and its impact on whale and fish stocks have reached media attention, further aggravating the interpersonal relations between stakeholders.

Line agencies are expected to support the LGU in the implementation of the transformation process embodied in ICM. However, mainland agencies are rarely engaged in the Babuyan Islands. The legislative framework stipulates that line agencies can only support the LGU upon being formally approached by the municipal government. Collaboration is further constrained by the remoteness of the islands as well as the tense relationships outlined above. Most agency staff have never visited the islands, and service delivery and programme implementation is limited to brief field visits. This is further complicated by the fact that the different components of the ICM policy framework remain ambiguous and un-harmonised in theory as well as in implementation (Batongbakal, n.d.). Conflicting and overlapping policies and lack of common sanctioning of mandates are derailing coordinated action amongst government bodies (World Bank, 2005; Milne & Christie, 2005; Pollnac & Pomeroy, 2005). This is considered to lead to jurisdictional tangles between the main implementing agencies, i.e. DENR and BFAR (DNER, undated). In sum, most of the coastal municipalities in Cagayan have not yet initiated the participatory resource assessment in collaboration with DENR, which is the first step in the coastal resource management planning process.

The 15 km boundary, which delineates municipal waters for non-commercial fisherfolk from the marine economic zone of the Philippines is, as other centralised planning measures (Dressler, 2006, p. 402), experienced as an unrealistic boundary drawn by the policy owners to reorganise municipal resource management. As has been observed elsewhere (White et al., 2005), resources are not available for local government to enforce this boundary. There is no Philippine Maritime Police representation in Camiguin Island and the Philippine

Coast Guards are without basic equipment such as patrol boat or binoculars. Poaching foreign vessels most often manage to avoid the Filipino patrol boats due to their modern equipment and the vastness of the ocean. The LGU presence in Camiguin is mainly by mobile texts messages and only in the most urgent cases the Philippine National Police (PNP) officers are sent to the island.

There are also concerns that national policies lack clarity in implementing guidelines, which complicate their application. This, in turn, shifts the responsibility to the municipal and barangay legislative process to enable local policy implementation. However, most municipal ordinances have remained unchanged for decades, and democratic procedures enshrined in the LGC to effect local governance, e.g. public hearings and Barangay Development Planning, are not practiced. In the islands, law enforcement is – as elsewhere – characterised by 'political interference and discretionary prosecution' (Eisma et al., 2005, p. 350) and widespread rumours of remittances of bribes. While the PNP is a national line agency, in isolated localities such as the Babuyan Islands, the national linkage can be broken and the PNP staff are seen in effect be under the authority of the highest bidder. Moreover, government officials have a low trust in the efficacy of public meetings citing that dialogues are held with a lack of political commitment from chief executives who delegate junior staff and rarely participate personally in the discussions.

The conservation NGO Isla is experiencing lacking interests from municipal and barangay officials, and the previously developed WWF-led humpback whale conservation action plan has not been implemented. Meanwhile, sustainability problems have grown; including encroaching on prohibited protected areas, use of illegal fishing equipment such as compressor diving, cyanide and dynamite, as well as pebble and shell collection, illegal logging and slash-and-burn farming (*kaingin*). Several of these practices pose severe human health and safety risks. Metal salvaging from shipwrecks started initially with walls and sidings but has now moved to main frames, which require larger amounts of explosives. This practice destroys the shelter of various species of fish and other animals and marine life on the seabed in the wreck's vicinity as well as disturbs the breeding and nursing ground of whales. In addition to the local offences, Taiwanese fishing vessels are frequently seen hiring local residents for the poaching in municipal waters with long-line fishing and lobster cages. The catch of highly priced yellow fin tuna is a particular incentive for these practices.

2.4.3 Unethical exerting of influence by elites

The collapse of the owner's worldview and disempowerment of the expected actors pave the way for the formation of stakeholder alliances through creative formal and informal connections between different levels of government, political parties, families/clans, and organisations. Their main purpose is to enhance the access to and control over natural capital which in the absence of an effective management regime can be converted into financial assets. Tuna fishing, which originated as a formal fishery in the 1960s, is one of the high income fisheries in Asia (Cruz-Trinidad, 2003), and national and international investors are important indirect actors as well as beneficiaries. Throughout the country, several examples exist where municipal elites open their waters to foreign vessels to benefit from external cash flows. Camiguin fisherfolk described how in particular Taiwanese vessels recruit locals in Babuyan Islands to work for them as guides.

Also, the growing tourism industry is an arena for competition between different alliances. A national survey by Women in Travel ranked Cibang Cove of Calayan Island as third in terms of potential for tourism development, and the islands are publicly considered as great tourism potential, a ‘Baby-Boracay’. However, an absence of guidelines for distinguishing between support to private and public initiatives is experienced to make the use of financial and technical support from government to private initiatives ambiguous. Other resource exploitation is captured by the stakeholder alliances, including metal salvaging, where many island residents are hired to dive, financed by a few individuals. In addition, classification of land areas has become a battleground for political strategies, as local officials use the classification to manipulate the view of the state of land management, e.g. ranking forested land as grasslands to be able to clear cut the area without repercussions. This is further complicated by the fact that delineations between public and private/communal forest land is not in place.

With the Fisheries Code, the policy for the creation of Fisheries and Aquatic Resource Management Councils (FARMCs), Executive Order 241 of 1995, was one of the key priorities for fisherfolk organisations. The formalisation of local management bodies was heralded as a major victory for local resource users, institutionalising their role in community-based planning and policy implementation and mandating representation of fisherfolk in barangay and municipal decision-making (National FARMC, 1999). However, mirroring the pattern at national level, several island associations and management initiatives have dissolved or discontinued following municipal elections as political sponsors of the associations left offices. In addition to the cash-strapped financial conditions of LGUs nationwide to implement local programmes (Balgos, 2005), isolationist strategies enforced by stakeholder alliances can effectively curb collaboration between FARMCs and sub-national arms of line agencies.

Elites may selectively silence public discussions on contested resource access and management in order to maintain their status as well as relationship with parts of the constituency.

Scattered and often opposing forces of government and NGO efforts for organising the communities mean that many externally initiated organisations have stagnated as ‘shell organisations’ at the barangay level, for instance the FARMCs are largely inactive throughout the province (as in Manalili, 1990). Joint actions in Camiguin are frequently undermined by infighting between the different elite factions and lack of accountability in economic management has led to the closure of several community-based organisations after member protests. FARMCs have to be initiated by respective level of government and have only advisory functions. In the province, few LGUs allocate the required funds to the FARMC as stipulated in the Fisheries Code because local chief executives do not see the value of the FARMC initiative. Elsewhere (Mungcal, 2007), it took the election of a new administration before the municipal FARMCs would be endowed with the necessary financial resources to take on an active role. Also the multi-stakeholder platform Calayan Environmental Council (CEC) led by Isla is struggling to find backing amongst municipal executives.

Scott (Scott, 1994, p. 6) has described the irony in the use of the term barangay in Philippine politics; today it is the lowest form of formal government, but the native meaning was a ‘political unit loyal to one boss’ (*datu*). The leadership of such elite *datus*, or strongmen, in stakeholder alliances can still be discerned. They are prominent figures in daily politics representing the larger alliance, which is not necessarily synonymous with a clearly defined political unit. Strongmen champion localised management practices which often conflict with the views of other stakeholders, e.g. through the sponsoring of logging and fishing activities. These practices are characterised by the exertion of powers and influences by the elites, which often run against the publicly espoused values.

Actual mandates and access rights are often-times negotiated through an unregulated and untransparent system of checks and balances. Strongmen use verbal threats and insults to patronise people and carry their will through and disposing of government and parish resources. Intruders from other municipalities together with international poachers dismantle communities into competing factions, which can employ tactics such as bribery, intimidation or threat. Thus co-opting the envisioned transformation embodied in the ICM framework, strongmen and alliances are the de facto owners of the use of the coastal resources in Camiguin. Local enforcement staff is anxious for retaliation in return for their partaking in official duties such as collecting dynamited fish specimen or reporting of legal offences, and barangay citizens fear punishments if disclosing information to outsiders (see also Acebes et al. (2008)).

Yet, in a commentary on local politics, an anonymous historian from Mindanao State University suggests that it is hardly fair

> to judge local political leaders using Manila standards: The concept of the state is not well developed … that is why people find more security in their clan or *datus*. Using public funds and equipment for private use may not be seen as a criminal act but as the normal exercise of authority of the *datu* (Coronel, 2000, p. 297).

This patronage role is prevailing – in the words of one PGU official, when explaining this behaviour in Cagayan:

> We are dealing with traditional … or 'modernising' politicians. The former is easier to understand, while the latter … brought physical development to their turf as a proof of service, wherever it came from, or in whatever process it came through. That's the remaining downside of governance devolution. The financial pie was not included in the downloading of political power. The term participatory governance is not crucial for a modernising politico while a 'no-no' to a traditional politico. What is crucial is what can be delivered to his turf.

2.4.4 Beneficiaries and victims

The main beneficiaries of the distorted transformation process and collapse of the owners' worldview are the local elite alliances, which capture the resource access and control. However, the patronage is not limited to the island or municipality. Local alliances are rumoured to be connected to other strongmen nationally and even outside national borders. Agency staff commonly experience apprehended Taiwanese fishermen claiming protection by officers in the Philippine military (known as a system of *padrinos*). This parallels experiences from the Philippine forestry sector, where Vitug (1993) has described how resource access has been and still is a source of political patronage, with army officers exerting significant influence and tenuring large concessions. The notion of alliances thus may be seen as capturing the modern form of *datu*-power, which in its historical form goes back to the precolonial era (Abinales & Amoroso, 2005). Contrary to the 16th century Philippine society, however, today the politics has evolved from localised to a highly networked form, giving way to complex politico-corporate-family based relationships which prosper from their informal influence. The resource access releases monetary gains, which in the clientalist democratic system of the

Philippines can be used to attract voters during elections, and govern their respective territories (see also Mungcal, 2007; Grainger & Malayang, 2006).

Meanwhile, Camiguin residents, who were the expected beneficiaries of the transformation, become the victims of the distorted implementation process. Fisherfolk depend on a composite livelihood from forest products, backyard farming and coastal resources but lack other income sources outside the fishing and farming seasons (see also WWF-Philippines, 2001). As a relatively isolated island community, they cannot as poor fishing communities elsewhere in the Philippines benefit from additional commercial activities geared to tourists or passersby's to make ends meet in the household economy. Further, the malfunctions in the legal system and uncertainties associated with the actions of the stakeholder alliances undermine household economy, for instance when catches confiscated due to suspicions of illegal fishing practices are lost in the absence of trial.

Kagawads and medical staff in all three Camiguin barangays complain over lacking social service delivery including medical supplies and basic health services. There is a limited economic cohesion in the barangays of Camiguin with a near-zero internal tax return from, for instance, sari-sari store permits and fees levied on nets within the barangays. Despite the decline in fish stocks, fish prices have remained unchanged while fuel prices have been surging. Middle men operate a credit system which mortgage farmers through advance payment credits in order to procure farming equipment and fertilisers. Due to the weakness of the public service delivery, the role of so-called breadwinners (resourceful persons who can support less advantaged relatives and friends) is important in the barangays. This is partly a consequence of the collapse of the management regime and the associated importance of the family and social relationships.

The vulnerability of the island residents and their natural resources is acknowledged by the PGU which is implementing training programmes on livelihoods in Camiguin. BFAR and neighbouring municipalities are similarly engaged in efforts for livelihoods development (WWF-Philippines, 2001). However, while local and provincial government is running a number of programmes creating incentives for shifting production patterns, e.g. via free certified rice seeds or financial credits to farmers, executives lack capacity to conduct more radical interventions in managing the price levels or increase the service delivery. They also fear stirring protests and criticisms for favouritism from parts of the constituency.

2.5 Discussion

The evidence from the Babuyan Islands suggests that the transformation process towards re-creating balanced coastal ecosystems for the benefit of poor fisherfolk is undermined due to the collapse of the policy owners' worldview in the face of diverging stakeholder agendas and local innovation from resourceful elites. The expected actors are disempowered by the incoherence between the underlying assumptions in ICM of the possibility to enforce the idea of expert-defined ecosystem equilibrium and the reality faced by local stakeholders, which paves the way for the dominance of unethical alliances and strongmen. The ultimate beneficiaries of the distorted transformation process are elite alliances, with resulting victimisation of poor island fisherfolk as well as their coastal environments.

Balgos argues that 'the unabated degradation of the marine environment and its resources continue to motivate efforts to improve the existing paradigm' (Balgos, 2005, p. 972). However, as evidenced above, the fundamental disagreements on plausible knowledge claims positions ICM far from a 'normal' coherent and internally consistent knowledge paradigm. Thus, there is no ICM paradigm in the Kuhnian sense in Babuyan Islands (Ravetz, 1999). Arguably, the islands have not yet seen the implementation of any large scale ICM programme, which could have alleviated some of the challenges encountered as it has been reported from other localities. However, the disempowerment of the line agencies and government administrations serve to explain why ICM programmes remain generally unsustainable after their termination (Eisma et al., 2005; Lowry et al., 2005). As elsewhere, sub-national management authorities frequently find themselves disempowered in the messy reality 'political infighting, technical errors, and ensuing misinformation' (Dressler et al., 2006, pp. 812, 2). This is also manifested in the nationwide challenges in institutionalising people's participation in decision-making and the formal recognition of community organisations (Heijmans & Victoria, 2001; Dressler, 2006).

While the last decade has seen an extensive debate within international development regarding the appropriate linkages between decentralisation and devolution, the academic literature on co-management in the Philippines scarcely distinguishes between these two processes. The typical distinction is as offered by Enters et al. (2000), namely that decentralisation denotes the relocation of administrative functions away from the state centre, whereas devolution refers to the relocation of authority/power. With this lens it is commonly argued that South East Asian government reforms have frequently seen a decentralisation of administrative burden without the devolution of authority to enable sub-national levels to participate in meaningful decision making and resource allocation.

However, this case suggests that the Philippines ICM regime, in contrast, suffers from the opposite imbalance, namely an extensive devolution of powers to the provincial and municipal levels to interpret state legislation without the associated decentralisation of administrative procedures to hold provincial and municipal stakeholders accountable. Yet, this case study sheds new light on subtler dimensions of what constitutes governance ‘devolution’. Despite formal mandates and fiscal autonomy the continued centralised control over policy formulation undermines the ability of provincial and municipal actors to co-define and collectively own the goals and assumptions underlying IMC.

In integrated resource management in wide sense, three mainstream categories of policy instruments have been highlighted which represent knowledge prescriptive approaches to policy implementation, namely normalisation of practices (coercion), regulation of the market through economic incentives, and awareness raising (Steyaert & Jiggins, 2007). Based on the evidence presented above, it is questionable whether the ICM regime as implemented in Babuyan Islands moves beyond such knowledge prescription to truly non-coercive measures which allow a collective construction of the goals of local ICM. Irrespective of the acclaimed devolution, it thus maintains an attempt to separate the decision and policy making (‘steering’) from the implementation (‘rowing’).

While stakeholders are invited into negotiating management arrangements through, for instance, mechanisms for community organising and participatory planning, the ICM planning model used by the Philippine Government (White et al., 2005; DENR et al., 2001) perpetuates the underlying assumptions of ICM, including the expert driven undisputable ontology, which supposes the existence of equilibrium ecosystem states. This means that ICM programmes evoke an instrumental approach to stakeholder involvement which places undue emphasis on how coastal stakeholders can be players in formalising the implementation of already established assumptions of ICM (Chuenpagdee & Jentoft, 2007). In the case of Babuyan Islands this serves to compromise formal collaboration between people caught in divisive alliance politics and to maintain the intransparent and unethical control exercised by the elite alliances.

Le Tissier and Hills (2006) have argued that capacity building for ICM must rely more on a holistic picture of governance aiming to create mechanisms for appreciating multiple stakeholder perspectives of what constitutes good management, rather than simplistic rational scientific measures. In Cagayan Province, one official example of enacting this principle is found in the establishment of a provincial office to support the development of local governance in barangays and municipalities. The People’s Action Center (PAC) was instituted by the Governor in May 2007 in response to the gaps exposed in implementation of the LGC. Following the Governor's provincial agenda Municipal Development Facilitators have been recruited for 145 barangays in the Province and are mandated to enable barangays and other frontliners in the democratisation of the efforts for livelihoods improvement (Balean et al., 2007).

In the Philippine forestry sector, which served as inspiration for the country's ICM regime, the transition from state-controlled to community-based management has also frequently been compromised by fragile assumptions promoted by the state to control the forests. This is manifested in reductionist conceptions of the 'community' as a stakeholder unit which ignores local groups' multiple identities (Gauld, 2000). It echoes concerns from other resource management experiences regarding the hiding of persistent 'fence-and-fines' management strategies behind a popular narrative of 'partnership' (Eder, 2005; Adams & Hulme, 2001). There has, indeed, globally been growing awareness of how environmental policy often relies on environmental definitions created by cultural and/or scientific elites and imposed in a local setting, leading to marginalisation of local stakeholders (Gómez-Pompa & Kaus, 1992; Colchester, 2004). Within the conservation movement at large these critics, at times as part of the global deliberative struggle to redefine the environmental movement (Rowell, 1996), argue that ethical values are being co-opted by a positivist scientific and economic rationality, which removes environmental action from the public realm (Jepson & Canney, 2003; Roebuck & Phifer, 1999).

The attempt to formalise and legitimise the ICM regime and its assumptions through instrumental stakeholder involvement is visible in the claims that failure of ICM programmes results from lacking awareness of the LGC responsibilities amongst LGUs (CRMP, 2004) and that there is a need to increase social acceptance of ICM (Balgos, 2005). This problem definition is extended to arguing that due to the diversity of stakeholder agendas, effective participation must be built strategically so as not to halt the overall process of the project, e.g. through alliances with supportive leaders (White et al., 2005). If this means avoiding a collective localised critique of the assumptions of the ICM regime, then there is a risk that such endeavours may further deepen the dominating role of international development banks, foreign aid agencies, and NGOs in promoting the worldview embedded in the ICM regime which frames development from specific neo-liberal premises (Nicholls, 1999; Grainger & Malayang, 2006). It also risks playing into the hands of local elites whose priorities often are contrary to that of the intended beneficiaries of ICM.

2.6 Conclusion

This paper has illustrated that in localities such as the Babuyan Islands, the assumptions perpetuated by the ICM worldview collapse with destructive consequences for its victims and the envisioned sustainable development for the Philippine coastal environment. If ICM is to foster an effective and equitable correction of current unsustainable exploitation patterns, then there is a need to institute improved accountability mechanisms in the devolved governance system. This may partly be achieved through linking the devolution of authority over the interpretation of policy goals more closely to a decentralisation of regulatory functions. However, such a strategy would also require that the espoused commitment to stakeholder involvement in determining the goals and assumptions of ICM is taken seriously by state, NGOs and international development organisations. This could contribute to alleviate the current vacuum established in the meeting between detrimental assumptions of ICM, which are held as non-negotiable by its centralised owners, and the extensive governance devolution which allows the undermining of coastal management when stakeholder involvement breaks down due to a lack of ownership in the periphery. Arguably, collective ownership ought to go hand in hand with mutual accountability.

2.7 Acknowledgements

The evidence in this paper derives from a project implemented in collaboration with the Provincial Government of Cagayan, the Municipality of Calayan, and BFAR and DENR in Philippines Region 2. A special note of gratitude is directed to Madam Bella Llopis of the LGU Calayan, Mr. Edgardo Buenaventura of Cagayan PGU who acted as LGU and PGU focal points, respectively, and to Director Jovita Ayson of BFAR Region 2 for her invaluable support. The project was funded by Ocean Park Conservation Foundation – Hong Kong. Financing for the writing of this paper was provided by Swedish University of Agricultural Sciences (SLU) and Stockholm Environment Institute (SEI). We also thank Prof. Sriskandarajah Nadarajah at the Swedish University of Agricultural Sciences (SLU) for advice in the planning of the research, and to Dr. Neil Powell and Maria Osbeck for inspiration throughout the process within the SEI Social Learning Project. Finally, we thank three anonymous reviewers for constructive comments, which improved the quality of the paper.

2.8 References

Abinales, N., & Amoroso, D. J. (2005). *State and Society in the Philippines.* Manila, Philippines: Anvil Publishing Inc.

Acebes, J. V., Darling, J. D., & Yamaguchi, M. (2007). Status and distribution of humpback whales (*Megaptera novaeangliae*) in Northern Luzon, Philippines. *Journal of Cetacean Research and Management, 9* (1), 37–43.

Acebes, J. M. V., Darling, J., & Aca, A. Q. (2008). Dynamite Blasts in a Humpback Whale Megaptera novaeangliae Breeding Ground, Babuyan Islands, Philippines, *Bioacustics, 17* (1–3), 153–155.

Acebes, J. V., & Lesaca, L. R. (2003). Research and conservation of humpback whales and other cetacean species in the Babuyan islands, Northern Luzon. In J. van der Ploeg, A. Masipiquena, & E. C. Bernardo (Eds.), *The Sierra Madre Mountain Range: Global Relevance, Local Realities. Papers Presented at the 4th Regional Conference on Environment and Development. Cagayan Valley Programme for Environment and Development* (pp. 34–42). Tuguegarao City, Philippines: Golden Press.

Adams, W.M., & Hulme, D. (2001). If community conservation is the answer in Africa, what is the question? *Oryx, 25* (3), 193–200.

ADB (Asian Development Bank). (2006). *Proposed Loan and Administration of Grant from the Global Environment Facility Republic of the Philippines: Integrated Coastal Resources Management Project.* Report and Recommendation of the President to the Board of Directors, Manila. Mandaluyong City, Philippines: Asian Development Bank.

Alcala, A. C. (1998). Community-based coastal resource management in the Philippines: A case study. *Ocean & Coastal Management, 38*, 179–186.

Balean, O., Buenaventura, E., & Antonio, A. T. (2007). *Strengthening local democratic processes promotion sustainable integrated area development for marginalised communities sectors as concrete manifestations new governance province Cagayan,* 2nd Draft. Cagayan, Philippines: People's Action Center (PAC)/Office of the Governor, Province of Cagayan.

Balgos, M. C. (2005). Integrated coastal management and marine protected areas in the Philippines: Concurrent developments. *Ocean & coastal Management, 48,* 972–995.

Barut, N. C., Santos, M. D., Miljares, L. L., Subade, R., Armada, N. B., & Garces, L. (2003). Philippine coastal fisheries situation. In G. T. Silvestre, L. R., Garces, I. Stobutzki, M. Ahmed, R. A. Valmonte-Santos, C. Z. Luna, L. Lachica-Alinõ, V. Christensen, D. Pauly, & P. Munro (Eds.), *Assessment, Management and Future Directions for Coastal Fisheries in Asian Countries,* WorldFish Center Conference Proceedings, 67 (pp. 885–914). Penang, Malaysia: WorldFish Center.

Batongbakal, J. L. (n.d.). A crowded shoreline: Review of the Philippines' foreshore and shore land management policies. Coastal Resource Manage Project. Quezon City, Philippines: DENR/USAID.

Belen, A., Ritarita Jr., B., Patino Jr., N., Ventura, M., Quiton, G., & Uy, K. (2008). Assessment of corals and fish in the Babuyan islands with emphasis on Camiguin island. Unpublished project report.

Berger, P., & Luckmann, T. (1966). *The Social Construction of Reality: A Treatise in the Sociology of Knowledge.* Harmondsworth, UK: Penguin.

BFAR (Bureau of Fisheries and Aquatic Resources). (2003). *Turbulent Seas: The Status of Philippines Marine Fisheries*. Manila, Philippines: Department of Agriculture, BFAR.

Billaud, J.-P., Brives, H., Jiggins, J., Reynolds, M., Röling, N. G., & Toderi, M. (2004). *Facilitation of social learning processes for integrated catchment management and sustainable use of water.* SLIM Thematic Paper No. 2.

Broad, G., & Oliveros, C. (2004). Biodiversity and conservation priority setting in the Babuyan Islands, Philippines. *Sylvatrop, 15*, 1–30.

Chapin, M. (2004). *A challenge to conservationists, World Watch, Vision for a sustainable world.* Washington DC: Worldwatch Institute.

Checkland, P. (1999). *Systems Thinking, Systems Practice.* New York: Wiley.

Chuenpagdee, R., & Jentoft, S. (2007). Step zero for fisheries co-management: What precedes implementation. *Marine Policy, 31*, 657–668.

Colchester, M. (2004). Conservation policy and indigenous peoples. *Environmental Science & Policy, 7*, 145–153.

Coronel, S. S. (2000). Betrayal of the Public Trust. In S. S. Coronel (Ed.), *Investigative Reports on Corruption* (pp. 294–297). Quezon City, Philippines: Philippine Center for Investigative Journalism.

CRMP (Coastal Resource Management Project). (2004). *Completion Report, 1996–2004*. Cebu City, Philippines: Resource Management Project of the Department of Environment and Natural Resources.

Cruz-Trinidad, A. (2003). Socioeconomic and bioeconomic performance of Philippine fisheries in the recent decades. In G. T. Silvestre, L. R., Garces, I. Stobutzki, M. Ahmed, R. A. Valmonte-Santos, C. Z. Luna, L. Lachica-Alinõ, V. Christensen, D. Pauly, & P. Munro (Eds.), *Assessment, Management and Future Directions for Coastal Fisheries in Asian Countries,* WorldFish Center Conference Proceedings, 67 (pp. 543–576). Penang, Malaysia: WorldFish Center.

Davos, C.A. (1998). Sustaining co-operation for coastal sustainability. J. Env Man. 52, 379–387.

DENR (Department for Environment and Natural Resource Management), BFAR (Bureau of Fisheries and Aquatic Resources), & Department for Internal and Local Government. (2001). *Philippine Coastal Management Guidebook No 2: Legal and Jurisdictional Framework for Coastal Management.* Cebu City, Philippines: Coastal Resource Management Project of DENR.

DENR (Department for Environment and Natural Resource Management) & UNDP (United Nations Development Programme). (2004). *ARCDEV, a Framework for Sustainable Philippine Archipelagic Development. Revaluing Our Maritime Heritage and Affirming the Unity of Land and Sea.* Manila, Philippines: Marine Environment and Resources Foundation Inc.

DENR (Department for Environment and Natural Resource Management), DA/BFAR (Bureau of Fisheries and Aquatic Resources), USAID. (Undated). *A policy study on the clarification of jurisdiction between the Department of Environment and Natural Resources and the Department of Agriculture for Coastal Resource Management.* Quezon City, Philippines: DENR/USAID.

Dressler,W. H., Kull, C. A., & Meredith, T. C. (2006). The politics of decentralizing national parks management in the Philippines. *Political Geography, 25*, 789–816.

Dressler, W. H. (2006). Co-opting conservation: migrant resource control and access to national park management in the Philippine uplands. *Development and Change, 37,* 401–426.

Eder, J. F. (2005). Coastal resource management and social differences in Philippine fishing communities. *Human Ecology, 33*, 147–169.

Eisma, R.-L. V., Christie, P., & Hershman, M. (2005). Legal issues affecting sustainability of integrated coastal management in the Philippines. *Ocean & coastal Management, 48,* 336–359.

Enters, T., Durst, P. B., & Victor, M. (Eds.). (2000). *Decentralization and Devolution of Forest Management in Asia and the Pacific, Forest Management in Asia and the Pacific. RECOFTC report N.18 and RAP Publication 2000/1.* Bangkok, Thailand: FAO and RECOFTC.

National FARMC (National Fisheries and Aquatic Resource Management Council). (1999). Review and Planning Workshop, 9–11 February, 1999. Davao City, Philippines: Bureau of Fisheries and Aquatic Resources.

Fisher, K. T., & Ulrich, P. B. (1999). Information dissemination and communication in stakeholder participation: the Bohol-Cebu water supply project. *Asia Pacific Viewpoint, 40* (3), 251–269.

Froese, R. (2004). Keep it simple: three indicators to deal with overfishing. *Fish and Fisheries, 5*, 86–91.

Gauld, R. (2000). Maintaining centralized control community-based forestry policy construction Philippines. *Development and Change, 31*, 229–254.

Gómez-Pompa, A., & Kaus, A. (1992). Taming the wilderness myth. *BioScience, 42* (4), 271–279.

Grainger, A., & Malayang, B.S. (2006). A model of policy changes to secure sustainable forest management and control of deforestation in the Philippines. *Forest Politics and Economics, 8*, 67–80.
Heijmans, A., & Victoria, L. P. (2001). *Citizenry-based and Development-Oriented Disaster Response. Experiences and Practices in Disaster Management of the Citizens Disaster Response Network in the Philippines.* Manila, Philippines: Center for Disaster Preparedness.
Holling, C. S., & Meffe, G. K. (1996). Command and control and the Pathology of natural resource management. *Conservation Biology, 10*, 329–337.
Isla Conservation Foundation, Inc. (2006). *Konsultasyon ng Komunidad at Action-Planning Workshop sa Calayan*.
Ison, R., Röling, N. G., & Watson, D. (2007). Challenges to science and society in the sustainable management and use of water: investigating the role of social learning. *Environmental Science and Policy, 10*, 499–511.
Ison, R., & Watson, D. (2007). Illuminating the possibilities for social learning in the management of Scotland's water. *Ecology and Society, 12* (1), 21.
Jepson, P., & Canney, S. (2003). Values-led conservation. *Global Ecology & Biogeography, 12*, 271–274.
Larsen, R. K. (2011). Critical systems thinking for the facilitation of conservation planning in Philippine coastal management. *Systems Research and Behavioral Science*, *28* (1), 63–76.
le Tissier, M., & Hills, J. M. (2006). Widening coastal managers' perceptions of stakeholders through capacity building. In C. T. Hoanh, T. P. Tuong, J. W. Gowing, & B. Hardy (Eds.), *Environment and Livelihoods in Tropical Coastal Zones: Managing Agriculture–Fishery–Aquaculture Conflicts* (pp. 249–257). Wallingford, Oxon.: CAB International.
Leslie, H. M. (2005). A synthesis of marine conservation planning approaches. *Conservation Biology, 19*, 1701–1713.
LMP (League of Municipalities in the Philippines) & DENR (Department of Environment and Natural Resources). (2000). *Best coastal management programmes awards 2000*. Manila, Philippines: LMP/DENR.
Lowry, K., White, A., & Courtney, C. (2005). National and local agency roles in integrated coastal management in the Philippines. *Ocean & Coastal Management, 48*, 314–335.
Ludwig, D. (2001). The era of management is over. *Ecosystems, 4* (8), 758–764
Manalili, A. G. (1990). *Community Organizing for People's Empowerment.* Manila, Philippines: Kapatirane-Kaunlaran Foundation Inc.
Miclat, E. F. B., Ingles, J. A., & Dumaop, J. N. B. (2006). Planning across boundaries for the conservation of the Sulu-Sulawesi Marine Ecoregion. *Ocean & Coastal Management, 49* (9–10), 597–609.
Milne, N., & Christie, P. (2005). Financing integrated coastal management: experiences in Mabini and Tingloy, Batangas, Philippines. *Ocean & Coastal Management, 48*, 427–449.
Mungcal, A. L. L. (2007). Community-based coastal resource management (CB-CRM): A case study of Mariveles, Bataan, Philippines. Paper presented at Delta 2007 Conference: Managing the coastal land-water interface in tropical delta systems, Bang Saen, Thailand.
Nicholls, K. (1999). Coming to Terms with 'Integrated Coastal Management': Problems of meaning and method in a new arena of resource regulation. *The Professional Geographer, 51* (3), 388–399.
PGC (Provincial Government of Cagayan). (2003). *Ordinance declaring the humpback whales as protected species within the territorial jurisdiction in the Province of Cagayan and providing penalties for the violation thereof.* Provincial Ordinance, 09–2003. Cagayan, Philippines: Provincial Government of Cagayan.
Pollnac, R. B., & Pomeroy, R. S. (2005). Factors influencing the sustainability of integrated coastal management projects in the Philippines and Indonesia. *Ocean & Coastal Management, 48*, 233–251.

Pomeroy, R., Parks, J., Pollnac, R., Campson, T., Genio, E., Marlessy, C., Holle, E., Pido, M. Nissapa, A., Boromthanarat, S., & Hue, N. T. (2007). Fish wars: Conflict and collaboration in fisheries management in Southeast Asia. *Marine Policy, 31,* 645–656.

Powell, N. (1998). Co-Management in Non-equilibrium Systems: Cases from Namibian Rangelands. PhD dissertation (Agraria, 138). Swedish University of Agricultural Sciences, Uppsala, Sweden.

Powell, N., & Osbeck, M. (2010). Understanding and Embedding Stakeholder realities in Coastal Governance: The Case of Mangroves in the Mahakam Delta, East Kalimantan. *International Journal of Sustainable Development, 18* (3), 260-270.

Pressey, R. L., Cabeza, M.,Watts, M. E., Cowling, R. M., & Wilson, K. E. (2007). Conservation planning in a changing world. *Trends in Ecology and Evolution, 22* (11), 583–592.

Purdon, M. (2003). The nature of ecosystem management: postmodernism and plurality in the sustainable management of the boreal forest. *Environmental Science Policy, 6*, 377–388.

Ravetz, J. (1999). What is Post-Normal Science? *Futures, 31* (7), 647–654.

Republic of the Philippines. (1998). *'The Philippine Fisheries Code of 1998': An Act Providing for the Development, Management and Conservation of the Fisheries and Aquatic Resources, Integrating All Laws Pertinent Thereto, and for Other Purposes.* Republic Act no. 8550. 25 February 1998. Retrieved from http://www.lawphil.net/statutes/repacts/ra1998/ra_8550_1998.html

Rivera, R., & Newkirk, G. F. (1997). Power from the people: A documentation of nongovernmental organizations' experience in community based coastal resource management in the Philippines. *Ocean & Coastal Management, 36*, 73–95.

Roebuck, P., & Phifer, P. (1999). The Persistence of Positivism in Conservation Biology. *Conservation Biology, 13* (2), 444–446.

Röling, N. G., & Wagemakers, M. A. E. (1998). A new practice: Facilitating sustainable agriculture. In N. G. Röling & M. A. E. Wagemakers (Eds.), *Facilitating sustainable agriculture: Participatory learning and adaptive management in times of environmental uncertainty* (pp. 3–22). Cambridge: University Press.

Rowell, A. (1996). *Green Backlash: Global Subversion of the Environmental Movement*. London: Routledge.

Scott, W. H. (1994). *Barangay. Sixteenth Century Philippine Culture and Society*. Manila, Philippines: Ateneo de Manila University Press.

Silvestre, G. T., Garces, L. R., Stobutzki, I., Ahmed, M., Valmonte-Santos, R. A., Luna, C. Z., Lachica-Aliño, L., Christensen, V., Pauly, D., & Munro, P. (2003). South and South-East Asian coastal fisheries: Their status and directions for improved management: conference synopsis and recommendations. In G. T. Silvestre, L. R., Garces, I. Stobutzki, M. Ahmed, R. A. Valmonte-Santos, C. Z. Luna, L. Lachica-Aliño, V. Christensen, D. Pauly, & P. Munro (Eds.), *Assessment, Management and Future Directions for Coastal Fisheries in Asian Countries,* WorldFish Center Conference Proceedings, 67 (pp. 1–40). Penang, Malaysia: WorldFish Center.

SLIM (Social Learning for the Integrated Management and Sustainable Use of Water at Catchment Scale). (2004). Stakeholders and Stakeholding in Integrated Catchment Management and Sustainable Use of Water. Briefing no. 2. Retrieved from http://sites.google.com/site/slimsociallearningforiwm/research-outcomes/policy-briefs-1.

Snelder, D. J., & Bernardo, E. C. (2005). Co-management in Practice. The Challenges and Complexities of Implementation in the Northern Sierra Madre Mountain Region. Ateneo de Manila University Press, Manila.

Steyaert, P., & Jiggins, J. (2007). Governance of complex environmental situations through social learning: A synthesis of SLIM's lessons for research, policy and practice. *Environmental Science & Policy, 10*, 575–586.

Ulrich, W. (2000). Reflective Practice in the Civil Society: The Contribution of Critically Systemic Thinking. *Reflective Practice, 1* (2), 247–268.

UNEP (United Nations Environment Programme). (2006). *Marine and Coastal Ecosystems and Human Well-being: A Synthesis Report Based on the Findings of the Millennium Ecosystem Assessment.* Nairobi, Kenya: UNEP.

UNEP (United Nations Environment Programme). (2007). *Global Environment Outlook: Environment for development (GEO-4).* Valetta, Malta: UNEP.

van Lavieren, H., de Iongh, H., & Belen, A. (2005). Managing the coastal resources of the northern Sierra Madre National Park. In D. J. Snelder & E. C. Bernardo (Eds.), *Comanagement in Practice. The Challenges and Complexities of Implementation in the Northern Sierra Madre Mountain Region* (pp. 165–194). Manila, Philippines: Ateneo de Manila University Press.

Vitug, M. D. (1993). *The Politics of Logging. Power from the Forest*. Quezon City, Philippines: Philippine Center for Investigative Journalism.

White, A. T., Eisma-Osorio, R.-L., & Green, S. J. (2005). Integrated coastal management and marine protected areas: Complementarity in the Philippines. *Ocean & Coastal Management, 48*, 948–971.

White, A. T., Gomez, E., Alcala, A. C., & Russ, G. (2006). Evolution and lessons from fisheries and coastal management in the Philippines. In T. R. McClanadan & J. C. Castilla (Eds.), *Fisheries Management: Progress towards Sustainability* (pp. 88–111). Oxford: Blackwell Press.

Whittaker, R. J., Araújo, M. B., Jepson, P., Ladle, R. J., Watson, J. E. M., & Willis, R. J. (2005). Conservation biogeography: Assessment and prospect. *Diversity and Distribution, 11,* 2–23.

World Bank (2005). *Philippines environment monitor 2005: Coastal and Marine Resource Management.* Washington DC: World Bank Group.

WWF-Philippines (2001). Workshop Report, Preliminary Conservation Management Planning: Workshop for Babuyan Channel. October 23–24, Aparri, Cagayan, Philippines.

3

Governing resilience building in Thailand's tourism-dependent coastal communities: The role of stakeholder agency[12]

[12] This chapter is reproduced with permission from: Larsen, R. K., Thomalla, F., & E. L. Calgaro (2011). Governing Resilience Building in Thailand's tourism-dependent coastal communities. The role of stakeholder agency. *Journal of Global Environmental Change*, 21 (2), 481–491.doi:10.1016/j.gloenvcha.2010.12.009.


พื้นที่เสี่ยงภัยคลื่นยักษ์
TSUNAMI HAZARD ZONE
IN CASE OF EARTHQUAKE, GO TO HIGH GROUND OR INLAND
แผนที่แสดงทางหนีภัยคลื่นยักษ์ "สึนามิ"
Evacuation route Map
EVACUATION SHELTER
1m.
(26 Dec 04)
TSUNAMI HAZ

3.1 Abstract

In current scientific efforts to harness complementarity between resilience and vulnerability theory, one response is an 'epistemological shift' towards an evolutionary, learning based conception of the 'systems-actor' relation in social-ecological systems. In this paper, we contribute to this movement regarding the conception of stakeholder agency within social-ecological systems. We examine primary evidence from the governance of post-disaster recovery and disaster risk reduction efforts in Thailand's coastal tourism-dependent communities following the 2004 Indian Ocean Tsunami. Through an emerging storyline from stakeholders, we construct a new framework for conceptualising stakeholder agency in social-ecological systems, which positions the notion of resilience within a conception of governance as a negotiated normative process. We conclude that if resilience theory is proposed as the preferred approach by which disaster risk reduction is framed and implemented, it needs to acknowledge much more explicitly the role of stakeholder agency and the processes through which legitimate visions of resilience are generated.

3.2 Introduction

3.2.1 Towards an 'epistemological shift' for social-ecological systems?

While originating in different disciplines, resilience and vulnerability theories are commonly propelled by an ambition to achieve more integrated and holistic perspectives of the coupled social and ecological domains so as to better address the challenges of sustainability. Resilience is often defined in terms of the ability of a system to absorb shocks, to avoid crossing a threshold into an alternate and possibly irreversible new state, and to regenerate after disturbance (Resilience Alliance, 2009). In contrast, vulnerability is increasingly seen as an inherent condition of the social-ecological system, which encompasses characteristics of exposure, susceptibility, and coping capacity that are shaped by dynamic historical processes, differential entitlements, political economy, and power relations rather than as a direct outcome of a perturbation or stress (Birkmann, 2006; Blaikie et al. 1994; Downing et al. 2005; Eakin & Luers, 2006).

It is now widely acknowledged that resilience and vulnerability approaches are complimentary in the sense that both are concerned with understanding how social-ecological systems respond to change in order to prepare populations, communities, sectors, and individuals to better cope with and adapt to shocks and longer-term change. Miller et al. (2010) argue that resilience research tends to take a systemic approach (see also Nelson et al., 2007; Olsson et al. 2006; Walker et al. 2006) that has advanced our understanding of system dynamics and interconnections, ecological thresholds, social-ecological relations, and feedback loops. Vulnerability research tends to take an actor-oriented approach, whereby the unit of interest is the 'exposure unit', i.e. how a social group or sector is able and enabled to respond to the stresses in the social-ecological systems in which it is located (see also Wisner et al. 2004; McLaughlin & Dietz 2007).

These differences continue to motivate academic efforts that harness this complementarity to strengthen analysis that transcends equilibrium-based management approaches, linear causality, and techno-centric and centralised governance discourses, and embrace theories of complex systems and distributed participation in knowledge production and decision making (e.g. Adger, 2006; Folke, 2006; Berkes & Folke, 2003; Jäger et al., 2007; Miller et al., 2010). One particular stream of this work specifically addresses the 'systems-actor' relation, prompting a convergence towards what we in this paper refer to as an 'epistemological shift' in the way we understand social-ecological systems.

This epistemological shift is manifest in what has earlier been referred to in this journal as an evolutionary theory of vulnerability and resilience, in which resilience is built through the struggle of redefining boundaries in socially constructed adaptive landscapes. This view promotes a critical realist epistemology aiming at contributing to overcoming a perceived tension between 'subjectivism' and 'universalism' of more disciplinary theorising (McLaughlin & Dietz, 2008). The approach thus aims to find bridges between disparate disciplinary traditions and their fragmented positions on human agency (Emirbayer & Mische, 1998). Another manifestation of the epistemological shift is in the propositions for interpreting resilience in unstable systems as 'a coupled system's capacity to learn (evolve) co-dependently' (Powell & Jiggins, 2003, p. 46). These arguments, to large extent, draw on advances in other disciplines, where the systems-actor dualism has already been overcome. This includes inspiration from sociology, such as the theory of structuration (Giddens, 1984), which integrates functionalism/structuralism with interpretive theories to yield recognition of how human agency simultaneously creates and responds to the objectified socio-ecological order. It also includes the extensive body of theory in Action Research traditions in agricultural innovation and natural resource management, which today is rarely acknowledged in the academic discourse on social-ecological systems (e.g. Röling & Wagemaker, 1998).

One of the advantages of this movement is that it offers a promise of recognition of morality into resilience building projects and research, which today is receiving perplexingly little attention in adaptive governance literature on social-ecological systems (see also Fennell et al., 2008; Powell & Jiggins, 2003; Nadasdy, 2007).

This lack of attention is argued to be partly because of a methodological 'problem of measurement', i.e. that 'the capacities of individual actors or institutionalised relationships among them are not straightforward to assess' (Lebel et al., 2006a, p. 14). Another perceived problem is internal to the social-ecological systems paradigm, namely that resilience often remains defined as an umbrella concept for system attributes, which *a priori* are deemed desirable (Klein et al., 2003). The epistemological shift proposes a conception of knowledge as more contested and co-produced than has been previously considered within mainstream resilience theory, thus placing issues of legitimacy and researcher positionality at the centre of the research endeavour (e.g. Vogel et al., 2007). Arguably, this comprises a response to the challenge of translating resilience theory into operational management concepts and mainstreaming resilience into policy and management practices (Miller et al., 2008). This shift also builds on insights from vulnerability research, which possesses a longer tradition of acknowledging different interpretations of vulnerability and the role of claims-making in governance (Bankoff, 2003; O'Brien et al., 2007).

In this paper we undertake a synthesis of narratives from stakeholders involved in the governance of post-disaster recovery and disaster risk reduction efforts in Thailand's coastal tourism-dependent communities following the 2004 Indian Ocean Tsunami. Our immediate purpose is to elicit an understanding as to why underlying socio-economic vulnerabilities to natural hazards persist in the country's tourism-dependent coastal communities, despite the introduction of strategies aimed at building resilience and a new and radically transformed formal governance regime for disaster risk reduction. We then employ these findings in a conceptualisation of stakeholder agency *vis-à-vis* the ambitions underlying the 'epistemological shift' in social-ecological systems theory.

3.2.2 Background to the case: Institutionalising governance measures for resilience building through sustainable recovery and early warning system development

The high frequency and severe impacts of coastal hazards owing to a combination of climate related stresses, global environmental change, and a range of socio-economic factors – as shown during recent disasters such as the 2004 Indian Ocean Tsunami, the 2009 Samoan tsunami, the 2009 Padang earthquake, the 2009 typhoon Ketsana, and the 2010 Haiti earthquake – has seen disaster risk reduction become a central theme in international governance. Over the last several decades there has been an increasing institutionalisation of disaster risk reduction measures in international policy and decision-making structures. Central to these efforts is the United Nation's International Strategy for Disaster Reduction Hyogo Framework for Action 2005–2015: 'Building the Resilience of Nations and

Communities to Disasters', which was adopted at the World Conference on Disaster Reduction in Kobe, Japan, in January 2005 based on the insights of a review of global progress made in disaster risk reduction under the Yokohama Strategy between 1994–2004.

The Hyogo Framework for Action emphasises the urgency of promoting community participation in disaster risk reduction, policies, networking, and strategic management of volunteer resources, roles and responsibilities (UNISDR, 2005). The World Conference on Disaster Reduction also saw the launch of the International Early Warning Programme and the formation of the Intergovernmental Coordination Group. The United Nations Education Scientific and Cultural Organisation's Intergovernmental Oceanographic Commission received a mandate from the international community at the World Conference on Disaster Reduction to coordinate the establishment of the Indian Ocean Tsunami Early Warning System. As a member country of the Indian Ocean Tsunami Early Warning System, Thailand has been in the process of developing its own national early warning system since 2005. A current Memorandum of Agreement between the Thailand International Development Cooperation Agency, the National Disaster Warning Centre and the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration of the United States of America for Technical Cooperation in Effective Tsunami System Analysis and Early Warning is in place until 2011.

These international, regional, and national institutional changes are motivated by an expectation that such governance initiatives will stimulate national and sub-national actions aimed at reducing vulnerability and increasing the resilience of communities to multiple risks while creating co-benefits for natural resource management and livelihoods improvement. However, the lessons from several decades of coastal disasters provide ample evidence that resilience building measures during recovery, disaster preparedness, and early warning system development, rarely address the underlying causes of vulnerability and trajectories of social inequality in disaster prone societies (e.g. Bankoff, 2003; Ingram et al., 2006; Larsen et al., 2009). Similar to many other disasters, new disaster risk reduction initiatives and policies introduced in the wake of the 2004 tsunami have caused controversy in many coastal communities with new strategies and policies spurring tensions, conflicts and increasing disparities between social groups. A key example has been in Sri Lanka, where contested coastal buffer zone policies have supported forced resettlement or eviction from prior, legal or *de facto*, property with subsequent negative consequences for livelihoods in the wake of post-tsunami uncertainty in property rights (Lebel et al., 2006b; Amnesty International, 2006; Cohen, 2007). In coastal Thai tourism-dependent communities, new planning guidelines and building codes for hotels were introduced but a lack of financial and human capacity to enforce new regulations coupled with widespread corruption and nepotism amongst government officials have resulted in failed implementation and many ‘planning exemptions’ (Calgaro et al., 2009a; Cohen, 2007).

Contestations over natural resource use in the tsunami affected countries around the Indian Ocean have been further exacerbated in the last several decades by increasing development in highly exposed coastal environments such as flat and low-lying land, particularly river deltas, estuaries and islands, which has increased people’s exposure to coastal hazards such as tropical cyclones, tidal surges, tsunamis, and coastal erosion (IUCN-NL et al., 2006; Zou & Thomalla, 2008). Much of this development has occurred in ecologically sensitive ecosystems such as coastal wetlands, mangroves and sand dunes and has led to the degradation and destruction of these systems. This is negatively affecting the poor in coastal communities who depend on the goods and services of these ecosystems for their livelihoods (Adger, 1997; Adger, 1999). Furthermore, the chaotic and sometimes competitive nature of humanitarian relief and post-disaster recovery work can lead to new emerging vulnerabilities due to a lack of coordinated planning and policies, limited differentiation of beneficiaries’ needs and circumstances, ongoing contestation over claims, and a lack of action on identified needs (Larsen et al., 2009; Hilhorst, 2002). The reorganisation pursuant of the 2004 tsunami disaster recovery process thus led to the emergence of new vulnerabilities, most notably amongst marginalised social groups such as poor fishing households (Lebel et al., 2006b) and tourism-dependent groups such as people working in small and medium sized tourism businesses along Thailand’s Andaman Coast (Calgaro et al., 2009a). The term ‘double victimisation’ has been used in the 2004 tsunami recovery process to capture this predicament (BDG, 2005). It is the coastal communities that were disadvantaged by post-tsunami recovery activities and exposed to rapid changes in the legislative and political environment, which are now frequently expected to participate in new forms of disaster risk reduction governance (Ingram et al., 2006).

The controversies highlighted above illustrate that disaster risk reduction governance addresses what is known as ‘over-determined’ problems: i.e. problems that are characterised by multiple legitimate perspectives on what constitutes the actual causes of a given risk (Powell & Jiggins, 2003). Because ‘outsiders’ and ‘insiders’ measure and describe risk in different ways (Twigg, 2003; Salter, 1996) in over-determined problem situations, the distinction between risk perception and actual risk loses its justification (Beck, 1992). Just as people in a risk situation do not respond ‘rationally’ to warnings (e.g. Buchanan-Smith & Davies, 1995; Thomalla & Schmuck, 2004), disaster risk reduction is not a rational and logical process. Rather, it consists of a wide range of more or less organised processes that rely on social, political and technological means to reduce risks and losses (Hamza, 2006; Hilhorst, 2002). Disaster risk reduction governance, then, involves a complex set of processes that brings together multiple stakeholders representing agencies and organisations with different mandates and agendas and operating at different levels. It charges them with the tasks of co-constructing an understanding of hazard vulnerabilities and sources of resilience, agreeing on levels of acceptable risk, and developing strategies to reduce vulnerability and build resilience.

3.3 Research methodology

In this paper we present evidence from (i) a participatory assessment conducted in 2008 in Krabi Province, in the villages of Ban Klong Prasong; Ban Tha Klong; Ban Thalane, and Ban Nam Khem. This work aimed to provide a platform for stakeholders to jointly create an improved understanding of the challenges and enabling conditions for different actors to implement recommendations and guidance to strengthen technology community linkages of early warning system (the so-called 'last mile') (Thomalla et al., 2009); and (ii) a comparative case study analysis of tourist destination vulnerability in three destinations at different stages of development, namely Khao Lak, Phi Phi Don and Patong Beach (Calgaro et al., 2009a).

The participatory assessment was initiated through planning meetings with key regional-level stakeholders, such as the United Nation's International Strategy for Disaster Reduction, United Nations Development Programme, and Asian Disaster Preparedness Center (Thomalla et al., 2009). Here, the point of departure was determined, namely that despite improved institutional structures and substantial research and guidance problems persisted in implementation of disaster risk reduction at the community level. Subsequent consultations in Krabi Province were held with 14 actors: government agencies involved in disaster risk management, coastal resource management, and community development at different administrative levels; international and national non-governmental organisations (NGOs) and community-based organisations; and communities at risk from tsunamis and other coastal hazards (Table 3.1). The assessment was designed to give participants the opportunity to co-design the research process and critique findings from the consultations. For this, an online dialogue on early warning with regional professionals was organised, including 155 registered participants from the region (Paul et al., 2009). To understand how organisations sought to implement policy in their specific operational context, the field consultations were guided by an adapted methodology of innovation histories (Douthwaite & Ashby, 2005). Here, we pursued questions such as: Which conditions enable/hinder your implementation of recommendations in practice? Which learning process is your organisation going through to be able to implement policy and practice recommendations? An adapted, simplified version of the policy life cycle of Parsons (cf. Lindahl, 2008) was used as a dialogical tool in discussions with stakeholders to explore the guidance and policy related to the 'last mile'. It included four steps in the policy cycle: recommendation, implementation, outcome, feedback. The findings from the consultations were analysed through a review of almost 500 scientific and 'grey literature' documents and more than 30 web repositories. This review aimed to substantiate the insights arising from these processes, and to position them in the overall policy and institutional context for early warning system and disaster risk reduction.

Table 3.1: Agencies, organisations and communities in Krabi Province, Thailand, that participated in the stakeholder assessment.

Department of Disaster Prevention and Mitigation
Krabi Provincial Administration Division of Public Works
Krabi Provincial Administration Organisation
Raks Thai Foundation (Raks Thai)
Thai Red Cross
Save the Andaman Network
Monitoring, Control and Surveillance fisheries network
Emergency Medical Service
One Tambon One Search and Rescue Team
Community-based disaster risk management committee, village Ban Klong Prasong
Community-based disaster risk management committee, village Ban ThaKlong
Community-based disaster risk management committee, village Ban Thalane
Rescue Team for marine accident management, Koh Punyee
Community-based disaster risk management committee, village Ban Nam Khem

In the comparative vulnerability assessment of Thai tourism destinations, the three case study sites for the of Khao Lak (Phang Nga Province), Patong (Phuket Province), and Phi Phi Don (Krabi Province) were selected based on (*i*) the level of damage sustained from the 2004 tsunami, (*ii*) the destinations' developmental histories, and (*iii*) the differential stages of recovery achieved (Calgaro et al., 2009a). Khao Lak, Phi Phi Don, and Patong cover the full spectrum in terms of developmental histories and damage sustained. Khao Lak is the youngest destination and sustained the most damage, while Patong is one of the oldest destinations in Thailand and suffered the least damage, with Phi Phi Don falling between these two extremes.

The data for the comparative vulnerability assessment was collected in two phases. The first phase comprised of desk-based research that included an exploratory literature review and document and map analysis. The desk study provided information on damage sustained in each destination site and institutional responses that together created foundational knowledge pertaining to the underlying causes of differential vulnerability and resilience levels found within and across the three case sites. The bulk of the data, however, was collected during the second field-based phase of the research that included 278 open-ended interviews, 31 case histories, 23 focus group discussions, and field observation. The type of stakeholders included in the empirical study are summarised in Table 3.2. Given the mere quantity of data, for findings where information is from numerous sources from across stakeholder groups, we follow the practice as in Scheper and Patel (2006) and Tan-Mullins et al. (2007) and corroborate evidence without specific references to the individual sources. The exact sourcing of information can be traced through the underlying documentation (Calgaro et al., 2009a; Calgaro et al., 2009b; Calgaro, 2010).

Table 3.2: Types of stakeholders included in the comparative vulnerability assessment of Khao Lak, Patong, and Phi Phi Don Don. (See Calgaro et al., 2009a for a comprehensive list of all stakeholders included in the comparative vulnerability assessment.)

Type of stakeholders	Examples
Tourism entrepreneurs	Accommodation providers and staff, tour operators, restaurant owners and staff, support services providers
Support organisations	Tourism Authority of Thailand, Patong Tourism Association, Phuket Professional Guides Association, Phuket Ecotourism Association, Phang Nga Tourism Association, Khao Lak SME Group, unregistered tourism sector representative groups, Small and Medium Enterprises Bank
Government departments	Office of Natural Resource and Environmental Plan, Tourism Development Offices, Tambon Administration Organisations, Village Headmen,
Non-governmental	Step Ahead Foundation, UN-WTO representative, International Labour Organisation, Ecotourism Training Centre, Swedish Microcredit Foundation, Phi Phi Dive Camp

3.4 Case results: Emerging storyline from Thailand's post-tsunami recovery and disaster risk reduction

3.4.1 Public sector responses: Mobilising post-tsunami recovery and strengthening disaster risk reduction

The 2004 tsunami severely affected Thailand's Andaman Coast, particularly the provinces Phuket, Pang-nga, Krabi, Trang, Satun, and Ranong, and killed over

8,200 Thais and foreign tourists. Thousands of buildings, roads, bridges, and other physical infrastructure were damaged or destroyed. Because the tsunami hit some of Thailand's most popular beach tourist resorts, a large number of foreign tourists were amongst the dead and injured. In economic terms alone, total damages were assessed at around $508 million (US), while losses were estimated at $1,690 million (US), totalling $2,198 million (US) or around 1.4 percent of GDP. In Phuket, damages and losses equalled 90 percent of GDP, and 70 per cent in Krabi and Phang Nga (Nidhiprabha, 2007).

The tsunami prompted swift action from the Royal Thai Government to aid the recovery of Thailand's Andaman Coast through post-disaster emergency response (Scheper & Patel, 2006; UN, 2005). The government set up the National Tsunami Disaster Relief Committee to respond to the needs of the survivors and a $76.5 million (US) fund was set up for tsunami recovery programmes (OPM, 2007). Short-term emergency aid and financial assistance was followed by medium- and longer-term adjustments and adaptation responses that fell under two overarching initiatives: the Andaman Tourism Recovery Plan and the Andaman Sub-Regional Development Plan. These initiatives included strategies of national marketing initiatives to attract tourists back, the provision of credit to facilitate tourism business recovery, the redrafting of coastal tourism development plans, the development of Thailand's tsunami early warning system, the establishment of a National Tourism Intelligence Unit and Crisis Management Centre, and multiple endeavours to promote good governance.

No tsunami early warning system existed in the Indian Ocean at the time the tsunami occurred, and the tremendous scale of this disaster provided the impetus for international, regional and national actors to initiate the establishment of a system to strengthen efforts to reduce vulnerability to future tsunami events. This parallels responses in many countries in the Indian Ocean Region where wide-ranging institutional and policy changes were implemented in order to address the priorities of the Hyogo Framework for Action to strengthen disaster risk reduction and to develop national early warning system to tsunamis and other coastal hazards.

The policy framework for disaster risk reduction in Thailand involves a wide range of institutions at the national, provincial, district and community levels (IRC & Tetra Tech, 2007). The Civil Defense Act of 1979 and the Civil Defense Plan of 2002 form the legal basis of the disaster risk reduction framework. The National Civil Defense Committee was formed as Thailand's strategic policy-making body for all activities relevant to civil defense and disaster risk reduction. It performs all disaster risk reduction functions at the national level, including the formulation of the Civil Defense Master Plan, and its evaluation and implementation, and the organisation of annual or periodical trainings. The National Tsunami Prevention and Mitigation Strategy (2008–2012) reflects a proactive approach to knowledge transfer, enhancing community understanding, early warning, safety area preparation, evacuation, and Community-based disaster risk reduction (DDPM, 2008).

The responsibility for refining and implementing DDR strategies in Thailand, however, falls to the provincial and sub-district levels of government to ensure that local conditions and needs are taken into consideration. Community-based disaster risk reduction was first introduced through the 9th National Economic and Social Development Plan (2002–2006), which placed a high priority on enabling participatory processes between the government, the private sector, and the communities (Singbun et al., 2008). At the provincial level, the primary organisation for disaster risk reduction is the Provincial Disaster Prevention and Mitigation Office under the Provincial Governor's Office. The provincial plans all specify Community-based disaster risk reduction as an important activity to develop and support, and the Provincial Disaster Prevention and Mitigation Offices s are composed of representatives from government agencies, private sectors, and civil society. The Department of Local Administration is responsible for instructing local government agencies to develop local disaster preparedness policies and action plans in collaboration with these stakeholders, while Department of Disaster Prevention and Mitigation provides knowledge and technical support. These plans aim to integrate infrastructure and communication systems development and capacity building for volunteer rescue and recovery operations, and must be linked to the Community Development Plan and the Provincial Disaster Mitigation Plan (RICB, 2006; DDPM, 2009).

District-level authorities play a coordination role in the disaster risk reduction process, where the main responsibility is allocated to the sub district level, the Tambon Administration Organisations. The National Disaster Plan specifies that Tambon Administration Organisations are the frontline organisations responsible for both relief and community disaster prevention. Oversight and technical support is located at the provincial level with an emergency relief fund of $1.6 million (US) available per province, under the authorisation of the provincial governor. Remaining Department of Disaster Prevention and Mitigation disaster risk reduction funding is allocated to Tambon Administration Organisations, along with the decision-making authority on how to utilise these funds in accordance with Thailand's decentralised government structure. As the Tambon Administration Organisations are the government authorities directly overseeing village affairs, Department of Disaster Prevention and Mitigation policy stipulates that Tambon Administration Organisations are also responsible for supporting Community-based disaster risk reduction processes. This is also specified in the plans prepared at the provincial level.

3.4.2 Formal governance responses at the local level

In the tourism-dependent communities of Khao Lak, Patong and Phi Phi Don, the evidence presented in this section shows how the success of many of the government's short-term (emergency) and longer-term recovery initiatives was compromised due to funding shortages and the persistence of pre-existing weaknesses in governance structures and processes that were overlooked. Emergency aid relief did not reach all eligible recipients for a number of reasons. First, the amount of emergency funding provided by the national government was insufficient to cover the amount of eligible claims. Second, available funds were often misappropriated due to corruption and nepotism. Secondary data likewise confirms reports of a portion of the aid being routinely and illegally absorbed by those responsible for distributing the money, namely village leaders (Scheper & Patel, 2006; Tan-Mullins et al., 2007). This not only caused aid distribution anomalies, but also heightened the communities' mistrust in local governing bodies (see also Tan-Mullins et al., 2007). Instances of localised institutional biases against tourism entrepreneurs (most notably in Khao Lak and Phi Don) exacerbated the problem of unequal aid distribution. While aid more easily reached so-called traditional livelihood sectors like fishing, small and medium tourism business entrepreneurs complained of being largely ignored by governmental institutions (see also Tan-Mullins et al., 2007; WTO, 2005). The resultant frustration was summed up by a Thai Resort Owner in Khao Lak who exclaimed:

> Normal people [i.e. villagers and those with traditional livelihoods], the government give them about 200 baht for this, they give them a house [and] house equipment … many, many provisions and many people give them money. But not for [tourism] business ... For business no.

To support the longer-term recovery of the tourism businesses, the national government set up two funds to assist the rebuilding of businesses: The Tsunami Recovery Fund supported by the Venture Capital Fund, and soft loans with low interest rates for smaller businesses underwritten by the Bank of Thailand. Tax reliefs were also offered to affected businesses. However, the effectiveness of post-tsunami business loan schemes for smaller businesses was limited by complex credit application processes (particularly for non-Thai business operators) and discriminated against Phi Phi Don's predominantly Muslim population (see also WTO, 2005) The belief held by Thai Muslims living on Phi Phi Don discourages followers from paying interest (or *Riba* in Arabic) on loans.

Yet the securing of additional funds through these schemes did not necessarily eliminate the financial vulnerability of recipients. Those businesses with existing loans were left with higher debt levels and an increased financial sensitivity to business competition, economic downturns and future shocks. Aggressive marketing campaigns designed to eliminate generalising negative images and restore tourist confidence in the destinations located along the Andaman Coast was spearheaded by the Tourism Authority of Thailand. However, as noted by several people, including Tourism Authority of Thailand representatives and land owners at Phi Phi Don, this support favoured Patong (the most lucrative destination precinct outside of Bangkok) at the expense of Khao Lak and Phi Phi Don that were long classified as disaster zones.

The introduction of the Indian Ocean Tsunami Early Warning System in 2005 was heralded by both national government and tsunami-affected communities as a crucial tool for both increasing consumer (tourist) confidence in the safety of the Andaman Coast and community preparedness against future shocks. However, as elicited in the community consultations in Krabi the functionality of the early warning system is being hindered by four factors: First, the warning sirens and announcements cannot be heard in some areas and previous tests have not worked properly causing many citizens to lose faith in its effectiveness. Second, key parts from some of the warning towers have been stolen rendering them useless. While the system is tested daily, the Royal Thai Government has not made plans for regular inspection and maintenance of the towers. Third, warning procedure and disaster preparedness training for the communities has been limited due to budgetary constraints and training dates are not widely known. Fourth, evacuation signage is irregular, marked evacuation distances unclear, and evacuation roads are sometimes too narrow or blocked by subsequent development and trees. These challenges are witnessed by statements from people consulted:

> Of the six Krabi communities we work with, only one has a warning tower that is operational (NGO staff, Krabi Province).
>
> … sign-posting is confusing. Some of the signs point in wrong direction, or to ‘safe site’ where the shelter was never constructed due to lack of funds (Ban Nam Khem, Villager).

Another concern is that sign-posting is only in English prompting Rescue Teams to erect parallel Thai language evacuation signage and instructions. The prescription of what is considered relevant risk knowledge means that warning artefacts such as signposts and risk maps in some cases are not relevant in that particular locality and/or for those particular end-users. In Krabi Province, the participatory assessment meetings with community organisations highlighted that evacuation routes identified by the national government are based on topographic maps without visual on-site inspection of the characteristics of the villages and their surrounding areas. Because of a lack of consultation with communities, suitable buildings that could potentially be used as shelters, such as temples and schools, have not been considered.

The technical shortfalls of the early warning system are partly caused by shortcomings in the distribution of financial resources. Despite the provision of considerable international funds for the development of national early warning system in the region, many authorities and non-government actors experience a shortage of funds at sub-national levels. Some donors are not aware of the budgeting procedures in local government agencies (see also Lukitasari, 2006; ADPC, 2006) and some local government officials are reluctant to provide funds originally dedicated for Community-based disaster risk reduction. It was suggested by national researchers that this is underwritten by the fact that many officials in province and Tambon struggle with a general shortage resources as promised funds, which are never provided from national government according to legally enshrined procedures.

Consequently, staff and operational capacity for disaster risk reduction at the local level are low and Community-based disaster risk reduction and stakeholder participation relies heavily on volunteerism. The lack of funds to pay or at least compensate volunteers for their time also causes low staff retention rates. The high turnover of volunteers and the need to continuously recruit and train new people throughout project implementation puts a considerable strain on organisational capacities.

Consequently, public trust in the national early warning system generally remains low and citizens and tourists rely on own observations and knowledge regarding weather and changes in the sea-level (see also Tsunami Aid Watch, 2007; Thomalla et. al., 2009b; Calgaro et al., 2009a). Incidents of accidental triggering of the sirens and false alarms have led to panic evacuations resulting in accidents and lawsuits against the government.

3.4.3 Self-organised stakeholder agency in recovering from the tsunami and building resilience to future shocks

Largely in the absence of sustained and effective assistance through the formal government response, the private sector and social networks mobilised to facilitate their own recovery responses and development of disaster risk reduction measures. Resourceful and well-connected tourism representative bodies and their strategic actions to the tsunami at different organisational levels formed the backbone of the communities’ quick recovery in Patong and heightened their resilience to shocks. The Phuket Tourism Association – the main power base and driving force behind the private tourism sector in Patong – played a pivotal role in the swift recovery of Patong. The Phuket Tourism Association used its considerable leverage and connections with the Phuket Provincial Governor, the Ministry of Sports and Tourism (at the national level) and the National Tourism Council (the national private sector representative body) to facilitate access to financial resources and help shape post-tsunami rebuilding strategies for Patong. They also established the Phuket Small Business Recovery Centre in January 2005 with the financial backing of select members. The Centre became a core resource for the affected communities by linking the community with relevant government departments in Phuket and funding bodies to aid the physical reconstruction of affected buildings, help the newly unemployed with job searches and social security applications, and assist smaller businesses gain access to funding. The Phuket Tourism Association also participated in the national marketing of the tourism sector and helped ensure that media impact reports were accurate.

According to a senior representative of the Phuket Tourism Association, the association's rationale for instigating a multi-level approach to assist much of the Patong business community was calculated and clear; the association understood that the Patong holiday experience sold to the consumer relies on the smooth delivery of multiple and interconnected services necessitating the simultaneous recovery of all businesses that fulfil the tourist's needs. Their method of instigating these multifaceted strategies also highlighted the political shrewdness of the Association. The Vice President of the Phuket Tourism Association explained that

> [the Phuket Tourism Association] uses all of the power avenues available to us to push for our members needs and agendas and, in doing so, presents a unified and 'loud voice' that national actors find difficult to ignore.

Khao Lak's tourism representative groups were also swift in their response to the disaster but their efforts waned over time as individual attentions turned to the recovery of their own businesses. The Phang Nga Tourism Association used its connections to the Provincial Governor to air grievances over financing and building delays. The association also used its close connections with local parliamentary members to petition for additional financial resources and influence post-tsunami planning strategies for Khao Lak at the national level. Yet, the evidence illustrates that their influence and connection with powerful actors at the national level paled in comparison with Patong's Phuket Tourism Association, resulting in the receipt of less governmental support, particularly in the area of marketing. Receiving little marketing support from the Tourism Authority of Thailand, Phang Nga Tourism Association members capitalised on direct and strong relationships with long-established European market partnerships to help revive consumer interest and confidence. One method was the showcasing of Khao Lak on the international stage through participation in marketing road-shows and joint industry-media familiarisation trips throughout 2005. Working in parallel with the Phang Nga Tourism Association, was the newly formed Khao Lak Small and Medium Enterprises Group. The Group was set up in direct response to the tsunami to give micro and small businesses a political voice. The Group actively sought political forums to voice the specific concerns of Small and Medium Enterprises regarding the formulation of the new building regulations and to petition for more financial support. Understanding the importance of getting their message to the most powerful audiences, the Group's founder presented Prime Minister Thaksin Shinawatra with a Memorandum in February 2005 outlining the concerns of Small and Medium Enterprises. The group also raised funds via multiple websites from past visitors and interested donors to help micro and small businesses rebuild their lost livelihoods and distributed them based on a needs basis. Family and support structures also provided support for tourism community members throughout the reconstruction. Types of support included financial backing for business ventures and the recovery, child-minding by grandparents so that parents could work for the betterment of the whole family unit, plus psychological support and strength needed to overcome trauma. In much of Thai society, the family unit remains central to the functioning of society and underpins the resilience of its members to shocks and stressors. Family self-sufficiency is prized, with the family providing its own welfare net against sickness and old age (Irwin, 1996). The above findings from the tourist destinations show how the family unit also serves as the basis for the development and growth of business opportunities, with various family members contributing to the success of ventures owned and run by the family. This family orientated business model dominates tourism businesses in Khao Lak but is most extreme on Phi Phi Don where isolation from the mainland has further cemented close family and village ties.

3.4.4 Negotiating competing visions of recovery and risk

The most significant agency was thus exerted by elite groups who mobilised their resources and social networks to influence and shape government actions. This elite is organised around business interests and family ties. Access to finances, governance and power structures are intertwined due to a close relationship between family and historically embedded community leadership structures. The resilience of a household and community is enhanced by access to such business and social support networks (as in Jäger et al., 2007; Miller et al., 2005). The elite is often comprised of local politicians and large investors who are well connected to local, provincial and national levels of decision making. They have direct links to provincial governments, national ministries and national tourism sector lobby groups that influence tourism policy and planning at the national level.

In contrast to Patong and Khao Lak, power and influence on Phi Phi Don resides in the hands of the five landowning families on the island and not with tourism representative organisations. The five most influential and wealthy families cooperate to create and maintain an environment that protects their collective interests. Some landowners on the island offer long-term leases of 15 years to promote business stability and help facilitate continuity of the type of businesses and tourism products that are found on the island. This stability benefited both the landowners and the tenants pre- and post-tsunami. One prominent landowner took responsibility for repairing the structural damage that was incurred from the tsunami with the purpose of restoring tourist flows and profits, which is mutually beneficial for the owners and their tenants. The Phi Phi Don community also capitalised on the power of the ruling elite to successfully oppose the post-tsunami planning proposals drawn up by the Designated Areas of Sustainable Tourism Administration, an arm of the national government designated to tourism planning. Alternative plans were subsequently proposed by the Department of Public Works and Town and Country Planning in cooperation with the community and the local elite.

The competition for resources and the struggle for realisation of different visions of what comprises 'effective' recovery and resilience in the communities have resulted in a marked difference between the immediate post-tsunami financial assistance provided to Thais and resident expatriates. The Minister for Natural Resources and Environment and the Minister of the Interior initially confirmed that all affected victims were entitled to aid assistance. However in practice, financial assistance at the local level was restricted to Thai nationals. Few Western expatriates working and living in Patong, Khao Lak, and Phi Phi Don received financial or logistical assistance from the local Thai authorities. The plight of Burmese minorities was much worse. Registered Burmese working in tourism businesses and support industries such as construction were like other non-national counterparts entitled to humanitarian assistance from the Royal Thai Government but in most cases assistance was refused due to discrimination at the local level (ALTSEAN Burma, 2005; Oberoi, 2005; Scheper & Patel, 2006). Both registered and illegal workers were subjected to abuse and mistreatment by police and Thai citizens (Hedman, 2005; Hulme, 2005; Oberoi, 2005; TAG, 2005). Unsubstantiated Thai media reports about Burmese looting intensified anti-migrant sentiment amongst factions of Thai society culminating in the arrest, extortion, and deportation of both documented and undocumented workers; 2000 workers were deported in the first three weeks following the tsunami (Chit, 2005; Hulme, 2005; Maw, 2005; TAG, 2005; Robertson, 2007). Burmese immigrants described how fear of deportation and abuse curtailed efforts to search for relatives and prompted the payments of bribes to local authorities. The problem was compounded by a lack of sufficient knowledge about human rights and information on where to source reliable assistance (Robertson, 2007).

The influence of family ties and social networks at the local government level (including village headmen) also resulted in the misappropriation of post-tsunami emergency provisions that favoured family and friends of the local elites. Those with money and connections to influential networks were able to secure approvals for infrastructure developments that contravene planning regulations. As one village Community-based disaster risk reduction Committee member explained:

> Private investors come in to purchase land for development, with influential people in the village and Tambon, then it pushes poorer inhabitants to more exposed areas.

The vested interests of the ruling elite in Patong and Phi Phi Don have helped to undermine the implementation of governmental post-tsunami tourism development plans. In Patong, the influence manifests in a tension between the public and private sector. A government official and tourist association members described how authorities such as the Provincial Administrative Office and the Provincial Governor's Office are trying hard to work with the private sector to design and effectively implement tourism strategies but their success is hampered by resistance from the private sector, which has money, influence and the backing of the Phuket Provincial Governor. The private sector seeks to avoid government involvement in tourism development and regulation of the market. As stated by Phuket Tourism Association members, this is because the community holds little respect for the Municipality of Patong, believing that the government does not understand the needs of tourists, and because public policy processes are considered too slow to make a real impact. Having no faith in these processes, the tourism community choose to bypass the local levels of government preferring to approach the Provincial Governor or national government representatives directly when petitioning for resources or desired changes and actions. In some villages the lack of trust in the government is further linked to a general suspicion of government agencies because of rumours and evidence of corruption in post-tsunami compensation payments for lost and damaged items such as houses, boats and fishing gear. The lack of trust between stakeholders engaged in recovery or disaster risk reduction is also exacerbated where pre-existing natural resource conflicts have created factions amongst local user groups.

Over and above these challenges in the private-public relations, local disaster risk reduction professionals describe what they see as a ‘tension between a top-down government approach and a bottom-up NGO approach’ (NGO programme manager, Bangkok). This reflects an ongoing debate regarding the sharing of roles, control and ownership between state and non-state actors, nested within ongoing decentralisation and governance reforms. Some NGOs are seen as being ‘over-participatory’ by government officials, focusing too strongly on engagement with community organizations, which lack legal status, and not collaborating with the appropriate government agencies (which may or may not be responsive to such engagement). (See also Lukitasari, 2006.) In turn, governments are faced with the considerable challenge to integrate the diverse activities by different NGOs and private businesses. Competition for donor support, it was widely argued by NGO staff, has also undermined previously well-functioning relationships between many NGOs in Krabi Province.

From this evidence, it is clear that the agency of social networks and stakeholder alliances can be both an opportunity as well as a challenge in disaster risk reduction. It presents a set of reasons why underlying vulnerabilities are exacerbated during the recovery and disaster risk reduction development: First, as in Phi Phi Don’s and Patong’s case, these dominant networks may stifle positive change and progress if measures are perceived to hinder dominant agendas, business interests and profit margins. Second, those that lack family support networks are left with few social support alternatives and can become marginalised within the community. A strong tradition of social inclusion and exclusion based around family units leave those without strong family ties with few support options and highly vulnerable to unforeseen shocks. Third, such links can also foster nepotism and the misappropriation of funds to family and friends over intended recipients. Information from multiple businesses in the three tourist destinations showed how comradery and community cohesiveness has increased amongst some social groups as a result of the tsunami (foreign expatriates, smaller businesses and dive operators), but the financial strain of rebuilding has isolated others. For instance, high in-migration into Patong for business opportunities has created a fragmented community that is solely focussed on profits and business growth.

3.5 Discussion: Conceptualising stakeholder agency in social-ecological systems

The evidence presented above shows how the most prominent source of post-tsunami resilience in the affected tourism-dependent coastal communities in Thailand stemmed from innovative modes of stakeholder agency emanating from the public, private and civil society sectors. But unity, collective action, and social network membership are only beneficial to those who are represented and included, leaving those that are not more isolated and vulnerable. The successful outcomes of actions depended heavily on the powerbase of those involved and their success in mobilising established and newly formed (post-tsunami) social networks. However, despite the considerable progress made since the 2004 tsunami in institutionalising formal governance structures for disaster risk reduction and early warning system development in the public sector at the international and national level, forms of collective action have largely remained informal in nature and are often undermined by weaknesses in the formal governance system.

In the conventional epistemology of social-ecological systems, stakeholder agency is typically perceived as individual or group practices (the 'informal' domain) that operate within the institutional, legal and administrative structures and officially accepted and mandated mechanisms within the public, private sector and civil society (the 'formal' domain) (Miller et al., 2010). Yet, the presented evidence lends grounds to confirm and expand the emerging view promoted by the epistemological shift in social-ecological systems theory. It shows how stakeholder agency is a central feature of the whole governance system, actively creating and perpetuating social-ecological spaces that can be varyingly accepted as 'formal' or 'informal' in nature. With this emerging conceptualisation of agency we deliberately avoid a perspective that focuses on human activity while disregarding social structures, as constructionist approaches to vulnerability have previously been criticised for (McLaughlin & Dietz, 2008). Rather, it demonstrates stakeholder agency as a contributor to governance formed through a dialectic relationship with the informal as well as formal governance structures of the public, private and civil society sectors. This conception of stakeholder agency supports attempts to overcome established jargon, which emphasises formal procedures and mandates at the expense of how disaster recovery and preparedness actually takes place on the ground. This is because actions for improvement at the local level are sanctioned not by their degree of formality, but by the extent to which they are perceived as legitimate by the stakeholders involved. Arguably, this is particularly relevant in societies with a large informal economy such as Thailand, where more than 70 percent of the population is engaged in activities unregistered by public authorities, or outside the framework of recognised corporate companies, particularly tourism and fisheries (Coate et al., 2006). Further, this view deconstructs the typical disaster management cycle with its temporally disaggregated stages of risk reduction, involving four phases: prevention, preparedness, response, and recovery (Alexander, 2002). While the evidence from the case study above has focused on what is nominally considered to be the recovery and preparedness phases, the observations show how stakeholder agency (re)constructs the underlying vulnerabilities and resilience patterns, and in doing so, forms a critical undercurrent in all phases of disaster management.

The actions taken by individuals and stakeholder groups within the affected communities reflected different and sometimes conflicting agendas and priorities. From a perspective of the 'common good', the manifested forms of self-organised stakeholder agency, which is thriving in the present disconnect between formal and informal modes of governance, were both constructive and destructive. The actions of the elite alliances mainly benefited the interests of members but also produced benefits for others and more marginalised groups. However, often the actions significantly harmed those who were most vulnerable. The success of the various actions divulge interacting social patterns of innovation, leadership, political shrewdness, power and influence, all of which influence differential patterns of resilience within and across affected tourism destination communities. The results have shown that local elites, while not necessarily blind to a commitment to the public good, were mostly concerned with preserving their respective power bases, and the actions taken often increased social exclusion of marginalised groups. The post-disaster recovery and disaster risk reduction efforts have led to a growing divide between the dominant interest groups in communities and the local government authorities who are often perceived as inaccessible and self-serving. While providing much-needed disaster relief, the uneven and intransparent distribution of humanitarian aid and limited and ineffective post-disaster assistance has led to a further deterioration of these relationships. The infiltration of formal government decision making by informal family ties and stakeholder alliances exacerbates these weaknesses in governance and heightens the community's mistrust in the existing power structures. This discrepancy undermines the avenues for ethically acceptable processes of recovery and disaster risk reduction in which the underlying vulnerabilities of Thailand's coastal tourism-dependent communities can be addressed.

How are we then to make sense of stakeholder agency *vis-à-vis* its ability to contribute to desirable and morally acceptable resilience building trajectories? The case study confirms how an individual's or group's ability to anticipate, withstand, and recover from shocks over time is intrinsically linked to access and entitlements to socio-political, economic and environmental resources (Adger & Kelly, 1999; Pelling, 2003). The more access and control a group had to such resources, the lower was their vulnerability during the recovery and the chance of improving their resilience in the new disaster risk reduction regime. Identifying patterns of access and entitlement thus goes a long way in deciphering differential vulnerability and resilience levels within and across populations and systems. However, it was clear that this has to be coupled with an appreciation of the opportunity to mobilise these entitlements and resources for purposeful and directed agency. Fundamental to this conceptualisation are the contested actions and outcomes that link human agency and scaled structures of power over time and space (Leach, 2008). Underlying the differential agency were not only entitlement patterns but also historically-embedded power structures, cultural norms and supporting ideologies and doctrines that permeate and bind the very fabric of society (Bankoff, 2003; Cannon et al., 2003; Cutter et al., 2000).

In the post-tsunami context in Thailand, stakeholders exerted their agency as a response to the set of conditions that are present in their surrounding society (see also Adger, 2008), shaped by their vision of what represented a desirable recovery process. This correlates with the definition of agency by Emibayer and Mirsche (1998), namely the capacity people to project alternative future possibilities and to actualise them in relation to current contingencies. By extrapolation, this suggests that resilience building, as observed in the case study, can indeed be said to progress through a process of social-ecological renewal (Berkes & Folke, 2006). Yet, it confirms that our knowledge of the multiple unstable states possible for Thailand's tourist-dependent coastal communities is not decoupled from our own, or stakeholders', perspectives on what these possible states are. Or, in other terms, each stakeholder acts, more or less consciously, from a view on what comprises the most desirable state of the system from just his/her perspective.

The evidence thus conveys how vulnerability is not only spatially scaled but the combined outcome of the ability of stakeholders to enact the temporality of their existence, transforming their past experiences in coping and survival and differentiated visions of the future into purposeful action in the present. In this conception, the notion of stakeholder can be logically translated into a concept of 'state-holder', illustrating the fact that persons, groups, and institutions strive to retain and build the resilience of a specific (unstable) system state. This view on stakeholder agency for resilience adds to the emerging epistemology, which defines resilience as the preservation of select unstable states and the co-dependent evolution (learning) of the human-environment system (Powell & Jiggins, 2003; McLaughlin & Dietz, 2008). In so doing, we position the notion of resilience *within* a conception of governance as a negotiated and contested normative process, owing to the fact that resilience theory currently does not incorporate these normative dimensions into the notion of resilience *per se*. In particular, the differential agency and the enabling environment for groups to exert their agency, determined who is able to promote their norms to frame the debate and to decide upon which state is desirable and should be maintained within the existing socio-ecological system. In so doing, we saw the outcomes of negotiations between stakeholders determine acceptable risks to particular populations or institutions, e.g. by downplaying the existence of uncertainties or the possibility of alternative stable states. Altogether, this analysis yields an analytical framework, which can be communicated in the following mnemonic device ('aide-memoire') (Box 3.1).

Box 3.1: Summary of the emerging analytical framework constructed on the basis of the case study presented.

Resources: Socio-political, economic and environmental assets available for stakeholders to mobilise;
Access and entitlements: Formal and informal rights and controls over resources, determining how they can be mobilised to enable agency;
Desired system states: The existing or imagined ideal (unstable) states of the community/society promoted by certain stakeholders;
'State-holder': Persons, groups, institutions who strive to retain and build the resilience of specific system states (i.e. stakeholders);
Resilience building: Preservation of selected desired unstable states, possibly through co-dependent evolution and learning between 'state-holders';
Governance: Negotiation and contestation between different competing envisioned resilient states of the community/society, which may lead towards a sustainable co-dependent evolution of the human-environment system.

3.6 Conclusions

The evidence presented in this paper has illustrated how stakeholder agency at the interface of formal and informal institutions was the main determinant of resilience building in Thailand's tourism-dependent coastal communities after the 2004 tsunami. Reflections on these results led us to the proposition for a new framework for conceptualising stakeholder agency within social-ecological systems theory. This framework shows how the vulnerability of each stakeholder is co-dependent on the ability to exert its agency by mobilising the social relationships associated with entitlements and resource access. The success in addressing chronic vulnerabilities and building resilience depends on the agency of community sub-sectors that exist and operate within wider multi-scaled socio-political structures and processes that shape reactions to risk and change in the socio-ecological system. Collective action, which is deemed morally acceptable and lead to desired outcomes, depends on mediation between competing scenarios of desirable unstable states. This view provides an elaboration on the evolutionary and learning based conception of resilience, and substantiates that it is the very negotiation and contestation between different competing envisioned resilient states of the community/society, which may lead towards a sustainable co-dependent evolution of the human-environment system.

In order to address underlying vulnerabilities, the governance of Thailand's tourism-dependent coastal communities must support adaptive approaches that recognise and respond to uncertainty and surprises associated with hazards and risks and the existence of multiple unstable states. The unexpected events in the formal recovery and disaster risk reduction responses owe to a significant degree to an absence of a shared vision of what desirable resilient states ought to look like amongst competing government, private and civil society sector stakeholders. The lack of spaces provided to enable both formal and informal agency to negotiate jointly agreeable visions and pathways for resilience building results in a lack of monitoring and transparency, which in turn paves the way for unethical outcomes and exacerbation of underlying vulnerabilities.

In conclusion, if resilience theory is increasingly proposed as the preferred approach by which disaster risk reduction is framed and implemented, it needs to acknowledge and incorporate much more explicitly this role of stakeholder agency and the processes through which legitimate visions of resilience are generated.

3.7 References

Adger, N. (1997). Sustainability and social resilience in coastal resource use. Centre for Social and Economic Research on the Global Environment, working paper GEC, 97–23. Norwich UK: University of East Anglia.

Adger, W. N. (1999). Social Vulnerability to Climate Change and Extremes in Coastal Vietnam. *World Development, 27* (2), 249–269.

Adger, W. N. (2006). Vulnerability. *Global Environmental Change, 16* (3), 268–281.

Adger, W. N. (2008). Resilience and Vulnerability. In M. Leach (Ed.), *Re-framing Resilience: A Symposium Report. Working paper, 13* (pp. 5–7). Brighton UK: STEPS Centre.

Adger, W. N., & Kelly, P. M. (1999). Social vulnerability to climate change and the architecture of entitlements. *Mitigation Adaptation Strategies for Global Change, 4* (3–4), 253–256.

ADPC (Asian Disaster Preparedness Center). (2006). *Proceedings of the Fourth Disaster Management Practitioners' Workshop for South-East Asia: Learning from Community-Based Practices, Strengthening Policy and Partnerships.* Bangkok, Thailand: ADPC.

Alexander, D. (2002). *Principles of Emergency Planning and Management.* Oxford: University Press.

ALTSEAN (Alternative Asean Network on Burma). (2005). *Tsunami Impact on Burma.* Bangkok, Thailand: ALTSEAN Burma.

Amnesty International. (2006). *Sri Lanka: Waiting to go home – the plight of the internally displaced.* Draft report. London: Amnesty International.

Bankoff, G. (2003). Vulnerability as a measure of change in society. *International Journal of Mass Emergencies and Disasters, 21* (2), 5–30.

BDG (Bilateral Donor Group). (2005). *Summary report: Bilateral verification mission to tsunami affected districts in Sri Lanka January to February 2005.* Colombo, Sri Lanka: BDG.
Beck, U. (1992). *Risk society. Towards a new modernity.* London: Sage.
Berkes, F., & Folke, C. (Eds.). (1998). *Linking Social and Ecological Systems: Management Practices and Social Mechanisms for Building Resilience.* Cambridge: University Press.
Birkmann, J. (2006). Measuring vulnerability to promote disaster-resilient societies: Conceptual frameworks and definitions. In J. Birkmann (Ed.), *Measuring Vulnerability to Natural Hazards: Towards Disaster Resilient Societies* (pp. 9–54). Tokyo: United Nations University Press.
Blaikie, P., Cannon, T., Davis, I., & Wisner, B. (1994). *At Risk: Natural Hazards, Peoples, Vulnerability and Disasters,* London: Routledge.
Buchanan-Smith, M., & Davies, S. (1995). *Famine Early Warning and Response: The Missing Link.* London: Intermediate Technology. Bohm, D. (1980). *Wholeness and the implicate order.* London: Routledge.
Calgaro, E., Naruchaikusol, S., & Pongponrat, K. (2009a). *Comparative Destination Vulnerability Assessment for Khao Lak, Patong Beach and Phi Phi Don. Sustainable Recovery and Resilience Building in the Tsunami Affected Region.* Stockholm Environment Institute (SEI) Project Report. Stockholm: SEI.
Calgaro, E., Pongponrat, K., & Naruchaikusol, S. (2009b). *Destination Vulnerability Assessment for Khao Lak, Thailand. Sustainable Recovery and Resilience Building in the Tsunami Affected Region.* Stockholm Environment Institute (SEI) Project Report. Stockholm: SEI.
Calgaro, E. (2010). Building Resilient Tourism Destination Futures in a World of Uncertainty: Assessing Destination Vulnerability in Khao Lak, Patong and Phi Phi Don, Thailand to the 2004 Tsunami. PhD dissertation. Department of Environment and Geography – Human Geography, Macquarie University, Sydney, Australia.
Cannon, T., Twigg, J., & Rowell, J. (2003). *Social Vulnerability, Sustainable Livelihoods and Disasters*. London: Department for International Development (DFID).
Chit, H. (2008). Burmese tsunami victims neglected, abused in Thailand. Cambridge MA: Unitarian Univeralist Service Committee.
Coate, B., Handmer, J., & Choong, W. (2006). Taking care of people and communities Rebuilding livelihoods through NGOs and the informal economy in Southern Thailand. *Disaster Prevention and Management, 15* (1), 135–145.
Cohen, E. (2007). Tsunami and flash floods – Contrasting modes of tourism-related disasters in Thailand. *Tourism Recreation Research, 32* (1), 21–39.
Cutter, S. L., Mitchell, J. K., & Scott, M. S. (2000). Revealing the vulnerability of people and places: A case study of Georgetown County, South Carolina. *Annals of the Association of American Geographers, 90* (4), 713–737.
DDPM (Department of Disaster Prevention and Mitigation. (2008). *Tsunami Prevention and Mitigation Master Plan (5 years).* Bangkok, Thailand: DDPM, Ministry of Interior.
DDPM (Department of Disaster Prevention and Mitigation. (2009). *Internal DDPM Agencies.* Bangkok, Thailand: DDPM, Ministry of the Interior. Retrieved from http://www.disaster.go.th/dpm/index.php?option=com_wrapper&Itemid=292
Douthwaite, B. & Ashby, J. (2005) *Innovation Histories: A Method for Learning from Experience. Institutional Learning and Change (ILAC), brief 5*. Rome: IPGRI.
Downing, T. E., Aerts, J., Soussan, J., Bharwani, S., Ionescu, C., Hinkel, J., Klein, R. J. T., Mata, L., Martin, N., Moss, S., Purkey, D., & Ziervogel, G. (2005). Integrating social vulnerability into water management. Stockholm Environment Institute (SEI) Working Paper and NeWater Working Paper No. 5. Oxford: SEI.
Eakin, H. L., & Luers, A. L. (2006). Assessing the vulnerability of Social-Environment Systems. *Annual Review of Environment and Resources, 31*, 365–394.
Emirbayer, M., & Mische, A. (1998). What is agency? *The American Journal of Sociology, 103* (4), 962–1023.

Fennell, D., Plummer, R., & Marschke, M. (2008). Is adaptive co-management ethical? *Journal of Environmental Management, 88* (2008), 62–75.

Folke, C. (2006). Resilience: The emergence of a perspective for social–ecological systems analyses. *Global Environmental Change, 16* (2006), 253–267.

Giddens, A. (1984). *The Constitution of Society. Outline of the Theory of Structuration*. Berkeley: University of California Press.

Hamza, M. (2006). The Human Dimension of Early Warning – Why Technology Alone is Not the Answer. Unpublished project report for Sustainable Recovery and Resilience Building in the Tsunami Affected Region. Stockholm: Stockholm Environment Institute (SEI).

Hedman, E.-L. (2005). Introduction: The politics of the tsunami response. *Forced Migration Review Special Issue – Tsunami: Learning from the Humanitarian Response, July*, 4–5.

Hilhorst, D. (2002). Being Good at Doing Good? Quality and Accountability of Humanitarian NGOs. *Disasters, 26* (3), 193–212.

Hulme, J. (2005). Forgotten tsunami victims: Burmese immigrants in Thailand. *World Socialist Web Site*. 2 February 2005. Retrieved 21 March 2008 from http://www.wsws.org/articles/2005/feb2005/burm-f02.shtml

Ingram, J. C., Franco, G., Rumbaitis-del Rio, C., & Khazai, B. (2006). Post-disaster Recovery Dilemmas: Challenges in Balancing Short-term and Long-term Needs for Vulnerability Reduction. *Environmental Science and Policy, 9*, 607–613.

IRC (International Rescue Committee), & Tetra Tech. (2007). *U.S. Indian Ocean Tsunami Warning System (IOTWS) Programme: Review of Policies and Institutional Capacity for Early Warning and Disaster Management in Thailand.* Washington DC: USAID Asia.

Irwin, H. (1996). *Communicating with Asia: Understanding people and customs*. St Leonards, Australia: Allen & Unwin.

IUCN-NL (International Conservation union Netherlands), Both ENDS, Wetlands International. (2006). *Coastal ecosystems and livelihoods after the tsunami.* Rehabilitation and management of coastal ecosystems after the Tsunami disaster to support local livelihoods, in Sri Lanka, South India, Aceh, Indonesia, Thailand, Malaysia.

Jäger, J., Kok, M. T. J., Mohamed-Katerere, J. C., Karlsson, S. I., Ludeke, K. B., Dabelko, G. D., Thomalla, F., de Soysa, I., Chenje, M., Filcak, R., Koshy, L., Martello, M. L., Mathur, V., Mareno, A. R., Nararin, V., Sietz, D., Al-Ajmi, D. N., Callister, K., de Oliveira, T., Fernandez, N., Gasper, D., Giada, S., Gororbets, A., Hilderink, H., Krishnan, R., Lopez, A., Nakyeyune, A., Ponce, A., Strasser, S., & Wonink, S. (2007). Vulnerability of People and the Environment: Challenges and Opportunities. In UNEP (Ed.), *Global Environment Outlook 4: Environment for development*. Nairobi, Kenya: United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP).

Klein, R. J. T. Nicholl, R. J., & Thomalla, F. (2003). Resilience to natural hazards: How useful is this concept? *Environmental Hazards, 5*, 35–45.

Larsen, R. K., Miller, F., & Thomalla, F. (2009). *Vulnerability and Recovery from the Tsunami: Building Resilient Coastal Communities. Lessons for building more resilient communities.* Stockholm: Stockholm Environment Institute.

Leach, M. (2008). Resilience thinking and pathways to sustainability. In M. Leach (Ed.), *Re-framing Resilience: a Symposium Report, Working paper 13* (pp. 3–4). Brighton UK: STEPS Centre.

Lebel, L., Anderies, J. M., Campbell, B., Folke, C., Hatfield-Dodds, S., Hughes, T. P., & Wilson, J. (2006a). Governance and the capacity to manage resilience in regional social-ecological systems. *Ecology and Society 11,* (1), 19.

Lebel, L., Khrutmuang, S., & Manuta, J. (2006b). Tales from the margins: Small fishers in post-Tsunami Thailand. *Disaster Prevention and Management, 15*,124–134.

Lindahl, K. B. (2008). Frame Analysis, Place Perceptions and the Politics of Natural Resource Management: Exploring a Forest Policy Controversy in Sweden. PhD dissertation (2008: 60). Swedish University of Agricultural Sciences, Uppsala, Sweden.

Lukitasari, C. (2006). Strengthening Local Government System to Support Community Initiatives. In ADPC (Asian Disaster Risk Preparedness Center) (Ed.), *Proceedings of the Fourth Disaster Management Practitioners' Workshop for South-East Asia: Learning from Community-Based Practices, Strengthening Policy and Partnerships* (pp. 48–51). Bangkok, Thailand: ADPC.

Maw, T. Z. (2010, 12 May). The Tsunami's Invisible Victims. *Southeast Asian Press Alliance*. Retrieved 8 April 2008 from http://www.seapabkk.org/seapa-fellowship/fellowship-2005-program/49-the-tsunamis-invisible-victims.html

McLaughlin, P., & Dietz, T. (2008). Structure, agency and environment: Toward an integrated perspective on vulnerability. *Global Environmental Change, 18*, 99–111.

Miller, F., Larsen, R. K., & Thomalla, F. (2008). *Hybrids, Bifocals, Tipping Points and Speed Dating. Report from the Resilience-Vulnerability Colloquium – From Theory to Practice, From Disconnect to Synergy in Support of Sustainable Development.* Stockholm, 10–11 April, 2008. Stockholm: Stockholm Environment Institute.

Miller, F., Osbahr, H., Boyd, E., Thomalla, F., Bharwani, S., Ziervogel, G., Walker, B., Birkmann, J., van der Leeuw, S., Rockström, J., Hinkel , J., Downing, T., Folke, C., & Nelson, D. (2010). Resilience and Vulnerability: Complementary or Conflicting Concepts? *Ecology and Society, 15* (3), 11.

Miller, F., Thomalla, F., & Rockström, J. (2005). Paths to a sustainable recovery after the tsunami. *Sustainable Development Update, 5* (1), 2–3.

Nadasdy, P. (2007). Adaptive Co-Management and the Gospel of Resilience. In D. Armitage, F. Berkes, & N. Doubleday (Eds.), *Adaptive co-management: Collaboration, learning and multilevel governance* (pp. 208–227). Vancouver: University of British Columbia Press.

Nelson, D. R., Adger, W. N., & Brown, K. (2007). Adaptation to environmental change: Contributions of a Resilience Framework. *Annual Review of Environment and Resources, 32*, 395–419.

Nidhiprabha, B. (2007). *Adjustment and Recovery in Thailand Two Years after the Tsunami*. ADB discussion paper, no. 72. Tokyo: Asian Development Bank Institute. Retrieved from http://ucbonline.ucb.ac.uk/shared/Library/adjustment_and_recovery_in_Thailand.pdf

Oberoi, P. (2005). *Humanitarian response towards Burmese migrant workers.* Forced Migration Review. Oxford: Refugee Studies Centre, University of Oxford.

O'Brien, K., Eriksen, S., Nygaard, L. P., & Schjolden, A. (2007). Why different interpretations of vulnerability matter in climate change discourses. *Climate Policy, 7* (1), 73–88.

Olsson, P., Gunderson, L. H., Carpenter, S. R., Ryan, P., Lebel, L., Folke, C., & Holling, C. S. (2006). Shooting the rapids: Navigating transitions to adaptive governance of social-ecological systems. *Ecology and Society, 11*(1): 18. Retrieved from http://www.ecologyandsociety.org/vol11/iss1/art18/

OPM (Office of the Prime Minister). (2007). Tsunami Help and Recovery Information System. Bangkok, Thailand: Prime Minister's Office. Retrieved 12 December 2007 from http://203.170.239.222/tsunami/index

Paul, D., Larsen, R. K., Thomalla, F., Kanji, F., Ahmed, A. K., & Ravesloot, B. (2009). Linking Communities and Technology in the Indian Ocean Region: Summary of the Online Dialogue on Early Warning. Stockholm: Stockholm Environment Institute. Retrieved from http://www.sei-international.org/mediamanager/documents/Publications/Sustainable-livelihoods/linking-communities-technology-indian-ocean.pdf

Pelling, M. (2003). *The vulnerability of cities: Natural disasters and social resilience*. London: Earthscan.

Powell, N., & Jiggins, J. (2003). Learning from participatory land management. In H. A. Becker & F. Vancley (Eds.), *The International Handbook of Social Impact Assessment. Conceptual and Methodological Advances* (pp. 42–55). Cheltenhan UK: Edward Elgar Publishing.

Resilience Alliance. (2009). *Assessing and managing resilience in social-ecological systems: A practitioner's workbook*. Version 1.0. Retrieved from http://wiki.resalliance.org/index.php/Main_Page

RICB (Research and International Cooperation Bureau). (2006). Thailand Country Report. Bangkok, Thailand: Department of Disaster Prevention and Mitigation, Ministry of Interior.

Robertson, P. S. (Ed.). (2007). *Helpless Before and After the Waves: The Plight of Burmese Migrant Workers in the Andaman Tsunami*. Bangkok, Thailand: Thai Action Committee for Democracy in Burma (TACDB).

Röling, N. G., & Wagemakers, M. A. E. (Eds.). (1998). *Facilitating sustainable agriculture: Participatory learning and adaptive management in times of environmental uncertainty*. Cambridge: University Press.

Salter, J. (1996). Towards a Better Disaster Management Methodology. *Australian Journal of Emergency Management, 10* (4), 8–16.

Scheper, E., & Patel, S. (2006). *Impact of the tsunami response on local and national capacities: Thailand country report*. London: Tsunami Evaluation Coalition.

Singbun, P., Opaspakornkit, S., Sirisuk, D., Jongkaijak, M., Suksai, S., To-Rang, S., Nunual, P., Panitdee, C., Sucharitkul, K., Kaichak, P., Pratepwanich, P., Sott, J., & Tavisai, A. (2008). Lessons learned from Thailand's tsunami experiences for future preparedness: 60 case studies of good practice for Thailand disaster management (2004–2007) from Tsunami Knowledge Decode Project. Three Years after Tsunami Conference. Bangkok, 17 December 2007.

TAG (Tsunami Action Group for Migrants). (2005). *Final Report*. Bangkok, Thailand: Tsunami Action Group for Migrants.

Tan-Mullins, M., Rigg, J., Law. L., & Grundy-Warr, C. (2007). Re-mapping the politics of aid: The changing structures and networks of humanitarian assistance in post-tsunami Thailand. *Progress in Development Studies, 7* (4), 327–344.

Thomalla, F., Larsen, R. K., Kanji, F., Naruchaikusol, S., Tepa, C., Ravesloot, B., & Ahmed, A.K. (2009). From Knowledge to Action: Learning to Go the Last Mile. A participatory assessment of the conditions for strengthening the technology–community linkages of tsunami early warning systems in the Indian Ocean. Stockholm: Stockholm Environment Institute. Retrieved from http://www.sei-international.org/mediamanager/documents/Publications/Sustainable-livelihoods/knowledge-to-action-100113%20web.pdf

Thomalla, F., & Schmuck, H. (2004). We All Knew that a Cyclone was Coming. Disaster Preparedness and the Cyclone of 1999 in Orissa, India. *Disasters, 28* (4), 255–269.

Tsunami Aid Watch (Ed.). (2007). *The Tsunami Early Warning System in Thailand: A Resource Book with a Synopsis of Comment by Tsunami Impacted Communities 30 months after the Disaster*. Chiang Mai, Thailand: Tsunami Aid Watch/Heinrich Böll Foundation.

Twigg, J. (2003). The Human Factor in Early Warnings: Risk Perception and Appropriate Communications. In J. Zschau, & A. N. Küppers (Eds.), *Early Warning Systems for Natural Disaster Reduction* (pp. 19–26). Berlin: Springer Verlag.

UN (United Nations). (2005). *Tsunami Thailand One Year Later: National Responses and Contribution of International Partners*. Bangkok, Thailand: UN.

UNISDR (United Nations International Strategy for Disaster Reduction). (2005). *The Hyogo Framework for Action 2005–2015: Building the Resilience of Nations and Communities to Disasters*. Geneva: UNISDR.

Vogel, C., Moser, S. C., Kasperson, R. E., & Dabelko, G. D. (2007). Linking vulnerability, adaptation, and resilience science to practice: Pathways, players, and partnerships. *Global Environmental Change, 17* (2007) 349–364.

Walker, B. H., Anderies, J. M., Kinzig, A. P., & Ryan, P. (Eds.). (2006). *Exploring resilience in social-ecological systems: Comparative studies and theory development*. Collingwood, Australia: CSIRO Publishing.

Wisner, B., Blaikie, P., Cannon, T. & Davis, I. (2004) *At Risk: Natural Hazards, Peoples, Vulnerability and Disasters*. London: Routledge.

WTO (World Tourism Organization). (2005). *Tsunami One Year On: A summary of the implementation of the Phuket Action Plan.* Madrid: World Tourism Organization.

Zou, L., & Thomalla, F. (2008). *The Causes of Social Vulnerability to Coastal Hazards in Southeast Asia: An SEI Working Paper*. Stockholm: Stockholm Environment Institute. Retrieved from http://www.sei-international.org/mediamanager/documents/Publications/Sustainable-livelihoods/social_vulnerability_coastal_hazards_thomalla.pdf

4

A multi-stakeholder approach to policy coherence: Negotiating global sustainable agricultural development in Swedish communities of praxis[13]

[13] This chapter was submitted to the journal *Development Policy Review* on 18 April 2011 as: Larsen, R. K., & Powell, N., A multi-stakeholder approach to policy coherence: Negotiating global sustainable agricultural development in Swedish communities of praxis.

(in one of the competence areas?) a network for change look like?
1a) What suggested changes?
1b) How can SIANI help facilitate these changes?
2) What to do about differences in perceptions?
The role of agriculture in development

4.1 Abstract

Within the European Union, promotion of 'policy coherence' is expected to improve coordination across sectors and groups of professionals, who place competing claims regarding how European participation in low-income country agriculture contributes to sustainable development. This paper examines the prospects for stakeholders in Sweden to implement ambitions of policy coherence to achieve sustainable global agricultural development, drawing on experiences from the launch a national multi-stakeholder platform with participation from ninety-nine organisations. The findings demonstrate how Sweden is characterised by fragmentation and institutional struggles for legitimacy, which undermine the ability to meet international obligations. We argue for a more strategically facilitated dialogue for all sectors in society to share perspectives and deconstruct social boundaries, which are no longer relevant.

4.2 Introduction

The current unsustainable condition of global agriculture is one of the most critical problems facing the world today. Those most at risk are the rural and urban poor, a number totaling no less than 800 million people, who do not have access to sufficient food to meet their basic needs. Yet, this urgent issue shares with other natural resource and sustainable development challenges in that professionals disagree over what constitutes the exact problem and its solutions. Representatives of international development organisations, donors, NGOs, research institutes, and companies place competing claims to knowing the true nature of agricultural production and the drivers of the world economy, and what comprises credible knowledge and relevant competencies in improving the situation. This paper examines the prospects for stakeholders in one European Member State, namely Sweden, to implement the ambitions of *policy coherence* in relation to negotiating and coordinating actions, which impact on the progress in achieving sustainable agricultural development globally.

4.2.1 Contestation on sustainable agricultural development

The character of global sustainable agricultural development as a 'social dilemma', characterised by high degrees of uncertainty, complexity and controversy, is reflected in the increasing contestation regarding the compatibility of agro-environmental sustainability and the dominant neo-liberal agenda, championed by global bodies such as the World Trade Organisation (WTO), International Monetary Fund (IMF), and international development banks (Dibden et al., 2009). This is in recognition of the detrimental effects of the global food economy in both Europe and low-income countries, as powered by the transnational agro-food industry, in particular nurtured through what is known as the temperate zone ‘grain-livestock complex’ (Weis, 2007). Many of these arguments mirror the critique recently summarised by Rao of the mainstream policy package adopted since the 1980s:

> Neoliberal in inspiration and emanating from the World Bank, the IMF, the WTO and IFPRI it prescribes getting agricultural prices ‘right’, substituting the market for public action, and defining ‘land reform’ as well-specified private property rights (Rao, 2009, p. 1280).

The recently renewed increase in interventions of European investors in third-countries (UNCTAD, 2009) and the fact that agricultural production and food processing has in emergent economies increasingly been deregulated to attract foreign investments (Punjabi, 2007) are further raising questions regarding how European participation in low-income country agriculture can contribute to sustainable agricultural development.

In this regard, a growing recognition of corporate social responsibility and ethical trade is deeming agro-environmental sustainability and the present neo-liberal agenda in international trade on agriculture irreconcilable. Amongst citizens in Europe, new social movements associated with consumer responsibility have been growing in recent years, in attempts to make agricultural trade more directly accountable to poor farmers and marginalised groups in the market chain. The fair trade and organic movements substantiate a critique of lacking accountability in so-called conventional agro-food systems and a response to what is seen as the ‘hypocrisy of free trade’ where farmers are marginalised by existing tariffs and subsidies (Hira & Ferrie, 2006). They seek to re-embed commodity chains in ways which counter capitalist industries and ecological and social injustices in the wake of globalisation (Dobson, 1993; Reynolds, 2000). This ‘global justice’ movement promotes moral and political claims grounded in Kantian philosophy of obligations (Papaioannou et al., 2009), where assumed universal human values are seen to have currency across national borders, and places a significant decision making burden with the individual consumers and agricultural professional as ‘international dispersed stewards of virtue’ (Blowfield & Dolan, 2008, p. 3).

Altogether, these irreducible uncertainties and multiple perspectives, which are intrinsic to the nature of agricultural policy problems, undermine accepted norms of policy making. These norms dictate a fragmentation of the concrete issues according to sectoral boundaries, a separation of the ‘steering’ (policy formulation) from the process of implementation, and otherwise assumes the possibility of a linear transfer of objective, norm-free knowledge from science to polity (Hajer, 2003; Steurer et al., 2010). Sweden is located within the larger trajectories of the evolving multi-level governance in the European Union (EU) and the ongoing revisioning of what comprises legitimate forms of citizen and stakeholder engagement in networked forms of governance in the interface of state and non-state actors (e.g. Auer, 2000). Contrary to the accepted norms, there is here a need to understand agriculturally related policies as continuous processes, which create 'spaces of meaning' in which theories for action, social change and instruments for implementation are continuously negotiated (Ison et al., 2007).

Stakeholders in agriculture and rural development comprise public, private and civil society sector actors who actively construct and promote their own stakes. They seldom respond in ways expected by a given policy and often adapt the policy instruments during implementation. In everyday life, people and organisations navigate political goal conflicts and policy incoherence and find suitable spaces between existing policy directions and instruments to insert their agendas and shape the policy outcomes. Significant influence is often exerted by coalitions of stakeholders who through their agency insert their agendas into the national institutions, polity, and practice (e.g. Harsh, 2005; Powell et al., in press). Thus, policies for agricultural development, defined here as a form of practice including planning, formulation of targets and measures and implementation, must progress through the embracement of dissent, which may not be expressed in a form expected by decision makers.

These interdependencies between European sectoral policies (including development aid, environment, trade, finance, energy, etc.) and third-country agriculture and livelihoods reflect the situated relationships between people and their environment under current conditions of modernity, where impacts in low-income countries proceeds through global infrastructures of abstract and codified systems of knowledge (Giddens, 1991). In other terms, the concern is that the construction of agricultural resources through international geo-politics sustains a fracturing and disembedding impact on the well-being of people and resilience of institutions owing to asymmetrical power relationships between 'owners' or 'victims' of global governance.

4.2.2 European policy coherence in development cooperation

It is in the European development aid sector increasingly recognised that countries in which European actors operate need more political engagement to assert influence in the relationships with the EU. This is partly due to recognitions of the low degree of harmonisation in development cooperation strategies between donor countries, including incompatibility between different domestic systems of aid. However, it also pertains to a lack of mechanisms to facilitate the inclusion of different stakeholder perspectives in decision-making processes in the EU (OECD, 2008; Wood et al., 2008). It is thus officially argued by the Commission of the European Communities (EC) that dialogue with developing countries of the effects of EU policies other than aid must be enhanced (EC, 2007). This includes making better use of field level resources to monitor impacts of European policies as well as transparent public reporting (OECD, 2008). It simultaneously requires facilitating the dialogue between conflicts of interest including evaluations of the institutional rules, capacities, and incentives, which determine the response capacity of the political system to interventions by stakeholders.

Such concerns have within the EU more recently stimulated attempts to promote the ambition of *policy coherence*, i.e. an expectation to coordinate all actions with international ramifications on sustainable development and food security. This policy direction espouses commitments to increased self-reflection on the multifaceted impacts of agricultural related policies. The commitment was affirmed in the European Consensus on Development and elevated via the Paris Declaration as a central pillar to address the multiple dimensions of poverty (EC, 2008). Since 2005 it also forms a central part of the framework intended to accelerate progress towards the Millennium Development Goals. Several international multilateral organisations are currently expected to adapt their strategies and bureaucracies in response to this new demand (UN, 2006) and mechanism, such as the Global Donor Platform on Rural Development, have been created to improve collective action in rural development in recognition that policies other than development cooperation have a strong influence on developing countries.

As a corollary, it can be mentioned that in the environmental sector, the notion of policy coherence is paralleled by the EU adoption of the principle of Environmental Policy Integration to avoid perverse policy outcomes arising from, for instance, ‘spill over’ effects into environmental degradation from financial investments & export/import policies (Nilsson, 2006). Anchored in the EU Treaty and reaffirmed in the Sustainable Development Strategy and the White Paper on European Governance it stipulates that all policies should be prepared with attention to environmental sustainability (EC, 2004). Policy integration is also included in the European White Paper as one of the so-called Good Governance Principles.

4.2.3 Case study: Sweden's Policy for Global Development

In Sweden, the objective of promoting pro-poor development oriented policy coherence, including meeting multilateral cooperation objectives of the 2005 Paris Declaration on Aid Effectiveness and the 2008 Accra Agenda for Action, is since 2003 manifest chiefly through Sweden's Policy for Global Development (PGD), which emphasises shared responsibility and closer collaboration for public authorities at national level, local authorities, civil society and NGOs, the private business sector and the trade unions. The overall goal of the policy is to contribute to an equitable and sustainable global development with involvement of all Swedish actors. Sweden is heralded as the first country in the world to develop such a policy to be implemented on both a national and international level, and to include public as well as the private sector, in the process of contributing to global sustainable development (OECD, 2005). The PGD states that:

> The policies of poor countries have been examined by the international community for many years. There is also a need for candid international examination of the rich countries' policy choices, and fulfillment of their commitments (Government of Sweden, 2004).

Two perspectives shall permeate all actions under the PGD, namely a 'rights perspective' and a 'perspective of the poor'. This means that, equitable and sustainable development, is compatible with respect for human rights and that the needs, interests, capacities, and conditions of poor people should be the point of departure (Government of Sweden, 2002).

However, despite the launch of the PGD, the understanding of policy coherence is ambiguous as Swedish actors have quite different views on what coherence means in practical terms. Civil servants acknowledge privately that the espoused holistic approach to development creates great challenges for politicians, policy makers, and other stakeholders in private sector and civil society and necessitates the recognition of the interrelationship and friction, which is occurring between different actors. Sustainable agricultural development contains many overarching goals, which outline a joint global effort in very abstract terms and stakeholders concretise these according to own institutional goals. Despite the fact that Sweden has a very well developed bureaucratic system for inter-sectoral coordination, e.g. through the *remiss* system (sharing of government proposition between sectors and with non-state actors) (Government Office of Sweden, 2003), there is an absence of implementing guidelines for the PGD and no commonly accepted method or framework to establish who is responsible, at the operational level, for coordinating, communicating and instructing stakeholders of the PGD requirements. Most, but not all, government departments and agencies have by now the PGD requirements incorporated in their Government Instruction and are obliged to report on PGD achievements annually. However, the PGD, in its current version, specifies goals and not results, and agriculture is not included as one of the acknowledged global challenges. Altogether, this ambiguity renders the ambition of policy coherence open to negotiations in which stakeholders can insert their agendas

4.2.4 Towards a multi-stakeholder approach to coherence

In the mainstream view of the European development aid sector and the Swedish PGD, policy coherence is sought through adjustment of policy targets and alignment of expected products, including institutionalising formal coordinative bureaucratic procedures. This approach assumes rational and transparent actions and the ability of formal governance mechanisms to foster their coordination. However, this assumption is at odds with the by now well-established recognition of the versatility of human agency and the fact that diverse social practices is in a mutually formative relationship with the institutional structures the mutual mediation of which determine the prospects for policy coherence (e.g. Giddens, 1991; Thevenot, 2001). For instance, it has been suggested that current transnational frameworks, e.g. as embedded in the UN system, exhibit a weakness in facilitating the interaction between individual and group identities, owing to a lack of appreciation of these dynamics of self-construction and self-society relations (e.g. Zook, 2006).

It is often proposed that little research has yet been conducted into the question of policy coherence as a concept and how it may be achieved (see review in Nilsson et al., 2010). Yet, this overlooks the many research traditions in international development and natural resource management, which already have built substantial bodies of knowledge regarding the preconditions for collective action through negotiating diverse goals and interests in a multi-stakeholder governance context (e.g. Leeuwis, 2000; Leeuwis & Van den Ban, 2004; Ison & Watson, 2007; Powell et al., in press). It also ignores the characteristics of sustainable agricultural development as a social dilemma, outlined above, in which claims to knowing are frequently contested and real progress is achieved through stakeholders' agency, which far from always respects formal structures, indeed it renovates them on the way.

With this appreciation of the shortcomings of the proceduralist approach to policy coherence as the backdrop, this paper examines the prospects for stakeholders in one European Member State, namely Sweden, to implement the ambition of policy coherence in relation to actions, which impact on the progress in achieving sustainable global agricultural development. The evidence has been generated through the authors' coordination of the launch of a Swedish response to the challenges in implementing the ambition of policy coherence, as sanctioned in the PGD. This concerns the inception of a multi-stakeholder platform, the Swedish International Agricultural Network Initiative (SIANI), as a long-term form of cross-sectoral institutional cooperation and support (Sida & SEI, 2008). Below, we commence by outlining the Action Research approach, which was employed to launch this multi-stakeholder platform and convene stakeholders for joint and coordinated dialogue, learning and action on issues connected to sustainable global agricultural development. We expect this process will be of value in itself to other countries struggling with similar challenges in implementing the coherence ambition. We then offer a narrative synthesis of the primary evidence from the establishment of the network examining the prospects for fostering a collective critique between different sectors to holistically address the interests of low-income countries.

To enable this analysis, we operationalise the notion of 'communities of praxis' (Wenger, 1998; Lindstead, 2006) in the sense of a basic premise of social life, where members are united by a relatively common purpose and a set of shared practices. A community of praxis is thus a group of people or stakeholders who comprise a network sharing relatively similar idea, norms, assumptions and practices. As everyone simultaneously belongs to several such 'communities' (e.g. one person can be considered, and may consider her/himself, to be part of a community of highly competent agricultural researchers, the fair trade movement, a network of U2 fans, etc.), there are always multiple ways through, which one can organise a discussion of stakeholder practices. In this regard, we highlight that the purpose of this paper is not to provide a comprehensive analysis of all such communities, the formal (procedural) institutional environment, or the many important substantial issues regarding sustainable agricultural development raised by the stakeholders who were involved. Rather, we aim to illustrate how the ambition of policy coherence is premised on the conditions in the larger stakeholder society and how current practices prevent a negotiation and collective critique in line with the ambition of the policy coherence agenda. We do not comment on the 'truth content' of the claims posited by professionals, but discuss how such claims are used in instrumental ways to propagate existing social boundaries. Thus, the analysis illustrates how existing practices of Swedish stakeholders escape the formal expectations in the discourse on policy coherence and significantly reduce their ability to engage in collective action and learn from other perspectives and interests. This, in turn, constraints the ability of Swedish stakeholders to coherently address systemic issues of sustainable development and global food security and respond to the complexity and context specific needs of affected people in low-income countries.

4.3 Research approach

The Inception Phase of SIANI was implemented from October 2008 until January 2009 by means of a scoping assessment. This assessment was conducted as a process of national multi-stakeholder consultation to explore the interests and needs of prospective members in preparation for the official launch of the network. There were three main phases to the scoping assessment, including (i) 142 stakeholder consultations, (ii) an inception workshop, and (iii) desktop synthesis (Fig. 4.1). The work was guided by Soft Systems Methodology (SSM), which is an approach to appreciating and improving complex problematic situations through involving stakeholders in a process of joint discovery and action (Checkland, 1999). This emphasises multiple types of knowledge and experience and invites stakeholders into a collective process of knowledge generation. The qualitative assessment aimed to elicit agricultural problems with international ramifications addressed by stakeholders in Sweden as well as mapping the current conditions for competence and policy development in Sweden.

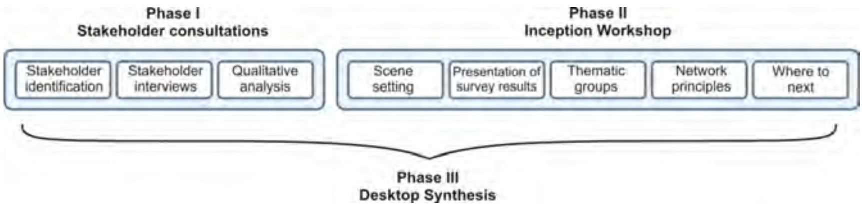

Figure 4.1: Structure of the scoping assessment.

In phase 1, the consultations included in total 142 people from 99 organisations (Table 4.1). Following the SSM approach, stakeholders were identified as organisations or people with a stake in the broad area of agriculture and development. Over the course of the project, a range of organisations and more than 220 people were contacted for setting up consultations. Within each organization, contact points for agriculture were identified. Consultations were mainly conducted through face-to-face meetings, but a few meetings were held by telephone. The majority of meetings took place in Lund, Göteborg, Uppsala and Stockholm.

In phase 2, a workshop was held to reflect on the findings from the scoping assessment with stakeholders that took part in phase 1, and to gain their feedback on the results. Sixty-four people from 44 organisations participated in the workshop. The purpose of gaining additional feedback was to consolidate and provide opportunities for stakeholders to comment on the content and suggested future process that emerged from the analysis conducted by the facilitators. The workshop aimed at (i) benchmarking concrete topics for formation of Cluster Groups; (ii) outlining the operating environment for policy development and competence building in which these concrete issues were to be addressed; (iii) developing of collective ownership and enthusiasm for the network.

In phase 3, implemented periodically throughout the scoping process, desktop review and syntheses were conducted. Material reviewed included background information on agricultural development and policy mechanisms in Sweden, and reports and case studies of networks and relevant thematic areas. The consultations also identified key reference material in the form of policies, research reports and position papers.

An Inception Report (Larsen et al., 2009), summarising the messages from stakeholders, was shared after the workshop to the contact list, which had been generated through the inception phase. Everyone with an interest in SIANI's mission in the field of sustainable agricultural development, particularly those who had not yet contributed, were encouraged to send comments and reflections on the recommendations in the Inception Report, and to share the report with other organisations and people in their own networks. Four organisations decided to submit formal responses, but the majority of comments (24) were received from professionals in their personal capacity. The feedback was compiled to support the activity planning and budget allocations for year one of the network as outlined in the work plan expected to be tabled for the Steering Committee when it would convene for its first meeting (SIANI Secretariat, 2009).

Parallel to these events, negotiations were held with potential members of the Steering Committee, including the Ministry of Agriculture, Ministry of Environment, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, FAO, Swedish agro business sector, universities, large consultancies, and Swedish EU parliamentarians. Similarly, Terms of References were developed for the Secretariat to be hosted at SEI and an open recruitment procedure undertaken for its positions.

Table 4.1: Overview of people and organisations consulted.

Sector	No. of organisations	Examples
Public sector	15	Ministry of Agriculture Swedish Environmental Protection Agency
Private sector	11	Ramböll Natura AB Food for Development Office, Tetra Pak
Civil society	23	Church of Sweden Swedish Red Cross
Research	38	Swedish University of Agricultural Sciences Nordic Africa Institute
International	4	UN Capacity Building Task Force on Trade, Environment and Development International Institute for Rural Reconstruction
TOTAL	**99 (142 people)**	

Below, we present the narrative, which has emerged from an aggregation of perspectives, which were uncovered through the Action Research process. Where nothing else is stated the results are rooted in primary evidence from the consultations, planning meetings, workshop, and email and telephone communication with the people and organisations involved in the launch of SIANI. Where appropriate, we make reference to secondary sources.

4.4 Results and analysis

In 2008, a confluence of several international processes contributed to reposition issues related to the multi-functionality of agriculture firmly on the political agenda in Sweden. The World Bank's World Development Report lifted the role of agriculture in relation to global concerns of poverty, climate change, 'peak oil' and biodiversity loss (World Bank, 2007). International convergences, e.g. through the International Assessment of Agricultural Knowledge, Science and Technology for Development (IAASTD, 2008), received significant attention amongst Swedish professionals and promoted an awareness of the complexity of agriculture as a multi output activity producing not only commodities (food, feed, fibers, agrofuels, medicinal products, etc.), but also non-commodity outputs such as environmental services, landscape amenities and cultural heritage.

A number of interconnected controversial questions, further highlighted below, were hence again brought to the forefront of the political, public and professional debates regarding the both direct and more complex causal links and power relations between the organising of livelihoods, land use and labour between Europe and low-income countries. This concerned particularly issues spurred by broader processes of globalisation, commoditisation, monetisation and high mobility of capital, which have over recent years accelerated the impact of European policies on the prospects for low-income countries in Africa, Asia and Latin America to implement sustainable and economically viable agricultural development strategies.

4.4.1 The development aid and traditional agriculture communities

In this historical context, two groups of professionals manifested themselves most strongly during the inception of the multi-stakeholder network, namely what we here term the development aid (*dev-aid*) community and the traditional agricultural (*trad-ag*) community. As in other such 'communities of praxis' (Wenger, 1998), the professionals who interacted all belonged to a number of communities, being core members of some and peripheral members of others. As mentioned earlier, the notion of praxis community is here applied in the sense of a basic premise of social life, where members are united by a relatively common purpose and a set of shared practices (see also Lindstead, 2006). As the encounter between these two communities was played out with a renewed political and public awareness and interest, it also opened up negotiations with a large set of what came to be generally understood as 'non-traditional' actors in the nexus between agriculture and development.

The manifestation of the communities was shaped by the fact that the framing of agricultural development seized significance in determining institutional legitimacy and who can access public funding. While there was uncertainty how the network would support policy making, the launch of SIANI as a multi-stakeholder platform was by many participants hoped to be an invitation by the Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency (Sida) and possibly other authorities/ministries to offer a channel for involvement in the priority setting in relation to budgeting and resource allocation in future agricultural development projects and institutional support. It further became evident that many people invested hopes that the network could be used to counter a perceived trend where, as one consultant stated

> funding is increasingly allocated to foreign consultants and international organisations from Swedish government institutions, particularly Sida, rather than Swedish-based organisations.

Naturally, expectations such as these shaped how the participants in the process constructed their stakes and engaged in the discussion preceding the launch of the network. The *dev-aid* community here emerged as those most centrally involved in guiding and owning the framing of the policies and public budgets within the formal development aid sector.

In contrast, the *trad-ag* community was delineated chiefly through their central objective to recover the prominence of a more production oriented mode of agriculture, which existed prior to what was seen by an agricultural scientist as 'the intrusion of environmental and livelihoods perspectives into development programmes' during the 1990s. In concert with many others, another researcher stated that

> while agriculture previously played a central function in Swedish development cooperation, now more focus is placed on democratisation, human rights and strengthening of institutions at the expense of production and economy of scale.

Many *trad-ag* professionals were thus frustrated by the way in which 'agricultural' projects had been diverted into the field such as 'environment', arguing that this prioritised conservation at the expense of production. In trying to transmit their views to a new generation of professionals they used arguments such as 'there is an absence of opinion and awareness about agricultural problems among Swedish government institutions'. In turn, this was linked to a claim that such a 'knowledge problem' must be alleviated with 'proper' agricultural knowledge from their respective institutions. Non-traditional actors were here categorised as working with more 'abstract levels of engagement' (e.g. human rights, gender, etc.), which are not directly relevant to agriculture.

4.4.2 Distrust and competition

Both the *trad-ag* and *dev-aid* communities propagated what was commonly termed 'concrete change on the ground' as an ultimate measure of progress, which was for many driven by a deep-felt disillusionment with lack of concrete improvement for agricultural development in low-income countries over recent decades. Yet, practitioners who work with empirical evidence from case-based and local change processes in third-country agriculture find that the categories and issues as expressed by the ultimate clients of development aid is not palatable for the policy processes in Sweden. For instance, one research group explained how their findings did not find any receptive grounds, despite showing that 'rural development projects funded by the Swedish government lack local ownership and do not lead to long-term benefits'. Further, while having solid contacts in governments in low-income countries, many Swedish professionals shared that they do not have networks within Swedish public ministries or agencies. They also felt that short planning horizons in public hearing of government decisions (the *remiss* system) exacerbate exclusion of their insights and lessons.

In fact, many non-state actors expressed a widespread lack of trust in public policy processes, which were seen to be detached from concrete change. It became evident that research, NGO and private sector members of both communities feared exclusion from what was perceived as rather closed decision making processes in the public sector. In addition, the reforming of the bureaucracies and mandates of Swedish authorities under EU legislation was frequently seen to introduce a new kind of ambiguity, which for many members of these communities contributed to a sense of limited space to manoeuvre and associated disempowerment. Civil society organisations expressed problems regarding 'pretence of consensus in meetings', where certain views are excluded from discussions to enable a common agreement within the frames of the discussion as set by the organisers. Further, it was widely recognised that some individuals can have a disproportionate impact in decision making, if they have a pre-existing solid entry point to the government. As one university institute shared, this impact of the well-connected individual is 'much greater than if even our whole organisation would engage in debate with a public ministry or authority, mobilising all our research knowledge'. Criticism was thus also directed at how individuals in the public bureaucracy can exert disproportionately great influence on decisions based on executive, personal judgements. This included criticism of 'favouritism of certain organisations who share the views of donors', or that funding institutions 'have made their mind up already before releasing tenders'. This perception provoked a rush from many non-state actors to propagate their specific agenda in meetings with competing communities, counteracting opportunities for constructive dialogue and learning.

4.4.3 Regulatory practices

The disabling conditions sketched out above, led both the *dev-aid* and *trad-ag* communities to employ a number of exclusionary and regulatory practices, which serve to maintain the view of reality as preferred by the respective community and defend its interest. These practices have a regulatory function towards other communities, through fending off intrusion, and themselves seeking to invade the symbolic grounds occupied by other communities, breaking down their social boundaries (Lamont & Molnár, 2002). An institutional and social environment characterised by high levels of competition and genealogies of personal conflicts paved the way for the prioritisation of what Blowfield and Dolan (2008) term 'reputational capital' and a defending of exclusive relationships.

Strategic alliances had emerged as means to enable practitioners to access policy makers and propagate their agendas. It was explained how 'many relationships depend on friendships formed between individuals rooted in shared biographies of education and employment'. These relationships are not inclusive to newcomers or non-members from other communities, but are alliances, which play a role in linking Swedish communities of praxis with international champions of the same community of shared perspectives and interests. These champions can be recipients of Swedish government aid, renowned international research agencies or the UN programme, or local partner organisations in third countries. In the latter case, legitimacy arose from evoking representative authority of stakeholders in developing countries, for instance in the struggle over the definitions of how risks associated with food safety, GMO and biotechnology in general are balanced between high- and low-income countries. Many claims were as such based on what are 'the needs of the poor farmers in Africa', who were objectified to serve as a discursive instrument to legitimise the interests of those who posited the claims. In addition, strategic relationships abroad were often built in regions with a long term development presence, for example in South East Asia, and have led to effective access to policy processes in these countries. The recent shift in country priorities for Swedish aid thus affected institutional legitimacy, when relationships loose the original significance within the development cooperation sector.

A predominant practice of professionals was to enforce a distinction between knowers and non-knowers, in which a set of issues and competencies were claimed to fall outside what is 'really agricultural or development aid' (for further conceptualisation of this practice see Berger & Luckmann, 1966). This was particularly frequent when people stepped out of their roles as sectoral experts to contribute to inter-sectoral collaboration. For instance, one water management professional described how experiences of being labelled as ignorant 'have made me cautious of traversing into "agricultural territory" as I risk losing credibility even in my own domain of expertise'. Similar experiences were shared by people from the environmental sector when taking the initiative to contribute to development cooperation discourse.

This practice in particular disqualified informal collaboration with public authorities who are outside the development cooperation sector and not mandated to engage in 'agriculture and development' or poverty alleviation activities *per se*. It rendered incompetent the many Swedish organisations, which over the years have transformed from conducting relief work to long-term aid provision, and later to rights-based interventions, including the reforming of political structures and higher-level social inequalities both in donor and recipient countries. It also contributed to the reification of 'sectoralisation' as a permanent phenomenon rooted in the demarcation of responsibilities of ministries – which then can be used as a legitimate excuse for a lack of action within the policy coherence framework. Other studies similarly show that Swedish stakeholders are facing problems in creating relationships, which transcend bureaucratic and institutional constraints (Ministry for Foreign Affairs Sweden, 2007).

Both of the dominant communities were aligned in their claims that there is, as repeatedly expressed, a 'lack of competence in Sweden and an absence of a significant human resource base'. The *trad-ag* community drew on this claim to enable traditional actors in seizing authority to claim absolute knowledge while disqualifying non-traditional actors, who were portrayed as 'deliberately trying to ignore agricultural questions' when directing attention to, for instance, human rights concerns linked to food security. The *trad-ag* members also employed a narrative based on a notion of, as stated by one scientist, 'the decline in funding of agricultural development programmes' to justify claims regarding lacking competence in Sweden – outside the *trad-ag* community. This shows how legitimacy comes to depend on the constructed biographies of specific communities and their members, including, for instance, the length of institutional or personal involvement in agricultural projects.

To accomplish this objective many *trad-ag* members in research institutes as well as the public sector sought to defend their community against what was claimed to be 'unscientific environmentalism', for instance regarding organic agriculture. Non-members were criticised by the *trad-ag* community for lacking, as exclaimed by one agricultural researcher, 'substantial understanding of intelligible facts'. NGO representatives were by scientists seen as having vested interests, and knowledge production was conceptualised as the sole sphere of a norm-free science, while private companies and NGOs are merely practitioners, not knowledge generators. This shows how science is evoked as a symbolic universe to legitimate the claims and behaviour of institutions and professionals. Indeed, the clash between whole universes of meaning was a contributing factor to the high levels of controversy on agricultural issues, particularly in clashes between researchers and NGOs (Berger & Luckmann, 1966).

Other ways existed in which *trad-ag* members reified their practices through national historical narratives. One dominant narrative promoted in the *trad-ag* community was based on the view that 'agriculture was an engine for development in Sweden for the generation of surplus for investment and development'. Through reifications like these, domestic Swedish experiences are extrapolated to the interpretation of what constitutes relevant interventions in low-income countries. This is justified by an obligation of the *trad-ag* members to, as stated by one consultant, 'remind new generations of Swedish professionals of these facts'.

4.4.4 Non-traditional actors in the development-agriculture nexus

When facing these regulatory practices, the so-called non-traditional actors sought to insert their own worldviews into the interaction to enable 'foreign' evaluations of the *trad-ag* and *dev-aid* perspectives. Due to the current incoherence between sectors and communities, comparative scrutiny from other paradigms can expose logical fallacies within both the *trad-ag* or *dev-aid* communities, when their arguments conflict with other sectoral goals and norms. This led to attempts at instituting preferred sense making perspectives such as vulnerability, rural development, technology transfer, etc. through a voicing of totalitarian claims that only one perspective is 'proper', at the expense of possibilities for their coexistence. When communication broke down, people's experiences with different types of agricultural systems contributed to imposing presuppositions on what constitutes 'reality' in agricultural development, which in turn acted as an obstacle to systemic and multifunctional approaches as advocated by the coherence agenda. The creation of dichotomies and maintaining of images of polarised models of agricultural development contribute to locking existing institutional relationships (e.g. between 'organic' and 'conventional' agriculture). Some stakeholders sought to associate certain community perspectives (e.g. 'pro-organic agriculture') with another, less favourable, practice, to discredit the prior (e.g. the support of a 'niche market for urban elites'). In addition, the dichotomisation between either/or positions on contested questions such as the efficacy of biofuel production excluded the appreciation of contextual factors such as the different types of resource conflicts, land use, land tenure, land rights, food production and energy production, differences between developing countries, and the taking into account of the nature of national and international institutional arrangements.

Over and above this, the *dev-aid* community was finding it hard to navigate its relationship with the private sector actors. Despite the promotion of partner driven cooperation, many *dev-aid* members, particularly within Sida, were seen to resist engaging in open debates on seemingly disparate approaches to development, for instance the considering of how rights-based approaches towards human security or gender equality may be reconciled with the use of market-based instruments. Companies here employed the generally accepted truth that 'access to viable markets and trade is crucial for agricultural development, and the lack of such markets is the most critical problem for farmers in many developing countries' (statement from business spokesperson). This enabled private companies to legitimise themselves through their support to rural entrepreneurial initiatives abroad and their investments, which were featured as combining business with development work, through collaboration with rural organisations and NGOs. New actors from environmental and human rights backgrounds here entered the scene to insert their perspectives on, for instance, ‘dumping of pesticides and low-quality food products from the EU in low-income countries’ and what is seen, as stated by one NGO director, to be ‘labour rights abuse by Swedish corporations’. Meanwhile, the Swedish *dev-aid* community found itself constrained by the prohibition of ‘tied’ aid to domestic private sector actors such as consultants, and were criticised for taking this obligation much more seriously than other European governments. These questions were part of the constraints to exploring mutually convincing incentive systems for public-private partnerships, such as time-limited exclusiveness and preferential terms, and different models of exercising intellectual property rights.

Not unexpectedly, we who sought to facilitate an improved dialogue across these communities could not stand outside the debate and found ourselves in the midst of the employed practices. As the invitation of non-traditional actors into the multi-stakeholder platform was seen to challenge the authority of both of the dominant communities, the SIANI initiative and the commissioned institution was challenged throughout the process. Some did this through the national media, contesting the impartiality of the host of the network and its underlying assumptions. It was emphasised that the network initiative was obsolete and support should rather be given to existing agricultural institutions (see critique of Fagerström & Gerremo, 2009; and Sida’s response in Norström & Albihn, 2009).

4.5 Discussion: Transcending the conditions of fragmentation?

The findings above illustrate how the *trad-ag*, *dev-aid*, and non-traditional communities employ practices, which contribute to the closing of boundaries between their communities of praxis. These annihilating practices are associated with the negotiation of institutional legitimacy and with a sometimes considerable resentment between professionals (in authorities, research agencies, NGOs, companies) due to decades of competition for resources and access to decision making channels. However, many communities do not coincide with formal institutional boundaries, and in fact, while some may be visible to members and non-members, many practices are unrecognised and/or not consciously reflected upon. People may thus not realise their varying community memberships, nor their participation in the shared practices, which serve to include or exclude others.

These experiences give evidence that who can contribute to the negotiation of policies with bearing on global sustainable agricultural development depends on large part on being recognised as legitimate and competent in the eyes of others (see also Mead in Strauss, 1977). Such endowment with credibility emerges from the sharing of sources of meaning, i.e. a common worldview, which provides a stabilising factor for individuals. It illustrates that the often subtle and concealed battle for instituting and legitimising of what counts as objective reality, is a powerful realm for social control and intervention in the governing of global agriculture.

Frustrations with the lack of progress in sustainable agricultural development expressed by Swedish professionals can thus, at least partly, be explained as an outcome of a collapse of a collective understanding of reality and an unmediated multiplicity of fundamentally divergent definitions of the issue food security (Mannheim, 1936). In fact, Mannheim suggested already in 1936 that in so far as the world does become a problem it does not do so as an object isolated from the subject but rather as it impinges upon the fabric of the subject's experiences (Mannheim, 1936, p. 6).

While the commitment to self-scrutiny espoused in the PGD might be shared as an honest ambition for many Swedish stakeholders, it is undermined by a struggle for self-actualisation and maintenance of self-identity of existing communities of practice. This represents a tangible manifestation of what Giddens (1991) has termed the 'enactment of life-politics in the unsettling conditions of high modernity', in which Swedish stakeholders arguably are positioned.

In its first overall evaluation of the PGD, the Swedish Government proposes for 2011–2012 (beyond some minor revisions in the programme areas) to work for inclusion of more public agencies in the mainstreaming of the policy, a clarification of the implementing procedures, and improved working group mechanisms for learning from perspectives and experiences of Swedish actors (Government of Sweden, 2010). These steps clearly form a response to messages from professionals as discussed above. Yet, there is a significant risk that such formal procedural initiatives will not address the underlying conditions, which cause the current fragmentation between sectors and stakeholders.

There is a strong argument for supporting a more transparent and joint critique of present practices and the construction of shared scenarios to avoid reifying inequalities and transcend the existing social order towards sustainable development (Hoy & McCarthy, 1994). However, the findings also suggest that it is doubtful if policy coherence can ever be achieved through a national level policy process, which is disentangled from concrete projects and actions. Also elsewhere in the EU it has been documented that fostering of coherent responses is easier in localities, and rivalry and competition for resources occur especially at national level (e.g. Lucas, 2000). There are grounds to argue that while possibly a noble intent, Swedish professionals are currently unable to serve as the proclaimed stewards of virtue, implementing their (or Europe's) version of Kantian universal ethics (Blowfield & Dolan, 2008). This supports concerns that the social and political movements for fair trade and coherence, do not just serve to revise the equity in relationships between the EU and low-income countries, but also to legitimise the neo-liberal capitalist agenda and the established global order, which it is itself criticising (see also Igoe et al., 2010).

Through neo-Gramscian approaches attention has recently been drawn to the subtle dimensions of social control, or 'agro hegemony', involved in shaping relations between stakeholders through material, institutional and discursive means (Gómez & Torres, 2001; Newell, 2009; Winders, 2009). Contrary to the exploration of overt expressions of power, this directs attention to the power associated with the 'maintenance of particular framings of an issue, ensuring that some issues remain "non-issues"' (Newell, 2009, pp. 38–39). When turning to investigations of agro hegemony, this specifically raises challenges associated with the temporal and spatial separation of the dominant and subordinate groups, i.e. the relative isolation of coalition of forces, which benefit from a hegemonic situation from the potential ultimate victims of it. In other words, how governance address the subtle dynamics of power, which serve to sustain particular worldviews in policies and practice.

In this examination of the current practices of Swedish stakeholders and their interventions in the issue of food security, we have shared an action learning as well as analytical approach, which combines assumptions in the nexus between traditions of symbolic interactionism, social boundary theory, phenomenology and ethno-methodology. We believe that this offers an alternative, more dialogically inspired, theoretical approach to wholesale post-Marxist and neo-Gramscian deconstructions of problematics of agro hegemony in global processes of commodification and trans-national corporatism. We contend that such an approach is relevant in finding a pragmatic middle way in the present frequent dichotomy between neo-Marxist critique of the continuation of the modern Enlightenment project and the resistant dominating neo-capitalist global world order.

4.6 Conclusions

The European ambition of policy coherence for food security is generally conceptualised within a procedural, structural and rationalist approach to policy processes, which ignores lessons from agency-based collective action theory and the reality of the present multi-stakeholder society. Coherence is, however, fundamentally premised on the conditions in the national stakeholder societies within EU member states. Sweden, as illustrated in this case study of the PGD and the launch of the SIANI as a multi-stakeholder platform, is characterised by a disabling and fragmented environment for stakeholders to coherently address sustainable development and global food security and respond to the complexity and context specific needs of affected people in low-income countries. The national struggle over legitimacy, self-actualisation and access to financial resources is to the detriment of the ability to meet international obligations. Current informal practices undermine the value of formal procedural routines and prevent a negotiation and collective critique of issues such as global food security and sustainable agricultural development, which is ethically acceptable from the perspective of global citizenship. Enabling a broader acceptance among stakeholders in Sweden to adopt the principles of PGD requires a shift from viewing Sida as the main contributor to sustainable development internationally to a broader awareness of joint responsibility for a constructive dialogue. This will, however, depend on a more strategically facilitated dialogue, which is jointly owned by all sectors in society, to improve communicative practices, share perspectives more constructively and deconstructing boundaries, which are no longer relevant

4.7 Acknowledgements

This paper examines lessons from the inception of the Swedish International Agricultural Network Initiative, which was coordinated by the authors. The inception of the network was funded by Sida. The authors wish to thank other SEI colleagues who were involved in launching the SIANI network: Maria Osbeck, Ivar Virgin, Johan Rockström, Katarina Eckerberg, and Atakilte Beyene. All contributions from the participating people and organisations in the work presented are gratefully acknowledged in the underlying documentation referred to in this paper. A previous version of this paper was presented as a keynote at the International European Summer University, Poiters, France, 2009.

4.8 References

Auer, M. R. (2000). Who participates in global environmental governance? Partial answers from international relations theory. *Policy Sciences, 33*, 155–180.

Berger, P., & Luckmann, T. (1966). *The Social Construction of Reality: A Treatise in the Sociology of Knowledge.* Harmondsworth, UK: Penguin.

Blowfield, M. E., & Dolan, C. S. (2008). Stewards of Virtue? The Ethical Dilemma of CSR in African Agriculture. *Development and Change, 39* (1), 1–23.

Browne, A. W., Harris, P. J. C., Hofny-Collins, A. H., Pasiecznik, N., & Wallace, R. R. (2000). Organic production and ethical trade: definition, practice and links. *Food Policy, 25*, 69–89.

Checkland, P. (1999). *Systems Thinking, Systems Practice.* New York: Wiley.

Dibden, J., Potter, C., & Cocklin, C. (2009). Contesting the neoliberal project for agriculture: Productivist and multifunctional trajectories in the European Union and Australia. *Journal of Rural Studies, 25* (3), 299–308.
Dobson, J. (1993). TNCs and the Corruption of GATT: Free Trade Versus Fair Trade. *Journal of Business Ethics, 12*, 573–578.
EC (Commission of the European Communities). (2004). Integrating environmental considerations into other policy areas: A stocktaking of the Cardiff Process. COM(2004) 394 final. Brussels: European Commission.
EC (Commission of the European Communities). (2007). EU Report on Policy Coherence for Development. COM(2007) 545 final. Brussels: European Commission.
EC (Commission of the European Communities). (2008). The EU: A global partner for development – Speeding up progress towards the Millennium Development Goals. COM(2008) 177 final. Brussels: European Commission.
Fagerström, T., & Gerremo, I. (2009). Hög flumfaktor bakom Sidas nya jordbruksbistånd (High degree of fluffiness in Sida's new mode of agricultural aid). Dagens Nyheter. 16 July 2009. Retrieved from http://www.dn.se/debatt/hog-flumfaktor-bakom-sidas-nya-jordbruksbistand
Fox, S. (2006). Inquiries of every imaginable kind: Ethnomethodology, practical action and the new socially situated learning theory. *The Sociological Review, 54* (3), 426–445.
Giddens, A. (1991). *Modernity and self-identity. Self and society in the late modern age.* Cambridge: Polity Press.
Gómez, F. M., & Torres, R. (2001). Hegemony, commodification, and the state: Mexico's shifting discourse on agricultural germplasm. *Agriculture and Human Values, 18*, 285–294.
Government of Sweden. (2002). Gov. Bill 2002/03:122. *Report 2003/04:UU3*. Stockholm: Government of Sweden.
Government of Sweden. (2003). Svara på remiss – hur och varför. Om remisser av betänkanden från Regeringskansliet (Answering on hearings – how and why. Regarding hearing on propositions from the Government Office of Sweden. *SB PM 2003:2*. Stockholm: Government Office of Sweden.
Government of Sweden. (2004). Sweden's Global Development Policy. *Government Communication 2004/05:4*. Stockholm: Government of Sweden.
Government of Sweden. (2010). Meeting Global Challenges. Communication on policy coherence for development 2010. *Government Communication 2009/10:129*. Stockholm: Government of Sweden.
Hajer, M. (2003). Policy without polity? Policy analysis and the institutional void. *Policy Sciences, 36*, 175–195.
Harsh, M. (2005). Formal and informal governance of agricultural biotechnology in Kenya: Participation and accountability in controversy surrounding the draft biosafety bill. *Journal of International Development, 17*, 661–677.
Hira, A., & Ferrie, J. (2006). Fair Trade: Three Key Challenges for Reaching the Mainstream. *Journal of Business Ethics, 63*, 107–118.
Hoy, D. C., & McCarthy, T. (1994). *Critical Theory*. Oxford: Blackwell.
IAASTD (International Assessment of Agricultural Knowledge, Science and Technology for Development). (2008). *Agriculture at a Crossroads: Executive Summary of the Synthesis Report*. Washington DC: IAASTD.
Igoe, J., Neves, K., & Brockington, D. (2010). A Spectacular Eco-Tour around the Historic Bloc: Theorising the Convergence of Biodiversity Conservation and Capitalist Expansion. *Antipode, 42* (3), 486–512.
Ison, R., Röling, N. G., & Watson, D. (2007). Challenges to science and society in the sustainable management and use of water: investigating the role of social learning. *Environmental Science and Policy, 10*, 499–511.
Ison, R., & Watson, D. (2007). Illuminating the possibilities for social learning in the management of Scotland's water. *Ecology and Society, 12* (1), 21.

Lamont, M., & Molnár, V. (2002). The study of boundaries in the social sciences. *Annual Review of Sociology, 28*, 167–95.
Larsen, R. K., Osbeck, M., King, C., Powell, N., & Virgin, I. (2009). *Inception Report – Swedish International Agricultural Network Initiative (SIANI)*. SEI Project Report. Stockholm: Stockholm Environment Institute.
Leeuwis, C. (2000). Reconceptualizing Participation for Sustainable Rural Development: Towards a Negotiation Approach. *Development and Change, 31*, 931–959.
Leeuwis, C., & van den Ban, A. (2004). *Communication for Rural Innovation: Rethinking Agricultural Extension.* (3rd ed.). Oxford: Wiley-Blackwell.
Lindstead, S. (2006). Ethnomethodology and sociology: An introduction. *The Sociological Review, 54* (3), 399–404.
Lucas, K. (2000). *Two for One and One for All? Exploring the potential for integrating the sustainable development and social exclusion policy agendas in the UK*. London: Centre for Sustainable Development, University of Westminster.
Mannheim, K. (1936). *Ideology and Utopia*. New York: Harvest Books.
Ministry for Foreign Affairs, Sweden. (2007). *Strategy for Multilateral Development Cooperation, 30 March 2007*. Stockholm: Ministry for Foreign Affairs.
Newell, P. (2009). Bio-Hegemony: The Political Economy of Agricultural Biotechnology in Argentina. *Journal of Latin American Studies, 41*, 27–57.
Nilsson, M. (2006). The role of assessments and institutions for policy learning: A study on Swedish climate and nuclear policy formation. *Policy Sciences, 38*, 225–249.
Nilsson, M., Zamparutti, T., Nykvist, B., Haq, G., McQuinn, J., Eales, R., & Rudberg, P. (2010). *Analysing Policy Coherence conceptual approach and case studies. Technical Report to the European Environment Agency.* Unpublished report.
Norström, A., & Albihn, M. (2009). Inriktningen på jordbruksbistandet ligger fast (Direction in agricultural aid is firm). *Dagens Nyheter*. 17 July 2009. Retrieved from http://www.dn.se/debatt/inriktningen-pa-jordbruksbistandet-ligger-fast?rm=print
OECD (Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development). (2005). *DAC (Development Assistance Committee) Peer Review: Sweden*. Paris: OECD. Retrieved from http://www.oecd.org/dataoecd/14/43/35268515.pdf
OECD (Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development). (2008). *Synthesis Report on Policy Coherence for Development, COM/SG/DCD(2008)1/REV1*. Paris: OECD.
Papaioannou, T., Yanacopulos, H., & Aksoy, Z. (2009). Global Justice: From theory to development action. *Journal of International Development, 21*, 805–818.
Powell, N., Hoang, M.-H., & Gerger Swartling, Å. (Eds.). (In press). *Shaping Policy Processes with Stakeholder Agendas: The Case of Rural Development in Vietnam*. Bogor, Indonesia: International Center for Forestry Research (ICRAF or CIFOR).
Punjabi, M. (2007). *Emerging Environment for Agribusiness and Agro-industry Development in India: Key Issues in the Way Forward*. New Delhi: Food and Agricultural Organization of the United Nations.
Rao, J. M. (2009). Challenges Facing World Agriculture: A Political Economy Perspective. *Development and Change, 40* (6), 1279–1292.
Reynolds, L. (2000). Re-embedding global agriculture: The international organic and fair trade movements. *Agriculture and Human Values, 17*, 297–309.
SIANI (Swedish International Agricultural Network Initiative) Secretariat. (2009). *Synthesis of feedback on the Inception Report*. Stockholm: SIANI.
Sida, & Stockholm Environment Institute (SEI). (2008). The establishment of the Swedish International Agricultural Network Initiative (SIANI). Proposal, August 2008.
Steurer, R., Berger, G., & Hametner, M. (2010). The vertical integration of Lisbon and sustainable development strategies across the EU: How different governance architectures shape the European coherence of policy documents. *Natural Resources Forum, 34*, 71–84.
Strauss, A. (Ed.). (1977). *George Herbert Mead on Social Psychology.* Chicago: University Press.

Thevenot, L. (2001). Pragmatic regimes governing the engagement with the world. In K. Knorr-Cetina, T. Schatzki, & V. Savigny Eike (Eds.), *The Practice Turn in Contemporary Theory* (pp. 56–73). London: Routledge.
UN (United Nations). (2006). *Delivering as one. Report of the High-level Panel on United Nations System-wide Coherence in the areas of development, humanitarian assistance and the environment', A/61/583*. New York: UN General Assembly.
UNCTAD (United Nations Conference on Trade and Development). (2009). *World Investment Report 2009 – Transnational Corporations, Agricultural Production and Development*. New York: United Nations. Retrieved from http://www.unctad.org/en/docs/wir2009_en.pdf
Weis, T. (2007). *The Global Food Economy. The Battle for the Future of Farming*. London: Zed Books.
Wenger, E. (1998). *Communities of Practice. Learning, Meaning, and Identity*. Cambridge: University Press.
Winders, B. (2009). The Vanishing Free Market: The Formation and Spread of the British and US Food Regimes. *Journal of Agrarian Change, 9* (3), 315–344.
Wood, B., Kabell, D., Sagasti, F., & Muwanga, N. (2008). *Evaluation of the Implementation of the Paris Declaration Phase 1, Synthesis Report*. Copenhagen: Ministry of Foreign Affairs.
World Bank. (2007). *The World Development Report 2008: Agriculture for Development*. Washington DC: The World Bank.
Zook, D. C. (2006). Decolonizing Law: Identity Politics, Human Rights, and the United Nations. *Harvard Human Rights Journal, 19*, 95–122.

5

Reinventing rural development in Vietnam: Discursive constructions of grassroots democracy during the renovation reform[14]

[14] This chapter will be published in the journal *Asia Pacific Viewpoint* 52 (3) 2011 as: Larsen, R. K., Reinventing rural development in Vietnam: Discursive constructions of grassroots democracy during the renovation reform.

The underlying field work was carried out whilst the author was affiliated with the Unit for Environmental Communication, Department of Urban and Rural Development, Swedish University of Agricultural Sciences, Uppsala, Sweden.

5.1 Abstract

Over the past decades Vietnam has seen striking efforts to reinvent the exercise of democratic rural development. Promotion of grassroots democracy, notably under the Grassroots Democracy Decree (GDD), has been an acute response by Communist Party and government to large scale unrest among the rural populace owing to dissatisfactions with a felt mismatch between espoused commitments to 'good governance' and its actual practice. Through evidence from field work, this paper assesses the implications of the GDD in the central and northern highlands, analysing how the promotion of grassroots democracy is discursively constructed by rural development professionals. The results outline three dominant discourses, which center on their respective interests in liberalist democratisation, improved efficiency in state renovation, and enhanced accountability in governing local policy ambiguities. It argues that 'grassroots democracy' is serving as a conceptual mediator, supporting learning between diverging interests associated with rural development and different ideological positions shrouding the notion of democracy itself. Yet, given the extent that discourses are reflective of how professionals relate to grassroots aspirations, grassroots movements, which originally ushered the Party and central government to pass the GDD, have a significant struggle ahead of them to affect concrete changes in professionals' practices.

5.2 Introduction

Over the past two and a half decade Vietnam has seen one of the most striking efforts to reinvent the exercise of democratic rural development. The Renovation Reform, *Doi Moi*, was formally promulgated in 1986 at the 6th National Party Committee Congress, and the country has since been embarking on a path towards increasing market economy. The reform process and its transition to market-based socialism has led to a relinquishing of polity and growth of space for more clearly defined non-state actors to engage in policy adaptation – that is, the decisions and actions involved in the implementation of political goals and, in some instances, even involvement in the formulation of policy through consultations and participation in the National Assembly. Within rural development, the promotion of grassroots democracy, notably under the Grassroots Democracy Decree (GDD), represents one of the most immediate manifestations of the Communist Party's and Vietnamese government's intensions regarding the renovation of the exercise of democratic governance.

Recent research on local governance change in Vietnam recurrently highlights different variants of the same question, namely whether observed political changes, signify actual changes in practice or merely represent symbolic efforts to appease demands from ‘below’ or outside the Party (e.g. Fforde, 2011; Wischermann, 2011). The promotion of grassroots democracy specifically under the GDD is a relatively young process and there are a limited number of scholarly and ‘grey literature’ reports available on the experiences to date, focusing chiefly on the responses from local government. This paper sets out to examine the impacts of the GDD amongst the wider community of rural development professionals, not only in government offices but also in non-government organisations (NGOs), development agencies, and research institutes. This assessment of the practical implications of the GDD is pursued through an analysis of how the promotion of grassroots democracy is discursively constructed by those who are key players in its implementation.

5.2.1 Reinventing democratic spaces under political reform

The opening to liberalisation in Vietnam under *Doi Moi* was from the outset accompanied by an extensive process of decentralisation and increased fiscal autonomy, with associated changes in the relationships between center and periphery. For rural agricultural policies this was in particular characterised by decentralisation of administrative responsibilities to the provincial level of government (McCann, 2005; World Bank, 2005). These new administrative conditions were central in enabling the agricultural sector to play a crucial role for economic growth in the first years of *Doi Moi*. As a case in point, analyses of the national Living Standards Surveys conducted in 1993 and 1997 concluded that the rising incomes in the agricultural sector accounted for close to 60 per cent of the progress in poverty reduction that occurred at that time (Haughton et al., 2001).

Like China, Vietnam has by many outside observers been seen to perform a novel political experiment in the balancing of policy instruments in its decentralised public policies, including regulation and coercion, market-based incentives and new forms of deliberation (Turley & Selden, 1993; Morley, 1997). This has seen the establishment of a new set of actors, which play a mediating role in the spaces within the tripartite governance system of the Communist Party (championing the central ideology), the National Assembly (legislative body), and the government (executing body) (Powell et al., 2011a). These actors are variably defined as ‘civil society’, ‘third sector’, ‘civic organisations’, and NGOs (e.g. Kerkvliet, 2004; Le & Khuat, 2008; Powell et al., 2011b). The protrusion of these organisations is representative of a broader diversification of social, political and economic practices under *Doi Moi* (Wischermann & Nguyen, 2003).

Until 1992 such organisations were not formally recognised in Vietnam and the Mass Organisations offered the only legalised form of organisation outside the core state apparatus (Gray, 2003). Mass Organisations were founded in the early years of the Indochinese Communist Party to include all sectors in the anti-colonial struggle. Subsequently, they became organised under the Vietnam Fatherland Front, led by the Communist party and constituting the political base of the people's administration (National Assembly, 1999; UNDP, 2006). For many years, Mass Organisations have been the formal entry point to the political realm for farmers and the modes of organisation for collective action in rural development. During *Doi Moi*, their role has been changing. For instance, Kaime-Atterhog and Tran (2000) describe how the Women's Union was established in 1930 to mobilise women for war activity but now focuses increasingly on promoting equality in legal rights and recognition of gendered interests at the grassroots level. In 2006, 74 percent of Vietnamese citizens were members of at least one of the Mass Organisations and on average each person was member of 2.3 organisations (Norlund, 2006).

5.2.2 Promotion of grassroots democracy

The first decree on grassroots democracy was issued in 1998 by the government (in contrast to laws, which are passed in the National Assembly) after initial piloting in selected communes (Zingerli, 2004). In its current form the GDD has since 2002 called for the stringent use of new decision making procedures at commune and village levels. It is argued to have put in place
the first legal framework required to expand direct citizen participation in local government to effectuate the popular slogan that 'the people know, the people discuss, the people do and the people monitor' (UNDP, 2006, p. iv).

In this view, the GDD stipulated, for the first time, which decisions of local government citizens must be informed of, which require consultation, and which require people's direct supervision and inspection. Commune People's Councils and Committees (the legislative and executing arms, respectively) are directly responsible for implementing the decree without further order from higher levels of government. Villagers are encouraged to set up relevant forms of organisation, and village conferences shall be held to decide on affairs relevant for the community. The village is also empowered to establish regulations for their internal affairs and upholding the community's customs in compliance with state regulations (Bui, 2005; Mekong Economics, 2006; Fforde, 2011).

The decree was launched as part of a larger programme of legislation, which includes improved citizen participation in the operation of state agencies and state owned enterprises (World Bank, n.d.). As such, it is only one of a set of additions to the legislative framework, which underpins direct and representational democracy in the country. The initial promulgation of the GGD also took place in conjunction with a heralded national trend towards increased public participation in rural development in general. For the first time, community consultations were seen to contribute to the formulation of the national Socio-Economic Development Plan (SEDP) 2006–2010 in 15 selected provinces (JICA, 2006), and the Comprehensive Poverty Reduction and Growth Strategy (CPRGS), now merged with the SEDP, also drew on what was presented as a novel participatory process. The CPRGS was approved by the Prime Minister in 2002 after what the government described as a highly consultative process for civil society organisations, with a Poverty Task Force acting as government-donor-NGO partnership platform (Government of Vietnam, 2002).

The promotion of grassroots democracy in the late 1990s and early 2000s took place in conjunction with amendments of the Land Law in 2003 and the Forest Protection Law in 2004, which provided further steps to support the ongoing devolution of management of rural areas such as forests and agricultural land. Amongst other, these legislative changes opened up for increased grassroots participation in community allocation of land and forest tracts within a formal legal framework (Sikor, 2000; Sikor, 2006). These initiatives partly owed to acknowledgement that despite a number of ambitious political programmes – such as Regreening the Barren Hills Programme and the Five Million Hectares Reforestation Programme – the process of decentralisation was struggling with harnessing effective grassroots responses to persistent issues of land degradation and deforestation (Nguyen, 1997; Junker, 2000). The frustrations over such policy inefficiency were significant, particularly regarding implementation of the decentralised agricultural policies in the socially diverse and often economically marginalised highlands (Jamieson et al., 1998; Le et al., 2003).

5.2.3 Response to rural resistance

Notwithstanding the importance of the recognition of policy inefficiency in rural development, previous political and historical analyses of the push for grassroots democracy have shown how the promulgation of the GDD was primarily an acute response by Party and government to large scale unrest during the 1990s among the rural populace, including demonstrations and violence against local officials. Revolts emerged in consequence of complaints over local level corruption, particularly in the Mekong Delta in 1997 and 1998 (Kerkvliet et al., 2003; Minh, 2008). In this view, the GDD thus emerged as one of the responses from the Party and the state apparatus to the recognition of the need to demonstrate decisive actions on mismatches between espoused commitments to 'good governance' and actual practice (Kerkvliet, 2004). Amongst others Fritzen describes how the Party's response to the uprising of large parts of the rural populace was 'a high-profile "rectification" campaign against corrupt officials, with emphasis on local government … Grassroots democracy was the ultimate legal expression of the campaign …' (Fritzen, 2003, p. 237). Zingerli describes how it was in order to address such violations of the 'people's mastery' such as increasing bureaucracy, democratic deficits, inequality and bribery, [that the Communist Party] and government took steps to (re)establish and strengthen democratic regimes in the localities (Zingerli, 2004, p. 54).

Part of the citizen dissatisfaction with the state and Party pertained to the way benefits from market reforms were distributed, formally and informally (Fforde, 2009). Experiences of theft and nepotism amongst officials and Party members came, for many people, on top of rising social and economic inequalities and growing poverty amongst rural upland communities.

Despite a general decline in poverty rate inequalities were accentuated by increased economic uncertainty and declining coping capacity of local institutions in the face of often uncontrolled market forces (Adger, 1999; ADB, 2002; Thoburn, 2004; Lindskog et al., 2005). As a case in point, the ratio of the top to bottom 10 percent of earners, a common indicator for economic inequality, increased from 1993 to 2002 from 8.07 to 9.42 (Fritzen et al., 2005).

Many of the reasons for the rural resistance, and in turn the GDD as one of the legal consequences of the unrest, had to do with an undermining of the connection between citizenry and Party: challenges, which partly owed to the history of nation building. Vietnam has, both during self-government and colonial rule, seen a radical and often heavy handed process of standardisation and simplication of local governance institutions, building a well controlled local government administration at the expense of other forms of organisation (Marr, 2004). In particular ethnic minority institutions have faced destruction by rural development policies such as New Economic Zones and the Fixed Cultivation and Sedentarisation Programme, which, amongst other, have led to widespread inter-provincial relocation of people (Kemf & Quy, 1999; Wessendorf, 2001). Village councils and assemblies that existed in pre-colonial and colonial times have also largely disappeared (UNDP, 2006). The village, which was the traditional unit of organisation, today does not harbor official government institutions, even though some may have Party cells and Mass Organisation branches (Kerkvliet, 2004). Further, As Fforde observes

> state policy is, in standard Vietnamese, no more than the concretisation of Party thinking. This denies state bodies opportunities to secure popular political support by the way these ideas site policy intentionality elsewhere… it leads to problems with securing stable (at least in terms of

> political presentation) links between problem, solution, and its implementation (Fforde, 2011, p. 169).

These structural constraints to local ownership of state policy is a chief reason for the many and varied obstacles facing local officials trying to attend to village or hamlet concerns and interests while adhering to directions of higher echelons (Kerkvliet, 2004).

5.2.4 Research objective: Analysing the discursive construction of grassroots democracy

The distinctiveness and rapid reform of Vietnamese local governance has attracted substantial scholarly attention and a significant body of evidence today exists regarding the structure of the political system and organisational landscape in Vietnam, (e.g. Kerkvliet et al., 2003; Kerkvliet & Marr, 2004; Nguyen, 2006; Le & Khuat, 2008; Fforde, 2011; Wischermann, 2011). Understanding of the particularities regarding Vietnamese governance of rural development has been and remains vital for countries taking on the role as donors through development cooperation, as well as for international trade partners. While the market economy has brought about increased standardisation in social organisation and alignment with the dominant international capitalist order, the reform process has also added to the general puzzlement amongst overseas observers when seeking to grasp Vietnamese socialist democratic governance, including the apparent contradictions between market liberalism and perpetuation of what appears to be opaque elitism within the Party.

In the first instance, the promotion of grassroots democracy, as represented by the GDD, manifests itself an outcome of the successful application of overt ‘weapons of the weak’ (Scott, 1985) by in particular the rural populace. The events associated with the GDD can be read as one of the expressions of rural resistance to rapid and perceived unjust agrarian change, which in these years are observed throughout South East Asia (Turner & Cauoette, 2009). However, as with other policy change it is far from evident the extent to which this decree and its stipulations lead to concrete change in the governance practices on the ground.

Zingerli (2004) has, to the author’s knowledge, provided the most explicit assessment of the implementation of the GDD showing how local officials in the northern highlands struggle with interpreting the decrees’ obligations and their new responsibilities. Problems of ‘formalism’, i.e. that the decree has led to very few real changes in the practices amongst government officials have also been highlighted elsewhere (e.g. Fritzen, 2003; Mekong Economics; 2006; Fforde, 2011; World Bank, n.d.). To wit, there are yet no evaluations of the impacts of the

GDD amongst the wider community of rural development professionals, not only in government offices but also in NGOs, development agencies, and research institutes. An understanding of the way these professionals appropriate the GDD and its ambitions is particularly interesting when – as argued by Turner and Cauoette (2009) – rural resistance under contemporary South East Asian politics forms part of increasingly multiscalar interactions between local, national and international actors.

To the extent that formal institutions only seize significance according to the manner in which they are interpreted and enacted by those who engage in rural development, it is possible to assess the practical implications of the GDD through an analysis of how the promotion of grassroots democracy is discursively constructed by those who are key players in its implementation. In so doing, this paper adopts a view on democratic rural development as a lived social practice, consisting of physical as well as discursive expressions; and where analysis of discursive practices informs us about the way grassroots democracy is enacted (Foucault, 1969).

Below, the paper presents an analysis, which departs from the recognition that in the pursuance of efficient and democratic rural development, people share and negotiate perspectives on rural agriculture, but equally their interpretations related to the exercise of democracy itself. This acknowledges that constructions of democracy are invariably under contestation (Gaventa, 2006) and form parcel of a general revisioning of what, in different stakeholders' view, constitutes credible institutions for harnessing rural development. This includes the political dimensions and differentiated interests and perceptions of resource users, who actively redefine their mandates under liberal market conditions (Miller, 2006). The analysis views the ability of the governance system to mediate between competing definitions placed on the desirability of different forms of environmental change as concrete expression of its democratic performance. It focuses on the discursive constructions of grassroots democracy under the GDD specifically in the context of agriculture, forestry and natural resource management in rural areas, and the efforts for improving livelihoods and increasing production and economic progress through rural development. The emphasis is on upland areas in central and northern Vietnam, where rural development is facing particular challenges in achieving lasting progress.

Further, the work has benefited from the new opportunities to conduct research into the relations between Communist Party, the state and its diverse publics, which have emerged in the market-oriented contemporary socialist Vietnam over the recent years (Kerkvliet, 2004; Nguyen, 2006). As such, the paper aims to make a contribution not only to an understanding regarding the substantive question of concrete implications of the GDD but equally to a debate on the methodological development of research in changing socialist contexts (e.g. Scott et al., 2005; Turner, 2010).

5.3 Methodology

The field-work underlying this paper was conducted during four months in April through July 2006 with the Vietnam-Sweden research cooperation on sustainable rural development in Vietnam (RDViet). The motivation for the study arose in connection to the expectations of the United Nations' Food and Agricultural Organisation (FAO) to implement the Sustainable Agriculture and Rural Development (SARD) Initiative in Vietnam, a global multi-stakeholder partnership launched at the World Summit for Sustainable Development (WSSD) in Johannesburg in 2002. Within the field of rural development the SARD Initiative was the partnership programme, which emerged to support specifically the implementation of Agenda 21, Chapter 14, of the same name. The SARD Initiative was launched as a re-interpretation of the initial SARD-concept of Agenda 21, partly in recognition of the general apprehension towards the lack of Agenda 21 outcomes in the late 1990s (Langeweg, 1998). This work had encountered claims that capacity-building programmes under the WSSD umbrella continued to be top-down and 'Northern-driven', and there were concerns within the UN system regarding the dominance of large international NGOs at the expense of grassroots movements (Paget-Clarke, 2002).

With a mandate from FAO, the Swedish University of Agricultural Sciences and the Stockholm Environment Institute undertook to develop an approach to implementing the SARD Initiative together with Vietnamese partners. Particular emphasis was placed on the recognition of the role of local context in shaping the applicability of agricultural practices in the rural highlands and the need for the SARD Initiative to ensure improved ownership by 'local civil society'.

Upon initiating the field-work, it became evident that the interest in civil society was generally perceived as foreign and confusing under Vietnamese conditions and participants generally advised to recast the emphasis into a concern with grassroots democracy. This was also motivated by the fact that there was great interest in this topic, connected to the recent passing of the GDD and its associated events. The study was hence framed to investigate the experiences with grassroots democracy in rural development in the central and northern highlands and prospects for further supporting rural grassroots movements, who struggle to improve their livelihoods and protect their environment.

Evidence was generated through individual consultations, focus group meetings, and participant observation with national, provincial, district and commune government officials, grassroots organisation representatives, development professionals and researchers involved with grassroots democracy initiatives in the context of rural development. Individual meetings were held with 77 people, primarily in Thua Thien Hue Province and the city of Hanoi, and three field visits to rural upland localities in the central and northern highlands. A semi-structured interview format was adopted, starting with inviting comments on the ambitions of the SARD Initiative, inquiring into past experiences with promoting grassroots democracy in rural development, and obtaining advice on how to best support grassroots organisations in adopting and upscaling good agricultural practices under current conditions (Table 5.1).

Table 5.1: Overview of contributors to the study. The categories of Local NGO (LNGO) and International NGO (INGO) are applied as this was the terminology preferred by the majority of people in the encounters. This list does not include the more than 50 people who contributed during workshops and focus groups in field visits, and informal exchanges.

Stakeholder coding	**#**	**Examples of affiliation**
Government officials at national, provincial, district, and commune levels (senior executives, department heads, people's committee representatives).	12	Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development (MARD), Ministry of Planning and Investment (MPI), Vietnam Agenda 21 Office, Provincial People's Committee.
International researchers	8	Oxford University, Copenhagen University, Institut de Recherche pour le Développement (IRD)
National researchers (lecturers, department heads, etc.)	24	HUAF, Hue University, Asian Institute of Technology, Vietnam Academy of Social Sciences
LNGO staff (directors, programme managers, field staff)	9	Nature Care, Towards Ethnic Women (TEW).
INGO staff (directors, programme managers, field staff)	9	Netherlands Development Organisation (SNV), Helvetas, NGO-VUFO Resource Center, Caritas, International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN),
International development agency staff and consultants (national and intl. employees)	10	GTZ, Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency (Sida), Mekong Economics Ltd., independent consultants
UN staff based in Vietnam	4	FAO Vietnam, UNDP Vietnam, UNEP Vietnam
Total	**77**	

Field visits were organised based on invitations from participants, who took an interest in the study and its objectives and who were already operating in different parts of Vietnam. Owing to the differences in the scope of their activities the focus during the visits was on different geographical and administrative levels. Staff from the Hue-based LNGO Nature Care provided an opportunity to experience how a provincial NGO operates in the field of community development and environmental education, focusing on their work in Phong My Commune in Thua Thien Hue Province. In Yen Bai Province, the author joined the staff of the Sida funded Chia Se Poverty Alleviation Programme in three days of field visits, meetings and workshops. The emphasis was here primarily on the efforts of the programme and the local government in Van Chan District. The third field visit was to Dak Lak Province, in conjunction with participation in a workshop in Buon Ma Thuot on communal land allocation organised by the Provincial government and international research partners.

The study was inspired by principles of action learning in its objective to elicit an understanding of the perspectives of rural development professionals on what constituted meaningful grassroots democracy and how diverging views on effective and desirable rural development were being negotiated and, perhaps eventually, reconciled. Action learning – as a branch of action research – is a scientific tradition, which aims at positioning the research efforts in the larger governance context, embedding the research interventions into existing governance mechanisms – as well as embedding stakeholder realities into the research outcomes. This includes recognition that stakeholders must be included as co-researchers, in both generating and analysis evidence, in order to position the research constructively in contested spaces of multiple actors with diverging interests and perceptions (Checkland, 1999; Powell, 2004). Action learning as facilitated in this research project was in particularly building on intersecting developments in farming systems science, systems thinking, and action research, which enable an appreciation of the diversity exhibited by agro-environments and the social processes that people engage in (e.g. Röling & Wagemakers, 1998).

Following this action learning tradition, the purpose of this paper is not to claim ‘objective validity’ of the arguments presented or one ‘proper’ view on grassroots democracy , but to share a number of perspectives, which were shared and co-constructed with/by the participants in the research process. This adopts a view on scientific rigour as dependent on the degree of social validation of the work and its results (e.g. Whitehead & McNiff, 2006). Different action learning projects may be critiqued according to the extent to which research participants obtain control over research design and the learning process, including the extent to which different actors are able to influence the interpretation of the evidence. It is acknowledged that the present study was constrained by its origin and purpose, and the findings must be judged with reference to who have had influence in the research process.

The original problem definition for the study was posed by FAO and subsequently interpreted during this study. The interest in civil society mobilisation was recast to a focus on grassroots democracy in collaboration with conversations with the first participants in the study. The research process was designed in dialogue with Vietnamese colleagues within the RDViet programme, and the author was assisted by colleagues from Hue University of Agriculture and Forestry (HUAF) with setting up meetings and interpreting the evidence in informal conversations after meetings. In the meetings, advice was received on further contacts and literature sources to substantiate claims. Questions were also designed to cross-check information and preliminary conclusion from previous meetings – thus giving people a chance to provide complementary interpretations of insights. The field visits were designed and undertaken together with interested partners (Nature Care, Sida staff, and government officials) who thus had an ability to influence the study through site selection, organising of meetings, and contributions to the interpretation of findings. In the synthesis of evidence, earlier versions of this paper have been reviewed by Swedish and Vietnamese researchers and NGO professionals connected to the RDViet programme and revisions undertaken in response to their comments. Key findings have also been shared and critiqued at the Vietnamese-Swedish partnership conference held in Hanoi in 2008 celebrating 30 years of development cooperation between the two countries.

As is evident in Table 5.1 above, the participants in the study are generally rural development 'professionals', i.e. people who have a professional competence and interest in the questions posed. As such, this paper does not pretend to convey perspectives of grassroots, but rather perspectives *on* grassroots democracy – as perceived by those who are charged to implement and operationalise the GDD ambitions in practice. Further, clearly, the three field localities differ significantly in bio-physical, cultural, economic and political circumstances, which to some extent will be brushed over in the results and analysis sections below. This is an acknowledged limitation of the study; however it is also symptomatic of the fragility of the national and international discourses, which are the objects of examination, including their tendency to apply generalising arguments. When arguments and observations pertain specifically to any of the localities visited, then such reference will be made.

Below, the evidence is presented through application of a grounded theory approach, in which the analytical codes have emerged from the engagement in the concrete meetings and field visits and the appreciation of the generated data (Charmaz, 2006). Three dominant discourses are presented, which embed the grassroots democracy policy with meaning relevant to different actors. In so doing, these discourses are also using the policy process as a vehicle for advocating their desired views on the renovation of Vietnamese society. The analysis is narrated through observations from the field-work and the insights and perspectives provided by the participants. When an observation became known as generally acceptable for a majority of participants it is referred to as such. When a view owes to a certain type of participant/actor then this is indicated.

5.4 Results

5.4.1 Discourse 1: Liberalist democratisation

The first of the dominant discourses on grassroots democracy, encountered predominantly amongst international development professionals and INGO staff, explained the GDD as a step in promoting liberal democracy with inspiration from outside Vietnam. In this line, Several INGO staff argued that the formulation of the GDD had been inspired by the approaches introduced by INGOs in recent years; in the same way as informal rural collaborative groups had been inspired by foreign donors and NGOs. It was commonly highlighted that the GDD was growing out of the national government's positive experiences with public participation to date, facilitated by such international efforts. Several NGO staff described that they had seen a change in attitude amongst both central and local government officials to now widely embrace grassroots participation as a means for improved and effective management.

Many INGO staff explained how they felt that civil society in Vietnam was still 'quite shocked' over the increased space for public participation provided by the government. In the words of one INGO professional, the GDD paved the way for an 'emerging civil society, which is still careful and in need of gaining capacity.' Another NGO staff member felt uncertain about whether the people-centred reform represented by the GDD was a 'genuine wish for participation or merely a consequence of persistent donor push.' The GDD was, in this way, considered to help in clarifying an uncertainty within the Communist Party as to what the role of civil society is. Within this discourse on liberalist democratisation, professionals narrated how from the late 1990s the political space for LNGOs had increased significantly owing the improvement in democratic rights, to large extent owing to the support from INGOs and development agencies.

In the perspective of several of these professionals from international development agencies, INGOs, and UN agencies, the policy was understood primarily as an outcome of an ongoing power struggle between the Party and the emerging civil society; driving the democratisation forward. This discourse articulated how the GDD was contributing to improving the conditions for NGOs to carry out their supporting activities. Through a more effective and consolidating civil society, the democratisation process associated with the GDD – and other legislation pertaining to rights of association – was, in the words of one international professional employed in a LNGO, representing a policy intervention in 'the conflict between the wish of People's Committees at different levels to control the emerging 'civil society' and civil society's wish for more maneuvering space.'

One international development professional described how some LNGOs, who were navigating this 'maneuvering space' to push the democratisation process forward, had periodical experiences of repression from the Communist Party, sometimes leading to temporary closure. One LNGO employee perceived this as part of a 'game', where the LNGOs would be testing the rules of the game, and the Party letting them know when they exceeded what was currently acceptable. Due to the associated risks when playing this 'game', a chief technical advisor in development cooperation noted that he 'would never like to be involved in any way with projects related to civil society questions as it could destroy the relationship with local government and People's Committees.'

5.4.2 Discourse 2: Policy efficiency for state renovation

The second major discourse – predominantly evoked by government officials – focused on the ability of grassroots democracy to nurture the process of state renovation. Notably, it was explained how the continued problems of implementing the process of decentralisation and devolution in the public policies for sustainable and equitable rural development in Vietnam's highlands, had led to an appreciation of the need for improving grassroots involvement, i.e. that the GDD process could serve as an enabling vehicle for better mobilising the strength of the people. It was frequently highlighted how the GDD had emerged against a background of policy inefficiency, including continuing replacement of natural forest with plantations and rising encroachment on remaining forests driven by, for instance, demands for fuel wood and urbanisation during *Doi Moi*

In this line, the promotion of grassroots democracy was expected to enable a better harnessing of the multiple institutional belongings of the individual citizen. In many voluntary associations and LNGOs, members and staff had other full time employment, often in government offices or research organisations, and activities were highly integrated with these other duties. For instance, the LNGO Nature Care, head-quartered in Hue City, mobilised close to 50 voluntarily engaged members for the work in Phong My Commune and neighbouring areas, many of whom worked in provincial government departments or as lecturers at Hue University, and the projects were implemented in a close collaboration between state and grassroots. The GDD was here considered to facilitate the creation of better opportunities for such organisations to collaborate with grassroots and contribute to the reform process. As one of the Nature Care founding members stated:

> We feel we have a capacity to help because we have studied forestry, environment, or management. We feel we have the capacity to do something …

For the socially diverse highlands, particular emphasis was on improving relationships between the *Kinh* ethnic majority and the 53 ethnic minorities recognised by the government – that is, how to better include the minorities in the state renovation project. In this line, two senior officials from the Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development in Hanoi described independently of each other how the major problem was

> how to organise [people] to protect the forest … Farmers do not know how to argue … I am sitting here and can change the law, but I do not get any ideas from them;

and that

> ethnic minorities in the highlands are not reacting as hoped for to the decentralisation and devolution due to the history of dependency and pacification.

However, there was in general a low level of interest in the GDD and its implications amongst most of the provincial and district officials contributing to the study. In Van Chan District, officials from the People's Committee rejected that the GDD had any direct relevance to their work.

In the workshop in Buon Ma Thuot, the Director General of one of the MARD Departments outlined the efforts of MARD to enhance the integration between state law and customary law in the rural villages, which are not part of the formal administration. It was in this line, he explained, that MARD was promoting grassroots democracy to yield new formalised rules for villages, adopted by the whole community to govern social relations on the basis of self-autonomy. The goal was to maintain good customs and supporting law-based state management. Part of the expectation was that grassroots democracy would foster new and more efficient forms of collaboration between ethnic groups. In proverbial terms, this was commonly expected to serve to overcome the persistent challenge that 'the King's Law stops at the village gates' (vn: *Phep vua thua le lang*, in Malesky, 2004).

United Nations staff members were arguing for improved grassroots participation as one path to combat issues of poverty and inequality and implement development targets (see also UNDP, 2002b). Similarly, one development cooperation programme coordinator in Dak Lak reflected on the provincial government's behalf, that

> after decades of continued slash and burn farming in Dak Lak, Provincial government now recognises that it must listen to what people say if the new policies shall have any effect on forest protection.

Grassroots democracy was within this discourse considered to justify improved legal recognition of organisations, enabling them to respond to decentralised policies and attract funding, as well as generally facilitating new forms of collaboration. In Phong My Commune, participants referred to a cross-institutional Land Solutions Group as a forum for settling disputes over land allocation issues with an improved collaboration between emerging networks of LNGOs, development agencies and government departments. Such initiatives between the state and non-state actors were, as expressed by one forester, in fact essential for implementing the procedures for land allocation. The collaborative arrangements were however, in general, seen to be constrained by the lack of resources for government officials to prioritise inter-organisational coordination. Working relationships were frequently highly temporary owing to the short-term projects of NGOs and fragility of grassroots initiatives. The GDD was here hoped to be an expression of a government commitment to increased support also for such collaborative efforts.

5.4.3 Discourse 3: Addressing local policy ambiguities and enhancing accountability

The third and final discourse to be presented here took an almost inverse perspective of the two previous discourses. The articulation of the relevance of grassroots democracy was here adopting the view of the GDD as a response to the need for improved accountability and transparency in policy implementation. Professionals expected that the emerging diversity and new forms of associations and improved local involvement in commune affairs could serve to keep authorities accountable and counteract corruption. As a case in point, one international consultant commented that

> I have not seen indications that a 'donor push' is having any significance … I think the GDD was implemented predominantly to avoid an

> increasing challenge of the Party's control … it arose as a response to dissatisfaction with the Communist Party and unrest in the Party's heartland.

UNDP staff similarly pointed to the realisation of the Communist Party that new measures were needed to enhance the trust in the relationship with its powerbase in the countryside (see also UNDP, 2006). This view thus suggested that the promotion of grassroots democracy was an outcome of bottom-up demands from citizens. In this line, one Vietnamese researcher described how the GDD came about in response to the fact that

> the devolution process [under *Doi Moi*] is by many actually experienced as bringing to people what they do not want, in a form they do not like or do not understand.

Rural development professionals thus welcomed an increased emphasis on new ways of addressing ambiguities and legal conflicts created during the renovation process. This view emphasised how the implementation of rural development objectives was often *ad hoc* and its outcomes unpredictable due to local 'trial and error' innovations during the implementation when policy expectations met local realities. Examples were shared by the participants to illustrate this point in relation to the amendments of the Land Law and the Forest Protection Law. In Thua Thien Hue Province, it was explained how village allocations were initially conducted without a policy framework. The sharing of land use rights between men and women was not formally recognised until the Land Law amendments of 2003, but in some communes, *de facto* power sharing arrangements adopted recognition of women's equal land rights.

Vietnamese researchers acknowledged that the fear of committing mistakes in the eyes of centralised decision makers meant that government officials in general would not act until provided with specific guidelines from higher levels of administration on a case by case basis. The GDD was hence expected to provide procedures for commune authorities to be more expedient in their nurturing of citizen demands. This was also considered as a means to counter discriminatory treatments of different villages based on local authority preferences. As described by one LNGO director, in rural upland villages inhabited by ethnic minorities, those villages that were supportive of the Communists during the war with the United States can better claim their rights and voice dissatisfaction with the government and the Party, as the Party feels it owes them a debt.

In this regard, the GDD was hoped to contribute to a more level playing field between different ethnic groups in the highlands, which for many years had seen an exacerbation of conflicts between different tenure systems, where local resource management institutions were incompatible with the official land management classification schemes. The renovation of grassroots democracy had, as explained by one Vietnamese anthropologist, to be considered against the fact that

> by not acknowledging the village as part of the state administration, the government has for decades rejected the core mode of organisation of ethnic minorities.

One Vietnamese researcher similar described how local governments for decades had sought to implement the Party line regarding assimilation of ethnic minorities, through building a 'brotherly relationship' where, however, there was 'no doubt who is the big brother and who is supposed to be the attentive little brother.'

Concern was raised that the promotion of grassroots democracy also had to factor in differential access of different NGOs to support new forms of decision making in village and commune level. One LNGO director explained that many LNGOs were established by people with former or current positions in government or Party, and these people had easier access to central bodies and representative forums for lobby activities. This was in contrasts to LNGOs founded by people from outside the centralised structures, and the GDD was hoped to offer new avenues for more level playing field, at least at local level. Similarly, it was explained by many NGO staff, LNGOs and INGOs were facing rather different prospects for engaging in the policy adaptation processes, owing to the often very different financial and human resource conditions as well as the differentiated relationship with government and Communist Party. One LNGO project manager explained how

> INGOs are criticising [LNGOs] for being 'undeveloped' and not ready for furthering people's participation … therefore they often by-pass local organisations and work directly with villagers via their own participatory approaches.

In this regard, a number of both INGOs and LNGO staff confirmed that the preparation of the strategic policy documents CPRGS and SEDP had involved almost exclusively INGOs, and many suggested that LNGOs were effectively 'crowded out' by INGOs (see also observations in Norlund et al., 2003). LNGOs were concerned about insufficient resources in comparison to INGOs, and that they were limited to smaller consultancy jobs. According to one Working Group Coordinator at the NGO Resource Centre in Hanoi, 'many INGOs have grown so big now that they do not depend much on collaboration with other NGOs.'

5.5 Analysis and Discussion

The results above have outlined three core discourses amongst rural development professionals, interpreting grassroots democracy in relation to their respective interests in liberalist democratisation, improved efficiency in state renovation, and enhanced accountability in governing local policy ambiguities. These discourses applied rather different vocabularies and frames of reference to construct images of what meaningful grassroots democracy constitutes. This illustrates how the grassroots democracy policy has taken the form of a set of practices, in which the role of contestation between discourses and their interpretation play a key role in determining the outcomes of the implementation of the policy (Hajer & Wagenaar, 2003).

5.5.1 Contesting 'good governance'

The co-existence of discourses demonstrates the ongoing negotiation of the meaning of democratic rural development, including an encounter between diverging ideological presumptions shrouding the rhetoric of 'democracy'. The promulgation of the GDD came shortly before the launch of a process of high-level dialogue between representatives of the Communist Party, the government and international actors, exactly exploring different meanings of 'deep democracy' (UNDP, 2006). As hinted from the diverging interpretations of the GDD, there are major issues still to resolve in this debate, coupled to underlying tensions in the conceptualisation of socialist and liberal democracy in rural development.

In mainstream international development rhetoric on 'deep democracy', as a process of more substantive and empowered citizen participation, democracy is implicitly assumed to refer to capitalist liberalism. The notions of civil society and public deliberation are seen to emerge from within the genealogy of liberal democratic theory rooted in the heritage of European Enlightenment (UNDP, 2002a; Kumar, 1993). Here, the notion of 'civil society', broadly defined as the arena of non-state institutions and practices that enjoy a high degree of autonomy, is used to comprehend the existence of NGOs and social movements as part of the heralded shift from government to governance, where public, private and civil society sectors are expected to jointly contribute to sustainable development (e.g. Anheier, 2005; Jensen, 2006; Kumar, 1993).

In Vietnam, terms such as 'civil society' remain opaque for large parts of the Communist Party, government, and citizenry; for many such terms are associated with experiences of earlier attempts to impose alien views on what comprises actual democratic governance, including during French colonialism and American aggression. As a case in point, the law on the rights of association, which by many international professionals has been perceived as the future 'law on civil society', was negotiated since 1993 in the National Assembly in order to be approved only in 2006 in its current form – after 13 years of contestation (*Van Nghe Magazine*, 2006).

Within international development, appropriations by development banks and strong states of a 'proper' definition of democracy continue to inspire what Roberts (2008) refers to as 'transitology', i.e. the assumption of democracy as an essentially portable concept, which can be transplanted into societies through foreign intervention. This ignores the many characteristics of socialist democracy, including how the distinction between 'state' and 'civil society' in socialist states is traditionally blurred because party and party system extend networks of organisation throughout society (Mair, 1998). As Amartya Sen eloquently argues, it also reflects a culturally biased perspective, which negates the many and diverse global origins of the values, which we today associate with democratic governance (Sen, 2006).

5.5.2 Conceptual mediation in the Vietnamese negotiation culture

The diversity of interpretations of the purpose of grassroots democracy highlights an interesting parallel to the popularity of decentralisation reform itself. In Vietnam, as in other Asian countries, decentralisation is seen to have currency across the political spectrum as popular remedy for renovating public bureaucracies with excessive concentration of decision making authority with the central government (Turner & Hulme, 1997). The widespread buy-in to grassroots democracy suggests that the concept has achieved a similarly 'universal' currency. The co-existence of the different discourses also indicates how the notion of grassroots democracy has become a 'conceptual mediator' between different interests in Vietnamese rural development. That is, a concept embodying a seemingly common set of assumptions, which are understood to be politically correct at present and which professionals ought to operationalise in their discourses, despite embedding it with rather diverging shades of meaning based on their own histories and desires

The role of such conceptual mediators has to be positioned in the particular negotiation culture in which professionals are active (Leeuwis, 2000). The Vietnamese negotiation culture is distinctly rooted in the legacy of Confucian ideology surviving through shifting forms of centralised authority under the imperial court and successive eras of concentrated powers during French reign and subsequent Leninist democratic centralism (Le and Khuat, 2008). Confucianism is seen to play a continued role in the shaping of the modern ideas of the nature of reality, proper social relationships and the righteous path in life (Woodside, 1970; Jamieson, 1995). Amongst other, this includes deterring overt questioning of authority (Scott et al., 2005). There is thus a long tradition in the one-party state to seek ‘consensus governance’ where important state decisions go through extensive consultancies at several administrative levels prior to approval (Norlund et al., 2003). Emphasis is here placed on reaching (even apparent) consensus and people will go a long way to achieve this and avoid that anyone looses face. This tradition was, during the field work, referred to by some participants as owing to Ho Chi Minh’s thinking regarding the idea of the state as characterised by Oneness, i.e. as a collective, organic whole which ought to act in concert for the common good of the people.

Arguably, such a negotiation culture, stakeholders benefit more from drawing on seemingly shared norms than confrontational strategies, and conceptual mediators such as the notion of ‘grassroots democracy’ achieve a great significance. This is also one of the reasons why national debates in Vietnam regarding the distinction between the state and non-state actors tend to focus on the practical consequence of such difference rather than categorical or nominal differences, which tend to provoke greater confrontation. For instance, the 2006 Vietnamese Civil Society Evaluation, conducted by a national Stakeholder Assessment Group, recommended a focus on function and interactions rather than *a priori* categorical entities when debating organisational issues related to grassroots democracy (Kaime-Atterhog & Anh, 2000; Norlund, 2006).

The richness of the discourses associated with grassroots democracy is thus both an asset for and a consequence of the tradition of consensus governance. When diverging perspectives are permitted to co-exist it enables a process of discursive exchange and learning in which stakeholders may gradually re-construct their perspectives and decide on relevant forms of collaboration despite ideological disagreements (Collins & Ison, 2006). As a case in point, Wischerman (2011) has provided evidence that creative encounters between different discourses may lead to incremental but appreciable change from within the state apparatus.

5.5.3 Whither grassroots’ empowerment?

While the discourses on liberalist democratisation and state renovation were exercised largely by international development professionals and INGO staff, and government officials, respectively, the discourse on increased accountability was promoted chiefly by local practitioners. They were pointing to policy ambiguities and the problems faced by new forms of grassroots organisations and how both international and government actors could improve their support to village and commune level initiatives. Notably, this concerned, as observed in previous studies, lack of appropriate institutions to navigate the diversity in land relations and the conflicting perspectives on the concept of property under top-down implementation of the reform – where *de facto* outcomes largely derived from informal negotiations among villagers and between villagers and various state agencies (e.g. Akram-Lodhi, 2002; Sikor, 2004; To, 2006).

A significant number of rural development professionals, including amongst INGOs and government employees, approach the GDD and its ambitions in ways which are not immediately connected to concerns for grassroots empowerment. In this regard, the GDD must be seen in context of the bounty of examples of new and supposedly more inclusive forms of governance deployed only to legitimate the interests of the state and development donors. Arguably, there is a risk that such discourses lead to a 'domestication' of grassroots participation in the political reform process (e.g. Wakeford & Singh, 2008; Larsen et al., 2010). Indeed, the recasting of roles and mandates under an evolving market socialism means that stakes are high for the individual citizen, government, and the Communist Party – and for external partners who have bilateral bonds through trade and international politics. When embedding the GDD with preferred connotations professionals discursively insert their agendas into the renovation reform.

The present reform politics are but the most recent efforts to regenerate the countryside and harness its productive forces. Vietnam has a long history of peasant rebellions under persistent tensions between an incompletely centralised authority (Confucian monarchy/colonial rulers) and rural leadership and the masses (Woodside, 1970; Woodside, 1989; Marr, 2004). It is likely that this history has contributed to the Party's reading of the expressions of power from the rural populace when they respond with dissatisfaction to perceived failures of Party and state to govern. For the Party and parts of the state apparatus the promotion of grassroots democracy invariably serves to embellish the state and the national programme for rural development with increased legitimacy (Kerkvliet et al., 2003; Vietnews, 2010). This positions the mainstreaming of public participation as part of nurturing the larger political project of the state, without necessarily challenging its central assumptions and powers (Hickey & Mohan, 2005). Similarly, Gray (2003) argues that allowing increased space for non-state organisations in the 'science and technology' sector was a pragmatic decision by the Communist Party and Vietnamese government to scale back the bureaucracy in the hope of increased service delivery by NGOs. A similar 'paradigm shift' occurred in the catering for war invalids (Vasiljev, 2003).

In his linguistic analysis of Vietnamese politics, Fforde finds that ‘common references to grassroots communities are better translated as references to the base of an apparat’ (Fflorde, 2011, p. 168); i.e. that these references emphasise the instrumental function of the ‘grassroots’ in the Party and state project. In this light, the GDD risks to be subsumed as a formalistic modification within the vertical hierarchical model of governance, which has been practiced in Vietnam for centuries (Marr, 2004). Other evidence has shown that within the decentralised state administration, different levels of sub-national administration can act as ‘black boxes’, where even quite extensive participation at village level will lose its significance (Mekong Economics, 2006).

The reinvention of rural development is not only national but equally shaped by an active involvement of international actors, such as the United Nations, the World Trade Organisation, bilateral trade partners, donors of development aid, international NGOs and corporate lobby groups (Kerkvliet et al., 2003; Norlund et al., 2003; Malesky, 2004; Miller, 2006; Engel, 2008). International development donors have often deliberately aimed their interventions at improved governance within a liberal democratic model in order to achieve their specific goals (Fritzen, 2003). It should not be overlooked that the advocacy for deepening democracy by international organisations also reflects the tendency to seek a replacement of economic coercion with participatory processes as a ‘dialogical method’ intended to alter and control the terrain of debate with Vietnamese partners (Engel, 2008). As a case in point, it is interesting to note how international professionals articulated that informal rural groups have been inspired by INGOs rather than representing them as self-organised initiatives in the country side. One of the few existing studies into informal rural groups in Vietnam has in fact concluded that international donors until very recently have all but ignored these groups in their programmes (Fforde, 2008).

5.6 Conclusions

During the dynamic unfolding of political reform Vietnam is seen to experience a radical transformation of the democratic spaces for professionals in rural development in the central and northern upland regions. The promulgation of grassroots democracy under the GDD represents one of the most heralded initiatives in this regard. Previous historical analyses have shown that it was expressions of dissatisfaction with the performance of Party and government from the rural populace in the late 1990s and early 2000s, which led to the high-profile promotion of grassroots democracy, notably symbolised by the GDD. In order to examine the practical implications of this policy change, the present paper has undertaken a discursive analysis of how professionals construct desired images of grassroots democracy, which match their respective interests.

In its current form, the promotion of grassroots democracy has come to serve as a conceptual mediator between diverging interests associated with rural development as well as between different ideological positions shrouding the notion of democracy itself. The three dominant discourses center on their respective interests in liberalist democratisation, improved efficiency in state renovation, and enhanced accountability in governing local policy ambiguities. In the Vietnamese negotiation culture, characterised by its Confucian heritage and a preference for consensus governance, the co-existence and exchange between contradictory views on the significance of grassroots democracy may support a peaceful and gradual improvement in rural development governance. This may also support a continued learning process between differing positions held by various local groups, Party, government, newly emerging NGOs, businesses, and international actors.

Yet, to the extent that the discourses of professionals are reflective of how they relate to grassroots aspirations and actions, it is worrying that professionals in international organisations and state administration generally prefer to evoke ideologically founded discourses on democratisation and the political project of the nation state, which do not up front acknowledge grassroots empowerment as a priority. This suggests that the grassroots movements, which originally ushered the Party and central government to pass the GDD, have a significant struggle ahead of them to affect concrete changes in professionals' practices.

5.7 Acknowledgements

A sincere note of gratitude is directed to the participants in this study for their willingness to share their experiences. The field-work underlying this paper was conducted from the Unit of Environmental Communication, Department of Urban and Rural Development, Swedish University of Agriculture. The work was a scoping study undertaken for the SLU/SEI consortium, with Dr. Neil Powell, now Senior Research Fellow with SEI, acting as project supervisor and providing invaluable guidance throughout the process. The field-work was conducted with the Vietnam-Sweden research cooperation on sustainable rural development in Vietnam (RDViet), hosted by Hue University of Agriculture and Forestry (HUAF), and funded by a planning grant from the research arm of the Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency (Sida-SAREC). The author wishes to thank the colleagues at HUAF and the RDViet master students, who helped made the stay in Hue both enlightening and enjoyable. Special thanks is directed to Mr. Tran Nam Tu for his support, which made it practically possible to carry out the research; Ms. Mai Hoang Yen who assisted during the work in Yen Bai Province; the staff of the Chia Se Poverty Alleviation Programme in Yen Bai;

and Dr. Minh Ha Hoang for advice during the study. Finally, a note of gratitude is directed to the two anonymous reviewers who provided critical and very valuable comments to help improve the argument to its present form.

5.8 References

ADB (Asian Development Bank). (2002). *Indigenous peoples/Ethnic minorities and poverty reduction in Viet Nam*. Manila, Philippines: Asian Development Bank.

Adger, W. N. (1999). Exploring Income Inequality in Coastal Viet Nam. *Journal of Development Studies*, *35* (5), 96-119.

Akram-Lodhi A. H. (2002). All decisions are top-down: Engendering public expenditure in Vietnam. *Feminist Economics, 8* (3), 1–19.

Anheier, H. K. (2005). Introducing the Journal of Civil Society: An editorial statement. *Journal of Civil Society, 1* (1), 1–3.

Bui, T. K. (2005). *Summary of the regulations on the implementation of democracy at commune level*. Leaflet issued together with Government Decree no. 79/2003/ND-CP. Hanoi, Vietnam: DWC (Center for Promoting Development for Women and Children).

Charmaz, K. (2006). *Constructing grounded theory. A practical guide through qualitative analysis*. London: Sage.

Checkland, P. (1999). *Systems thinking, systems practice*. Oxford: Wiley.

Collins, K., & Ison, R. (2006). Dare we jump off Arnstein's ladder? Social learning as a new policy paradigm. In *Proceedings of PATH (Participatory Approaches in Science and Technology) Conference, 4–7 June 2006, Edinburgh.*

Engel, S. (2008). The World Bank and Neoliberal Hegemony in Vietnam. In R. Howson & K. Smith (Eds.), *Hegemony: Studies in Consensus and Coercion* (pp. 159–183). New York: Routledge.

Fforde, A. J. (2008). Vietnam's Informal Farmers' Groups: Narratives and Policy Implications. *Journal of Current Southeast Asian Affairs*, *1*, 3–36.

Fforde, A. J. (2009). Luck, Policy or Something Else Entirely? Vietnam's Economic Performance in 2009 and Prospects for 2010. *Journal of Current Southeast Asian Affairs, 28* (4), 71–94.

Fforde, A. J. (2011). Contemporary Vietnam: Political Opportunities, Conservative Formal Politics, and Patterns of Radical Change. *Asian Politics and Policy, 3* (2), 165–184.

Foucault, M. (1969). *The archeology of knowledge*. London: Routledge.

Fritzen, S. (2003). Donors, Local Development Groups, and Institutional Reform over Vietnam's Development Decade. In B. J. T. Kerkvliet, R. H. K. Heng, & D. W. H. Koh (Eds.), *Getting Organised in Vietnam: Moving in and around the socialist state* (pp. 234–270). Singapore: Institute of Southeast Asian Studies.

Fritzen, S., Brassard, C., Bui, T. M. T., Ngo, D. H., Nguyen, P. N., Nguyen, M. T., McCarty, A., & Vu, B. T. (2005). *Vietnam Inequality Report 2005: Assessment and Policy Choices*. Hanoi, Vietnam: Mekong Economics Ltd.

Gaventa, J. (2006) *Triumph, deficit or contestation? Deepening the deepening democracy debate*. IDS working paper 264. Institute of Development Studies, University of Sussex Brighton: Brighton, UK.

Government of Vietnam. (2002). *The Comprehensive Poverty Reduction and Growth Strategy (CPRGS)*. Document no. 825/QD-TTg. Hanoi: Government of Vietnam.

Gray, M. L. (2003). NGOs and highland development: A case study in crafting new roles. In B. J. T. Kerkvliet, R. H. K. Heng, & D. W. H. Koh (Eds.), *Getting Organised in Vietnam: Moving in and around the socialist state* (pp. 110–125). Singapore: Institute of Southeast Asian Studies.

Hajer, M., & Wagenaar, H. (2003). *Deliberative policy analysis. Understanding governance in the network society*. Cambridge: University Press.

Haughton, D., Haughton, J., & Phong, N. (2001). *Living standards during an economic boom: the case of Vietnam*. Hanoi, Vietnam: Statistical Publishing House.
Hickey, S., & Mohan, G. (2005). Relocation participation within radical politics of development. *Development and Change, 36* (2), 237–262.
Jamieson, N. L. (1995). *Understanding Vietnam*. Berkeley: University of California Press.
Jamieson, N. L., Le, T. C., & Rambo, A. T. (1998). *The Development Crisis in Vietnam's Mountains*. East-West Center Special Reports no. 6, Honolulu, Hawaii: East-West Center.
Jensen, M. N. (2006). Concepts and conceptions of civil society. *Journal of Civil Society, 2* (1), 39–56.
JICA (Japan International Cooperation Agency). (2006). *Improvement of Provincial Socio-Economic Development plan 2006–2010 and planning practice through participatory efforts in Hoa Binh Province*. Hanoi, Vietnam: Hoa Binh Provincial People's Committee.
Junker, B. (2000). Forests, people and policies in the central highlands of Vietnam. *Indigenous Affairs, 4*, 56–65.
Kaime-Atterhög, W., & Tran, T. V. A. (2000). *Vietnam Women's Union: Promoting Gender Equality.* Sida Evaluation 00/16. Stockholm: Sida.
Kemf, E., & Quy, V. (1999). Ethnic minorities and protected areas in Vietnam: The effect of land use on biodiversity in the buffer and core zone of Yon Dok National Park. In M. Colchester & C. Erni (Eds.), *Indigenous Peoples and Protected Areas in South and Southeast Asia* (pp. 152–179). IWGIA document no. 97. Copenhagen: International Work Group for Indigenous Affairs.
Kerkvliet, B. J. T., Heng, R. H. K., & Koh, D. W. H. (Eds.). (2003). *Getting organised in Vietnam: Moving in and around the socialist state*. Singapore: Institute of Southeast Asian Studies.
Kerkvliet, B. J. T. (2004). Surveying local government and authority in contemporary Vietnam. In B. J. T. Kerkvliet & D. G. Marr (Eds.), *Beyond Hanoi: Local governance in Vietnam* (pp. 1–27). Singapore: Institute of Southeast Asian Studies.
Kerkvliet, B. J. T., & Marr, D. G. (Eds.). (2004). *Beyond Hanoi: Local governance in Vietnam.* Singapore: Institute of Southeast Asian Studies.
Kumar, K. (1993). Civil society: An inquiry into the usefulness of an historical term. *The British Journal of Sociology, 44* (3), 375–395.
Langeweg, F. (1998). The implementation of Agenda 21 'our common failure'? *The Science of the Total Environment, 218*, 227–238.
Larsen, R. K., Acebes, J. M., & Belen, A. (2010). Examining the assumptions of Integrated Coastal Management: Diverging stakeholder agendas and elite cooption in Babuyan Islands, Philippines. *Oceans and Coastal Management, 54*, 10–18.
Le, B. D., & Khuat, T. H. (2008). Third Sector Governance in Vietnam. In S. Hasan & J. Onyx (Eds.), *Comparative third sector governance in Asia: Structure, Process and Political Economy* (pp. 309–323). New York: Springer.
Le, Q. D., Nguyen, V. B., & Ha, D. T. (Eds.). (2003). *Upland agricultural development: Current status and orientation. Selected papers from the National Workshop on Sustainable Upland Agricultural Research and Development, Yen Bai City 6–8 November 2002*. Hanoi, Vietnam: Agriculture Publishing House.
Leeuwis, C. (2000). Reconceptualizing Participation for Sustainable Rural Development: Towards a Negotiation Approach. *Development and Change, 31*, 931–959.
Lindskog, E., Dow, K., Axberg, G. N., Miller, F., & Hancock, A. (2005). *When Rapid Changes in Environmental, Social and Economic Conditions Converge: Challenges to Sustainable Livelihoods in Dak Lak, Vietnam.* Stockholm: Stockholm Environment Institute.
Mair, P. (1998). *Party system change: Approaches and interpretations.* Oxford: University Press.
Malesky, E. J. (2004). Push, pull and reinforcing: The channels of FDI influence on provincial governance in Vietnam. In B. J. T. Kerkvliet & D. G. Marr (Eds.), *Beyond Hanoi: Local governance in Vietnam* (pp. 285–326). Singapore: Institute of Southeast Asian Studies.

Marr, D. (2004). A brief history of local government in Vietnam. In B.J.T. Kerkvliet and D.G. Marr (Eds.), *Beyond Hanoi: Local governance in Vietnam* (pp. 28–53). Singapore: Institute of Southeast Asian Studies.

McCann, L. (2005). Transaction costs of Pesticide Policies in Vietnam. *Society and Natural Resources, 18*, 759–766.

Mekong Economics Ltd. (2006). *Measuring grassroots democracy in Vietnam*. Retrieved from http://www.mekongeconomics.com/Document/Publications/2006/MKE%20Measuring%20Grassroots%20Democracy%20in%20Vietnam.pdf

Miller, F. (2006). Seeing 'Water Blindness': Water Control in Agricultural Intensification and Environmental Change in the Mekong Delta, Vietnam. In J. Connell & E. Waddell (Eds.), *Environment, Development and Change in Rural Asia-Pacific: Between Local and Global* (pp. 196–207). London: Routledge.

Minh, N. D. (2008). Grassroots democracy in Vietnamese communes. Centre for Democratic Institutions, Research School of Social Sciences, Australian National University. Retrieved from http://www.cdi.anu.edu.au/CDIwebsite_1998-2004/vietnam/veitnam_downloads/Doung_Grassrootsdemocracypaper.pdf

Morley, J. W. (1997). Politics in transition. In J. W. Morley & M. Nishihara (Eds.), *Vietnam joins the world* (pp. 15–36).New York: M. E. Sharpe.

National Assembly. (1999). *Law on the Vietnam Fatherland Front*. June 12, 1999, Article 1. Hanoi, Vietnam: National Assemby.

Nguyen, P. A. (2006). State–society relations in contemporary Vietnam: An examination of the arena of youth. *Asia Pacific Viewpoint, 47* (3), 327–341.

Nguyen, T. V. (1997). *Country Report: Vietnam.* FAO (United Nations Food and Agricultural Organization) working paper no. APFSOSNVP/31. Rome: FAO.

Norlund, I. (Ed.). (2006). *The emerging civil society. An initial assessment of civil society in Vietnam.* Hanoi, Vietnam: CSI-SAT Vietnam.

Norlund, I., Tran, N. C., & Nguyen, D. T. (2003). *Dealing with the Donors. The Politics of Vietnam's Comprehensive Poverty Reduction and Growth Strategy*. Policy Paper 4/2003. Helsinki: Institute of Development Studies, University of Helsinki. Retrieved from http://www.ngocentre.org.vn/files/docs/vietnam28i04.pdf

Paget-Clarke, N. (2002). Interview with Eve Crowley: Respecting the autonomy and decisions of the poor. *In Motion Magazine*, 29 August 2002. Retrieved from http://www.inmotionmagazine.com/global/ec1.html

Powell, N. (2004) *Methods, insights, theories and concepts to support action and outreach within development orientated natural resource related research*. Unpublished paper.

Powell, N., Gerger Swartling, Å. G., & Hoang, M. H. (Eds.). (2011). *Stakeholder agency in rural development policy. Articulating co-governance in Vietnam.* Nairobi, Kenya: World Agroforestry Centre (ICRAF).

Powell, N., Osbeck, M., Sinh, B. T., & Vu, C. T. (2011). Mangrove Restoration and Rehabilitation for Climate Change Adaptation in Vietnam. *World Resources Report Case Study*. Washington DC: World Resources Institute. Retrieved from http://www.worldresourcesreport.org/files/wrr/wrr_case_study_mangrove_restoration_vietnam.pdf

Roberts, D. (2008). Post-conflict Statebuilding and State Legitimacy: From Negative to Positive Peace? *Development and Change, 39* (4), 537–555.

Röling, N. G., & Wagemakers, M. A. E. (Eds.). (1998). *Facilitating sustainable agriculture: Participatory learning and adaptive management in times of environmental uncertainty*. Cambridge: University Press.

Scott, J. C. (1985). *Weapons of the Weak: Everyday Forms of Peasant Resistance*. Yale: University Press.

Scott, S., Miller, F., & Lloyd, K. (2005). Doing Fieldwork in Development Geography: Research Culture and Research Spaces in Vietnam. *Geographical Research, 44* (1), 28–40.

Sen, A. (2006). *Identity and Violence. The Illusion of Destiny*. New York: Norton.
Sikor, T. (2000). The allocation of forestry land in Vietnam: Did it cause the expansion of forests in the northwest, *Forest Policy and Economics, 2* (1), 1–11.
Sikor, T. (2004). Conflicting Concepts: Contested Land Relations in North-western Vietnam. *Conservation and Society, 2* (1), 75–95.
Sikor, T. (2006). Analyzing community-based forestry: Local, political and agrarian perspectives. *Forest Policy and Economics, 8*, 339–349.
Thoburn, J. (2004). Globalisation and poverty in Vietnam. Introduction and overview to special issue. *Journal of the Asia Pacific Economy, 9* (2), 127–144.
To, P. X. (2006). Fuzzy forest relations in the Vietnamese uplands: Ethnography of forest access and control. *Journal of Legal Pluralism, 55*, 73–94.
Turley, W. S., & Selden, M. (Eds.). (1993). *Reinventing Vietnamese socialism: Doi Moi in comparative perspective*. Boulder USA: Westview Press.
Turner, M., & Hulme, D. (1997). *Government, administration, and development: Making the state work*. Hong Kong: Macmillan.
Turner, S. (2010). Challenges and dilemmas: Fieldwork with upland minorities in socialist Vietnam, Laos and southwest China. *Asia Pacific Viewpoint, 51* (2), 121–134.
Turner, S., & Cauoette, D. (2009). Agrarian Angst: Rural Resistance in Southeast Asia. *Geography Compass, 3* (3), 950–975.
UNDP (United Nations Development Programme). (2002a). *Human Development Report 2002*: *Deepening Democracy in a Fragmented World*. Oxford: University Press.
UNDP (United Nations Development Programme). (2002b) *Localizing MDGs for Poverty Reduction in Viet Nam: Promoting Ethnic Minority Development*. Strategies for achieving the Vietnam development goals. Unpublished document.
UNDP (United Nations Development Programme). (2006). *Deepening democracy and increasing popular participation in Viet Nam*. UNDP Vietnam Policy Dialogue Paper 2006/1. Hanoi, Vietnam: UNDP.
Van Nghe Magazine. (2006). Issues surrounding the draft bill for the Law of Association. Summary compilation of discussion in the *Van Nghe Magazine*. Hanoi, Vietnam: Hoi Nha Van Publisher.
Vasiljev, I. (2003). The disabled and their organisations: The emergence of new paradigms. In B. J. T. Kerkvliet, R. H. K. Heng & D. W. H. Koh (Eds.), *Getting organised in Vietnam: Moving in an around the socialist state* (pp. 126–153). Singapore: Institute of Southeast Asian Studies.
Vietnews. (2010, December 6). The evolution of democracy in Vietnam. *Vietnews: Eyes on Vietnam*. Retrieved from http://www.dztimes.net/post/politics/the-evolution-of-democracy-in-vietnam.aspx.
Wakeford, T., & Singh, J. (2008). Towards empowered participation: stories and reflections. *Participatory Learning and Action, 58*, 6–9.
Wessendorf, K. (Ed.). (2001). *Challenging politics: Indigenous peoples' experience with political parties and elections*. IWGIA document no. 104. Copenhagen: International Work Group for Indigenous Affairs (IWGIA).
White, R., & Smoke, P. (2005). East Asia Decentralises. In World Bank (Ed.), *East Asia Decentralises: Making local government work* (pp. 1–23). Washington DC: World Bank.
Whitehead, J., & McNiff, J. (2006). *Action research and living theory*. London: Sage.
Wischermann, J. (2011). Governance and Civil Society Action in Vietnam: Changing the Rules From Within – Potentials and Limits. *Asian Politics & Policy, 3* (3), 383–411.
Wischermann, J., & Nguyen, Q. V. (2003). The Relationship between Civic and Governmental Organisations in Vietnam: Selected Findings. In B. J. T. Kerkvliet, R. H, K. Heng, & D. W. H. Koh (Eds.), *Getting organised in Vietnam: Moving in and around the socialist state* (pp. 185–233). Singapore: Institute of Southeast Asian Studies.

Woodside, A. (1970). Decolonization and Agricultural Reform in Northern Vietnam. *Asian Survey, 10* (8), 705–723.
Woodside, A. (1989). History, Structure, and Revolution in Vietnam. *International Political Science Review, 10*, 143–157.
World Bank. (n.d.). Governance Institutions: The case of the Grassroots Democracy Steering Committee. Mobilizing Rural Institutions for Sustainable Livelihoods and Equitable Development. Agriculture and Rural Development Department (ARD-SASKI) and Social Development Department (SDV). Case study in Vietnam country study. Washington DC: World Bank.
Zingerli, C. (2004). Politics in mountain communes. Exploring Vietnamese grassroots democracy. In D. McCargo (Ed.), *Rethinking Vietnam* (pp. 53–66). London: Routledge.

6

Making sense of accountability in Baltic agro-environmental governance: The case of Denmark's Green Growth Strategy[15]

[15] This chapter has been accepted (with revisions) as an article in the Social and Environmental Accountability Journal, submitted on 23 September 2011 as: Larsen, R. K., & Powell, N., Making sense of accountability in Baltic agro-environmental governance: The case of Denmark's Green Growth Strategy.

6.1 Abstract

Agro-environmental governance associated with the issue of eutrophication in the Baltic Sea Region relies on accountability as a central norm to secure legitimacy of transnational cooperation. However, owing to co-existence of different traditions of governance the implementation of nutrient reduction targets requires negotiation between competing definitions of accountability. This paper presents results from an empirical analysis of the implementability of nutrient reduction targets in one riparian state, namely Denmark, focusing on the government's ambitious Green Growth Strategy. It charts the policy adaptation route to explore how stakeholders mobilize claims within different sense-making perspectives on governance in order to seek to keep each other accountable. We conclude that if transnational cooperation on agro-environmental pollution governance is to improve its effectiveness, then it must more explicitly address ambiguities between sense-making perspectives on governance to enable a co-construction of acceptable modes of justification, which determines when stakeholder agency represents creativity and innovation or misconduct and cooption.

6.2 Introduction

The Baltic Sea Region comprises eight European Union member states and their neighbours Belarus and Russia. Like other regions, it is characterised by complex economic, environmental and social problems, which transcend administrative and political borders. This produces transnational interdependencies, which are particularly pertinent with reference to issues connected to water resources management and agricultural nutrient pollution. Eutrophication (nutrient over-enrichment, primarily of nitrogen, N and phosphorous, P) is acknowledged as one of the main issues for the 'environmental health' of the Baltic Sea as a common transboundary resource, receiving considerable attention from many of the riparian states as well as the European Union (EU). There is currently considerable scientific focus on agricultural pollution and water management in the BSR (e.g. Backer et al., 2009; Österblom et al., 2010; Borja et al., 2010; Stöhr & Chabay, 2010; Larsson & Granstedt, 2010). The arrival of the EU Baltic Sea Region Strategy has provided an umbrella to direct strategic funding to support the propelling of regional territorial coherence, which is also reflected in a remarkable number of transnational development projects in the region with a focus on nutrient pollution (SEI, 2010).

Given the frequent divergence between different sectoral and national agendas, trust in constructive cooperation is constantly challenged and the Baltic Sea Region (BSR) agro-environmental governance regime relies significantly – as other liberal democratic regimes – on the norm of accountability as one of the 'master values', which is expected to ensure the required legitimacy through providing mechanisms of control of those who have decision-making authority, practical autonomy and/or exercise executive discretion. However, while accountability is a heavily theorised subject in legislative, administrative and political sciences, only few studies into natural resource management have investigated the norm of accountability (e.g. van Woerkum & Aarts, Forthcoming; Bäckstrand, 2006; Muller, 2008; ; Lewis and Russell, 2011). For the Baltic region and its governance of eutrophication no examinations have, to wit, been undertaken regarding how the norm of accountability is operationalised in the concrete implementation of agro-environmental targets. Arguably, this undermines the ability of researchers to support professionals with a robust terminology for debating issues connected to accountability, which in turn weakens the ability at societal level to decide what forms of behaviour are morally acceptable.

In its traditional clothing, accountability is sought through creating formal incentives (award or punishment) for what is considered 'moral behaviour'. This represents an administrative procedural approach to accountability as a form of 'second order responsibility', i.e. that someone is responsible for something and for showing that this responsibility is fulfilled (Boström & Garsten, 2008; van Woerkum & Aarts, Forthcoming). The arrival of accountability as a widely accepted norm in such liberal democratic regimes as the Baltic region is also attributable to the advent of a wider set of actors in governance and the associated ambiguities in responsibilities. Indeed, the question of how to ensure acceptable forms of influence by the individual public servant, corporate lobbyists and NGO networks as well as the average farmer and citizen runs at the core of the debate on the European democratic project (Bovens et al., 2010).

The increasing popularity of viewing transnational governance as a networked and multi-sectoral phenomenon involving the public, civil society and private spheres has seen propositions for the need to redefine traditional, often state-centric, procedural conceptions of accountability (Bäckstrand, 2006; Boström & Garsten, 2008; Lewis and Russell, 2011). As a case in point, the very notion of stakeholding involved in the acclaimed shift from government to governance, i.e. the commitment to involving those with a stake in a management issue, represents a shift not only in our conception of governance in wide sense but in the conceptualisation of responsibility and accountability, including the distribution of risks and benefits, within formal systems of decision-making (Logsdon & Lewellyn, 2000). Based on interviews with civil servants in three Danish ministries of the state administration, Birgitte Poulsen observes that

> co-existence of competing traditions of governance and different and sometimes contradictory interpretations of administrative accountability … create potential dilemmas and contradictions for the individual civil servant (Poulsen, 2009, p. 117).

In this paper, we pursue this recognition of the norm of accountability as being subject to ongoing negotiation in the interface between different and co-existing modes of governance. In so doing, we proceed with Boström and Garsten (2008) and (Bovens et al., 2010) to enquire into accountability not in any realist or essentialist manner looking for this norm *really* means, but rather as a (dis)organised process in concrete discursive and material exchanges between actors. This pursues a view on accountability in which

> the definition of accountability is itself part of many power struggles, framing activities and organising efforts among a broad array of groups and organisations (Boström & Garsten, 2008, pp. 6–7).

Accordingly, our aim is to examine how the norm of accountability is negotiated as part of active processes of governance and policy adaptation for nutrient reduction. Below, we first introduce the agro-environmental governance regime in the BSR and how it emerges through the interplay between an array of European policy processes. We then zoom in on one of the riparian countries in the region, namely Denmark, as a case of an EU member state seeking to implement agreed nutrient reduction targets. Based on this background, we introduce the action research methodology underlying this paper and offer an analytical lens for distinguishing three co-existing sense-making perspectives on agro-environmental governance in the region, which provide different frames of reference for stakeholders to justify their views and actions, thus conveying an impression of being accountable. The results section provides a jointly constructed narrative from a process of stakeholder consultation, which describes how nutrient reduction targets and agro-environmental measures have been negotiated in Denmark under the national government's ambitious Green Growth Strategy, which currently seeks to orchestrate Danish compliance with EU directives and Baltic regional goals. This evidence enables us to chart the policy adaptation routes and how stakeholders seek to keep each other accountable. Finally, while the policy processes involved in the agro-environmental governance include a range of targets, ranging from pesticides and hazardous waste to biodiversity and habitat conservation, in this paper we use the interest in nutrient pollution as one concrete entry point into this larger governance system.

6.3 Background: Agro-environmental governance in the Baltic Sea Region

The BSR is heralded as a flagship region within the EU for piloting sustainable solutions to reconciling economic growth and environmental conservation in the agro-environmental and food sectors. The recent launch of the Baltic Sea Region Strategy (BSRS) was founded on the notion that the region reflects ‘an ideal case’ for the application of the European territorial cohesion approach (EC, 2009a). The core motivation for the BSRS was the recognised need to address interdependencies such as those related to eutrophication in a political manifestation of the new European concept of ‘macro-region’ as a heterogeneous but functional space for the implementation of EU political goals. While lacking an exact definition of the geographical boundary around this macro-region, the ambition is to coordinate all policies with ‘territorial impact’ in the region (Committee on Regional Development, 2010). It was with this rationale that the European Commission (EC) received a formal mandate from European Council to prepare the BSRS in December 2007, and the BSRS was subsequently adopted during the Swedish Presidency of the EU in October 2009.

In the consultation process prior to the launch of the BSRS, the majority of responses interpreted the notion of environmental sustainability of the Baltic Sea in relation to the targets under the Baltic Sea Action Plan (BSAP), led by the Helsinki Commission (HELCOM), and the EU Marine Strategy Framework Directive (MSFD) (Schymik & Krumrey, 2009). The MSFD is itself expected to be made operational through the regional sea conventions. In the case of the BSR this means that HELCOM and the BSAP are expected to coordinate the MSFD implementation. The BSAP has thus been argued to represent a voluntary pilot for the obligatory EU requirements in the MSFD. By extrapolation, it is suggested, the BSAP represents a fulfillment of the MSFD required development of a programme of measures for the involved member countries ahead of the 2015 deadline (Backer et al., 2009) (Table 6.1).

A significant portion of nutrient input to the Baltic Sea is riverine, i.e. from freshwater bodies (Håkansson & Bryhn, 2008), and the attainment of the MSFD and BSAP targets are thus contingent on progress under the EU’s Water Framework Directive (WFD). Many actions under the member states’ River Basin Management Plans (RBMP) are intended financed by respective Rural Development Programmes under the Common Agricultural Policy (CAP) (Dworak et al., 2010). Under the WFD, nutrient conditions comprise one of the chemical quality elements determining the ecological status of water bodies. Hence, there is here interdependency with the current revision of the CAP itself, including the expected change in the use of mandatory agro-environmental measures associated with the direct payments.

Table 6.1: Original nutrient reduction targets in the BSAP. The BSAP addresses eutrophication as one of four segments/strategic goals of the strategy (segment 1). These targets are the country-wise provisional nutrient reduction requirements included in the BSAP. The ongoing process for revising national targets can be followed through public meeting documents available from HELCOM. (Source: HELCOM, 2007.)

Country	Phosphorus (tonnes)	Nitrogen (tonnes)
Denmark	*16*	*17,210*
Estonia	220	900
Finland	150	1,200
Germany	240	5,620
Latvia	300	2,560
Lithuania	880	11,750
Poland	8,760	62,400
Russia	2,500	6,970
Sweden	290	20,780
Transboundary Common pool	1,660	3,780

6.3.1 The case of Denmark's Green Growth Strategy

Farmland in Denmark comprises close to two thirds of the total land area and this vast coverage and the intensive forms of production means that agriculture makes a significant imprint in most parts of the country. The concern regarding eutrophication dates back to the 1980s when a general public and political awareness emerged of the problem regarding oxygen depletion in shallow near-shore waters and contamination of groundwater, an important drinking water resource. The first action plan to reduce leaching of N, P and organic pollution was launched in 1985, and the first Action Plan for the Aquatic Environment (APAE) in 1987. The subsequent Action Plan for Sustainable Agriculture and the APAE phase II aimed to provide further measures and the political agreement behind APAE II also stipulated the need to prepare an action plan specifically for ammonium, which was agreed in 2001. The most recent action plan, APAE phase III, covering the period 2004–2015, represents a continuation of these plans, with a strengthening of the targets and provision of new and revised measures (Table 6.2).

Table 6.2: Overview of major national action plans on water and agriculture. (Condensed version from syntheses provided in Mikkelsen et al., 2005; Jørgensen et al., 2009; Grant & Waagepetersen, 2003; Waagepetersen et al., 2008; Mills & Dwyer, 2009.)

Year	Policy action	Purpose	Targets
1985	**NPO Action Plan (Nitrogen, Phosphor, Organic)**	Agriculture is defined as the most significant polluter of N and P. The plan aims to alleviate this pollution	Reduction of N and P – no specific targets
1987–1992	**Action Plan for the Aquatic Environment I**	First aquatic action plan, addressing both point sources and diffuse pollution.	Reduction of N leaching with 49 % (145,000 tons) Reduction of P leaching with 80 % (15,000 tons)
1991–2000	**Action Plan for Sustainable Agriculture**	Extension of the deadline for reduction targets from APAE I and provision of new measures	No further targets
1998–2003	**Action Plan for the Aquatic Environment II**	Extension of the deadline for reduction targets from APAE I and provision of new measures	No further targets
2001–2004	**Ammonia Action Plan**	The political agreement behind APAE II acknowledged that ammonium comprises up to one third of the N lost from agriculture.	Reduction in ammonium use of 9,400–9,600 tons
2005–2015	**Action Plan for the Aquatic Environment III**	To further reduce the nutrient pollution from the agricultural sector, initially parallel to, and to be merged with, the implementation of the WFD	Nitrogen leaching reduced by 13 % compared to 2003 levels. P leaching halved by 2015 compared to the 32,700 tons P in 2001/2002

Since the introduction of the action plans, official figures show that N discharges from point sources have on national level been reduced by 75 percent, and N and P surplus have been reduced by 35 percent and 55 percent, respectively. Model calculations estimate the reduction of nitrogen leaching from the root zone on agricultural land to be close to 47 percent (national average) (Waagepetersen et al., 2008; Vinther & Olsen, 2010; Grant et al., 2010). However, there has been a general delay in reaching agreed targets in politically endorsed action plans. The reduction targets for N and P of the APAE I and the Action Plan for Sustainable Agriculture were not reached by the end of the implementation period, and the second water management plan thus aimed at securing that the original 1987 targets were reached by 2003. This target was approximately reached by 2003, partly through a reduction in the import of mineral fertiliser from 406,000 to 206,000 tons N per year (Grant & Waagepetersen, 2003). While the 25 percent reduction target for P by 2009 was reached within APAE III, the reduction in N leaching from the agricultural sector seen under APAE II has ceased and has stagnated under APAE III (Waagepetersen et al., 2008).

The most recent large-scale governmental agro-environmental initiative is the Green Growth (*Grøn Vækst*) Strategy (henceforth simply the Strategy) from 2009, which ambitiously aims at an improved inter-sectoral coordination in promoting a green growth economy where the agro-food sector improves its innovative and competitive potential and regains international market shares. The Strategy replaces the succession of APAEs and is the follow-up on the Pesticide Action Plan 2004–09. It combines Danish commitments under the WFD and Nitrates Directive and is part-financed by the national Rural Development Programme. It is commonly argued by civil servants that a successful implementation of the WFD under the Strategy will ensure a simultaneous accomplishment of Danish obligations under the BSAP and MSFD, which are expected to be harmonised regarding targets for N and P. Further, it is expected that the commitments in BSAP do not add new commitments on top of those in the WFD and Nitrate Directive, as Denmark has already interpreted these directives to provide for an extensive regulative framework.

With regards to the discharge of nutrients, the Strategy first specified reduction targets of 19,000 tons N and 210 tons P discharge to the aquatic environment by 2015. These targets were politically agreed in June 2009 for the draft RBMPs under the WFD and are thus referring primarily to the ecological objectives for inland waters. This is the reason why they are exceeding the Danish obligations for the marine areas included under the BSAP (Table 6.1), as the effect on downstream marine nutrient reduction is expected to be less than the reduction upstream in inland waters (BLST, 2010a). However, following discussions, especially with the agricultural organisations about the financially strained situation for farmers and the risk of not being able to farm in parts of the country if these goals should be reached by 2015, led to a second political agreement (Green Growth 2.0) in April 2010. In the 2.0 agreement the goal is still to reach 19.000 tons N reduction in discharge to the aquatic environment, but the reduction of ‘deficit’ 10.000 tons N have, after analysis in four inter-ministerial working groups led by Ministry of Finance, been postponed to 2027 (Table 6.3). The decision to postpone the achievement of the original targets was made by the Minister of Environment, partly after comparisons with the rate of progress in selected other member states under the WFD (Anon., 2011).

Table 6.3: Measures under Green Growth to reduce nutrient discharge to the aquatic environment. (Strategy version 1.0 figures reproduced from DCEE (2010) with version 2.0 updates from BLST [Agency for Environmental and Spatial Planning] and the Faculty of Agricultural Sciences, Aarhus University, 2010.)

Measure	**Area covered (ha)**	**N reduction (tons)**	**P reduction (tons)**
Buffer strips	**50,000**	**2,561**	**160**
Extensification of river valleys	**3,000**	**0**	**30**
Wetlands	**10,000**	**1,132**	**0**
Catch crops replacing winter green fields	**50,000**	**690**	**0**
Increased catch crops	**140,000**	**1,950**	**0**
Revision of N norm rules		**1,008**	**0**
Ban on soil manipulation during autumn	**110,000**	**739**	**<1**
Periodic ban on tilling of grass fields	**15,000**	**230**	
Synergy from nature plans.		**700**	
TOTAL REDUCTION	**288,000**	**9,000**	**200**
TARGET		**19,000**	**210**
CURRENT DEFICIT		**10,000**	**10**

The effectiveness of instruments under earlier APAEs was calculated solely on the basis of impacts on N leaching (Grant & Waagepetersen, 2003; Mikkelsen et al., 2007). However, the most recent scientific assessments of measure prior to the selection for the RBPMs under the Strategy included consideration also of the effect measures would have under other targets (e.g. Jensen et al., 2009). The calculations of nutrient reductions were based on known potentials for each policy instrument, but with a partial deduction for voluntary measures (including those under the direct payments scheme) as full impact was not expected (BLST, 2010b). The development of RBMPs also drew on the outcomes from the conclusions of a previously established Committee on Policy Instrument, which had evaluated measures against their efficiency in reducing the agricultural impact on water bodies (Jensen et al., 2009). However, for the instruments, which were not analysed by this committee, data from previous evaluations and the registry was used, in conjunction with expert judgements (MST, 2006). In so doing, the Danish approach resembles that of most other member states, which drafted their plans based on mixtures of expert catalogues and public consultations (Dworak et al., 2010). The RBMPs are currently in public hearing and municipal action plans will subsequently be prepared.

6.4 Methodology

6.4.1 Action research approach

The research for this paper was undertaken as a situation analysis of national implementability challenges faced by implementing actors through a review of past and current practice on agro-environmental targets. The analysis was undertaken following an action learning research approach in soft system thinking tradition (Checkland, 1999). Action learning, as facilitated in this research project, aimed to position the work in the larger Danish and Baltic governance context, embedding the very research interventions into existing governance mechanisms – as well as embedding stakeholder realities into the research outcomes. This included recognition that stakeholders must be included as co-researchers in order to position research constructively in contested spaces of multiple actors with diverging interests and perceptions (Ison et al., 2007). The findings provided in this paper thus have been co-developed in a participatory process of inquiry with opportunities for implementing actors to provide the relevant information, undertake interpretations of findings, and critique conclusions.

Consultations were held in Copenhagen during March and April 2010 with professionals from organisations who in different ways have ‘implementing responsibility’. The identification of implementing actors acknowledged that the national contexts in each of the BSR riparian countries vary and that the drivers of change are not limited to the public sector, but equally in the private and civil society sectors. Thus, the notion of ‘implementing actor’ referred to all organisations and people engaged in policy adaptation, i.e. public, private, and civil society sectors (Table 6.4).

The consultations aimed at eliciting the nature of the implementation process and surfacing the major implementability challenges faced. The problem of eutrophication was tabled but an effort was made to make the issue of eutrophication relevant in relation to each stakeholder’s interests. The consultations took the form of one-to-one conversations, focus groups, or – in two cases – telephone interviews. A synthesis report was circulated to the contributors and other interested parties for comments between five and 27 November 2010 and the findings subsequently discussed and consolidated in a workshop held in cooperation with Local Government Denmark in Copenhagen 6 December 2010. Subsequent follow up interviews were conducted in March 2011 with selected additional actors to provide information, which was identified as missing from the first round of consultations in 2010.

Table 6.4: Contributors to the study. Participants in the consultations were affiliated with the following organisations, however not necessarily representing the official view of their organisation. In total 33 professionals from 22 organisations contributed to the study. Danish ministries are organised into two segments: (i) the department, which is the political level supporting the minister with policy development, and (ii) the agencies, which are implementing arms of the ministry.

Public	The Department – Ministry of Food, Agriculture and Fisheries; Danish Plant Directorate; Danish Food Industry Agency; Agency for Spatial and Environmental Planning; Forest and Nature Agency; Environmental Protection Agency; The Department – Ministry of Finance, Danish Regions; Local Government Denmark.
Private	Individual farmers; Danish Agriculture and Food Council; Danish Agricultural Advisory Service; Rambøll Denmark Ltd.; Agro Business Park.
Civil society	Danish Society for Nature Conservation; Danish Outdoor Council; The Trade Union NNF; United Federation of Danish Workers; The Ecological Council; Danish Consumer Council.
Research institutes	Faculty of Agricultural Sciences, Aarhus University; Institute of Food and Resource Economics

6.4.2 Analytical lens: Co-existing sense-making perspectives on governance

Below, we synthesise the insights from all contributing stakeholders into a joint narrative, substantiated with specific statements and references when relevant. In so doing we appropriate the view on rigour of qualitative research, which emphasises how the research findings adequately reflect the complex reality of the context and its human interactions, and is constructively interpreting and rendering it intelligible for actions (van der Riet, 2008). This approach reflects that the purpose of presenting these findings is not to claim any 'objective validity', but to share a number of insights, which were co-constructed with the participants in the research process. The research interventions thus aimed at transforming people's lived experiences into recognised scientific knowledge, which could be fed back into the governance system for further improvements (Flyvbjerg, 2006).

In creating this joint narrative we apply an analytical lens, which recognises the existence of three co-existing sense-making perspectives on governance within the BSR agro-environmental regime, namely (i) a reductionist perspective, (ii) a holist and expert systems perspective, and (iii) an interactionist perspective (Fig. 6.1) (Powell & Larsen, forthcoming). The reductionist perspective legitimates actions, which addresses clearly delineated (sectoral) policy targets and/or uses a vocabulary of accepted scientific categories. As a case in point, it has been argued that the WFD, through its reduction of the environmental complexity to a set of biological and chemical quality elements as the unit of analysis and its fragmentation of ecosystems into delineated river basins, represents a reductionist sense-making perspective (Borja et al., 2010). Addressing the problem of eutrophication of the Baltic Sea as a question of reducing the inflow of biochemical compounds and chemical elements of N and P also represents a reduction of the notion of environmental health to abstract scientific entities. The holist approach, in turn, requires actions and claims to conform with a more 'systemic' view defined by presumed objective delineations, such as for instance the Baltic Sea as an entire catchment. This is motivated by the desirability of so-called inter-sectoral and/or interdisciplinary collaboration, i.e. bringing together formerly distinct parts of the agro-environmental system into a new and assumed more integrated view. This perspective is argued to underlie the ecosystem approach as featured in the BSAP and MSFD, reflecting the global trend towards holistic and integrated management (Österblom et al., 2010, p. 1290). Such an approach departs from the larger catchment area of the Baltic Sea as a regional sea, and Borja et al. (2010) thus suggests that the MSFD represents a 'holistic functional approach', emphasising ecological processes and the integrity of the marine ecosystems at a larger spatial scale.

Both the reductionist and the holist perspective are founded on a 'knowledge prescriptive' approach. This means that policy measures are mobilised within an objectivist worldview, in which experts (scientists and decision-makers) can define the degree of nutrient leaching and the extent to which is a societal problem, which in turn is not open for negotiation. In contrast, the interactionist perspective acknowledges that the issue of eutrophication emerges in the interface of a diverse set of interests pertaining to environmental sustainability, human health, economic viability and social equity. This recasts eutrophication from a definable management 'problem' to a resource 'dilemma' shaped by multiple legitimate perspectives and a high degree of uncertainty and controversy regarding the most suitable management choices. This also recasts the attention from a holist 'expert system' to diverse 'stakeholder systems of interest' (Ison et al., 2007; Powell & Larsen, forthcoming). To some extent, the BSRS aims to follow this approach through seeking to enable more efficient implementation of sectoral targets through coordination of broader stakeholder involvement, raising awareness of different problem definitions related to nutrient leaching, and highlighting possibilities for collaboration (Kaarikivi-Laine & Biedrzycka, 2010).

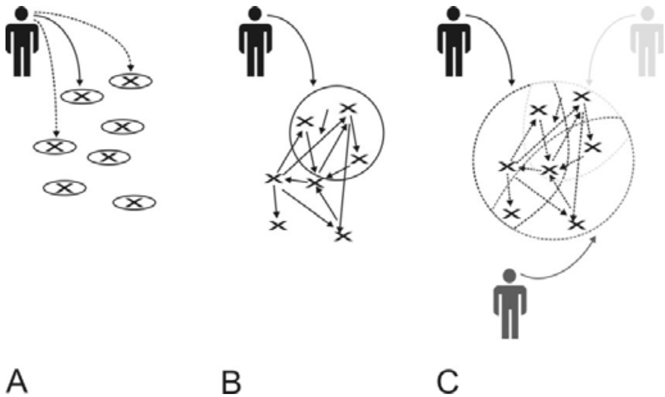

Figure 6.1: Sense-making perspectives on natural resource management.(Source: Powell & Larsen, Forthcoming. A: Reductionist (analysis of components); B: Holist ('hard' boundaries defining reference system); C) Interactionist (stakeholders' systems of interest).

6.5 Results and analysis charting the policy adaptation route

While the inter-sectoral collaboration between ministries and agencies in the public sector was commended, it was commonly acknowledged across state and non-state actors involved in the present study that there had been challenges in the inclusion of other implementing actors and stakeholders in general (such as research institutes, municipalities, private sector, farmer organisations, NGOs, etc.). In this view, the preparation of the Strategy had resulted in politically agreed ambitious nutrient reduction targets in the Strategy version 1.0 without a clear joint picture of how these targets were to be implemented. Denmark has an impending European court case for the WFD implementation (BLST, 2008), and it was suggested by non-state actors that the risk of severe financial penalties had spurred a concern in national government to rapidly arrive at a frame for Danish implementation. This meant that the government delayed the securing of buy-in from non-state actors chiefly for the negotiation of policy instruments to implement the already set targets. As symbolised by the arrival of the Strategy version 2.0, this has been fraught with significant difficulty.

In order to understand how the norm of accountability is negotiated, we discern three major 'instances' of the policy adaptation process, which emerged during the stakeholder dialogue. We explore how people within these instances mobilised different strategies of justification seeking to achieve a desirable degree of mutual accountability in prioritising and selecting measures and influencing reduction targets.

6.5.1 Policy adaptation instance 1: Defining the 'public good'

Public policy directions on nutrient reductions are embedded in the Danish societal project and thus intrinsically cast in relation to the responsibility for the common, or public, good. This forms an important bottom-line of deliberations on nutrient reductions and decisions on policy measures have to be justified as to how they contribute to this end. The agricultural sector is by far the largest manager of land in Denmark and this raises frequent questions regarding the demands, which can placed by the public and how the public good in that case can be defined. As a general rule, state regulation is enacted without compensation when the regulation is deemed to refer to the public interest. Management requirements are imposed, which infringe on the rights of private property enshrined in the Constitution, when they can be justified as of a general and acceptable nature to the land owners. The definition of the 'public good' thus achieves significance in determining the interpretation of the 'polluter pays principle' in environmental law, and the distribution of interventions between voluntary and coercive measures (see also Wilhjelmudvalget, 2001b; DCEE, 2010). As explained by an agricultural civil servant

> the increasing state regulation of agricultural practices must continuously be reconciled with the underlying principles in Danish legislation where there is a heavy obligation to voluntary measures in respect for private ownership, supported by a broad political base (Copenhagen, February, 2010).

In the negotiation of what comprises justifiably demands on landowners, the majority of arguments from stakeholders were cast under the holist sense-making perspective. Under the Strategy, the public good considered is first and foremost that of the Danish citizenry, i.e. a national territorial boundary. In this regard, the Green Growth vision takes a systemic view, nurturing the widespread national self-conception that Danish agriculture is leading with regards to innovation and green agricultural practices, including animal welfare. It is thus expected that promotion of high environmental standards under agro-environmental regulations in the EU will not only serve environmental and public health interests but also give a competitive edge in the market competition, especially with the more small scale producers in Southern and Central Europe, and enabling export of green technologies with an increased economic gain (see also Mills & Dwyer, 2009). It is also in this line that the Danish government has argued for a deregulation of the CAP, specifically a complete abolishment of the support under Pillar 1 (direct support to production), and a channelling of these funds to agro-environmental measures and steps to avoid renationalisation in the member states (Kristensen & Andersen, 2008).

This nationalist version of the holist perspective was dominating in the discussions and left little space for holist systems boundaries propagated through regional efforts. The BSAP is considering the Baltic Sea catchment as the total relevant system, in which the Danish territory is only one component. Beyond the fact that the WFD had the most immediate deadlines, the emphasis on the national public interest also explains the relative prioritisation of the WFD implementation as a national priority in the Strategy, since this more immediately address the national concerns of eutrophied inland waters and shallow fiords and contamination of groundwater. Different kinds of arguments were here mobilised to maintain the national boundary as preeminent over the regional sea boundary, for instance as expressed by one agricultural expert:

> Technically, the greater part of the Danish drainage area is to the North Sea rather than the Baltic Sea … and, owing to the southward flow of the Baltic Sea waters, efflux from Danish agriculture is rarely contributing to the marine waters of other riparian states (Copenhagen, March 2010).

In addition to the national and the Baltic Sea catchment boundaries, a third holist line of argument was promoted by representatives of labour unions, focusing on the European Community at larger scale as the relevant 'whole' systems level. As such, one labour union programme director stated that

> the one-eyed emphasis on nutrients disregards how [changing legislation] lead to exploitation – 'social dumping' – of labour from new member states and problems of food hygiene due to unskilled labour (Copenhagen, March 2010).

This argument implied that environmental regulations were indirectly driving the shifting of agro-industry, such as that connected to pig and livestock production, to countries where labour could be exploited more ruthlessly. Through such arguments, labour union representatives relied on the holist expert system's inter-sectoral ambition to critique the lack of coherence of nutrient reduction efforts with EC Directives, which more explicitly consider aspects of social sustainability in relation to labour and worker rights. This focused on the fact that much economic activity is not space based but organised according to transnational corporate networks in the European and international markets.

6.5.2 Policy adaptation instance 2: Estimating cost-efficiency of measures

As previous government strategies, the Strategy relies on science based and economically rational cost-efficiency analyses as a central means of comparing and selecting the most desirable measures for nutrient reduction targets. Actors generally acknowledged the uncertainty associated with nutrient reductions and that the setting of targets and implementation of measures best could be conceived as a trial and error process, where some plans may not reach targets, and that a number of uncertainties beyond the control of those responsible influence the success of chosen measures. The emphasis on N and P as abstract scientific entities represents a reductionist approach to harnessing this uncertainty associated with agro-environmental measures, and reductionist arguments thus comprised the central discourse shaping resource allocation and actions.

Within the mainstream reductionist approach, negotiation centred on the strength of available cost-efficiency analyses. Most contributors to the present study had points of criticism regarding technical estimation procedures and their assumptions and respective weaknesses (e.g. whether calculations pertained to nutrient reductions per ha of farmed land or ton of produced food; attended to variability in price levels for agricultural products; incorporated estimated future climate changes, etc.).

In the renegotiation of the Strategy to yield version 2.0, the agricultural lobby organisations targeted the general appreciation of the uncertainty associated with selection and evaluation of instruments, which interact in a non-linear fashion. This included references to uncertainties associated with scientific estimates of nutrient discharges, both in terms of the underlying data used and the calculations and formula for estimating the flux of N and P (e.g. Mikkelsen et al., 2007). The critique pertained specifically to the relationships between the official monitoring indicators such as sea grass and secchi depth and the actual nutrient richness. The credibility of the indicators was questioned, among other based on a recent report from technical consultants recruited by the largest agricultural interest organisation (DHI, 2010). As explained by one representative from the agricultural organizations:

> the model used by the authorities was generic for all fiords and does not take into account the different relationships between the variables in different fiords (Copenhagen, March 2010).

Municipalities and farmer organisations also successfully mobilised claims within the holist perspective, arguing during the technical hearings of the RBMPs that the national level cost-efficiency analysis (national boundary) was insufficient to justify policy measures and that there had to be analyses undertaken at catchment level (sub-national catchment boundary).

However, in general, interventions by stakeholders within the reductionist sense-making perspectives proved more efficient than claims within the holist expert systems perspective. Most non-state participants referred in the present study to their unsuccessful attempts to push the prioritisation towards a more holistic inter-sectoral consideration in the prioritisation of measures. This included arguments such as that expressed by an environmental NGO programme leader that

> if the search is for synergies between sectors it makes no sense to evaluate measures in relation to only one parameter – like N reduction (Copenhagen, February 2010).

One civil servant similarly argued that the preparation of the Strategy had ignored measures such as nature reconstruction, which deliver a range of benefits, including on reduction of pesticides, nutrients, and for biodiversity and recreation. Environmental NGOs suggested that the same was the case for the use of organic agriculture as a measure, which was argued to offer a similar 'package' of benefits. Several civil servants and environmental NGO also described how reforestation is not factored into nutrient reduction efforts as the management of state forest and nature reserves is not formally acknowledged to contribute to combating diffuse pollution from agriculture. The lack of capacity to incorporate the value of recreation into cost-efficiency analyses has earlier been pointed out in the Danish deliberations and it has been recommended to revise the standard analysis methods to include a broader welfare economic analysis method (see also DCEE, 2010).

The embracement of these more holistic claims in the prioritisation of measures was compounded partly by the lack of accepted models and estimation procedures to satisfy the reductionist demands. For instance, civil servants acknowledged that the mainstream approach placed reductionist constraints on actors in terms of the information to provide in the evaluation of measures, where new ideas must go through credible scientific testing years in advance in order to have the necessary evidence to judge their relative effectiveness. As one civil servant explained 'it is of no use to have great ideas if the scientific evidence is missing'.

6.5.3 Policy adaptation instance 3: Negotiating adaptability of measures

Intrinsic to the selection of measures was a negotiation regarding the flexibility of each measure, i.e. the sub-national and contextual operationalisation of the centralised decision. It was generally acknowledged that measures in previous action plans had been too generic and that more flexible and adaptable instruments were desirable to achieve local as well as national win-win situations. This view was partly motivated by estimates such as that the N reduction target of 19,000 tons discharge would require a general reduction in fertiliser input of up to 50 percent if relying on general instruments indiscriminate of the cost-efficiency in different localities and catchments (DCEE, 2010). The need for more targeted measures was also frequently explained by the fact that the achievements over the past decades had owed largely to general measures and that further reductions would require more locally tailored approaches. In fact, the renegotiation of the Strategy version 2.0 reflects a realisation that it would be economically unrealistic to reach the reduction targets by more general measures alone. Further, the calculation of the current Strategy reduction targets is based on the discharge of nutrients to the aquatic environment, contrary to previous action plans, which calculated targets against *leaching* from the root zone (c. 1 m below soil surface). This makes it even more important to focus the employment of measures where the retention of nutrients is highest.

The ability to debate the flexibility and adaptability of measures was creating space for arguments predominantly within the interactionist perspective, drawing on claims from non-state actors that a 'blanket' approach under the Strategy continued to prioritise generic measures, which did not consider the different properties of local contexts, including discrimination against local conditions such as topography, habitats, the nature of the agro-food sector, and management styles at farm level (see also Noe & Langvad, 2006). Interactionist inspired claims were drawn upon by non-state actors to criticise (i) the drawing up the draft RBMPs without sufficient involvement of catchment stakeholders, (ii) the general leadership of the Strategy development for not having sufficient competence in facilitating collaboration with private and civil society agro-environmental groups, and (iii) to protest that detailed steering of the state was inhibiting the ability of local administrations to coordinate their use of policy instruments across legislative domains.

Within the debate on adaptability and local operationalisation of measures the interactionist perspective framed claims regarding the importance of stakeholder participation. Civil servants from both agricultural and environmental agencies raised concern regarding the heated discussions with interest groups, in which there has been a significant critique of the government in the media. It was widely recognised that measures are not effective without buy in from farmers and rural groups and that a main problem is that many farmers have not bought into the goals of the current policy. As one civil servant stated:

> [W]e know that the implementation of [voluntary measures] cannot proceed faster than people are prepared to talk with us (Phone interview, March 2010).

For this reason, professionals from public agencies placed high priority on nurturing relationships with sub-national administrations of municipalities and regions as well as private and civil society organisations, and it was a source of concern that the approach under Green Growth was weakening these relationships. That this worry was justified was confirmed by NGOs and farmer organisation representatives. For instance one NGO programme director, stated that due to

> increasing frustration that our inputs are not heard in the Danish policy making we feel urged to a more confrontational strategy towards the government (Copenhagen, February 2010).

Such interactionist claims were by some civil servants sought disqualified as disregarding the procedures of the representative democratic system. This was the reason why one civil servant exclaimed, upon reading the viewpoints from other stakeholders in the report prepared as part of the present study, that

> there are too many extra-parliamentarian viewpoints! They have to acknowledge that the majority has decided on the political line for the country through the elections (Copenhagen, December 2010).

These interactionist claims encountered the reductionist and holist arguments, which were already well established in the process of defining the view on the public good and the proper approach to estimating of costs-efficiencies of measures. The meeting between the three perspectives is particularly well illustrated in the deliberations regarding the ambition to launch a national system of tradable N quotas as a more locally adaptable mechanism. This prospect is currently being assessed in one of the inter-ministerial working groups to address the 10,000 tons deficit N under the Strategy. Participants in the present study, who are party to these negotiations, explained how, first of all, such a quota system would likely require a revised monitoring system to assess leaching at plot/farm level. The current monitoring system is based on calculations of nutrient inputs in selected localities and extrapolations enable estimates for the national and catchment/basin scale (DMU, 2004). Secondly, civil servants expressed that because of the strict (reductionist) rules for the N norms per crop set under the Nitrates Directive there is a limited opportunity for the proposed trading scheme to deal with N as lump sum to respond to local (interactionist) interests and/or farm level conditions. The ambition was also hampered by holist boundary problems owing to a lack of integration between farmers' production maps and the local authorities' environmental maps and the fact that relevant statistics are not currently available at catchment level but only according to administrative boundaries.

6.6 Discussion: Accountability vacuums and the role of justification

The case of Denmark's Green Growth Strategy shows how riparian efforts to reduce nutrient pollution to the Baltic Sea proceeds through stakeholders' actions within specific policy adaptation instances. In the analysis we discerned three such instances, where professionals mobilised claims to justify their actions in relation to one or several of three co-existing sense-making perspectives on governance. Owing to the nature of the discussion and the origin of the central questions debated, each of the policy adaptation instances was largely colonised by one particular sense making perspective (Table 6.5). As observed, this provided a filter for the types of claims, which were accepted to justify actions and render them accountable, but also enabled stakeholders to tap into different policy adaptation instances, where their competencies could be best appraised.

Table 6.5: Framework to explain the construction of accountability in Danish nutrient reduction governance.

Sense-making perspective on governance	Strategies for professionals to justify actions and claims	Examples of modes of justification	Dominant policy adaptation instance
Reductionist	**Reduction** of uncertainty to singular manageable components through objectivist scientific methods	Estimating N and P reduction targets and evaluating policy measures in relation to single targets	Estimation and prioritisation of cost-efficiency of measures
Holist	**Bounding** of a system through authoritative knowledge: inter-sectoral, interdisciplinary, multiple benefits	Addressing the Baltic Sea as system (catchment) across country borders *vis-à-vis* focusing on the Danish national territory	Definition of the 'public good'
Interactionist	**Reference to interests** and perspectives of stakeholders and the importance of social relationships	Justifying decisions in relation to diverse knowledge types, mandates, trust, political programmes, etc.	Negotiation of the adaptability of measures

Owing to the opportunity to strategically use the sense-making perspective, which is most likely to sanction people's ambitions, the participants in the study shared that it was frequently unclear when decisions owe to political agendas, technical knowledge of scientists and/or implementers or interests of the clients of the policy. This was seen to pave the way for considerable ambiguities in which professionals struggle with trading off the politically opportune and administratively/practically possible. Two specific quotes from the consultations further substantiate this argument:

> There is so much ambiguity in the interpretation [of the EU Water Framework Directive] … that politics invariably enter the technical argumentation. This creates real problems of trust! (Civil servant, Copenhagen, March 2011).

And

> The main problems in identifying policy measures arise because we have competing demands on the decision-making, which don't go well together. The measures have to be scientifically proven, they have to be just, and they have to controllable. And constantly, there are enormous uncertainties – there is no one in the Kingdom of Denmark, who knows exactly the reality of the nutrient flows! (NGO senior programme manager, Copenhagen, March 2011)

In consequence it is frequently unclear whether different forms of stakeholder agency ought to be interpreted as misconduct or desirable innovation. In other words, policy adaptation becomes characterised by 'vacuum symptoms', where formal, institutionalised accountability mechanisms do not alone acknowledge the roles actors take through their agency. This reflects a manifestation of what Ulrich Beck (1992) has termed the problem of organised irresponsibility, i.e. the production of risks, which are no one's responsibility because they have multiple causes and no one are directly accountable for their role in creating the risk.

Such ambiguity partly serves to explain the difficulties faced by professionals in operationalising objectives cast within any single sense-making perspectives. For the holist Baltic Sea ecosystem catchment-boundary Österblom et al. thus observes that

> [t]he ecosystem approach is commonly featured in marine policy documents, but managers commonly struggle with its interpretation and practical implementation (Österblom et al., 2010, p. 1290).

For the reductionist approach, Stöhr and Chabay (2010) conclude, in a case study of the Baltic Sea Regional Advisory Council for fisheries governance, that reductionist expert inputs are unable to overcome the conflict between competing rationalities. Further, while relatively successful in the policy adaptation instances concerning adaptability of measures, interactionist inspired claims operated in the present study within the frames set primarily by holist and reductionist based arguments in the defining of the public good and selection of measures, respectively. This supports the findings by Fletcher (2007) that Baltic marine management continues to be characterised by an absence of clearly defined guidelines for stakeholder involvement and that assumed norm-free 'scientific inputs' are still set to dominate. It also supports findings from other coastal and marine resource management cases that while enthusiastic arguments may abound regarding a shift towards a multi-stakeholder and multi-sectoral governance regime, the basic premise remains reductionist and objectivist (e.g. Larsen et al., 2011).

Poulsen's (2009) study of administrative accountability in Danish ministries showed how accountability dilemmas emerge from the 'archaeological layers' of Danish parliamentarism since 1901, when the parliamentary principles introduced in the 1849 Constitution were implemented. The transition from bureaucratic *Rechtstaat*, over a corporative welfare state to an increasingly networked form of meta-governance has seen a shift from an emphasis on 'procedural accountability' towards 'performance accountability'. This means that it is not sufficient for civil servants to only ensure that the formal rules are followed, they are now also partly held accountable for the outcomes of the policy processes. The present study confirms that the central challenge in the Danish response to Baltic and European agro-environmental nutrient reduction targets is a navigation of co-existing of definitions of accountability (Bovens et al., 2010; Boström & Garsten, 2008). However, it also goes further to propose a framework to approach accountability not only within the public administration but as a constructed norm across sectors. More specifically, the results offer a framework for professionals in agro-environmental governance to more explicitly address the subtle ways in which accountability is created and undermined.

As van Woerkum and Aarts (Forthcoming) observe, professionals are by nature highly resistant to control. Indeed, it is their ability for autonomous and spontaneous actions that makes them competent professionals capable of leading implementation of agro-environmental measures in the first place. However, this extraordinary and valuable competence of people has to be socially mediated in some way, if it is to lead to concerted action and publicly desirable outcomes. How, then, do civil servants – and other stakeholders – respond to the dilemmas arising when they are caught between expectations of value neutrality, observance of appropriate rules, and actively nurturing relationships and ideas with non-state actors? The strategies employed by professionals documented in this case study point to the processes of justification within policy adaptation instances as a critical undercurrent, which enables actors across sectors to creatively draw on different co-existence sense-making perspectives on agro-environmental governance to justify – and hence legitimate – their practices.

This places an awareness of the quality of reasoning and discourses used in each encounter as central in determining the accountability of actors. Those charged to facilitate national implementation of nutrient reduction targets must pay more explicit attention to the way in which the exertion of stakeholder agency is located in the in-between of the *ex ante* and *ex post*, i.e. between anticipative claims of responsibility and the retrospective expectation of answerability through accountability mechanisms (Boström & Garsten, 2008). This implies a need to more transparently monitor and shape the creative instances of policy adaptation in which professionals have the possibility to judge what constitutes acceptable external and internal sources of responsibility and how to react to incomplete knowledge, i.e. the intrinsic indeterminacies between management actions and consequences. An important implication is that accountability cannot be treated as a remote meta-level principle, which can be redefined, negotiated, or navigated in isolation from concrete, material and discursive nutrient management practices. We need to approach accountability exactly for what is it, namely a norm *embedded* in conflicts between different interests as an intrinsic phenomenon of human life and expressed in frequent policy incoherence in agro-environmental governance. This means revisiting the frequent assumption that

> constructs of accountability … are objective or verifiable because they are done at arm's length, as opposed to transactions between … relatives (Muller, 2008, p. 400).

In fact, accountability is constructed exactly *in* the transaction between professionals, where different modes of justification are enacted. This implies a need to better nurture policy adaptation instances to transform them into more transparent and accessible spaces, where creativity can be adequately appraised.

The Danish efforts to address the issue of eutrophication in the Baltic Sea are also symbolic of how Baltic riparian states in general are struggling with the implementation of the European Community ambition of delivery of 'multiple benefits' and regional cohesion through its agro-environmental policies. This includes the challenge of reconciling the sustainable management of the Baltic Sea as a common resource with navigating internal national contestations between divergent definitions of the public good and external competition between states for access to shares in European and international agro-food markets. At the outset, the neoliberal capitalist mode of agricultural production underlying current European agro-environmental policy precipitates that member states, and their corporate lobbyists, have large vested interests in the allocation of EU financial resources and the setting of environmental standards that affect the 'costs of compliance' for their respective agro-industry in following obligatory environmental regulations (Erjavec & Erjavec, 2009; Grethe, 2007; Weis, 2007). This reflects that the legitimating strategies employed by Danish stakeholder play out

> within a broader global governance context shaped by a liberal democratic push for individual liberty, choice and participation; but also by a neoliberal privileging of market-based solutions to environmental and social challenges and support for 'light touch' regulation of the private sector (Gupta, 2010, p. 6).

This competitive backdrop runs fundamentally counter to concerted action on distributed environmental problems such as nutrient pollution and further posits the need for improved accountability. When the ability to keep each other mutually accountable for the setting, interpretation, and implementation of nutrient reduction targets are undermined, then this contestation over accountability in the national interpretation of policy objectives is severely holding back cooperation on eutrophication and related agro-environmental transboundary dilemmas. In consequence, today riparians frequently give priority to the implementation of national actions embedded in mandatory EU legislation rather than regional voluntary actions, such as those within the BSAP. This prioritises reaching country targets at the expense of BSR system level benefits of transboundary cooperation (Powell et al., 2011; Juska, 2010).

6.7 Conclusions

Through an examination of the Danish Green Growth Strategy, this paper has shown how stakeholders employ strategies within co-existing reductionist, holist, and interactionist sense-making perspectives on governance in instances of policy adaptation related to definition of the public good, the prioritisation of measures, and the negotiation of the adaptability of these measures. This has posited the processes of justification in the transactions between professionals – i.e. in the concrete encounters and exchanges between professionals – as a critical undercurrent, which enables actors across sectors to creatively draw on different co-existence sense-making perspectives on agro-environmental governance to create images of accountability and thus legitimate their practices.

While appreciative of current Danish and regional efforts to improve progress and cooperation on the issue of eutrophication the presented analysis suggests that agro-environmental governance of eutrophication must much more explicitly address the ambiguities between sense-making perspectives to enable a co-construction of acceptable modes of justification, which determines when stakeholder agency represents creativity and innovation or misconduct and cooption. There is a need for a heightened awareness amongst decision-makers and professionals in general regarding the possibility to justify decisions and actions with reference to competing frameworks and governance traditions and more consciously consider the very process of negotiating different modes of justification as vital in securing a joint sense of accountability. This accountability, in turn, is required foremost when actions rely on voluntary cooperation, as is the case in many agro-environmental measures and the agreements underlying the approach to Baltic Sea eutrophication.

6.8 Acknowledgements

This paper is an outcome from the Danish national review of implementability of agro-environmental targets and measures, conducted in Work Package 6: Policy Adaptation and Governance in the project Baltic COMPASS (Comprehensive Policy Actions and Investments in Sustainable Solutions in Agriculture in the Baltic Sea Region). The work was funded by the European Union through the Interreg Baltic Sea Region Programme with matching funding from the Swedish Ministry of Agriculture. We wish to acknowledge the contributions of all Danish participants in the review process. In particular we are grateful to Nikolaj Sveistrup (Local Government Denmark), Henriette Hossy (Danish Environmental Protection Agency), and Henning Lyngsö Fogde (Agro Business Park) for their contributions and advice. Finn Vinther (Faculty of Agricultural Sciences, Aarhus University) provided technical inputs to the project report underlying the present paper, and Kaj Granholm (HELCOM and Swedish University of Agricultural Sciences) provided advice regarding the Danish obligations under the Baltic Sea Action Plan. Christian Sivert Brogaard supported with guidance concerning the legislative procedures in Denmark, and Prof. Cees Leeuwis (Communication and Innovation Studies, Wageningen University) provided valuable comments on the analysis to help improve the paper to its present form.

6.9 References

Anon. (2011). Kvælstof-reduktion udsættes 12 år (Nitrogen reduction postponed with 12 years). *Landbrugs Avisen,* 9 February 2011. Retrieved from http://www.landbrugsavisen.dk.

Backer, H., Leppänen, J-M., Brusendorff, A. C. Forsius, K., Stankiewicz, M., Mehtonen, J., Pyhälä, M. Laamanen, M., Paulomäki, H., Vlasov, N., & Haaranen, T. (2009). HELCOM Baltic Sea Action Plan – A regional programme of measures for the marine environment based on the Ecosystem Approach. *Marine Pollution Bulletin, 60*, 642–649.

Bäckstrand, K. (2006). Multi-Stakeholder Partnerships for Sustainable Development: Rethinking Legitimacy, Accountability and Effectiveness. *European Environment, 16,* 290–306.

Beck, U. (1992). *Risk society. Towards a new modernity*. London: Sage.

BLST (Agency for Environmental and Spatial Planning). (2008). Den danske regerings svar på Europa-Kommissionens åbningsskrivelse om gennemførelsen af direktiv 2000/60/EF om fastlæggelse af en ramme for Fællesskabets vandpolitiske foranstaltninger (2007/2235) i dansk lovgivning (Danish Government response on the European Commission's announcement regardingthe implementation of Directive 2000/60/EU on the framework for the Community's water policy). Memorandum no. 405–0004. Retrieved from http://www.ft.dk

BLST (Agency for Environmental and Spatial Planning). (2010a). Rapport om Danmarks implementering af HELCOM's Baltic Sea Action Plan (Report on Denmark's implementation of the HELCOM Baltic Sea Action Plan, BSAP). Memorandum, no. BLS–465–00129. Retrieved from http://www.helcom.fi/stc/files/BSAP/DK_NIP.pdf

BLST (Agency for Environmental and Spatial Planning). (2010b). Virkemiddelkatalog. Til brug for vandplanindsatsprogrammer for: Overfladevande, Grundvand, Sø- og Vandløbsrestaurering, Spildevand, Regnvand, Dambrug (Catalogue of policy instruments. For river basin management plans: surface waters, groundwater, lake and river restauration, waste water, rain water, aquaculture). Version 3. Retrieved from http://www.naturstyrelsen.dk/.

BLST (Agency for Environmental and Spatial Planning), & Faculty of Agricultural Sciences, Aarhus University. (2010). Personal communication, 15 December.

Borja, Á., Elliott, M., Carstensen, J., Heiskanen, A-S., & van de Bund, W. (2010). Marine management – Towards an integrated implementation of the European Marine Strategy Framework and the Water Framework Directives. *Marine Pollution Bulletin, 60* (12), 2175–2186.

Boström, M., & Garsten, C. (Eds.). (2008). *Organizing transnational accountability*. Cheltenham, UK: Edward Elgar Publishing Ltd.

Bovens, M., Curtin, D., & Hart, P. (Eds.). (2010). *The real world of EU accountability: What deficit?* Oxford: University Press.

DCEE (Danish Council of Environmental Economics). (2010). *Økonomi og Miljø 2010. Landbrug, Rekreative værdier i by og land, Energiforbrug og drivhusgasudledning, International klimapolitik* (Economy and Environment 2010. Agriculture, recreational values in urban and rural areas, energy consumption and greenhouse gas emission, international climate policy). Albertslund, Denmark: Schultz Grafisk. Retrieved from http://www.dors.dk/.

DHI (Danish Hydrological Institute). (2010). Analyse af ålegræsværktøjets anvendelighed til fastsættelse af miljømålsætning for kystvande og kvælstof-reduktionskrav. Landbrug & Fødevarer (Analysis of the applicability of sea grass to determine environmental targets for coastal waters and nitrogen reductions). Final Report. Copenhagen: DHI.

DMU (National Environmental Research Institute). (2004). *Det nationale program for overvågning af vandmiljøet og naturen, Programmebeskrivelse – del 1*. Faglig rapport fra DMU, no. 495 (National program for monitoring of water and nature, program description – part 1). Retrieved from http://www2.dmu.dk/.

Dworak, T., Berglund, M., Thaler, T., Fabik, E., L., Amand, B., Grandmougin, B., Ribeiro, M. M., Laaser, C., Matauschek, M., Amand, B., & Grandmougin, B. (2010). Assessment of agriculture measures included in the draft River Basin Management Plans: Summary Report. Retrieved from http://ec.europa.eu/environment/water/quantity/pdf/summary050510.pdf

EC (European Commission). (2009). Communication from the Commission to the European Parliament, the Council, the European Economic and Social Committee and the Committee of the Regions concerning the European Union Strategy for the Baltic Sea Region. COM(2009) 248 final. Retrieved from http://ec.europa.eu/regional_policy/sources/docoffic/official/communic/baltic/com_baltic_en.pdf

EC (European Commission). (2010). Interim report from the European Commission. The implementation of the EU Strategy for the Baltic Sea Region. Retrieved from http://ec.europa.eu/regional_policy/cooperation/baltic/documents_en.htm

Erjavec, K., & Erjavec, E. (2009). Changing EU agricultural policy discourses? The discourse analysis of Commissioner's speeches 2000–2007. *Food Policy, 34*, 218–226.

Fletcher, S. (2007). Converting science to policy through stakeholder involvement: An analysis of the European Marine Strategy Directive. *Marine Pollution Bulletin, 54*, 1881–1886.

Flyvbjerg, B. (2006). Five Misunderstandings About Case-Study Research. *Qualitative Inquiry, 12* (2), 219–245.

Grant, R., & Waagepetersen, J. (2003). Vandmiljøplan II – slutevaluering (Action Plan for the Aquatic Environment II – final evaluation). National Environmental Research Institute, Ministry of Environment. Retrieved from http://www.vmp3.dk/Files/Filer/Slutrapporter/VMPII_Slutevaluering_web.pdf

Grant, R., Pedersen, L. E., Blicher-Mathiesen, G., Jensen, P. G., Hansen, B., & Thorling, L. (2010). Landovervågningsoplande 2009: NOVANA. Faglig rapport fra DMU nr. 802 (river basins for monitoring: NOVANA). Danmarks Miljøundersøgelser, Aarhus Universitet. Retrieved from http://www2.dmu.dk/Pub/FR802.pdf

Grethe, H. (2007). High animal welfare standards in the EU and international trade – How to prevent potential 'low animal welfare havens'? *Food Policy, 32*, 315–333.

Gupta, A. (2010). Transparency in Global Environmental Governance: A Coming of Age? *Global Environmental Politics, 10* (3), 1–9.

Håkansson, L., & Bryhn, A. C. (2008). *Eutrophication in the Baltic Sea: Present Situation. Nutrient Transport Processes, Remedial Strategies.* Environmental Science and Engineering Series. Berlin: Springer-Verlag.

HELCOM (Helsinki Commission). (2007). HELCOM Baltic Sea Action Plan. HELCOM Extraordinary Ministerial Meeting, Krakow, Poland, 15 November, 2007. Retrieved from http://www.helcom.fi/stc/files/BSAP/BSAP_Final.pdf

Ison, R., Blackmore, C., & Jiggins, J. (2007). Social learning: An alternative policy instrument for managing in the context of Europe's water. *Environmental Science and Policy, 10*, 499–511.

Jensen, P. N., Jacobsen, B. H., Hasler, B., Rubæk, G., & Waagepetersen, J. (2009). Notat vedr. virkemidler og omkostninger til implementering af vandrammedirektivet April. Danmarks Miljøundersøgelser, Det Jordbrugsvidenskabelige Fakultet, Aarhus Universitet, og Fødevareøkonomisk Institut, Københavns Universitet (Notes on policy instruments and costs associated with implementing the Water Framework Directive). Copenhagen: FOI

Juska, A. (2010). 'Profits to the Danes, for us – Hog stench?' The campaign against Danish swine CAFOs in rural Lithuania. *Journal of Rural Studies, 23* (3), 250–259.

Jørgensen, L. B., Hagensen, J., Jørgensen, C. E., Vilby, K., Petersen, K. B., Bennekou, G. (2009). Miljøintegration i EU's landbrugspolitik (Environmental integration in EU's agricultural policy). Copenhagen: EcoCouncil.

Kaarikivi-Laine, U., & Biedrzycka, K. (2010). Annual report 2010 on EU Strategy for the Baltic Sea Region – Priority Area 1 (to reduce nutrient inputs to the sea to acceptable levels) 5.7.2010. Ministry of the Environment of Finland/Chief Inspectorate of Environmental Protection of Poland. Retrieved from http://www.itameriportaali.fi/.

Konrad-Adenauer-Stiftung. (2009). EU Baltic Sea Strategy. Report for the Konrad Adenauer Stiftung London Office. Retrieved from http://www.kas.de/.

Kristensen, L., & Andersen, E. (2008). CAP Reform Profile – Denmark. Retrieved 14 March 2010 from http://cap2020.ieep.eu/member-states/denmark

Larsen, R. K., Acebes, J. M., & Belen, A. (2011). Examining the assumptions of Integrated Coastal Management: Diverging stakeholder agendas and elite cooption in Babuyan Islands, Philippines. *Oceans and Coastal Management, 54*, 10–18.

Larsson, M., & Granstedt, A. (2010). Sustainable governance of the agriculture and the Baltic Sea: Agricultural reforms, food production and curbed eutrophication. *Ecological Economics, 69,* 1943–1951.

LEI (Agricultural Economics Research Institute), & IEEP (Institute for European Environmental Policy). (2009). Study on the economic, social and environmental impact of the modulation provided for in Article 10 of Council Regulation (EC) No 1782/2003. Directorate General for Agriculture and Rural Development, Contract Nº 30–CE–0162480/00–47. Retrieved from http://ec.europa.eu/agriculture/analysis/external/modulation/exec_sum_en.pdf

Lewis, L., & Russell, S. (2011). Permeating Boundaries: Accountability at the Nexus of Water and Climate Change. *Social and Environmental Accountability Journal* 31 (2), 117–123.

Logsdon, J. M., & Lewellyn, P. G. (2000). Expanding Accountability to Stakeholders: Trends and Predictions. *Business and Society Review, 105* (4), 419–435.

Mikkelsen, S. A., Iversen, B. H., Kjær, S., & Feenstra, P. (2005). The regulation of nutrient losses in Denmark to control aquatic pollution from agriculture. In *Evaluating Agri-environmental Polices. Design, Practice and Results* (pp. 295–308). OECD Publishing.
Mills, J., & Dwyer, J. (Eds.). (2009). *EU Environmental Regulations in Agriculture. Final Report to the Environment Agency.* Gloucester UK: Countryside and Community Research Institute.
MST (Danish Environmental Protection Agency). (2006). Enhedsomkostninger og forureningsbegrænsning ved forskellige miljøforanstaltninger. Katalog til brug for overordnede tekniske og økonomiske vurderinger i forbindelse med vandrammedirektivet (Unit costs and pollution control associated with different environmental interventions. Catalogue for general technical and economic judgements under the Water Framework Directive), March 2006. Retrieved from http://www.naturstyrelsen.dk
Muller, S. (2008). Accountability Constructions, Contestations and Implications: Insights from Working in a Yolngu Cross-Cultural Institution, Australia. *Geography Compass, 2* (2), 395–413.
Noe, E., & Landgvad, A. M. (2006). Sociologisk undersøgelse af forudsætninger for udvikling og implementering af integreret rådgivning i EU– LIFE projektet AGWAPLAN (Sociological study of the preconditions for development and implementation of integrated advisory in the EU-LIFE project AGWAPLAN). Tjele, Denmark: Department of Agroecology, Danish Institute of Agricultural Sciences. Retrieved from http://www.agwaplan.dk. /
Olejniczak, W. M. (2010). Working Document on the European Union Strategy for the Baltic Sea Region and the role of macro-regions in the future cohesion policy: Committee on Regional Development. DT\799506EN.doc. Retrieved from http://www.europarl.europa.eu.
Österblom, H., Gårdmark, A., Bergström, L., Müller-Karulis, M., Folke, C., Lindegren, M., Casini, M, Olsson, P., Diekmann, R., Blenckner, T., Humborg, C., & Möllmann, C. (2010). Making the ecosystem approach operational: Can regime shifts in ecological- and governance systems facilitate the transition? *Marine Policy, 34*, 1290–1299.
Poulsen, B. (2009). Competing traditions of governance and dilemmas of administrative accountability: the case of Denmark. *Public Administration, 87* (1), 117–131.
Powell, N., Larsen, R. K., Osbeck, M., & Jotikapukkana, S. (2011). Paving the way for the EU Regional Cohesion Policy in the Baltic Sea Region: Co-Constructing Agro-Environmental Measures through Stakeholder Agency. In Å. Gerger Swartling, C. Lundhom, R. Plummer & D. Armitage (Eds.), *Social Learning and Sustainability: Exploring critical issues in relation to environmental change and governance. Workshop proceedings, Stockholm Resilience Centre, Stockholm, Sweden 1–2 June 2010* (pp. 38–39). Stockholm: Stockholm Environment Institute.
Powell, N., & Larsen, R. K. (Forthcoming). Integrated Water Resource Management: A platform for improving the adaptive capacity of higher education institutions in meeting complex sustainability challenges. *Environmental Education Research.*
Schymik, C., & Krumrey, P. (2009). EU Strategy for the Baltic Sea Region. Core Europe in the Northern Periphery? Working Paper FG 1 2009/08, April 2009. Berlin: SWP. Retrieved from http://www.cespi.it/GOVMED/krumrey.pdf
SEI (Stockholm Environment Institute). (2010). Transboundary cooperation in agro-environmental governance: Lessons from past and ongoing Interreg projects. Baltic COMPASS Project Report. Retrieved from http://www.balticcompasss.org
Stöhr, C., & Chabay, C. (2010). Science and Participation in Governance of the Baltic Sea Fisheries. *Environmental Policy and Governance, 20*, 350–363.
van der Riet, M. (2008). Participatory Research and the Philosophy of Social Science. Beyond the Moral Imperative. *Qualitative Inquiry, 14* (4), 546–565.
van Woerkum, C., & Aarts, N. (Forthcoming). Accountability: To broaden the scope. *Journal of Organisational Transformation and Social Change*.

Vinther, F. P., & Olsen, P. (2010). *Næringsstofbalancer og næringsstofoverskud i landbruget 1988–2008*. Intern rapport, Markbrug no. 26 (Nutrient balances and surplus in agriculture). Aarhus, Denmark: Faculty of Agricultural Sciences, Aarhus University.

Waagepetersen, J., Grant, R., Børgesen, C. D., & Iversen, T. M. (2008). *Midtvejsevaluering af Vandmiljøplan III* (Half-way evaluation of the Action Plan for the Aquatic Environment III). Aarhus, Denmark: DJF (Faculty of Agricultural Sciences, Aarhus University)/ DMU (National Environmental Research Institute).

Weis, T. (2007). *The Global Food Economy. The Battle for the Future of Farming*. London: Zed Books.

Wilhjelmudvalget. (2001a). *Virkemidler til fremme af naturen i landbruget* (Policy instruments promoting nature in agriculture), November 2001.

Wilhjelmudvalget. (2001b). *Omkostninger ved udvalgte landbrugstiltag til styrkelse af biodiversiteten i Danmark* (Costs associated with selected agricultural initiatives promoting biodiersity in Denmark), November 2001.

7

Critical Systems Thinking for the Facilitation of Conservation Planning in Philippine Coastal Management[16]

[16] This chapter is reproduced with permission from: Larsen, R. K. (2011). Critical Systems Thinking for the Facilitation of Conservation Planning in Philippine Coastal Management. *Systems Research and Behavioural Sciences*, 28, 63–76. doi: 10.1002/sres.1045.

The underlying work herein was carried out while the author was affiliated with the Unit for Environmental Communication, Department of Urban and Rural Development, Swedish University of Agricultural Sciences, Uppsala, Sweden.

7.1 Abstract

In Critical Systems Thinking (CST), the notion of boundary judgements represents a constructionist view on knowing as the bounding of components of reality into knowable objects. Cognitive boundary judgements determine observations (facts) and evaluations (values), which knowers appreciate and act in relation to. Werner Ulrich's method of dialogical boundary critique and the framework of Critical Systems Heuristics (CSH) are intended to enable citizen participation in Western democracies through acknowledgement of legitimate competencies in public and corporate dialogues. This paper investigates the application of this methodology in Philippine coastal resource management. The conclusions are based on stakeholder-based action planning carried out between November 2007 and May 2008 in the Babuyan group of islands, bounded by the Balintang and Babuyan Channels. It argues that dialogical boundary critique requires significant adaptation if it is to provide a liberating language for participants in Philippine resource management dilemmas shaped by multiple and conflicting knowledge claims under conditions of significant controversy.

7.2 Critical systems thinking and dialogical boundary critique

CST offers a 'third wave' of systems thinking, which attempts to redress the failure of traditional systems approaches to address dimensions of power (Midgley, 2000). In the pragmatist tradition of CST, the facilitation of dialogical boundary critique is proposed as an avenue for enabling citizen participation in decision-making structures of modern democracies. While boundary critique is originally anchored in a Kantian philosophy of reason (Ulrich, 2000) it yet seeks to provide guidance on how to appreciate the situated character of knowledge through exploring situation-transcendent validity of stakeholder claims. Arguably, this places dialogical boundary critique in an intermediate position in the debate between theories of communicative rationality and localised ideation of, for instance, social constructionism and post-structuralism. This is particularly evident in its mergence of a Habermasian acceptance of universal communicative competencies with the genealogical deconstruction of the given order through critical questioning (Hoy & McCarthy, 1994). Dialogical boundary critique offers a methodology for integrating these perspectives to reframe stakeholder processes.

To transform this 'critical kernel' of systems thinking into practice, Werner Ulrich has proposed the methodology of dialogical boundary critique and the framework of CSH to enable collective reflection on how 'the meaning of a proposition depends on how we bound the relevant reference system, that is, the context that matters when it comes to assessing the merits and defects of the proposition' (Ulrich, 2000, p. 5; Ulrich, 2005). The notion of boundary judgements represents a constructionist view on knowing as the act of bounding of components of reality into knowable objects (Berger & Luckmann, 1966). The relationship between knowing and learning is contested through a variety of theoretical traditions, some of which are categorised as cognitive learning theories (Blackmore, 2007). The cognitive dimension of learning takes a central role also in individualist behavioural and pedagogical learning models (e.g. Kolb et al., 2000; Bawden et al., 2007). However, while Ulrich's CSH rely on the cognitive dimension as its primary arena of operation, it does not neglect other aspects of the learning environment. As such, cognitive boundary judgements are proposed to determine which observations (facts) and evaluations (values) we appreciate and act in relation to (Midgley, 2000; Ulrich, 2000). Ulrich's framework CSH is intended to provide citizens and employees with tools for negotiating the acknowledgement of legitimate competencies in public or corporate dialogues (Ulrich, 1998; Ulrich, 2005). It represents an attempt to pragmatise the communicative situation through critical systemic questioning of assumptions and boundary judgements (Midgley, 2000). In the CSH framework, 12 boundary problems, or categories, connected to one of four boundary issues are explored by means of a boundary question into each particular boundary problem (Table 7.1).

Also Soft Systems Methodology (SSM), initially proposed by Checkland and Scholes (e.g. Checkland, 1999) to manage transformations in corporate organisations, draws on a form of boundary critique through a set of *a priori* categories (Clients, Actors, Transformation, Worldview, Owners, Environment – hence the mnemonic CATWOE) to model, compare and reflect on conceptual systems and implement human activity systems for systemic transformations. This methodology is used to guide participatory stakeholder analyses and critical learning based approaches in natural resource management (e.g. Powell & Osbeck, 2010).

Boundary critique is intended to provide a 'liberating language' for citizens in the negotiation of what comprises legitimate competency (Midgley, 2000, p. 149). The challenge of providing a liberating language for citizen participants is more difficult when they are invited into the negotiation of resource management dilemmas where they have to make sense of multiple and conflicting knowledge claims under conditions of controversy (Funtowicz & Ravetz, 2007; Ison et al., 2007a). Within existing approaches to CST there are divergent views regarding the universality of boundary judgements and the relativisation of moral judgments to local conditions. This is, for instance, reflected in the disagreement between Ulrich and Midgley on this topic. Midgley (2000) proposes that the facilitator is responsible for localising the methodology of the boundary critique to the conditions of the intervention. This reflects the standpoint that Kantian boundary questions are not directly applicable as universal tools to facilitate situated forms of knowing as the cognitive domain is linked with other situated aspects of local context (e.g. Shen & Midgley, 2007).

Table 7.1: Critical Systems Heuristics. Bold is significant as it highlights the keyword for the respective boundary question. (Source: Ulrich, 2000).

Sources of Motivation
(1) Who is (ought to be) the **client**? That is, whose interests are (should be) served?
(2) What is (ought to be) the **purpose**? That is, what are (should be) the consequences?
(3) What is (ought to be) the **measure of improvement**? That is, how can (should) we determine that the consequences, taken together, constitute an improvement?
Sources of Power
(4) Who is (ought to be) the **decision-maker**? That is, who is (should be) in a position to change the measure of improvement?
(5) What **resources** are (ought to be) controlled by the decision-maker? That is, what conditions of success can (should) those involved control?
(6) What conditions are (ought to be) part of the **decision environment**? That is, what conditions can (should) the decision-maker *not* control (e.g. from the viewpoint of those not involved)?
Sources of Knowledge
(7) Who is (ought to be) considered a **professional**? That is, who is (should be) involved as an expert, e.g. as a researcher, planner or consultant?
(8) What **expertise** is (ought to be) consulted? That is, what counts (should count) as relevant knowledge?
(9) What or who is (ought to be) assumed to be the **guarantor of success**? That is, where do (should) those involved seek some guarantee that improvement will be achieved?
Sources of Legitimation
(10) Who is (ought to be) **witness** to the interests of those affected but not involved? That is, who is (should be) treated as a legitimate stakeholder, and who argues (should argue) the case of those stakeholders who cannot speak for themselves, including future generations and nonhuman nature?
(11) What secures (ought to secure) the **emancipation** of those affected from the premises and promises of those involved? That is, where does (should) legitimacy lie?
(12) What **worldview** is (ought to be) determining? That is, what different visions of 'improvement' are (should be) considered, and how are they (should they be) reconciled?

This paper aims to make a contribution to this debate regarding the universality of dialogical boundary critique through investigating the application of the methodology in Philippine coastal resource management. In so doing, it also contributes to the still relative sparse body of theory growing from the practical application of CST in environmental management (see also Foote et al., 2007). The evidence derives from a stakeholder dialogue carried out between November 2007 and May 2008 in the Babuyan group of islands, bounded by the Balintang and Babuyan Channels in the northern Philippines. The approach to the stakeholder dialogue as a process of social learning for stakeholder self-organisation is presented. Midgley's model for marginalisation of issues is introduced as an analytical device to respond to the need for grounding the boundary critique (Midgley, 2000). The analysis highlights the ritual expressions of contestation over illegal resource exploitation, the boundary conflicts associated with the clash of 'alliances', and the boundary issue of a 'void of Illegitimacy'. The paper concludes with a discussion of the experiences that while the CSH may at the meta-theoretical level target the right boundary issues, the context of application (the rituals and the boundary conflict) poses a set of very significant needs for adaptation and localisation.

7.3 Case: Philippine coastal resource management

Coastal resource management in the Philippines is being institutionalised in an integrated coastal management (ICM) policy paradigm (Cruz-Trinidad, 2003; White et al., 2005). Following the trend in the South East Asian region, the ICM regime espouses a shift towards increased stakeholder participation and balanced employment of coercive and non-coercive policy instruments (Alcala, 1998; Milne & Christie, 2005). This represents a reaction to former command-and-control management, bearing on the colonial imprint on Philippine natural resource management. Under Spanish rulers and American administrations, state-led centralised schemes, as elsewhere in the region, led to dissolution of common property regimes in the provinces and de facto open access to natural resources in many localities (Barut et al., 2003; Abinales & Amoroso, 2005; Dressler, 2006). Problems stemming from open access led to new approaches to conservation. The Philippines is today heralded for pioneering efforts in community-based coastal resource management converting open access into co-management regimes (Lowry et al., 2005; White et al., 2005). Balgos (2005) lists 10 major internal donor assisted and government funded projects and Pollnac and Pomeroy (2005) describe more than 100 community-based projects carried out since 1980.

Despite the current ICM regime, severe over fishing and resource degradation has continued in many areas and the fisheries sector is rapidly declining in its contribution to GDP (World Bank, 2005; White & Cruz-Trinidad, 1998; Barut et al., 2003; Cruz-Trinidad, 2003). This has led to increased questioning of the value of noncoercive policy instruments and their role in creating the ICM regime. Concerns are surfacing regarding the perpetuation of hidden agendas through the implementation of ICM, including investment penetration by state and international capital and the influence of development banks and foreign aid agencies in shaping development from neo-liberal premises (Nicholls, 1999; Grainger & Malayang, 2006). Stakeholder participation in programmes is low and formal recognition of community organisations problematic (Barut et al., 2003; Silvestre et al., 2003). Studies of major foreign funded CRM programmes in the country conclude that the notion of participation is contested and mirrors experiences elsewhere in hiding persistent 'fence-and-fines' management strategies behind a popular narrative of 'partnership' (Eden, 2005; Adams & Hulme, 2001). These problems of instrumenting noncoercive policy measures are key driving forces behind efforts to improve the existing ICM policy paradigm (Balgos, 2005).

7.4 Sources of evidence: Conservation planning in Babuyan Islands

The evidence in this paper derives from a stakeholder dialogue carried out from November 2007 through May 2008 in the Babuyan group of islands, located at 1218 360 E and 198 180 N, bounded by the Balintang and Babuyan Channels in the northern Philippines (Fig. 7.1). The waters around the Babuyan Islands are the only known breeding ground for humpback whales in the Philippines (Acebes et al., 2007). In 2000, Kabang Kalikasan ng Pilipinas (KKP) (WWF Philippines) initiated the Humpback Whale Research and Conservation Project (HWRCP) in the Babuyan Islands. KKP facilitated a conservation planning process, which in October 2001 led to the formulation of an action plan. In 2003, motivated by this research, Provincial Ordinance 09-2003 was passed declaring the humpbacks a protected species within the jurisdiction of the province of Cagayan (PGC, 2003). After KKP pulled out, the only conservation NGO present in Calayan Municipality is ISLA Conservation Foundation Inc. who from 2006 has taken the leadership in establishing an island wide multistakeholder body; the Calayan Environment Council (CEC) (Broad & Oliveros, 2004). However, the CEC is undergoing a number of birth pains and the humpback whale conservation action plan has not been implemented. Camiguin residents have increased their use of dynamite to collect scrap metal from ship wrecks, coinciding with an increase in the practice of dynamite and cyanide fishing around the islands. Motivated initially by these experiences, the aim of the planning process was to develop an adaptive conservation action plan for the Babuyan Islands, focusing on Camiguin.

Figure 7.1. Geographical location of Babuyan Islands in the northern Philippines. (Courtesy of Leonard Soriano). The Babuyan Islands consists of the five main islands of Calayan, Camiguin, Dalupiri, Fuga and Babuyan Claro. Calayan Municipality, with the jurisdiction over four of the islands, is located in Cagayan Province of Region II of the Philippines.

7.5 Operationalisation of boundary critique for the facilitation of social learning

Positioning the planning process within the non-coercive shift in the ICM paradigm, it was decided to facilitate the stakeholder dialogue as a process of social learning. Social learning is an alternative policy instrument to environmental problems, which views policy itself as a form of praxis, in that it does not exist in isolation from its implementation (Ison & Watson, 2007). Environmental problems are approached as resource dilemmas, characterised by the existence of multiple legitimate perspectives on what constitutes the actual problem and its solutions (Steyaert & Jiggins, 2007).

Recent critiques of stakeholder processes and demands for concrete learning goals and expectations have led to concerns with traditional learning based approaches (Lightfoot et al., 2003; Bouwen & Taillieu, 2004; Armitage et al., 2008). We used the notion of stakeholder self-organisation to operationalise a clear learning goal for the planning process, departing from experiences that the dialogical process in social learning can aim to create a common context of meaning that can potentially lead ‘to the emergence of self-organised concerted action amongst stakeholders’ (Gibbon et al., 2004, p. 5). The notion of self-organisation has recently gained prominence in social theory as well as resource management, often rooted in realist complex systems theory (Waldrop, 1992; Pahl-Wostl et al., 2007). Commonly, self-organisation is expressed as ‘the spontaneous emergence of new structures and new forms of behaviour in open systems far from equilibrium characterised by internal feedback loops’ (Capra, 1997, p. 85). In constructionist epistemology emphasis is more frequently placed on the manifestation of self-organisation through the creation and shifting of ‘boundaries’ between ‘self’ and ‘non-self’. Notably, in the theory of autopoiesis by Maturana and Varela (1992) these boundary judgements establish a structural coupling between self and non-self (or the stakeholder and her/his environment). The mutually formative relationship depends on a process of ‘closure’, i.e. the functional containment of the self in viable relationship with its environment (Fell & Russell, 1994; Fuchs, 2003). Ulrich’s methodology of dialogical boundary critique was chosen to enable the reconstruction of such cognitive boundaries.

The CSH approach was integrated into a participatory stakeholder planning process guided by SSM (Checkland, 1999) to stimulate creative thinking about how current stakes are constructed, potential conflicts of interests, scenarios for change, and collective action (SLIM, 2004). The CSH were conceptually translated to Tagalog/Filipino and were, following a methodological pluralist approach (Jackson, 1991; Midgley, 2000; Billaud et al., 2004; Cordoba, 2008;), used in conjunction with a number of communicative tools (e.g. Venn diagram, mind mapping, brainstorming, force field analysis, etc.) in different facilitated forms of interaction (workshops, working groups, open space, focus groups, semi-structured interviews, informal conversations).

The backbone of the planning process was a series of planning workshops in Camiguin and Calayan Islands, and in Tuguegarao City, the capitol of Cagayan Province. In addition, individual consultations with key informants were exploring questions, which emerged from the workshops. Close to 100 people participated in these workshops. In addition, interviews were conducted with 11 people from the three Camiguin villages (barangays) (Councilors (Kagawads), farmers, fisherfolk, parish ministers); four people from the Local (Municipal) Government Unit (LGU) (Legislative Council (Sangguniang Bayan); six senior officials from the Provincial Government Unit (PGU) (from offices of environment, agriculture and tourism); nine officials from the line agencies

Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) and Bureau of Fisheries and Aquatic Resources (BFAR) (directors, programme leaders and field staff); and four NGO staff (local and national).

7.6 Discussion: Localising the boundary critique for Camiguin Island

7.6.1 Emergence of a stakeholder platform

Participants were generally eager to engage in boundary critique but a commonly accepted standard for such critique was absent. While it was possible to suggest ground rules and guidelines, it was not possible to introduce a form for this critique and it had to emerge in each dialogical situation through negotiation between the participants. Further, outside interventions were met with a general apprehension from the municipal elite, exacerbated by a sense of tension between conservation and development on the question of coastal planning. Previous conservation efforts in the islands had produced a contentious relationship and decreasing trust between the elite and 'outsiders'. Disputes regarding responsibilities for combating illegal resource use such as dynamite fishing, metal salvaging and its impact on whale and fish stocks had shifted from an inter-personal level to national media connected to inflictions of embarrassment and hurt (Rivera, 2006; Arquiza, 2008). This was received as a challenge of LGU autonomy under the Local Government Code (LGC). Senior BFAR officials and heads of provincial government offices recounted how information extraction by outsiders leads to disappointment and anger amongst barangay citizens. For instance, the 'normal' research tradition followed by researchers, where data are published before being shared with local partners, was experienced as competitive and exclusionary. The creation of an enabling learning environment ('platform') for the stakeholder interactions was as such a chief task for the facilitators. The stakeholder platform both delineated the prospects for boundary critique, and was created by the learning preferences of stakeholders involved, reflecting a structural coupling between learning environment and learner (Gibbon et al., 2004; Poerksen, 2004).

Contrary to assumptions in the literature on group facilitation (Schuman, 2005; Hunter & Bailey, 1999), the process of emergence meant that from the outset the dialogue was characterised by an absence of shared 'group purpose'. The sense of what the planning process was about was continuously negotiated in response to the unfolding of controversies and appreciation of interdependency of perspectives. One particular reflection of this emerging convergence was the redefinition of the problem statement from conservation to eco-tourism and sustainable development. During initial negotiations, it was expressed by the municipal elite as well as island residents that there was no interest in humpback whale issues. The elite would only engage in the dialogue if it focused on tourism development, preferably with tangible benefits in the form of financial resources and visiting tourists. Island residents raised their concerns over legal and fiscal mismanagement and their dependency on middlemen. This reflected the fact that the critical 'pre-implementation' phase of the planning process took place prior to involving a range of stakeholders and the entry into the project with a predetermined problem definition based on a quite strong conservationist perspective and narrating of the land/seascape (Leach & Fairhead, 2000). This was due to the project history and its anchoring in previous conservation efforts. As experienced in other applications of CST, a continuous reconstruction of the process and its assumptions was necessary (Cordoba, 2008).

7.6.2 Localising the boundary critique

In the initial workshops, CSH were used directly in exploratory enquiry with the participants in each planning event. The approach was however problematic as it imposed a cognitive framework based on assumptions of what were the main 'boundary issues' for the participants. Participants commented about rigidity and felt constrained by this structure. After these experiences, the CSH were used simply as mental devices for the facilitator in seeking to guide the dialogue. For instance, questions regarding 'reference systems' could be explored in a conversation on the interest in an ice plant for the island's fisherfolk or concerns regarding the prohibition of compressor diving, with the translation of the boundary questions into meaningful propositions or questions in the particular conversation. The boundary questions were also used as underlying questions to guide specific processes in workshops.

While valuable devises for process design the CSH were therefore not directly applicable for a dialogical boundary critique by the participants. The facilitation interventions had to incorporate an organic dialectic between initial boundary heuristics and more grounded categories, which were not prior to the context. This resonates with the tenets of grounded theory (Charmaz, 2006). While Ulrich (2000) emphasises the determination of the evaluative (values) and observational (facts) from a cognitive dimension, these experiences highlight the need to depart more explicitly from the mutually formative relationship between the cognitive, normative and observational. To unveil these relationships as a basis for identifying more grounded boundary questions, Midgley's model for marginalisation of issues was used as an analytical device (Fig. 7.2) (Midgley, 2000). This model explains ritualised and habituated forms of stakeholder behaviours from a divergence in normative foundations, or ethics, for the stakeholders involved. This normative divergence is in turn rooted in the boundary issue(s), which can be addressed by means of the dialogical boundary critique.

The analysis below thus proceeds from an outline of the ritual expressions of behaviours through the central boundary conflict in Camiguin CRM. In so doing, the synthesis proposition for the most urgent boundary issue builds a rich picture of the management without delving into in-depth analysis of specific points regarding the challenges of stakeholder participation or the management as such.

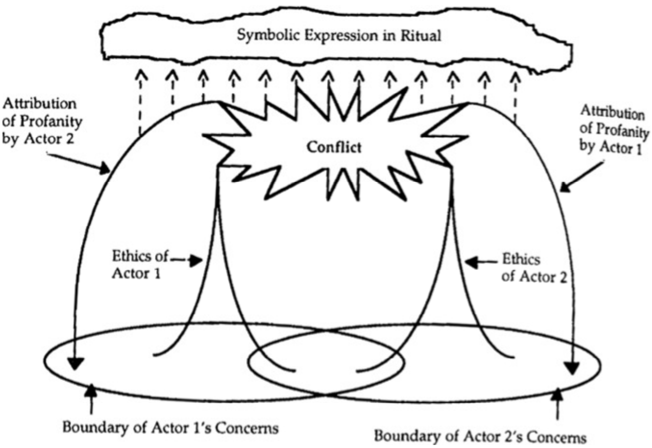

Figure 7.2: Model of overlapping stakeholder concerns and marginalisation of issues. (Reproduced from Midgley, 2000, p. 154). Shows the three layers of ritual expression, boundary conflict, and boundary issue arising from the encounter between actors with diverging fields of concern.

7.7 Ritual expressions: Contestation over illegal resource exploitation

The ritualised expression of behaviours in Camiguin's coastal resource management is manifest in the perceived conduct and contestation of 'illegal resource exploitation', localised as well as induced by outsiders. Taiwanese fishing vessels intrude on the fishing grounds in the search for the highly priced yellow fin tuna. More localised offences are equally abundant, including encroaching on prohibited fishing grounds, use of illegal equipment such as compressor diving, cyanide and dynamite, pebble and shell collection, and illegal logging (kaingin). Metal salvaging from shipwrecks started initially with walls and sidings but has now moved to main frames, which requires larger amounts of explosives.

The definition of a problem of 'illegal activities' is instead logically extended to policy prescriptive reliance on legal coercion and awareness raising of ordinances as mainstream policy instruments. The Taiwanese vessels are often sized 30–50 meters with modern equipment and the smaller and worse equipped Filipino control boats rarely stand a chance to apprehend the violators. There is no PMP representation in Camiguin and the Coast Guard delegation is without basic equipment such as patrol boat, radio equipment or binoculars. Legal violators and poachers are most often associated with powerful networks, and barangay citizens fear punishments if disclosing information to higher levels of government. Local enforcement staff is anxious for retaliation from elite citizens in barangay and municipality in return for their partaking in official duties such as collecting dynamited fish specimen or reporting of legal offences (see also Acebes et al., 2008).

The engagement in illegal exploitation reflects a deepening vulnerability of the residents in Camiguin. While most mainland fishing communities can complement income from fisheries with other commercial activities to make ends meet, Camiguin residents predominantly depend on a composite livelihood from forest products, back-yard farming, and coastal resources and lack other income sources outside fishing and farming seasons (KKP, 2001). Barangay residents complain over malfunctions in the legal systems, which undermine household economy, for instance, the confiscation of catches by the Philippine Maritime Police (PMP) without legal trials to defend their stakes. Despite the decline in fish stocks, fish prices have remained unchanged while fuel prices have been surging. Middlemen operate a credit system where rice farmers are effectively mortgaged through an advance payment credit system in order to procure farming equipment and fertilisers. There is lacking economic cohesion in the barangays and the barangays are entirely dependent on the internal revenue allotment (IRA) from the national government.

7.8 Boundary conflicts: The clash of 'alliances'

Contrary to experience elsewhere in Philippine resource management (e.g. Dressler, 2006) the CRM in Camiguin is not predominantly shaped by power struggles between different levels of government. Rather, the main defining feature is the existence of an intricate web of coalitions and alliances, which cross-cut administrative levels or formal stakeholder categories. These alliances come into being from the creative mergence of both formal and informal norms and behaviours through connections between different levels of government, political parties, clans, and companies. The core source of the ritualisation of illegal activities as conduct and discourse is thus the normative divergence manifest in a complex web of alliances, which operate without collectively and publicly accepted (formal) rules.

The formation of different stakeholder alliances enhances the participants' access to and control over natural capital, which, in the absence of an effective management regime, can be converted into financial assets, opportunity and influence. Tuna fishing, which originated as a formal fishery in the 1960s, is one of the high-income fisheries in Asia (Cruz-Trinidad, 2003), and national and international investors are important indirect actors as well as beneficiaries. Throughout the country, examples exist where municipal elites open their waters to foreign vessels to benefit from external cash flows. Intruders from other municipalities and international poachers dismantle communities into competing factions, which employ tactics such as bribery, intimidation, or threat (see also Mungcal, 2007). Similarly, the growing tourism industry is an arena for competition between different alliances enacted through seizing of executive posts in the tourism sector, ownership over accommodation, travel and infrastructure development, and coordination of promotional activities. An absence of guidelines for distinguishing between support to private and public initiatives make the use of financial and technical support from government ambiguous and there is a growing public questioning of the sharing benefits. Other resource exploitation contributes to the financing, including metal salvaging, where many island residents are hired and financed to purchase dynamite by a few individuals.

The patronage of strongmen and their alliances operates at different levels, e.g. within the island or municipality. However, often they are connected to other strongmen nationally and outside national borders. Apprehended Taiwanese fishermen claim protection by officers in the Philippine military. In the barangays, intruding fishermen from other barangays and municipalities use similar types of namedropping to influence the kagawads. In the Philippine forestry sector, Vitug (1993) describes similar experiences of how resource access is a source of political patronage, with army officers exerting significant influence and tenuring large concessions. In this 'clash of alliances', resource management is characterised by a need to continuously bargain over mandates and access rights through an unregulated and intransparent system of checks and balances. As cited widely from other localities, selective law enforcement is one manifestation of the negotiated use of policy, by means of 'political interference and discretionary prosecution' (Eisma et al., 2005, p. 350). Islands residents have low trust in the law enforcement, which is intricately involved in the remittance and receipt of bribes. While the Philippine National Police (PNP) is a national line agency, in isolated localities the national linkage is broken and the PNP staff may be under the authority of the highest bidder.

7.9 Boundary issue: The void of illegitimacy

Under these conditions, the significant discrepancy is not between espoused and actual policy agendas of central or local government (Grainger & Malayang, 2006) or between rule of law and corrupt officials (ADB, 2006; Sarmiento, 2000). The clash of alliances and their operation in a self-maintaining behaviour through an intransparent pattern of bargaining ultimately reflects the outcome of a conflicting set of normative systems. This boundary conflict and its politicising of the coastal resources emerge as a consequence of the absence of a commonly accepted norm of legitimacy, which is the core boundary issue for Camiguin's coastal resource management. The boundary judgements, which underlie the clash of the alliances and the resulting contestation regarding illegal activities thus pertain to a basic uncertainty regarding the most fundamental understanding of legitimacy of most actions pertaining to coastal management in a broad sense. In consequence, most practices are potentially criminalised and associated with severe punishing, depending on which alliance's interpretation one happens to be exposed to. In turn, this creates a 'dialogical vacuum' for stakeholders negotiating the actual resource use practices as the boundary judgements are at odds at the very level of determining what can be acceptably discussed in public. In turn, the consequences to one-self and relatives of trespassing any such boundary can be significant. This carves out a void where marginalised stakeholders are further oppressed as they cannot engage in dialogue from fear of suppression. In this vacuum the actual powers and patronage politics over resource use are regulated by informal negotiations, which cannot be formally addressed.

7.10 Conclusion

Critical Systems Thinking seeks to foster the legitimisation of citizen competence and Ulrich's (2000) methodology of CSH does include 'legitimacy' as one of the four core boundary issues. However, the experiences discussed above indicate that while the CSH may at the metatheoretical level target the right boundary issues, the context of application (the rituals and the boundary conflict) poses a set of very significant needs for adaptation and localisation. The CSH were not directly applicable and the dialogue on the proposed boundary categories could serve only as guiding devices for the facilitators. This was due to the fact that the design of the stakeholder platform and the form and process of boundary critique had to be grounded in the appreciation of the existing systems of patronage and stakeholder alliances. The 'void of illegitimacy' prevents an explicit dialogue on predefined categories and requires inquiry into tangible boundary problems of the stakeholders involved in a more subtle and strategic manner not addressed in the school of CST, which subscribes to the universality of boundary critique. Given the competition emerging from the clash of alliances, dialogical initiatives are easily compromised as elites can selectively avoid public discussions on contested resource access and repress other groups in order to maintain their status as well as the survival of their alliances.

Arguably, theories of Habermas and Kant, which have shaped CST and the CSH, provide a meta-theoretical perspective on empirical evidence (e.g. Hansen, 2008) and the framework of CSH provides a set of boundary questions, which are logically prior to the context of application. Checkland's CATWOE model has been more extensively used to environmental problems and concerns have here been raised regarding its corporate focus on 'clients' and a lacking appreciation of the complexity of the social dilemmas embedded in conflicts between individual and collective interests (Röling & Wagemakers, 1998). Reflecting the emphasis in the third wave of system thinking, this hinges on concerns of properly appreciating existing structures and power-relations amongst stakeholders, which create risks of further marginalising already disadvantaged groups (e.g. Edmunds & Wollenberg, 2001; King, 2000). Basden and Wood-Harper (2006) support the claim that CATWOE tends to result in conventional and regulative results rather than opening up for challenging political and economic structures.

The experiences discussed in this paper challenge the claim that CST's critical character can derive from a 'critical' predetermined lens of the facilitator, notwithstanding its nature. Rather, it emphasises the inherently heuristic role of CSH as vehicles, which must be co-constructed with the enquiring stakeholders in recognition of the prevailing structures (or boundary conflicts and rituals). It supports experiences from co-management and organisational change which have shown that the most important contribution of facilitation interventions are to give people tools to analyse their own experiences (Wollenberg et al., 2001) and to move away from predetermined formats and guidelines (Roberts, 2003). The translocation of the methodology of boundary critique from a corporate or Western societal setting to diverse situational conditions of natural resource management must thus involve an organic dialectic between the content and the form of the communicative process (see also Hallgren, 2003).

In this light, Midgley's model for marginalisation of issues may support the localisation of the boundary critique through addressing the mutually formative relationships between normative and observational realities of stakeholders and the cognitive boundary issues. While this does not provide specific guidance on how to carry out the strategic facilitation needed, it assists in the first steps of identifying grounded boundary problems with those who participate in the boundary critique and in surfacing the needs for grounding the intervention in situations when questions of legitimacy are highly contested and significant stakes are in play for the stakeholders involved.

7.11 Acknowledgements

The evidence in this paper derives from a project implemented in collaboration with the Provincial Government of Cagayan, the Municipality of Calayan, and the line agencies Bureau of Fisheries and Aquatic Resources (BFAR), and Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) in Philippines Region 2. Jo Marie Acebes led the scientific investigations and Alejandro Belen acted as local project coordinator. The project was funded by Ocean Park Conservation Foundation – Hong Kong. Financing for the writing of this paper was provided by Swedish University of Agricultural Sciences (SLU) and Stockholm Environment Institute (SEI). Thanks go to Dr. Neil Powell for inspiring conversations and advice throughout the process, and to Prof. Sriskandarajah Nadarajah and Prof. Tarla Rai Petersson for comments early and late in the process, respectively.

7.12 References

Abinales, N., & Amoroso, D. J. (2005). *State and Society in the Philippines.* Manila, Philippines: Anvil Publishing.

Acebes, J. V., Darling, J. D., & Yamaguchi, M. (2007). Status and distribution of humpback whales (*Megaptera novaeangliae*) in Northern Luzon, Philippines. *Journal of Cetacean Research and Management, 9* (1), 37–43.

Acebes, J. M. V., Darling, J., & Aca, A. Q. (2008). Dynamite Blasts in a Humpback Whale Megaptera novaeangliae Breeding Ground, Babuyan Islands, Philippines, *Bioacustics, 17* (1–3), 153–155.

Adams, W. M., & Hulme, D. (2001). If community conservation is the answer in Africa, what is the question? *Oryx, 25* (3), 193–200.

ADB (Asian Development Bank). (2006). *Philippines: Performance Measurement at Local Level.* Final Report. Manila, Philippines: Asian Development Bank.

Alcala, A. C. (1998). Community-based coastal resource management in the Philippines: A case study. *Ocean and Coastal Management, 38*, 179–186.

Armitage, D., Marschke, M., & Plummer, R. (2008). Adaptive co-management and the paradox of learning. *Global Environmental Change, 1*8, 86–98.

Arquiza, Y. (2008). The song of the whale. *Mabuhay, January*, 74–80.

Balgos, M. C. (2005). Integrated coastal management and marine protected areas in the Philippines: concurrent developments. *Ocean and Coastal Management, 48*, 972–995.

Barut, N. C., Santos, M. D., Miljares, L. L., Subade, R., Armada, N. B., & Garces, L. R. (2003). Philippine Coastal Fisheries Situation. In G. T. Silvestre, L. R., Garces, I. Stobutzki, M. Ahmed, R. A. Valmonte-Santos, C. Z. Luna, L. Lachica-Aliño, V. Christensen, D. Pauly, & P. Munro (Eds.), *Assessment, Management and Future Directions for Coastal Fisheries in Asian Countries,* WorldFish Center Conference Proceedings, 67 (pp. 885–914). Penang, Malaysia: WorldFish Center.

Basden, A., & Wood-Harper, A. T. (2006). A philosophical discussion of the root definition in soft systems thinking: An enrichment of CATWOE. *Systems Research and Behavioral Science, 23*, 61–87.

Bawden, R., McKenzie, B., & Packham, R. (2007). Moving beyond the academy: a commentary on extra-mural initiatives in systemic development. *Systems Research and Behavioral Science, 24*, 129–141.

Berger, P., & Luckmann, T. (1966). *The Social Construction of Reality. A Treatise in the Sociology of Knowledge*. London: Penguin.

Billaud, J.-P., Brives., H., Jiggins, J., Reynolds, M., Röling N. G., & Toderi, M. (2004). Facilitation of Social Learning Processes for Integrated Catchment Management and Sustainable Use of Water. SLIM Thematic Paper no. 2. Retrieved from: http://sites.google.com/site/slimsociallearningforiwm/research-outcomes/case-study-monographs.

Blackmore, C. (2007). What kinds of knowledge, knowing and learning are required for addressing resource dilemmas? A theoretical overview. *Environmental Science and Policy, 10*, 512–525.

Bouwen, R., & Taillieu, T. (2004). Multi-party collaboration as social learning for interdependence: Developing relational knowing for sustainable natural resource management. *Journal of Community and Applied Social Psychology, 14*, 137–153.

Broad, G., & Oliveros, C. (2004). Biodiversity and conservation priority setting in the Babuyan Islands, Philippines. *Sylvatrop: The Technical Journal of Philippine Ecosystems and Natural Resources, 15* (1&2), 1–30.

Capra, F. (1997). The Web of Life: A New Synthesis of Mind and Matter. London: Flamingo.

Charmaz, K. (2006). *Grounded theory. Methods for the 21st century*. London: Sage.

Checkland, P. (1999). *Systems Thinking, Systems Practice.* New York: Wiley.

Cordoba, J.-R. (2008). Critical reflection in planning information systems: A contribution from critical systems thinking. *Information Systems Journal, 19* (2), 1–25.

Cruz-Trinidad, A. (2003). Socioeconomic and bioeconomic performance of Philippine fisheries in the recent decades. In G. T. Silvestre, L. R., Garces, I. Stobutzki, M. Ahmed, R. A. Valmonte-Santos, C. Z. Luna, L. Lachica-Alinõ, V. Christensen, D. Pauly, & P. Munro (Eds.), *Assessment, Management and Future Directions for Coastal Fisheries in Asian Countries,* WorldFish Center Conference Proceedings, 67 (pp. 543–576). Penang, Malaysia: WorldFish Center.

Dressler, W. H. (2006). Co-opting conservation: Migrant resource control and access to National Park Management in the Philippine Uplands. *Development and Change, 37* (2), 401–426.

Eder, J. (2005). Coastal Resource Management and Social Differences in Philippine Fishing Communities. *Human Ecology* 33 (2), .147-169

Edmunds, D., & Wollenberg, E. (2001). A strategic approach to multi-stakeholder negotiations. *Development and Change, 32*, 231–253.

Eisma, R.-L. V., Christie, P., & Hershman, M. (2005). Legal issues affecting sustainability of integrated coastal management in the Philippines. *Ocean and Coastal Management, 48*, 336–359.

Fell, L., & Russell, D. (1994). An introduction to Maturana's biology. In L. Fell, D. Russell, & A. Stewart (Eds.), *Seized by agreement, Swamped by understanding. A collection of papers to celebrate the visit to Australia in August, 1994, by Humberto Maturana*. Sydney: University of Western Sydney.

Foote, J. L., Gregor, J. E., Hepi, M. C., Baker, V. E., Houston, D. J., & Midgley, G. (2007). Systemic problem structuring applied to community involvement in water conservation. *Journal of the Operational Research Society, 58*, 645–654.

Fuchs, C. (2003). Structuration theory and self-organisation. *Systemic Practice and Action Research, 16* (2), 133–166.

Funtowicz, S., & Ravetz, J. (2007). Post-normal science. Environmental Policy under Conditions of Complexity. Research paper. Retrieved from www.nusap.net.
Gibbon, D., Powell, N., Poggero, P. P., Seddaiu, D., & Toderi, M. (2004). Dialogical Tools: A Methodological Platform for Facilitating and Monitoring Social Learning Processes. SLIM Case Study Monograph 5. Retrieved from http://sites.google.com/site/slimsociallearningforiwm/research-outcomes/case-study-monographs.
Grainger, A., & Malayang, B. S. (2006). A model of policy changes to secure sustainable forest management and control of deforestation in the Philippines. *Forest Policy and Economics, 8*, 67–67–80.
Hallgren, L. (2003). *I djubet av et vattendrag. Om konflikt och samverkan vid naturresurshandtering* (In the depth of a watershed. On conflict and cooperation in natural resource management). PhD dissertation (Agraria, 379). Swedish University of Agricultural Sciences, Uppsala, Sweden.
Hansen, H. P. (2008). Demokrati og Naturforvaltning: en kritisk sociologisk-historisk analyse af nationalparkudviklingen i Danmark (Democracy and natural resource management: a critical socio-historical analysis of the national park development in Denmark). PhD dissertation. Roskilde University, Denmark.
Hoy, D. C., & McCarthy, T. (1994). *Critical Theory*. Oxford: Blackwell.
Hunter, D. A., & Bailey, B. T. (1999). *The essence of facilitation. Being in action in groups.* Auckland, New Zealand: Random House.
Ison, R., Blackmore, C., & Jiggins, J. (2007a). Social learning: An alternative policy instrument for managing in the context of Europe's water. *Environmental Science and Policy, 10*, 499–511.
Ison, R., & Watson, D. (2007). Illuminating the possibilities for social learning in the management of Scotland's Water. *Ecology and Society, 12* (1), 21.
Jackson, M. C. (1991). *Systems Methodology for the Management Sciences*. New York: Plenum Press.
King, C. (2000). Systemic processes for facilitating social learning. Challenging the legacy. PhD dissertation. Swedish University of Agricultural Sciences, Uppsala, Sweden.
KKP (WWF-Philippines). (2001). Workshop Report. Preliminary Conservation Management Planning-Workshop for Babuyan Channel. Aparri, Cagayan, October 23–24, 2001.
Kolb, D. A., Boyatzis, R. E., & Mainemelis, C. (2000). Experiential Learning Theory: Previous Research and New Directions. In R. J. Sternberg, & L. F. Zhang (Eds.), *Perspectives on cognitive, learning, and thinking styles.* NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum, 2000.
Leach, M., & Fairhead, J. (2000). Fashioned forest pasts, occluded histories? International environmental analysis in West African Locales. *Development and Change, 31*, 35–59.
Lightfoot, C., Groot, A., Ramirez, R., Noble, R., Bekalo, I., Shao, F., & Muro, G. (2003). Facilitating Multi-Stakeholder Collaboration: Impact and Lessons Learned. Paper presented to the 17th Symposium of the International Farming Systems Association (IFSA), Lake Buena Vista, Florida, USA, November 17–20, 2002. Retrieved from http://conference.ifas.ufl.edu/ifsa/papers/paper_b.htm
Lowry, K., White, A., & Courtney, C. (2005). National and local agency roles in integrated coastal management in the Philippines. *Ocean and Coastal Management, 48*, 314–335.
Manalili, A. G. (1990). *Community Organizing for People's Empowerment.* Manila, Philippines: Kapatirane-Kaunlaran Foundation Inc.
Maturana, H. R., & Varela, F. J. (1992). *The Tree of Knowledge. The Biological Roots of Human Understanding.* Boston: Shambhala.
Midgley, G. (2000). *Systemic Intervention: Philosophy, Methodology and Practice, contemporary systems thinking.* New York: Kluwer Academic.
Milne, N., & Christie, P. (2005). Financing integrated coastal management: experiences in Mabini and Tingloy, Batangas, Philippines. *Ocean and Coastal Management, 48*, 427–449.

Mungcal, A. L. L. (2007). Community-based Coastal Resource Management (CB-CRM): A Case Study of Mariveles, Bataan, Philippines. Paper presented at Delta 2007 Conference: Managing the Coastal Land-Water Interface in Tropical Delta Systems, Bang Saen, Thailand, 7–9 November 2007.

Nicholls, K. (1999). Coming to terms with 'integrated coastal management': Problems of meaning and method in a new arena of resource regulation. *Professional Geographer, 51* (3), 388–399.

Pahl-Wostl, C., Sendzimir, J., Jeffrey, P., Aerts, J., Berkamp, G., & Cross, K. (2007). Managing change toward adaptive water management through social learning. *Ecology and Society 12,* (2), 30.

PGC (Provincial Government of Cagayan). (2003). *Ordinance declaring the humpback whales as protected species within the territorial jurisdiction in the Province of Cagayan and providing penalties for the violation thereof.* Provincial Ordinance, 09–2003. Cagayan, Philippines: Provincial Government of Cagayan.

Poerksen, B. (2004). The Certainty of Uncertainty. Dialogues Introducing Constructivism. Exeter UK: Imprint Academic.

Pollnac, R. B., & Pomeroy, R. S. (2005). Factors influencing the sustainability of integrated coastal management projects in the Philippines and Indonesia. *Ocean and Coastal Management, 48*, 233–251.

Powell, N., & Osbeck, M. (in press). Understanding and Embedding Stakeholder realities in Coastal Governance: The Case of Mangroves in the Mahakam Delta, East Kalimantan. *International Journal of Sustainable Development, 18* (3), 260-270..

Rivera, B. S. (2006). Dynamite blastings scaring whales in Babuyan. *Philippine Daily Inquirer*, 26 March 2006.

Roberts, P. (2003). Emerging Selves in Practice: How do I and others create my practice and how does my practice shape me and influence others? PhD dissertation. University of Bath, Bath, England.

Röling, N., & Wagemakers, A. (Eds.). (1998). *Facilitating sustainable agriculture; Participatory learning and adaptive management in times of environmental uncertainty*. Cambridge: University Press.

Sarmiento, P. (2000). The burdens of agriculture. In S. S. Coronel (Ed.), *Betrayal of the Public Trust. Investigative Reports on Corruption* (pp. 78–88). Quezon City, Philippines: Philippine Center for Investigative Journalism.

Schuman, S. (Ed.). (2005). *The IAF Handbook of Group Facilitation: Best Practices from the Leading Organization in Facilitation.* San Francisco: Jossey-Bass Publishing.

Shen, C. Y., & Midgley, G. (2007). Toward a Buddhist systems methodology 1: Comparisons between Buddhism and systems theory. *Systemic Practice and Action Research, 20*, 167–194.

Silvestre, G. T., Garces, L. R., Stobutzki, I., Ahmed, M., Valmonte-Santos, R. A., Luna, C. Z., Lachica-Aliño, L., Christensen, V., Pauly, D., & Munro, P. (Eds.), *Assessment, Management and Future Directions for Coastal Fisheries in Asian Countries,* WorldFish Center Conference Proceedings, 67. Penang, Malaysia: WorldFish Center.

SLIM (Social Learning for the Integrated Management and Sustainable Use of Water at Catchment Scale). (2004). Stakeholders and Stakeholding in Integrated Catchment Management and Sustainable Use of Water. Briefing no. 2. Retrieved from http://sites.google.com/site/slimsociallearningforiwm/research-outcomes/policy-briefs-1.

Steyaert, P., & Jiggins, J. (2007). Governance of complex environmental situations through social learning: a synthesis of SLIM's lessons for research, policy and practice. *Environmental Science and Policy, 10*, 575–586.

Ulrich, W. (1998). *Systems Thinking as if People Mattered. Critical Systems Thinking for Citizens and Managers.* Lincoln School of Management, working paper no. 23. Lincoln, UK: University of Lincolnshire & Humberside.

Ulrich, W. (2000). Reflective Practice in the Civil Society: The Contribution of Critically Systemic Thinking. *Reflective Practice, 1* (2), 247–268.

Ulrich, W. (2005). A Brief Introduction to Critical Systems Heuristics (CSH). Paper prepared for ECOSENSUS. Milton Keynes UK: Open University.
Vitug, M. D. (1993). *The Politics of Logging. Power from the Forest*. Quezon City, Philippines: Philippine Center for Investigative Journalism.
Waldrop, M. M. (1992). *Complexity: The emerging science at the edge of order and chaos*. New York: Penguin.
White, A. T., & Cruz-Trinidad, A. (1998). *The Values of Philippine Coastal Resources. Why protection and management are critical.* Cebu City, Philippines: Coastal Resource Management Project.
White, A. T., Eisma-Osorio, R.-L., & Green, S. J. (2005). Integrated coastal management and marine protected areas: Complementarity in the Philippines. *Ocean and Coastal Management, 48*, 948–971.
Wollenberg, E., Edmunds, D., Buck, L., Fox, J., & Brodt, S. (Eds.). (2001). *Social Learning in Community Forests.* Jakarta, Indonesia: Center for International Forestry Research (CIFOR).
World Bank. (2005). *Philippines Environment Monitor, 2005. Coastal and Marine Resource Management.* Washington DC: World Bank Group.

8
Discussion and Synthesis

8.1 Introduction

In the introduction to this thesis, I indicated that I would approach the research into stakeholder agency by reflexively deconstructing the process of stakeholding as it pertains to natural resources' governance within the liberal democratic tradition. I argued that this would provide a radical democratic entry point into critically examining how stakeholder agency is legitimised as part of larger ideological struggles. This, in turn, led me to question how stakeholders exert their agency and legitimise their engagement in policy adaptation. I posed three research questions (see Section 1.2.5): (i) the nature of policy adaptation and stakeholder agency; (ii) how facilitated multi-stakeholder processes contribute to the fostering of legitimacy; and (iii) the critical reflexivity and rigour of the research intervention itself.

In this final chapter, I intend to revisit these premises and examine the significance of taking phenomena of stakeholding from the realm of formally denoted stakeholder processes (or so-called alternative policy instruments) and recasting it as an epistemological awareness of how people – as stakeholders – insert their agendas and legitimise their agency in natural resource governance. In response to the limited explicit theoretical guidance for such research interventions, I will attempt to articulate a framework that conceptualises legitimate stakeholder agency as a property emerging from multiple modes of negotiation of intersubjective reality. Given the interventionist character of the case studies presented in the previous chapters, Section 8.3 addresses the first two research questions: the nature of stakeholder agency and the facilitation of multi-stakeholder processes in the collective fostering of legitimacy.

In Section 8.4, I will then inquire how a rigorous and reflexive critique as part of the research interventions may be possible given the inherent human prejudice of researchers in the learning process. This section does not present direct conclusions based on the empirical findings from the cases but rather intends to share some further, meta-theoretical thoughts, which have been stimulated based on the synthesis of this work. It is primarily a response to the third of the research questions. Here, I depart from the resistance we encountered from those who 'owned' legitimising practices. That is, their resistance to a praxiological approach that permits a critical appraisal of all interests. I will then take a closer look at the specific virtues of human interaction that our research methodology, in fact, promotes. This leads me to examine how these virtues may be operationalised through Systemic and Participatory Action Research (SPAR) interventions and, finally, to propose the importance of considering more explicitly how research interventions may balance critical ('revolutionary') and pragmatic ('dialogical') principles.

Section 1.3 showed that, while each of the case studies explored different aspects of stakeholder agency and legitimacy, the main thrust of this thesis has been to draw common conclusions for use in future research interventions that, under related project conditions, adopt a similar methodological approach. As such, I seek in Section 8.3 to construct a guiding framework for understanding agency and fostering legitimacy among stakeholders across the case contexts. This goal of my analysis has shaped the lens through which I have analysed the evidence, and it means that I will not dwell on many of the differences between the cases studies. In Section 8.4, however, I allow their intrinsic differences to enter into a more meaningful dialogue and be mediated by our experiences of operationalising related methodologies in different contexts. Through the focus on the rigorous critique of our research interventions, the notion of 'resistance' to praxiological virtues thus serves as a proxy for the variability and surprise, which is always characteristic of work concerning stakeholder agency in policy adaptation.

For this reason, Sections 8.3 and 8.4 must be read together since their relevance *vis-à-vis* each other is only revealed therein. As such, I first construct a theoretical framework to improve our understanding of stakeholder agency and the fostering of legitimate agency, and then offer the means to de- and re-construct it during interventions. Notwithstanding, it is understood that no framework will ever adequately reflect the contingencies of the realities in which we work; instead, we must attempt as best we can to account for our human choices under conditions that are in a constant state of being created and unveiled.

However, before entering this theoretical analysis and reflection, section 8.2 kicks off this chapter with a synthesis of the change processes that each project engendered in concrete terms. This does not intend to represent a formal evaluation but is a compilation based on the experiences as seen from the perspective of the facilitators and as documented in the research and project reports. As such, the section narrates my experiences and understanding based on personal impressions and joint reflections with my colleagues and partners. As a synthesis of experience it is impossible to follow a traditional scientific procedure with direct references to single sources of evidence, particularly as the lessons learnt in many cases owe to multiple sources and a number of events. Yet, where possible, an effort is made to build on the information and comments received from project partners and participants, including references to where further information can be found. Based on the synthesis, the section then considers what lessons can be derived for project design and implementation and proposes five factors, which have been shaping the ability of the presented projects to produce concrete and relevant outcomes for those involved. It concludes with some further thoughts on what these lessons may mean for future praxis.

8.2 Change processes engendered

8.2.1 Summary of project contributions and key outcomes

The documented projects first and foremost sought to promote conditions for people to realise their stakes and respond in appreciation of their role as stakeholders in relation to common issues. In fact, much of each project was focused simply on fostering an awareness of stakes and interdependencies in order to encourage the participating co-researchers pursue dialogue about and support further opportunities for larger systemic changes. This section discusses each of the projects in turn and then provides an overview of project outcomes (see Table 8.1).

In the Babuyan Islands, the action planning process enabled stakeholders to collectively discuss and propose a number of coastal resource management issues of importance for Camiguin Island and the surrounding waters, which they found should be considered for future policy and practice. This work in the Philippines (Chapters 2 and 7) was the project that operated at the most local scale of the projects presented in this thesis. The design and facilitation of the action planning process was founded on the years of experience in the area, which my colleagues in the project team, Jom and Ali, had with WWF-Philippines and BFAR, respectively. The establishment of the work plan and partnerships for the project thus benefitted enormously from their prior knowledge and contacts. However, the heritage of the project and its roots in the work of conservation NGOs (and thus a predetermined problem definition based on a strong conservationist perspective) was a source of frustration by some of the LGU politicians, who found that such efforts had not previously added much value to their municipality (see also section 7.6.2). A significant effort was therefore invested to seek to negotiate a work plan for the action planning process that would bring these municipal actors on board, for instance through repeated bilateral meetings with LGU politicians to explain the project purpose and solicit their advice on the design of the activities. This was one of the reasons for recasting the scope of the planning process from a focus on resource conservation to wider ICM, including livelihoods and economic development. Notwithstanding, the localised scope of the interventions enabled the dialogues and interactions to be very concrete and focus on tangible activities, and the work was able to mobilize many of the immediate stakeholders in the area (see also Acebes & Larsen, 2008). The project had not been intended to bridge these local processes with higher order decision making at national or regional level, and the lessons thus generally remained with the participants in the activities in the islands and province. However, as we found that the conclusions had significance also for international development agencies, we emailed the project report and policy brief to USAID and the ADB, two of the main donors for ICM projects in the area, but this did not lead to further communication. The work was funded by a minor grant from a Hong Kong based conservation foundation and a large part of the work was conducted voluntarily by the project team.

The participatory assessment in Thailand of community preparedness and technology-community linkages in the IOTWS (Chapter 3) was one of the activities within the SEI project on early warning in the Indian Ocean, which also included work in Indonesia and Sri Lanka. The project start had been delayed and it had not, as planned, been possible to undertake the work in collaboration with the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies (IFRC). When I joined the project, different options were being discussed for how to organise the research, including whether it was feasible to establish new partnerships for field work or whether the objectives could be met through desktop reviews and analysis. After internal discussions, it was recognised that the work would have little relevance if not building directly on the concrete experiences of affected communities in the region and contacts were established with three partner organisations in order to undertake consultations with community organisations as well as responsible agencies (Raks Thai in Thailand, Asian Disaster Preparedness Center in Sri Lanka, and GTZ in Indonesia). Beyond enabling the stakeholder consultations (e.g. Table 3.1), the field visits proved to act as catalysers for the subsequent higher level interactions with UN and IOTWS forums where local insights were shared and discussed with an eye to the implications for national and regional policies and strategies. The collaboration with Raks Thai, which was initiated with the field visits to Krabi, subsequently developed into a series of activities, outside the work reported in this thesis, including a number of training workshops to increase disaster awareness and preparedness in Krabi Province (Thomalla et al., 2009).

The inception of the Swedish network initiative for international sustainable agricultural development (Chapter 4) was based on a request from Sida to SEI. Sida had at the time recently been restructured and thematic policy groups had been formed, expected to support country programme officers in Sweden and abroad. The policy group on agriculture had received a budget to organise a network of professionals within Sweden intended as a competence and resource base for its policy development and support to Sida programme officers. The broad-based involvement of Swedish professionals in the scoping assessment (e.g. Table 4.1) attracted much interest, especially from those organisations who expressed that they hitherto had found mainly closed doors when seeking to contribute to Swedish agenda setting in this area. The involvement of 'non-traditional' actors was particularly valuable as the Swedish Policy for Global Development and its goal of increased coherence across sectors was still in an early phase of implementation and much uncertainty existed as to what this would mean in concrete terms for other sectoral agencies. However, the work also encountered significant resistance from some of the more established agricultural institutions, who criticised SEI and the network. including in the national media, and sought to undermine the initiative (section 4.3). As the scoping process proceeded, Sida's policy group for agriculture became increasingly anxious that they would lose control with the network if the members themselves determined the activities, as was originally conceived. This was a concern especially since the network budget was the only budget directly under the influence of the thematic policy division, with all other operational budgets located under the country and regional program offices. They therefore proposed an amendment to the contract in order to revise the original governance structure, relegating the planned multi-stakeholder participation in the steering of the network from the Steering Committee, with mandate to make strategic decisions and allocate the project budget, to a reference group with only advisory role, thus concentrating authority with Sida and SEI. This proposal was subsequently agreed to by SEI's leadership. The changes in the network's scope and governance were the reasons why my colleagues and I, who led the inception phase, decided to leave the project. We felt that it had lost its chance to become the expected multi-stakeholder platform, placing SEI in a patron-client relationship towards Sida and making it hard to champion network members' interests, and that, ultimately, SEI had made promises to the participants in the inception phase that would now be hard to honour (compare also with recommendations received from prospective members (SIANI Secretariat, 2009)).

The work in Vietnam (Chapter 5) was a pilot study for the upscaling component of the FAO-led SARD Initiative. It was also the first work I was involved in, trying to operationalise action research and action learning methodologies. Contacts with a number of rural development professionals were established and a situation analysis prepared, which was expected to form a basis for more concrete activities in the subsequent implementation phase. However, owing to the fact that the expected multi-donor trust fund did not materialise, there was no direct follow-up on the pilot study. Instead, the insights were channelled into a number of written outputs, the final one of which is shared in Chapter 5. Although the work did not include more extensive collaborative knowledge generation activities, an effort was made to design and use individual consultations and the field trips as joint learning opportunities. While the work may hardly have made any major contribution to the wider group of professionals who participated, it formed part of the learning process hosted within the RDViet programme of Vietnamese and Swedish institutions and insights were shared and discussed at several meetings, workshops and conferences. This lead to some intense discussions with, in particular, Vietnamese researchers and civil servants on the interpretation of grassroots democracy and the role of research in making such inquiries. I also recollect some of the participants in Hanoi and Hue City acknowledging during the meetings (see section 5.3) that they found the individual consultations welcome and rare opportunities to reflect on their own practice and how they perhaps could improve their support to grassroots initiatives.

The assessment of implementability challenges in Denmark (Chapter 6) is an ongoing project, and by far the largest of five communicated in this thesis. The work presented here describes only one aspect of the activities conducted by multiple colleagues and partners within work package 6 on governance and policy adaptation of Baltic COMPASS. The project as a whole has 22 formal partners and many more associate partners: ministries, agencies, NGOs, farmer federations, advisory services etc. The project is a strategic effort by the European Union to support cooperation and cohesion in the Baltic Sea Region, under the Baltic Sea Region Strategy. The assessment of implementability challenges in Denmark was one of the first steps in the project, to undertake a 'situation analysis' and define areas of more targeted intervention in the remaining years of the project. At the time, there were heated discussions on the national Government's Green Growth Strategy, which by most people consulted was seen as a good example of coordination between the ministries and agencies, but also as a failure in terms of involvement of non-state actors (see also section 6.5). Many participants thus used the occasion to ventilate frustrations and critique the way the Strategy had been developed, including the River Basin Management Plans, which at the time was in the last phase of preparation. In the words of one of the participants, the consultations and national report brought into the formal domain much of the 'corridor and coffee room gossip', which he found to contain the most accurate analysis of the issues in the preparation of the national Green Growth Strategy (civil servant, Copenhagen, Feb. 2010).

Table 8.1: Highlights from the change processes endengered in each project. In some cases, these highlights include references to the projects as a whole and reflect the contributions from many colleagues and partners. For explanation of acronyms please see the respective chapters.

Project	Main beneficiaries and key outcomes
Integrated Coastal Management, Philippines (Chapter 2+7)	*1.* The three barangays in Camiguin prepared 'rich pictures' which showed their main concerns and propositions for future development. They were shared with the LGU as proposed inputs to the municipal development plan. The barangay kagawads informed that in the past there had hardly been any input from the barangays to municipal planning. Residents of barangay Balatubat also used the opportunity to discuss the need for an agricultural cooperative and start planning for its realisation. Given local politics this was a sensitive topic, as some municipal politicians considered it a challenge to the municipal mandate (Acebes & Larsen, 2008). *2*. The municipal councillor for environment and the municipal administrators were provided with insights to adapt the policy environment in the municipality. This included proposals to convene an inter-municipal committee on transboundary fishing; revise certain local ordinances; and the need to think vertically across a variety of policy instruments in order to better appreciate the different stakeholder groups in the municipality (Acebes & Larsen, 2008). *3.* Line agencies DENR and BFAR of Region 2 obtained feedback from the LGU, barangays and residents of Camiguin on the coastal resource management policies. There was a realisation of a need for more coordinated efforts for law enforcement and livelihoods support amongst mainland agencies, and a set of action points were outlined. LGU, PGU and line agencies started discussing an environmental consortium, who could submit a joint proposal for a larger sustainable development programme for the islands (Acebes & Larsen, 2008).
Disaster recovery and resilience, Thailand (Chapter 3)	*1*. The participatory stakeholder assessment in Thailand, which was co-organised with Raks Thai in July 2008, was seen to make a significant contribution to Raks Thai's momentum and programmatic vision in the field of DRR and the overall strengthening of community resilience. The field report was translated into Thai, and the concrete and forthright findings informed the overall internal reflection process undertaken by Raks Thai in 2009 to review its complex post-tsunami programme in the affected provinces. The report also served as important background information for the external end-of-project evaluation undertaken in 2008. The findings have also been used to inform the design of multiple proposals submitted to public and private donors, and to guide broader programme development in Southern Thailand (evaluation submitted by Raks Thai, in Thomalla et al., 2009). *2*. The online dialogue on 'Strengthening the last mile of tsunami

	Early Warning Systems in the Indian Ocean' shared insights from the field visits and stakeholder consultations in Thailand, Sri Lanka and Indonesia with a wider audience, and engaged DRR professionals in the region and globally to jointly explore recent lessons learned in strengthening disaster preparedness and developing tsunami EWS. The dialogue drew a response of 154 registrations from 41 countries. The results from the dialogue were shared at the Regional Task Team and Regional Standard Operating Procedures (SOP) Workshop in Jakarta in 2009 (Thomalla et al., 2009). *3*. Based on the contributions from the consulted stakeholders, SEI and ADPC provided scientific support to Working Group 6 of the ICG/IOTWS in compiling a document of good practices in tsunami warning dissemination as part of its efforts to support the development of the IOTWS, particularly community preparedness (Thomalla et al., 2009). The insights from the consultations and dialogue were also communicated to the UN/ISDR through the preparation for the Global Assessment Report on Disaster Risk Reduction 2011 (Larsen et al., 2010).
Policy coherence in sustainable agricultural development (Sweden) (Chapter 4)	*1*. The scoping assessment allowed professionals in Sweden from across sectors, also those who generally are not perceived as agricultural experts, to raise key issues related to international sustainable agricultural development and to comment on the institutional operating environment in Sweden for addressing such issues. These insights were shared in a nationwide dialogue and also placed Sweden's engagement in agricultural development cooperation in the national media (e.g. section 4.3). *2*. The key issues raised in the scoping assessment was synthesised into concepts for the formation of Cluster Groups, to be funded by the network's budget for targeted dialogues between sectors and interest groups. The Cluster Groups were aimed at providing a multi-year platform for professionals to establish more institutionalised collaboration on the basis of individuals' participation and commitment (Larsen et al., 2009). *3*. The scoping assessment contributed to operationalise the Swedish Policy for Global Development in concrete terms and critique current institutional efforts to improve intersectoral coherence. The inception workshop brought together professionals who had never before interacted directly despite all working with issues connected to international agricultural development (Larsen et al., 2009).
Grassroots democracy in rural development (Vietnam)	*1*. The pilot study invited professionals to participate in an inquiry into the role and meaning of grassroots democracy and the ability of international programmes such as the SARD Initiative to support grassroots organisations in rural development. For some of the participants this provided a rare opportunity to reflect on own practice

(Chapter 5)	and consider how they could improve their efforts (comments from rural development professionals, Hanoi and Hue, 2006). *2*. The final report (Larsen, 2006) was shared with the FAO's SARD office in Rome. It provided the FAO team, responsible for global implementation of SARD as a WSSD partnership, with feedback on its relevance in Vietnam and requests from the consulted stakeholders. *3*. The pilot study formed part of the Vietnamese-Swedish RDViet programme and both benefited from and contributed to the learning process among involved researchers, lecturers and students (see e.g. the book published by ICRAF Vietnam, synthesising lessons from many people's work in the RDViet programme: Powell et al., 2011).
Accountability in agro-environmental governance, Denmark (Chapter 6)	*1*. The situation analysis of national implementability challenges faced by implementing actors involved many of the immediate players in the agro-environmental debates in Denmark. The circulation of the report (Larsen & Vinther, 2010) and the workshop held with Local Government Denmark were by some participants seen to provide a complementary (informal) channel for the national public hearing on the River Basin Management Plans under the Water Framework Directive (civil servant, Copenhagen, Dec. 2010). *2*. Following the work plan within the Baltic COMPASS project's Work Package 6, the analysis process supported the launch of subsequent more detailed policy analyses, including an assessment of the implementability of biogas in Denmark with a case study on Bornholm in collaboration with the Danish advisory service. This work is intended to provide a stakeholder-based review of the implementability of the ambitious targets for delivery of 'green energy' from degassing of animal manure, an important pillar of the national government's proposed renewable energy action plan until 2050 (see e.g. Larsen & Falk, 2011). *3*. The work enabled the development of partnerships with Danish agencies in order to organise governance dialogues in the Baltic Sea Region, which would be relevant for Danish clients. One example is the request from the Danish Ministry of Environment for the COMPASS project to organise a contribution to a one-day session on phosphorous management and recycling in the Baltic Sea Region at the EU agro-environmental conference convened under the Danish chairmanship during 2012 (e.g. planning meeting with civil servant at the Ministry of Environment, Copenhagen, Sept. 2011).

8.2.2 Lessons for project design and implementation

As evidenced by the summary above, there were clear differences in the nature of the change processes engendered in each project. To large extent, these can be explained by differences in project design, scope and partnership constellations. The Vietnamese project stands out as that of the five which led to the least concrete or significant outcomes. This probably owes to a number of reasons, including i) being a pilot study for a larger multi-institutional programme of action that did not materialise, ii) being the first attempt from my side to apply an explicit action research approach, where the involvement of stakeholders as co-researchers was limited in comparison with the other projects. It was also the first time I worked in a South East Asian context and I found it very challenging to build a sufficient appreciation of the culture and history of the problem situation, which I was exploring. In particular, the very topic of the work – grassroots democracy – often seemed elusive and opaque, as I was trying to come to grips with the socialist democratic tradition in Vietnam, and overcoming language and cultural barriers.

In contrast, the Philippine work had the benefit of an excellent project team and partnership with real 'insiders' to the local situation. I believe this is a main reason that the work became quite well integrated with the efforts of municipal and provincial agencies and led to a very tangible outline of proposed action points, despite a rather short life span of the project and quite limited financial resources. However, exactly given the limited (one year) duration and very constrained funding there was no capacity to support subsequent piloting of such actions, and this placed the responsibility for implementation with the participating partners and collaborators. Recognising the general scarcity of resources in local government and agencies in the decentralised administrations in the Philippines it is, in most cases, doubtful if these actions were implemented.

The work in Thailand was initially looking to be a quite conventional research project, but because of the decisions made by the project team, with advice from other colleagues, it instead adopted a participatory analysis approach with a number of partners as co-researchers. The partnership with ADPC, Raks Thai and GTZ provided leverage to the project activities and helped integrate the work with the efforts of local communities and local and national governments, NGOs and some private sector actors owing to the networks and programmes already carried out by these organisations. This project was also a lesson in how much space there is within a typical research project concept and work plan, allowing the project team to adopt or reject a multi-stakeholder approach as they see fit. A similar realisation was made for the Swedish network initiative, as mentioned below, although this was a reverse situation.

Despite delivering what I believe are worthwhile outcomes, these projects in Vietnam, Philippines, and Thailand all suffered from a general lack of long-term commitment in the facilitated multi-stakeholder processes (ranging from a few months to one year part time work). This impacted the extent to which the work could follow through to organise more substantial actions for practical improvements for those involved. In contrast, the projects in Sweden and Denmark both had a more long term horizon (three years). The Swedish network initiative was promising in the sense that it had a quite significant budget for concrete activities, which was initially mandated to be allocated in accordance with the members' interests under the supervision of the multi-stakeholder Steering Committee. The intention was that specific Cluster Groups, as issue-based organising fora for activities, would be convened by members to take action on concrete issues with relevance for both policy and practice. The network secretariat, hosted at SEI, would here have a vital role as facilitator and mediator of the members' different interests and perspectives. However, as mentioned, the revision in the governance structure meant that the link between member interests and network activities was significantly decoupled. As the network could be steered directly by Sida and SEI several professionals subsequently shared that they came to see it simply as an implementing mechanism for Sida's policy.

The Baltic COMPASS project was designed with the same intention of an intricate integration between stakeholder dialogues (such as the multi-stakeholder situation analysis reported in Chapter 6) and strategic decisions to take action on concrete issues. This requires coordination between the project's work packages, which focuses on – respectively – technical agricultural management practices, design and testing of technologies through finance investment within the project, monitoring and evaluation of agro-environmental measures' impact on nutrient pollution, and governance and policy adaptation through facilitated stakeholder involvement. It was expected that the national assessment in Denmark, as one component of similar work, that was carried out in the other riparian states, would support the decisions in other work packages regarding what agricultural practices to test, which monitoring and evaluation methods to explore, and what technologies to fund through the project budget as pilot activities. However, in reality it has proven impossible to obtain this coordination between work packages. Outcomes from the facilitated stakeholder negotiations are thus often not having clear links to decisions taken in the other work packages (and *vice versa*). From communication with colleagues involved in similar multi-institutional EU projects I have learnt that these experiences are far from unique.

This challenge of integration highlights a recurrent lesson from the projects, namely that there is an inherent risk of separating the dialogical element ('software') from the action oriented element ('hardware'). Facilitated stakeholder processes then remains a 'tag on' or parallel activity to the actual fora where decisions are made regarding selection of (in the case of the Baltic work) what agricultural practices to test, what types of risks to account for in monitoring and modelling exercises, and which technologies to pilot through investments. As the mainstream governance environment is generally more sensitive to rationalist and traditional scientific arguments communicated through modelling and technology pilots than negotiated narratives and other less tangible outcomes from stakeholder dialogues, then the value of the facilitated multi-stakeholder processes depend entirely on whether some of the participants decide to pick up an idea and run with it.

In sum, it is possible to highlight five factors, which have shaped (enabled as well as disabled) the ability of the five projects to foster concrete and relevant outcomes for those involved:

1. *Insider knowledge*: Adequate appreciation of the problem situation, its history and culture, either through own experience and contacts or through partnership with embedded actors.
2. *Long term commitment*: If the interactions were to lead to more than situation analysis and issue mapping and actually pilot implementation of agreed action points then the work had to commit sufficient time (and budget) to the process.
3. *Integration of 'dialogue' and 'action'*: Technical/technological activities, which often have great leverage in the formal governance systems, should be clearly linked to the outcomes from the stakeholder negotiations. If the project includes different tasks / work packages, then it had to include coordination mechanisms to foster coherence.
4. *Ownership*: Shared ownership invited engagement and leveraged knowledge, resources and commitment from partners to ensure that the work was relevant and had an impact.
5. *Accountability*: There had to be mechanisms in place to keep the hosts and/or facilitators of the multi-stakeholder process accountable to the engaged constituency to ensure that negotiated outcomes would be honoured.

8.2.3 Implications for future praxis?

What do these lessons mean for practitioners, charged with responsibilities for facilitating such multi-stakeholder processes? I can share some reflections on my part, as I see these lessons inspire my future work. Insider knowledge and appreciation of the problem context (factor 1) is probably the one of the five factors above over which the facilitator/researcher may have the highest degree of control. It can be rather straightforwardly enabled through always working through appropriate partnerships with competent local organisations. Establishing appropriate partnerships will also normally promote shared ownership of the project activities (factor 4). Of course it is impossible to talk about specific 'design criteria' and both insider knowledge and ownership will rely on a continuous process of relationship building and negotiation between the project partners and co-researchers. This will in most cases mean building such collaboration into the project design through shared funding and allocation of resources to local organisations, many of which are struggling with maintaining an adequate financial resource base.

In fact, this highlights one of the challenges faced within existing funding structures: that many donors do not accept financing of partner organisations, and time horizons are rarely exceeding a few years. Further, as research and project proposals are often prepared and submitted with very short timelines, it is often not possible to agree, or even consult, many relevant local partners prior to project submission, thus postponing crucial partnership building for the implementation process, where *a priori* assumptions have already been built into the design. Nor is much of mainstream donor set up enabling for securing long term commitment (factor 2). In a wider sense, this is contingent on the time limited nature of project engagements. It raises questions regarding what can actually be accomplished within 'projects' in contrast to personal and professional engagement through employment in organisations permanently committed to a local context or problem area; or – surely more powerful – through life time commitments to a way of life and a place of belonging. Based on my experiences described in this thesis, I have also become more critical towards engaging in local contexts with which one has no prior experience, and that one has to be prepared to reject such opportunities in order to allow others who are better placed to take the lead in such work. Further, given these constraints project based engagement with research institutes as institutional platforms should perhaps not primarily be expected to lead to direct improvement for the participants, but rather be more explicitly valued as methods to empower those practitioners who *are* the long term committed local experts and who may champion the methodological tenets of facilitated multi-stakeholder processes in the long run.

In the preparations for partnerships and joint ownership there are important trade-offs to be made with the need to ensure an integration of the 'dialogue' with the 'action' oriented elements (factor 3). In my experience (and as noted already in section 1.1.2), while many organisations flag 'multi-stakeholder' competencies, in practice they still adopt a knowledge prescriptive approach (and thus remain on the left side of the spectrum in Fig. 1.2). This means that one may, during project implementation, end up in a methodological confusion regarding what was meant with previous agreements in the project work plan. For instance, to give a simplified example, if it was stated that stakeholder dialogues on technological innovations should be facilitated; does this mean that 'stakeholders' should be convened and receive results on what comprises the best available technologies as perceived by the technical agencies in the project, or should they actually participate in critiquing these technologies? It is desirable to join hands with organisations with other expertises; for many facilitators this will include technical and or 'hard' science partners. However, if there is not sufficient clarity in the project ambitions or if communication between the partners is not smooth enough to bridge disciplinary divides, then it is likely that the project will not achieve the intended integration between the dialogical and action oriented / technical elements.

Unfortunately, the required in depth communication between partners, which is necessary for building such mutual understanding, will often be undermined by the time constraints imposed on individuals. Project managers are typically juggling several projects at the same time in organisations, which reward staff for production of tangible outputs such as written papers rather than process oriented outcomes. Research institutions are generally unable to monitor and track performance and quality which pertain to process related outcomes. Meanwhile, a perverse incentive structure encourages professionals to compete with colleagues and partners in order to deliver on variables, which are measurable by the existing system, such as journal articles (preferably single authored). This forces loyalty towards the scientific system and encourages reproduction of one's own institution rather than rewarding loyalty to project partners and clients. Clarity in project plans and dedication to establishing the personal relationships, which will form the backbone of the implementation process, may go part of the way. However as long as institutional incentive structures are not geared to rewarding process oriented engagement on, at least, equal footing with traditional scientific work, then the costs for carrying projects through will be carried by individuals urged by their sense of dignity despite incurring personal losses – both in career opportunities and personal life.

The need for integration of the dialogical and the action oriented elements may be addressed not only in the internal project set up, but also in the way the project is affiliated with the 'outside world', its origin, institutional base etc.. In order to enable a satisfactory coupling between the negotiated outcomes from the facilitated processes and decision making, which leads to concrete actions, projects may have to be directly grounded in (or emerging from) administrative structures, which have formal decision making authority. Voluntary and self-organised platforms have their justification only to the extent they are able to make a difference to the participants through negotiating with the mandatory, formal, and coercive structures. While this may in some cases border to being ‘too close for comfort’, leading to some tough compromises in objectives and methods, it may make what *is* possible to be more meaningful. In concrete terms, this would require an estimate regarding what such formal institutional structure are the most appropriate foundations for the stakeholder processes (e.g. within public, private or civil society sectors), and if such institutions may be united in a collaborative process management forum. Here, I believe the Steering Committee, as originally conceived, for the Swedish network initiative (Chapter 4) was a good example of how to promote a marriage between the self-organised and the coercive. One could also go further and recommend that process design emerges from and is governed *from within* existing structures, such as a government committee or an already established public-private partnership forum, rather than only seeking to establish these links after the launch of the (voluntary) process.

However, in any case, the challenge of accountability still stands. As recounted for the five projects presented in this thesis, facilitated stakeholder processes – and research projects in particular – are characterised by a high degree of freedom in interpretation of project objectives and methods. This freedom enables the project to adapt to changing circumstances, surfacing insights, and shifting buy in from partners and participants. But it also paves the way for a high risk of cooption of the process, depending on personal inclinations and ambitions of project staff and organisational leadership (which may change over time). It is noteworthy that stakeholding, as an approach to natural resource governance, here faces the same challenge as was faced by its predecessors known under the labels of ‘public participation’, ‘co-management’ etc. Evidently, institutionalisation of approaches, which are promoted owing to their emancipatory potentials, is invariably accompanied by a risk of cooption.

While multi-stakeholder processes often emerge as a response to dissatisfaction with ‘command and control’ type management, there remains a need to have a clear – and shared – governance structure, particularly in multi-institutional partnerships. In order not to defeat its own purpose, such governance – and in turn ownership – should be adequately distributed amongst the main actors and clients of the work. Formally institutionalised representative fora such as Steering Committees, Advisory Boards etc. here play a role. Yet, if such project ownership structures with a mandate to direct the development of a multi-stakeholder process are established then there will be a tendency for already well positioned organisations and individuals to populate them. They have more privileged access and others may naturally feel hesitant to challenge their authority in taken such positions in the governing bodies. This will typically lead to a reproduction of the system and unwillingness to adequately critique the *status quo*. The real opportunity will arise if previously disadvantaged stakeholders (or their spokespeople) are empowered to obtain their fair share of the seats in these governing bodies and participate in mobilising the relevant accountability lines during the work. This, in turn, requires endorsements from donors and organisational leadership of such administrative arrangements, and sufficient commitment of time and resources to make the investments in this negotiation process meaningful. There is no doubt that this will present its challenges.

There is no straightforward 'cook book' for good project or process design. Operationalisation of objectives and methods will in the end depend on personal judgements and the strength and trust embedded in relationships between the professionals involved. There is no escaping of the never ending process of dialogue and striving for mutual justification for actions and decisions. Yet, I believe that an increased attention to the five factors highlighted here, and the associated pitfalls and opportunities, can support such critical judgements regarding which projects are worthwhile to engage in, and what possibilities exist to maximise the chances that such work leads to the expected benefits for those who need it most. Below, I will now delve into a more theoretical discussion of the research findings, which later (in section 8.5) in turn will lead to two theoretically founded tools for future praxis.

8.3 A framework on stakeholder agency and the fostering of legitimacy

8.3.1 Transactions in intersubjectivity

It only takes a quick comparative glance across the cases presented in Chapters 2 to 6 to see the extent to which concerns about stakeholder agency were an intrinsic aspect of the examined governance systems. This was true whether the situation was rural development, coastal resources, disaster preparedness, agricultural development aid or nutrient pollution. It was also observable that each stakeholder practice had a contingent set of legitimising practices that sought to justify the agency in question. For instance, when reporting on progress of Thai contributions to the Indian Ocean Tsunami Warning System (Chapter 3), government officials were relying on an institutionally entrenched idea of one coherent 'system', even in spite of other stakeholder criticisms of technical and human deficiencies (See summary in Table 8.2.)

Throughout, it is clear we must view legitimacy as both a quality inexorably linked to the agency by which it is generated and concrete, material objects that can be mobilised, produced or exploited. Given its pervasive character, any theorising of stakeholder agency and its legitimisation must be able to capture all types of interaction between the people involved in resource dilemmas (see also Section 1.2.4, which considers problems inherent to mainstream theoretical perspectives on legitimacy.) Rather than only focusing on 'stakes', justifiable rules, normative structures or collective purposes, we require a framework that is sufficiently broad to capture the impressive multiplicity of conscious and unconscious strategies employed by stakeholders when exerting of agency and negotiating legitimacy.

Table 8.2: Synthesis of key findings from the five cases regarding agency and legitimacy. Two examples have been selected from each case study.

Case	**Stakeholder agency**	**Contingent legitimisation**
Integrated Coastal Management, Philippines (Chapter 2)	The ICM regime departed from a goal of rehabilitating and protecting coastal ecosystems to maintaining or recovering an assumed equilibrium ecosystem state. In the implementation, this assumption was greatly contested amongst stakeholders, many of whom exploited a lack of accountability mechanisms in the devolved governance system to undermine policy implementation.	Elite alliances were able to disempower the formally mandated actors and maintain control over resources, thus victimising fisherfolk and continuing exploitation. The collapse of the management regime and patronage of exercised by 'strongmen' posited elite alliances as the only available source of legitimate authority.
Example 1	*Strongmen champion localised management practices which often conflict with the views of other stakeholders, e.g. through the sponsoring of logging and fishing activities.*	*The resource access released monetary gains, which in the clientalist democratic system of the Philippines can be used to attract voters during elections, and govern their respective territories.*
Example 2	*National policy owners drew on expert conservation science to articulate a scientific ecosystem management paradigm that is indisputable by local actors.*	*Avoiding collective critique of the assumptions associated with ICM; this deepens the dominating role of international development banks, foreign aid agencies, and NGOs in promoting a worldview that frames development according to specific interests.*
Disaster recovery and	Faced with the failure of formal recovery, people mobilised	People's informal agency was legitimised by competing visions

resilience, Thailand (Chapter 3)	resources and entitlements to instantiate informal recovery and disaster preparedness through innovative modes of stakeholder agency that emerged from the public, private and civil society sectors.	for the coastal communities, i.e. the existing or imagined ideal (unstable) states of the community/society promoted by certain stakeholders. This included competition for resources and the struggle for realisation of different visions of what comprises 'effective' recovery and resilience in the communities.
Example 1	*Villagers in Krabi Province erected their own sign-posting for Tsunami evacuation routes: '… sign-posting is confusing. Some of the signs point in wrong direction, or to [a] "safe site" where the shelter was never constructed due to lack of funds' (Villager, Ban Nam Khem).*	*Contesting the legitimacy of the government-owned warning system and maintaining village control over disaster preparedness.*
Example 2	*Government officials mobilised family ties and social networks to misappropriate post-tsunami emergency provisions that favoured family and friends of the local elites.*	*Those with money and connections to influential networks were able to legitimise their 'desired system states' and, for instance, secure approvals for infrastructure developments that contravened planning regulations.*
Policy coherence in sustainable agricultural development (Sweden) (Chapter 4)	Communities of professionals in Sweden employed a range of informal social practices to negotiate and frame what constitutes desirable 'sustainable agricultural development'.	The practices had a regulatory effect in determining boundaries around existing communities of professionals, specifying insiders and outsiders. They maintained and undermined institutional legitimacy and prospects for securing public funding and status.
Example 1	*Swedish university researchers criticised water resource professionals for 'ignorance' in debates on agricultural development.*	*Professionals in other fields lost credibility and feared experimenting with opportunities outside traditional areas of expertise: 'It has made me cautious of traversing into "agricultural territory" as I risk losing credibility even in my own domain of expertise' (Water management professional).*
Example 2	*The network initiative and the commissioned institution were challenged by the 'traditional'*	*Devaluing the competence of 'non-traditional' actors when shaping Swedish contributions to global*

	agricultural institutions, contesting the impartiality of the network and its host and arguing that financial support should rather be given to existing agricultural institutions.	*agricultural development.*
Grassroots democracy in rural development (Vietnam) (Chapter 5)	International, national and local stakeholders mobilised three different discourses to insert their agendas into the renovation reform. They justified the relevance of grassroots democracy under *Doi Moi* as a vehicle for: (i) liberal democratisation, (ii) improved policy efficiency, and/or (iii) enhanced accountability in the governance of rural development.	Through defining the meaning and relevance of grassroots democracy, each discourse legitimised a particular direction within *Doi Moi*, namely: (i) increased introduction of liberal democratic procedures from outside Vietnam, (ii) nurturing the 'state project', and/or (iii) a better monitoring of local policy ambiguities and cooption by elites.
Example 1	*Claims by INGO staff that the formulation of the Grassroots Democracy Decree was inspired by approaches introduced by INGOs in recent years in the same way as informal rural collaborative groups had been inspired by foreign donors and NGOs.*	*Interpreting the function of grassroots democracy in order to legitimate increased influence from the 'international community' (discourse 1 on democratisation).*
Example 2	*One Vietnamese researcher commented: 'the devolution [under* Doi Moi*] is by many actually experienced as bringing to people what they do not want, in a form they do not like or do not understand.'*	*Casting grassroots democracy as a means to address emerging ambiguities and problems during the renovation reform, legitimating improved accountability and feedback from local professionals and citizens (discourse 3 on enhanced accountability).*
Accountability in agro-environmental governance, Denmark (Chapter 6)	Stakeholders intervened in three 'policy adaptation instances' to negotiate nutrient reduction measures and targets: (i) definition of the public good, (ii) estimating cost-efficiency of measures, (iii) negotiating adaptability of measures.	People strategically mobilised claims within co-existing sense-making perspectives on governance: (i) the reductionist, (ii) holist and (iii) interactionist. This enabled justification of specific actions and visions for Danish agriculture.
Example 1	*Agricultural lobby organisations targeted the appreciation of the*	*Mobilising the reductionist perspective and undermining the*

	uncertainty associated with selection and evaluation of measures: 'The model used by the authorities was generic for all fiords and does not take into account the different relationships between the variables in different fiords' (Representative from agricultural organisations).	*credibility of the official indicator used for estimating nutrient reduction targets in the River Basin Management Plans.*
Example 2	*Civil servants critiqued the government's strategy, stating that proposed measures had to be bought into by relevant implementers beforehand: 'We know that the implementation of [voluntary measures] cannot proceed faster than people are prepared to talk with us' (Civil servant).*	*Mobilising the interactionist perspective to legitimise increased state investments in nurturing relationships with sub-national administrations of municipalities and regions as well as private and civil society organisations.*

The findings outlined above emphasise how people both reacted to and reproduced the conditions that made their activities possible. In so doing, their practical actions in everyday life created the social structures that were experienced and reacted to as objective reality. This in turn was the basis for claims to knowledge and for plausible policy options. It also showed that stakeholder agency can be conceived of as being a recursive social activity that allows for a reciprocal coupling of socialisation and individuation (Giddens, 1984; Strauss, 1977; Kemmis, 2008; Fox, 2006).

Moreover, this evidence confirms the relevance of a relational view of power (Section 1.2.4) – how social order is an ongoing accomplishment of 'contexts of accountability in which both individuals and institutions are given identity and reproduced' (Lindstead, 2006, p. 399). For instance, the cases from the Philippines and Denmark (Chapters 2 and 6) revealed the extent to which just accountability was dependent on the transactions between people in concrete encounters, where stakeholders could exert their agency and choose to accept or reject the agency of others.

In the same way, it highlights the importance of distinguishing between stakeholder 'agency' as actions (directly contributing to certain transformation processes) and 'legitimating practices' (i.e. contingent efforts to render acceptable and credible these actions). As observed in the case studies, the role of legitimating practices represented an implicit or explicit effort toward what

Berger and Luckman have termed 'second-order objectivation', functioning 'to make objectively available and subjectively plausible the "first order" objectivations which have been institutionalised' through the agency (Berger & Luckman, 1966, p. 110). Thus, agency and legitimising practices combined to constitute the entire stakeholder praxis.

It is hence appropriate to approach stakeholder agency as forms of praxis, which is both legitimised by and reshapes the totality of the intersubjective order in which it takes place. The notion of intersubjective consciousness is well established in the constructionist and interactionist philosophies of science. It acknowledges that while the individual is the perceiving subject, shared (i.e. agreed 'objective') reality consists of an intersubjective consciousness that emerges within the context of the agency of many. This broad view of legitimacy is also coherent with the radical democratic approach adopted by this thesis: that is, one that acknowledges the 'process of relationship – the unencumbered capacity of people to sustain the meaning making process' (Gergen, 2003, p. 46). It also resonates well with the adopted research approach: that while objectivism and subjectivism make sense within realist and idealist philosophies of science, respectively, intersubjectivity is the primary locus of interest within SPAR's approach to constructionism (Midgley, 2000, pp. 69-100).[17]

This conclusion establishes an initial view of legitimate stakeholder agency, as emerging from the cases, as follows:

> *Legitimate agency* is constituted of actions considered by the stakeholders involved to cohere with the totality of the intersubjective order in which the agency occurs; coherence that is crafted through contingent legitimising practices.

Legitimising practices can be partly interpreted through the theoretical lens of 'reality maintaining practices'. These comprise the defining parameters of membership in communities of praxis that share a dominant sense of the intersubjective reality and thus the regulatory principle of inclusion in/exclusion

---

[17] Many critics confuse the attention to intersubjective reality with a 'relativist', idealist or solipsistic philosophy, and/or are ignorant to the many varieties of non-positivist philosophies of sciences (e.g. Jones, 2002; Bunge, 2001). For instance, McLaughlin and Dietz (2008) – two of a very few researchers within resilience theory who take an interest in epistemological concerns – conflate constructivism broadly with an ethnocentric idealism that treats categories as artifacts of the human mind. Similarly, water management and conflict studies that are seeing a revival of constructivist epistemology frequently promote the view that 'constructions' are not amenable to validation or explanation (e.g. Warner, 2008). As such, constructionist philosophy is said to suffer from a weak capacity to bridge the process of claims-making and the efficacy of these claims (Hannigan, 1995). As should be evident from both the methodological outline in Chapter 1 and this section, these concerns do not apply to the intersubjectivity approach adopted by this thesis.

from negotiations about legitimate agency (e.g. Wenger, 1998, pp. 149-163; Althusser, 2008, p. 43; Berger & Luckman, 1966, pp.110-146). Such communities of praxis (as seen with the Swedish professionals negotiating the meaning of agricultural development in Chapter 5) are dynamic social structures in which actors position their bodies as fields of perception and action. Representing to themselves the presence of others, they may come to accept other subjectivities invested with equal rights (Merleau-Ponty, 2002). In the sphere of the intersubjective, we therefore become alert to reality maintaining practices that shape the active crafting of collective and intersubjective consciousness and make them the most suitable focus of investigation and intervention in facilitated multi-stakeholder processes.

8.3.2 Policy adaptation instances and legitimising practices

Beyond this broad definition of what is conveyed by the notion of legitimate stakeholder agency in the contexts of the presented cases, I will now seek to provide more specific guidelines for related future research interventions. The methodology sections of Chapters 2 to 6 showed that the stakeholder agency studies differed as a result of intrinsic differences in problem contexts and project design and needs. Notwithstanding, they all examined the role of agency in specific examples of policy adaptation. Thus, the case studies have all charted policy adaptation processes and spaces that are provided for and/or created by the exertion of agency. Specifically, in the assessment of the implementability of nutrient reduction targets and measures in Denmark's compliance with Baltic and European agreements, these spaces took the form of temporal and content specific instances that I came to view as 'policy adaption instances' (Chapter 6). They provided opportunities for professionals to mobilise claims to legitimise their actions in relation to one or several co-existing sense-making perspective(s) on governance.

The research on agro-environmental governance in the Baltic Sea Region was the most recent (ongoing) project presented in this thesis. Looking back over the previous six years of project work presented in Chapters 2 to 5, I am struck by how obvious the existence of policy adaptation instances are also in the other cases (Table 8.3). This would seem to prove that it is possible, in research on stakeholder agency, to identify policy adaptation instances that are the particular loci of stakeholder agency: knowable and comprehensible spatio-temporal instances where people struggle to create an intersubjective space and an acceptable coherence. It may be said that these instances harboured intersubjective constructions that determined the maintenance and/or possible shifts in modes of legitimately enacted agency (Table 8.3).

Table 8.3: Examples of policy adaptation instances in the examined cases. Examples are drawn from the case study evidence to show the range of types of policy adaptation instances. They are not expected to be representative of the full diversity of such instances.

Case	Examples of policy adaptation instance
Integrated Coastal Management, Philippines (Chapter 2)	• Definition of what constitutes relevant indicators and criteria for determining the 'ideal' state of coastal ecosystems in the ICM regime. • Municipal level decision whether to pursue coastal resource planning, and what interests shall be accommodated. • The option to use repression and tactics of fear to threaten law enforcers to give up official duties.
Disaster recovery and resilience, Thailand (Chapter 3)	• Prescription within early warning system design determining what is 'relevant' risk knowledge. • Opportunity to rebuild market access for tourists through lobbying and informal contacts with central government. • Decisions whether to comply with national policy and *de facto* allocate post-tsunami relief to expatriates/non-Thais.
Policy coherence in sustainable agricultural development, Sweden (Chapter 4)	• Definition of what is 'proper' agricultural knowledge, e.g. concerns of yield and productivity vs. gender roles on farms. • Spaces for executive decisions regarding public funding allocations, based on personal contacts. • Evoking 'representative authority' of stakeholders in low-income countries, e.g. through claims such as 'the needs of the poor farmers in Africa are …'
Grassroots democracy in rural development, Vietnam (Chapter 5)	• Professionals recasting and interpreting the grassroots democracy policy direction to support own agenda. • Ambiguities in decentralisation reform and land law paving the way for varying local modes of implementation. • INGOs being permitted to crowd out LNGOs in the national policy dialogues.
Accountability in agro-environmental governance, Denmark (Chapter 6)	• Definition of what comprises the 'public good', something that ought to be promoted through agro-environmental policy. • Estimation and prioritisation of cost-efficiency of measures, i.e. how to 'know' the impact on nutrient loads and other benefits. • Negotiation of the adaptability of measures, i.e. what constitutes the sub-national and contextual operationalisation of the centralised decision

The case studies showed the different roles people took within such policy adaptation instances (Chapters 2 to 6). In presenting the evidence of each case, my colleagues and I experimented with different analytical lenses that have shaped the classification of such roles and, in fact, created typologies of stakeholders. For the Philippine coastal management work (Chapter 3), we adopted the TWOCAGES framework, a tool developed by Richard Bawden and colleagues within the tradition of systems thinking and action research at the Centre for Systemic Development at the University of Western Sydney, Australia, in 1995. It was originally inspired by Peter Checkland's (1999) analytical framework CATWOE that had been presented within his Soft Systems Methodology (SSM). The acronym TWOCAGES is an abbreviation of eight questions that are posed according to the research and help to distinguish between different types of stakeholder in relation to an envisioned transformation in the system of interest (Bawden, 2011)[18]. The framework allows stakeholder identification and interventions to depart from ongoing and *de facto* dynamics of the local situation (in which the research is undertaken) rather than *a priori* defined categories related to assumed formal institutional mandates. In the Thai disaster recovery and preparedness case (Chapter 3), we used our results to generate a framework – as perceived through a lens of resilience and vulnerability theory – for distinguishing stakeholder agency. For the Swedish case on agricultural development (Chapter 4), three communities of praxis were identified according to the stakeholders' roles in the interactions between perspectives and interests. In the analysis of Vietnam's rural agriculture (Chapter 5), people's agency was defined in relation to their adoption of the three major discourses that legitimised specific interpretations of and responses to grassroots democracy. Finally, for work on Baltic agro-environmental governance (specifically the Danish Green Growth Strategy), stakeholders were distinguished according to the sense-making perspective they employed in different policy adaptation instances (Chapter 6).

At this stage, I believe it is possible to step back from such differences in analysis and articulate three common roles the people involved adopted as part of their legitimising practices: the interrelated roles of Creators, Sanctioners and Contesters. Together these roles form what we may consider a triad of legitimising practices, attempts to colonise policy adaptation instances and create, sanction or contest fragments of intersubjective reality that legitimise certain modes of stakeholder agency (Table 8.4).

[18] See Chapters 2 and 7 for explanations of the acronyms.

Table 8.4: Legitimising practices in policy adaptation instances. One contested example of agency has been selected from each case in order to demonstrate the extent to which legitimising practices focus on negotiation of the legitimacy of this agency through the targeting of a specific policy adaptation instance. The purpose is to illustrate the way agency and legitimising practices combine to produce the praxis of stakeholders engaged in three types of legitimising activity. (Please note that these examples are somewhat simplified, disregarding the differences exercised by people *within* a broad category such as 'international NGOs', 'village professionals', etc.).

Case	**Example of contested agency**	**Current colonisation of a policy adaptation instance**	**Creators**	**Sanctioners**	**Contesters**
Integrated Coastal Management, Philippines (Chapter 2)	Central government steering of coastal resource use	Definition of the 'ideal' ecosystem state	Expert science and development projects	Central government, development banks	Municipal elites, National *padrinos*, *barangay* citizens who do not share in the benefits
Disaster recovery and resilience, Thailand (Chapter 3)	Implementation of IOC and national government led tsunami early warning system	Prescription within early warning system design that determines who can provide 'relevant' risk knowledge.	National and international warning system designers and risk reduction experts	Responsible ministry decision-makers, donor agencies	Village disaster risk preparedness professionals
Policy coherence in sustainable agricultural development, Sweden (Chapter 4)	Channelling public funding for agricultural development to 'traditional' institutions	Defining 'proper' agricultural knowledge as concerned only with production	Agricultural scientists in established institutions	University leadership, and some funding agencies	'Non-traditional' actors such as water resource professionals or human rights experts

Grassroots democracy in rural development, Vietnam (Chapter 5)	Promoting civil society within a liberal democratic ‘good governance’ vision	Casting grassroots democracy as a consequence of international development efforts	International NGOs	International development agencies, foreign governments	Vietnamese government officials, local NGOs
Accountability in agro-environmental governance, Denmark (Chapter 6)	Undermining the national government’s Green Growth Strategy target of 19,000 tons N reduction	Asserting that officicial cost-efficiency estimates of measures are invalid owing to lack of catchment level assessments	Agricultural lobby organisations	Some technical experts, some government parties	Environmental NGOs, other research agencies

In contrast to earlier systems tools such as CATWOE (Checkland & Scholes, 1999) and TWOCAGES (Bawden, 2011; Larsen et al., 2011), this identified triad of legitimising practices distinguishes stakeholders in relation not to a defined issue or a transformation process, but rather to a form of legitimising practice as a creative force of intersubjective reality. This means that the three core roles involved in the negotiation of what constitutes legitimate agency are discerned *vis-à-vis* their influence on creating/sanctioning/contesting how policy adaptation instances are presently colonised and imbued with meaning. This, in turn, contributes to determining the legitimacy of stakeholders *when* they engage in concrete issues and change processes. In fact, the policy adaptation instances – which are the *loci* of struggles between Creators, Sanctioners and Contestors – may typically be linked to several forms of agency and change processes.

In this view, the stakeholders who – within CATWOE and TWOCAGES may be denoted as Owners, Actors, Clients, Guardians, etc. in relation to a certain issue or transformation – may independently of this categorisation seize the role of Creator, Sanctioner, or Contester in the different policy adaptation instances. In others words, the presented framework deconstructs resource dilemmas situations to offer an alternative filter through which to distinguish stakeholders. Importantly, the initial question regarding legitimacy differs from that asked in the CATWOE and TWOCAGES models. The advantage of explicitly identifying the triads of legitimising practices is that it breaks down the notion of legitimacy from a generic 'either/or' and describes it according to specific relationships. As such, it highlights how legitimate agency can be fostered through interventions in different phases of stakeholder praxis: as changes in the agency itself and/or as shifts in the relationships between the legitimising practices.

Accordingly a synthesis of the evidence across the five cases motivates the following conception of legitimacy of stakeholder agency in policy adaptation for natural resource governance (Fig. 8.1):

> *Stakeholder agency is legitimate* when it coheres with the intersubjective reality in which it is exerted. It further depends on the colonisation of specific policy adaptation instances that are negotiated through triads of legitimising practices. These practices aim to create (Creator), maintain (Sanctioner) or challenge (Contester) the way in which the policy adaptation instance is used, thus giving meaning to and legitimising the agency in question.

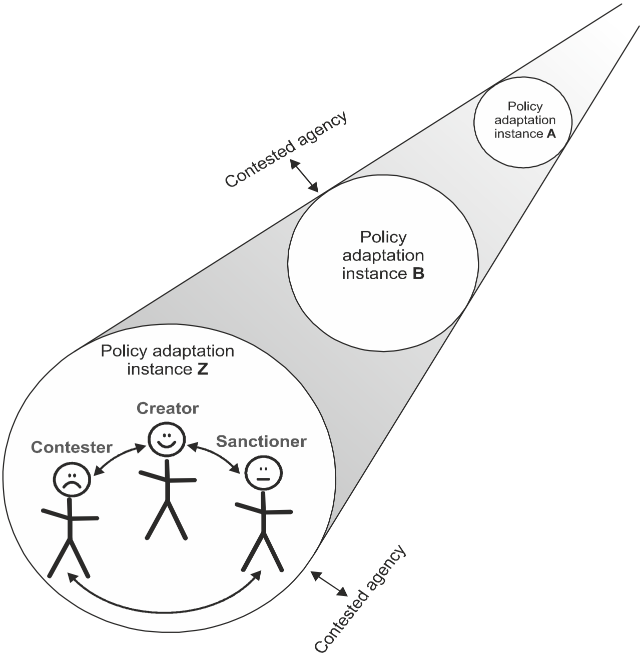

Figure 8.1: Negotiating legitimate agency. Schematic depiction of how legitimate stakeholder agency is negotiated in specific policy adaptation instances. Stakeholder praxis is composed of (i) agency and (ii) legitimising practices: Creation, Constesting, Sanctioning.

This view demands that we acknowledge that the people's roles in the triads of legitimising practices were not static; that is, stakeholders who played the role of the Sanctioners in one instance of policy adaptation (for example, in promoting a certain conception of the role of disaster risk reduction committees (Chapter 4) or the notion of grassroots democracy (Chapter 3) could be Contesters in another instance. As such, it is important to note that isolated analysis of a single triad of legitimising practices cannot be justified when one set of relationships (e.g. as those listed in Table 8.4) can only be understood and acted upon once they are considered in context of the 'neighbouring' triads of legitimising practices in other policy adaptation instances. In fact, the real transformative potential seems to lie in connecting neighbouring triads and in casting critical praxis in an infinite 'n-dimensional space' of legitimising practices. Indeed, the co-existence of multiple sources of legitimisation for contested modes of stakeholder agency may be taken to reflect what William James treated, in the pragmatist tradition, as a question of 'competing truths' (James, 2010, pp. 31-54). Arguably, it is the purpose of facilitated multi-stakeholder processes to foster constructive ruptures in the normal separation of such triads and truths, to improve the interaction and coherence between different policy adaptation instances.

8.3.3 Realising interdependencies: From issue to existence

This emergent framework for conceptualising legitimacy of stakeholder agency has several implications for how we should plan multi-stakeholder processes: for instance, how our view about interdependencies between stakeholders and our mediation in these relationships is changed. Following the SPAR tradition, stakeholder interdependencies are generally expressed in terms of their interests – i.e. the 'stakes' associated with their particular resource dilemma. The notion of interest implies conscious desires connected to identified issues, where the intrinsic nature of nature and the human dimension attached to frequent transgressions of managerial boundaries of natural resources form the basis for interdependencies among stakeholders. As highlighted above, analytical systems frameworks such as CATWOE and TWOCAGES (e.g. Checkland & Scholes, 1999; Bawden, 2011; Larsen et al., 2011) place greatest emphasis on the role of stakeholders *vis-à-vis* the transformation process and/or issues associated with resource dilemmas as conflicts of interest between interdependent stakeholders. Altogether, this reflects an axiology (view on the source and substance of values), which – while appreciative of the different normative structures and dispositions of stakeholders – assumes that value arises in connection to an interest associated with an issue.

In the creation of intersubjective reality in the documented cases, stakeholders were not only creating definitions and images of 'ecosystems', 'early warning systems', 'grassroots democracy', etc., but in fact were actively co-creating the social identities and existences of one another in a broader sense. For instance, when businessmen in Krabi province conveyed critique of the nepotism of civil servants in local governments (Chapter 4), they were contesting the legitimacy of a set of informal practices as well as seeking to influence the personality and morality of the people in question. When environmental NGOs in Denmark suggested it absurd to protect bankrupt agricultural landholdings and indebted farms (Chapter 6), they were contesting the legitimacy of government policy as well as seeking to influence the collective view on the rights of a group of citizens whose way of life they would like to see changed. These examples shows how the legitimacy of agency is often generated with a decision about whether others should participate in the co-construction of a shared social and physical order – in effect, the active construction of each other as interdependent subjects in a shared intersubjectivity. Thus, in the context of fostering legitimacy, existential conflicts (more than just conflicts of interest) need to be recognised.

Acknowledgement of larger existential conflicts is hardly a new idea in interpretive and constructionist scholarship. In fact, it reflects an adherence to the full consequences of accepting reality as an intersubjective negotiated order. Mead's interactionism (in Strauss, 1977, pp. 199-248) was founded on the conception of communication as a process of participating in the other ('the other in the self'). The significance of the notion of discourse *per se* is – as expressed by Gergen – that the 'self' is plucked from the head and located in the sphere of the social (Bragg, 1996). Recent research, which has adopted an interpretive overview of conflicts in natural resource management, has similarly highlighted the relevance of a shift from viewing conflict as the incompatibility of interests and/or perspectives and goals to one that embraces multiplicity in the way people create, maintain, accept and/or reject roles and identities adopted by self and others (e.g. Hallgren, 2003; Ångman et al., 2011; Idrissou et al., Submitted).

Given the dynamics of legitimising practices, where stakeholder agency is mainly defined in relation to specific 'interests' there is a risk of disavowing the full experiential and existential foundation of those who are involved. In this regard, SPAR together with other post-foundationalist responses to positivism (and other forms of research that objectify the other) continue to support the rationalist emphasis on conscious interests in the defining stakeholder agency. Arguably, this owes to the fact that SPAR partly legitimises itself through negation of these earlier research traditions and, in so doing, is struggling to 'connect the resulting hermeneutical, post-modern, and critical research traditions to the hopes, needs, goals, promises of a free democratic society' (Denzin & Lincoln, 2005, p. 3). Notably, this changed view enables us to address conflicts and differences between stakeholders more holistically when human action is considered an explicitly existential problem (Markell, 2003, pp. 10-22).

In sum, multi-stakeholder processes, as they regard legitimising practices, ought to foster an awareness of stakeholder interdependencies, specifically in terms of how people co-create one another through activities in which policy adaptation instances are sanctioned, contested and/or created. This means that we must learn to focus not only on the interrelation of interests but on sources of co-dependent legitimisation and then to inquire into the fragility of legitimising claims that seek to construct a desirable image of reality. As Scanlon (1998, pp. 147-188) described, we humans tend to choose to live with those sharing similar notions of justifiability to others. It is in the tangible policy adaptation instances that we explore such 'moral holidays' (James, 2010, p. 50), and may recognise our concrete others and have the chance to come to stand in an ethical relationship with them (Benhabib, 1992, p. 148).

8.3.4 Radical cordiality: from hegemony to adaptive instances

Stakeholding has been criticised for acknowledging the needs of some more than others, thus undermining the equal worth of each citizen (Agne, 2006; Näsström, 2010; Hansen & Sriskandarajah, 2009), and radical democracy has been criticised for challenging 'orthodox models' of liberal democracy without offering coherent alternatives (e.g. Little & Lloyd, 2009). In this last section, I would like to comment on this critique and consider the implications of relying on radical democratic theory in the facilitation of multi-stakeholder processes.

Through the collective inquiry into intransparent or vaguely monitored instances of policy adaptation, I believe it is possible to see that the facilitated multi-stakeholder processes not only critiqued the myth of bounded political communities, which can control their destinies (Bartelson, 2008), but also suggested avenues for concrete improvement in policy adaptation instances. While other governance approaches and research disciplines are concerned with promoting what they consider the most desirable institutional arrangements, facilitated stakeholder processes – instead – depart from the *de facto* situation in existing policy adaptation. In other words, they endeavour to pick up and reassemble the pieces of shattered attempts to define complex and contested localities.

From an international perspective, I believe our work contributed to larger attempts to challenge claims that settled notions of the 'national' or other formal institutional boundaries provide conditions and/or sources of legitimisation for current global injustices (Näsström, 2003). However insignificant, the projects have promoted the idea that increased global tolerance and solidarity is possible, through fostering moral communities that extend beyond hypocritical and universal claims of humanism and reciprocity. Acknowledgement of this allows for an operationalisation of one of the original commitments of systems thinking: namely, to concretise a type of solidarity that is not limited to notions of the nation state or by boundaries drawn by an already privileged elite (Fuenmayor, 2001; Schecter, 1994). Indeed, the case studies presented in Chapters 2 to 6 show that our research interventions sought to foster new transboundary political communities around specific issues and to negotiate the meaning of democracy and liberalism *vis-à-vis* relevant contexts and conditions.

It is possible that attention to the existence of tangible policy adaptation instances and triads of legitimising practices, has important methodological significance for the facilitation of stakeholder processes. The radical democratic interpretation of stakeholding as a phenomenon embedded in the liberal governance tradition rests (as we saw in Chapter 1) on a relational view on power. It is partly inspired by the approach of Michel Foucault to power and knowledge that defines discourse as an anonymous intersubjective field of regulation for various positions of subjectivity, governed by the construction of the rules of formation and points of choice that are freed from the discourse of its participants (Foucault, 1969, pp. 34-61). Similarly, the radical critique relies on meta-theoretical claims made through the extrapolation of the Gramscian notion of 'hegemony' (Forgacs, 1988).

Antonio Gramsci's work on hegemony has been heralded as one of the best expositions of post/neo-Marxism in its incorporation of theories of intersubjectivity, power and discourse into the classical Marxist studies of economic determinism, ontological universalism and structural class differentiation (Barrett, 1991, pp. 51-80; Cameron, 2005). This involves a decentering of the subject into a world of discursive networks in which subjects are constituted; and focuses on the social apparatus (*dispositif*) of reality creating practices (Ashenden, 2005). This attitude to the intersubjective builds on the desire to undertake an absolute analysis of the contradictions of reality, that is both external to individual subjects and distinct from the material base (James, 1985; Hiddleston, 2009, pp. 1-24).

While Marx's radical humanist paradigm comprised elements of both the subjectivist and objectivist paradigms (e.g. Burbank & Martins, 2009), the discursive notion of hegemony approximates a view of human agency that might be deemed a critical form of symbolic interactionism with its emphasis on the dynamic co-construction of self and society/social order. The genealogy of the Gramscian concept of hegemony reflects a response to the 'over-determination' of struggles (i.e. the multiple ways they can be interpreted) and the deficiencies of historical determinism. It contends that the hegemonic discourse silences all other discourses, and that

> historically speaking we hear only one voice because a hegemonic discourse suppresses or marginalises all antagonistic class voices … yet remains in dialogue with the discourse it has suppressed (Dowling, 1984, p. 131).

As we have seen above (Section 8.3.2, and earlier in Section 1.2.3), attention to larger hegemonic and discursive fields of struggle provides a useful framework for pursuing investigations into how legitimate agency is constructed through practices that negotiate the intersubjective. However, I believe evidence from the case studies suggest that since the tensions between different forms of agency are so severe, it is impossible (and practically undesirable) to speak of larger 'ideologies', 'hegemonies' or specific groups of 'dominant' and 'sub-ordinate' classes without first identifying where in the policy adaptation processes they are located. In guiding concrete and constructive multi-stakeholder interventions, it appears irrelevant to generalise about how, for instance, Thai elites seek to define the desirable state of the disaster risk reduction system or Danish professionals exploit different sense-making perspectives in the governance of nutrient reductions. We saw in all cases how a multiplicity of stakeholders exploited the policy adaptation process in very specific ways and – for this reason – we must pay special attention to those located practices and actors where possible.

Therefore, it is more relevant, in my view, to 'simplify' the larger radical critique of ideologies and hegemonies into more manageable units that allow the actors to relate more effectively with each other and to the issues at hand. This implies that emphasis be placed not on distanced and abstracted critiques of certain 'capitalist and/or neoliberalist orders', but on the poorly monitored instances ('vacuums') therein – and then to consider constructive responses. The evidence in this thesis supports the veracity of the claim that legitimacy of agency depends on a pragmatic emphasis on explaining how legitimisation is constructed to accept or refute a certain process, inquiring into practical options 'here, now, about this issue' (Connelly et al., 2006, p. 271). In all the cases, the concerns of stakeholders could rarely be described as seeking a 'universal' legitimisation, but so long as they could justify their actions as being *just sufficiently legitimate*, they were able to move on with that they needed to do. This observation implies that we, the researchers, must both be specific if we seek to make informed and constructive propositions about the formation of legitimacy and be cautious to ground general ideology critique in particular instances of policy adaptation.

In sum, instead of a pervasive 'hegemony', we need to focus on the vast and often bewildering variety of specific instances of policy adaptation in which improvement is achieved or prevented. This allows us to consider specifically those people involved and to evaluate how they depend on each other when justifying their actions. In adopting such an approach, we have the advantage of locating tangible, concrete 'things' (e.g. the access to water, the choice of terminology in a meeting, etc.) that often can be addressed practically and/or questioned without overtly challenging people's positions. It also allows us to tackle contentious political and/or abstract discussions head-on with lesser risk of undermining the research and compromising relationships with co-researchers or among participants themselves.

8.4 Further thoughts on ensuring rigorous critique

8.4.1 Facing resistance to inquiry

As demonstrated in Section 8.3 above, Creators and Sanctioners were the privileged stakeholders who controlled the legitimisation of certain forms of agency. They were the *de facto* owners ('colonisers') of their specific policy adaptation instances (see Table 8.4). Their legitimising practices reified the human actions as objective givens and created a bonding effect between those in favour of a certain worldview and its motivated pathways of action and those who had the power to sanction it. In the case studies, Creators would craft explanations for norms and customary practices and use available knowledge as legitimising instruments to convince the Sanctioners (as also discussed by Wenger, 1998, pp. 188-211; Habermas, 1997; Habermas, 1998). In this context, the purpose of our interventions was typically to support a collective critique of these stakeholders' claims in order to facilitate shifts in the processes of legitimisation and to increase unforced coherence in modes of justification. This, in turn, was expected to motivate improvements in the problematic situations addressed. To some extent, we were striving for a 'pedagogy of the powerful' (Chambers, 2005), critiquing settled legitimacy relations where privileged access had come to underwrite or disallow claims to knowledge (Rorty, 2009, pp. 17-69).

As noted in Section 1.3, the praxiological SPAR approach embodies a commitment to seeking truth in processes of justification and, as such, to revealing conflicts of interest. When we faced resistance during our facilitated collective inquiries then it typically came from those who currently owned the policy adaptation instance in question (i.e. Creators and Sanctioners), those whose legitimising practices could be the most immediate object of critique. This resistance manifested itself in the way, for instance, the Swedish multi-stakeholder network for sustainable international agricultural development was challenged by some 'traditional' actors (Chapter 4) or municipal elites resisted the conservation planning process in the Babuyan Islands (Chapters 2 and 7). (See summary in Table 8.5.)

As we launched each process, we often saw people making initial judgements about the risks and opportunities associated with participation in our proposed projects. How would the work benefit them? Were there any risks involved? Could it compromise their relationships with other stakeholders? Concerns like this required not only a considerable amount of negotiation on our part, but that we rely significantly on support of professionals across sectors and interest groups, who more immediately saw a value in the proposed research praxis even in spite of their differences of opinion. For instance, my meetings with the municipal leadership in Babuyan Islands (Chapter 2) were possible only because of the support we received from one of the line agency directors. Similarly, networking with Danish civil servants was significantly aided by the support and guidance we received from people within the state administration, who had taken an early interest in our work (Chapter 6).

Clearly, this process of negotiation was also essential in adapting the work plans and thus agreeing on how the work could become relevant for those involved and, indeed, was a vital undercurrent in collaborative knowledge generation. People's level of interest could never be predicted simply based on their formal affiliations and assumed stakes/interests, e.g. whether they were a public authority, NGO or private company. Rather, it would largely depend on their personal inclinations and degree of support for the methodological principles associated with the inquiry.

Table 8.5: Resistance faced by 'owners' of policy adaptation instances. The reason for enumerating these examples is simply to illustrate the fact that – on occasion – we met significant resistance; they are not presented here to cast judgement on the value or legitimacy of the respective claims or to single out any particular stakeholder. Instead, the behaviours listed below must be understood within the context of the wider relationship between legitimising practices and people's motivations (see Section 8.3.2 above).

Case	Who (Creator/Sanctioner)	Example of resistance
Integrated Coastal Management, Philippines (Chapters 2 and 7)	Elite alliances in the municipality of Calayan	Harassing the research team; threats of physical violence; criticising the conservation planning process as 'selfish outside influence'
Disaster recovery and resilience, Thailand (Chapter 3)	Technical early warning system experts	Criticising the participatory assessment as being 'fuzzy' and 'non-scientific'
Policy coherence in sustainable agricultural development, Sweden (Chapter 4)	'Traditional' agricultural development experts	Using national media for contesting the impartiality of the network and the facilitating organisation; arguing that the network initiative was obsolete and support should rather be given to existing agricultural institutions.
Grassroots democracy in rural development, Vietnam (Chapter 5)	Some government officials	Preventing the author from consulting ethnic minority representatives.

Accountability in agro-environmental governance, Denmark (Chapter 6)	Some civil servants in the state administration	Rejecting to involve in the assessment; withholding information; criticising other stakeholder claims as invalid and 'extra-parliamentarian'

In hindsight, I believe that these recurrent experiences of resistance not only represented the challenge of engaging Creators and Sanctioners in policy adaptation instances, but also were a consequence of the praxiological method itself. Indeed, few people – including myself – are comfortable with others criticising the very foundations of their worldview! This factor alone underlines the importance of initiating such inquiries with cordiality and care. It also requires that explicit attention be paid to how the core tenets of any adopted SPAR methodology are negotiated in each context of intervention. This brings renewed attention to the frailty of the principles of accountable and transparent co-construction of evidence in the research process, which I declared as a core commitment of our work in Chapter 1 (Section 1.4.2). In other words, the experience of resistance directs attention to what in SPAR jargon is often referred to as *facipulation*, i.e. that facilitation involves a combination of methodological transparency and strategic manipulation of human interaction.

My first explicit awareness of the importance of negotiating our methodology, specifically the operationalisation of dialogical tools in concrete stakeholder processes, emerged while working in the Babuyan Islands, Philippines. I was inspired to question the universality of the method of dialogical boundary critique (Chapter 7). In this project, our use of Ulrich Werner's Critical Systems Thinking (CST) framework of Critical Systems Heuristics (CSH) intended to help citizens find a vocabulary that would help them negotiate legitimate competency (Ulrich, 2000). As documented, the experiences challenged the claim that the methodology's critical character could be derived from the facilitator's predetermined lens. As the boundary critique had to be grounded in the appreciation of the existing systems of patronage and stakeholder alliances, I came to emphasise that CSH must be co-constructed with the inquiring stakeholders in recognition of the prevailing local social structures. I found that other action researchers had earlier arrived at the same conclusion based on the constraints they had experienced in adapting systems based methodologies (e.g. Midgley, 2000; Basden & Wood-Harper, 2006; Tsivacou, 1992; Shen & Midgley, 2007; Callo & Packham, 1999). Subsequently, I also considered this to highlight the importance of an awareness regarding our own normative theory and motives underlying the efforts to facilitate stakeholder interactions (e.g. Hallgren, 2003; Groot, 2002).

In all five cases, the resistance to the praxiological tenets from owners of legitimising practices implied that our methodology could never be completely transparent – not that many of the participants would necessarily have considered this relevant. This underscores a point that, while SPAR rests on a fundamental claim that its praxis makes itself relevant to the everyday lives of people, many people and institutions – often the most 'powerful' – do not appreciate the relevance of SPAR interventions; indeed, they may consider them a challenge. One of the central bulwarks to creating the required space for constructive inquiries into the policy adaptation instances was that our very own praxiological ambition was often significantly at variance from the existing cultures of the people with whom we worked. The general methodological propositions, therefore, had to be operationalised to make sense in each concrete situation. We had to consider the practical consequences associated with and contributions from the interventions, and whether they would compromise relations with stakeholders and/or undermine the situation of more vulnerable groups.

From the outset, while I was aware that our research praxis – like any other – was actively contributing to reshaping the interactions amongst stakeholders, it was not until later that it became evident the extent to which our interventions actually were premised on the desirability of promoting certain 'ideals' regarding human interactions. In fact, the resistance provoked a growing awareness of what we were 'advocating' through our methodology. From the dialogue with my colleagues and our collaborators, I gradually realised that it was necessary to pay greater attention to how the work promoted certain ideals about human behaviour and how these could be operationalised in concrete research situations. Arguably, this impetus for operationalisation and negotiation of methodological expectations reflects one concrete response to the conclusions about the need to focus on specific instances of policy adaptation rather than on the larger hegemonic radical critique (Section 8.3.4 above).

8.4.2 Promoting praxiological virtues

Hitherto, I have discussed the commitments of SPAR in terms of core tenets/commitments that made the research approach for inquiry into legitimacy of stakeholder agency relevant (e.g. Section 1.3). Given the demonstrated contestability of these tenets by owners of policy adaptation instances, I will henceforth follow the practice of Argyris and Schön (1996, pp. 118–121) and speak of 'virtues', as the central modality of a rigorous learning process. I believe an emphasis on virtues[19] represents how we may seek to facilitate more explicitly

[19] The concept of virtue has a long history in philosophy. I use it here in the pragmatist sense within the articulation of the role of inquiry by William James and John Dewey; implying that such virtues

the specific policy adaptation instances to achieve greater mutual understanding of what comprise reasonable justifications for different forms of agency. Focusing on virtues also enable us to be more explicit and transparent about the societal visions ('social projects') promoted by our projects. Finally, they help to emphasise our active choices as researchers and facilitators rather than concealing such choices behind philosophical and academic jargon.

A complete analysis of the virtues underlying our work is an entirely retrospective exercise and, thus, not necessary for the arguments that follow. Let it suffice, here, to exemplify how a number of virtues can be associated with the central tenets of the adopted methodology (Table 8.6). I will subsequently give some examples of the heritage of these virtues over and beyond their roots in the scientific and liberal democratic developments that were reviewed in Chapter 1 (Table 8.7).

Table 8.6: Examples of core virtues promoted through the adopted SPAR approach.

Tenet	Associated virtues
Criticalness: Radical democratisation of knowledge generation to account for power relations as an intrinsic dimension of knowledge	• Open critique of interests and reasoning behind claims • Responsibility to highlight and address hidden power relations
Axio-onto-epistemological integration: Rejection of metaphysical universalisms and orthodox dualisms	• Trust in joint processes of knowledge development • Valid knowledge is co-constructed knowledge
Pragmatism: Derivation of meaning based on antecedents of consequences and workability of results in a desire for solidarity	• Aiming to foster actions which have desired effects in the local situation • Always interpret methodological principles in context and relative to the practical effects

Table 8.7: Tracing the roots of SPAR virtues.

The adopted methodology contains – through its emphasis on mutual justification – a belief in people as active rather than responsive agents. It supports the 'non-teleological' character of the self in liberal theory, i.e. the capacity of people to choose their paths and purposes (Snow, 2001; Salem-Wiseman, 2003). Bahktin has expressed this as a 'faith in the possible existence of an autonomous other "I" and the necessity of (intersubjective) "co-experience"' (Nielsen, 2002, p. 20). The methodology thus espouses a comprehension of the intersubjective *qua* freedom: 'If … I treat the other as Thou, I treat him and comprehend him qua freedom … What is more, I help him, in a sense, to be freed, I collaborate with his freedom … I am only open to him

are the guiding principles which are referred to when – in the absence conclusive fact – we assume the risk of faith in the choice between one meaning and another (Dewey, 1981 p. 48).

insofar as I cease to form a circle with myself, inside which I somehow place the other, or rather his idea … in this condition he is uprooted and taken to bits' (Marcel, 1999, p. 107).

In Chapter 1 (Section 1.3), I presented – with reference to what I perceived to be key works in the field – the motivations for SPAR as a revolt against scientific metaphysical universalism, offering a new scientific alternative directed towards operationalising the liberal democratic ideal of solidarity. The immediate reason to choose this scientific point of reference was that I was concerned with arguing the relevance of the methodology from within a research setting. It also reflects the experiential pragmatism of Dewey and thus much of the SPAR literature, justifying its research agenda in relation to a secularised society, where the dominance of faith has been replaced by the autonomy of nature as distilled by scientific expertise (Waks, 1998; Dussel, 2003). In building a deeper awareness of the virtues promoted by our research, it is important to recall that SPAR has historical connections with broader social and spiritual movements. This enables us to position it in a context beyond being a critique of the positivist scientific and liberal democratic ambitions.

The perhaps most obvious connection, which was already alluded to in Chapter 1, is the partial heritage of Participatory Action Research in Latin American liberation theology. Liberation theology is a social movement, which grew out of extreme inequalities during colonial reigns and post-colonialism: it undertakes to provide a hermeneutics of identity as a guide to praxis of faith and reaction to objectified power structures (Vuola, 1997). In reaction to the dominant image of God as the ultimate referent, it explains redemption in relation to liberation through a 'theological discourse of critique and transformation in solidarity with the poor' (Chopp, 1997, p. 412). Gustavo Gutiérrez (2009, pp. 5-12), who wrote one of the best-known texts from the movement, described liberation theology as a critical reflection on Christian praxis. While SPAR is far from a religious doctrine and indeed contains many more streams of influence, it is nevertheless possible to trace a spiritual element in the shift from locating the creative agency with God or other extra-human force as responsible for ultimate reality (Schweiker, 1998) to a constructionist emphasis on the role of human agency in creating both the world and its image.

Scandinavia, where I have been based while producing this thesis, hosts another distinct social and spiritual movement that inspires Action Research. This concerns the Lutheran tradition of non-formal, popular education and life-long learning. This work was pioneered by, among others, Nikolaj Grundtvig, the founder of the Danish Folk Schools in the 19th century. In addition, as noted by Sherwood (2010), SPAR shares in ambitions and method with numerous post-colonial grassroots movements across several continents. In Asia, these are, for instance, represented by Yen's mass education movement (e.g. known by the work of the International Institute of Rural Reconstruction).

Through its integration of critical and pragmatic virtues, some areas of SPAR also draws inspiration from the traditions of non-violent socio-political action as enshrined in the *satyagraha* process articulated by Mahatma Gandhi (Gandhi, 1993; Pantham, 1983) and later adopted by social activists such as the African American Martin Luther King (King, 1998).

One final socio-spiritual connection considers the link to the worldview of Buddhist and Taoist philosophies (building on arguments of e.g. Capra, 1997; Shen & Midgley, 2007; Bohm, 1980). The justification notion of truth has much similarity with the Taoist notion of the *Tao* (the Way). As defined by Nobel Prize winner Xingjian (2001, p. 402), *Tao* is 'the source and the law of the myriad things, when there is mutual respect of both subject and object, there is oneness'. As a case in point, Liu Xiaogan (1998, p. 211) argues that the Way, as originally proposed by Lao-Tzu (author of the first official Taoist text) just like the pragmatist tradition works 'as an experiential doctrine that supports both the core value and its method' (Xiaogan, 1998, p. 211). Human intervention in life, as expressed in Taoism, is thus the exercise of *wue-wei* (non-action), a type of social leadership to allow the achievement of natural harmony in self-realisation of others (Xiagan, 1998, p. 218). Arguably, there is a remarkable resemblance with the discourse on facilitation as comprising of non-coercive interventions.

SPAR professionals may or may not agree that these roots (Table 8.7) inspire their own praxis and methodologies. Yet, notwithstanding the specific tradition, we as action researchers must acknowledge the claim of SPAR methodology to know human nature and the nature of our world – a claim we are obliged to compromise when the situation opposes its realisation.

Assertion of a common human nature, within which we will chose to live different lives, is most clearly found in the move from positivist objectivity to constructionist solidarity within SPAR methodology (Section 1.3). Here, the attention to personhood is a 'matter of decision rather than knowledge, an acceptance of another being into fellowship' (Rorty, 2009, p. 38). Rorty further suggested that this implies a claim to knowing whether people are 'in touch with, or out of touch with, the process by which we create our reality' (Rorty in Reason, 2003, p. 113). The pragmatist philosophy underlying SPAR thus claims that there are modes of comprehension and action congruent with the way 'we are' – and those that are not. It also suggests that we, as SPAR researchers, have special insight into appreciating the degree of this congruence. It confirms that methodologies, even in SPAR, are 'the normative or prescriptive branch of epistemology, which attempts to lay down, justify, refine, or criticise research rules and procedures' (Bunge, 2001, p. 14571).

In his critique, Hans Joas (2000, p. 170) argued that pragmatist inspired methodologies contain a 'prescriptive ethic' that assumes universal characteristics of human action. Further, he contended that John Dewey's arguments (which, in Section 1.2.3, I presented as a pragmatist philosophical underpinning of radical democracy) espoused a sacralisation of democracy that has a common faith in mankind and supported a universal democratic ideal that cannot be easily operationalised. In this view, SPAR is seen to reject the metaphysical universalism of positivist methodologies but not its belief in the possibility of a universal, common human nature. Indeed, I would suggest that such a belief is a requisite of any commitment to truth as a process of solidarity and joint justification. It is also necessary in order to avoid the risk of promoting a post-modern ethic based on claims to righteousness from single issues and activities without connecting them to larger systemic and societal realities (Baumann, 1995, pp. 301-308).

As suggested in Section 8.4.1, SPAR interventions often engage with governance systems that espouse diametrically different views on the need to justify stakeholder agency. We face the risk that commitment to our methodological virtues will undermine the possibility of encouraging situated and collective experience by instead inserting a new foundationalist layer separate from the historicity and contingency of the situation (Kompridis, 2004). In seeking to invite people into a collective research process, the negotiation of common methodological virtues has to be a core activity. Thus, it is essential we consciously avoid acting like arrogant 'emancipatory researchers' who atempt to implement an overly rigid version of SPAR virtues (Kincheloe & McLaren, 2005).

Roberts (2003) argued that the view of the self is not neutral but always reflects a social and cultural ideology. This is naturally true even in research methodologies. Thus, a constructionist view of the self, as manifest in the way we approached the intersubjective, would not fare well if interpreted out of context (see also similar arguments in Bragg, 1996; Liu, 2004, p. 364; Saraswathi, 2005). Further, as in many other stakeholder processes (e.g. Friedman, 2002), we may experience how it is far from always possible to support participants co-determine their own identity.

The central question seems to be how commitment to the radical democratic critique through the adopted SPAR methodologies may be collectively scrutinised. Or, as expressed by Hoy and McCarthy (1994, p. 21), how we may ensure the quality of the reconstructive and not just subversive side of the critique. Praxiology espouses a rejection of standing 'in awe of anything other than human imagination' (Reason, 2003, p. 106); but, how do we respond when such imaginations run fundamentally counter to the virtues embodied in our own methodology – or trample on the imagination of others? As outsiders, we interventionist researchers typically have an extraordinary amount of space in order to exert our own agency – e.g. striving for the ideal of Greenwood and Levin's 'friendly outsider' (2007, pp. 115-130). Yet, at the outset of each project we will generally know less about the legitimising practices than those we engage (see also Margonis, 2003). In a partly post-modern research agenda, reflexivity often serves as the replacement for eternal moral categories (Seel, 2004, p. 261); but, we still need to be explicitly self-reflexive when – in the face of resistance – we take recourse in our methodological virtues. Indeed, it is this conscious and transparent adaptation of methodological virtues that upholds the rigour of the methodology. Arguably, we are also facing – as researchers in most other disciplines (e.g. Bunge, 2001) – the fact that we adopt original research approaches and specialised techniques that have been developed by others, with the philosophical content proposed yet by a third group of scholars.

In sum, work such as that presented in this thesis demand we respond to a recurrent challenge of finding an appropriate balance between promoting implicitly or explicitly agreed praxiological virtues while remaining open for a renegotiation and reconstitution of these virtues in the face of resistance. How do you react when an island 'strongman' dominates a meeting and seeks to humiliate other participants? What do you do when a Danish civil servant seeks to discredit other people's arguments as ignorant based on his own singular vision of what constitutes the desirable 'democratic process' for the country? Or, when traditional actors in Swedish universities reject the relevance of a wider dialogue with non-traditional actors? And, so forth (Table 8.5). In other words, when is it appropriate to conceive of people's practices as proper reflections of the current reality of people's interrelations and, thus, as locally acceptable; indeed, when can one exercise a mandate to intervene with the purpose of facilitating awareness of and shifts in legitimising practices?

8.4.3 Tension between the dialogical and the revolutionary?

As should be apparent, the experiences on which this thesis is based impel me to agree with Nielsen and Nielsen (2010) that we, as researchers, are still struggling to gain an understanding of how the SPAR tradition can maintain a normative foundation while prioritising local change processes. Hence, we must look for a way in which SPAR undertakes to reconcile, as expressed by McCarthy (1992), the perceived tension between situated reasoning and transcendence (i.e. 'going beyond' situatedness). In the remaining part of this chapter, I will consider – with inspiration from the cases – how it may be possible to address this challenge and enable a negotiation of relevant methodology with the research participants while ensuring our critical and pragmatic commitments. First, however, I will provide a theoretical backdrop.

A review of the SPAR literature reveals that many arguments are characterised by a perceived tension between its critical and pragmatic tenets – i.e. a conception of the impossibility of simultaneously fulfilling both 'revolutionary' and 'dialogical' ideals. Arguably, this would seem to be the result of different philosophical streams inspiring varying strands of work in the SPAR family. It also emphasises that, like other post-foundational research traditions, SPAR is struggling to reconcile a notion of what is universally 'right' with what is locally 'good' in policy adaptation instances in order to produce an operationalisable view of the nature of reciprocity and processes of justification. This dilemma has also been variously described as the tension between historicity and universalism, liberalism and communitarianism, and *verstehen*/interpretion and criticalness (Joas, 2000; Benhabib, 1992; Hoy & McCarthy, 1994; Barrett, 1991; Nielsen, 2002; Denzin & Lincoln, 2005).

SPAR is a radical democratic and interventionist movement that hosts – at times – opposing theoretical foundations: for some Habermas, while for others Freire or Foucault. One of the most prominent differences is between the so-called emancipatory and pragmatic strands (e.g. Johansson & Lindhult, 2008; Greenwood & Levin, 2007, pp. 131-167).[20] The emancipatory or 'southern' Participatory Action Research tradition is here considered more radical and critical owing to the conditions under which it emerged – namely as a response to situations of extreme oppression, such as colonial exploitation and post-colonial impoverishment from structures of advanced capitalism. Greenwood and Levin (2007, pp. 151-167) even suggested that Participatory Action Research adopts a conventional realist scientific view in attempting to '[speak] truth to power' with the researcher as *agent provocateur*. In contrast, the pragmatic tradition is thought to emphasise the gradual and experiential modes of learning in which all parties in collaborative action are involved. Pragmatic approaches are thus cast as replacing the emancipatory critical perspective in terms of whether changes are useful or not. Usefulness is here defined in relation to the goals of clients and refers to different value sets that depend on their devotion to democratisation, justice, sustainability, etc. (Reason, 2003).

Distinctions of this sort motivated Mejía (2004) to speak of an impossibility of simultaneously fulfilling both the 'dialogical' and the 'critical'. He argued that there is a contradiction between the dialogue (interaction) and the critical consciousness (validity), where accomplishing the latter involve manipulating the former, where the dialogue thus becomes 'non-genuine'. Johansson and Lindhult (2008) supported this argument and classified the critical position as creating a

[20] For the sake of simplicity, I do not include further distinctions such as those provided, for instance, by Nielsen and Nielsen (Nielsen & Nielsen, 2006; Nielsen & Nielsen, 2010) between critical utopian action research and the socio-technical tradition.

greater ‘distance’ between the participants and researcher or between action and reflection – i.e. a greater degree of ‘steering’ by the researcher.

Another example of this dichotomisation of the critical and pragmatic virtues occurs when SPAR professionals distinguish between the emancipatory (ideological) and the scholarly (methodological) intent of CST (e.g. Ulrich, 1998; Leleur, 2008; Midgley, 2000, pp. 149-152). Yet another when Gergen and Gergen (2008) distinguished between a ‘critical’ constructionism (built on the Frankfurt School and post-structuralism of Foucault) and the phenomenological tradition (focused on the mental rather than social aspects of meaning-making)[21]. Arguably, this view tables an argument that a critical SPAR approach implements a rigid version of constructionism that distinguishes between ‘brute’ (outside human institutions) and ‘institutional’ facts (Searle, 1995, pp. 1-30) – a distinction that can be made scientifically by the researcher.

The tension between pragmatic and critical virtues is also evident in the now well-accepted distinction between different ‘waves’ (paradigms) of systems thinking, where CST is considered more critical than the earlier SSM version (see also Section 1.3). This draws on the history of an analytical separation between the technical, practical and emancipatory interests in several philosophical traditions underlying SPAR methodologies (Habermas, 1973, pp. 95-143; Nielsen & Nielsen, 2006). As a case in point, Flood expressed this distinction regarding the choice of theoretical framework (F) as follows: ‘Where F in soft systems methodology explores interpretive theory, F in critical systems thinking explores emancipatory theory’ (Flood, 1998, p. 81). Jackson (1991), in turn, identified a tension between Kantian idealist epistemology[22] (an ideal against which critique can take place) and a Marxist ontological revolt against a false epistemological consciousness that explains how material conditions shape human perceptions of reality.

When adopting this distinction, ‘emancipatory’ adherents accuse the ‘more dialogical’ pragmatists as operating from an ahistorical and naively apolitical value system that is easily subverted by existing elites (Gatenby & Humphries, 2000, p. 90). This has motivated scholars like Midgley (1997) to encourage the widening of the SPAR praxis to include rigorous political action and

---

[21] I believe this is also motivating their distinction between ‘constructivism’ and ‘constructionism’, where the former is seen to emphasise the centrality of the individual learner in the meaning-making process, whilst the latter places more emphasis on the social dynamics (see also Barab et al., 1999; Lawler, 1998).

[22] Kantian idealism posits that an action is objectively necessary in itself without reference to another end if one can ‘act only according to that maxim whereby one can at the same time will that it should become a universal law’ (Cullity & Gaut, 1997, p. 18).

campaigning. In contrast, the ‘critical strand’ is blamed for unfairly judging people’s creative acts as ‘destructive’, implying either the existence of a ‘true’ creative ideal or an *a priori* framework of judgement. This would, for instance, be the case for those building on Habermas’ method of ideology critique in which theory is framed as a process of identification and reaction towards ideologically ‘distorted’ interpretations and aspects of the social order that obstructs the pursuit of rational goals (Carr & Kemmis, 1986, pp. 129-154). Such arrogance is seen to assume a post-Marxist attitude in which intellectual researchers – relatively free-floating and detached individuals – are better able to obtain direct insight into the reality of social relations. Or, is seen to inspire an approach wherein researchers have superior consciousness at the vanguard of intellectual leadership to guide the ‘masses’ (Mannheim, 1936, pp. 153-163; Barrett, 1991, pp. 18-34; Rahman, 1991). In this view, critical constructionist inquiry will invariably suffer from ontological gerrymandering, allowing a problematisation of some conditions while leaving others untouched (Loseke, 2007). ‘Emancipatory consciousness’ here appears as a suspect socialist meta-narrative, just as problematic as the older Enlightenment versions it replaces (Margonis, 2003).

8.4.4 Negotiation and testing of virtues

Now let us again consider the experiences from the cases. By orienting work on the cases according to the same core virtues (Table 8.6), we implicitly claimed that it is possible to work across presumed cultural and administrative boundaries within common aspects of the ‘human condition’ in policy processes. We thus adopted the pragmatist universalism of Rorty and Dewey. When adopting such an approach, how may it, then, be possible to ensure that the praxiological virtues are sufficiently open for negotiation and the methodology adequately reconstituted together with the participants?

One option is to follow the approach of Ison (2008, p. 155) in striving for ‘a conscious braiding of theory and practice in a given context’. In so doing, one may adopt a view contrary to the perceived theoretical tension between the ‘dialogical’ and ‘revolutionary’: instead, pursuing an approach in which the rejection of metaphysical universalism and object-subject distinctions *in itself* offers a ‘revolutionary’ epistemology (James, 1985). That is, where the ‘collective praxis’ within the hermeneutic and pragmatist traditions *is* a process of societal revolution (Dowling, 1984). One concrete example is the use of SSM, which along with other second-generation systems methodologies, has been critiqued for focusing on practical interests rather than critically examining power relations (see also Section 8.4.3 above). I would argue that it is possible, in fact, to operationalise SSM in an explicitly critical manner, perhaps with incorporated influences from CST.

To illustrate this point let us consider the case of Philippine coastal management (Chapters 2 and 7), for instance, where we attended to the elite cooption within the vacuums created by the policy processes and related these observations to presumably more generic norms of accountability in such governance systems. Similarly, in the establishment of the Swedish network for sustainable agricultural development (Chapter 4), there was an explicit focus on allowing 'non-traditional' actors into the deliberations. And, in the work on eutrophication in the Baltic Sea and Danish agro-environmental governance of nutrient reduction targets, legitimacy and accountability emerged as a core critical thread – still fundamentally with an SSM-based approach (Chapter 6).

Negotiation of relevant methodology may seek to appreciate that when interpretations are always made in relation to a technical and practical objective, then the emancipatory dimensions are inherent in all interpretations (Kincheloe & McLaren, 2005). Indeed, this epistemological critique may empower the rigour of the inquiry. Constructionism, as has been operationalised in this research, I will argue, *is* an anti-foundational epistemology that supports liberation of consciousness from cultural/historical conditions and raises awareness about how claims to universal definitions effectively eradicate alternative categories (Gergen, 2003). Interventions are thus expected to attend to stakeholder agency through a reciprocal social constitution of the self and the collective and the mutual accountability in people's actions.

I believe it is possible to adopt a theoretical perspective that views every relation, act and non-act as examples of power relations. Learning becomes not only pragmatic but also inherently emancipatory in the reorganisation of these relations (Westberg, 2005). When local pragmatic decisions are made in the research interventions, one may seek to consider terminologies and discursive rules as essentially power differentials that legitimise some actions and denigrate others (Dennis & Martin, 2005). This would represent an adoption of McTaggert's (1997) approach in arguing that collective and pragmatic conscientious objectification of concrete experience and change *is* explicit of critical politics towards solidarity.

In research interventions, we may typically encounter other participants with certain expectations regarding what constitute appropriate virtues for justifying legitimising practices. Herein, we may compare our virtues with others and seek to remain open-minded about developing shared interpretations for further interaction. In each encounter, it can be determined which legitimising practices are open for a constructive collective critique and which are not – i.e. asking what could be the pragmatic consequences of such a critique? Thus, contrary to a dichotomising of two 'strands' of pragmatic and critical praxis, one can seek to exercise a jointly critical-pragmatic recursive praxis that is *both* dialogical and revolutionary. There would not be a fixed 'distance' between researcher and the stakeholder/co-researcher (Johansson & Lindhult, 2008); rather it would shift iteratively over time, depending on the activity at hand and the degree of collective ownership that had developed.

As noted above in Section 1.3, the original intent of the pragmatic method *per se* was to settle metaphysical disputes that otherwise were indeterminable (James, 2010, p. 32). This mediation between competing truths and metaphysics reflects a belief in the honesty of the participants in the dialogue – i.e. that they argue on the basis of what they actually hold to be 'real' truths. The cases partly suggested the relevance of this view: namely, that while metaphysical God-given orders have, in the examined governance regimes, largely broken down, they have been replaced by others (e.g. the symbolic universes of positivist science and rationalist policy making). Further, older religious metaphysical orders of Confucianism in Vietnam, Catholicism in the Philippines, Buddhism/Islam in Thailand, and protestant Lutheran morality in Scandinavia were still quite visible as undercurrents in the work. Yet, the cases also seemed to indicate that the policy adaptation processes harbour a mixture of metaphysical and strategic discourses. That is, people will act both from beliefs in metaphysical orders *and* from beliefs in the acceptability of using strategic arguments (that promote their agendas) through the creation of 'artificial' metaphysical universes beneficial for their purposes.

As a result, rigorous research praxis may have to cast judgements in two occasions: first, when it is necessary to react towards strategic modes of justification that seek to conceal contradictions in the intersubjectively shared world; and second, when it is necessary to foster a cordial dialogue between co-existing metaphysical truths that honestly seek to relate to one another. These requirements would demand an iterative method that takes as its point of dispersion the precise moment when collective experience and pragmatic reference to the local good have to be replaced with a critical inquiry into strategically promoted myths. This would serve as an iterative and collaborative 'test procedure' for adopted methodological virtues; as an implicit undercurrent in the more explicit deliberations on natural resource issues, such as – for this thesis – warning systems, coastal fish stocks, upland agro-forestry, nutrient loads, etc.

Hans Joas (2000, pp. 161-186), Seyla Benhabib (1992) and others (e.g. Bracci, 2002) have argued that there is, in fact, no compelling reason to support an opposition between universalism and historicity – or the local 'good' and the universal 'right'. Instead, methodological assumptions could be applied as a collective 'test procedure' to determine the relevance and implications of assuming the transferability of virtues between contexts.[23] In each situation, we would have to ask ourselves what would be the consequences of enforcing *this* virtue in *this* situation – i.e. what will happen if I question this person about his motivations for taking just that perspective? This iterative test procedure would reflect an understanding that, as Moya Lloyd has remarked, the 'unrealisability of the universal is what keeps the democratic project alive' (Lloyd, 2009, p. 35).

Such an iterative approach would help us judge whether or when it is necessary and feasible to intervene and transform a legitimising practice from an unchallengeable myth into a competing truth that could join other such truths in a non-violent and dialogical 'struggle'. Crucially, this would demand interventions that are, at times, 'non-dialogical'. For instance, it could require observing a responsibility to point out where a certain form of agency justifies itself strategically and apply methods to compel people to collectively justify their legitimising practices. Other situations would arise when we, as researchers, would feel that we had sufficient evidence to question the claims of collective experience and point to contradictions in intersubjectivity that required reaction (Table 8.8).

Table 8.8: Examples of critical-pragmatic iterations in the cases. These examples are intended to illustrate, with real life experiences from the work, how a critical-pragmatic iterative approach would be carried out in practice. See Table 8.5 for the first introduction to these examples.

Case	Resistance encountered	Choices
Integrated Coastal Management, Philippines (Chapters 2 and 7)	Elite alliances in the municipality of Calayan: Harressing the research team; threats of physical violence; criticising the conservation planning process as 'selfish outside influence'.	*Pragmatic*: Requesting meetings to clarify and address sources of frustration. Observing custom of courtesy calls. Inviting critics to co-own the planning process and shape its objectives. *Critical*: Continuing inviting views from barangays' that exposed weaknesses of current governance and elite cooption.

[23] A collective test procedure in contrast to the Kantian universalisability test, which is an internal thought experiment.

Disaster recovery and resilience, Thailand (Chapter 3)	Technical early warning system experts: Criticising the participatory assessment as being 'fuzzy' and 'non-scientific'	*Pragmatic*: Continuously inviting dialogue to learn to focus on what they felt was important in the assessment. Willingness to revise the work based on advice. *Critical*: Maintaining the emphasis on allowing 'non-experts' to comment on early warning efforts. Deconstructing expert frameworks into procedural, normative and cognitive dimensions for critique.
Policy coherence in sustainable agricultural development, Sweden (Chapter 4)	'Traditional' agricultural development experts: Using national media for contesting the impartiality of the network and the facilitating organisation; arguing that the network initiative was obsolete and support should rather be given to existing agricultural institutions.	*Pragmatic*: Accepting the criticism without public rebuttals. Requesting follow-up meetings with the people in question to try and clarify underlying reasons for frustrations. Inviting 'traditional' institutions to become co-owners of the network. *Critical*: Continuing to explicitly invite 'non-traditional' actors to contribute in the inception of the network, dedicating space to their voices.
Grassroots democracy in rural development, Vietnam (Chapter 5)	Some government officials: Preventing the author from interviewing ethnic minority representatives.	*Pragmatic*: Accepting the authority of government and party officials. Organising consultations together with officials. *Critical*: Inviting dialogue with officials to discuss the reasons why minorities could not be consulted. Seeking to locate views on grassroots democracy in longer trajectory of minority-majority relationships.
Accountability in agro-environmental governance, Denmark (Chapter 6)	Some civil servants in the state administration: Rejecting to involve in the assessment; withholding information; criticising other stakeholder claims as invalid and 'extra-parliamentarian'.	*Pragmatic*: Accepting resistance as expressions of low interest in Baltic Sea Region cooperation and focusing efforts elsewhere in the government administration. *Critical*: Clarifying the rationale behind stakeholder consultations and the view that they complement the 'representative democratic' procedures. Sharing views critical of the government policy.

Such choices would represent our own – very human and often imperfect – efforts to make a judgement about how to proceed in each project in the face of irreducible uncertainty and contestation at the interface between the collectively reasoned and strategically critiqued. It is quite evident that praxiological methodological virtues (Table 8.6) by definition are evolutionary and self-referential insofar that those promoting them should be equally subject to their application. Still, the virtues have to be championed by someone: they do not work on their own. Here, I believe that the choices for operationalisation, which we researchers and co-researchers can make, reflect an adoption of Gadamer's (2004) practice of 'reproachment with prejudice', i.e.

> a fusion of horizons, a partial reproachement between our present world, from which we can never detach ourselves, and the different world we are seeking to appraise (cf. Skinner, 1985, p. 7).

Therefore, through the iterative 'test-procedure', we may seek to enable an intermediation between the 'right' and the 'good' in a process of collaborative experience, action and testing in order to generate a recursive relationship between the 'universal' and 'contextual'. Joas (2000, pp. 161-186) expressed such a recursion as a reflective relationship, in which the restrictions of the right arise through actors' perspective of the locally good, as a universal requirement for the coordination of social action. In other words, it is the balancing act and dialogue between the local and the presumed universal that undertakes to broker pragmatic and critical deals in the face of forces of power that can never be fully justified in the concrete situation (Devenney, 2004).

8.4.5 Proposing a critical-pragmatic dialectic

Such a recursive critical-pragmatic approach to operationalising the methodological virtues appears to reflect a specific interpretation of the quasi-transcendent dialectical element that is, in fact, inherent in SPAR. In this last section, I will seek to clarify this argument and consider how it contributes to an understanding of the prospects for ensuring a rigorous critique of legitimising practices in natural resource governance.

First, we must note that the attention to legitimising practices in the realm of the intersubjective represents, as expressed by among others Sartre (1956, pp. 3-32), a shift from the belief in the 'transphenomenality of phenomena' to the 'transphenomenality of consciousness'. For our purposes, this means an emphasis on the transcendent character of virtues of justification; that is, the promise that they can be adopted and applied across situated policy adaptation instances. In his review of the function of 'critique' in systems thinking, Fuenmayor (1990) argued that contemporary systems thinking is based on an emerging transcendent critique, which is distinguishable from quotidian dogmatic experience and immanent critique insofar as it inquires into *how* the object is experienced. In fact, reliance on a claim to common humanity and a shared way of creating knowable reality – key to SPAR (Section 8.4.2) – reflects precisely a belief in the transcendence of virtues of human interaction. More specifically, in the context of how these virtues can be adapted and negotiated in context, it is an expression of a form of 'quasi-transcendence'.

Second, the recursive iteration between critical and pragmatic virtues reflects the adoption of a dialectical logic. This means that contradictions in intersubjectivity – i.e. paradoxes of meaning associated with conflicting legitimising practices – due to overdetermination arise from multiple and interrelated but uncoordinated subjectivities (Westphal, 2009). As discussed by Roy Bhaskar (2008), dialectic logic – in contrast to formal logic – acknowledges that novel material forms and ideas emerge in non-linear and unpredictiable manners from the past forms and ideas which give rise to them. Dialectic, he said,

> … has come to signify any more or less intricate process of conceptual or social (and sometimes even natural) conflict, interconnection and change, in which the generation, interpenetration and clash of oppositions, leading to their transcendence in a fuller or more adequate mode of thought or form of life (or being), plays a key role (Bhaskar, 2008, p. 3).

In SPAR, the reliance on dialectics as an organising principle belies its Hegelian roots. Dialectic is here the mechanism that creates the shifts in consciousness in a process of negation between moments in intersubjective reality (see also Fear et al., 2006; Whitehead & McNiff, 2006). This heritage reveals its reliance on a pragmatic philosophical movement that offered a middle-path between the transcendent idealism of the Anglo-Hegelian school and empiricist rationalism (James, 2010, pp. 7-30). While SPAR does not take on the ideological overtones of Hegel, it does inherit from him the idea of a tension between thesis and antithesis that leads to an emergent synthesis (Bawden, 2011). In Hegel's discourse, *Geist* (spirit) was the intersubjective integration of the dichotomies between reason and passion, mind and the material. Inclusive consciousness arose from one moment subsequently giving rise to a new moment through negation and self-alienation (Bernstein, 1971, pp. 14-34; Westphal, 2009).

Dialectic logic is also a central element underlying the systemic notion of 'emergence' in interactionist and constructionist theory. For instance, within constructionist theory, the process of self-organisation/autopoiesis represents the adoption of a dialectic logic to motivate the notion of 'structural coupling' as the bridging concept between structure and agency, autonomy and environment. It operationalises a view of knowing that emphasises the dialectic relation between organism and environment (Maturana & Varela, 1998; Bateson, 2000; Fell & Russell, 1994; Capra, 1997).

In pragmatism, the dialectical method is further expressed in the iterative approach to inquiry through abduction and retroduction. This is the logic underlying the method of the empirical pragmatic inquiry originally coined by Peirce (1878). It denotes that reasoning starts with preliminary data and moves towards the formation of a hypothesis (abduction), which can subsequently be tested and adapted (retroduction). The building of theory makes accommodation for the resistance encountered in real life situations when the hypothesis is tested (Waldenström, 2001, pp. 16-24). The total abductive and retroductive research process, thus, implies a dialectic between inference (thesis) and resistance (anti-thesis), and leads to an accommodation (synthesis).

As SPAR comprises a broad family of research traditions, it is not surprising that different branches adopt different dialectical approaches. In the praxiological approach, one primary recursive dialectic is between the 'epistemic' and the 'concrete'. The primacy of the epistemic in praxiology was already discussed in Chapter 1 (Sections 1.2 and 1.3) as the reason for motivating a paradigm shift in the approach to integrated natural resource management. Then, we saw how praxiology claims authority based on a supposedly superior constructionist epistemology. The epistemic/concrete dialectic is reflected clearly in SSM, especially when it defines 'validity' in Action Research as dependent on the recoverability of the research process through an explicitly stated epistemology (episteme) that underpins the theoretical Framework, informs the Methodology and finds an Area of application (concrete) (hence the mnemonic device 'FMA') (Checkland & Holwell, 1998). In so doing, the methodology adopts a qualitative research methodology that distinguishes theory, method and context (Holliday, 2002). It organises iterations between these elements; expecting to create a dialectic bridge between the episteme and the concrete.

This dialectic also plays a central role in experiential and action learning traditions based on pragmatist philosophy (e.g. Packham & Sriskandarajah, 2005; Kolb et al., 2000; Bawden, 2005; Fear et al., 2006) that emphasise the iterative process of action learning through stages of planning, action, observation and reflection. In fact, they sometimes even distinguish between whether actions and observations take place in the 'concrete' or the epistemic 'abstract' (e.g. Bawden, 1999)[24].

---

[24] As a corollary, it is interesting to note that this dialectic between the epistemic and the concrete relies periodically on the correspondence notion of truth (i.e. comparing mental constructions to an

The critical-pragmatic recursion appears, in fact, to be a specific, alternative interpretation of the quasi-transcendent dialectic logic that underpins SPAR. If we return to the original three tenets of SPAR (Section 1.3 or Table 8.8 above), we will see that this dialectic process may be captured under the rubric of what we then termed the axio-onto-epistemological tenet. That is, the virtues that promote the integration of the axiological, ontological and epistemological also encapsulate the core recursive dialectic approach of SPAR. They provide the methodological infrastructure that permits a bridging of the pragmatic (local improvement: the 'good') and the critical (the transcendent 'right') into one dually dialogical and revolutionary mode of inquiry (Fig. 8.2). This argument further supports a rejection of a view that the dialogical and revolutionary are opposed and recasts it as a question of the dialectic relationship between the critical and pragmatic.

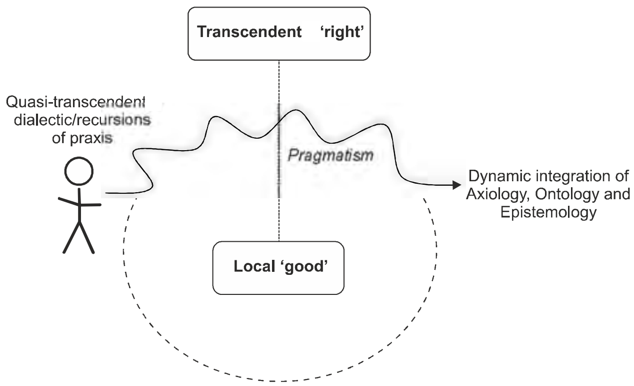

Figure 8.2: The critical-pragmatic dialectic. Schematic depiction of the particular quasi-transcendent dialectic that has been proposed with inspiration from the experiences in our research to foster integration between the critical and the pragmatic commitments of SPAR. The journey from left to right in the diagram represents a series of interventions over the course of one project duration.

---

imagined reality: see Section 1.3). For instance, Checkland's conventional seven-stage SSM model distinguishes between the 'real world' and the 'systems thinking about the real world'. It facilitates a comparison between the conceptual activity systems (and its problem definitions) and testing in the real world (Checkland & Scholes, 1999). Further, the 'coherence-correspondence model' developed by Niels Röling and colleagues highlights the dual importance of cognitive coherence (consistency between values, perception, theories and action) and correspondence (the match between these four cognitive elements and the context of the cognising or organism (e.g. Röling, 2002). Yet, of course, this is also a question of etymology, where even notions such as 'perspective' will often embody an implicit assumption of something which is outside that perspective.

From a practical perspective, there is good reason why we ought to pay explicit attention to the distinctions between the critical and pragmatic phases and consider how they are intermediated by the axio-onto-epistemological integration. As mentioned in Section 8.4.4, it emphasises the need to 'test' the virtues in the first place: namely, that we do not know in advance what may be achieved in an encounter with others. Project interventions are most probably conducted at the interphase between the actual and the possible, the real and the utopian. The existence of a 'revolutionary' opportunity – the chance to actually foster a collective shift in modes of justification and legitimising practices – may often only be clear in retrospect; that is, only when we assess the results of having critically engaged in dialogue based on our praxiological virtues. For instance, in the presented work, my co-researchers and I had limited manoeuvrability due to human, financial and material resource constraints, and we frequently had to make proactive choices in order to move the stakeholder processes forward. The resistance our work encountered, thus, generally emerged as a consequence of an intervention, prior to which we had judged what would be our most appropriate form of action.

The assessment of the consequences of the critical intervention would require the space for an inclusive pragmatic response to resistance in which those involved in the legitimising practices can contribute to interpreting the virtues locally, helping research teams adjust and adapt for future interventions (see examples in Table 8.8). In the pragmatic phase of accommodation, it would be required to both recall that everyone are equally reflexive subjects and believe in the authenticity of each other (Friedman, 1999). This would express confidence in our ability to move beyond the predetermined worldview of the participants in the dialogue and overcome our mutual limitations. Buber notes that, in a dialogue, neither participant

> needs to give up his point of view; only, in that unexpectedly they do something and unexpectedly something happens to them … they enter into a realm where the law of point of view no longer holds (Buber, 2002, p. 7).

In the process of pragmatically responding to a critical intervention, the 'subject' of experience might not be 'us', 'them', 'we' etc. who react experientially but, in fact, the process of interaction itself. This, in turn, would legitimise a joint interpretation of both the substantial issue at hand and the evolving methodological virtues for justification when a presupposed common agreement had vanished (Gadamer, 2004, p. 103). The distinction between iterative phases of critical and pragmatic emphasis is relevant because research interventions cannot be positioned as ahistorical or outside the unfolding of the policy adaptation process and concrete situations in which we intervene. Attention to the critical-pragmatic dialectic is a more explicit and transparent way of monitoring and reflecting upon how we, as people who have taken the role of 'researchers', are part of historical realities while striving for certain ideals of common forms of human solidarity.

I believe that an explicit attention to the critical-pragmatic dialectic also helps clarify – even among ourselves – what contradictions in intersubjectivity that we choose to respond to; and which we ignore. The appreciation that these distinct dialectic phases exist provides, in the view of Merleau-Ponty (2002), an opportunity to show more transparently how we as researchers are open to phenomena that transcend us and that yet exist only insofar as we let them present themselves to us.

The locus of interest of these critical-pragmatic dialectic iterations is the existence of contradictions between co-existing existential interdependencies and legitimising practices (Section 8.3). Through this dialectic between collective experience and critical efforts for quasi-transcendence, we may become more aware of such contradictions as unsustainable systemic tensions with potential 'fault lines for transformative possibilities' (Weis, 2007, p. 8). We may be enabled to embrace a 'break' in the collective consciousness (Tsivacou, 1992) or, as articulated by Paulo Freire (1970, pp. 43-124), learn to perceive the contradictions in and take actions against the oppressive elements of reality. It means focusing interventions around the shifting between the intersubjective reality and the politically unconscious, the latter being akin to Jameson's 'collective denial or repression of underlying historical contradictions in human societies' (Dowling, 1984, p. 114).

The proposed dialectic thus gravitates to a moment of dispersion, which I believe is the instance of Freire's conscientisation; namely, becoming aware of our common situation (Freire, 1970, p. 109). It is when deciding whether to promote an ideal of a quasi-transcendent 'right' over a local 'good' that social concerns of inequality or oppression can be reacted to; when they are expressed as problems, emerging from the unconscious bracketing of objective reality (Loseke, 2007, p. 193). It is also at this time when ruptures in the 'binding effect' on the will of our located subjectivities may bring into conscious attention what was previously unconscious (Habermas, 1973, pp. 95-143). The critical-pragmatic dialectic may thus provide an alternative interpretation of the Freirian radical pedagogy compared to that of Meìja (2004; *viz.* Section 8.4.3), namely that the process of conscientisation emerges from a dialectic between a critical ethical intervention from a quasi-transcendent view of the ideal of our society and an appreciative inquire into the participants' contextual conditions (see also Macedo, 2002).

This critical-pragmatic dialectic approach would be concerned with actively responding to the oft-concealed rules of intersubjective relations and the joint creation of existence and the nihilating unreal (Sartre, 1956, pp. 36-49; Barnes, 1956). This may assist in uncovering the dehumanising practices that are typically concealed and subconscious to oppressors as well as victims (as chartered by, for instance, Fanon, 2001; Césaire, 2000; Said, 2003). They are unconscious because the symbolic signification that creates their sense of legitimacy continuously pushes the utopian away from the everyday experience (Berger & Luckman, 1966, pp. 110-146). This provides the social control that remains a 'collective-unconscious' (Mannheim, 1936; James, 1985) or what Durkheim called 'deeper causes opaque to consciousness' (Outhwaite, 1985, p. 37). It is this social control, which SPAR interventions must continuously probe and challenge.

8.5 Two new tools for future praxis

A central objective of undertaking the presented synthesis has been to offer guidance for future projects that seek to foster more legitimate stakeholder agency through rigorous research interventions. The comparative analysis of the case studies has inspired theoretical insights that I will summarise in the form of two new practical 'tools'. The first tool focuses on fostering legitimate stakeholder agency through an exploration of policy adaptation instances and legitimising practices. The second offers a vehicle for ensuring rigorous critique in such interventions, through a critical-pragmatic dialectic approach. Each tool consists of a set of guiding questions and reference to where in the thesis the reader can find a full articulation of the assumptions and implications.

An exploration of policy adaptation instances and legitimising practices (Table 8.9) may, first, assist as an internal planning tool for those facilitating a multi-stakeholder policy process: a guide to consider explicitly and strategically the major policy adaptation instances and the legitimising practices of stakeholders. Through undertaking a mapping of the policy adaptation process, it would be possible to identify which interventions would be best targeted. Such a mapping exercise could even help pre-assess whether facilitated multi-stakeholder processes would be suitable for intervention in the first place – i.e. whether the level of accountability in the facilitated process would be sufficient to avoid cooption. Second, it could serve as a dialogical tool to engage participating co-researchers (stakeholders) in a collective analysis of the justifiability of their governance system, including the identification of formally designated as well as self-organised (even *ad hoc* and intransparent) spaces for stakeholder agency. The particular value of this latter mode of application would be to guide an explicit yet jointly owned monitoring and evaluation of the legitimacy of the governance regime. This would strike a reconciliation between mainstream expert assessments of ‘good governance’, which are often undertaken by lawyers or political scientists, and multi-stakeholder natural resource management efforts, which often only approach those contested governance qualities that are embedded in the addressed resource issues.

As to the emphasis on rigorous critique (Table 8.10), I suggest that an explicit adoption of the critical-pragmatic recursive approach may enable greater transparency about the invariably personal choices made by those with the mandate to design and enact multi-stakeholder interventions. It could help facilitators and researchers become clearer about the virtues promoted through their methodologies and how to identify and respond to resistance from stakeholders. Given the focus on the intervention itself, this tool may primarily guide internal planning and evaluation. However, it could then also motivate dedicated and consistent efforts of co-researchers to negotiate the methodological virtues of the multi-stakeholder process.

Table 8.9: Tool I – Fostering legitimate stakeholder agency.

Guiding question	**Reference (this thesis)**
What are the modes of stakeholder agency that are so contested they warrant intervention, and why? That is, what is the main natural resource governance issue and which are the stakeholder actions creating this issue?	Section 8.3.1
Where in the governance system are the major policy adaptation instances that harbour the legitimising practices justifying this agency? That is, where should interventions be targeted and which such instances need to be interconnected to enhance coherence in the modes of justification?	Section 8.3.2
Who are the Creators, i.e. those who have colonised a policy adaptation instance and imbued it with meaning and legitimise the contested agency in question?	Section 8.3.2
Who are the Contesters, i.e. those who challenge the current usage of the policy adaptation instance, and who may be victimised by the agency that it motivates?	Section 8.3.2
Who are the Sanctioners, i.e. those enabling the Creators to uphold the present colonisation of the policy adaptation instance in the face of being challenged by the Contesters?	Section 8.3.2
What are the major existential interdependencies between stakeholders? That is, how do legitimising practices co-create stakeholder identities and where should interventions take extra care to foster cordial and constructive critique?	Section 8.3.3

Table 8.10: Tool II – Ensuring rigorous critique.

Guiding question	Reference (this thesis)
What kind of resistance are you likely to experience from the participating stakeholders, and what will you do to ensure that you become conscious of such resistance and can accommodate it?	Section 8.4.1
Which are the major methodological virtues that you are promoting through your work? That is, which presumptions and prejudice regarding human interaction and societal visions are implicit in your theories and methods?	Section 8.4.2
How will you test and adapt your methodological virtues in an iterative manner that allows you to decide dialectically between critical and pragmatic interventions?	Section 8.4.4

8.6 Conclusions

This thesis has sought to answer three research questions: namely, (i) how stakeholders exert their agency in policy adaptation; (ii) how facilitated multi-stakeholder processes foster more legitimate agency; and (iii) how research interventions may ensure a rigorous critique. Through the comparative analysis of five case studies, I have identified five factors that shaped the ability of the projects to foster concrete and relevant outcomes for those involved (Section 8.2). Second, I have proposed an alternate view of legitimate stakeholder agency in natural resource governance, including the requirements of those who facilitate multi-stakeholder processes (Section 8.3). Third, I have offered a critique of the ability of researchers to make the difficult choices, balancing criticalness and pragmatism in the face of resistance to radical democratic virtues that are espoused by the SPAR research approach (Section 8.4).

The findings have shown, first, that the facilitated multi-stakeholder processes which aimed to improve the legitimacy of stakeholder agency required i) Insider knowledge: Adequate appreciation of the problem situation, its history and culture, either through own experience and contacts or through partnership with embedded actors, ii) Long term commitment: If the interactions were to lead to more than situation analysis and issue mapping and pilot implementation of agreed action points then the work had to commit sufficient time to the process, iii) Integration of ‘dialogue’ and ‘action’: Technical/technological activities, which often have great leverage in the formal governance systems, should be clearly linked to the outcomes from the stakeholder negotiations. If the project included different tasks / work packages, then it had to include coordination mechanisms to foster coherence, iv) Ownership: Sharing of ownership invited engagement and leveraged knowledge, resources and commitment from all partners to ensure that the work would relevant and have an impact, v) Accountability: There had to be mechanisms in place to keep the hosts and/or facilitators of the multi-stakeholder process accountable to the engaged constituency to ensure that negotiated outcomes would be honoured. These lessons may inspire more critical judgments regarding project design in the future, and highlight weaknesses in the existing institutional environment offered by research institutions and funding structures.

Second, the thesis has shown how stakeholders legitimised their agency through crafting a sufficient degree of coherence between their actions and the intersubjective reality in which these actions were carried out. *Legitimising practices* occurred in concrete *policy adaptation instances*, where stakeholders seized the roles of *Creators, Sanctioners or Contesters* in order to colonise these instances and imbue them with meaning and, in turn, legitimise specific modes of contested stakeholder agency. This conclusion recasts the notion of 'stakeholder interdependencies' from a conception based on interests to a view based on the manner in which people co-create one another in wider existential terms. It also localises the ambitions of the radical democratic critique of ideology and hegemony in policy adaptation instances that cater for a more constructive emphasis on concrete and practical improvement.

Third, this thesis has shared some further thoughts on how researchers, who seek to facilitate a critical appraisal of stakeholder interests, are often faced with resistance from 'powerful' stakeholders and must be prepared to negotiate their methodology in a rigorous manner. When adopting a SPAR approach, it is vital to appreciate that this methodology contains a set of virtues that are based on a claim to a common human nature and a universal aspiration for solidarity. These virtues are far from always achievable. One way to balance critical intervention with a pragmatic accommodation to such resistance may be to employ a critical-pragmatic recursive approach that enables the researchers to champion and to negotiate these virtues in an iterative manner. This tool reflects a specific interpretation of the quasi-transcendent dialectic logic inherent in SPAR. Herein, research interventions may realise both critical (revolutionary) and pragmatic (dialogical) objectives – thus fostering a dialogue that may contribute to a peaceful revolution for a more sustainable and just society.

In terms of implications for future research, these findings and reflections present an exciting and necessary challenge to action researchers in natural resource governance, namely to facilitate critical dialogues which clearly attend to the badly monitored vacuums in policy adaptation, in particular uncovering the often concealed strategies and legitimising practices employed by Creators and Sanctioners to maintain the *status quo*. Such research efforts will face an interlinked challenge, which arises because the projects themselves will invariably be part of the very governance system in which they intervene. This concerns the design and management of conducive project processes, which ensures, among other, sufficient linkages to coercive structures, sharing of ownership and strong internal accountability mechanisms. In order to meet these challenges, I believe that SPAR researchers cannot escape from continuing the discussion on how to operationalise the praxiological virtues embodied in their methodologies.

As a personal reflection, the past six years of experience has taught me that we as researchers should indeed strive to be 'friendly outsiders' fostering cordial and pragmatic critique, but also that there are times when we through our critique must be 'unfriendly'. Championing praxiological virtues will frequently locate the research endeavour as a challenge to those who presently own policy adaptation processes, i.e. those who are the most 'powerful'. Such people may often be centralised decision makers, donors, influential scientists etc., who have the authority to mobilise significant sources of repression and opposition against the responsible researchers and their partners. What level of risk are we, then, willing to accept, in terms of impacts on our careers, reputations, personal finances, and perhaps even physical health and security, in order to continuously challenge the boundary between (in the terms evoked in this thesis) the local good and the quasi-transcendent right? How do we really come to practice what we preach, when priding ourselves with high-swung commitments to emancipation and solidarity? At some level, I believe, this is a personal judgment which we will have to make when it becomes relevant. But, it is also a question which should be not just personal but very much subject to the scrutiny of those most affected by contested forms of stakeholder agency. Clearly, this has wide-ranging implications as to how we organise adequate forms of accountability in multi-stakeholder processes, submitting the personal judgments by facilitators and researchers to the sanctioning of our co-researchers and the people we ultimately are supposed to serve through our work.

8.7 References

Acebes, J. M. V., & Larsen, R. K. (2008): Science and Community-Based Conservation of Humpback whales and other cetaceans in Babuyan Islands, Philippines. Final report to Ocean Park Conservation Foundation – Hong Kong (OPCF-HK). Unpublished project report.

Agne, H. (2006). A Dogma of Democratic Theory and Globalization: Why Politics Need not Include Everyone it Affects. *European Journal of International Relations, 12* (3), 433–458.

Althusser, L. (2008). *On ideology*. New York: Verso.

André, K., & Simonsson, L. (2009). Identification of regional stakeholders for adaptation to climate change. Paper submitted to 9th Nordic Environmental Social Science Conference (NESS), 'Knowledge, learning and action for sustainability', London, UK, 10–12 June 2009.
Ångman, E., Hallgren, L., & Nordström, E.-M. (2011). Managing Impressions and Forests: The Importance of Role Confusion in Co-Creation of a Natural Resource Conflict. *Society and Natural Resources.* Online first.
Argyris, C., & Schön, D. A. (1996). *Organizational Learning II: Theory, Method, and Practice.* Wokingham UK: Addison-Wesley Publishing Company.
Ashenden, (2005). Structuralism and post-structuralism. In A. Harington (Ed.), *Modern social theory: An introduction* (pp. 196–214). Oxford: University Press.
Barab, S. A., Cherkes-Julkowski, M., Swenson, R., Garret, S., Shaw, R. E., & Young, M. (1999). Principles of self-organisation: Learning as participation in autocatakinetic systems. *The Journal of the Learning Sciences, 8* (3/4), 349-390.
Barrett, M. (1991). *The politics of truth. From Marx to Foucault*. Stanford: University Press.
Barnes, H. E. (1956). Translator's introduction. In J.P. Sartre, *Being and Nothingness.* New York: Washington Square Press, Philosophical Library Inc.
Bartelson, J. (2008). Globalizing the democratic community. *Ethics & Global Politics*, *1* (4), 159–174.
Barton, J., Stephens, J., & Haslett, T. (2009). Action Research: Its Foundations in Open Systems Thinking and Relationship to the Scientific Method. *Systemic Practice and Action Research, 22*, 475–488.
Basden, A., & Wood-Harper, A. T. (2006). A philosophical discussion of the root definition in soft systems thinking: An enrichment of CATWOE. *Systems Research and Behavioral Science, 23*, 61–87.
Bateson, G. (2000). *Steps to an ecology of mind*. Chicago: University Press.
Baumann, Z. (1995). Postmodern etik (Postmodern Ethics). Gothenburg, Sweden: Daidalos.
Bawden R. J. (1999). The community challenge: The learning response. *New Horizons in Education, 99*, 40–59.
Bawden, R. (2005). Systemic Development at Hawkesbury: Some Personal Lessons from Experience. *Systems Research and Behavioral Science, 22*, 151-164.
Bawden, R. (2011). Personal email communication, March 27.
Beetham, D. (1991). *The Legitimation of Power.* Hong Kong: Humanities Press International.
Benhabib, S. (1992). *Situating the self: Gender, Community and Post-modernism in Contemporary Ethics*. Cambridge: Polity Press.
Berger, P., & Luckman, T. (1966). *The social construction of reality. A treatise in the sociology of knowledge.* London: Penguin.
Bernstein, R. J. (1971): Praxis and action. University of Pennsylvania Press Inc., Philadelphia, USA.
Bhaskar, R. (2008). *Dialectic: The Pulse of Freedom*. London: Routledge.
Bohm, D. (1980). *Wholeness and the implicate order*. London: Routledge & Kegan Paul.
Bracci, S. L. (2002). Seyla Benhabib's Interactive Universalism: Fragile Hope for a Radically Democratic Conversational Model. *Qualitative Inquiry, 8* (4), 463-488.
Bragg, E. (1996). Towards ecological self: Deep ecology meets constructionist self-theory. *Journal of Environmental Psychology, 16*, 93–108.
Brandom, R. B. (Ed.). (2000). *Rorty and his Critics*. Oxford: Blackwell.
Buber, M. (2002). *Between Man and Man*. New York: Routledge.
Bunge, M. (2001). Sociology, Epistemology of. In N. J. Smelser & P. B. Baltes (Eds.), *International Encyclopedia of the Social & Behavioral Sciences* (pp. 14569–14574). Oxford: Elsevier.
Burbank, P. M., & Martins, D. C. (2009), Symbolic interactionism and critical perspective: divergent or synergistic? *Nursing Philosophy, 11*, 25-41.
Callo, V. N., & Packham, R. G. (1999). The Use of Soft Systems Methodology in Emancipatory Development. *Systems Research and Behavioral Science, 16*, 311–319.

Cameron, J. (2005). Journeying in radical development studies: a reflection on 30 years of researching pro-poor development. In U. Kothari (Ed.), *A radical history of development studies. Individuals, institutions and ideologies* (pp. 138–156). London: Zed books.
Capra, F. (1997). *The web of life. A new synthesis of mind and matter*. London: Flamingo.
Carr, W., & Kemmis, S. (1986). *Becoming critical: Education, knowledge, and action research.* London: Falmer Press/Taylor and Francis.
Castree, N. (1995). The nature of produced nature: Materiality and knowledge construction in marxism. *Antipode, 27* (1), 12–48.
Césaire, A. (2000). *Discourse on colonialism*. (Trans. by J. Pinkham). New York: Monthly Review Press.
Chambers, R. (2005). Critical reflections of a development nomad. In U. Kothari (Ed.), *A radical history of development studies. Individuals, institutions and ideologies* (pp. 67–87). London: Zed books.
Checkland, P. (1999). *Systems Thinking, Systems Practice.* New York: Wiley.
Checkland, P., & Holwell, S. (1998). Action Research: Its Nature and Validity. *Systemic Practice and Action Research, 11* (1), 9-21.
Checkland, P., & Scholes, J. (1999). *Soft Systems Methodology in Action*. New York: Wiley.
Chopp, R. S. (1997). Latin American Liberation Theology. In D. F. Ford (Ed.), *The Modern Theologians. An introduction to Christian theology in the twentieth century* (2nd ed.; pp. 409–425). Oxford: Blackwell.
Connelly, S., Richardson, T., & Miles, T. (2006). Situated legitimacy: Deliberative arenas and the new rural governance. *Journal of Rural Studies, 22*, 267–277.
Cooke, B., & Kothari, U. (Eds.). (2001). *Participation. The new tyranny?* London: Zed Books.
Cullity, G., & Gaut, B. (1997). *Ethics and practical reason*. Oxford: Clarendon Press.
Dennis, A., & Martin, P. J. (2005). Symbolic interactionism and the concept of power. *The British Journal of Sociology, 56* (2), 191–213.
Denzin, N. K., & Lincoln, Y. S. (2005). Introduction: The Discipline and Practice of Qualitative Research. In N. K. Denzin & Y. S. Lincoln (Eds.), *The Sage Handbook of Qualitative Research* (pp. 1–32). London: Sage.
Devenney, M. (2004). *Ethics and Politics in Contemporary Theory. Between critical theory and post-Marxism*. London: Routledge.
Dewey, J. (1981). The Development of American Pragmatism. In McDermott, J. J. (Ed.). The Philosophy of John Dewey. Two Volumes in One. 1: The Structure of Experience. 2: The Lived experience (pp. 41-57). Chicago: University Press.
Dewey, J. (2000). *Liberalism and social action*. New York: Prometheus Books.
Dowling, W. C. (1984). *Jameson, Althusser, Marx. An introduction to the Political Unconscious.* Bristol: Methuen, Cornell University Press.
Dussel, E. (2003). *Beyond Philosophy. Ethics, History, Marxism, and Liberation Theology*. (Ed. by E. Mendieta). Oxford: Rowman and Littlefield Publishers.
Erman, E., & Uhlin, A. (Eds.). (2010). *Legitimacy Beyond the State? Re-examining the Democratic Credentials of Transnational Actors*. Houndmills UK: Palgrave Macmillan.
Fanon, F. (2001). *The wretched of the earth*. London: Penguin.
Fear, F. A., Rosaen, C. L., Bawden, R. J., & Foster-Fischman, P. G. (2006). *Coming to Critical Engagement: An Autoethnographic Exploration.* Lanham US: University Press of America Inc.
Fell, L., & Russell, D. (1994). An introduction to Maturana's biology. In L. Fell, D. Russell, & A. Stewart (Eds.), *Seized by agreement, Swamped by understanding. A collection of papers to celebrate the visit to Australia in August, 1994, by Humberto Maturana*. Sydney: University of Western Sydney.
Flood, R. L. (1998). Action Research and the Management and Systems Sciences. *Systemic Practice and Action Research, 11* (1), 79–101.

Forgacs, D. (Ed.). (1988). *The Antonio Gramsci Reader. Selected writings 1916–1935*. London: Lawrence and Wishart.
Fox, S. (2006). 'Inquiries of every imaginable kind': Ethnomethodology, practical action and the new socially situated learning theory. *The Sociological Review, 54* (3), 426–445.
Foucault, M. (1969). *The archeology of knowledge*. London: Routledge.
Freire, P. (1970). *Pedagogy of the oppressed*. New York: Continuum.
Friedman, A. L. (2002). Developing stakeholder theory. *Journal of management studies, 39* (1), 1–21.
Friedman, M. (1999). *The worlds of existentialism: A critical reader*. New York: Humanity Books.
Fuenmayor, R. (1990). Systems Thinking and Critique. I. What is Critique? *Systems Practice, 3* (6), 525–544.
Fuenmayor, R. (2001). The Oblivion of Churchman's Plea for a Systems Approach to World Problems. I. The Inseparability of Systems Thinking and World Issues in the Modern Epoch. *Systemic Practice and Action Research, 14* (1), 11–28.
Gadamer, H.-G. (2004). *Truth and Method*. London: Continuum.
Gatenby, B., & Humphries, M. (2000). Feminist participatory action research. Methodological and ethical issues. *Women's Studies International Forum, 23* (1), 89–105.
Gergen, K. J. (2003). Action research and orders of democracy. *Action Research, 1* (1), 39–56.
Gergen, K. J., & Gergen, M. G. (2008). Social Construction and Research as Action. In P. Reason, & H. Bradbury (Eds.), *The SAGE Handbook of Participative Inquiry and Practice* (2nd ed., pp. 1159–1171). London: Sage.
Gandhi, M. K. (1993). *An autobiography. The story of my experiments with truth*. Boston: Beacon Press.
Giddens, A. (1984). *The Constitution of Society. Outline of the Theory of Structuration*. Berkeley: University of California Press.
Greenwood, D. J., & Levin, M. (2007). *Introduction to Action Research: Social Research for Social Change*. London: Sage.
Groot, A. E. (2002). Demystifying facilitation of multi-actor learning processes. PhD dissertation. Wageningen University, Wageningen, Netherlands.
Guba, E. G., & Lincoln, Y. S. (2005). Paradigmatic Controversies, Contradictions, and Emerging Confluences. In N. K. Denzin, & Y. S. Lincoln (Eds.), *The Sage Handbook of Qualitative Research* (3rd ed., pp. 191–216). London: Sage.
Gutiérrez, G. (2009). *A Theology of Liberation*. 15th Anniversary Edition. New York: Orbis Books.
Habermas, J. (1973). *Legitimation crisis*. Boston: Beacon Press.
Habermas, J. (1997). Discourse ethics: Notes on a programme of philosophical justification. In S. Darwall, A. Gibbard, & P. Railton (Eds.), *Moral discourse and practice. Some philosophical approaches* (pp. 287–302). Oxford: University Press.
Habermas, J. (1998). A genealogical analysis of the cognitive content of morality. In C. Cronin, & P. De Greiff (Eds.), *The inclusion of the other. Studies in political theory* (pp. 3–48). Cambridge: Polity Press.
Hallgren, L. (2003). *I djubet av et vattendrag. Om konflikt och samverkan vid naturresurshandtering.* PhD dissertation (Agraria, 379). Swedish University of Agricultural Sciences, Uppsala, Sweden.
Hannigan, J. A. (1995). *Environmental sociology. A social constructionist perspective*. New York: Routledge.
Hansen, H. P., & Sriskandarajah, N. (2009). Stakeholders or Citizens? A probe into the politics of participation in environmental governance. Paper presented at Conference on Communication and the Environment (COCE), Portland, Maine, USA.
Hiddleston, J. (2009). *Understanding Postcolonialism.* Stocksfield UK: Acumen Publishing Ltd.
Holliday, A. (2002). *Doing and Writing Qualitative Research*. London: Sage.
Hoy, D. C., & McCarthy T. (1994). *Critical Theory*. Oxford: Blackwell.

Idrissou, L., van Paassen, A., Aarts, N., & Leeuwis, C. (Submitted). From Cohesion to Conflict in Participatory Forest Management: The Case of Ouémé Supérieur and N'Dali (OSN) Forests in Benin. *Forest Policy and Economics.*

Ison, R. (2008). Systems Thinking and Practice for Action Research. In P. Reason, & H. Bradbury (Eds.), *The SAGE Handbook of Participative Inquiry and Practice* (2nd ed., pp. 139–158). London: Sage.

Jackson, M. C. (1991). Arguments Between Critical Systems Thinkers: A Critical Comment on Flood and Ulrich's 'Testament'. *Systems Practice, 4* (6), 611–614.

James, S. (1985). Louis Althusser. In Q. Skinner (Ed.), *The Return of Grand Theory in the Human Sciences* (pp. 141–158). Cambridge: University Press.

James, W. (2010). Pragmatism. A new name for some old ways of thinking. La Vergne USA: Filiquarian Publishing.

Joas, H. (2000). *The Genesis of Values*. Chicago: University Press.

Johansson, A. W., & Lindhult, E. (2008). Emancipation or workability? Critical versus pragmatic scientific orientation in action research. *Action Research, 6* (1), 95–115.

Jones, S. (2002). Social constructionism and the environment: Through the quagmire. *Global Environmental Change, 12*, 247–251.

Kalberg, S (Ed.). (2005). *Max Weber. Readings and Commentary on Modernity.* Oxford: Blackwell.

Kemmis, S. (2008). Critical Theory and Participatory Action Research. In P. Reason, & H. Bradbury (Eds.), *The SAGE Handbook of Participative Inquiry and Practice* (2nd ed., pp. 121–138). London: Sage.

Kincheloe, J. L. and McLaren, P. (2005). Kincheloe, J. L., & McLaren, P. (2005). Rethinking Critical Theory and Qualitative Research. In N. K. Denzin, & Y. S. Lincoln (Eds.), *The Sage Handbook of Qualitative Research* (3rd ed., pp. 303–342). London: Sage.

King, M. L. (1998). *The autobiography of Martin Luther King, Jr.* (Ed. by C. Carson). London: Abacus.

Kolb, D. A., Boyatzis, R. E., & Mainemelis, C. (2000). Experiential Learning Theory: Previous Research and New Directions. In R. J. Sternberg, & L. F. Zhang (Eds.), *Perspectives on cognitive, learning, and thinking styles.* NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum, 2000.

Kompridis, N. (2004). From reason to self-realisation? Axel Honneth and the 'ethical turn' in critical theory. In J. Rundell, D. Petherbridge, & J. Bryant (Eds.), *Contemporary Perspectives in Critical and Social Philosophy* (pp. 323–360). Leiden: Brill.

Larsen, R. K. (2006). Operationalising the SARD-Initiative in Viet Nam. MSc. Thesis, Department of Urban and Rural Development, Swedish University of Agricultural Sciences, Uppsala, Sweden.

Larsen, R. K., & Falk., E. (2011). Assessment of biogas plant. Web-article retrieved from http://www.balticdeal.eu/news/assessment-of-biogas-plant/.

Larsen, R. K., & Vinther, F. P. (2010). *Implementability of agro-environmental targets in Denmark.* Project Reporting, Baltic COMPASS (Comprehensive Policy Actions and Investments in Sustainable Solutions in Agriculture in the Baltic Sea Region). Work Package 6: Policy Adaptation and Governance. Stockholm: Stockholm Environment Institute. Retrieved from http://www.balticcompass.org/AgroEnvImplem_COMPASS-report_Denmark_Final_public_110329%20_2_.pdf.

Larsen, R. K., Osbeck, M., King, C., Powell, N., & Virgin, I. (2009). *Inception Report – Swedish International Agricultural Network Initiative (SIANI).* SEI Project Report. Stockholm: Stockholm Environment Institute. Retrieved from http://sei-international.org/publications?pid=1242.

Larsen, R. K., Thomalla, F., Kanji, F., Naruchaikusol, S., Tepa, C., Ravesloot, B., & A.K. Ahmed (2010). Integrating DRR and NRM priorities from a local livelihoods perspective in the Indian Ocean Tsunami Early Warning System. In: PEDRR (Partnership for Environment and Disaster Risk Reduction): Demonstrating the Role of Ecosystem-based Management for Disaster Risk Reduction, pp. 37-40. Background Paper for UN/ISDR Global

Assessment Report 2011. Retrieved from http://www.preventionweb.net/english/hyogo/gar/2011/en/home/annexes.html.
Larsen, R. K., Gerger Swartling, Å., Powell, N., Simonsson, L., & Osbeck, M. (2011). *Framework for supporting the dialogue between regulatory policy and local climate change adaptation: Insights from case study research in Sweden, Canada and Indonesia.* SEI Research Report. Stockholm: Stockholm Environment Institute. Retrieved from http://sei-international.org/publications?pid=1882.
Lawler, J. (1998). Phenomenologies as research methodologies for nursing: from philosophy to nursing practice. *Nursing Inquiry, 5*, 104–111.
Leleur, S. (2008). Systems Science and Complexity: Some Proposals for Future Development. *Systems Research and Behavioral Science, 25*, 67–79.
Levin, M. (1994). Action Research and Critical Systems Thinking: Two Icons Carved Out of the Same Log? *Systems Practice, 7* (1), 25–41.
Lindstead, S. (2006). Ethnomethodology and sociology: An introduction. *The Sociological Review, 54* (3), 399–404.
Little, A., & Lloyd, M. (Eds.). (2009). *The politics of radical democracy*. Edinburgh: University Press.
Liu, Y. (2004). The self and Li in Confucianism. *Journal of Chinese Philosophy*, 31 (1), 363-376.
Lloyd, M. (2009). Performing radical democracy. In A. Little & M. Lloyd (Eds.), *The politics of radical democracy* (pp. 33–51). Edinburgh: University Press.
Loseke, D. R. (2007). *Thinking about social problems*. New Brunswick USA: Transaction Publishers.
Macedo, D. (2002). Introduction to the Anniversary Edition of P. Freire's *Pedagogy of the oppressed*; 1970. New York: Continuum.
Mannheim, K. (1936). *Ideology and Utopia*. New York: Harvest Books.
Marcel, G. (1999). *Being and Having: An Existentialist Diary*. In M. S. Friedman (Ed.), *The worlds of existentialism: A critical reader* (pp. 209-210). New York: Prometheus Books.
Margonis, F. (2003). Paolo Freire and post-colonial dilemmas. A review of Peter Roberts, 2000, Education, literacy, and humanization (Westport, CT: Bergin and Garvey), *Studies in Philosophy and Education, 22*, 145–156.
Markell, P. (2003). *Bound by Recognition*. Princeton: University Press.
Maturana, H. R., & Varela, F. J. (1998). *The Tree of Knowledge. The biological roots of human understanding*. Boston: Shambhala.
McCarthy, T. (1985). Complexity and Democracy, or the Seducements of Systems Theory. *New German Critique, 35*, 27–53.
McCarthy, T. (1992). Practical discourse. On the relation of morality to politics. In C. Calhoun (Ed.), *Habermas and the public sphere* (pp. 51–72). Cambridge: MIT Press.
McTaggert, R. (1997). (Ed.). *Participatory action research. International contexts and consequences.* Albany: State University of New York Press.
Mejía, M. (2004). The Problem of Knowledge Imposition: Paulo Freire and Critical Systems Thinking. *Systems Research and Behavioral Science, 21*, 63–82.
Merleau-Ponty, M. (2002). The primacy of perception and other essays. In D. Moran, & T. Mooney (Eds.), *The Phenomenology Reader* (pp. 436–460). New York: Routledge.
Midgley, G. (1997). Dealing with Coercion: Critical Systems Heuristics and Beyond. *Systems Practice, 10* (1), 37–57.
Midgley, G. (2000). *Systemic Intervention: Philosophy, Methodology, and Practice*. New York: Kluwer Academic /Plenum Publishers.
Näsström, S. (2003). What Globalization Overshadows. *Political Theory, 31* (6), 808–834.
Näsström, S. (2010). Democracy Counts: Problems of Equality in Transnational Democracy. In J. Tallberg & C. Jönsson (Eds.), *Transnational Actors in Global Governance* (pp. 348–383). Houndmills: Palgrave Macmillan.
Nielsen, G. M. (2002). *The norms of answerability. Social theory between Bahktin and Habermas.* Albany: State University of New York Press.

Nielsen, K. A., & Nielsen, B. S. (2006). Methodologies in action research. In K. A. & L. Svensson (Eds.), *Action research and interactive research* (pp. 63–88). Maastricht, Netherlands: Shaker Publishing.
Nielsen, B. S., & Nielsen, K. A. (2010). In S. Brinkmann, & Tanggaard, L. (Eds.), *Kvalitative metoder: En grundbog* (Qualitative methods: a foundation) (pp. 97–120). Copenhagen: Hans Reitzel Publishing.
Outhwaite, W. (1985). Hans Georg Gadamer. In Q. Skinner (Ed.), *The Return of Grand Theory in the Human Sciences* (pp. 21–40). Cambridge: University Press.
Packham, R., & Sriskandarajah, N. (2005). Systemic Action Research for Postgraduate Education in Agriculture and Rural Development. *Systems Research and Behavioral Science, 22*, 119–130.
Pantham, T. (1983). Thinking with Mahatma Gandhi: Beyond Liberal Democracy. *Political Theory, 11* (2), 165–188.
Peirce, C. S. (1878). How to Make our Ideas Clear. *Popular Science Monthly, 12*, 286–302.
Powell, N., Gerger Swartling, Å. G., & Hoang, M. H. (Eds.) (2011). *Stakeholder agency in rural development policy. Articulating co-governance in Vietnam.* Hanoi, Vietnam: World Agroforestry Agency (ICRAF).
Rahman, M. A. (1991). The theoretical standpoints of PAR. In O. Fals-Borda, & M. A. Rahman (Eds.), *Action and knowledge. Breaking the monopoly with participatory action research* (pp. 13-23). London: The Apex Press.
Reason, P. (2003). Pragmatist philosophy and action research. Readings and conversation with Richard Rorty. *Action Research, 1* (1), 103–123.
Roberts, P. (2003). Emerging Selves in Practice: How do I and others create my practice and how does my practice shape me and influence others? PhD dissertation. University of Bath, Bath, England.
Rorty, R. (2009). *Philosophy and the Mirror of Nature*. 30th Anniversary Edition. Princeton: University Press.
Röling, N. (2002). Beyond the aggregation of individual preferences. Moving from multiple to distributed cognition in resource dilemmas. In C. Leeuwis & R. Pyburn (Eds.), *Wheelbarrows full of frogs. Social learning in rural resource management* (pp. 25–48). Assen, Netherlands: Royal Van Gorcum.
Said, E. (2003). *Orientalism*. London: Penguin.
Salem-Wiseman, J. (2003). Heidegger's *Dasein* and the Liberal Conception of the Self. *Political Theory, 31* (4), 533–557.
Saraswathi, T. S. (2005). Hindu Worldview in the Development of Selfways: The "Atman" as the Real Self. *New Directions for Child and Adolescent Development*, 109, 43-50.
Sartre, J. P. (1956). *Being and Nothingness*. Philosophical Library Inc. New York: Washington Square Press.
Scanlon, T. M. (1998). *What We Owe to Each Other*. Cambridge USA: The Belknap Press of Harvard University Press.
Schecter, D. (1994). *Radical theories. Paths beyond Marxism and social democracy*. Manchester: University Press.
Schweiker, W. (1998). *Power, value and conviction. Theological ethics in the postmodern age*. Cleveland USA: Pilgrim Press.
Searle, J. R. (1995). *The construction of social reality*. New York: The Free Press.
Seel, M. (2004). Adorno's contemplative ethics. In J. Rundell, D. Petherbridge, & J. Bryant (Eds.), *Contemporary Perspectives in Critical and Social Philosophy* (pp. 259–270). Leiden: Brill.
Shen, C. Y., & Midgley, G. (2007). Toward a Buddhist Systems Methodology 1: Comparisons between Buddhism and Systems Theory. *Systemic Practice and Action Research, 20*,167–194.
Sherwood, S. (2010). Mobilising our greatest resource for continuity and change: People. *Farming Matters, 10*, 10–11.

SIANI Secretariat (2009). Synthesis of feedback on the Inception Report. Stockholm, Sweden: Swedish International Agricultural Network Initiative (SIANI).
Skinner, Q. (1985). *The Return of Grand Theory in the Human Sciences*. Cambridge: University Press.
Snow, D. A. (2001). Interactionism: Symbolic. In N. Smelser & P.D. Baltes (Eds.), *International Encyclopedia of the Social and Behavioral Sciences* (pp. 7695–7698). Oxford: Pergamon Press.
Strauss, A. (Ed.). (1977). *George Herbert Mead on Social Psychology.* Chicago: University Press.
Thomalla, F., Larsen, R. K., Kanji, F., Naruchaikusol, S., Tepa, C., Ravesloot, B. & Ahmed, A.K. (2009). *From Knowledge to Action: Learning to Go the Last Mile. A Participatory Assessment of the Enabling Conditions for Strengthening the Technology – community Linkages of Tsunami Early Warning Systems in the Indian Ocean*. SEI Research Report. Stockholm: Stockholm Environment Institute, Macquarie University, Asian Disaster Preparedness Centre, and Raks Thai Foundation. Retreived from http://sei-international.org/publications?pid=1412.
Tsivacou, I. (1992). Emancipation and Truth in Critical Systems Methodologies. *Systems Practice, 5* (2), 181–191.
Ulrich, W. (1998). *Systems Thinking as if People Mattered. Critical Systems Thinking for Citizens and Managers.* Lincoln School of Management, working paper no. 23. Lincoln, UK: University of Lincolnshire & Humberside.
Ulrich, W. (2000). Reflective Practice in the Civil Society: The Contribution of Critically Systemic Thinking. *Reflective Practice, 1* (2), 247–268.
Vuola, E. (1997). *Limits of Liberation. Praxis as Method in Latin American Liberation Theology and Feminist Theology.* Humaniora 289. Helsinki: Finnish Academy of Science and Letters and Finnish Society of Science and Letters.
Waks, L. J. (1998). Post-experimentalist Pragmatism. *Studies in Philosophy and Education 17*, 17–29.
Waldenström, C. (2001). Constructing the world in dialogue. A study of advisory situations in Swedish agriculture. PhD dissertation (no. 105). Department of Education, Stockholm University, Stockholm, Sweden.
Warner, J. F. (2008). The politics of flood insecurity. Framing contested river management projects. PhD dissertation. Wageningen University, Wageningen, Netherlands.
Weis, T. (2007). *The Global Food Economy. The Battle for the Future of Farming*. London: Zed Books.
Wenger, E. (1998). *Communities of Practice. Learning, Meaning, and Identity*. Cambridge: University Press.
Westberg, L. (2005). Aktörssamverkan i praktiken. Om lärende och makt i samverkensprocesser mellan aktörer i livsmedelssystemet (Actor cooperation in practice. About learning and power in cooperative processes between actors in the food system). PhD dissertation (no. 2005:96). Faculty of Natural Resources and Agricultural Sciences, Swedish University of Agricultural Sciences, Uppsala, Sweden.
Westphal, K. R. (Ed.). (2009). *The Blackwell's Guide to Hegel's Phenomenology of Spirit*. Oxford: Blackwell.
Whitehead, J., & McNiff, J. (2006). *Action research and living theory*. London: Sage.
Xiaogan, L. (1998). Naturalness (Tzu-Jan), the core value in Taoism: Its ancient meaning and its significance today. In L. Kohn & LaFargue, M. (Eds.), *Lao-Tzu and the Tao-te-ching* (pp. 211–228). New York: State University.
Xingjian, G. (2001). *Soul Mountain*. London: Harper Perennial.

Summary

This thesis explores how people exert their agency in policy processes that pertain to natural resource governance, and how they construct the required sense of legitimacy for such actions. It also examines the manner in which facilitated multi-stakeholder processes foster legitimate stakeholder agency, and reflects on how they may ensure the rigour of research interventions in situations characterised by intractable uncertainty and controversy. The analysis and reflections presented herein is based on six years of professional experience with designing, managing and implementing development and research projects in South East Asia and Northern Europe. The evidence is presented via five action-research 'cases' undertaken together with colleagues and partners. These cases provide analyses of stakeholder agency and the construction of legitimacy in coastal resource management (Philippines), disaster risk reduction and recovery (Thailand), sustainable agricultural development (Sweden), grassroots democracy in rural development (Vietnam), and agro-environmental governance of nutrient pollution (Denmark). The thesis is thus an attempt to share a set of concrete stories that may resonate with and inspire people involved in related areas of work. The underlying motivations for writing this thesis have been (i) to improve the rigour of my own engagement in current and future projects; (ii) to inspire my colleagues and partners in their efforts to continuously strengthening the rigour and criticalness of our work; and (iii) to raise general awareness of partners and collaborators that most mainstream governance and research efforts are blind to the many ways stakeholders influence policy processes and seek to negotiate their legitimate agency therein.

Within natural resource governance, it has become commonplace to nurture and promote the ambition of policies to orchestrate what is known as 'stakeholder processes': an alternative, non-coercive way of fostering collective action. Stakeholding forms a response to the critique of planned interventions and 'command-and-control type' management, proposing to replace coercive, hierarchical and/or centralised modes of governance with participatory processes for self-organised collective action and in so doing to improve the effectiveness and quality of change processes. However, despite this ambition, collaborative forms of management – which espouse strategies of stakeholding – often fail to acknowledge their heritage as specific social projects of neo-liberal capitalism. The literature on stakeholding in natural resource governance strongly substantiates the extent to which certain types of stakeholder agency is promoted through an intransparent legitimising of already dominant interests.

Any consideration of stakeholding in the environment-development nexus must thus recognise the historical roots of the phenomenon as a manifestation of the unfolding of the liberal democratic tradition, which shapes our governance regimes, including our discourses about this governance. Such a reflexive deconstruction of stakeholding provides an entry point for a radical democratic critique of the legitimacy of stakeholder agency as part of larger ideological struggles in governance contexts suffering from a collapse of collective understanding of their natural resource issues. We become interested not only in formally denoted 'stakeholder processes' or so-called 'alternative policy instruments', but the way in which people ('stakeholders') continuously pursue their agendas in the governance system. That is, we recognise that stakeholder agency takes place in spaces created and designated for that very purpose as well as in *ad hoc* processes triggered by the presence of governance ambiguity. In this view, policy adaptation is an inherent feature of governance systems; denoting the process and outcomes of the manner in which stakeholders exert their agency to revise political goals and to affect their interpretation, navigate institutional ambiguities, and/or engage in rule-bending and self-organised action.

While the subject of legitimacy has been covered extensively in disciplines such as sociology, organisational studies and political philosophy, it is not easy to apply the guidelines contained therein to the special conditions associated with natural resource governance. Little theoretical work has emerged to grapple with the creation and maintenance of legitimacy under the messy conditions of real-life policy adaptation in the governance of natural resources and livelihoods. Moreover, descriptive scientific disciplines focus on aspects of governance that are quite different than approaches which are more concerned with operationalising interventions through concrete project work and actively aim at fostering legitimate agency.

In order to address these challenges, this thesis formulates and responds to the following three research questions: 1) How do stakeholders exert their agency and construct legitimacy in policy adaptation? 2) How do facilitated multi-stakeholder processes contribute to collective efforts to foster legitimacy? 3) How may research interventions ensure a rigorous critique of stakeholder agency and its legitimacy? The research presented has been conducted with reference to an overarching Systemic and Participatory Action Research (SPAR) approach. The SPAR tradition represents a broad grouping of approaches that unite Participatory Action Research and the most recent paradigms of systems thinking, most notably Soft Systems Methodology and Critical Systems Thinking. For the present purpose, SPAR is operationalised in the praxiological tradition of systemic thinking, as a both critical and dialogical mode of inquiry, which rests on constructionist and pragmatist philosophies of science. The principal measure of research quality adopted is that of scientific rigour; that is, that the work aims towards a transparent co-construction of knowledge together with the participants. In recognition of context and project realities, each case study mobilises different specific research methods and theories in order to respond to the problems at hand.

After the introductory chapter, each case study is presented in a separate chapter and includes analysis of its individual problem context, research methodology and results. All of these have been reproduced (with permission) from articles published in or submitted to scientific journals. Since they represent active interventions in scientific discourses, each chapter also reflects a discourse adopted by the community of scholars and professionals to which it was originally addressed. As part of the interventionist research approach, each case responds to the first two research questions (i.e. stakeholder agency and the fostering of legitimacy through facilitated multi-stakeholder processes) in different ways. Chapter 2 (coastal resource management in the Philippines) and Chapter 3 (Thai disaster preparedness and recovery strategies) tackle the actual processes of stakeholder agency directly and seek to conceptualise its significance. Both chapters offer synthetic narratives of stakeholder agency that were developed as part of the project work itself. Chapter 4 (Swedish agricultural development aid) and Chapter 5 (Vietnamese grassroots democracy) more explicitly emphasise the claims-making processes and subtle practices that stakeholders employ to enact and legitimise their agency. Chapter 6 (Baltic/Danish agro-environmental governance) partly responds to the recognition of these subtle practices and questions the chances that the idealised norm of 'accountability' is achievable within a liberal governance regime given the impressive variety of stakeholder practices. The third research question (i.e. prospects for ensuring rigorous critique) is a methodological introspection that emerges in response to the composite synthesis of all the cases. The ideas herein initially found expression in the second of two chapters addressing the coastal management situation in the Philippines (Chapter 7). It considers the challenges we faced facilitating a conservation action planning process in the Babuyan Islands (Chapter 2) and examines the efficacy of the adopted methodology of critical boundary critique. Finally, Chapter 8 provides the synthesis and critique of the findings and offers answers to the thesis research questions.

In the Philippines, Integrated Coastal Management (ICM) represents the dominant response to narratives of ecosystem decline. However, there are persistent challenges to implementation, manifested in continued resource degradation, questioning of the exercise of stakeholder involvement and rising resource conflicts. This paper (Chapter 2) examines the implementation process and how the assumptions embodied in the ICM regime meet the local reality in one group of islands in the Philippine archipelago. A participatory conservation action planning process was facilitated Nov. 2007 to May 2008. The evidence derives from planning workshops, consultations, and key informant interviews with participation from nearly 100 people, including secondary data from review of scientific and policy documents. It shows how the transformation towards a supposed equilibrium state of coastal ecosystems is undermined in the face of diverging stakeholder agendas. Expected actors are disempowered by the incoherence between the policy owners' worldview and reality, paving the way for unethical influence from elite alliances. This is coupled with a deepening of the dominance of state, international development banks, foreign aid agencies, and NGOs in promoting their respective interests. In localities such as the Babuyan Islands, when assumptions of ICM collapse it has destructive consequences for fisherfolk and the coastal environment. We conclude that if ICM is to foster an effective and equitable correction of current unsustainable exploitation patterns, then there is a need to institute improved accountability mechanisms in the devolved governance system as well as taking seriously the espoused commitment to stakeholder involvement in determining the goals and assumptions of ICM.

In current scientific efforts to harness complementarity between resilience and vulnerability theory, one response is an 'epistemological shift' towards an evolutionary, learning based conception of the 'systems-actor' relation in social-ecological systems. In this paper (Chapter 3), we contribute to this movement regarding the conception of stakeholder agency within social-ecological systems. We examine primary evidence from the governance of post-disaster recovery and disaster risk reduction efforts in Thailand's coastal tourism-dependent communities following the 2004 Indian Ocean Tsunami. The work undertook a participatory policy analysis of disaster risk reduction measures, which was conducted during 2008 and included stakeholder consultations with 14 implementing actors in Krabi Province, an online dialogue with 155 professionals, and review of nearly 500 scientific and 'grey literature' documents and more than 30 web repositories. Through an emerging storyline from stakeholders, we construct a new framework for conceptualising stakeholder agency in social-ecological systems, which positions the notion of resilience within a conception of governance as a negotiated normative process. We conclude that if resilience theory is proposed as the preferred approach by which disaster risk reduction is framed and implemented, it needs to acknowledge much more explicitly the role of stakeholder agency and the processes through which legitimate visions of resilience are generated.

Within the European Union, promotion of 'policy coherence' is expected to improve coordination across sectors and groups of professionals, who place competing claims regarding how European participation in low-income country agriculture contributes to sustainable development. This paper (Chapter 4) examines the prospects for stakeholders in Sweden to implement ambitions of policy coherence to achieve sustainable global agricultural development, drawing on experiences from the launch a national multi-stakeholder platform (network) for agricultural professionals supporting policy coherence in Swedish contributions to international agricultural development. The work adopted an action learning approach in the Soft Systems Methodology tradition, including consultations with Swedish organisations from October 2008 until January 2009, involving 142 people from 91 organisations, an inception workshop with 64 participants, and a desktop synthesis. The analysis is also shaped by the authors' experiences prior to and after the inception of the network, in total a project period of over one year. The findings demonstrate how Sweden is characterised by a disabling and fragmented environment for stakeholders to coherently address sustainable agricultural development and global food security and respond to the complexity and context specific needs of affected people in low-income countries. Current informal practices undermine the value of formal procedural routines and prevent negotiation and collective critique, which is ethically acceptable from the perspective of global citizenship. We argue for a more strategically facilitated dialogue for all sectors in society to share perspectives and deconstruct social boundaries, which are no longer relevant.

Over the past decades Vietnam has seen striking efforts to reinvent the exercise of democratic rural development. Promotion of grassroots democracy, notably under the Grassroots Democracy Decree (GDD), has been an acute response by Communist Party and government to large scale unrest among the rural populace owing to dissatisfactions with a felt mismatch between espoused commitments to 'good governance' and its actual practice. Through evidence from field work, this paper (Chapter 5) assesses the implications of the GDD in the central and northern highlands, analysing how the promotion of grassroots democracy is discursively constructed by rural development professionals. The work consisted of a pilot study for the Sustainable Agriculture and Rural Development (SARD) Initiative, one of the partnerships launched at the World Summit for Sustainable Development in 2002. It included four months of field work April to July 2006 with 77 consultations with individual professionals, and three field visits to rural upland localities in the central and northern highlands. The results outline three dominant discourses, which center on their respective interests in liberalist democratisation, improved efficiency in state renovation, and enhanced accountability in governing local policy ambiguities. It argues that 'grassroots democracy' is serving as a conceptual mediator, supporting learning between diverging interests associated with rural development and different ideological positions shrouding the notion of democracy itself. Yet, given the extent that discourses are reflective of how professionals relate to grassroots aspirations, grassroots movements, which originally ushered the Party and central government to pass the GDD, have a significant struggle ahead of them to affect concrete changes in professionals' practices.

Agro-environmental governance associated with the issue of eutrophication in the Baltic Sea Region relies on accountability as a central norm to secure legitimacy of transnational cooperation. However, owing to co-existence of different traditions of governance the implementation of nutrient reduction targets requires negotiation between competing definitions of accountability. This paper (Chapter 6) presents results from an empirical analysis of the implementability of nutrient reduction targets in one riparian state, namely Denmark, focusing on the government's ambitious Green Growth Strategy. The work was conducted as a situation analysis of implementability of agro-environmental targets and measures in a multi-institutional partnership in the Baltic Sea Region. Consultations were held in Copenhagen March–April 2010 with 33 professionals from 22 organisations. The findings were circulated in a synthesis report and discussed at a consolidation workshop convened with Local Government Denmark in Copenhagen December 2010. Project experiences of nearly two years (2009–11) provide background for analysis. This analysis charts the policy adaptation route to explore how stakeholders mobilize claims within different sense-making perspectives on governance in order to seek to keep each other accountable. We conclude that if transnational cooperation on agro-environmental pollution is to improve its effectiveness, then it must more explicitly address ambiguities between sense-making perspectives on governance to enable a co-construction of acceptable modes of justification, which determines when stakeholder agency represents creativity and innovation or misconduct and cooption.

In Critical Systems Thinking (CST), the notion of boundary judgements represents a constructionist view on knowing as the bounding of components of reality into knowable objects. Cognitive boundary judgements determine observations (facts) and evaluations (values), which knowers appreciate and act in relation to. Werner Ulrich's method of dialogical boundary critique and the framework of Critical Systems Heuristics (CSH) are intended to enable citizen participation in Western democracies through acknowledgement of legitimate competencies in public and corporate dialogues. This paper (Chapter 7) investigates the application of this methodology in Philippine coastal resource management. The conclusions are based on the stakeholder-based action planning carried out between November 2007 and May 2008 in the Babuyan group of islands, bounded by the Balintang and Babuyan Channels. It argues that dialogical boundary critique requires much adaptation if it is to provide a liberating language for participants in Philippine resource management dilemmas shaped by multiple and conflicting knowledge claims under conditions of significant controversy.

In Chapter 8, the synthesis of the case study findings show, first, that there are clear differences in the change processes engendered in the five projects, largely owing to differences in project design, scope and partnership constellations. The facilitated multi-stakeholder processes, which aimed to improve the legitimacy of stakeholder agency, required i) Insider knowledge: Adequate appreciation of the problem situation, its history and culture, either through own experience and contacts or through partnership with embedded actors, ii) Long term commitment: If the interactions were to lead to more than situation analysis and issue mapping and pilot implementation of agreed action points then the work had to commit sufficient time to the process, iii) Integration of 'dialogue' and 'action': Technical/technological activities, which often have great leverage in the formal governance systems, should be clearly linked to the outcomes from the stakeholder negotiations. If the project included different tasks / work packages, then it must include coordination mechanisms to foster coherence, iv) Ownership: Sharing of ownership invited engagement and leveraged knowledge, resources and commitment from all partners to ensure that the work would relevant and have an impact, v) Accountability: There had to be mechanisms in place to keep the hosts and/or facilitators of the multi-stakeholder process accountable to the engaged constituency to ensure that negotiated outcomes would be honoured. These lessons may inspire more critical judgments regarding project design in the future. They also highlight weaknesses in the existing institutional environment offered by research institutions and funding structures.

Second, the synthesis of the cases shows how stakeholders legitimised their agency through crafting a sufficient degree of coherence between their actions and the intersubjective reality in which these actions were carried out. *Legitimising practices* occurred in concrete *policy adaptation instances*, where stakeholders seized the roles of *Creators, Sanctioners or Contesters* in order to colonise these instances and imbue them with meaning and, in turn, legitimise specific modes of contested stakeholder agency. This conclusion recasts the notion of 'stakeholder interdependencies' from a conception based on interests to a view based on the manner in which people co-create one another in wider existential terms. It also localises the ambitions of the radical democratic critique of ideology and hegemony in policy adaptation instances that cater for a more constructive emphasis on concrete and practical improvement.

Third, the final chapter shares some further thoughts on how researchers, who seek to facilitate a critical appraisal of stakeholder interests, are often faced with resistance from 'powerful' stakeholders and must be prepared to negotiate their methodology in a rigorous manner. When adopting a SPAR approach, it is vital to appreciate that this methodology contains a set of virtues that are based on a claim to a common human nature and a universal aspiration for solidarity. These virtues are far from always achievable. One way to balance critical intervention with a pragmatic accommodation to such resistance may be to employ a critical-pragmatic recursive approach that enables the researchers to champion and to negotiate these virtues in an iterative manner. This tool reflects a specific interpretation of the quasi-transcendent dialectic logic inherent in SPAR. Herein, research interventions may realise both critical (revolutionary) and pragmatic (dialogical) objectives – thus fostering a dialogue that may contribute to a peaceful revolution for a more sustainable and just society.

In terms of implications for future research, these findings and reflections present an exciting and necessary challenge to action researchers in natural resource governance; namely to facilitate critical dialogues which clearly attend to the badly monitored vacuums in policy adaptation, in particular uncovering the often concealed strategies and legitimising practices employed by Creators and Sanctioners to promote their own agendas. Such research efforts will face an interlinked challenge, which arises because the projects themselves will invariably be part of the very governance system in which they intervene. This concerns the design and management of conducive project processes, which enables, among other, sufficient linkages to coercive structures, sharing of ownership and strong internal accountability mechanisms. In order to meet these challenges, SPAR researchers cannot escape from continuing the discussion on how to operationalise the praxiological virtues embodied in their methodologies.

Samenvatting

Deze thesis onderzoekt hoe mensen hun *agency* (handelingsvermogen) uitoefenen in beleidsprocessen rond het beheer van natuurlijke hulpbronnen en hoe zij hierin het vereiste gevoel van legitimiteit construeren voor dergelijke acties. Het onderzoekt ook de manier waarop gefaciliteerde processen tussen verschillende belanghebbenden (*stakeholders*) de legitimiteit bevorderen van het handelingsvermogen van belanghebbenden en reflecteert op manieren waarlangs deze de grondigheid van onderzoeksinterventies kunnen garanderen in situaties die worden gekenmerkt door onnavolgbare onzekerheid en controverse. De analyse en reflecties die hier worden gepresenteerd zijn gebaseerd op zes jaar professionele ervaring op het gebied van ontwerp, bestuur en implementatie van ontwikkelings- en onderzoeksprojecten in Zuid-Oost Azië en Noordelijk Europa. De resultaten worden gepresenteerd middels vijf casussen van actieonderzoek die zijn ondernomen samen met collega's en partners. Deze casussen bieden analyses van het handelingsvermogen van belanghebbenden en de constructie van legitimiteit in het beheer van natuurlijke hulpbronnen aan de kust (Filippijnen), vermindering van rampenrisico en herstel (Thailand), duurzame landbouwontwikkeling (Zweden), 'grassroots' democratie in plattelandsontwikkeling (Vietnam), en agrarisch-milieukundig beheer bij vervuiling door nutriënten (Denemarken). De thesis is daarmee een streven om een serie concrete verhalen te delen die mogelijk herkenning en inspiratie bieden aan betrokkenen in gerelateerde werkgebieden. De onderliggende motivaties voor het schrijven van deze thesis waren (i) het verdiepen van mijn eigen betrokkenheid bij huidige en toekomstige projecten; (ii) het inspireren van mijn collega's en partners in hun streven om blijvend alertheid en kritische reflectie te betrachten bij ons werk; en (iii) een algemene bewustwording stimuleren onder partners en medewerkers dat het merendeel van beleid en onderzoeksinspanningen blind is voor de vele manieren waarop *stakeholders* beleidsprocessen beïnvloeden en bewust onderhandelen over de legitimiteit van hun handelingsvermogen hierin.

Op het gebied van beheer van natuurlijke hulpbronnen is het gemeengoed geworden om die ambities van beleid te voeden en promoten die wat men noemt '*stakeholder* processen' bewerkstelligen; een alternatieve, vrijblijvende manier om middels openbaar beleid collectieve actie te bevorderen voor het beheer van natuurlijke hulpbronnen en de ontwikkeling van middelen voor levensonderhoud. *Stakeholding* vormt een antwoord op kritiek aangaande geplande interventies en een bestuurstype gebaseerd op het volgen van orders en is daarmee een voorstel om gedwongen, hiërarchische en/of gecentraliseerde vormen van beheer te

vervangen door participatieve processen ten behoeve van door de betrokkenen zelf georganiseerde collectieve actie, om daarmee de effectiviteit en kwaliteit van veranderingsprocessen te verbeteren. Ondanks deze ambities blijkt echter dat samenwerkende vormen van bestuur – die strategieën van *stakeholding* omarmen – vaak falen in hun vermogen om hun erfenis te onderkennen als zijnde specifieke sociale projecten van neoliberaal kapitalisme. De literatuur over *stakeholding* in het beheer van natuurlijke hulpbronnen wijst sterk op de mate waarin bepaalde vormen van *stakeholder-agency* vorm krijgen middels een ondoorzichtige legitimering van heersende belangen.

Elke overweging met betrekking tot *stakeholding* op het gebied van milieu en ontwikkeling moet daarom de historische wortels van het fenomeen erkennen als een uiting van het ontplooien van de liberaal-democratische traditie die vormgeeft aan onze bestuurlijke stelsels, met inbegrip van onze betogen over dergelijk bestuur. Een dergelijke reflectieve deconstructie van *stakeholding* biedt een uitgangspunt voor een radicaal democratisch her-evalueren (*critique*) van de legitimiteit van *stakeholder-agency* als onderdeel van grotere ideologische worstelingen in contexten van bestuur die lijden onder een onvermogen om te komen tot een gezamenlijk, collectief begrip van de eigen problematiek op het gebied van natuurlijke hulpbronnen. We richten ons daarmee niet enkel op de formeel genoemde '*stakeholder* processen' of zogenoemde 'alternatieve beleidsinstrumenten' maar ook op de manier waarlangs mensen ('*stakeholders*') aanhoudend de eigen agenda's navolgen te midden van het bestuurlijke systeem. Oftewel, wij herkennen dat het handelingsvermogen van *stakeholders* plaatsvindt in situaties die zijn gecreëerd en bestemd voor precies deze doeleinden alsook in *ad hoc* processen die voortkomen uit de aanwezigheid van onduidelijkheden en tegenstrijdige belangen in het bestuurlijke contexten. In dit opzicht is beleidsaanpassing een inherent aspect van bestuurlijke systemen; verwijzend naar het proces en de uitkomsten van de manier waarop *stakeholders* hun handelingsvermogen uitoefenen om politieke doelen te herzien en de interpretatie daarvan te beïnvloeden, hun weg te vinden te midden van institutionele tegenstrijdigheden, en/of het lichtjes ombuigen van regels en acties op eigen initiatief.

Terwijl het onderwerp van legitimiteit breeduit is behandeld in vakgebieden als sociologie, organisatie studies en politieke filosofie blijkt het lastig om de richtlijnen die daarin zijn gegeven te betrekken op de specifieke omstandigheden van het beheren van natuurlijke hulpbronnen. Er is slechts weinig theoretisch werk verschenen dat ingaat op het fabriceren en onderhouden van legitimiteit onder de chaotische omstandigheden van daadwerkelijke beleidsaanpassingen in het beheer van natuurlijke hulpbronnen en bronnen van levensonderhoud.

Bovendien, beschrijvende wetenschappelijke disciplines richten zich op aspecten van bestuur en beheer die aanmerkelijk verschillen van benaderingen die meer begaan zijn met het operationaliseren van interventies middels concrete projecten en die zich actief tot doel stellen om legitiem handelingsvermogen te bewerkstelligen.

Om deze uitdagingen het hoofd te bieden worden in deze thesis de volgende drie vragen geformuleerd en beantwoord: 1) Op welke wijze beoefenen *stakeholders* hun handelingsvermogen en construeren zij legitimiteit in beleidsaanpassing? 2) Hoe dragen zogenaamde *facilitated multi-stakeholder processes* bij aan collectieve inspanningen om legitimiteit te creëren? 3) Hoe zouden onderzoeksinterventies een grondige evaluatie van *stakeholder-agency* en de legitimiteit daarvan kunnen waarborgen? Het gepresenteerde onderzoek is verricht met verwijzing naar een overkoepelende Systematisch en Participatief Actieonderzoek (*Systematic and Participatory Action Research* / SPAR)-benadering. De SPAR-traditie vertegenwoordigt een brede groepering van benaderingen die Participatory Action Research verenigt met de meest recente paradigma's op het gebied van systeemdenken, met name Soft Systems Methodology and Critical Systems Thinking. In het kader van de huidige doelstellingen wordt SPAR geoperationaliseerd in de praxeologische traditie van systematisch denken, als een kritische en dialogische wijze van onderzoek, berustend op constructionistische en pragmatistische wetenschapsfilosofieën. De voornaamste meetlat van de gehanteerde onderzoekskwaliteit is dat van wetenschappelijke grondigheid; oftewel, dat het werk een transparante mede-constructie van kennis samen met de participanten beoogt. In erkenning van context en projectwerkelijkheid worden in elke casus verschillende specifieke onderzoeksmethodes en theorieën ingezet om de problemen in kwestie aan te gaan.

Na het inleidende hoofdstuk wordt elke casus gepresenteerd in een afzonderlijk hoofdstuk, inclusief een analyse van de desbetreffende problematische context, de onderzoeksmethodologie en de resultaten. Deze zijn alle gereproduceerd (met toestemming) uit artikelen die zijn gepubliceerd in -of aangedragen voor-publicatie in wetenschappelijke tijdschriften. Aangezien zij actieve interventies vertegenwoordigen in wetenschappelijke vertogen is daarmee ook elk hoofdstuk op zich een interventie in een vertoog zoals aangegaan door de gemeenschap van wetenschappers en professionals aan wie het aanvankelijk was geadresseerd. Als onderdeel van de interventionistische onderzoeksbenadering reageert elke casus op een andere wijze op de eerste twee onderzoeksvragen (i.e. *stakeholder-agency* en het creëren van legitimiteit door *facilitated multi-stakeholder* processen). Hoofdstuk 2 (het beheer van hulpbronnen aan de kust van de Filippijnen) en hoofdstuk 3 (Thaise maatregelen voor rampenvoorbereiding en herstelstrategieën) gaan direct in op de daadwerkelijke processen van *stakeholder-agency* en streven naar een conceptualisering van de significantie daarvan. Beide hoofdstukken bieden gesynthetiseerde verhalen van *stakeholder-agency* die zijn ontwikkeld als onderdeel van het projectwerk zelf. Hoofdstuk 4 (Zweedse landbouwontwikkelingshulp) en hoofdstuk 5 (Vietnamese 'grassroots' democratie) benadrukken meer expliciet de processen van aanspraak maken en subtiele beïnvloeding die *stakeholders* gebruiken om hun handelingsvermogen te verwezenlijken en te legitimeren. Hoofdstuk 6 (Baltisch/Deens agrarisch-milieukundig beheer) reageert gedeeltelijk op de herkenning van deze subtiele gedragingen en bevraagt de haalbaarheid van de geïdealiseerde norm van 'aansprakelijkheid' binnen een liberaal bestuurlijk stelsel gezien de indrukwekkende variatie aan *stakeholder* praktijken. De derde onderzoeksvraag (i.e. vooruitzichten voor het waarborgen van grondige evaluatie) is een methodologische introspectie die gestalte krijgt in reactie op de samengevoegde synthese van alle casussen. De hierin genoemde ideeën kregen aanvankelijk vorm in de tweede van twee hoofdstukken over de situatie rondom het besturen van kustgebieden op de Filippijnen (hoofdstuk 7). Het behandelt de hindernissen die we ondervonden bij het opzetten van een actieplanningsproces ten bate van behoud op de Babuyaneilanden (hoofdstuk 2) en onderzoekt de doelmatigheid van de gebruikte methodologie van kritieke grensbepaling (*critical boundary critique*). Tenslotte biedt hoofdstuk 8 de synthese en evaluatie van de bevindingen alsook antwoorden op de onderzoeksvragen van de thesis.

Op de Filippijnen vertegenwoordigt het Geïntegreerd Kust Beheer (Integrated Coastal Management; ICM) de heersende reactie op verhandelingen met betrekking tot het verval van ecosystemen. Er zijn echter aanhoudende uitdagingen bij de implementatie daarvan, wat zich uit in voortdurende degradatie van hulpbronnen, het bevragen van de uitoefening van de betrokkenheid van *stakeholders* en toenemende conflicten over hulpbronnen. Dit verslag (hoofdstuk 2) onderzoekt het proces van implementatie en hoe de aannames vertegenwoordigt in het stelsel van ICM tegemoetkomen aan de lokale werkelijkheid van een eilandengroep in de Filippijnse Archipel. Een breed gedragen actieplanningsproces voor behoud was mogelijk gemaakt van november 2007 tot mei 2008. Het onderzoeksmateriaal komt voort uit het voorbereiden van workshops, consultaties en interviews met sleutelinformanten met medewerking van bijna 100 mensen, inclusief secundaire data afkomstig uit wetenschappelijke documenten en beleidsdocumenten. Het toont aan hoe de transformatie naar een vermeend evenwicht van ecosystemen aan de kust wordt ondermijnd door toedoen van de uiteenlopende agenda's van *stakeholders*. Verwachte spelers (*actors*) worden gedwarsboomd door de inconsistentie tussen de visies van beleidseigenaren en de werkelijkheid, de weg banend voor onethische beïnvloeding vanuit elitaire allianties. Dit gaat gelijk op met een intensivering van staatsdominantie, internationale ontwikkelingsbanken, buitenlandse hulpinstanties en NGOs in het bevorderen van hun respectievelijke belangen. Wanneer aannames van de ICM ineenstorten dan heeft dit, in locaties zoals de Babuyaneilanden, destructieve gevolgen voor de vissersbevolking en het kustmilieu. Wij concluderen dat als ICM een effectief en billijk herstel zou (trachten te) bevorderen van de huidige onhoudbare patronen van exploitatie, er daarmee ook een noodzaak is voor het instellen van verbeterde aansprakelijkheidsmechanismen in het gedecentraliseerde bestuurlijke stelsel alsook voor het serieus nemen van de aangegane toewijding aan de medebetrokkenheid van *stakeholders* in het bepalen van de doelen en aannames van ICM.

Te midden van huidige wetenschappelijke pogingen om complementariteit te bewerkstelligen in theorieën omtrent veerkracht en kwetsbaarheid is een mogelijke reactie een 'epistemologische verschuiving' richting een evolutionaire, op leren gebaseerde opvatting aangaande de relatie tussen 'systeem' en 'speler' in sociaal-ecologische systemen. In dit verslag (hoofdstuk 3) dragen wij bij aan deze beweging aangaande de opvatting van *stakeholder-agency* binnen sociaal-ecologische systemen. We onderzoeken primaire bronnen omtrent beheer van post-rampenherstel en initiatieven gericht op het verminderen van risico op rampen onder de Thaise, van tourisme afhankelijke gemeenschappen aan de kust, volgend op de tsunami in de Indische Oceaan van 2004. Het werk betrof een breed gedragen beleidsanalyse van maatregelen gericht op het reduceren van rampenrisico, uitgevoerd gedurende 2008 en met inbegrip van het raadplegen van *stakeholders,* waaronder 14 implementerende spelers in de provincie Krabi, een *online* dialoog met 155 professionals, een recensie van zo'n 500 wetenschappelijke documenten alsook secundaire documentatie en meer dan 30 *online*-bronnen. Door een zich gaandeweg ontwarende verhaallijn van *stakeholders* construeren wij een nieuw kader voor conceptualisering van *stakeholder-agency* in sociaal-ecologische systemen, waarmee de notie van veerkracht wordt geplaatst binnen een opvatting van bestuur en beheer als een onderhandeld normatief proces. Wij concluderen dat als theorie omtrent veerkracht wordt voorgesteld als de voorkeursbenadering voor het kaderen en implementeren van het reduceren van rampenrisico, dan dient het de rol van *stakeholder-agency*, alsook de processen waarlangs legitieme visies op veerkracht worden gegenereerd, nog veel uitdrukkelijker te erkennen.

Binnen de Europese Unie wordt verwacht dat de promotie van 'beleidscoherentie' de samenwerking tussen sectoren en groepen van professionals zal verbeteren die onderling concurrerende beweringen doen met betrekking tot de manier waarop Europese deelname in de landbouw van landen met lage inkomsten bijdraagt aan duurzame ontwikkeling. Dit verslag (hoofdstuk 4) onderzoekt de vooruitzichten voor *stakeholders* in Zweden voor het implementeren van ambities op het gebied van beleidscoherentie voor het behalen van duurzame mondiale landbouwkundige ontwikkeling, puttend uit ervaringen van het lanceren van een nationaal *multi-stakeholder* platform (netwerk) voor landbouwkundige professionals in ondersteuning van beleidscoherentie in Zweedse bijdragen aan internationaal landbouwkundige ontwikkeling. Het werk omhelsde een '*action learning'*-benadering in de traditie van Soft Systems Methodology, inclusief consultatie van Zweedse organisaties van oktober 2008 tot aan januari 2009, welke 142 mensen omvatte van 91 organisaties, een startsein workshop met 64 mensen en een samenvattend verslag. De analyse is ook tot stand gekomen aan de hand van de ervaringen van de auteur voorafgaand aan - en volgend op de fase van aanvang, gedurende een projectperiode van meer dan een jaar. De bevindingen geven aan hoe Zweden wordt gekenmerkt door een belemmerend en gefragmenteerd milieu dat *stakeholders* ervan weerhoudt om op samenhangende wijze betoog te houden ten aanzien van duurzame landbouwkundige ontwikkeling en mondiale voedselzekerheid, en om te reageren op de complexiteit en de contextuele behoeften van de getroffen mensen in landen met lage inkomsten. Huidige informele praktijken ondermijnen de waarde van formele procedurele werkwijzen en verhinderen onderhandeling en collectieve kritiek, wat overigens ethisch aanvaardbaar is in het licht van mondiaal burgerschap. Wij pleiten voor een meer strategisch ingezette dialoog voor alle sectoren in de samenleving om perspectieven te delen en sociale grenzen te overstijgen, welke niet langer relevant zijn.

Gedurende de afgelopen decennia heeft Vietnam opmerkelijke inspanningen gezien om het praktiseren van democratische rurale ontwikkeling hernieuwde invulling te geven. De bevordering van 'grassroots' democratie, met name onder de Grassroots Democracy Decree (GDD), is een acute respons geweest vanuit de Communistische Partij en de regering op een grootschalig ongenoegen onder de rurale bevolking ten aanzien van een bemerkte discrepantie tussen de met de mond beleden toewijding aan 'goed beheer' en de daadwerkelijke praktijk daarvan. Aan de hand van bewijsmateriaal vanuit veldwerk beoordeelt dit verslag (hoofstuk 5) de implicaties van de GDD in de centrale en noordelijke hooglanden en analyseert het hoe de bevordering van 'grassroots' democratie discursief wordt geconstrueerd door rurale ontwikkelingsprofessionals. Het werk bestond uit een 'pilot study' voor het Sustainable Agriculture and Rural Development (SARD) initiatief, één van de samenwerkingsverbanden die van start is gegaan bij de World Summit for Sustainable Development in 2002. Dit omvatte tevens vier maanden veldwerk, vanaf april tot juli 2006, met 77 raadplegingen bij individuele professionals en drie veldbezoeken aan rurale hooggelegen locaties in de centrale – en noordelijke hooglanden. De resultaten omlijnen drie dominante vertogen die centreren rondom, respectievelijk, hun belangen in liberale democratie, verbeterde efficiëntie op het gebied van staatshervorming en versterkte aansprakelijkheid in het beheren van lokale bestuurlijke tegenstrijdigheden en onduidelijkheden. Het beargumenteerd dat 'grassroots' democratie dient als een conceptuele bemiddelaar die een onderling leren bevordert tussen verschillende belangen die zijn verbonden met rurale ontwikkeling en de verschillende ideologische posities die een besef van democratie zelf omvatten. Ik concludeer, gezien de mate waarin vertogen een afspiegeling vormen van de manier waarop professionals zich verhouden tot 'grassroots' aspiraties, dat 'grassroots' bewegingen die oorspronkelijk de Partij en de centrale regering hebben aangezet tot het goedkeuren van de GDD, nog een flinke worsteling in het verschiet hebben om concrete veranderingen te kunnen bewerkstelligen in het praktisch handelen van professionals.

Agrarisch-milieukundig bestuur rondom de problematiek van eutrofiëring in de regio van de Baltische Zee is sterk afhankelijk van onderlinge aansprakelijkheid als centrale norm voor het veiligstellen van de legitimiteit van transnationale samenwerking. Echter, wegens het naast elkaar bestaan van verschillende tradities van beheer vereist de implementatie van doelen omtrent de reductie van nutriënten dat er wordt onderhandeld tussen onderling wedijverende definities van aansprakelijkheid. Dit verslag (hoofdstuk 6) presenteert resultaten van een empirische analyse aangaande de mogelijkheid tot implementatie van doelen omtrent de reductie van nutriënten in een oeverstaat, namelijk Denemarken, met nadruk op het ambitieuze Green Growth Strategy van haar regering. Het werk is uitgevoerd als een situatieschets van de mogelijkheid tot implementatie van agrarisch-milieukundige doelen en metingen in een meervoudig-institutioneel samenwerkingsverband in de regio van de Baltische Zee. Ruggespraak werd gehouden in Kopenhagen van maart tot april 2010 met 33 professionals van 22 organisaties. De bevindingen werden gecirculeerd in een samenvattend verslag en bediscussieerd op een consoliderende workshop, gehouden in december 2010 met Local Government Denmark in Kopenhagen. Projectervaringen van bijna twee jaar (2009-11) bieden de achtergrond voor analyse. Deze analyse brengt de weg van beleidsaanpassing in kaart om zodoende te exploreren hoe *stakeholders* binnen verschillende interpretaties van bestuur en beheer, hun 'claims' inzetten in een streven om elkaar aansprakelijk te kunnen houden. We concluderen dat, als transnationale samenwerking op het gebied van beheer van agrarisch-milieukundige vervuiling zijn effectiviteit zoekt te verbeteren, dan moet het meer expliciet ingaan op tegenstrijdigheden tussen verschillende interpretaties en visies met betrekking tot bestuur om zo een co-constructie van aanvaardbare vormen van rechtvaardiging mogelijk te maken. Dit bepaalt wanneer *stakeholder-agency* creativiteit en innovatie vertegenwoordigt in tegenstelling tot wangedrag en coöptatie.

In Critical Systems Thinking (CST) wordt de opvatting van grensbepalingen (*boundary judgements*) vertegenwoordigt door een constructionistische visie op kennen/weten als het binden van componenten van de werkelijkheid tot kenbare objecten. Cognitieve grensbepalingen bepalen observaties (feiten) en evaluaties (waarden), die weters aanvoelen en waarnaar zij handelen. Werner Ulrich's methode van dialogische grensbepalingen en het kader van Critical Systems Heuristics (CSH) zijn bedoeld om burgerbetrokkenheid mogelijk te maken in Westerse democratieën door het erkennen van legitieme competenties in publieke en gezamenlijke dialogen. Hoofdstuk 7 onderzoekt de toepassing van deze methodologie in het Filippijnse beheer van natuurlijke hulpbronnen bij de kust. De conclusies zijn gebaseerd op de vanuit de *stakeholder*-gebaseerde actie planning, uitgevoerd tussen november 2007 en mei 2008 in de Babuyaneilandengroep welke is begrensd door de Balintang en Babuyan kanalen. Het beargumenteerd dat dialogische grensbepaling aanzienlijke aanpassing vereist als het moet voorzien in een bevrijdende taal voor deelnemers in het Filippijnse dilemma omtrent beheer van natuurlijk hulpbronnen, welke is beïnvloed door meerdere conflicterende kennisclaims in omstandigheden van grote controverse.

In hoofdstuk 8 laat de synthese van de casusbevindingen zien dat er, ten eerste, duidelijke verschillen zijn in de veranderingsprocessen vervaardigd in de vijf projecten, hoofdzakelijk ten gevolge van verschillen in projectontwerp, omvang en de constellatie van betrokken partners. De ingezette *multi-stakeholder* processen, gericht op het verbeteren van de legitimiteit van *stakeholder-agency* vereisten i) Kennis van ingewijden: voldoende besef van de probleemsituatie, zowel historisch als cultureel, door eigen ervaringen en contacten of door middel van partnerschap met de daarin besloten actoren, ii) Toewijding voor lange termijn: Als de interacties verder dienden te reiken dan enkel situatieanalyse en het in kaart brengen van problemen en pilot-implementatie van overeengekomen actiepunten dan diende het werk voldoende tijd te wijden aan het proces, iii) Integratie van 'dialoog' en 'actie': Technische/technologische activiteiten, die vaak een grote uitwerking hebben in de formele bestuurlijke systemen, moeten duidelijk gekoppeld zijn aan de uitkomsten van de *stakeholder* onderhandelingen. Als het project verschillende taken/werkgebieden omvat, dan moet het ook ordeningsmechanismen bevatten die coherentie bevorderen, iv) Eigendom: gedeeld eigendom bracht betrokkenheid en versterkte de werking van kennis, bronnen en toewijding vanuit alle partners voor het zeker stellen van de uiteindelijke relevantie en uitwerking van het werk, v) Aansprakelijkheid: Er moesten mechanismen opgezet worden om de gastheren en/of begeleiders van de *multi-stakeholder* processen aansprakelijk te stellen ten overstaan van de betrokken kieskring om te garanderen dat de overeengekomen uitkomsten nageleefd zouden worden. Deze lessen nodigen wellicht uit tot een meer kritische beoordeling van projectontwerp in de toekomst en belichten tevens de zwakheden in het huidige institutionele milieu van onderzoeksinstellingen en fondsenstructuren.

Ten tweede, de analyse laat zien hoe *stakeholders* hun handelingsvermogen legitimeerden door het fabriceren van een voldoende mate van coherentie tussen hun acties en de intersubjectieve realiteit waarin deze acties werden uitgevoerd. *Legitimerende praktijken* voltrokken zich te midden van concrete *gevallen van beleidsaanpassing,* waarin *stakeholders* zich de rollen toe-eigenden van *Makers*, *Bekrachtigers* of *Betwisters* om zodoende deze momenten te beheersen en er betekenis aan toe te kennen en, vervolgens, legitimiteit toe te kennen aan specifieke vormen van betwist handelingsvermogen aan de zijde van *stakeholders*. Deze conclusie herformuleert de benadering van 'onderlinge afhankelijkheden' tussen *stakeholders* van een opvatting die is gebaseerd op belangen naar een zienswijze die is gebaseerd op de manier waarop mensen mede-scheppers zijn van elkaar in bredere existentiële zin. Ook lokaliseert het de ambities van een radicaal democratisch her-evalueren (*critique*) van ideologie en hegemonie in situaties van beleidsaanpassing die een meer constructieve nadruk verschaffen op concrete en praktische verbetering.

Ten derde worden in het slothoofdstuk een aantal verdere gedachten gedeeld over de manier waarop onderzoekers, die willen inzetten op een kritische waardering van *stakeholder* belangen, vaak weerstand ondervinden van 'invloedrijke' *stakeholders* en bereid moeten zijn om rigoureus te onderhandelen over hun methodologie. Wanneer men een SPAR-benadering gebruikt is het noodzakelijk om daarmee te beseffen dat in deze methodologie een serie waarden zijn omsloten die zijn gebaseerd op aanspraken ten aanzien van een gezamenlijke menselijke natuur en een universele aspiratie tot solidariteit. Deze waarden zijn verre van altijd haalbaar. Een manier om kritische interventie te balanceren met een pragmatische accommodatie voor dergelijke weerstand kan zijn door het gebruik van een kritisch-pragmatisch wederkerige benadering die de onderzoekers in staat stelt om deze waarden herhaaldelijk te kunnen verdedigen en verhandelen. Dit hulpmiddel geeft een specifieke interpretatie weer van de quasi-transcendente, dialectische logica inherent in SPAR. Hierin kunnen onderzoeksinterventies zowel kritische (revolutionaire) alsook pragmatische (dialogische) doelen verwezenlijken – daarmee een dialoog cultiverend die mogelijk kan bijdragen aan een vredige revolutie richting een meer duurzame en rechtvaardige maatschappij.

In termen van implicaties voor toekomstig onderzoek bieden deze bevindingen en reflecties een spannende en noodzakelijke uitdaging voor actie-onderzoekers op het gebied van het beheer van natuurlijke hulpbronnen, met name om kritische dialoog te bieden die duidelijk ingaat op de slecht-bewaakte lacunes in beleidsaanpassing en specifiek om de vaak bedekte strategieën en legitimerende praktijken te ontmaskeren die worden ingezet door Makers en Bekrachtigers met het oog op behoud van de *status quo*. Zulke onderzoeksinspanningen zullen het hoofd moeten bieden aan een onderling verbonden uitdaging die zich voordoet omdat de projecten zelf onveranderlijk onderdeel zijn van datzelfde systeem van bestuur en beheer waarin het zoekt in te grijpen. Dit betreft het ontwerpen en beheren van bevorderlijke projectprocessen die, onder andere, voldoende verbindingen garanderen met dwingende structuren, het delen van eigendom en sterke interne aansprakelijkheidsmechanismen. Om deze uitdagingen aan te gaan kunnen SPAR-onderzoekers niet ontkomen aan de voortzetting van dialoog over de wijze waarop de praxeologische waardes die zijn omvat in hun methodologieën dienen te worden geoperationaliseerd.

Citation of financial support

While engaged in the projects described in this thesis, I was employed for three years as an Assistant Lecturer with the Integrated Water Resource Management programme at the Swedish University of Agricultural Sciences (SLU) in Uppsala and for five years as a Research Associate at the Stockholm Environment Institute (SEI). The research presented relied on projects that received funding from different donors, who have been acknowledged in the respective chapters. The conservation planning process for the Babuyan Islands in the Philippines (Chapters 2 and 7) was funded by Ocean Parks Conservation Foundation in Hong Kong and support for writing the research articles was provided jointly by the Unit for Environmental Communication at SLU and the SEI. The assessment of early warning systems in Thailand (Chapter 3) was funded by the Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency (Sida), as part of the Sustainable Recovery and Resilience Building in the Tsunami Affected Region research programme. The launch of the Swedish network for sustainable agricultural development (Chapter 4) was similarly funded by Sida, as was the study of grassroots democracy in Vietnam (Chapter 5). The work underlying the examination of accountability in agro-environmental governance in Denmark (Chapter 6) was possible through Work Package 6 on Governance and Policy Adaptation in the Baltic COMPASS (Comprehensive Policy Actions and Investments in Sustainable Solutions in Agriculture in the Baltic Sea Region) project that is funded by the European Union through the Interreg Baltic Sea Region Programme and the Swedish Ministry of Agriculture. The 20 percent full-time funding that my current employer SEI provided over the past 11 months September 2010 to July 2011 allowed me – as an external PhD student at Wageningen University – to compile my project experiences into the present thesis. The Communication and Innovation Studies Group at Wageningen University and SEI have jointly subsidised the costs associated with the defense and publication of this thesis.

GRAPHIC DESIGN COVER: Fidelity PRINTING: Danagårds Litho
COPYEDITING: Sarah King Head PHOTO CREDITS: all photos © of the author

Printed on Profimatt wood-free paper. The paper is chlorine free (TCF) and meets SIS-requirements of the Nordic Ecolabel (Svanen).