

ON THE EDGE OF FLUIDITY
INTERNATIONAL COOPERATION IN
TURBULENT TIMES

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ON THE EDGE OF FLUIDITY:
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Thesis

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Chapter 1. Introductions

‘Think differently, save the world!
Philosophers, other scientists and artists let us think about
dealing with our progress that at the same time can become our destruction.’¹

This thesis is an exploration of the fringes of a relatively stable, known and discernable world order, reality and world view. It ventures into fluid, turbulent situations to provide an understanding of the contemporary order, changes, crises and developments. Its focus is on Dutch international cooperation, both development cooperation and diplomacy.

Over the last few decades the world population could witness several dramatic changes in the field of international relations. An exemplary case was the fall of the Berlin Wall in 1989. First, it was sudden, unexpected and unanticipated. Second, it was the literal, visual and symbolic tearing down of a ‘great division’ with multiple dimensions. The physical wall divided Berlin. As part of the Iron Curtain, it divided Europe between East and West. It stood for the political economic and ideological divide between capitalism and communism and the geopolitical divide between two nuclear blocks engaged in a Cold War. The consequences of the dissolution of this great division are multiple. Fukuyama celebrated the victory of liberalism as ‘the end of history’ (1992: xi). Security cooperation resulted in arms reduction. Development cooperation was freed from the geopolitics of the Cold War.

Not all dramatic changes are that concrete, observable, layered or immediate. Nor are all changes the result from the breakdown of a division. However, my research shows that the reworking of divisions is a key entry point to understand the dynamics within the field of international cooperation. In this thesis I look at divisions such as inside-outside, donor-beneficiary, North-South, global-local, human-nonhuman, nature-culture. Reflecting on these divisions, I pose the question of the dual necessity of separation and inseparability of things (Thacker, 2010).

My research on international cooperation reveals a second entry point to understand international cooperation, namely processes as flows. The example of the fall of the Berlin Wall is indicative of an unforeseen process, a sudden change, a volatile situation and a flow of cascading events. Global flows are creating new degrees of connectedness among economies—and playing an ever-larger role in determining the fate of nations, companies, and individuals. “Flows of goods, services, and finance reached \$26 trillion in 2012, or 36 percent of global GDP, 1.5 times the level in 1990. In the past, global flows were dominated by labor-intensive flows from low-cost manufacturing nations and commodity-intensive flows from resource rich economies. But today knowledge-intensive flows account for half of global flows, and they are gaining share.” (Manyika et al., 2014:2). Over the last few decades these dynamics resulted in rethinking the static images of the world. The ideas of relatively stable households, relatively isolated communities and relatively autonomous nation-states have lost explicatory power. The imperative is to find ways to grasp the world as a constant flux. The idea of change as a transition from state A to state B, presupposing static beings and a linear dynamic, is replaced by the idea of change as continuous becoming. That is to say that in this thesis I understand processes as flows and use the concept fluidity to overcome static and structural interpretations of realities. I pose the question of simultaneous being and becoming, actuality and potentiality.

My research on divisions and flows in international cooperation reveals a third entry point, namely relations of affect. International cooperation is not only based on affective relations among people but also between people and things. The ways in which people and things collectively shape the world are

¹ This was the announcement of a philosophers’ festival in Nijmegen in April 2014 (own translation).

defined by their capacities to affect. People and things affect others and are themselves affected by others. When these forces affect a division or static situation, change happens or is set in motion.

My research reveals how international cooperation shapes future outcomes within and through particular practices. In the contemporary practices of development cooperation, policy making and diplomacy the changes in divisions are so important that they affect the very practices themselves. As will be shown, in development cooperation the division between external donor and internal beneficiary is no longer useful to capture the multiplicity of flows that shape their relations. In policy making the Aid Architecture² is dissolving. In diplomacy, networks and nonhumans start to break open the traditional, self-referential diplomatic service. Through those practices, assemblages of people and things enact the world differently up to the point of enacting different worlds. To grasp what is happening I will look at these practices of international cooperation from a sociological, political and ontological point of view.

In this introduction I first provide some background on the research: where was my research conducted, what were the historical trends so far and what came out of my research. Subsequently, the research topic, scope and questions are presented. Then I will elaborate the conceptual framework that is used in the argumentation of the chapters. I draw on several academic debates that immediately relate to my research. Subsequently, I elaborate the theoretical framework. Finally, I will elaborate the methodological framework.³

1.1 Overview of the chapters

In concrete terms, my multi-sited ethnographic research was conducted in different settings. The first setting is composed of several communities in Bolivia where I did ethnographic field work and action-research. In this thesis I draw on three of these experiences: the community Primero de Mayo, the territory of the Yuracaré and the village of Raqaypampa. Yet, my research is not about these places and its people. The research settings are not the geographical locations but the social sites⁴ of interactions among the people of those communities and the development agents from outside. These social sites or interfaces⁵ are abstract localities where entities (people, artefacts, knowledges, things) come together in associations through and in the practices people perform. My focus was on development practices such as the introduction and up-take of external technology, planning methods, legislation, knowledge, etc. I accompanied the villagers and external development agents not only in their field interactions but also in their work and private lives.

These development practices, whereby inputs are introduced, are themselves triggered by or linked to a set of development policy practices. Policy is negotiated, formulated, implemented and evaluated. These policy practices are also part of my research. This research was conducted in a second group of settings: the offices of Dutch Embassies in Guatemala and Bolivia as well as the offices of the Dutch Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MoFA) in the Netherlands.⁶ My daily working experience and additional interviews form the basis for studying how policy practices were performed. Again, the research is not restricted to those geographical and bureaucratic localities but to the multiple interconnected social sites that enable and constrain policy practices. Therefore, I visited many other offices as well as the field where policy was (supposed to be) implemented. In the course of the research in these settings, I

² The Aid Architecture refers to the aid organizations, the rules and principles as well as aid management (World Bank, 2008).

³ In line with my theoretical framework these introductions do not pretend to constitute a coherent whole or logical sequence but they are rather fragmented (story) lines that together constitute an immanent entirety that will make sense to the reader along the way or at the end.

⁴ The social site is described as “a specific context of human coexistence: the place where, and as part of which, social life inherently occurs” (Schatzki, 2002: xi).

⁵ “[A] social interface is a critical point of intersection between different lifeworlds, social fields or levels of social organization, where social discontinuities based upon discrepancies in values, interests, knowledges and power, are most likely to be located” (Long, 2001: 243).

⁶ I worked in all three locations as a policy officer.

enlarged my research focus to include diplomatic practices. In the Dutch setting these diplomatic practices are closely linked to development cooperation practices and policy development practices.⁷ The particular social site of my study on diplomatic practices was the Dutch-Bolivian bilateral relationship.

So, to give the reader a first overview, I studied development cooperation actors in Bolivian communities and development organizations. I studied development policy officers and the policy process in the Dutch Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Embassies. And I studied diplomats of Bolivia and the Netherlands. I studied the actors involved, their practices (in the broad sense of the word) and how these practices shape the world (the assemblages).

In the rest of this section the various chapters of the thesis will be introduced. The research on development cooperation is split in two chapters: cooperation strategies and cooperation approaches. The part on policy is also split in two: development cooperation policies and the policy cycle paradox. These are followed by a chapter on diplomacy and on theory.

In the following I will show how each chapter is linked to the previous chapters and building upon those. The guiding questions to introduce the content of each chapter are:

- my view on the history and recent trends of a particular practice;
- the questions raised by others and by me about this practice;
- the responses proposed by others and by me in my research and this thesis.

1.1.1 Cooperation strategies

Development cooperation has a long legacy of interventions in the form of projects, structural adjustment programs, public sector reforms, etc. The intervention strategy was studied in the case of the Jatun Sach'a forestry project in Bolivia. This study revealed that outside development actors intervened in the way of life of migrant coca peasants in four ways. They organized the target group in a new, project-centred organization at both community and regional levels. They propagated particular notions of development, sustainable forest management, gender equality and others. They influenced political decision-making, procedures and authority in the communities. And project performance was aimed at colonizing the communal space in a rather masculine way. These four ways are examples of particular social, discursive, political and performative practices.

These are characteristic practices of the intervention strategy. They are derived from the outsider's will to improve the local situation. By intervening this will takes the form of the will to control. The outsider takes the lead, provides the inputs and predetermines the development process.

Which questions can be raised? The intervention strategy is heavily criticized from different angles. It relies on a bias towards expert knowledge and top-down normal professionalism.⁸ It imposes Western interests rather than local ones.⁹ It departs from a normative and moral framework that sets out *a priori* what ought to be achieved.¹⁰ Moreover, it is very difficult to sustain the results of these interventions over time. Finally, intervention produces all kinds of unintended consequences, a loss of motivation and inefficiencies.¹¹ After having seen the practical experiences and failures of this approach, my

⁷ In the Netherlands development cooperation has a separate budget and (with a few exceptions) a separate minister but it is not managed by a separate agency. Development cooperation staff is part of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. Still, some staff members would argue that there is a clear dividing line within the Ministry between the diplomats and the development cooperation experts. So the closeness of the link is a subject of contestation. This also holds if one does not look at staff but at policy integration. The intention to strive for policy coherence for development indicates closeness but some staff members would point at the occasional distance between policy goals.

⁸ Chambers, 1993; Long and Long, 1992

⁹ Escobar, 1995.

¹⁰ Quarles van Ufford, 2003.

¹¹ Arce, 1993; Ellerman, 2004; IOB, 2006; WRR, 2010a.

research points at the design of alternative strategies that rebalance the power differences (building upon the agency¹² of active partners in development rather than passive beneficiaries) These are alternative strategies enacted through other social, discursive, political and performative practices.

My first response to the intervention strategy is the facilitation strategy.¹³ The outsiders participate together with the insiders in a team and both facilitate a process of change. In Chapter 3 the practices that correspond with this strategy are analysed. My second response is the strategy encouraging self-development.¹⁴ In this case the insiders take the lead in shaping their own development process and practices in their own way. In both alternative strategies the will to improve is not a will to control but a will to engage horizontally and to respect.

The central differences I elaborate to distinguish the three strategies are (1) the location of initiative, agency and determination in the development process, and (2) the different assemblages¹⁵ of four interrelated practices through which cooperation is enacted. I bring forward the idea that development effectiveness rests on matching the particular cooperation strategy with certain characteristics of the local situation in the following manner: intervention-controllability, facilitation-affect and encouragement-trust.

1.1.2 Cooperation approaches

In my view another characteristic feature of development cooperation is the ‘fix-the-problem’ approach. This fix approach refers to development initiatives that introduce a standard solution into a well-known and stable context in order to fix a problem. The case developed in this thesis is the attempt of the Bolivian Forestry Agency to limit the annual quantity of timber that the Yuracaré Indigenous People could commercialize. The problem of overharvesting was attempted to be solved by introducing an administrative rule. In the case of the Yuracaré, this fix-the-problem failed due to not taking into account the local people, context and complexities. Empirical investigation affirmed that the Yuracaré cannot be reduced to mere rule-followers. Moreover, there was no consideration for the already existing plurality of customary rules. Neither did the Agency notice the blurred and fragmentary nature of the Yuracaré territory. Nor was the Yuracaré practice of ‘caring for the woods’ acknowledged. As often, the local development setting cannot be reduced to a simple situation where a single solution will automatically generate anticipated improvements. More often than not, situations are complex.

In general terms, the critiques regarding the fix approach are not new. They are widely documented.¹⁶ My first response to the fix-the-problem approach is the fit-in-context approach. The fit approach attempts to find the fit between a tailor-made solution and a complex context. In Chapter 4 the attempts of the NGO CERES and the Yuracaré are described. They attempted to fit the 1996 Forest Law into the customary practices. My second response to the fix approach is the go-with-the-flow approach. The flow approach starts from acknowledging situations in which things are not bounded, separable or distinct but flow over into each other. An example is the Yuracaré *corregimiento*, a sub-territorial unit that has no clear boundaries but rather vague directions. Dealing with these blurred and fluid situations requires a different mind-set and specific approach of cooperation.

The research did not only result in differentiating three approaches but revealed theoretical insights into:

¹² Agency refers to the capacity of knowledgeable actors to act independently and to make free choices.

¹³ This answer draws on the pioneering work of Robert Chambers (1993) and many authors and practitioners who promoted participatory development.

¹⁴ This answer draws on scholars critical but constructive of instrumental facilitation or *facipulation* such as Chambers (1993), Ellerman (2004) and many others. They argue for moving participation from tyranny to transformation (Hickley and Mohan, 2004).

¹⁵ The notion ‘assemblages’ (DeLanda, 2006) refers here to loosely associated fragments. For example, a car is an assemblage put together in a production line.

¹⁶ Arce, 1989; Booth, 1994; Long and Van der Ploeg, 1994; OECD, 2009a.

- (1) Things like laws, machines, concepts, etc., have certain imprints that are embodied in the thing during its process of creation. For instance a law embodies a certain rationality, a machine embodies knowledge of its materiality and functionality.
- (2) These imprints result in a certain embodied stickiness of things. When the thing is lifted out of its original context (a parliament or factory), the imprints travel with it. When the thing is subsequently inserted in a new, distinct context, it turns out to be more than an isolated thing. Such more-than-things can easily fail to solve the problem, can cause additional problems or can impede a good fit because the more-than-things have blurred boundaries.
- (3) The blurred more-than-thing I call 'a multity' to distinguish it from an entity. An entity is a distinct atomistic, bounded thing. The multity is one, many and multiple at the same time: one whole with many fragments and multiple dimensions.
- (4) The difference between an entity and a multity serves to rethink metaphysics (that what is said to exist), ontology (the nature of things) and assemblages (the forms of association). I postulate that both entities and multities exist. The nature of entities is fixed (bounded and singular) while the nature of multities is fluid (blurred and amorphous). The fixed or solid side of assemblages associates through relations (forming a gridded space of positions and lines) and the fluid side of assemblages associates through intermingling and flows (forming a smooth space). I postulate that both sides are inseparable and co-constitute the assemblage as a viscous entirety.
- (5) These conceptual and ontological detours enable a different understanding of development effectiveness. Effectiveness relies on the matching of the cooperation approaches with the ontological situation. The fix approach matches with an ontology of singular entities. The fit approach matches with an ontology of multiple, interlinked entities in systems or networks. And the flow approach matches with a viscous entirety of entities and multities (see Chapter 4).

The cooperation strategies (intervention, facilitation and encouraging self-development) and the cooperation approaches are often related in practice. The fix approach is conducive for the intervention strategy. Interventions from outside implicitly (or explicitly) carry the assumption that a solution is brought in to fix a problem. Both the strategy and the approach assume a rather simple situation and clear problem statement. The fit-in-context approach matches the facilitation strategy. Both focus more on the relations than on the individual entities and both assume that the situation is complex. The go-with-the-flow approach also matches well with the facilitation strategy but also with the self-development strategy. The flow approach presupposes that the situation might be more-than-complex, namely fluid. This makes it a suitable approach to encourage self-development which takes its own course of events.

Taken together, the research on cooperation strategies and on cooperation approaches provides a framework for understanding the practice of development cooperation. Though the approaches and the strategies do not neatly match, the consideration of both simultaneously can generate important synergies and practical ways forward. These ways are embedded in the development cooperation policies. These policies provide the strategic guidelines for actual practice. For that reason in the next two sections I examine policy making as a practice within international cooperation.

1.1.3 Development cooperation policies

Chapter 5 is not about development cooperation 'in practice' or 'on the ground' but deals with development cooperation policy. Development cooperation is not only done through capital, technology and knowledge transfers but also through policy transfers. The cooperation policies of donor countries and the OECD are often translated or mirrored in the development policies of recipient countries. Like technology transfers in the field at the local level, policy transfers in the offices at the national level occur in viscous situations characterized by blurred divisions and flows. In my research, particular attention was given to the questions: which boundaries are contested or blurred, which existing associations are being affected or are becoming fluid, and which new associations are emerging?

Chapter 5 focuses on the Dutch aid policy and outlines possible policy trends that respond to current changes and blurring of divisions. For the purpose of this introduction, I start again with my view on the recent trends in aid policies. Central to the current policy is the Aid Architecture (AA) which comprises 3 pillars: the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), the Monterrey Consensus and the Paris Declaration. The AA can be seen as a regime of principles and rules that came about at the turn of the millennium to improve the quantity and quality of aid. It is a jump from aid relations (whereby a donor assists a beneficiary) towards partnership relations (with genuine cooperation and local ownership). Underlying this AA there is the clear will to improve. This time it takes the form of the will to reform aid itself and the will to govern through rules and principles.

Regarding the AA the following questions can be raised. How does the blurring of old divisions and the emergence of new crises affect the Aid Architecture (AA)? What are more flexible, conceptual devices to think about policies in a way that allows for dynamics that result from fluidity (transgressions of divisions)?

I argue the new policy should address the dissolution of three divisions (1) between poverty and inequality policies, (2) between public and private sectors or aid and trade as well as (3) between separate global concerns or issues. To express the agglutination across old divisions I use the notion of 'policy assemblage'. A policy assemblage is a conceptual device to capture the constant re-association of policy fragments. The rule-based AA and the notion of policy networks¹⁷ are both too structural to grasp the dynamics and fluidity of political processes. The notion of assemblages presupposes much looser relations and much more fragmentation or contradiction. I argue that the three emerging policy assemblages have the potential to modify, undermine or dissolve the current policies, practices and architecture. Towards the end of this thesis it is argued to profoundly revise the rule-based AA framework and develop a less rigid assemblage-based policy 'follow-work' (see Chapter 8).

The notion of policy assemblages can be combined with the previous chapters' classification of intervention, facilitation or encouragement of self-development. The matrix of strategies and practices seems helpful to pursue effective modalities of policy cooperation. Policy assemblages can also be combined with the matrix of approaches (fix, fit and flow) and their preconditions. This might sensitize policy officers that policies are not neat entities that can be transferred unproblematically across contexts. Policies are most often 'multities' that contain imprints of their particular (democratic) production process. These imprints blur its boundary with its original institutional and cultural political context in such a way that many fragments of that context stick to the policy when the latter is travelling. These sticky fragments often go undetected and can cause misfits in the new context.

Conceptually, the notion of policy assemblages enables the study of divisions, fragmentations and fluidity that take place in the changing practice of policy development. Assemblages might not be new in policy science but it is believed to be an important contribution in respect to the mainstream realist, institutionalist or policy network analyses. The notion of fluidity frees policy analysis from its structural biases.

1.1.4 The policy cycle paradox

In Chapter 6 I switch from policy (the content) to the policy cycle (the process). I extend again the type of items 'transferred' in development cooperation. On top of introducing capital, technology, knowledge and policy content, development cooperation introduces the policy cycle into the institutional settings of beneficiary governments. The policy cycle is a specific organization of the policy process. The policy process is organized as a cycle with different phases: agenda setting, formulation, implementation and evaluation. This cycle relies on making divisions, distinctions and separations. The different policy phases are separated from each other in time, in space (the Dutch Ministry versus Embassies) and institutionally (different departments deal with different phases).

¹⁷ See Klijn and Koppenjan (2000).

These divisions between the phases have been one of the sources of practical and theoretical critiques. Yet, despite pointing out the many flaws of this rigid, circular model, paradoxically, the model is still widely used and ‘transferred’. Why? What are possible alternatives of thinking and enacting policy processes?

My response to these questions is sought in analysing the factors that stabilize the cycle (among which procedures and incentives) and factors that destabilize the cycle (among which fragmentation and contradictions). This illuminates how, when and where the cycle is ‘done’ and ‘undone’ or where it is territorialized or deterritorialized. Empirical investigation reveals that policy is not a text emerging out of a policy network and travelling through a bureaucratic network to be implemented. It is rather a fragment embedded in constant practices of assembling. Policy officers cannot function as docile rule followers but have to reassemble policy due to problems, contradictions and their own inevitable mediation. Especially when labouring the passage from formulation to implementation they re-do the policy. They link the aid policy to budgets, local partners, opportunities, host country priorities, materialities, etc. These are many fragments of multiple dimensions that need to be brought together in a singular coherent program which will have the characteristics of a multity (see above). In these practical and pragmatic ways, the policy and other fragments are performed or creatively ‘done’ anew in a flow of events and things.

The practices of reassembling are not to be understood as the passage from the formulation phase of the cycle to the implementation phase. Rather, they constitute a passage or trajectory through a fluid moment in which boundaries are blurred. While transiting through fluidity, the policy becomes opened up, unpacked or disarticulated in order to be reinterpreted or reassembled in a new setting. The reassembling brings the policy back into the solidity of newly congealed boundaries and divisions with the policy becoming formalized, territorialized and institutionalized. This alternative view conceives the policy process not a linear succession but a meandering trajectory constituting space and time in one movement.

Here the concepts of solidity and fluidity are mobilized in policy science to shed a different light on the policy cycle paradox. The nature of these fragments is sometimes solid and sometimes fluid. This ontological viscosity of policy shows that in solid situations the cyclical model is created and in fluid situations the flaws in the model are created.

This chapter has clear linkages with the previous ones. From my point of view the policy cycle model was conducive for policy *intervention*. In the 1960s and 1970s modernization policy was introduced in a top-down and ‘from the outside’ fashion. The policy cycle model worked as a device to do so. It enabled to control those policy introductions and to close the implementation gap. This control was only partial since complex political realities could not always be moulded to fit the simple model. In the 1980s a similar strategy was taken for the structural adjustment policies and in the 90s for the poverty reduction policies. Over time, the possibilities for facilitation of participation or ownership increased, especially in the agenda-setting phase. The critique on policy intervention and state-centred planning¹⁸ resulted in a shift towards an attention for governance and govern mentality (the governing of the Self).

The link with cooperation approaches (fix, fit and flow) is clear from the policy cycle model’s assumption that policy formulation fixes policy implementation. Over time the policy literature recognized the inherent need for a policy to fit the unique conditions found in a certain context. Ethnographic research revealed how local actors in a particular setting receive, rework, redesign or resist the diffusion of a particular policy. “[P]olicy intervention can be thought of as a situation that mutates from being understood as a property of policy-makers, planners and bureaucrats (who possess specialized knowledge) to becoming embedded in long-standing local arrangements, not just as a policy object, but also in the form of problem-solving repertoires on which people draw” (Arce, 2010: 305). In this thesis I argue that besides the fit there are instances of flow. In policy processes the

¹⁸ Amongst others Long and Van der Ploeg (1989).

separation of text and context is not rigid but fluid. Textual fragments travel in a fluid space as citations and reiterations. Texts are performed or enacted in practices of reassembling. These assemblages are rather open-ended, ambiguous and follow the flow meandering in-between solid and fluid states.

Conceptually, this chapter builds on the previous chapters' concept of assemblage. Not only policy is an assemblage of fragments. Also the policy *process* can be analysed as practices of assembling. In this chapter the emphasis is on the *practices* of assembling rather than assemblage (a loosely structured whole). These practices allow for more fluidity and less structure to the analytical potential. These potentials are needed to follow policy processes. Methodologically I propose not to focus on following the temporal-spatial movements of things or following the actor (policy text in this case) through the network. I will propose to follow the transgressions. In this way three different intellectual traditions are articulated in a particular way: practice-based approaches, assemblage theory and spatial topology.

1.1.5 Diplomats are creative world-makers

Chapter 7 is on diplomacy as one of the international cooperation practices besides development cooperation. Where does diplomacy come from and where does it stand? To put it crudely, diplomacy was or is mainly geopolitics 'done' by a cosmopolitan elite in the interest of a nation-state.¹⁹ Its central issues reflect several of the above mentioned topics: intervention (versus sovereignty), fixing (of boundaries), dividing, policy making and the centrality of the human actor. The diplomat's will to improve is the will to negotiate peace when a difference has arisen but also the will to represent (a country, its interest and the way it wants the world to be).

Many of the questions raised above can be applied to diplomacy as well. Diplomacy is equally affected by the blurring of old boundaries and the emergence of new crises and surprises. Where is this taking the practice of diplomacy?

A response to the geopolitical bias is (geo)economic diplomacy. A response to the humanist bias is the inclusion of nonhumans in diplomacy, which is explored in this thesis. The example is lithium in Bolivia. It is a resource in demand for the production of batteries for electrical cars. These nonhuman actors or attractors are 'things of interest' or 'matters of concern' around which multiple relations of affect come into being.

A third response is to recognize that diplomats not only negotiate about things and relations but often implicitly negotiate about the nature of those things. Are those lithium deposits a 'natural' resource of inert chemical matter or are they living Earth-beings (De la Cadena, 2010) with human-like features? In Chapter 7 I will argue that the nature of lithium is embedded in practices whereby certain worlds are enacted and made real. So there are multiple worlds being created as equally real. Negotiating the encounters of different worlds requires diplomatic skills and requires cosmopolitan diplomats (Stengers, 2011b) to escape from their fixed ontological assumptions.

Taking these responses together leads me to a shift from geopolitics to political ontology in which now diplomats become engaged. Political ontology expands the practice of diplomacy to encompass negotiations over what really exists and about its nature (Blaser, 2013). It leads to the question: which world do we²⁰ want to enact collectively?

¹⁹ A nation-state might mean different things for different people, ranging from semi-private property (of an autocratic ruler) to an imagined public community.

²⁰ 'We' here is an imagined community.

1.1.6 Exploring the un-things.

Chapter 8 is theoretical. In the field of development studies and the sociology of development, actor/practice approaches occupy an important position.²¹ Actor/practice approaches form a broad category which includes many and very diverse orientations. There are rational actor theories, the actor-oriented approach, structuration theory, practice theory, institutional analysis and others.²² Their common ground is the notion of the human actor endowed with certain attributes: rationality, preferences, agency, knowledgeability, a feel for the game, etc. In actor/practice approaches, the human actor is the key to understanding development processes.

If this is where the mainstream academia comes from, what are the questions raised? This thesis explored the following: how can a division between human and other be maintained in a world and time of cyborgs²³ (beings that are partly human and partly machine), of transgressions of the species' boundaries by biotechnology or of the philosophical blurring of the boundary between vibrant living beings and dead, inert matter (Bennett, 2010)?

An important response to this question came in the form of the actor-network theory (ANT) and assemblage theory. In ANT, the notion of actor is extended from the human to the human and non-human. Together these form the networks or assemblages that account for 'the social' (Latour, 2005). Agency, or the capacity to 'do', is not an attribute of the human actor but it is a distributed, emergent property of the network as a whole (Latour, 1999). Although ANT reworked the human/nonhuman and culture/nature divide (Latour, 1993), according to me it does not rework the being/doing division. That would require a different perspective on things and vitality (Bennett, 2010).

Another response comes from a practice ontology: what really exists are practices (not the actors).²⁴ Practices are bundles of doings and sayings together with material arrangements. They are enacted in specific sites, either large or small, but never layered (above and below or micro and macro). The world of bundles is flat. A key feature of practice ontology is the notion of 'performativity' which refers to practices as enacting a reality. Practices and the terms used in them, enact networks of relations which create not only a difference in the world but a different world. Practices *do* the world, there *is* no world or existence prior to or outside the practices.²⁵

This thesis proposes a third response that draws on the previous two but centers on the importance of fluidity. This is to say that in fluid situations, characterized by unstable entities and unstable relations, there are no networks or bundles. The proposed way forward in Chapter 8 is to conceive entities or things as processes. Here two moves are made: from the network to the holes in the net and from 'thing' as a substantive to 'thing' as a verb.

1.2 The research topic, scope and questions

A general approximation to international cooperation would describe it as the effort of multiple actors to work together within one or more policy areas. Such international cooperation is often seen as the political and rational way to solve disputes and accommodate different interests. Inverting and paraphrasing Von Clausewitz, international cooperation is the continuation of war with other means. This is the rational and realist perspective centred on power and will.

Another view on international cooperation takes it as the establishment of working relations and rules for collective action in order to address transnational challenges, concerns, diverging interests or a common good. This is the institutional perspective on international cooperation.

²¹ Major other positions are structuralism and discourse analysis.

²² Arce and Long, 2000; Bourdieu, 1990; Corradi et al., 2010; Giddens, 1984; Ostrom, 1990.

²³ Haraway, 1991.

²⁴ One example is provided by Schatzki (2002); another, although a very different one, is provided by Butler (1993).

²⁵ Law and Lien (2013), see also Butler (1993).

I choose for a more sociological and ontological approach. This research focuses on international cooperation as efforts of dividing the world and of recoupling or assembling the heterogeneous fragments (actors, texts, resources, etc.). For human beings to understand and live in the world, divisions need to be made. Things have to be individuated and separated by a division, boundary or surface. But to understand and live also means ‘making the connections’: assembling, associating and cooperating. Ingold (2009: 154) states: “Recall his [Gibson’s] assumption that to render the open world habitable, it must first be furnished with *objects*, and thus partially enclosed. Now it is by their outward surfaces, according to Gibson, that objects are revealed to perception. (..) Thus the very objectness of things lies in the separation and immiscibility of substance and medium. (..) Our conclusion, to the contrary, is that the open *can* be inhabited precisely because, wherever life is going on, the interfacial separation (..) gives way to mutual permeability and binding.” Thacker (2010) refers to these phenomena as the dual necessity of separation and inseparability. This constant tension, contradiction, excitement and dynamism is the topic of exploration of this thesis. I see international cooperation as practices that enact realities which are continuously and differently being divided and reassembled. From this rather unusual perspective unusual questions arise.

1.2.1 How the research evolved

This research started as action-research from an interest in the collaboration of multiple human actors in localized situations of development cooperation. Case material was collected in Bolivia. The research was subsequently broadened by moving from the practice of development cooperation to the practices of policy and diplomatic cooperation, while I worked in positions of policy officer and diplomat, I took interest in studying other policy officers and diplomats. Like development cooperation, foreign policy making and (economic) diplomacy appeared to me as practices of assembling that are always open to the blurring of boundaries and the becoming fluid of entities or things. These emerging flows merit attention because they constitute the origins of surprises and ‘unknowns’ that play key roles in the diplomatic service and practice. The research scope centres on the various forms of cooperation enacted by the Dutch Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MoFA).

The chapters include cases on cooperation strategies and approaches within development cooperation, internal cooperation within the MoFA’s policy cycle and diplomatic cooperation. This sequence of chapters is not a coincidence. The cases on development cooperation form the starting points for a movement into three different directions: (1) the broadening towards international cooperation, (2) a theoretical and ontological orientation to understand cooperation in fragmented and fluid situations, and (3) the deepening of diplomatic cooperation and rethinking of diplomacy.

1.2.2 Research questions

This thesis’ research specifically addresses the following questions in the subsequent chapters:

- How is development cooperation shaped in practice and as a practice? To limit the scope of the question I focus on strategies, approaches and assumptions about the nature of development problems.

Moving from development cooperation ‘in the field’ towards the policies that precede, legitimize or follow upon these practices, I pose the following question:

- How is Dutch development cooperation policy shaped and implemented? To narrow down this broad question I focus on contemporary developments and debates affecting the Dutch policy as well as bureaucratic practices.

Moving from development cooperation and its policy towards the broader practices of international cooperation practices, I pose the following question:

- How are diplomatic practices enacting different worlds and how are the ontological differences regarding the natures of these worlds negotiated in diplomatic encounters? To narrow down this broad question I focus on recent developments and encounters to reshape the Dutch-Bolivian bilateral relationship.

Moving from development cooperation and diplomacy towards the theories that are useful to understand these practices, I pose the following question:

- How are the network metaphor and the Actor-Network Theory (ANT) falling short in explaining realities at the edge of fluidity? The question will be tackled by looking at ways to complement ANT with a Deleuzian-inspired metaphysics and ontology.

Overseeing the whole of the research I will reflect on the question:

- How is real change enacted through and within practices on the edge of fluidity?

1.3 Conceptualizations

To start answering the research questions, there is a need to clarify the conceptual, theoretical and methodological frameworks applied. In this paragraph I start with the central concepts and debates to which this thesis relates. The starting point is the concept ‘development’, which is fiercely debated for six decades. This is closely related to the second concept: development cooperation. This is analysed as a practice with different strategies, approaches and policies. In my research I looked beyond development cooperation at other practices of international cooperation, particularly diplomacy. I see international cooperation as a set of practices through which the world is enacted. In this enactment, the practices of assembling are central. Human and non-human entities are continuously assembled and reassembled in loose associations without ever forming coherent totalities. Unstable associations fall apart along emerging lines of division. Stabilization fixes and structures realities into clear entities, classifications, divisions and associations. Destabilization blurs the entities. Their bounded, singular and distinct nature changes and turns into amorphous fluidity. The two processes of stabilization and destabilization interact within the assemblages. To denote this in-between space of neither fully fixed, nor fully fluid, I use the concept of viscosity.

The central concepts and debates are: development, development cooperation, international cooperation, assemblages, entities and viscosity. Figure 1 shows the conceptual map.

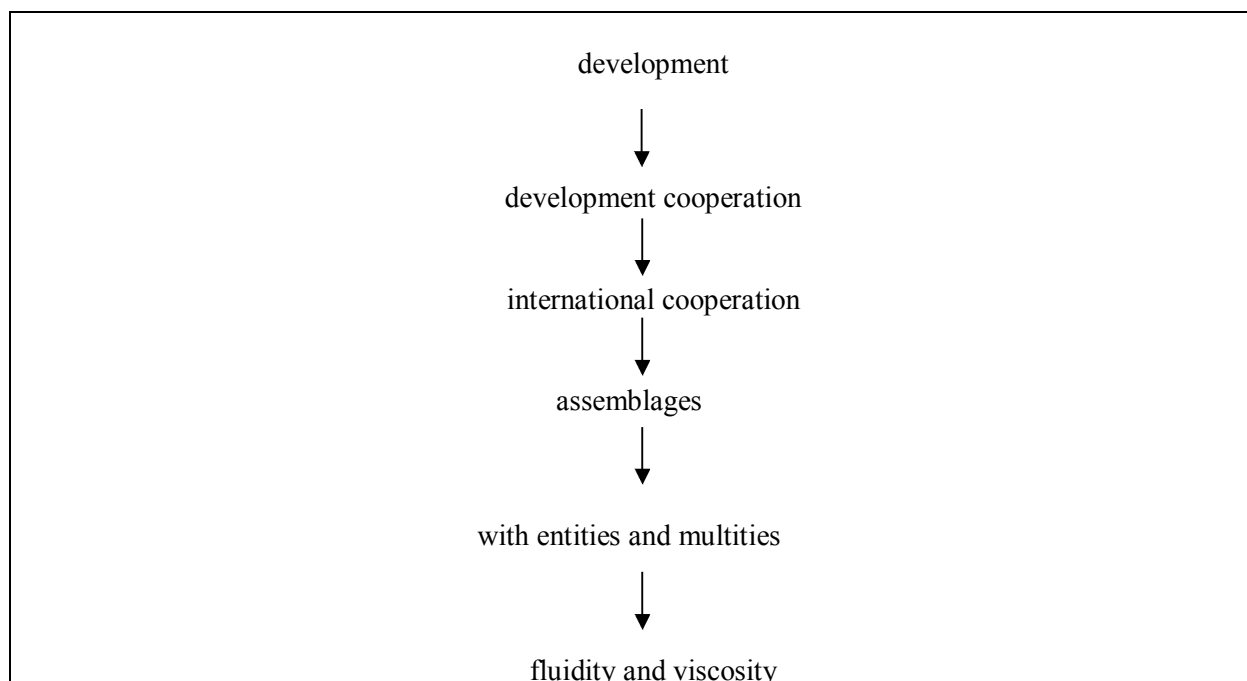


Figure 1. Conceptual map

The central concepts connect the chapters. They form the red line through the thesis. Below each concept is presented with references to broader academic debates and on-going discussions within the Dutch Ministry of Foreign Affairs. These descriptions do not intend to provide an overview of the

literature. They are meant to show the reader where I am coming from. The conceptualizations show how I interpret and link the debates.

1.3.1 Development

The term development is hotly debated over the past 6 decades and has different meanings to different people. According to Escobar (1995) the first time that the word development was publicly linked with the geo-economic differentiation of countries was during the inaugural address of President Truman (1949). He divided the world in developed and underdeveloped countries. Development was perceived as the progressive movement towards the technologically and institutionally advanced Western societies. The development problems of the underdeveloped countries could be solved by making use of scientific knowledge, technology, democracy and capital.

For several decades, development theory and practice were based on these convictions. In the 1960s these elements were expressed in the modernisation theory. The delivery of modern, external inputs would trigger innovation, industrialization and modernisation (Rogers, 1962; Rostow, 1960). Modernisation could be attained through structural transformation of the economy, shifting resources from the traditional agrarian sector to the modern industrial sector (Rostow, 1960). Forestry would for instance contribute to modernisation through commercial timber production by which it "will release capital from the frozen form of natural resources to a more liquid form which can be directed to various sectors of the economy" (Zivnуска, 1966). Such modernisation required a transfer of capital, technology and modern knowledge. These initial investments in the industrialization of forestry would trigger a self-sustained growth and trickle-down effect. Yet, the initial investments or impetus had to come from outside. Modernisation was thus seen as fixed, linear structural progress through a number of different stages and in various dimensions. The term progress implied clear normative ideas about what the end-stage of the 'developed' entailed.

From the end of the 1960s onwards modernization was criticized from at least five very different theoretical points of view. They come from political economy, development economics, practitioners and sociology.

First, the political economy critique by neo-Marxist theories (Frank, 1969) pointed at the exploitative nature of worldwide capitalist relations and the negative effects for the rural poor of the modernisation policies. It became evident that especially the rural poor did not benefit from industrialization. Instead, modernization was seen as a heavy burden on the traditional agricultural sector. From a critical point of view development cooperation in the underdeveloped countries could best be explained as insisting on the necessity to reproduce the universal representation of capitalism (Long 1992, Booth 1994).

From the late 1970s the political economy critique by neo-liberal theories emerged. They identified the reliance on state-led planning of the development process as a shortcoming of modernization theories. Despite successes in Asia (Japan), in many Least Developed Countries (LDCs) the results with modernisation were poor. Development came to be perceived as the outcome of a free and vigorous private sector rather than from a developmental state. Mainstream development thinking moved away from state-led development. With the rise of neoliberalism and the Washington Consensus, state institutions like agricultural extension services were dismantled, reduced to their regulatory role or transformed into autonomous state agencies. State companies were privatised. Policy emphasis shifted from structural transformation to structural adjustment.

The second source of critique of the modernisation theories came from within development economics. Modernisation theories (as well as neo-Marxist and neo-liberal) were part of the narrowly defined economic growth paradigm. Increasingly development was defined more broadly. For instance, from an environmental point of view, modernization was criticized by pointing at the limits to growth arising out of resource scarcity (Meadows *et al.*, 1972). Over time development was qualified as human development, sustainable development and lately inclusive development.

The third source of critique was from practitioners. In the late 1970s they problematized the modernisation theories' bias towards interventions from outside to control the development process.²⁶ Through interventionism the developed countries uphold the idea that development and social change emanate primarily from external centres of power (see Janvry's 1981). However, increasingly these external development projects were being criticised for playing a perverse role. They not only reduced people's autonomy and transformed indigenous forms of livelihood and solidarity. They also blinded the interveners for the dynamics that happened outside the planned change.

Practitioners and sociologists (the fourth source of critique on modernisation theories) also pointed at the theories "failing to reflect the diversity and complexity of the real world of development, the earlier theories were incapable of explaining it" (Booth, 1994:4). The preoccupation with simplified structural transformation masks the complexity that is encountered in rural people's daily lives and struggles. During the 1980s new work revealed many on-the-ground divergences in development experiences (Booth 1994) in the heterogeneous contexts (Long and van der Ploeg, 1994). These cannot be captured by grand narratives or paradigm discussions but by a focus on practice (Edwards, 1989). The contribution of practice studies lies in the revelation of pluralities (including legal pluralism), interconnectivity (Arce and Marsden, 1993) and relationality (Marsden et al., 1993). Contrary to simple structural transformation or adjustment, these sociologists introduced complex system analysis. The context was no longer perceived as a structure out-there-and-above but as an integral part of the wider system dynamics. Adding a new element to the local context implied it had to fit into the whole. Development then is not only a matter of fixing complicated problems. It is about fitting a solution into a complex context (OECD, 2009a).

The sociologists' critique on the structuralist bias in modernisation theories (as well as neo-Marxist and neo-liberal theories) resulted in the introduction of actor-oriented approaches (Long, 1989). Evidence and insights accumulated regarding the agency of local actors to shape their own development path. Different actors have different modernities (Arce and Long, 2000). The protagonist of development is not with the outsider but with the insider. The local actor is no longer the object of development but the subject of its own development (Chambers, 1993). Development is not a process of acceleration with a clear goal in sight (the 'developed') but then becomes a set of much more ambiguous and diversified trajectories. Social action and social change are not dependent on policy or development interventions but are enacted in everyday lives of people. Social change sometimes happens despite policy interventions, sometimes by reworking policy interventions and sometimes it is aided by policy interventions. Due to local values, agency, experience, knowledge, ordering, institutions, creativity and sense-making, the nature of social change is heterogeneous and unpredictable (Arce and Long, 2000).

In the 1990s, Escobar (1995) proposes a completely different reading of development. Rather than the liberal processes of modernisation or the Marxist ways to socialism, he states that development is a discourse or knowledge/power configuration. This critical perspective questions the disciplinary workings of hegemonic development agencies and visualizes local resistance to such discursive and power regimes up to the point of bringing a counter-discourse into being. For an overview of the above mentioned theories, 'schools', paradigms and the issues at stake, see table 1.

The issues that gained importance in the 1990s were the pursuit of collective action and its conducive institutions (Ostrom, 1990). Good governance and peace were recognized as prerequisites for development. Development was redefined as freedom (Sen, 1999). The increased influence and importance of the market became a central topic in the development debate. The impact of globalization on the local situation became problematized.

In the 2000s the rise of emerging economies and private financial flows to Low and Middle Income Countries dominated the development debate. The importance and role of development cooperation in

²⁶ Interventionism in part relied on the fabrication of multiple overlapping binaries (traditional – modern; underdeveloped – developed; stagnant – dynamic; etc.). These binaries were inherent in both sets of theories.

development is reassessed. Countries that have high growth rates like China received very little development cooperation while countries that received large sums of aid are growing slowly at best.²⁷

Table 1: An oversimplified overview of the main tendencies in Development Studies and the Sociology of Development from the 1960s to the 1990s.

	1960s – 1970s	1980s -1990s
Main debate	Modernisation versus dependency	Structural modernisation theory versus practice / actor approaches
Main policy	Structural transformation versus import substitution	Structural adjustment versus participatory development
Main environmental concern	Limits to growth	Sustainable development
Main social concern	Exploitation	Inequalities
Context	Cold war	Neoliberalism

With the financial and economic crisis emerging in 2008 and hitting primarily OECD countries, a new panorama emerged. Some argue it propelled an era of the great convergence (Mahbubani, 2013). Superficially, one could see it as a sign that finally happens in practice what was implicit in many development theories: the ‘laggards’ are catching up with the ‘moderns’. Yet, it is quite implausible that the discredited modernisation theories of the past explain the totally different realities of the 21st century. So, what is a better theory to explain development as seen today? Hopefully this thesis will give some clues.

1.3.2 Development cooperation

Development cooperation is an effort of (Western, modern or developed) donors to cooperate in the development of recipients or partners (the governments or people of ex-colonies, the Third World or the global south). This description hides a number of problematic issues that have different meanings for different people, among others: what is development and how to cooperate?²⁸ Development cooperation can be seen as a product or phase in the Enlightenment ‘project’ (Umans, 1992), having a very particular historic and contextual legacy.

The term development cooperation is substituting the notion of aid. Aid has a connotation of inequality with a vertical relation between the donor who gives and the beneficiary who receives. In Dutch politics, from 1971 onwards, the term aid was no longer used to denote the Minister’s position.²⁹ Development cooperation is characterised by more horizontal relations of mutual effort and interests. However, the power differences between the donor and beneficiary largely remained intact. These inequalities were most often masked. From the 1990s onwards ‘partnership’, ‘ownership’ and ‘self-development’ became important concepts to further reconfigure the horizontal relations among development actors.

Historically, development cooperation was conceived on the basis of at least three lines. First, the intentions and efforts of enlightened colonial rule, civilization efforts and in the Americas interregional cooperation. According to Easterly (2013) already in 1919, at the Treaty of Versailles talks after World War I, U.S. President Woodrow Wilson justified the transfer of former German African colonies to Britain as part of a ‘trust’ for the ‘helpless parts of the world’, which would be ‘administered for the benefit of their inhabitants...during the period of their development’. Second, the experiences with the Marshall plan in reconstructing Europe after the Second World War. And third, the discursive framing of ‘development’ in the 1949 inaugural speech of Truman (Escobar, 1995).

²⁷ The debate on the relation between aid and (long-term) growth is still inconclusive because many other factors contribute to growth.

²⁸ This conception of development cooperation is rather conventional and excludes for instance South-South cooperation that is not framed in terms of ‘donors’ and ‘recipients’ but which becoming more and more important.

²⁹ Only recently the term ‘aid’ resurfaced in the latest Dutch policy.

From its inception, development was conceived as modernisation³⁰ and cooperation was conceived as helping the ones who lag behind.

In the 1960s and 1970s development cooperation was shaped by modernisation theory. Its fixed, linear structural assumption, its protagonist role of outsiders and its clearly normative ideas about progress translated into a specific domain, strategy and approach of cooperation. The domain was circumscribed to capital investments, technology and knowledge transfers as well as democracy. The strategic initial investments or impetus had to come from outside. The conviction that development problems could be solved by making use of transfers resulted in a praxis of the delivery of development. This fabrication of development cooperation legitimated external actors to intervene in order to do good and to fix problems.

The approach to supplying inputs was usually in the form of one-size-fits-all: mass communication messages, uniform technological packages, universal standards, policy recipes and prescriptions or much later best practices (Lerner, 1958; Schultz, 1964). The “will to govern or, more specifically, the will to improve” (Li, 2007: 264) generated a desire to control the development process, to fix the problems and to rigidify the institutions. In general, the customary was codified, the informal was formalised, the traditional was modernised, the spontaneous was planned, etc.

In the 1980s, during the rise of neoliberalism, policy emphasis shifted from structural transformation to structural adjustment. Structural adjustment programmes were implemented to ensure macro-economic stability, to open up the economy for both trade and investment, to promote privatization and to free the markets. This set of in total 10 economic policy prescriptions is called the Washington Consensus. The emphasis shifted to fiscal and monetary policies, tax and public sector reforms as well as trade liberalization and deregulation.

During the 1980s social research applying actor-oriented approaches revealed that transfers of knowledge and technology were not diffusions (Rogers, 1962) but transformations (Long, 1989) or translations (see Buttel et al., 1990). Local actors did not passively adopt but actively adapt technology. State-led or donor-driven development projects were superseded by participatory projects. Two very different ideas, the neoliberal ‘rolling back’ of the state and the increased recognition of local agency, together, resulted in strategies to encourage local participation and self-development. The local actor emerged as the subject of his/her own development (Chambers, 1993). While participation was initially primarily seen as the participation of local people in an external intervention project, this gradually turned around to the idea that outsiders should participate in on-going local transformations. Development professionals changed their role from interveners to facilitators. Researchers changed their role from data extractors to supporters of local or indigenous knowledge production. But the extensive use of participatory methods was also critically examined. The methods implied modernist or Western assumption. For instance the time-line exercise implies that time is linear. Too often there was an instrumental logic embedded in the facilitation (the facilitator decided on the process, on the tools to be used, on the type of information deemed relevant, etc.). Cooke and Kothari (2001) even notice that participatory methods were ‘imposed’ on local actors and write about ‘the new tyranny’. Indeed, in very few cases the methods were used by local actors for their self-development after the facilitators had left.

In the 1990s, the meagre results in the first decades of development cooperation could no longer be denied. Donors realized that aid was not effective in creating a conducive policy environment for development to happen (World Bank, 1994). Economic growth alone was not enough to alleviate poverty. By conditioning aid or persuading countries into adoption of certain policies, donors wrongly affected self-confidence and self-development. The lesson learned is not to give aid to get policies and institutions right but to insist on the right policies and good governance to give aid. Poverty Reduction Strategy Papers became lead documents for both recipient and donor governments. The donors shifted

³⁰ Modernization was broadly understood as the development of amongst others capitalism, industry, technology, formal institutions and democracy (see Rostow, 1960).

to sector development through the programmatic approach. This means no support to separate, local projects anymore but to an integrated policy framework that entails national programmes, institutional arrangements and budget support provided by the donors (IOB, 2006). The management of aid was shifted from supply-driven to result-driven. Central to the sector-wide approach were national ownership, partnership and governance (including human rights, rule of law and public sector reform). These phenomena were seen as prerequisites for effective aid but could also become financed with aid.

However, the sectoral approach turned out to be difficult in productive sectors since these sectors often pertain to several ministries and these public entities only play a minor role. So donors channelled their funds primarily to social sectors. Only in the margins they supported private sector development. For that support, production chains became a new conceptual and organizing principle for donors.

During the 1990s the orientation and effectiveness of development cooperation became widely questioned. As a response the Aid Architecture (AA) evolved. The AA is formed by the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), the Monterrey Consensus on Financing Development and the Paris Declaration on Aid Effectiveness. These documents stipulate objectives, commitments and principles for the Official Development Assistance (ODA). They can be seen as the ‘rules of the game’ of a governance regime that links donor and partner countries in a particular ‘game’. The MDGs reflect a new political consensus on aid objectives. They do not only provide a clear measurable framework but also present a long-missing focus for developing aid and a broad international constituency of donors and partner countries.

The Monterrey Consensus on Financing Development was signed in 2003 and responded to earlier shortcomings in donor commitments and partner country financial management. The MDGs provided the support base for increasing the quantity of aid. The long-established international ODA commitments³¹ were reaffirmed. After 2003 the absolute aid expenditures of donor countries went up to a total of around 128 billion USD in 2010. After a decline in 2012 total ODA commitments further increased to a total of USD 135.2 billion in 2014.

The Paris Declaration on Aid Effectiveness was signed in 2005 and responded to shortcomings in the quality of aid management. Donors realized that development cannot be *delivered* but needs to be constructed from within the country³². Country ownership and government leadership became important principles to obtain political will, to improve motivation and to ensure responsibility (see Whitfield, 2009). Donors promised to align their aid with partner country policies and to harmonize the aid procedures among themselves. These issues culminated in the Paris Declaration on Aid Effectiveness³³. Together the Millennium Development Goals, the Monterrey Consensus and the Paris Declaration provide focus, indicators and a timeframe. They boost quantity as well as quality of aid.

With the terrorist attacks on 9/11 2001 the theme of security regained importance in the policies and practices of development. The already emerged attention for post-conflict and so-called failed states shifted increasingly to the war against terrorism. High amounts of ODA were re-allocated to Afghanistan, Iraq and Egypt. This happened not only out of economic rationality (Collier, 2007) but because these ‘ungoverned’ situations posed a threat for OECD countries and interests.

In the new millennium concerns regarding the lack of aid effectiveness, for instance caused by perverse incentives (Moyo, 2009) remained an issue that threatened to erode the public and political support for aid. Research on the impact of aid on economic growth or poverty reduction is

³¹ In 1970 the donors associated in the OECD-DAC committed to spend 0.7% of their Gross National Income on ODA.

³² Development is constituted and seen in different ways. Donors see development as growing and flowering of productiveness. Social movements see development essentially as exercising rights and struggles for life, dignity, recognition and power.

³³ The monitoring of the commitments laid down in the Paris Declaration resulted in two important High Level Meetings in Accra (2008) and Busan (2011) where further details and commitments were worked out.

inconclusive (Riddell, 2007; Mosse and Lewis, 2005; Wood, 2011). Let alone on the impact of aid on happiness or ‘living well’ (Andersen, 2011). Several studies indicate positive impacts at micro-level, within a short time span or within the aims defined by specific projects or programmes. Yet, at macro-level, a long time span or in terms of overall objectives (like the Millennium Development Goals) the results might be negative or not sustainable. A hypothetical example could be a micro-finance program. The program might succeed at micro-level reaching its targets regarding the number of participants in the scheme. Yet, these participants might over time end up with a large debt burden due to their participation in the scheme. The aid was effectively delivered yet the escape from poverty did not materialize; on the contrary, poverty was deepened. Yet, even reaching aid goals does not automatically translate in lasting development results. Too often conflicts wipe out earlier advances in development. So the question is not only whether aid is effective in terms of its intended effect but whether it contributes to transformational development. Many aid intervention that were successful within their internal rational, did not generate such developmental change.

With the food crisis emerging in 2007, the neglect of agriculture and productive rural development was again at the forefront of debates about development cooperation. The renewed attention for productive sectors was also the result of the social bias in sector-wide approaches.³⁴

With the financial and economic crisis in the West emerging in 2008, the development cooperation policies and budgets of the donors were affected. It became clear that development effectiveness was mediated by many other factors and phenomena such as trade, foreign direct investment, remittances, tax regimes, labour policies, etc. Development cooperation as *the* instrument for development is challenged. Beyond conventional aid the development effectiveness of other financial flows came into the picture. This was reflected in cooperation policies that seek not only coherence with other activities and sectors but seek leverage with other financial flows. This view is reflected in a kind of development optimism: within the next generation (extreme) poverty can be eradicated (Global Partnership for Effective Development Co-operation, 2014) and the spread of technologies has already greatly improved the livelihoods of people (Kenny, 2011).

By 2013 the dip in donor spending ended with an all-time high. Donors provided a total of USD 134.8 billion in net official development assistance (OECD, 2014). Since the timeframe of the Millennium Development Goals run up to 2015, the international community negotiated a new framework: the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). In 2015 the UN Member States approved them. The countries also adopted ground-breaking guidelines on green economy policies and climate change. These latest developments are not part of this thesis.

1.3.4 International cooperation

Here international cooperation is defined as all cooperation activities with foreign countries, whether bilateral (between two governments or states), multilateral (between several states), decentralized (between local authorities), by non-governmental organizations (including companies) or in a mix of those actors. The activities within the practice of international cooperation are negotiation (diplomacy), joint operation (development cooperation, peace keeping or business cooperation) and arbitration.³⁵ My understanding of the history of international cooperation is that most analysis

³⁴ Particularly for the Dutch policy, new insights also came research that compared four pairs of countries, each pair consisting of an Asian and an African country having similar characteristics. The explication of different development outcomes pointed at the combination of macro-economic stability, agricultural investments and conducive institutions. Key drivers of development are government support to increase agricultural productivity, market liberalisation and economic freedom for small farmers and entrepreneurs (Donge et al., 2012).

³⁵ Here international cooperation is considered a practice (bundles of doings and sayings with their material arrangements, after Schatski, 2002). Traditionally it has a cosmopolitan orientation. Cosmopolitanism refers to the ability to go beyond self-interest and understanding the self as a part of the whole to which the other is also a part.

assumed either a realist or harmonious³⁶ worldview in which well-defined actors either struggle for their own interests or collaborate upon mutual interests.

The above definition makes clear that international cooperation is not static but through the interactions it is always in a flux. The dynamic nature of international cooperation is triggered to a large extent by changing divisions (for instance the boundaries of nation-states) and working across the divisions. Historically, international cooperation occurred in different contexts enacting different divisions: the colonial setting (motherlands-colonies), the Cold War ideology (East-West), the development era (First, Second and Third worlds and South-North) and the non-state actor intrusion (NGOs, companies and networks).

In this thesis I endeavour to bring forward alternative understanding of international cooperation. I start with the assumption that international cooperation has been relying on fixities: the nation states (the divided fixed spaces with boundaries), the relations between fixed entities (the blocks and divisions) as well as the processes from a fixed situation A to a fixed situation B. I argue it is imperative to not rely exclusively on divisions of bounded entities but to include multities; not to limit the analysis to relations between two or more fixed entities but to take a relational approach; not to limit the analysis to processes but to take a processual approach and to explore fluidity. Letting-go the fixities is crucial for a different understanding in a different, turbulent time.

Dutch policy texts recognize already in 1991 the “fading frontiers [...] between North and South” (MoFA, 1991: 6). This blurring of divisions is currently a topic of much debate. Yet, I want to highlight the difference between contesting divisions and changing dualistic thinking. Most debate concentrates on contesting a certain division and proposing another dual categorization. I think international cooperation can be studied and taken forward by challenging any dualistic approach because they rely on reified, bounded separations and entities. Seeing nations emerging from specific kinds of interaction allows them to come into view not as static objects precoded and prior to their relations but rather as the visible results of the dynamic on-goingness of the flux (Hayles, 2002). Such a relational ontology conceives of reality not consisting of entities that have relations but of relations from which the entities emanate. In the case of international relations this means that the nations do not exist as such but are expressions of their international relations. Simultaneously, this line of thinking makes the switch from studying processes to thinking processual. That is to say, change processes are no longer conceived of as a transition from situation A to situation B. Again, this presupposes two fixities. Change is continuously ongoing in interactions and flux. This is proposed as an alternative reading of international cooperation as a practice.

The multiple forces affecting international relations generate a mixture of stability and change. The entry point to study the nature of this flux are the ways in which existing divisions, compartmentalisations and categorisations are reworked. For instance development, defence and diplomacy are integrated in a 3D-approach. And the political and the economic are fused into economic diplomacy. While old distinctions and divisions are disappearing, new ones are emerging, for instance the BRICS. Fragmentation occurs in hitherto distinct, coherent and unified entities (for example the Brexit). While unifications occur elsewhere among previously separated fragments.

During such turbulent times, normality changes into fuzziness, messiness, complexity and embeddedness, contingency, insecurity, crisis, chaos, hybridity, wickedness, fluidity, fragility, vulnerability, ‘unknown unknowns’³⁷, etc. Each term already denotes a reaction: creating clarity,

³⁶ Keohane (1984) assumes a conflictive policy situation at the outset of each cooperative agreement. Policy adjustments are then negotiated to bring agreements more in line with each actor’s preferences. Once both policies become more compatible, the act of cooperation is completed. However, to assume an a priori conflict is rejected here since especially in the 21st century many international cooperation efforts involve joint operations with shared resources vis-à-vis a global risk or concern.

³⁷ During a press conference in 2002 Donald Rumsfeld referred to *known and unknown unknowns*. “There are known unknowns. That is to say there are things that we now know we don't know. But there are also unknown

order, systems, flexibility, stability, rebuilding, resilience, resistance, coping, intervening, etc. The incorrect characterization of the a-normal³⁸ runs the risk to induce inappropriate action or policy. My research findings resulted in emphasizing the notion of fluidity to capture well the incidental and contingent flux of social reality. However, the quest is not to find a suitable metaphor to depict the social realities. I argue that the nature or empirical-ontological characterization of social reality is in need for revision. Taking into account the fluid nature of multities and contemporary change sheds light on empirical, sudden and unpredictable dynamics (for instance the financial and Euro crises or the Arab spring, Syria and Crimea).

So how do these changes and continuities affect the Dutch government? The Dutch Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MoFA) modernises its diplomacy, focusses its development cooperation and implements austerity measures. MoFA is at a critical junction (Doctors van Leeuwen, 2013). Despite the decline of influence and budget, the potential relevance for international cooperation and the potential for serving Dutch interests might increase. Its traditional role as power broker might now be more needed than ever within the fragmented international arena. The advice of several experts (Colijn, 2013; Doctors van Leeuwen, 2013) and the ambition of the Secretary General of the MoFA point in the direction of modernizing and transforming the MoFA into a network-organization with professional staff. This is an adaptation strategy to cope with a polycentric and hybrid international arena (WRR, 2012).

However, change did not only occur in the social dimension of human actors and networks. Policy themes are also changing. The nexus of traditionally separated themes, such as food-water-energy or diplomacy-defence-development, is blurring thematic boundaries. This calls for a review of conceptual and organizational boundaries. The blurring of global-local levels is another change. In this thesis I will explore ways to conceive the characteristic of these changes beyond hybridity (the sterile product of a fusion of two originally distinct beings or phenomena). I will explore the intermingling of multiplicities, the emerging viscosity, the alternative of a relational and processual approach as well as the flattening of the 'glocal' space. I hope that this provides more explanatory power to understand the cause of surprises, contingency and confusion.

1.3.5 Assemblage

Fragmentation and unification (in terms of alignment and coherence) have been at the centre of development cooperation for quite a while. Fragmentation is usually seen as a negative phenomenon, affecting efficiency and effectiveness (Schulpen et al., 2011). So policies are geared towards coherence in donor countries, alignment of the donors to the beneficiary government and whole-of-government planning approaches. Despite these various unification efforts, "fragmentation can [still] be found throughout the aid system" (Ramalingam, 2013: 4).

In social sciences, the relation between fragments and their unity has been conceptualized in various ways: individuals and their society, parts and their whole, organs and their organism, elements and their system, actors and their network, fragments and their assemblage, etc. These different conceptualizations not only intend to understand the phenomena but also their relations and the processes occurring in those relations. Using the metaphor of organisms highlights the functional and structural relations among body parts. From at least the 1970s onwards, scientists addressed the holistic, organic or structural biases of such a perspective.³⁹

unknowns. There are things we don't know we don't know." See:

<http://www.nato.int/docu/speech/2002/s020606g.htm>

³⁸ A-normality has been worked on by Foucault. Deleuze makes the point that a-normality can only be defined in terms of characteristics while anomaly is "a set of positions in relation to a multiplicity" (2004: 269). The anomalous is the borderline of a multiplicity.

³⁹ "The focus has shifted away from 'island-like' views of culture – as stable, closed and geographically situated in a particular place- towards conceptualizations in which cultures are seen as (...) more fragmented (Clifford 1988:10)" (Andersson, 2002:3).

A different way to think fragmentation and unification is through systems. Systems thinking emerged as a reaction to the shortcomings of analytical thinking regarding the understanding of complexity. Complexity is characterised by interactive embeddedness, nonlinear causality or disproportional effects due to the mutual interdependence of elements or processes (Snowden and Boone, 2007). Initially, complexity was approached with system theories that emphasized emergent properties, equilibrium, structures, stability, regulation and predictable causality. This type of system thinking proved its virtues in particular fields such as natural sciences (for instance ecosystems) and technology development (farming systems). But in management science these ‘hard systems’ (Checkland, 1981) have limited applicability and ‘soft system thinking’ was proposed. Hard systems are combinations of entities. Linguistically, they are composed of nouns. Soft systems are linguistically composed of verbs and are combinations of actions or processes. Soft system thinking emphasizes social action over the structural components of systems. It was therefore better applicable in fields such as knowledge systems (Engel and Salomon, 1997), innovation systems, adaptive management systems (Röling and Wagemakers, 1998), etc. However, ethnographic work (Arce and Long, 2000) pointed at the primacy of agency over structure and system. Complexity in the social realm makes processes unpredictable and unknowable before they really happen. Even soft system thinking falls short on assessing non-linear feedback loops, irreversibility, instability, and sudden flows that might characterise social dynamics (Law and Urry, 2004; Fowler, 2008). Social action and everyday practice showed the creativity and knowledgeability of actors beyond their system (Leeuwis et al., 1990). “[A]ctors can create for themselves a social space in which they can find ways of using the institutional order of the state” (Arce, 1993: 14). This social space is characterised by networks as well as social interfaces, by continuities as well as discontinuities (as opposed to systemic regularities).

Another way of thinking fragmentation and unification was brought forward by Foucault. He pointed out the overarching role of discourse as knowledge/power in normalizing and in disciplining subjects. The hegemonic discourse is a strong connector. It produces a diagram of power and particular normality that hold the social together. Yet, Foucault’s philosophy indicated ways to resist or escape this hegemony, universalization and totalization of discourse. Where modernists (and the early Foucault) seemed to defer or efface difference, heterogeneity and fragmentation, the postmodernists seemed to celebrate those issues. Foucault not only criticised the homogenization of the Enlightenment modernity but also showed that modernity itself generated fragmentation and heterogeneity, for instance in sciences. Fragmentation is a prerequisite and a power technique to know, control and discipline a population. Individualization is the prerequisite and effect of modern forms of rule. The counter-discourses and multiplicity of normalities resulted in the search for alternative modernities and alternatives to development (Escobar, 1995).

My assessment of these debates is that the system thinking is too rigid and the Foucauldian philosophy is underestimating the importance of the material world. System thinking and actor / network approaches presupposes that the elements of the system are distinct, well-determined and stable entities. It is grounded in fixities that relate and develop, but as fixities. System thinking still has a bias towards structure and function. ‘Design’ is a prominent yet problematic aspect of system approaches. The design usually overemphasizes cognitive capabilities which do not match unknown, fluid situations. Regarding discourse analysis I have problems with the presupposition that the world is socially constructed. The critique on historical materialism in some cases escalated up to the point of denying materiality. Without denying that to a certain extent the world is socially constructed or enacted through practice, I am in search of a more prominent role for ‘matter’.

For these reasons I explore the concept ‘assemblage’, referring to an entirety of loosely connected fragments (DeLanda, 2006; Deleuze and Guattari, 2004; Latour, 2005).⁴⁰ Deleuze uses the notion of assemblage⁴¹ to point at the multiple connections between fragments and at the intersections of those

⁴⁰ The ‘entirety of loosely connected fragments’ (the assemblage) is different from ‘the totality of connected elements’ (the system or network).

⁴¹ “In Deleuze and Guattari the English term ‘assemblage’ has been used to translate the French ‘agencement’. Like ‘assemblage’, ‘agencement’ is an abstract noun. It is the action (or the result of the action) of the verb

relations. Assemblages emphasize the heterogeneity of components that interact in situated events (Collier and Ong, 2004). Assemblages include humans and non-humans (Latour, 2005). Latour (1993) criticizes the segmentation of people and things that fails to recognize the heterogeneous mixings of activities and processes composed of material, cultural, human and non-human elements. The heterogeneity is an important source of inherent instability and contingent dynamics. What holds assemblages together is theorised differently by Latour (2005) and DeLanda (2006). For Deleuze and Guattari (2004), affect holds the assemblages. According to me, Latour postulates that it is agency. But for Latour agency does not reside in the human or non-human actor; it resides in the assemblage. For DeLanda, the relations that hold together the assemblage are relations of exteriority (DeLanda, 2006). In assemblages, the components or fragments are loosely coupled and have “relations of exteriority” (DeLanda, 2006: 11). These relations form wholes that often lack internal coherence. Assemblages do not require ‘relations of interiority’ that are characteristic for organisms, systems and seamless wholes. These relations of interiority between the constitutive entities are obligatory and essential to create an internal coherence and external boundary of the whole. The entity’s role within the larger unity is what defines it. Yet, in assemblages, the components possess an openness of possibilities for external connections with other components. They can be unplugged and subsist independently or plug-in somewhere else without losing their identity and capacities. These relations of exteriority are not obligatory but contingent. The relevant relations are not derived from logic but must be explored and identified empirically. Besides the connectivity through relations of exteriority, DeLanda (2006) elaborates on a different connectivity: the articulation of the material and expressive dimensions. This connectivity defines the variable roles a component may play within an assemblage (see Chapters 4, 5 and 6).

The concept of assemblage allows me to do two things: (1) to overcome singularity and separation, acknowledging the inseparability of many things, and (2) to overcome duality rather than to oppose fragmentation and unification. In assemblages, the component entities not only possess an openness of possibilities for external connections with other entities but these connections can be in the form of fusions into an amorphous entirety. The entities lose their singularity as well as their opposition to other entities, meaning that the divisions blur and dissolve.

1.3.6 Entity and multity

The entity is the nucleus or building block of that what exists. It can be a particle with corpuscular properties. To explore the entity and its nature in this paragraph, I start conceptualizing it as the singular and then relate it to the dual, the plural and to multiplicity.

Many scientific endeavours presuppose the existence of a bounded unit, a distinct object, a self-contained entity, a separate singular or an enveloped thing.⁴² This monism is pervasive: one God, one King, one Truth, one nation, the individual, one modernity, one world, etc. This is not only done through unification but also through universalization, homogenization and concealment.⁴³ These tendencies are widely documented and critically analysed (Law, 2011). My research findings regarding the blurred nature of the Yuracaré territory made clear that in order to understand ‘their’

‘agencer’. In French ‘agencer’ has a wide range of meanings. A small French–English dictionary tells us that it is ‘to arrange, to dispose, to fit up, to combine, to order’. A large French dictionary offers dozens of synonyms for ‘agencement’ which together reveal that the term has no single equivalent in English. This means that while ‘assemblage’ is not exactly a mistranslation of ‘agencement’ much has got lost along the way. In particular the notion has come to sound more definite, clear, fixed, planned and rationally centred than in French. It has also come to sound more like a state of affairs or an arrangement rather than an uncertain and unfolding process. If ‘assemblage’ is to do the work that is needed then it needs to be understood as a tentative and hesitant unfolding, that is at most only very partially under any form of deliberate control. It needs to be understood as a verb as well as a noun” (Law, 2004:41-42).

⁴² Entities are closed in upon themselves, sealed by an outer boundary or shell that protects their inner constitution from the traffic of interactions with their surroundings.

⁴³ The pretention of truth and universality as well as the normalization of the abnormal are techniques to produce monisms.

world, the professionals have to leave behind the fundamental assumption that the world is made up of or constituted by singular entities. There also exist undifferentiated multities.

Entities exist upon *difference* (Derrida) that is objectified in clear boundaries (material or non-material). Ingold states: “Recall his [Gibson’s] assumption that to render the open world habitable, it must first be furnished with *objects*, and thus partially enclosed. Now it is by their outward surfaces, according to Gibson, that objects are revealed to perception. It is as though they had turned their backs on inhabitants, exposing their congealed shapes and layouts, rather than allowing inhabitants to join with them in the material flows and movements contributing to their ongoing formation. Every surface, as Gibson explains, is an interface between the more or less solid substance of an object and the volatile medium that surrounds it. If the substance is dissolved or evaporates into the medium, then the surface disappears and with it the object it once enveloped (Gibson 1986, pp. 223). Thus the very objectness of things lies in the separation and immiscibility of substance and medium. (...) Our conclusion, to the contrary, is that the open *can* be inhabited precisely because, wherever life is going on, the interfacial separation (...) gives way to mutual permeability and binding” (Ingold, 2009: 154).

The necessity of separation (Thacker, 2010) relates the singular often to the dual. The ‘one’ or Self is constructed in relation to the ‘other’ and vice versa. The entity exists due to the processes of ‘othering’ and the construction of dichotomies (of which the Cartesian body-mind duality is an example). Through essentializing these dual identities, they are fixed and stabilized.⁴⁴ In recent times many scholars move away from duality towards entanglement. Dichotomies are no longer seen in terms of opposite poles: state versus market, top-down versus bottom-up, global versus local, inside versus outside, language versus world and discourse versus materiality. Nor is it sufficient to think of the poles as being related. This upholds the separation at the cost of neglecting the inseparability.

Dualities, binary oppositions and dichotomies are particularly stable since they construct coherent grids.⁴⁵ It is also a way to smuggle-in hidden value judgements, since one of the two poles has priority or is hierarchically higher. So reworking dualities is a powerful way to address boundaries, grids and hierarchy. From my research it became clear that stable and simple dualisms need to be overcome in order to enhance an understanding of complexity and fluidity. There are several ways to deal with dualism. Dualism can be dealt with as dialectics or interdependency. But these ways maintain the basic assumption of having two poles in the first place. Dualism can be overcome through merging as in syncretism and hybridity. All of these views sustain the idea of pure, clear, fixed, original differences (see Arce and Long, 2000). A more radical way which will be followed in this thesis, is to overcome dualism through intermingling, folding (in a Deleuzian sense), co-constitution and fusion. Once fluidity, intensities and gradients are acknowledged, the dualities no longer make sense. The processual perspective of flows, fusions and flights transcends dualism.

The singular also relates to the plural. This relation is not one of differentiation, pairing or contrasting but one of summing up. Here plurality is defined as the sum of singularities plus the emergent properties that the exercise of summing-up yields ($1+1 = 3$). One assemblage is made up of many fragments. Within the one assemblage, processes of de- and reterritorialization constantly rework and blur the distinction between either ‘many’ or ‘one’. These processes of ‘many-ing’ and ‘one-ing’ result in inclusive relations of both ‘many’ and ‘one’. ‘Monism = pluralism’ (in Jensen and Rødje, 2010). ‘Many’ and ‘one’ are co-created or co-actualized. Or in the words of Latour: “an actor is nothing but a network, except that a network is nothing but actors” (Latour, 2010: 5). Shifting from ‘either-or’ to ‘and-and-and’ is a powerful technique to avoid dualism.

Finally, the singular is also related to the multiple. “It is a problem not of the One and the Multiple but of a fusional multiplicity that effectively goes beyond any opposition between the one and the

⁴⁴ The result is a foundational epistemology with a particular semiotic regime of bi-univocal or one-to-one relationships between elements so that reality can be represented in thought or language.

⁴⁵ Such as the Western dualities of mind/body, rational/emotional, freedom/determinism, man/woman, nature/culture.

multiple. A formal multiplicity of substantial attributes that, as such, constitutes the ontological unity of substance” (Deleuze and Guattari, 2004: 170). The multiplicity is not just referring to ‘multiple’ in the sense of ‘many’ (the plural). It entails the combination of ‘more’, ‘different’ and ‘entangled’.⁴⁶ ‘[T]he problem is not one of a singular reality that we interpret in multiple ways’ but ‘reality is in itself always multiple’ (in Winslade, 2009). A singular can have multiple dimensions, potentialities and intensities. A plurality of singularities with multiple dimensions then becomes rather complicated.⁴⁷ Such a mathematical exercise yields no neat whole. In this thesis I will show how I inserted this idea into assemblage theory to understand the blurred nature of phenomena encountered in my field research. For these entiretys with blurred boundaries I coined the term ‘multity’ (in contrast with the term ‘entity’). Multities render the assemblage fluid and amorphous. The notion of “fusional multiplicity” (Deleuze and Guattari, 2004: 170) captures well this entirety and uninterrupted continuum.

1.3.7 Fluidity and viscosity

Multiplicity changes the nature of entities: it blurs their boundaries and causes fluidity. Fluidity is not a new term in theorizing. In ancient Greece, Anaximander (611-549 BC) developed an evolutionary materialist account in which the universe begins as an unformed, infinite mass, which develops over time into a many-faceted world. Heraclitus (535 – c. 475 BC) affirms that ‘everything flows’. He is the philosopher of becoming rather than of being (the philosophy that Plato, Aristotle and others subsequently developed). These two lines of philosophy seem to have been debated for more than 2500 years.⁴⁸ Building on this long debate, this paragraph looks into four strands of thought on fluidity in contemporary philosophy and social science. Deleuze and Guattari’s ‘molecular soup’, Mol and Law’s work on ‘fluid space’, Latour’s concept of ‘plasma’ and Bauman’s work on liquid modernity. Then I deal with contemporary critiques on fluidity. Once my approach to fluidity is outlined, I arrive at the notion of ‘viscous ontology’.

The first strand of thought on fluidity is developed by Deleuze and Guattari (2004). Though they do not develop fluidity-solidity as one of their principle pairs (rhizome-root, nomad-sedentary, molecular-molar, smooth-striated space, minor-major science, expression-body, direction-dimension, etc.) Deleuze and Guattari use the notion of fluidity. When they state “the molar segments are necessarily immersed in the molecular soup” (Deleuze and Guattari, 2004: 248) it seems they attribute fluidity to the rhizomatic, nomadic and spatially smooth sides of their series of pairs and solidity to the arborescent, sedentary and spatially striated side of their pairs.⁴⁹ This line of reasoning will be explored further in this thesis. The notion of “fusional multiplicity” (Deleuze and Guattari, 2004: 170) also implies fluidity. It refers to the uninterrupted continuum of the assemblages which constitute the real.

The second strand of thought on fluidity is elaborated by Mol and Law (1994). According to them in fluid space neither stable relations nor boundaries exist. Boundaries come and go and allow leakage. Relations can transform themselves without fracture. The network can dissolve. These phenomena of flows and movements indicate fluidity. This fluid space differs from regional and network spaces due to its distinct view on similarity and difference. Empirical observation revealed that “entities may be

⁴⁶ An example is ‘multiple modernities’ (Arce and Long, 2000). These modernities are not merely ‘many’ (as opposed to the one Enlightenment’s Modernity) but they are ‘more, different and interrelated’.

⁴⁷ Again in mathematical terms this means adding for instance $3^2 + (\frac{5}{8})^8 + 245^4$. This is a rather complicated exercise, especially when the dimensions are qualitative (for instance the political and cultural dimensions of one singularity with the political, discursive, social and material dimensions of another singularity).

⁴⁸ In the 19th century the two exponents of this debate were Gabriel Tarde and Émile Durkheim. Their topic was the social. Tarde rejected the atomistic materialism emerging at that time. “He considered the social as a circulating fluid that should be followed” (Latour, 2005: 13). Tarde conceived “spheres of actions that mutually penetrate and form flows or waves of beliefs and desire” (Lazzarato, 2006: 61).

⁴⁹ This is not to say that the pairs can be collapsed into two distinct categories of which the series are the multiple expressions. The use of multiple pairs by Deleuze and Guattari is opening up possibilities, slight distinctions and tensions instead of closing down upon an overarching binary opposition.

similar and dissimilar at different locations within fluid space. In addition, they may transform themselves without creating difference” (Mol and Law, 1994: 641). In fluid space there are substances which flow and mix, sometimes crystalizing into more or less momentary forms that can nevertheless re-form without breach of continuity.

The third strand of thought on fluidity is developed by Latour (2005). Besides his emphasis on the flows within or through the actor-network, Latour uses the concept of ‘plasma’ to denote a vaster background from which the actor-network emerges.⁵⁰ This plasma is a ‘not yet’: not yet formatted, measured, socialized, engaged in methodological chains, covered, surveyed, mobilized, or subjectified. This plasma is a source necessary for interpreting behaviour. It is not the social structure or framework hidden behind or underneath social action where the sociologists of the social are looking for. “It’s *in between* and not made of social stuff. It is not hidden, simply *unknown*. It resembles a vast hinterland providing the resources for every single course of action to be fulfilled” (*idem*: 244). Latour makes an explicit difference between and combination of “both the formidable inertia of social structures and the incredible fluidity that maintains their existence” (Latour, 2005: 245). Elsewhere he distinguished the ‘social’ as either substance or movement, either solid or fluid. He states: “When it is taken as a solid, it loses its ability to associate; when it’s taken as a fluid, the social again disappears because it flashes only briefly, just at the fleeting moment when new associations are sticking the collective together” (Latour, 2005: 159). The ‘social’ is only traceable when it’s being modified, when in movement and in the instance of “a provisional appearance” (*idem*: 77). Summarizing these fragments on fluidity it seems that plasma is quite compatible with the Deleuzian smooth space and in-betweenness although Latour himself is not making references to Deleuze and Guattari regarding this particular issue.

The fourth strand of thought on fluidity is developed by Bauman (2000) in relation to modernity. Bauman argues that modernity involves control and categorization in order to make the chaotic aspects of human life appear well-ordered and familiar. To remove insecurities, unknowns and uncertainties modernity installed a solid control over nature (science) and over society (hierarchical bureaucracy, rules and regulations). However, this ‘solid’ form could never be attained. According to Bauman during the latter half of the 20th century the ‘liquid’ aspect of modernity has become more prominent. This he relates to a shift from a society of producers into a society of consumers, to the privatization of services, to the ICT developments and to freeing the individual from traditional, fixed, category-based communities. The ‘liquid modern’ man flows through his own life, changing places, jobs, spouses, political affiliation, values, etc.

The various approaches on fluidity have encountered criticism from various angles. As of late Escobar characterises approaches of fluidity as being one of “the [various] ‘liberalist trajectories’ that fetishize flows, freedom of movement and ‘absolute deterritorialization’ at larger abstract scales” (2007: 109). Escobar seems to criticize the hermeneutics of fluidity-metaphors and the conceptual approaches of fluidity. For instance the concept of fluid networks referred to by Bizzi and Langley (2012). A similar critique is developed by Roberts and Joseph (2014). They argue that social theorist who define the global economy by flows, fluids and networks “often fetishise the very social changes in the global economy they are trying to describe” (Roberts and Joseph, 2014: 1). “We find it perplexing, for example, why we need to discard a theory of enduring social structure in favour of highlighting purely contingent social relations based on the constant movements of capital, flows (..) and the complexity and fluidity of exterior relations. What we are against, then, is the one-sided analysis of the global economy as being comprised purely through flows, fluids and networks” (*idem*: 3).

The multiple approaches to fluidity together with their critiques form the basis for my research on fluidity in international cooperation. The research elaborates an approach to fluidity that is neither a hermeneutics of metaphors nor a conceptual network approach. It focuses on ontology, arguing that

⁵⁰ For a critique on the plasma see Schatzki (2011) who argues that there is no vaster backdrop or plasma outside of the plenum of practices from which these emerge. This might be due to Latour’s ambivalence and lack of elaboration of this concept which seems to be both background and in-between.

the nature of entities might become fluid. Entities are never fully fixed nor do they become fully fluid. For me, the concept of viscosity counters the one-sidedness of celebrating or fetishizing fluidity without solidity. Viscosity is an intensity and the movement in-between solid and fluid (dissolving the dichotomy). Viscosity is not about those two end-points or stages, nor only the continuum between them (the line from A to B) but it focuses on the territorialization processes within assemblages (the line in-between A and B).

In the literature, viscosity is used to describe processes of ‘sticking together’ (Saldanha, 2007). Saldanha utilizes the concept to show how heterogeneous fragments form assemblages and simultaneously how this “sticking together creates a surface tension that keeps others out” (Wagner and Peters, 2014: 417).⁵¹ Wagner takes up the concept of viscosity to avoid speaking of inclusive or exclusive and private or public (Wagner and Peters, 2014). Wagner uses viscosity to analyse blending and multifaceted groupings (blending traditional sociological attributes of ‘migrant’ and ‘religion’). For me, viscosity is not so much about these representations and metaphors. I will use the concept of viscosity to understand the ever-changing nature of entities, the blurring of divisions, the destabilization of assemblages as well as the becoming fluid of a particular reality. I am interested in viscous ontology.

1.4 The theoretical framework

This thesis’ research is set with the Sociology of Development. Both modernisation and neo-Marxist theories dominated the academic debates in the 1960s and 1970s. By the late 1970s it became clear that modernisation and neo-Marxist theories had very similar and problematic assumptions. Both sets of theories were structuralist, abstract⁵², general, ignorant of the complex heterogeneity of the real world and reliant on grand simplifications (Booth, 1994; Long, 1990). Both sets of theories expressed a desire to control the development process in order to fix the problems. In this context to fix social and economic anomalies, both the capitalist and the critical neo-Marxist positions, advocated from different ideological positions the increasing incorporation of populations to modernity and the centralization of institutions to distribute the benefits of progress (see Porter, Allen and Thompson, 1991).⁵³

In the 1980s there were two major turns in sociological studies of development: the practice turn and the linguistic turn. The practice turn focused on the fact that both modernisation and neo-Marxist theories had little attention for concrete practice and everyday life experiences. Social, political and spatial research concerned with development revealed that homogenising policies and practices resulted in divergent reactions and development experiences at the local level (Booth 1994:7). The ethnographic work on actors, social networks and interfaces (Arce and Long, 2000) pointed at the primacy of actors and their agency over structure. Social action and everyday practice showed the creativity and knowledgeability of actors (Leeuwis et al., 1990). “[A]ctors can create for themselves a social space in which they can find ways of using the institutional order of the state” (Arce, 1993: 14).

In the 1990s the linguistic turn formed a strong point of convergence for interlinking the various social science disciplines. Much of this work is based on the French postmodernists Foucault, Derrida, Lyotard and Baudrillard. Despite their differences they all focus on semiotics and the production of meaning. Especially Foucault’s concept of discourse, as a knowledge/power regime that disciplines subjects, was influential in development studies (for instance Escobar, 1995).

⁵¹ Saldanha utilizes the analogy of molecules being attracted in viscous substance to show on the one hand how heterogeneous fragments (music, bodies, skin colours, gestures, drugs, bars, etc.) form assemblages (the Goa Trance Scene) and on the other hand how ‘whites’ stick together and segregate from non-white through processes of Othering and Saming/Self-ing.

⁵² The debates on the unfolding capitalist mode of production and its laws of motion were very abstract.

⁵³ This view is coming to the fore in the debate and comparisons between the commercialisation and commoditisation positions in agrarian development (see Vandergeest 1988).

Social sciences are now turning away from linguistics, (to some extent) language, metaphors and representations (Thrift, 2007; Viveiros de Castro, 2010). This turn is further fuelled by the growing discontent with “the ancient premise of the ontological discontinuity between language and the world, which assured the reality of the former and the intelligibility of the latter (and vice versa) and that served as ground and pretext for so many other discontinuities and exclusions – those between myth and philosophy, magic and science, primitive and civilized, for example” (Viveiros de Castro, 2010: 221). In the academic field I noticed three developments that will be further explored in this paragraph.

First, those practice-based approaches that emphasize the language-world continuity in terms of the performativity of practice (including discourse). Discourse does not describe a pre-existing world but is part of a practice of handling the world and thereby of enacting one of its versions – up to bringing it into being (Law and Mol 2002). The performativity of discourse “produces the effects that it names” (Butler 1993:2). Thus, there are not only multiple discourses and perspectives on the ‘One world’ (Law, 2011) but there are multiple worlds being enacted. This means there is ontological pluralism (Blaser, 2014). And this means there is an ontological politics regarding decisions and negotiations about the possible world we desire and we want to enact (Prada, 2013).

Second, my research is informed by the renewed interest in ‘flat ontology’ amongst very different scholars (Deleuze and Guattari, 2004; Schatzki, 2002). Spinoza’s monism is back in heterogeneous expressions. Fractional, differential and flat multiplicities take over the explanatory frames based on holistic, multi-scale, hierarchical totalities (be they organisms, systems or complexities). The global is not ‘above’ or transcendental to the local. Global and local form reciprocal presuppositions or a “field of immanence” (Deleuze and Guattari, 2004: 170) where processes of folding, unfolding and refolding take place that articulate, fracture and reassemble distinct events and becomings in ways that undermine the notion of levels. This is called flat ontology: “all multiplicities are flat, in the sense that they fill or occupy all of their directions: we will therefore speak of a *plane of consistency* of multiplicities” (*idem*: 9). Analysis will articulate and disarticulate dualities, categorizations and levels to shed light on change and the nature of the social as an immanent entirety and as (a) matter of “mixtures and gradients” (Mol and Law, 1994: 659).

Third, those studies that emphasize the entanglements of materiality and non-materiality as well as of humans and non-humans. During the 1980s the post-modernist and constructivist approaches reduced materiality to a ‘condition of possibility’. This anti- or post-materiality deepened rather than deconstructed the dichotomy of materialism and idealism. Issues of ontology were all covered as issues of epistemology. During the 1990s, there is a lively interest in rethinking the matter-idea duality traced back to Aristotle. Inspired by the French post-structuralist Gilles Deleuze, recent scholars in ontology acknowledge a ‘new materiality’ (Braidotti, 2008; DeLanda, 2006), the materiality of the social, the sociality of matter (affect and capacity to associate) as well as ‘vibrant matter’ (Bennett, 2010). Matter is not inert but has a vitality that affects others. In social sciences these interests in rethinking objects, beings and things have inspired many scholars up to the point that it is labelled as the ‘ontological turn’ (Escobar, 2007). Instead of thinking in terms of dualities these scholars think in terms of assemblages, embodiments or foldings.

During the 1990s, also the human and non-human dichotomy came under critique. This foundational difference for social sciences was questioned by Actor-Network Theory (ANT). In a world and time of cyborgs⁵⁴ (beings that are partly human and partly machine) and of transgressions of the species’ boundaries by biotechnology the fundamental dichotomy between human and non-human can no longer be maintained. If ‘the human’ cannot be completely separated from the non-human, ‘the social’ is not a separate domain anymore. Latour (2005) differentiates therefore ‘the sociology of the social’ and ‘the sociology of associations’. ANT is contrasted with most social theory because it extends the social to all kinds of associations. ANT does not privilege the human but seeks symmetry between human and non-human actors. ANT aims to understand social realities as associations of actors

⁵⁴ Haraway, 1991.

(human and non-human) which constitute networks or assemblages. ANT intends to account for the constellations and dynamics of these networks.⁵⁵

Like other network theories, ANT conceptualizes realities to be constituted by multiple, discrete, self-contained entities (actants or nodes), their connections (associations or relations), their dynamics (processes, movements or change) and their entirety (the whole network and its emergent properties). In this thesis I will move from such a social topography of actor-networks to a topological understanding of realities.

Initially, ANT put a lot of emphasis on the individual actants or mediators (Latour, 1987 and 1999). These form the nodes of the network. Much of the debate focused on Latour's efforts to rework the divide between human and non-human actants. His symmetry not only disturbed the 'sociologists of the social' but unintentionally reemphasized the importance of the nodes rather than the relations or network. Gradually, the nodal topography of separate, enveloped actors (human and non-human) is replaced by a relational topography of mediations and their continuities. Agency is delinked from the nodal actor and conceptualized as distributed throughout the network. The actor and network are reversible: "an actor is nothing but a network, except that a network is nothing but actors" (Latour, 2010: 5). Latour introduces the principle of relativity (not relativism) to make clear that "any entity can be seized either as an actor (a corpuscle) or as a network (a wave)" (Latour, 2010: 5). Because of this relativity, ANT is not so much about a network of substance and actors but of movement and processes of assembling. To emphasize this different conception of the entirety, Latour suggests the alternative term 'worknet' to indicate the labour that goes on in laying down networks or assemblages. In fact, the term assemblage rather than network is a key shift in deepening the relational topography.⁵⁶

A critique on this particular relational topography of ANT comes from Ingold whose relational topography merely recognizes bundles, threads or rhizomes that form a seemingly all-encompassing, knotted tissue. For Ingold there are no actants or entities but only threads, lines, relations or haecceities.⁵⁷ There are not ANTs but only SPIDER⁵⁸ webs (Ingold, 2011). In other words: the world exists not as networks but meshworks (Ingold, 2010). He criticizes Latour by stating that for Latour "the relation has no material presence. For the materiality of the world (..) is fully comprehended in the things connected" (Ingold, 2011: 91). For Ingold, the lines "are relations not *between* but *along*" (Ingold, 2011:85). Ingold builds on Deleuze and Guattari (2004) by stating that "[t]he living organism, for Deleuze, is a bundle of lines, a haecceity. Critically, these lines do not connect points but pass forever amidst and between. Considering the way in which this idea has been taken up in actor-network theory, particularly associated with the work of Latour, I stress the importance of distinguishing the network as a set of interconnected points from the meshwork as an interweaving of lines" (Ingold, 2009: 141). For Ingold an organism is "no longer a self-contained object like a ball that can propel itself from place to place[;] the organism now appears as an ever ramifying web of lines of growth" (*idem*).

The ANT versus SPIDER debate can be brought down to the ontological difference between enveloped entities versus rhizomes. Despite their differences both are topographical ontologies, the one emphasizing points and connecting lines, the other emphasizing interwoven lines. Yet, there is a

⁵⁵ Here I refer primarily to Latour (2005). A deeper discussion of ANT will follow below.

⁵⁶ "[I]n a network things that go together depend on one another" (Mol and Law, 1994: 661). The elements have "relations of interiority" (DeLanda, 2006: 11) that are characteristic for seamless wholes. These relations between the constitutive elements are obligatory and essential to create an internal coherence and external boundary of the network. Yet, in assemblages, the fragments are loosely coupled and have "relations of exteriority" (*idem*: 11). The components possess an openness of possibilities for external connections with other components. They can be unplugged and subsist independently or plug-in somewhere else without losing their capacities. These relations of exteriority are not obligatory but contingent. The relevant relations are not derived from logic but must be explored and identified empirically.

⁵⁷ Haecceities are sets of movements not between entities but constitutive of entities.

⁵⁸ SPIDER stands for Skilled Practice Involves Developmentally Embodied Responsiveness

different difference, namely, between topographical and topological ontologies. Both networks and meshworks rely on a geometry of lines with high levels of differentiation. The assumption is that points, positions and lines are clearly distinguishable.

Interestingly, this assumption was already questioned in an initial topological critique on networks as elaborated by Mol and Law (1994). They elaborated on the characteristics and limitations of the regional topology and of the network topology. In a regional topology objects are clustered together, boundaries are drawn around each cluster and space seems flat. In a network “distance is a function of the relations between the elements and difference a matter of relational variety” (Mol and Law, 1994: 643). A network topology seems to pull similar configurations (elements and their relations) together and thus folds the flat regional topology as in an accordion. An ‘immutable mobile’, a concept developed by Latour, moves through the regional space and crosses boundaries without changing. As a result, things like laboratories, “*with a similar set of elements and similar relations between them*” (*idem*: 649), can be situated in far-away and different regions while their similarities position them very close in a network topology. Their research on blood, anaemia and laboratories however suggests that these ‘things’ are not necessarily bound and immutable and the relations that co-constitute them are not necessarily well defined and stable. “Sometimes, we suggest, neither boundaries nor relations mark the difference between one place and another” (*idem*: 643). Regarding boundaries: “[i]n some measure vessels are well-bounded regions that keep their constituents inside them. Large arteries have solid walls. But the small hair vessels in most organs (except the brain) are permeable to endless chemical substances and many cells” (*idem*: 671). Blood “ignores internal bodily boundaries” (*idem*: 641). Regarding relations: the elements or their relations might not hold, especially not when people are part of the constellation. This not only results in “the familiar story of the failing network” (*idem*: 652) but also in a process whereby “the folded surface of the region starts to flatten out, and the space-time tunnel of the network dissolves” (*idem*). Said differently, if the invariant transformation of the immutable mobile does not hold, “we’re looking at *variation without boundaries and transformation without discontinuity*. We’re looking at flows. The space with which we’re dealing is *fluid*” (*idem*: 658). In fluid space objects aren’t well defined, boundaries are not clear and relations are unstable. There are mixtures, gradients and flows that make the situations unpredictable, undetermined and indistinguishable. “[A]naemia keeps on differing but also stays the same, (...) it *transforms itself from one arrangement into another without discontinuity*” (*idem*: 664). Mol and Law propose a flat, fluid topology alongside the regional and network topologies. Their conclusion is that social theory has to take into account multiple and interacting topologies with different rules for localizing and enacting similarities and differences.

Latour (2005) further elaborated on the immutable mobile and fluid space. He clarifies that immutable mobiles are not displacements without transformation. They are not handed down through a chain of intermediaries. Rather, they are a “displacement *through* transformation” (Latour, 2005: 223). They are part of chains of mediators. The entities are translated rather than transferred. Besides Latour’s emphasis on the flows within or through the actor-network, he uses the concept of plasma to denote a vaster background from which the actor-network emerges. I suggest that it is through exploring viscous ontology, topology and Deleuzian metaphysics that plasma can acquire a more central place in ANT and in the understanding of realities.

1.5 The methodological framework

In my work as development advisor, donor and policy advisor, I collected in-depth information, grounded in the real interactions of people and organizations, be it in a community or office. Development cooperation field work and diplomatic engagement were two practices that yielded opportunities for formal research and important scientific insights. In these notes I will elaborate several of the specifics of my research process: the researcher’s positioning, the choice for action research, the scientific procedure of following, the methodology and analysis.

1.5.1 The positions of the researcher

The (methodological) positioning of any researcher has various dimensions: the social position, the position vis-a-vis the research object as well as the position vis-à-vis contemporary academic debates. In the first place I deal with my social position as researcher. According to standpoint epistemology, my social position as the subject of knowledge is at the same time my point of view on the social (Harding, 1991). This point of view is translated in the knowledgeability and representation of the social and permeates the social research findings. It might therefore be relevant to make explicit here that I am a Dutch, white, middle-aged, middle-class man. However, the concept of social positioning presupposes a sociological topography of striated space with fixed (stand)points and bounded fields rather than a topology of undifferentiated and in-between, smooth space. Thus, my social positioning excludes my lines of flight (see epilogue) as creative movements in my life and research.

A second dimension of positioning is the researcher's stance regarding knowledge production processes. The research approach taken in this thesis starts from the hypothesis that scientific knowledge production is only partly based on a rational plan, an ex-ante research design and the researcher's position as an external 'objective' observer trying to discover truth. This formal scientific procedure was partly followed to study and understand the cases elaborated in the Chapters 3 and 4 on Community Forestry. Although action-research requires participation rather than mere observation. My research on policy and diplomacy are to a great extent based on an organizational ethnography (Ybema et al., 2009) of the organization where I worked. Most of the other research findings follow from the fact that I was part of the 'object of investigation': the on-going activities, processes and events in the MoFA. In terms of the epistemological debate regarding distancing and intimacy as preconditions for knowledge production, I opted for both. I sometimes participated as "an observer whose view is premised on distance and detachment" (Jensen and Rødje, 2010: 12) with an orientation "towards constants and universals" (*idem*) to "seek the conditions for the reproduction of the same" (*idem*). While sometimes I participated as an accomplice who follows and who is "ready to explore new spaces from which to extract creative possibility" (*idem*). I produced knowledge through the intimacy with the research object (Knorr-Cetina, 1999) or the engagement with a process of becoming. My position of the researcher in this epistemological debate is one of multiplicity: there are multiple legitimate ways of knowledge production.

A third dimension of positioning is the researcher's intellectual stance or 'theoretical lens' through which the empirical object of study is seen. I reject this crude separation of theory and empiricism or intellectual work and practice. Having said that, I do feel the need to sharply position myself vis-à-vis debates within the Sociology of Development. This partial positioning is not done by subscribing myself into one or more of the contemporary 'schools' but more implicitly through being inspired by the ways I understand the debates. I am particularly affected by three strands of theorizing. First the performativity of practice to study the enactment of worlds. Second, the flat ontology of assemblages to study entities, multities and processes of territorialization. Third, the centrality of affect to study the entanglements within assemblages.

Retaking the above need to position myself as a development actor as an ethnographic researcher, I perceive a necessity to position myself vis-à-vis the inside-outside divisions and positions. This duality is also reflected in the division of emic versus etic and familiar-ness versus stranger-ness (Ybema et al., 2009). My position regarding these dualities is one of discomfort. I was an outsider of the communities where the research of Chapters 3 and 4 took place. Yet, I was an insider of the cooperation with these communities.⁵⁹ Then, as an employee of the Dutch Ministry of Foreign Affairs I had an insider's perspective regarding the policy processes described in the Chapters 5 and 6. Despite being an employee and having worked in the Dutch Embassy in La Paz in the past, I could best be considered an outsider regarding the transition of the Dutch-Bolivian bilateral relation analysed in Chapter 7.

⁵⁹ As practitioner and donor I also noticed that it is very difficult to have the will and ability to truly cooperate with a local community or national counterpart since one is expected to operate in the logic of aid delivery, the objectives of a project or the policy instructions.

The positions of insider and outsider do not only change, they are usually based on fixed ideas about communities and organisations as bounded entities. Often not my organizational belonging was important but my personal networks and friendships. The intensity of (net)working with several colleagues from other organizations was often higher than the intensity of cooperation with several staff from my own organization. All in all the boundaries between inside and outside are constantly blurred. At times the familiar felt strange and the strange became familiar.

Summarizing, my position is multiple (geographical, social, organizational and in networks). This results in blurredness and stranger-ness. To understand my positioning, spatiality needs to be extended from the gridded space to smooth space (Deleuze and Guattari, 2004). Positioned in the striated space, I moved along the lines the network to collect information and to construct socially situated knowledge, either as insider or as outsider. But during the work and research I also ventured into smooth space where I moved by developing lines of flight as a nomad.

1.5.2 Action research methodology

In this action-research, the data were collected through participant observation, informal conversations, formal interviews, critical engagement as well as studying field notes, reports, evaluations and literature. Although I made use of participatory observation, the methodology would be better characterized as being-in-there as a working, observing, acting, accompanying and reflecting accomplice. My partnerships and my relations with colleagues were my lab. My action and their results were my 'field'. Action-research enabled a short feedback loop regarding how new insights were enacted in a change of practice and subsequent reflection.

In my action-research, experience-based learning was more important than the formal scientific procedures. As development actor or diplomat I was part of longer-term transformations rather than of a formal research project. The experience of working on transitions is the source of my learning. It is well known that there are limits to a researcher's capacity to sense and experience reality. Categories of lived experience cannot be taken at face value. Bourdieu points at the linguisticity of experience (the construction of subjective experience through linguistic categories), DeLanda points at the experience-shaping effects of "sorting practices" (DeLanda, 2006: 66) such as the practices of inclusion and exclusion. Despite these limitations, experiential knowledge is widely valued as the basis for experimental research, philosophy and interpretative research (Behagel, 2012). In this research, interpretation is valued as one of the core elements of social science. The quality of this research is only partly related to the richness of fieldwork data. My extensive experience in the fields of development practice and anthropology of development entered into the text of this thesis through (re)interpretation of particular fieldwork data and academic literature research. The strength of this research is neither its ethnographic fieldwork nor its inter-textual literature analysis. The strength lies in using two inputs (fieldwork and literature) in combination with the experience-based interpretations.⁶⁰

My methodology does not intend to distinguish on the one hand empirical field research and data collection and on the other hand conceptual and theoretical 'deepening'. First, interpretation of empirical work relies on conceptual frames and tends to reproduce these frames. Second, interpretation during conceptual reading relies on empirical experience. Third, the above dualistic distinction gives raise to the idea that research is a process whereby in time the researcher oscillates in-between the two poles. Knowledge processes occur not only in time but also in space, moving in-between a space of neat, separate and distinct things or knowns and a space of amorphous, undetermined unknowns. These two spaces are not opposed but entangled, one being the furthering of the other, one presupposing the other. Thus, rather than creating a dualism between empirical and conceptual work, I follow Deleuze in conducting research through "a kind of empiricism, which sets

⁶⁰ For more details on interpretative research see Bevir and Rhodes (2010) and Behagel (2012).

out to present concepts directly” (Deleuze, 1995: 88). The in-between movement is an important site of creativity.

1.5.3 Following

Deleuze and Guattari distinguish “two types of science, or scientific procedures: one consists in “reproducing,” the other in “following”” (2004: 410). Reproducing science involves iteration and reiteration. It “implies a fixed point of *view* that is external to what is reproduced” (*idem*). It deals with law-like regularities. The following science involves itineration. “One is obliged to follow when one is in search of the “singularities” of a matter (..) when one engages in a continuous variation of variables, instead of extracting constants from them” (*idem*). In this research I will illustrate both. My interest is mostly in showing how the latter operates and is linked to what I will call fluid space-time (Chapter 4). I try to follow their advice to “[I]odge yourself on a stratum, experiment with the possibilities it offers, find an advantageous place on it, find potential lines of deterritorialization, possible lines of flight, experience them, produce flow conjunctures here and there” (2004: 178).⁶¹ “Always follow the rhizome by rupture; lengthen, prolong, and relay the line of flight [...] you start by delimiting a first line consisting of circles of convergence around successive singularities; then you see whether inside that line new circles of convergence establish themselves, with new point located outside the limits and in other directions” (*idem*: 12). I interpret this advice as de-parting (in both meanings of starting and leaving) from a seemingly fixed and stable division, analysing its socially constructed, contingent and contestable nature (Hetherington and Munro, 1997), pushing its becoming-fluid and exploring where that takes me. A very concrete case is the analysis of the donor-beneficiary division that characterized the Dutch-Bolivian bilateral relationship but that ended and gave way to a transformation in which not aid but lithium became central (see Chapter 7).

This methodology differs from ‘follow the logic’ (rationalist approaches) as well as from ‘follow the actor’ (social interactionist approaches, the actor-oriented approach and actor-network theory⁶²). For me ‘following’ is the following of two types of lines: boundary or grid lines and lines of flight. The grid lines exist in striated space. The researcher can follow and trace the boundary lines, the fault lines, their segmentations as well as their enfolding (the grid’s extension and reproduction). The lines of flight occur in smooth space. The researcher can follow these lines when and where they de-part from the grid lines. These flights can be followed as trajectories and processes of becoming. For Deleuze and Guattari these lines of flight are not tracings but a map. The map “is entirely oriented toward an experimentation in contact with the real” (Deleuze and Guattari, 2004: 13). While a tracing is “closed in upon itself (..), a map is open and connectable in all of its directions” (*idem*). Tracings and the map are not opposites but entangled through the method: “*the tracing should always be put back on the map*” (*idem*: 14).

De Landa indicates several methodological and epistemological guidelines to study Deleuzian assemblages. The assemblage as a particular singularity needs to be studied from its historically contingent process of production, reproduction and transformation. It cannot be studied through its essences but only through its internally dispersed capacities to (inter)act and affect. Thus, it is a methodology of the in-between: in-between the moment of the assemblage’s birth and its goal. There is no origin and there is no end point.⁶³

The methodology of the minor scientist or nomad is that of learning how to follow and not how to frame. Thus, the word followwork would be more appropriate than framework (still used in my subtitles of this chapter). The followwork is necessary for two reasons: to be able to let-go and to be

⁶¹ See also Jensen and Rødje (2010: 55).

⁶² The actor-oriented methodology centres on following the everyday life experiences of actors (Arce and Long, 2000). Latour (1987) insists on following the actor as suggested in his title: *How to follow scientists and engineers through society*. For him, the actor is not only the human actor. For a critique on Latour’s ‘following the actor’ see Krarup and Blok (2011).

⁶³ Interestingly, Latour has a similar emphasis on empirical descriptions of assemblages but he uses a different notion of ‘tracing’. He traces the social as “a movement during a process of assembling” (2005: 1).

able to anticipate the unknowable in-becoming. Followwork is also an alternative for the academic debate about network versus meshwork (see Ingold, 2008). The following here is neither the following of network lines (relations) nor the following of meshwork lines (materialities). Following here includes the following of the evasive trajectories that transgress boundaries, rework divisions and escape categorizations. Following does not refer to actualizations but to potentialities. It is speculation.

Regarding the ethnographic fieldwork, I took note that followwork has consequences for the practice of ethnography itself. Followwork requires an alignment of the research practice with the everyday lives of the researched. This entails an alignment of the interviewer to the interviewee's practices and temporal-spatial arrangements (space-time).⁶⁴ Followwork implies a follow-through in the other's space-time. A good example is the lived experience of making appointments for the research on the Dutch-Bolivian bilateral relationship (Chapter 7). It turned out Dutch and Bolivian diplomats enact different space-times. While arranging the interviews, I had access to the Dutch diplomats because they were my colleagues in the Ministry. For the interviews they readily blocked time in their agendas (the device to striate time). The meetings were during working hours in their office or in the lounge of the Ministry. The interviewees work in a striated space-time in which space is fixed and clear whereas time is segmented, allocated and recorded. The interviewer needs to align to this space-time, hence the importance of making appointments. Access to Bolivian officials with whom the researcher worked previously was easy too. Appointments could be made in the evenings, either in their offices or in café's. Location and time were decided upon in the last minute. It was not that easy to fix appointments with unknown high-level Bolivian officials. They do not manage time by pinpointing appointments in their agenda. It seems their time-machine does not resemble the clock or calendar but the compass: if the direction of interaction is interesting, they make and take time. For arranging a meeting with these officials, a personal relation, direct contact and a sudden opportunity must coincide. For the researcher this means bypassing their secretaries, finding a mutual friend to broker a contact, communicating through their private mobile phones and being attentive to invitations on short notice. Yet, since these officials spend most time in meetings, they cannot attend phone calls. Even outside meetings, they usually don't take a call if their device only displays the number instead of the known name of the incoming call. So it was important to have my number registered under my name in the informant's mobile phone. Still then, it was better to send a text message since the officials can read it and respond to it during their meetings.

So the ethnographic research methodology became itself a strategy of expanding the grid/network and a strategy of going-with-the-flow. Ethnographic research can be an encounter of different space-times⁶⁵ and the surprises that come from it. The researcher became entangled with the professional and personal assemblages of informants and learned to operate according to the behavioural 'codes' governing their solid space-time or learned to operate according to the sudden surprises emerging along the line of flight forming fluid space-time. Through these ways the conceptual, the theoretical and the methodological followworks became aligned and consistent.

1.5.4 Baroque ontology, epistemology and methodology

The way space-time is conceived (in its ontological dimension) has yet another methodological consequence. Viscous space-time is full, leaving no empty spots.⁶⁶ The holes in the net or the openings in-between the rhizome are not empty but are the medium (Ingold, 2011) or plasma (Latour, 2005). This fullness of details is one of the characteristics of baroque.⁶⁷ The notion of baroque is used in

⁶⁴ Space-time will be explained in Chapter 8. Here it is about how in practices time and space are related and how through these practices time-space realities are arranged.

⁶⁵ In striated space the time is linear or circular. In smooth space the time has no dimensions but is an intensity (time flies). So space and time are interlinked. Striated and smooth space are space-times.

⁶⁶ This does not mean that viscous space-time is fully actualized. On the contrary, it is full of potentials and attractors (DeLanda, 2002). Yet, according to me, there are no empty holes outside or inside the entangled solid and fluid (including 'holey') space.

⁶⁷ The fullness of baroque is seen by Hetherington and Munro as an overabundance of elaboration, indulgence and exaggeration (1997: 234).

different ways (Phillips, 2014). Baroque as the historical artistic, architectural and musical style addresses the concreteness and heterogeneity of “mundane crawling and swarming of matter” (Kwa, 2002: 26), rather than the generalizations or abstractions. “[H]istoric baroque insists on a strong phenomenological realness, a sensuous materiality. This materiality is not confined to, or locked within, a simple individual but flows out in many directions, blurring the distinction between individual and environment. This is a course of baroque inventiveness: the ability to produce lots of novel combinations out of a rather limited set of elements” (*idem*). Together these characteristics of baroque also characterise what I will call ‘viscous ontology’ because as I will explain, the natures of worlds are real, more-than-material, multi-dimensional (multiplicities), partly fluid and flowing, blurred and full of potentials.

I follow closely the way baroque is elaborated by Luis Tapia in his effort to characterize the work of the Bolivian sociologist René Zavaleta. For Zavaleta, Bolivian society is a *formación social abigarrada* (a patchwork social formation), a socially diverse multiplicity with articulations, mixes, fusions and particularities with their internal becomings which give it a specific “mode of existence” (Zavaleta, 1987: 237). Tapia (2002) uses the notion of the modern baroque to denote both the social reality faced by Zavaleta and the way Zavaleta produced knowledge about that reality (the baroque epistemological strategy). In the prologue to the work of Tapia (2002), Luiz Antazana characterizes baroque as “assuming a diversity – multiplicity – of spheres, each one of them has its own nucleus, irreducible to the one of other spheres, who [the spheres] on the other hand, without losing their own characteristics, are communicating among them, on their borders, peripheries or passages, conforming among others a multiple entirety, relatively articulated (...) In these horizons, producing knowledge will require the travelling through some of these spheres, trying, in the long run, to know the entirety” (2002: 9; my own translation). This baroque epistemological and methodological strategy I used in my own way to ‘travel’ along the lines of my network and to follow my lines of flight.

“Thrift is using the term baroque in a more ontological sense, suggesting that nature should be seen as a set of elements or actants that whilst often connected to one another do not constitute some all-encompassing coherent whole” (Phillips, 2014: 57). To my understanding this means that baroque ontology cannot be ‘captured’ solely by representational means but this ‘capturing’ should also build on more-than-representational experiences of affect (see Thrift, 2008). The fullness of such an understanding involves “represented emotions, pre- or semi-cognitive feelings and unconscious affects, (...) creating complex sensings of nature” (Phillips, 2014: 57). This is central to the concept of assemblages.

As might be clear from the above, the baroque ontology has epistemological implications and vice versa. The way we can produce knowledge on full and multiple worlds (Chapter 8) is not only through separation, determination and differentiation. This striation of space is exactly the cause of the present knowledge failures⁶⁸ and the many unknown unknowns (Rumsfeld⁶⁹). The full and multiple worlds cannot be fully ordered, boxed-in and captured in grids. The on-going smoothing of space is the creation of un-order (Snowden, 2005) and ‘un-things’ (Chapter 8). Lines of flight not only escape the networks and the gridded, striated space but affect the conditions of possibility of the production of knowledge. There is no standpoint anymore, no interpretative frame, no embodied habitus, no categorical grid, no subject nor object of knowledge, only the voids and holes of the networks.

⁶⁸ For instance in development cooperation in the 1960s and 1970s many practitioners failed to understand why peasants did not adopt improved seed varieties. It was not until the practitioners understood the logic and practice of peasants to minimize risks rather than to maximize crop yield, that peasants were no longer considered backward, traditional or ignorant but rational. This example shows the type of knowledge failures that are at work in development cooperation. In this thesis I will argue that the main knowledge failure we meet today is that we conceive of the world only in terms of striated space and not in terms of baroque ontology.

⁶⁹ During a press conference in 2002 Donald Rumsfeld referred to *known and unknown unknowns*, see: <http://www.nato.int/docu/speech/2002/s020606g.htm>

1.6 Guide to the rest of the thesis

Chapter 2 will give further introductions into the jargon and theory underlying this thesis work. On the basis of art works it sensitizes the reader for conceptualizations such as blurredness, stickiness, amorphous space, gridded and striated space, fluidity, thinging the world and assemblage. The chapter also provides background information on Bolivia, the site of most of the field research.

Chapter 3 and 4 deal with the analysis of development cooperation. In Chapter 3 I distinguish three cooperation strategies on the basis of different practices. This finding came out of my ethnographic action-research conducted in three communities in Bolivia: the community Primero de Mayo, the territory of the Yuracaré and the village of Raqaypampa. Yet, the research settings are not the geographical locations but the social sites of development cooperation and interaction. My focus was on development practices such as the introduction and up-take of external technology, planning methods, legislation, knowledge, etc.

In Chapter 4 I studied the successive efforts of cooperation with the Yuracaré. As a result I elaborated a matrix of three approaches to cooperation that are related to three settings (simple, complex and fluid). An important finding of the research is the ontological difference between on the one hand distinct and clear entities and on the other hand amorphous and blurred multities.

In Chapter 5 I turn to policy. I studied policy content and its recent developments. It provides a background on international agreements and shows on-going discussions within the Dutch Ministry of Foreign Affairs regarding development cooperation policy.

In Chapter 6 I studied development policy officers. In this chapter the focus is on the policy process in the Dutch Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Embassies in Guatemala and Bolivia. My daily working experience and additional interviews form the basis for studying how policy practices were performed. I describe the policy cycle and the stalled debate on the policy cycle paradox. I propose to revisit the paradox from the point of view of assemblage theory. I conceptualize it in terms of deterritorializing and reterritorializing processes that continuously undo and redo the policy cycle through practices of assembling.

In Chapter 7 I turn from development cooperation and its policy development to diplomacy. Diplomacy is one of the practices of international cooperation. The particular social site of my study on diplomatic practices was the Dutch-Bolivian bilateral relationship. I studied diplomats of Bolivia and the Netherlands. I studied how an establish division (donor-beneficiary) dissolved and how a new relationship among equal trade partners emerged. I analysed how in this endeavour a new division became apparent: between on the one hand a one-world ontology based on inert nature being separate from culture. And on the other hand a world ontology of animated nature. I show how through the diplomatic practice these differences shape the world in different ways. I also highlight that the diplomatic encounter was a negotiation of different ontologies with political sensitivities.

In Chapter 8 I turn to social theory, particularly Actor-Network Theory. I show its shortcoming in terms of accounting for ontological fluidity and viscosity. Due to its topographical bias, it cannot adequately deal with the least differentiated state of stability. A topological complementary methodology is proposed.

In Chapter 9 I answer my main research questions and assemble the main conclusions of my research.

Chapter 2. Multiple entries into an open thesis

This thesis is an open thesis, meaning it is open to different readings and from different entry points. One can start from the summary (the main argument), the acknowledgements (me and my network), the introduction (the formal academic entry point), the theoretical discussion (Chapter 8), the epilogue (my lines of flight), or the conclusions (the main outcomes and recommendations). But one could also start from other, less obvious entries. There are multiple entries because this thesis brings multiple lines together.

The first entry is a common-sense narrative to introduce and visualise several important elements of my thinking. I will start here with four works of art that help me describe the most important concepts and perspectives that I will use in the rest of this thesis.

The second entry is contextual. My empirical research activities were mainly situated in Bolivia. A bit of context about Bolivia and the Bolivians seems useful. This entry (*la entrada Boliviana*) sketches in an anecdotal way an overview of the setting (field) of several chapters presented in this thesis.

The third and last entry is conceptual. It addresses the key concepts that are used in this research. They are illustrated with reference to the second entry (*la entrada Boliviana*).

2.1 The art of explaining this thesis

In order to acquaint the reader with the views expressed in this thesis and the realities described in this thesis, I first present four visualizations. These visualizations merely help to reproach various aspects of the theories, methodologies and empirical material presented in the rest of the thesis.

The first visualization (figure 2) is a photograph depicting a part of the old *medina* of Fès, Morocco. What the below picture depicts can be seen in different ways. Some people would recognize the copper section of Fès' medina. Others might see people (humans) and things (non-humans). When I made the photo I wanted to show the difference between entities that move and static entities. The movement of entities makes their photographic representation blurred. In contrast to the things and people sitting or standing still, the moving entities' boundaries are not sharp and their identities are hard to determine. This difference between blurred and clear entities is central to this thesis and is elaborated in sociological and philosophical terms. The above blurred picture can be appreciated in different ways. Some people would perceive it as a work of art, others as a failed snapshot. The point here is that blurred entities have to do either with failure or an appreciation of a different kind. When blurred entities start to populate the worlds of development cooperation or diplomacy, the common sense tendency is to see failure and risks. The lack of clarity, order, sequence, etc. is affecting the way we want things to be or to evolve. But in those situations there is always the potential to approach the blurredness with interest, empathy and eagerness to learn. This is the position I take in this thesis. My research is about exploring the vitality of blurred entities.

The below picture is a representation of a situation or reality. Any representation refers to specific aspects of that reality. In this case I point at mobility. I studied various movements. First, the movements of goods, technology and capital from developed countries to developing countries in the context of aid. I noted cases in which these transferred goods were not neat entities but were blurred multities that dragged along fragments of the context from which they were derived. An example was the introduction of a mobile saw mill (Chapter 4). It was not a clearly delineated machine because it dragged along many knowledge, capital and labour requirements. These requirements were sticky fragments of the industrial, economic and cultural context where the machine was built and was

operating well. These sticky fragments were imprints in the materiality of the machine and attachments to it. This made the machine a blurred entity (like the moving pushcart in the centre of the picture).



Figure 2. Different bodies in a market place.

A totally different movement I studied, were the social movements in Bolivia. Here again, what struck me was their capacity to blur established boundaries. In this case for instance the boundaries between *originario*, *campesino* and *indígena*.

Blurred boundaries are not only the result of mobility or movements. In my fieldwork I came across entities that had blurred boundaries and vague identities due to their undetermined and open nature. An example of such an entity is the *corregimiento* or territorial sub-unit of the Yuracaré, an Indigenous People in Bolivia. These *corregimientos* had no clear boundary lines. They only had two demarcation points on the river bank; one point of entry and one point of exit. From each demarcation point there was only a sense of direction that divided the two neighbouring *corregimientos* further inside the dense forest. In technical terms of mapping the *corregimiento* is an entity that had no lines but had only points and vectors. The nature of a *corregimiento* is thus partly fixed (the two points near the river) and partly open or amorphous (the blurred boundaries inside the forest). In other words, its nature exists of a solid part and a fluid part. This makes the *corregimiento* a viscous in-between body. Further research in other settings made me extend this proposition into general hypothesis: reality exists as viscous bodies.⁷⁰

Coming back to the picture, it can now be seen as my visualization of the viscosity of the world. Viscosity is the in-between and entanglement of solid and fluid. I can now start answering a key question of this thesis: from where do the differences emanate that enable me to distinguish clear and

⁷⁰ According to Gilles Deleuze bodies are not defined by what they *are* but by what they can *do* (their forces and affects). Anything which can affect or be affected is a body (an animal, a body of sounds or an idea).

blurred boundaries, entities and multities, things and un-things? One source is movement (like in the picture), the other source is metaphysical viscosity. With this I mean to say that reality is made of things and un-things and that the nature of this reality is viscous. On the one hand there are things that can be said to really exist. These things are the bodies that are solid, congealed, fixed in their position, bounded by a sharp line, known by their attributes and categorized by their identity. On the other hand, besides these things there are un-things. Un-things are neither no-thing nor some-thing. They are in-betweens. They really exist but as bodies that are a matter-flow or matter-energy. Un-things have blurred boundaries, constitute trajectories rather than entities and are unknowns capable of generating surprise. This is to say that besides entities there are other ‘substances’ that I call multities.⁷¹

Although the photograph gives a first visualization of looking at the viscous nature of a reality, it also has its shortcomings. Pictures privilege the sight or eye as only one of the senses that are important in research. Since bodies (things and un-things) affect each other in multiple ways, the research has to expand beyond the visual. “Affect is not a question of sight, representation or discursiveness but of existence” (Guattari, 1995: 93).

The next visualization (figure 3) is a painting made by Rob van Doeselaar. It depicts a grid drawn with charcoal and a plane painted with acryl. The acryl intermingled with the charcoal to blur its boundaries. The grid represents the orderly and more concrete New York’s street plan. The plane represents chaos and more concrete an energy, a potency, an intuition or a flow (pers. com.). For Van Doeselaar order and chaos have no meaning without the other and together they create a tension / thrill.

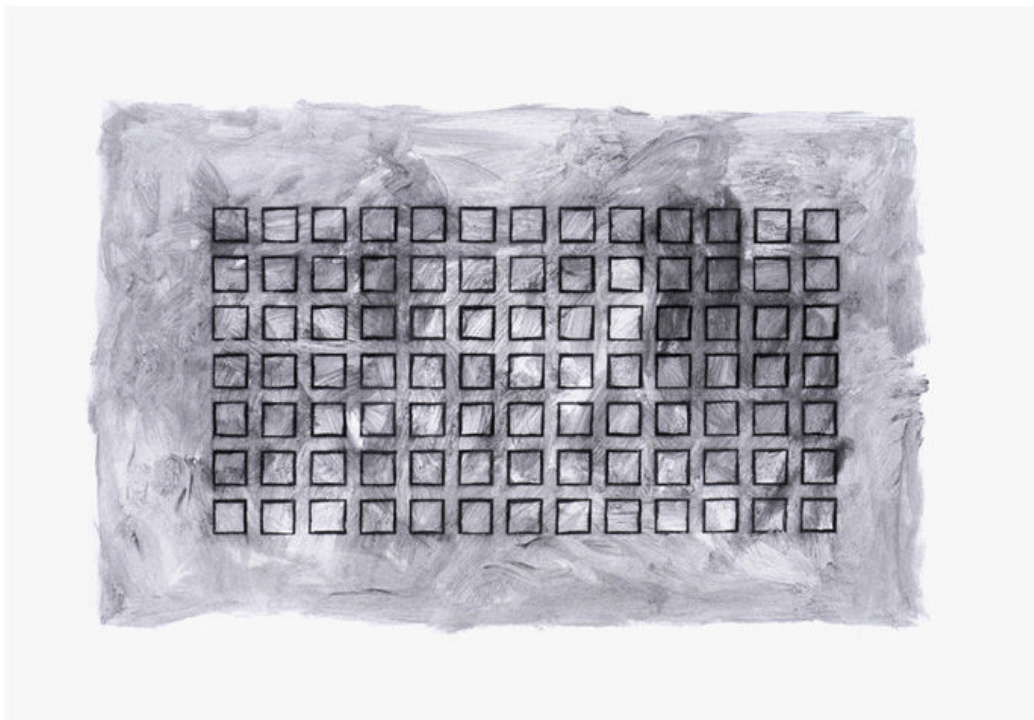


Figure 3. Van Doeselaar (1994) *Basic Rhythm 7*, <http://www.robvandoeselaar.nl/x223.html>.

⁷¹ Multities have blurred boundaries because they embody a superposition of a singularity, many internal fragments and multiple dimensions (like the particle-wave superposition in quantum physics). This is an extension of assemblage theory and elaborated in this thesis.

For me this painting expresses the viscous nature of New York's reality. The solid parts of its nature are depicted as a grid, the fluid parts as an amorphous in-between. Though for the painter the grid refers to the street plan, for me it refers to the way people create solid things (as opposed to un-things). People create a gridded order by way of differentiating things, segmenting realities, classify entities and giving meaning to what exists. People *think* the world when they think the world. And thereby they fill-in or extend the grid. People not only create an order of the streets and in the streets but also create order in abstract things such as a language. A language can be seen as an abstract grid of words, rules, meanings, etc. The grid is both an external, material, linguistic or collective device and an internal, mental, cognitive or individual device. The grid is an entanglement of the present and the represented, of the outside and the inside, of the object and the subject, of the ideational and the material. This entanglement refers to the complex relations rather than the two poles of each binary opposition. For instance the relations between how the presented is represented and how the represented affects the actualization of the presented. These thoughts and observations provoke a need to rework established divisions still used to express the entanglement. This requires the creation of new concepts and the displacement of binary oppositions.

Pulling the two visualizations together lead to the following picture. The ontologically solid things with their boundary lines form a grid. The philosopher Gilles Deleuze and his co-author the psychotherapist Felix Guattari (2004) call this grid a striated space. The grid is the cartographic representation of the striated space with as its reference points the bodies, their expressions and their affects. The ontologically fluid un-things with their blurriness form the in-between space. This is a smooth space (Deleuze and Guattari, 2004). Smooth means "open, slippery and evasive" (Jensen and Rødje, 2010: 12). Things can slip into un-things and escape from the grid in different directions. And un-things can be captured by the grid, expanding its dimension. An example of the latter was the fixing of the borders of the *corregimientos*. To comply with the Bolivian Forest Law, the boundaries had to be congealed and demarcated as lines on a map. This is a form of state capture of indigenous territoriality based on vectors.

The next visualization (figure 4) is Petra de Vree's ceramic statue of a bird.

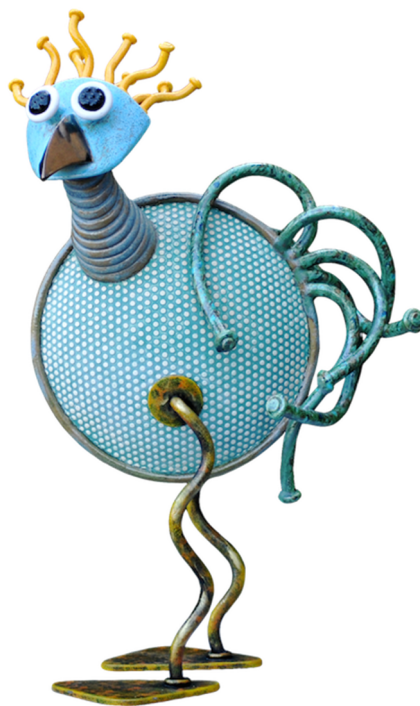


Figure 4. De Vree (2011) Oranjezwammetjeskuif, <http://www.petradevree.nl/sculpture/orange-feather-hat-bird/>

This statue expresses an assemblage of imaginary bird-parts. The artist was inspired by the odd features, bright colours and great variety of birds in a Brazilian zoo. The assemblage is a way to relate and associate parts in a manner that is not necessarily logic, coherent, systemic, structured or organic. The practice of assembling is highly creative, associative, open and free. It is in these ways that the above mentioned entanglements of the present and the represented, of the outside and the inside, of the object and the subject, of the ideational and the material are given shape. Or said more carefully, assemblages are associations in which bodies are being expressed and expresseds are being embodied.⁷²

The next visualization (figure 5) is Ingo Leth's painting of a Japanese *geisha* and cherry blossom.



Figure 5. Leth (2013) *Letter from Kyoto*, <http://www.ingoleth.nl/gallery/letter-from-kyoto>

This painting is painted on a mailbag from the Japan Postal Service Agency. For me it indicates that in an assemblage the parts have capabilities of doing different things, of enacting in different ways, of playing different roles. The parts can be de-linked from one assemblage in which the cloth is part of the practice of postal services and can be linked to another assemblage in which the cloth becomes part of the practice of painting. This process of de-linking and re-linking (or deterritorializing and reterritorializing) is a recurrent phenomenon encountered in my empirical research. Realities are constantly reassembled, 'done' and in-becoming. That is to say that reality is not about what there is (the metaphysics of being) but about what is becoming. This thesis is not only about the things that exist but also about their relations and the processes of assembling these relations in specific practices

⁷² This is not the articulation of material and immaterial entities but the creation of a different division. Both bodies and expressions have a materiality and immateriality. For instance the skyline of New York is an expression that has its materiality (the buildings). The buildings form a body that embodies its immateriality (the architects' aesthetics and knowledge).

of international cooperation. It should be kept in mind that this assembling of things is affected by the un-things that reside in the smooth space and whose bodies can become expressed as surprises.

The final visualization (figure 6) are photos of international cooperation.

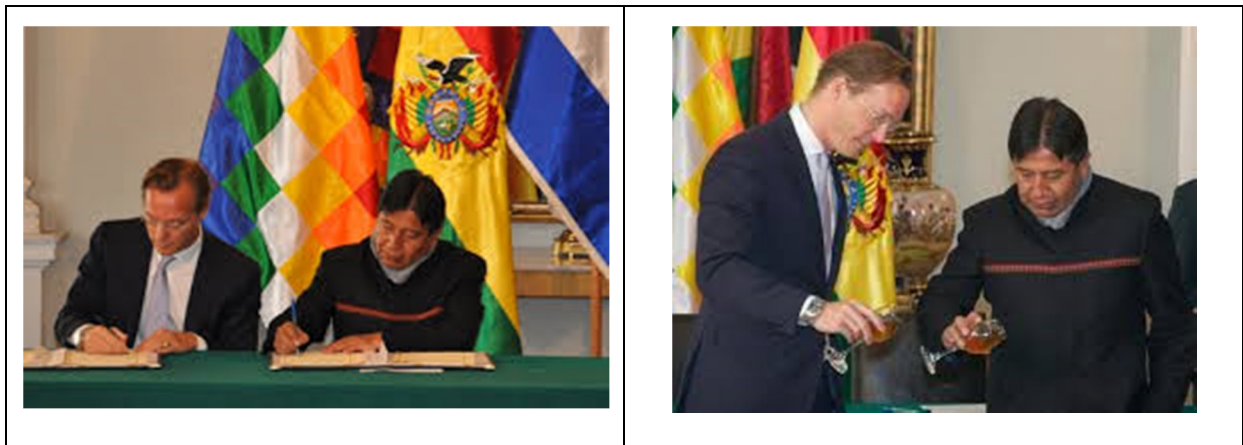


Figure 6. Jaime de Bourbon Parme and David Choquehuanca signing a Letter of Intent and paying tribute to Pachamama (Source of Life).

With the above reflections on realities in mind, I hope to be able to shed fresh light on the theme of international cooperation and its multiple forms. The pictures and the thesis show that international cooperation is more than negotiating and signing texts (the picture on the left). It is more than a ritual (both pictures). It is primarily a relationship between people and between people, other things and un-things. It articulates the human and non-human in dynamic ways. International cooperation involves the enfolding of striated spaces with grids as well as the enfolding of striated spaces with the smooth space of unknowns. Too often conflict arises over the clash of grids. Trust is affected by misunderstandings related to different perceptions. Equivocations pop-up from hidden assumptions⁷³ that there is only one world while in their practice actors are enacting different worlds. And surprises emerge from unknowns. This thesis intends to contribute to a better understanding of how to cooperate and correlate by pointing at the possibility to explore both striated space and smooth space.

International cooperation encompasses multiple practices of assembling: assembling the foreign and aid policies, assembling their implementation and assembling the multiple aspects of politics (not only geopolitics). Central to international cooperation as the encounter of different cultures and different worlds, is the blurring and redrawing of divisions and correlations. The grids and their things are constantly pulled apart, assembled anew, correlated again and un-things are locked-in. These processes affect the ways we ‘thing’ the world, the ways we think the world and the ways we enact the world. The use of divisions, concepts and terms is not only descriptive but also prescriptive for handling the world, doing the world and bringing a particular version of the world into being. It is through their enactment and the performativity of these practices that diplomatic and development bodies make different worlds meet whenever different people meet. When I say ‘worlds meet’ I do not mean the encounter of different perspectives on the world nor the negotiations over these perspectives (cultural politics). I mean that ontologically different *worlds* meet. When De Bourbon and Choquehuanca pay tribute to the *Pachamama* (photo to the right) two worlds meet. On the one hand the world where nature is seen as inert, passive matter that is a universal substrate for all humans who are active and develop many cultures. On the other hand the world where nature and culture are not divided, where mountains and the earth are living matter just as humans. This world is constituted by multiple natures (the many forms of living entities) and one culture (the universality of life or spirit). So when both worlds meet, there is an implicit or explicit negotiation about entities. Which entities can be said to really exist? This political ontology is a novel terrain in international cooperation. I hope

⁷³ The right hand picture assumes the presence of the hidden *Pachamama* (Source of Life) as a reality that is part of the international cooperation in as far as it is politically activated by Minister Choquehuanca (see this thesis).

my contribution to this field will help to articulate the different worlds and will help to create a more common world.⁷⁴

2.2 La entrada Boliviana

The parade (*la entrada*) is an icon of Bolivian religious, civic and political life (Lazar, 2013). It constitutes the format for processions, carnival, neighbourhood festivals, nationalistic commemorations and protest demonstration. Such a lively, heterogeneous and diverse parade or entry of people in the streets, seems an appropriate title to introduce an anecdote about the Bolivian context where part of the fieldwork of this research has taken place. This anecdote is a bundle of story-lines about cooperation and articulations. And these lines are bundled or articulated in the rest of the thesis.

One line is centred around the several articulations of the Yuracaré indigenous people in Bolivia. One of their articulations is with CERES and through them with CIDOP and other lowland Indigenous Peoples in the beginning of the 1990s. This *movimiento indígena* [indigenous movement] is later articulated with other Bolivian social movements. This resulted in a political cooperation aiming at the end of neoliberalism. When these movements succeeded getting an electoral victory with their party *Movimiento al Socialismo* (MAS), this political project became state policy and amongst others rearticulated the international relations of Bolivia. At that point or intersection of lines the focus shifts to the Dutch-Bolivian bilateral relation. The Dutch story-line will be retraced, looking at recent economic and political events. This story-line is then followed to describe the implications for the Dutch Embassy in La Paz. That is one of the sites where the Bolivian and Dutch story-lines intersect. Together these story-lines gradually introduce the context of the research, a number of critical events and at the end several key concepts will be distilled from this account. Figure 7 is a guideline for this account and its lines and terms will become clear while proceeding the following account.

The Yuracaré story-line: biocultural articulations

The Yuracaré indigenous people have lived in and with the Bolivian subtropical Amazonian forest for immemorial times. They are woods-people. According to themselves they trace their origin to a huge tree. They have always taken care of their woods, making sure they do not finish it. But with the numerous encroachments of outsiders into their original territory, this principle was increasingly difficult to live up to. With the outside world coming in in multiple forms, the Yuracaré way of life became vulnerable and changed. In the early 1990s, through the facilitation of the Bolivian NGO CERES the Yuracaré living along the Chapare river were connected with the emerging organization of lowland indigenous peoples in Bolivia, CIDOB. CIDOB became the pivotal point of the indigenous movement in Bolivia. This movement would gain strength and political leverage in the decades to come, both at national level and internationally. The political agenda of this social movement revolved around dignity and territorial autonomy. This agenda resonated with the deep wishes of the Yuracaré of the Chapare river. So through this articulation the Yuracaré changed from their relatively isolated position to being a partner in a wider social movement.

A second articulation which CERES facilitated was between the Yuracaré and several forest agencies. The aim was to prove that the Yuracaré managed their forest in a legal and sustainable way. The acknowledgement of their *management*, beyond mere timber extraction, would be a technical underpinning of their capacity for political and territorial self-governance. The central element of this articulation was the encounter of lay wisdom and expert knowledge, customary rules and formal law and in a later stage beneficiary and donor. These multiple dualities had to be bridged, accommodated or dissolved in the exercise of articulation. The Yuracaré's 'taking care of the woods' (Chapter 4) was taken as the starting point to plan for a modality of 'sustainable forest management in indigenous peoples' territories' that was acceptable for the forestry professionals and national institutions. Both discourses, 'registers' or 'cultural scripts' were integrated and even merged.

⁷⁴ By 'more common world' I do not refer to an homogeneous, shared or middle ground but to multiple and divergent worlds that need each other (after Stengers, 2011a).

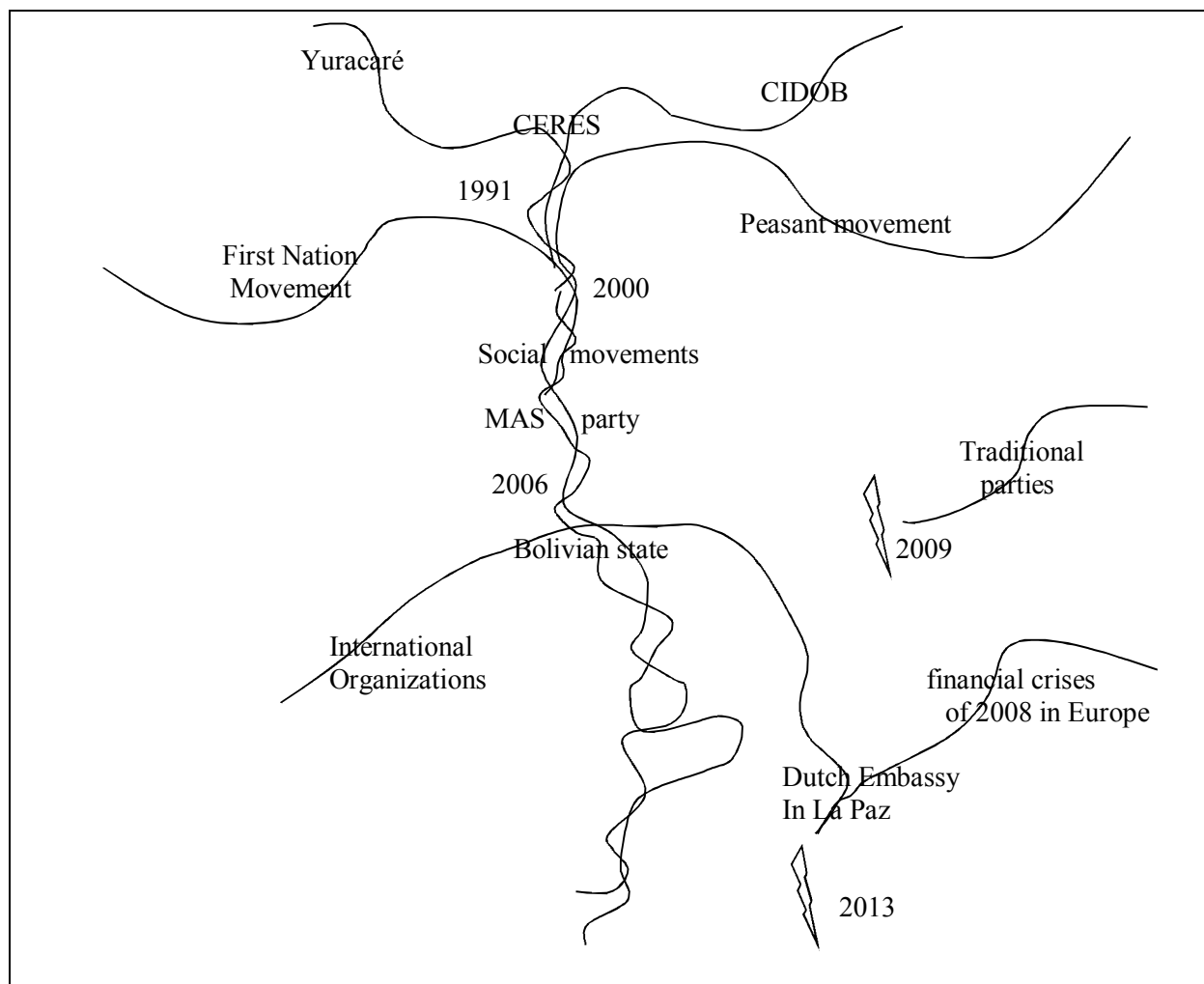


Figure 7. The story-lines and their intersections which informed this thesis.

Both of the above articulations can be seen as outcomes of folding. Imagine a sheet of paper that can be folded and refolded just like in Japanese *origami*. Places on the sheet that were initially far apart (for instance the Yuracaré of the Chapare river and CIDOB in the city of Santa Cruz were hundreds of kilometres apart) can appear very close after the folding is done in a particular way. In this case the social distance of the fold is small or is even dissolving with the Yuracaré becoming part of CIDOB. In the same way the refolding of the conventional separation between lay wisdom and expert knowledge generated an epistemic proximity among Yuracaré and CERES. Through new learning and mutations on either side of the old fold the duality of layman and expert was blurred and even dissolved. The co-creation of new knowledge resulted in a fusion of bodies of knowledge and sense-making.

The social movement story-line: Morales' political articulations

In Bolivia over the last two decades many such processes of unfolding, refolding and fusing occurred in different spheres and through several events. CIDOB and the indigenous peoples' movement became articulated with other social movements that demanded rights, respect and resources. Bolivia experienced a reactivation of the legacy of strong social organizations and revolutionary groups.⁷⁵ The

⁷⁵ Implicitly and explicitly, the turbulence in the beginning of the 2000s was linking the present with past. In line with Aymara thought that time is cyclical, they conceived of a return of the great indigenous insurrections of Túpac Katari in 1781 and of Pablo Zárate (*el temible Willka*) in 1899. It as for many a cycle of 100 years that was now closed again.

miners traditionally had strong unions. The *campesino* [peasant] movement had built a strong affiliated structure, the *Confederación Sindical Única de Trabajadores Campesinos de Bolivia* (CSUTCB). CONAMAQ was the organization that came out of the movement of highland *campesinos-originarios* [peasant-First Nation]. The women's movement consisted of many organizations, among which the *Federación Nacional de Mujeres Campesinas-Bartolina Sisa* would play an important role in the years 2000-2008. The 1992 mobilizations to commemorate 500 years of indigenous resistance was one of the triggers to articulate the movements and to project the *indígena originario campesino* [indigenous First Nation peasants] movement as a political 'subject'. This fusionist concept (without hyphens) embodied unity in diversity. Apart from constituting an articulation, this concept marked the shift from thinking in cultural terms about these identities to thinking in political terms. In those years, the representative democracy did not enable their access to power so they opted for political self-representation. Building on the long tradition of collective rather than individual citizenship, citizens and movements became increasingly powerful to articulate collective demands through their own locally elected authorities that were not so much representative power holders but directly accountable duty bearers (Pearce, 2011: 89)⁷⁶.

The *cocalero* movement in the Chapare further developed the idea of political self-representation. The movement's initial preoccupation was to defend the coca leaf and *cocalero* way of life against the 'war on drugs'. Within the CSUTCB this militant movement elaborated the proposal for a broad-based political arm of the *campesino-indígena* struggle: the *Asamblea por la Soberanía de los Pueblos - Instrumento Político para la Soberanía de los Pueblos* (ASP-IPSP). In 1995 ASP-IPSP participated as part of the Izquierda Unida (IU) in the municipal elections. They managed to win in several municipalities. During the national elections in 1997 they won 4 seats in Congress. In 1998, after an internal schism, Evo Morales became leader of one fraction, the IPSP. In 1999 IPSP received the name and registration of a political party that had become insignificant: *Movimiento Al Socialismo* (MAS). In this way the IPSP got its own political party and self-representation. In short, MAS emerged as a result of a series of foldings and unfoldings as articulations and disarticulations. These processes are still on-going nowadays.

In the period from 2000 to 2008 many processes of unfolding and refolding took place, generating mass mobilizations, blockades and violent upsurges. In the Bolivian highland several social movements were activated and articulated around mass mobilizations. In the year 2000 the strength and articulation of the social movements became clear in what has become known as the Water War. The *Coordinadora de Defensa del Agua* in Cochabamba staged a massive protest together with other social movements and the urban middle class. Through these articulations, the demands of the protesters reached beyond the reversal of the privatization of water. The political and economic models were questioned: the liberal, representative democracy and neo-liberalism.

Several mass mobilizations followed in 2000 and 2001, mostly in the Altiplano region. Analysts frame the events as Aymara insurrections, explicitly linking the present to the great indigenous insurrections in 1781 and in 1899. This time Felipe Quispe, leader of CSUTCB, emerged as the strong leader, as high indigenous authority (*el Mallku*) and for others as a radical revolutionary who instilled fear among the *mestizo* middle-class and elite. In his figure the conventional divisions and debates about class-struggle (the Marxist tradition) versus indigenous peoples' struggle (the *Kataristas* and *indigenistas*) merged or fused.

In 2002 a new drama unfolded in Congress: Evo Morales, leader of the *cocalero* movement and Congressman, was ousted on dubious, political grounds revolving around allegations of involvement in cocaine trafficking. The US Embassy was deeply involved in the slander campaign against Morales. Which helped him a lot, because suddenly his popularity began to increase.

In 2003 the 'Gas War' broke out. It was headed by Felipe Quispe's *Movimiento Indígena Pachakuti* together with the Federation of Neighbourhood Councils-El Alto and other movements. The 'October

⁷⁶ They are not one representing the many but they are one-of-many.

Agenda' was elaborated and served as a guide for the following years. It contained three points: (1) the installation of the Constitutional Assembly, (2) the inclusion of direct and participatory democracy, (3) the nationalization and industrialization of hydrocarbons, including the distribution of its revenues. What had appeared as one big mobilization was in fact the sum of many smaller protests and groupings. It was a heterogeneous, contingent and diverse dynamic that only at the very end turned into a totality. The emerging demand or desire was well expressed in one of the placards: we no longer want to be governed, we want to govern. The Gas War resulted in over 70 deaths and President Sánchez de Lozada fled to the United States. Vice-president Carlos Mesa took over the presidency.

After this period Evo Morales emerged as the articulator of the social movements. Although he had not participated in the Gas War, he was the politician who incorporated all elements of the October Agenda into his political project. Morales gradually shifted his rather moderate position on the nationalization of hydrocarbons. First, he supported a reformist law proposal to get it passed through Congress. Then, after President Mesa refused to sign the law, Morales aligned with the popular demands of the October Agenda and took a firmer stance on the nationalization⁷⁷. Morales mobilized protests that in 2005 resulted in President Mesa's step down. A complicated, negotiated solution for the political and constitutional crisis resulted in the presidency of Eduardo Rodríguez Velzé. The main purpose of his government was to organise new elections. In this period Evo Morales had differences with his more radical rivals, Felipe Quispe and Oscar Olivera (leader of the Water War). In contrast to Quispe, Morales insisted on the convocation of a Constitutional Assembly. In contrast with Olivera, Morales insisted on following the democratic path to the Presidency through elections. So in his electoral programme Morales was best in incorporating the October Agenda. Furthermore, he chose Álvaro García Linera as his running mate. García, an *ex-guerrillero*, had excellent relations with the Aymara movement and as an intellectual he was considered to be part of the *mestizo* leftist middle-class. In the presidential elections Morales obtained a landslide victory and was installed as President in 2006.

The Bolivian government story-line: state rearticulations

The newly appointed government of President Morales resulted in amongst others an overhaul of public servants, the nationalization of strategic sectors such as hydrocarbons and the installation of the Constitutional Assembly. The Constitutional Assembly was tasked to recodify the nation, the state, the economy and many other aspects of constitutional nature. The policies of the Morales government aimed at materializing a new model or mode of living: post-neoliberal; beyond liberal democracy; beyond only-human rights and beyond coloniality/modernity. This new model is economically, culturally and politically pluralist. Central to these policies is the concept '*vivir bien*' (living well). *Vivir bien* stresses indigenous values and ethics instead of Western, solidarity instead of competition, equality instead of social disparity and harmony with *Pachamama*⁷⁸ instead of exploitation of the natural resources. It is also presented as an alternative to the notion of development (living better).

These policies created oppositional articulations and counter-movements among the established elites. Since the elite were no longer articulated at a national level (the crisis of representation), they strived for articulations at Department level. This culminated in a coalition of Prefectures and civic organizations in the lowlands, the *Media Luna*. In a number of Departments political tensions arose between on the one hand the social movements and on the other hand a Prefect who aligned with the *Media Luna*. Within the Department of Cochabamba, in January 2007, the *cocaleros* organised a march to ouster the conservative Prefect. The city of Cochabamba became once again the scene of massive violence. The Prefecture was set in fire, the Prefect was ousted and four people were killed. In Sucre the opposition staged a violent upsurge when the Constitutional Assembly was about to approve the new Constitution. The honorary members of the Assembly had to flee for their lives but also the security forces abandoned the city. In 2008 in Santa Cruz the protests of various oppositional groups overflowed into the violent occupation and destruction of governmental and MAS-related offices.

⁷⁷ Although Morales in May 2006 issued Presidential Degree 28701, the so-called nationalization is rather a forced renegotiation of the terms of contracts and a politically motivated framing to fulfill campaign pledges.

⁷⁸ Source of Life, often mistakenly translated as Mother Earth.

MAS-related movements initiated the ‘march-to-Santa Cruz’ to occupy the city. This conflict was however settled before the movements reached Santa Cruz.

In 2009 the government organised a referendum on the text of the new Constitution. With the massive popular approval of the Constitution, the years of ‘constituting’ and fluidity turned or flowed into a period of the ‘constituted’ and a new solidity of the plurinational state, its relation with the economy, its pluralistic democracy and its relation with society. Unity and plurality were central elements in the processes of congealment. Article 1 of says: “Bolivia is constituted as a Unitary Social State of Pluri-National Communitarian Law that is free, independent, sovereign, democratic, inter-cultural, decentralized and with autonomies. Bolivia is founded on plurality and on political, economic, juridical, cultural and linguistic pluralism in the integration process of the country”. In the political dimension this was expressed in the characterisation of Bolivia as ‘uni-pluri’, one and many, a common united in difference. The Constitution recognizes three types of democracy (representative, direct and participatory) and three types of economy (public, private and communitarian). Especially the interrelations within these domains and across the domains or dimensions have become important in configuring the new state-polity-economy-society.

The bilateral story-line: Dutch Embassy disarticulations

The above mentioned dynamics and fluidity affected the relations with the international community. The Morales government emphasized sovereignty and reciprocity among equal partners. The relations with the traditional donors became tense. The instalment of the Morales government created a rupture of daily working relations among donors and their governmental counterparts. Not only because most civil servants were replaced but also due to political and ideological differences. The MAS government discursively created a distance with regard to the traditional donors and their programmes. This affected the workings of the Dutch Embassy in La Paz. It generated insecurity, anxiety and confusion among its staff. With some exceptions, it was not until mid-2006 that the Dutch Embassy succeeded in rearticulating partner relations with governmental agencies. The publication of the National Development Plan (*Plan Nacional de Desarrollo Bolivia digna, soberana, productiva y democrática para vivir bien*) in June 2006 provided a new framework for Dutch development cooperation. The alignment of Dutch programmes to the new national policies was an exercise of renegotiations and reconfiguration of aid. It drew on the political will and commitment, the flexibility as well as the personal affection and creativity of the Dutch Embassy staff.

While in Bolivia the institutional and social fluidity hardened out into new assemblages of cooperation, the Dutch Embassy was affected by a whole set of different dynamics resulting from the financial crisis in 2008. Suddenly the world-wide financial sector appeared to be vulnerable and fluid rather than trustworthy and solid. Processes of unfolding (the fall of the Lehmann’s Brothers bank), refolding (the state interventions in private banks and unprecedented public investment programmes) and fusion (the overflow of the financial crisis into the economic and social crises) were taking place in multiple sites all over the globe. After the Dutch parliamentary elections in 2009 these crises were translated into austerity plans and policy adjustments affecting amongst others development cooperation and the diplomatic service. Development cooperation was focused on less partner countries and more participation of Dutch business. This affected the Dutch Embassy in La Paz and its programmes in various ways. The most important one was the Dutch government’s decision in 2011 to terminate the development cooperation with Bolivia and close its Embassy in La Paz by the end of 2013. The termination of development cooperation affected some of the partner organizations (mostly the Bolivian NGOs) and staff members. The closure of the Embassy affected the bilateral relation, the staff, the Dutch NGO’s, the Dutch citizenry and the future opportunities for Dutch business.

The above anecdotic reviews and sketchy story-lines will serve as an entry point to this thesis. This overview does not pretend to tell the truth or to be scientifically rigorous. Rather, it serves as an illustration of issues and concepts that will be elaborated in more detail in the following paragraphs and chapters.

2.3 The conceptual entry

The above freely associated and anecdotal review of historical events is a description and interpretation of what might have happened.⁷⁹ These descriptions and interpretations always bear in them a hidden use of concepts. In this case for instance the concepts of social movements, the nation-state, the indigenous people, etc. Thus, related to the anecdotal description, the concepts provide an entry into this thesis. By way of introduction I explore two sets of each three concepts that are hidden in the above description. On the one hand the above anecdote reveals foldings, fusions and flights. On the other hand there are territorializations, deterritorializations and reterritorializations. Each set of concepts will be shortly explained.

From the account it is clear that different realities experience turbulent periods of foldings, fusions and flights that characterize the fluidity of such a 'wet cement moment' in history. These are specific moments when emerging realities can still be molded into a particular congealment that will last for a longer period. These fluid moments are often co-occurring with a certain fusion and confusion. For instance the fusion of social movements in the MAS party. This fusion of ideas, forces and desires gave a tremendous power to the MAS. The flights are escapes, sudden rapid movements or flows turning into turbulence. For example the headlong flight of President Sánchez de Lozada but to a certain extent also the ousting of Congressman Morales and the exodus of civil servants after the 2005 election. The flights open up new lines of action and thought. These 'lines of flight' actualize the potential and mobilize the vitality of fluidity. They are creative and productive ways to question, destabilize and affect the old folds of political and categorical divisions. Old folds and dualities can be refolded in new articulations that harden out and congeal, for instance into a new Constitution, the pluri-national state, a reordered institutional set-up, a post-neoliberal economic model and transformed citizen-state relations.

The second set of basic ingredients to read the account of historical events is composed of three processes: territorialization, deterritorialization and reterritorialization. These are abstract processes. To comprehend them, it is necessary to make a series of intellectual movements: conceptual, spatial, ontological and process-wise. Let me start with the familiar class or network analysis (Castells, 1996). The terms class and network are highly abstract and these phenomena cannot be seen. Classes and networks are social constructions, cognitive devices or conceptual abstractions. Without making such a conceptual movement (Latour, 2005) it is impossible to describe social realities or socio-material networks. The conceptual movement proposed in this thesis is not referring to class or network but to territorialization. Territorialization in its concrete form is related to territory, space and physical places. In geography and biology territorialization takes this most literal meaning. For instance the territorialization of a particular area into a region. It has to do with the drawing of boundaries, the occupation and use of land, the struggles over access, the spatial governance arrangements, the construction of identities, the social life of regions, etc. Besides this concrete territorialization and building upon it, there is a conceptual understanding of territorialization. Conceptually, territorialization refers to linking, articulating, relating and associating parts into larger wholes or fragments into assemblages. It is about joining and converging in an abstract territory (the assemblage). Territorialization is the spatiality of associations. This is parallel with the conceptual movement required to describe networks (see also Müller and Schurr, 2016). The difference between the two is that the network is only one of the many territorializations that are possible.⁸⁰

The significance of conceptual territorialization is that it can be extended to other phenomena than territory, land and places. The territory provides but a template to think about other socio-material entities, assemblages or territorializations. Just as a territory is on the one hand an assemblage of associated fragments and on the other hand carved out, bounded and subdivided physically and

⁷⁹ Whether it really happened in this way, with the logic and linearity that the description presumes, is questionable.

⁸⁰ Moreover, as will be shown in this thesis, the network is a one-sided territorialization, only focussing on the network and not the holes in the net.

topographically, so are populations, societies, identities, discourses, subjectivities, etc. Like the globe is turned into a gridded space of longitudes and latitudes, societies are gridded spaces of nationalities, classes, gender differences, religions, etc. In fact, all entities are associated, differentiated, segmented and classified. This is an insight into the similarities of what is ultimately there and what it is like (the two basic questions of metaphysics). What is there are entities and assemblages. What they are like is associated, differentiated, segmented and classified. This insight presents a movement towards the metaphysical concepts of striated space (Deleuze and Guattari, 2004). Striated space is the gridded and segmented territory of assemblages. It is the abstract space of differentiations, separations⁸¹, dimensions and positions. Thus, the significance of conceptual territorialization is that it is derived from the metaphysical striated space.

While territorialization refers to the converging into a territory, deterritorialization refers to the diverging of a territory and the separation of articulated or associated parts. Moving again from the conceptual to the metaphysical abstraction, deterritorialization is the removal of the grid, the divisions, the boundary lines that constitute the striated space. This results in what Deleuze and Guattari call a smooth space. Smooth space is the space outside or in-between the grids, segments and classifications where the undetermined and unknown resides. Using the network metaphor: while the gridded net forms the striated space, the holes in the net form the smooth space. Back to metaphysics again: while the striated space (the net) is solid or fixed matter-energy, the smooth space (the holes) is fluid matter-energy. Coming back to the basic questions of metaphysics: what is there in smooth space are different intensities of matter-energy; what they are like is fluid, dissolved matter-flow. Taken together, the striated space and the smooth space, leads to conceptualizing a viscous metaphysics in-between solid and fluid.⁸²

It has now become clear that territorialization is the formation of a striated space where any-thing or any phenomenon fits into a cell of the grid. Deterritorialization is the smoothing of space, the escape from the grid, the exploratory trajectory of a new potential. There is a third process: reterritorialization. Reterritorialization is the striating of smooth space, the capturing of the lines of flight, the nurturing of the congealed striated space from the matter-energy of the fluid smooth space.

Taking the reader back to where I began:

- I see two moves, from concrete to conceptual and from conceptual to metaphysical;
- in the metaphysical dimension I distinguish between a gridded, striated space of solid entities and an amorphous smooth space of fluid matter-flows;
- the metaphysical move enabled me to work out three concepts to think socio-material dynamics and the articulation of striated and smooth space: territorialization, deterritorialization and reterritorialization.
- With these concepts any researcher can conduct empirical investigation on which associations are established or dissolved, where these processes are located and how these processes unfold (without any prior assumptions or foundational determinations).

Now I can combine both sets of ingredients (foldings, fusions and flights on the one hand and territorialization, deterritorialization and reterritorialization on the other hand). This enables a reading of historical events and processes not as unfolding in time but as unfolding in space as well. The rise of social movements in Bolivia is not only unfolding during the years 2000-2005 but is also expanding in space (from the Chapare region to the rural areas, from the rural areas to the city of El Alto, from those localized urban centres to middle-class neighbourhood and finally from a mainly highland phenomenon to a nation-wide political movement). More interestingly, it is not only played out in literal geographic space but in metaphysical space: the movement deterritorializes the postcolonial nation-state, the neoliberal economic model and the exclusion of *campesino indígena originarios*. The fusions and lines of flight occur outside the striated space. Fusions take place in the smooth space due

⁸¹ The striation of space is based on a modernist, binary logic of dichotomist classifications (culture-nature, subject-object, etc.) and atomistic partitioning.

⁸² Chapter 8 provides a closer look at these 'matters'.

to the metaphysical fluidity of matter-energy. Lines of flight de-part from the striated space and along their trajectories they create the smooth space. Now I have all the basic conceptual ingredients of what will follow in this thesis:

- There is change and development as processes of unfolding and refolding. Newly emerging fold lines can be conceptual (old categorizations lose their significance and new categories arise), social (old relations loosen up while new ones are tightened), political (old political parties in Bolivia completely disappeared and new ones arose out of social movements), economic (old gift-giving aid shifted to market transactions or new mutual economic cooperation) and other.
- There is the unfolding of deterritorializations. The world as present or represented in its stable and territorialized bodies and expressions is destabilized or disassociated. The boundaries of phenomena and classifications are blurred and beyond that, realities are becoming fluid. Movements, flows and flights are critical to understanding change.
- There is the refolding of reterritorializations. The deterritorialized and territorially fragmented phenomena and classification are reassociated, rearticulations and reassembling. Affect is critical to understanding the holding together of folds, whether in their 'wet cement moment' or as solidified new reterritorializations. But affect is not enough. "What cements a movement on the basis of individual affects is always of a negative character" (Badiou, 2013: 45). It might result in backward-looking resistance. Besides affect, the reterritorializations of new assemblages seem to require desire, will, the power of ideas and the surprise of circumstances.
- There is the relation between ontology (what there is) and epistemology (how it is understood). The way a particular situation *is* or *becomes* has implications for the way it can be understood. A fluid space cannot be understood with fixed, bounded and neatly divided concepts or epistemological frameworks based on such concepts. An understanding is created by following the flows and flights in nomadic and empirical ways through multi-sited ethnographic research. And vice versa. The way a situation or an event is understood (as a stable and fixed fold, a crisis, a process of refolding, a flight, a fluid space or in other ways) affects the way to deal with the event and affects the enactment of a particular reality. The practices of development cooperation, international cooperation and diplomacy are all based on understandings that performatively produce new worlds. The working hypothesis is that the effectiveness of these efforts is closely related to the proper ontological assessment, the corresponding epistemological strategy and the alignment of the practice perspective to the nature of the event.

Chapter 3. Intervention, Facilitation and Self-development: Strategies and Practices in Forestry Cooperation in Bolivia⁸³

3.1 Abstract

Aid encounters in three community forestry endeavours reveal different strategies of development co-operation. The first, intervention, is a unilaterally designed aid strategy where the external intervening party takes the lead, sets the goal, makes the plans, etc. The second, facilitation, is a mutually designed strategy of co-operation which focuses on collective action and mutual learning. The third, encouragement of self-development, is a unilaterally designed strategy where local actors take the lead in development endeavours. These three distinctive strategies will be analysed with reference to social, discursive, political and performative practices found in development co-operation. This provides an integrated framework for assessing local community situations which could guide strategic decisions and promote effective development co-operation.

3.2 Analytical framework

The delivery of foreign aid is highly criticized today (Easterly, 2006; Eyben and León, 2005) and there are general concerns regarding the developmental effectiveness of aid (Riddell, 2007; Wood et al., 2011). At the same time, development is recognized increasingly as a process owned, shaped and pursued by local actors who claim the right to self-determination (Chambers, 1993; Ellerman, 2004). Can this insight into the development process help aid deliverers to increase developmental effectiveness? The present chapter approaches this question by examining how co-operation strategies are enacted and actualized in daily practice, and how specific practices shape aid strategies and effects. The main contribution lies in the distinction between four practices (social, discursive, political and performative) and three strategies (intervention, facilitation and encouragement of self-development). The analysis is conducted at community level and focuses on forestry co-operation in Bolivia. The framework and the case studies delineate several opportunities for further aid reforms, highlighting the implications for knowledge management within development organizations.

Development cooperation is perceived as a collective endeavour which displays the following dimensions: (a) concrete social action and the organization of the co-operation, (b) a shared conceptual framework, (c) the power and will to pursue it, and (d) the shaping of new realities. In analytical terms, these aspects can be characterized as four sets of practices: social, discursive, political and performative. These pillars of the analytical framework are derived from literature, field research and extensive professional experience. The study of these four practices can be connected to the literature on the sociology of development (Long and Long, 1992), practice-based approaches (Corradi et al., 2008) and post-structuralist theory (Butler, 1993; Mignolo and Escobar, 2010; Quarles van Ufford, 2003). This diverse body of literature reveals the importance of people shaping the social world through agency and social networks as well as through discourse (Law and Mol, 2002). In this chapter the concept of ‘practice’ is privileged as the site of knowledge construction and serves as means to study human interaction (Corradi et al., 2008). By way of distinguishing between four practices — the aforementioned social, discursive, political and performative practices — this thesis attempts to avoid unhelpful dualities between discourse and practice, policy and practice and theory and practice.

Social practices refer to the ways in which development co-operation is organized and enacted. Development actors are endowed with agency (Giddens, 1984) and have the capability to organize,

⁸³ This chapter is based on the content of the article: Umans, L. (2012) ‘Intervention, Facilitation and Self-development: Strategies and Practices in Forestry Cooperation in Bolivia’, *Development and Change* 43(3), 773–795.

shape and act out development co-operation. As actors, ordinary men and women can shape and change their worlds within certain limits. They engage in relationships and networks (Long and Long, 1992). Through organizing their social associations the actors co-operate with one another and take part in collective action (Ostrom, 1990).

Discursive practices refer to the ways in which language, labels and frames are constructed and utilized to claim truth or to exercise power (Moncrieffe and Eyben, 2007). Development actors produce discursive spaces in which only certain things may be said by certain actors; other views are silenced or even hard to imagine. Discursive practices are both constitutive of society and dependent on societal conditions for their production (DeLanda, 2006).

Political practices refer to the ways in which power is exercised and authority is legitimized. Development actors exercise power through techniques such as conditionalities, governance, patronage, discourse, acts of resistance or claiming autonomy. Political practices recursively shape the political consciousness and identity.

Finally, performative practices refer to the ways in which social subjects shape new ‘worlds’. Actors are endowed with subjectivity and possess an acquired identity. Through subject formation, objects of development turn into subjects of their own development, while at the same time being subjected to power, for example. This process of subject formation and subjectification is expressed in and through performativity. Performativity is understood as “the reiterative ... practice by which discourse produces the effects that it names” (Butler, 1993: 2). Knowledge and texts do not merely articulate a pre-existing world, it is a means of coming to terms with the world, actualizing it and “bringing it into being” (Law and Mol, 2002: 19).⁸⁴

These four sets of practices are analytically distinct but interconnected. For example, discursive practices are socially organized and politically mobilized. Through the utilization of this eclectic framework of theoretical and conceptual building blocks, the analysis will be grounded in empirical observations of actual practices — not to derive a truth claim but from which to extract explanatory power (DeLanda, 2006).

As a methodological strategy, grounding the analysis in empirical observation enabled me to frame particular combinations of social, discursive, political and performative practices as illustrative of three overarching strategies: co-operation as intervention, as facilitation and as self-development. First, intervention is the unilaterally constructed strategy of development aid whereby the intervening actors set goals, take the lead and apply their own means–end rationality. Intervention refers to the act of ‘stepping into’ the ‘natural’ course of events to realize an objective that the intervening actor values morally and politically in the name of progress. Intervention is the dominant strategy of project aid and often takes the form of ‘aid delivery’.

Second, facilitation refers to the mutually developed strategy of co-operation. Facilitation involves an exchange of societal ‘materials’ (ideas, values, meanings, knowledge, etc.) for the benefit and enrichment of all actors involved. Facilitation entails a ‘coming together’. For transformation to be successful, process facilitation is more than a collection of techniques, tools and participation. It is a long-term co-operation strategy with a particular professional and ethical stance (Chambers, 1993). Aid agents are not mere deliverers but catalysts prepared to participate in the recipients’ endeavours, to learn from them and, if necessary, change themselves.

Third, encouragement of self-development is also unilateral. The development endeavours of local actors are leading here. The concepts ‘self’ and ‘own’ do not refer to ‘traditional’ or ‘unspoiled’ but emphasize that the nature of change is ‘appropriate’. The concepts point at development as the result of self-assembly, which can include external and internal elements. Encouragement of self-development refers to ‘help to self-help’ (Ellerman, 2004) and being respectful of the autonomy of the

⁸⁴ This line of reasoning requires the avoidance of “discursive determinism” (see Mosse, 2005: 15).

other (Muñiz Castillo and Gasper, 2009). Local actors increasingly demand ownership and self-determination, the latter of which refers to the right to freely determine political, economic, social and cultural development.⁸⁵ Increasingly communities, countries and donors aim at economic self-realization (WRR, 2010). Self-determination and self-realization are entry points for co-operating towards self-development. The notion of self-development implies that development does not necessarily depend on co-operation and assistance from outside.

The above-mentioned practices and strategies provide a framework to study development cooperation (see table 2).

Table 2. The Framework of the Four Practices within Three Co-operation Strategies

Practices: Strategies:	Social	Discursive	Political	Performative
Intervention				
Facilitation				
Encouragement of self-development				

3.3 Research design

The main objects of study are the co-operation strategies of three organizations: Jatun Sach'a, Centro de Estudios de la Realidad Económica y Social (CERES) and Centro de Comunicación y Desarrollo Andino (CENDA). These organizations matched the selection criteria to detect, for each strategy, those practices that shape the aid encounter and that are relevant for the study of effectiveness. The research methodology consisted of participant observation, in-depth interviews and action learning.⁸⁶ I worked with and interviewed local leaders, forest workers, local women, project staff and members of non-governmental organizations (NGOs).

All cases were set within the field of community forestry, which emerged in the late 1970s as an alternative to private and state forestry (Umans, 1993). Cross-cultural empirical research has shown that community management often yielded better results than private or state management in terms of social development and environmental sustainability (Ostrom, 1990). This led to the launch of a range of community forestry projects. Jatun Sach'a and CERES are two examples. In the 1990s, a third stream emerged that emphasizes indigenous forestry (Wiersum, 1999). CERES and CENDA display elements of such indigenous practices.

The case studies were conducted in Bolivia. Three case-related aspects of the context will be sketched here: the political situation, the development agencies and the issue of coca. The first part of the fieldwork was conducted during the first presidency of Sánchez de Lozada (1993–97). He pursued a policy of economic liberalization, decentralization, land reform, adopted a new forest law and participated in the US 'war on drugs'. The neo-liberal and decentralization policies created the space for community forestry, increased recognition of the land rights and political representation of indigenous peoples. Due to strong pressure from social movements, central government handed over power and control not only to the private sector but also to the local level and to civic actors. Aid agencies supported these policies through their projects, support for public sector reforms and capacity development. Aid agencies had a powerful position and maintained strong patronage relationships (Eyben and León, 2005).

The second part of the fieldwork was conducted during the first presidency of Morales (2006–09). He pursued constitutional and state reform to advance pluralism and equity (Soruco Sologuren, 2011). He endeavoured to achieve national sovereignty, equality and reciprocity in international relations and

⁸⁵ http://www.un.org/esa/socdev/unpfii/documents/DRIPS_en.pdf (accessed 1 March 2012).

⁸⁶ The aim was neither a comparative analysis of organizational efforts nor ethnographic research in the local communities. It was only through the organizations that local communities were included as research objects.

embarked on a programme of nationalization of strategic economic sectors. The political changes heralded by Morales resulted in tensions with traditional donors, particularly the United States. Aid agencies lost their patronage and influence as a result of Morales' insistence on genuine partnerships and a profound overhaul of staff in central state institutions. Venezuela became a close ally and donor. President Morales maintained his leadership of coca farmers' federations. He reclaimed the traditional use of coca leaves but did not tolerate cocaine production.

I worked in CERES as a Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) Associate Professional Officer from 1995 to 1999. In daily work people perceived me as part of CERES. During the same period I was also frequently involved in Jatun Sach'a in the capacity of advisor. In both instances I paid several visits to the field, followed by further trips in 2008 when I worked for the Dutch Embassy as policy officer. These subsequent visits were carried out with the intention to link practices of the 1990s with their outcomes a decade later. My involvement in CENDA was occasional and field research was conducted only in 2009.

3.4 Development co-operation as intervention

The Jatun Sach'a⁸⁷ project in the Primero de Mayo community presents an example of intervention. The project aimed at promoting the sustainable use of forest resources as an alternative for the illegal production of coca (Anonymous, 2005a). The project was part of the 'war on drugs', which followed two main strategies: (1) the eradication of coca plants, mostly through police and military operations; and (2) the promotion of 'alternative development' through projects such as Jatun Sach'a. The project established small forestry operations and provided technical assistance focusing on rational planning, ecological sustainability and commercial viability. The project was a collective endeavour of several different intervening actors: the Vice-ministry of Alternative Development; United States Agency for International Development and the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime as funding agencies; FAO as implementing agency; project staff; and local consultants.

The setting of the case study is Primero de Mayo in the Chapare region. The project selected this remote community of about 400 families due to the abundant natural forest in the area. Shortly before the launch of the project in 1996, highland peasants (*campesinos*) had occupied the territory collectively and divided it into privately owned family plots of 20 hectares each. They had slashed and burnt a minor part of the forest for coca cultivation. The coca cultivators (*cocaleros*) organized themselves in a peasant union (*sindicato*).

Project experts calculated that forestry was more lucrative than coca cultivation, but most *sindicato* members were opposed to the project. Only twenty-five families were interested. After a diagnostic phase, the project staff elaborated the forest management plan for those twenty-five plots. The project provided skidders and a mobile sawmill for two years. The twenty-five members created the Mapajo company, each buying shares for US\$ 200. The first president of Mapajo soon ran into trouble after over-enthusiastic stories did the rounds of its initial success. *Sindicato* members accused him of being a 'capitalist'.⁸⁸ His removal resulted in the loss of contacts with potential buyers.

In 1999, Mapajo decided to break with the project which had divided the community. The shareholders returned the mobile saw to the project and bought a big sawmill, partly from savings and partly on credit. They did not succeed in installing the new machines. After a year they approached the project again for technical assistance. By the time the sawmill was running, the bank pressed to get payments. After a lawsuit the bank removed the sawmill. Mapajo ceased to exist around 2003. In 2008, most of the forest in Primero de Mayo was cleared. The ex-members of Mapajo had managed to preserve their forest. They knew the value of their trees and were reluctant to sell them cheaply to an illegal logger.

⁸⁷ The original project name was the Forestry Resources Management, Conservation and Utilization Project in the Tropics of Cochabamba. It started in 1994. The second phase of the project was named Jatun Sach'a (1997–2008).

⁸⁸ Interview with *sindicato* member, December 2008.

3.4.1 Social Practices

This brief historical overview of the case highlights the actors involved, their agency and their relationships. The co-operation took the form of a stand-alone project that sought out communities to participate in its activities. The project was organized in technical divisions, separating forestry, agronomy, social issues, etc. The external intervention divided the community into the Mapajo company and the *sindicato*. This division became a site of political tension between liberal governance and neo-liberal competitive economics on the one hand, and collective action, reciprocity and a strong union, on the other hand. Typical of interventionism was the social engineering integral to the project, which divided outsiders from insiders and subdivided insiders.

3.4.2 Discursive Practices

Project staff used multiple labels to identify the same person: *campesino*, *cocalero*, *sindicato* member, interested stakeholder and shareholder. Project staff actively produced negative connotations with certain labels (e.g., *cocalero*) and associated positive values with others (e.g., shareholder). Labels enabled actors to legitimize and reinforce the distinction between good and bad. Through practices of labelling, the *mestizo* professionals stigmatized *campesinos* as being retarded. They criminalized *cocaleros* as environmental destructors and narco-terrorists. Labelling justified intervention in the lives and practices of *cocaleros*. By employing normative discursive practices, project staff attempted to induce changes in the identity formation of subjects, whilst at the same time subjecting them to a particular category. However, implicit efforts to change *cocalero* identity into a shareholder identity were countered by the revival of the *cocalero* identity.

The interventionist strategy revolved around two concepts: ‘aid’ and ‘delivery’. This discursive framing could only be used on the assumption that the communities needed help and that the project could inject what was needed into the community: rational planning, industrial technology, etc. The aid delivery mode created a division between outsiders who were endowed with agency to actively deliver aid and beneficiaries who were the passive recipients of help. Taken together, the discursive practices of labelling and framing were constitutive of intervention and of the exercise of power.

3.4.3 Political Practices

The project’s aim to change land-use patterns and *cocalero* identity was accompanied by the intention to break the power of the *sindicatos*. The *sindicatos* defended the right to land and coca. Coca was a traditional crop and an integral part of the Andean economy and culture. Within the global economy of emerging cocaine trafficking, coca cultivation was a route out of poverty that the *cocaleros* had devised themselves and were proud of (Arce and Long, 2000). To counter the efforts of coca eradication, pride turned into political militancy against ‘neo-liberal imperialism’.⁸⁹ The *sindicatos* organized themselves into federations with strong political leaders. The federations participated in municipal and national elections but turned against the state too (Van Cott, 2008).

In Primero de Mayo, political practices were collectivist. The *sindicato* governed through assemblies. This stood in contrast to the project’s focus on individual rights and voice. Such political practice was resisted by the *sindicato* in various ways. For example, crucial meetings with project staff were blocked regularly due to a lack of quorum among the *sindicato* and because the community had selected one of the least capable members as contact person for the project.

3.4.4 Performative Practices

The performative dimension of the project entailed ‘coming in between’. Staff members entered the ‘field’, communities and *sindicato* meetings in ways that would appropriate those territorial, social, cognitive and political spaces. A standard behavioural pattern of intervention could be observed: enter, inject (capital, technology or knowledge) and exit (or abandon). The behaviour of entering and

⁸⁹ Interview with *sindicato* member, December 2008.

occupying lent a colonial character to the project.⁹⁰ The project actualized a new world of ‘alternative development’, which was populated by new colonizers and the colonized: donors and recipients, professionals and laypersons, stakeholders and *cocaleros*.

Apart from the production of new colonial subjects and identities, the project constructed new gendered subjects and identities. The project can be described stereotypically masculine⁹¹ given its emphasis on strength, speed, toughness, ambitions, independence, visibility, rationality, out-going orientation, taking initiative, scaling-up, targeting, privileging the breadwinner’s role, etc. These performative practices gave the project a distinctly ‘masculine’ character.

The *sindicato* was a colonizing and ‘masculine’ subject too. It was instrumental in the conquest and colonization of the lowland, the production of corporate discipline, commercial relations with cocaine traffickers, and the sometimes violent defence activities against military eradication of coca (Arce and Long, 2000). In short, the *sindicato* colonized, produced, competed and fought like a masculine subject.

The forestry endeavour was thus an encounter between two ‘masculine’ subjects: the project and the *sindicato*. Due to opposed interests, this resulted in performative practices of mutual rejection, resistance to being subjected and proactive expulsion. The encounter resulted in feelings of being cheated, sadness, shame and impotency, which was expressed by various members of the *sindicato*. During field visits in 2009, it emerged that many *cocaleros* had overcome the role of ‘victim’ and had transformed themselves into new subjects struggling for truth, dignity and justice (cf. Van Cott, 2008).

The Mapajo company had a more mixed or ambivalent colonial and gender identity. Mapajo was subject and subjected at the same time. On the one hand, given its commercial role, Mapajo imitated and internalized the masculinity and colonialism of the outsiders by being outgoing, competitive or even aggressive in search of new markets. On the other hand, Mapajo was constructed as the feminine counterpart of the masculine project. Project staff portrayed it as a passive ‘target group’ that would adopt new ideas and technology.

3.5 Development co-operation as facilitation

The forestry programme FTTP⁹² which supported the Yuracaré Indigenous People in their effort to consolidate their territory and culture⁹³ is illustrative of the strategy of facilitation. The endeavour was developed by the Study Centre of Economic and Social Reality (CERES), a Bolivian research NGO. The Yuracaré authorities requested CERES to help claim land and forest rights. The Yuracaré lacked legal ownership although they had lived in and managed their forests for hundreds of years.⁹⁴ The Yuracaré wanted to legalize their landownership and forest use both as a matter of principle and as an instrument for their development. Legalization implied compliance with the Forestry Law 1700 (*Ley Forestal 1700*). This entailed the elaboration of a forest management plan (FMP) for which they requested technical assistance from CERES (CERES-CONIYURA, 1998).

⁹⁰ Thus, colonial strategies of conquering, settling and preaching have contemporary counterparts in development interventionism. Colonization as performativity is not a normative device but a descriptive and analytical one.

⁹¹ The traditional western notion of masculinity is emphasized here since it was this conception that was expanded through colonialism and much of development co-operation. Here the *stereotype* of masculinity is discussed to indicate the role of images and discourse shaping the gender relations performatively.

⁹² FTTP stands for Forestry, Trees and People Programme, which was a collaboration of the FAO and the Swedish University of Agricultural Sciences. The programme was largely funded by the governments of Sweden and the Netherlands. Initiated in 1987, the global programme developed participatory methodologies applicable to community forestry projects.

⁹³ The Yuracaré are not traditional in the strict sense of the term, yet they are keen on determining their own development path and modernization process.

⁹⁴ According to Decree Law 11686 of 1974, all forest resources are the property of the State. Their exploitation and management takes place through utilization concessions granted by the government to the private sector.

The setting of this case study is the Yuracaré territory along the Chapare River. It comprises approximately 250,000 hectares and has about 2000 inhabitants. The Yuracaré have never been colonized. An evangelical mission has been active from the mid-twentieth century onwards. Yuracaré ceded much of their original territory as a result of displacements and encroachments by outsiders. *Cocaleros* regularly attempted to colonize part of the territory. The Yuracaré engaged mainly in slash-and-burn agriculture. Their traditional, clan-based organization had evolved into the Yuracaré Council. The Council formed a more united and powerful organization better able to protect the territory from further encroachments and external loggers.

Timber harvesting was the principal and legitimate source of cash income for the Yuracaré. From the perspective of the Forest Service, however, it was illegal because Bolivian law didn't recognize indigenous people's rights. In 1992, the Forest Service intervened and formed the Association of Timber Loggers (Engel et al., 2001). All men engaged in the timber business had to become a member. The Association regulated timber harvesting internally, while the Forest Service set the annual allowable cut. The legal ceiling was much lower than the customary and legitimate amount harvested. While the Yuracaré continued with their customary practices, the Forest Service's law enforcement resulted in considerable state harassment.

The historical record in forest management, the vast indigenous knowledge, a strong sense of ownership, and the desire of the Council to turn their legitimate claim into a legal entitlement led the FTTP-CERES team to refrain from intervening unilaterally but to facilitate change in forest management. CERES insisted on respecting the existing forest management rules and activities as much as possible.

CERES, Forest Service and Yuracaré Council represented a diverse team allowing them to gain the required in-depth knowledge on local values, institutions and specific silvicultural practices (Becker and León, 2000). They used the International Forestry Resources and Institutions methodology (cf. Poteete and Ostrom, 2004). The research showed that the Yuracaré forest management was competent even though not consistent with the technical criteria developed by forestry science (Umans, 1993).

In 1997, the government invited the team to collaborate in writing the by-law for the new Forestry Law 1700. The team's contribution was to align the by-law with the principles and practices of indigenous forest management.

The enactment of the new Forestry Law 1700 brought about major changes in Yuracaré logging practices due to the prohibition to use chainsaws. Without a chainsaw, the Yuracaré could no longer cut logs to a size still transportable on their backs. Rather than moving the (chain) saw to the tree, they had to move the trees to the (mobile) saw. This required higher investments, new skills, as well as a different approach to planning and organization. In fact, the law imposed a more commercial approach to logging which relied on expensive machines, labour shifts and business management. The Yuracaré made the necessary adjustments by applying their own 'rules on how to change the rules'.

In 1998 the Yuracaré forest management plan (FMP) became the first indigenous FMP to be approved by the Forest Service. Thus, the Yuracaré People and the Forest Service entered into a new relationship with high hopes for the future. Yuracaré development didn't oppose the state or the market but their entry into state and market relations was based on indigenous social values. Their understanding of development was inclusive, articulated and humanized.

The first shift of workers operating the mobile saw was successful, but the second shift failed to properly hand over the operation to the third. Several reasons were advanced for this, including technical failure, high costs, the difficulty to organize labour, insufficient training and inadequate supervision by the authorities (Anonymous, 2006). The technical and social challenges surrounding the sawmill operation were compounded by political tension. The FMP had triggered internal disputes regarding income distribution and territorial subdivisions. Clans started to claim timber resources which they claimed belonged to their sub-territory. Timber stocks varied significantly among the

different communities. Disputes arose and eroded the basis for collective action among the Yuracaré. At the 2001 general assembly, organized by the Council, dissatisfaction with the implementation of the FMP was widespread among the attendants. One member asked: “Why don’t we dump the sawmill in the river if we fight so much over it?” (Anonymous, 2006: 33). The Council made several adjustments to the internal rules and practices. Again, their implementation failed.

In 2003, a Chinese company offered to invest in a sawmill and exploit the forest. The offer was rejected mainly because the Yuracaré did not want to become contract labourers on their own land. In 2004 several *colonos* invaded the territory. This united the Yuracaré once again and strengthened their leadership. Meanwhile, banana production was intensified to generate cash income, but massive flooding destroyed the crops in 2007 and 2008. People returned to timber harvesting. The Council instructed its own forest technician, a member of the erstwhile CERES team, to review the FMP and prepare a new one. The Council approached CERES again for facilitation.

The Yuracaré case exhibits a variety of impositions, interventions, facilitation and self-development. The planning phase was characterized most strongly by facilitation and will be further analysed below.

3.5.1 Social Practices

The Yuracaré related to each other and to the forest primarily through care. Their relationship with the social and biophysical environment was based on reciprocity. Reciprocity *vis-à-vis* the Forest Service meant claiming rights (territory, citizenship) and complying with legal requirements. The supreme Yuracaré authority told the officials: “We would like to request that you do not only come to see [us] but that you carry the Yuracaré People in the depth of your heart and mind” (Teobaldo Noé, 28 November 1998). This symbolism captures the intimacy characteristic of Yuracaré social relations. Such relations extended to the forest, which they perceived as their offspring (Orellana, 1996) and nurtured accordingly (León, 1997).

The action-research illustrates best how facilitation works. CERES did not intervene in customary organizational forms but, together with the Council, decided to create a mixed research team in order to foster mutual learning and local leadership. This team was not imposed by CERES as a formal structure but rather emerged along the course of collective action as a site for the conversion of knowledge, as well as a battlefield for knowledge. Facilitation created a shared space for change to take place in a manner appropriate to the Yuracaré.

3.5.2 Discursive Practices

The daily language and labels of the Yuracaré reflected their perception of the forest. The mixed team started with *lenguajear* (Maturana, 1990: 22) or ‘*language*’ through a mutual dialogue reflecting on concepts, meanings and views. For example, the Yuracaré did not use the label ‘*bosque*’ (forest) but ‘*monte*’ (woods). The concept ‘woods’ contained mythical, emotional and spiritual dimensions. Thus, rather than seeing their multiple activities as *management of forest resources*, the team constructed the discourse of *caring for the woods*. This discursive frame emerged as a consequence of facilitating a shared space where a variety of divergent positions converged. The novel concepts challenged the ideas about forestry prevalent within the Forest Service. Facilitation enabled plurality, complexity and innovation. Yuracaré, CERES and the Forest Service increased their knowledge and succeeded in constructing their own meanings and rules.

3.5.3 Political Practices

The Forest Law 1700 challenged Yuracaré political practices. The Council needed to develop new rules on decision making and on income distribution. Forestry decisions were no longer related to daily needs and family autonomy but were based on the management plan. The Law called for an equitable distribution of benefits which was at odds with the exclusive nature of the Association and with clan-based customary practice. Traditionally powerful families benefitted most. The development of distributional rules created internal tensions and eroded collective action. Studying these tensions

formed part of the facilitation process (Orellana, 1996) and they were discussed in the mixed team and Council. However, they were not ‘resolved’ within the fifteen-year period. The Yuracaré failed to achieve equity and inclusiveness.

Facilitation also addressed the power relations between the Yuracaré and external actors. Respectful and more equitable relationships were established between Yuracaré and the Forest Service. The Yuracaré challenged policymakers’ implementation of the law: their top-down design, lack of closeness of fit to local circumstances, technical emphasis and their presumed role in fostering development. The Yuracaré contributed to state building through their knowledge and experience. Once the Forest Service staff understood local practices and how CERES facilitated change, they moved away from their interventionist strategy.

Inevitably, facilitation included a component of empowerment, as CERES accompanied multiple but specific actors in their political struggles (the Yuracaré People) and governance efforts (the state and the Yuracaré Council). The Yuracaré expanded their sense of ownership and their capacities through establishing their own technical branch and hiring its personnel. They were no longer the “cleaners in their own house” (pers. com.)⁹⁵ who are being told what to do, where and when. Yet, they remained subjected to the power of middlemen to trade timber for food and other necessities.

3.5.4 Performative Practices

In this instance, performative practices were also analysed in terms of coloniality and gender. CERES did not physically or symbolically colonize the Yuracaré territory or minds but created a ‘shared space’ or ‘caring space’. The facilitation discourse was marked by intimacy, reciprocity and care. For CERES, ‘to facilitate’ meant accompanying subjects in redefining competent performance and adjusting their practices accordingly, a process that could only be realized through learning from within (Engel et al., 2001). The facilitators were not the drivers of community development but partners in bringing about multiple changes within the Yuracaré communities, the Forest Service staff and the policy makers.

Returning to the gendered identities discussed above, both the Yuracaré and CERES displayed strong ‘feminine’ characteristics through the caring, collaborating, listening and inviting stance that was assumed. Both displayed ‘masculine’ characteristics through proactive public lobbying and demanding a state response. Facilitation resulted in an affective relationship between the Yuracaré, CERES and the state. Facilitators pursued an exchange enjoyed by all, enriching to all and without subjecting anyone.⁹⁶ This pursuit was interrupted by a lack of funds and the failure to implement the FMP which was regretted by all parties involved. The recent rapprochement suggests that the relationship is still healthy. The institutional engagement of CERES with the Yuracaré went deeper than a development project. It was a relationship of partners in a web of reciprocal interactions. Innovations were the result of a relational and affective strategy of co-operation which required openness, familiarity, sensitivity, empathy and care of the other.

3.6 Development co-operation as self-development

The activities undertaken by CENDA⁹⁷ in Raqaypampa, a remote region in the Bolivian highlands, represents a case of encouragement of self-development. CENDA is a Bolivian NGO which was founded in 1985. Its primary objective is to contribute to strengthening spatial management strategies of *campesino* indigenous communities, linking it to the exercise of their collective rights. CENDA supports a development model that is culturally defined by the communities themselves. It also

⁹⁵ One leader explained that projects turned the indigenous peoples into ‘cleaners of our own house’. They recognize ownership but order them around or pay them for certain project-related tasks. “Are you still the owner then?”.

⁹⁶ Such interaction is devoid of the ‘masculine’ pursuit of ‘scoring points’.

⁹⁷ CENDA stands for the Centre of Communication and Andean Development <http://www.cenda.org>.

pursues an alternative approach to development⁹⁸ (rather than ‘alternative development’ as in the first case study). CENDA’s mission is to strengthen community capacities through a horizontal relation of mutual respect and the creation of an autonomous organizational and institutional identity. Right from the start CENDA worked in Raqaypampa. CENDA was partly funded by an Austrian NGO and also maintained collaborative relations with several universities.

The setting of the case study is Raqaypampa. Its people constitute a small ethnic group consisting of almost 10,000 people (Anonymous, 2005b). They are part of the Quechua culture and identify themselves as *campesino*, *indigena* (indigenous) as well as *originario* (original). Over the centuries Raqaypampeños have pursued a path of self-development. In the colonial era Spanish settlers seized their land and the Raqaypampeños became bonded labourers (Anonymous, 1995). After the 1953 land reform, all Raqaypampeños received a piece of land. Increasingly, the state and the market expanded their interest in this region. The individualization of land titles left them vulnerable to infringement of their territory by outsiders. In response, the various communities organized themselves in unions (*sindicatos*). The unions were integrated into the *Central Regional Único Campesino de Raqaypampa* in 1997. The *Central* formed the collective entity deciding on Raqaypampa’s development. It developed a socio-political response to neo-liberal policies, market forces, professional interference and liberal democracy.⁹⁹ The *Central* successfully fought for territorial integrity, management and control (Anonymous, 2005b).

In order to guarantee the integrity of the territory as a collective property and to ensure control over natural resources, the *Central* successfully applied for recognition as *Tierra Comunitaria de Origen* (TCO).¹⁰⁰ It was the first TCO of *originarios* in the highlands. Yet, the category of TCO limited the autonomy of the *Central* to govern themselves, especially regarding mining concessions and various municipal competencies. Hence, its leaders demanded recognition as an indigenous municipal section which allowed them to draw up their own by-law and gain access to a part of the municipal budget proportional to the number of inhabitants. The financial basis formed another cornerstone of self-development, despite the fact that their own municipal management had to comply with external bureaucratic requirements and administrative procedures.

The decline of forest was one of the problems the Raqaypampeños faced. After seeing a nearby community receive tree seedlings from a project, the leaders approached CENDA for money to start growing tree seedlings. CENDA decided to engage in forestry with a political purpose rather than merely providing technical assistance. Through collective reforestation and forest management, CENDA intended to bring to light the complex relations within the Andean agro-ecological productive system, and reinforce its viability and validity as livelihood system (cf. Bebbington, 2000). In addition, CENDA wanted to increase awareness among policymakers of the relations between the productive system, the wider socio-political dynamics and the exploitation of peasants. Forestry became part of the endeavour to develop a socio-political model of development rather than an attempt to green the landscape. As such, CENDA required communities to commit to collective forest management. CENDA trained local specialists among the *campesinos* who could take up forestry activities in accordance with the Andean principles of community assistance, reciprocity and solidarity. The community took the lead, also in terms of economic contribution. The main role of CENDA was to train nursery foremen in each community.

The introduction of nursery foremen could be seen as a departure from traditional ways of knowledge management, and from indigenous knowledge itself. Traditionally, specialist knowledge was

⁹⁸ According to CENDA, mainstream development had a negative attitude towards Andean agriculture (see also Bebbington, 2000) and submitted it to technological packages that further disintegrated *campesino* productive systems. CENDA studied and proved conclusively the viability of *campesino* systems with high productivity, autonomy regarding markets, sustainability and social solidity. This was field tested by farmers’ research.

⁹⁹ In Raqaypampa, representative democratic institutions exist alongside participatory and non-liberal forms of democracy.

¹⁰⁰ Original Communal Land. A TCO is a territorial unit with collective land and forest rights administered by an indigenous people.

concentrated in the *tata* (old wise men) and *jampiri* (healer). Practical knowledge was widely shared. The training of foremen by an external specialist undermined the position of the *tata* and distinguished community members who could access the intellectual capital and authority of professionals from those who could not. This created a new logic of accumulating, rather than sharing, of forestry knowledge (Alba, 1996). Soon the Raqaypampeños requested CENDA to replace the external trainer with a local person, Luis Albarracín. The leaders wanted CENDA to spend project money locally and pay a local person rather than an external trainer. The leaders also wanted to prove their capacity for self-management. Albarracín assumed the title of *técnico campesino* (peasant technician). His supervision of the nursery foremen merely reproduced the knowledge-related differentiation and hierarchy within the community. When CENDA stopped payments to Albarracín and the foremen, the nursery efforts were abandoned. Forestry nevertheless remained important since timber and firewood remained scarce. The *Central* stimulated one of the Raqaypampeños to study forestry at a university.

The case illustrates that self-development is a matter of power and knowledge, both indigenous and modern. Raqaypampeños invited outsiders to make contributions but as the owners of their development, they maintained their autonomy. CENDA first encouraged self-development and then discontinued financial support to avoid dependency and stimulate self-development. This will be discussed in greater detail below, with reference to social, discursive, political and performative practices.

3.6.1 Social Practices

Self-development was achieved thanks to the capacity for self-organization. The organization of internal collective decision making evolved in response to diverse pressures from external actors. The *Central* with its technical arm emerged as a powerful and knowledgeable actor capable of insisting on autonomy. CENDA not only respected and strengthened this collective actor but served it and was guided by it. The *Central* played a supervisory role in the self-organization of multiple and customary forms of social life in Raqaypampa. A variety of formal and informal organizations were accountable to the *Central*.

The *Central* modified the social organization of forestry since traditional customs were no longer sustainable. Yet, the new form of a *técnico campesino* turned out to be unsustainable as well. The *Central* is reflecting on innovative ways of self-organization to deal with the scarcity of forest resources. Changes took place in the social organization of the NGO, not only in Raqaypampa. Some of the Raqaypampeños were staff members of CENDA and they occupied part of CENDA's office.

3.6.2 Discursive Practices

Self-development implies ownership and authorship of labels and meanings. The concept of *usos y costumbres* (uses and custom) was employed and acted as a powerful strategic and adaptable framework that enabled internal cohesion and coherence in opposition to certain external frames (cf. Boelens, 2008). The framework created a dualism between 'self' and 'other' with other *usos y costumbres*. A distinct, separate 'self' was the precondition for self-development. *Usos y costumbres* grounded such self-development in an imagined past. Through this frame, the Raqaypampeños established links with wider networks and political entities (for example, CENDA, the Movimiento al Socialismo party and Bolivia's Constituent Assembly). At the level of speech acts, discursive practices of self-development included local leaders leading discussions and granting outsiders permission to speak at meetings.

3.6.3 Political Practices

Self-development depended on the capacity for self-determination and self-governance. No activity in the region was permitted without the consent and authorization of the *Central*. Self-governance depended on strong political commitment, democratic institutions and authority structures. Major decisions were taken by the General Assembly which represented all Raqaypampeños. These decisions were based on consensus and imparted legitimacy to the *Central*. CENDA encouraged

ownership and autonomy through a strategy of non-interference and active restraint from intervention. Self-development was encouraged through political support and the transfer of administrative powers to Raqaypampeños. CENDA chose to collaborate at the political level, assuming that strong leadership would be followed by self-development. CENDA was held accountable by the General Assembly as the highest authority.

3.6.4 Performative Practices

CENDA's mission statement explicitly states that it treats its partners as equals and that it refrains from subordinating them or being subordinated. One of the reasons CENDA was established was to pursue a de-colonial¹⁰¹ strategy, that is, one that avoids entering, occupying and controlling the other. De-colonization was expressed through a celebration and revalorization of *campesino* indigenous thought, its heterogeneity and its value. CENDA stimulated rather than aided, and the relationship could be described as one of friendship (*compañero*) rather than paternalistic. The *Central* and CENDA were not equal but their differences did not prevent them from interacting on an equal footing. Although asymmetrical, the relationship was respectful. CENDA trusted the local authorities. In short, the discourse of self-development was based in friendship, local ownership and authorship.

Furthermore, CENDA's conduct revealed a mixed gender identity. It supported *Central* in its struggles and also accepted Raqaypampa's leadership and presence in its midst. Many Raqaypampeños worked, studied and lodged in CENDA's offices. Two quite separate worlds merged here: academic, critical thought and activism combined with indigenous knowledge, wisdom and struggle. This convergence represents a good example of co-operation as encouragement of self-development.

The Raqaypampeños experienced colonialism and modernity in various forms: Spanish rule, post-independence subordination to landlords, state massacres in response to *campesino* uprisings, as well as more recent state interventions in education and governance that neglected the local context and culture (Anonymous, 1995). Many state policies subjected, controlled and contained, rather than enabled, self-governance. This 'colonial' encounter shaped the identity of the *Central*. The lived experience of subordination did not result in a desire for self-assertion through the subordination of others. Instead the *Central* sought to break away from subordination altogether and create alternative horizontal relationships.¹⁰² In its struggle, exercising internal control and taking initiative, the conduct of the *Central* could be labelled as 'masculine'. Through fostering a co-operative and productive relationship with the state by bringing policies in line with the framework of *usos y costumbres*, it could be described as 'feminine'.

3.7 Discussion: engaging with communities

Table 3 provides an overview of some of the features of the three case studies. It should be noted that there is ample scope for further nuances, cross-connections and additions. The strategies described are loose assemblages (DeLanda, 2006) of fragments of practices rather than fixed, distinct or separate categories.

None of the three strategies (intervention, facilitation and self-development) in itself is better than the other. In many long-term co-operation efforts, the three strategies are followed at the same time or individually at some point in time. A project might start as an intervention and evolve into self-development with the donor gradually withdrawing. In this section, the findings of studying community forestry cases will be used to reflect on the characteristics of the three co-operation strategies. The above-mentioned strategies and practices will be related to situational parameters in order to clarify their relevance for the study of aid effectiveness.

¹⁰¹ A group of Latin-Americanists developed the 'de-colonial turn' (Mignolo and Escobar, 2010).

¹⁰² Corporate culture does entail strict hierarchical relations between leaders and members.

Table 3. Examples of the Four Practices within Three Co-operation Strategies

Practices: Strategies:	Social	Political	Discursive	Performative
Intervention	Dividing outsiders from insiders and subdividing insiders. New organizational forms.	Opening up political space and introducing new forms of authority. Serving external geo-political interests.	Production of normative labels. Push for establishment of professional discourse.	Delivery. Masculine. Colonial. Feminizing.
Facilitation	Merging of outsiders and insiders into new mixed entities.	Mutual accommodation of interests and practices.	New concepts and ways of producing knowledge.	Catalysing. Ambivalent. Interchange. Emergence.
Encouragement of self-development	Strengthening organizational forms appropriate to the subject of development.	Respecting local leadership and decision-making processes. Self-determination.	Local discourse.	Ownership. Invitation. Constructing self-realization. Ethics of self-constraint.

Intervention is an external and unilateral co-operation strategy built around a desired goal. Interveners are subjects who step in and construct a ‘colonized space’ characterized by interveners and intervened. There are many examples of interventions that are successful in terms of their contribution to the realization of the ideals of modernity such as prosperity, freedom and equality. These successes¹⁰³ depend largely on control and knowledge. Interveners control inputs to steer the process of change. Their knowledge production focuses on the predictability of essential cause and effect relations. Interveners actively produce control, labels, truth claims, as well as counter-reactions expressed in the reluctance or outright resistance of the intervened to be controlled, conditioned, known and ruled. It makes interventions messy, temporary and costly. The costs often involve unintended consequences, such as dependency on continued donor support or reliance on a neo-paternalistic state. Morality figures prominently in interventions that aim at doing good or getting things right. Any such normative framework is contested (Quarles van Ufford, 2003). For example, development in the Chapare region based on coca/cocaine production is impressive and very modern (Arce and Long, 2000). The moral question is whether ‘alternative’ development is a better form of development — and for whom (Arce and Long, 2000). In short, intervention works when (1) pursuing short-term objectives and results that (2) are highly valued by the recipient and (3) fall within the political, social and technical sphere of control and area of expertise of the donor.

Facilitation is a strategy of development co-operation which enables the mutual construction of knowledge and power in which balance¹⁰⁴ is central. Facilitators create a ‘shared space’ of co-producers. Success largely depends on good relationships and the quality of the process. For example, facilitation was effective in the CERES case due to the mobilization of relevant actors, the mutual identification of the problem and inclusion of different practices. Facilitators find rather than deliver, enable rather than inject, catalyse rather than control, and learn rather than know. Facilitation renounces an instrumental rationality, even the instrumental use of participatory tools. Success in co-operation is not so much dependent on following a well thought through plan. Success requires, among other things, a plurality of masculine and feminine qualities. Facilitation fosters the participation of external actors in the relationships and processes of development subjects, which is a sign of care and commitment. Facilitation renounces the coloniality and masculinity of

¹⁰³ Success is most often judged, applauded and rewarded from ‘above’ (see Mosse, 2005). This reinforces the underlying hierarchy between donor and recipient.

¹⁰⁴ Balance does not necessarily mean there is equality. Inequality should be acknowledged but does not impede the establishment of a relationship of mutual respect and does not necessarily lead to a relationship of dependency.

interventionism. The external actor cares, engages, catalyses, enquires¹⁰⁵ and accompanies. Facilitators enable diversity and stimulate innovation in order for the other to flourish. There is no 'one-size-fits-all' and 'best practice' since practice takes place in specific contexts. The morality of facilitation is not about getting things right but about doing the right thing in the right manner. What is right and wrong is negotiated and morality is mutually constructed. In short, facilitation works when there is (1) a relationship of mutual respect (2) mutual affection and empathy and (3) powerful actors (donor, local leaders, government or the facilitator) are committed to abstain from taking decisions unilaterally or forcing ideas onto the other.

Self-development is a tremendous force; however, people, communities or countries cannot always develop themselves due to certain conditions that impede change. At the community level, both intervention by and neglect from external actors can create such impediments. Those who encourage self-development enable unlocking, unchaining or unleashing the social, discursive, political or performative practices that impede self-development. They nurture the self-development of the subject and participate in an 'invited space' (see also Brock et al., 2004). Success largely depends on trust. This co-operation strategy fosters, on the one hand, political leadership and responsibility from below and, on the other hand, willingness, trust and commitment from above. The morality of self-development departs from the principle of autonomy and the recognition of the subject as owner of its development. The subject can, in principle, take decisions unilaterally without fearing threats from the donor, NGO or local government to stop funding if its ideas and policies do not match their priorities or preferences. External actors exercise self-restraint as an ethical stance and refrain from intervening or getting too closely involved in the life of the other through all sorts of activities (Quarles van Ufford, 2003). Self-development might require a shift in donor or NGO objectives in the sense that autonomy becomes the primary goal and means to achieve more conventional development objectives. Autonomous people, networks and nations are better able to choose the life they want to lead or path they want to follow. They are more motivated to act and more inclined to expand the capabilities that they value most (Muñiz Castillo and Gasper, 2009). In short, encouragement of self-determination is effective when (1) there is sufficient political space and creativity to imagine and shape change, (2) external actors exercise self-restraint, value autonomy for intrinsic and instrumental reasons, and (3) there is confidence in the development endeavours of the subjects.

3.8 Conclusion

In daily practice, development co-operation is constructed and negotiated. Three co-operation strategies have been identified: intervention, facilitation and self-development. Intervention is characterized by unilateral decision making of an external actor. Interveners construct a 'colonized space'. As subjects of development they actively produce social control, labels, knowledge and truth claims. Facilitation is a strategy that involves mutuality and partnership in development. Facilitators construct a 'shared space'. Through their engagement with each other, the partners arrive at innovative solutions. Encouragement of self-development involves an external actor enabling the subject to take unilateral action. Self-development involves participation in an 'invited space'. Through trust and commitment the external party unlocks potential and empowers.

The effectiveness of aid at community level is likely to be improved by taking into account the three co-operation strategies with their practices. It is likely that intervention works better in simple situations with high levels of control; facilitation in complex situations with high levels of interaction; and self-development in fluid situations with high levels of trust, where local subjects collectively take development into their own hands. Effectiveness of developmental outcomes is likely to be highest in the case of the latter.

Each strategy and situation requires specific types of knowledge management from the external actors. This implies that they develop assessment tools and monitoring systems that correspond to the three strategies and in accordance with different situations (level of complexity, quality of relations and

¹⁰⁵ Development partners can shift from counting and measuring results to critically questioning the developmental logics and political dynamics.

level of trust). Assessments should yield knowledge to aid managers and others who engage with communities in their choice of strategy. Monitoring systems should reveal whether a change in setting is taking place or a shift in strategy is desirable. Decisions on ceasing community engagement need to be based on the likelihood that the aid endeavour could be taken over by local actors to become a self-sustained, self-development initiative. Evaluations should be aligned to the specific co-operation strategy in a manner that enables comparative analysis and relates strategy to context as well as aid effectiveness. Support for self-development, however, requires more than merely reforming donor procedures regarding planning, monitoring and accounting. Donor country governments might also hinder bottom-up, self-development priorities if they define aid policies solely on the basis of party politics and domestic priorities.

Intervention has too often been the default choice of development despite being criticized as 'unhelpful help', 'benevolent aid' (Ellerman, 2004) and top-down, 'normal professionalism' (Chambers, 1993). This thesis demonstrates that there is no justification to adhere to a 'one-size-fits-all' default strategy. By drawing on the insights of multiple practices and situational differences, actors engaging with communities should be able to modify their intervention strategies more towards facilitation and the encouragement of self-development.

Chapter 4. Fixing rural development cooperation?

Not in situations involving blurring and fluidity.¹⁰⁶

4.1 Abstract

Rural development cooperation often took the form of a fix: external actors fixed a problem by introducing a fixed solution. Since the late 1980s the increased recognition of diversity, embeddedness and complexity, resulted in a shift from a ‘best fix’ approach to a ‘best fit’ approach. Context specificity replaced one-size-fits-all models. Yet in the specific case of forestry cooperation with the Yuracaré in Bolivia, it is argued no fit-in-context was found because of blurred phenomena and a confusing development situation. Moreover, the Yuracaré together with a Bolivian NGO blurred boundaries, reworked categorical divisions, and intermingled knowledge. This case sensitizes policy and rural development actors more generally to a novel conceptual and ontological perspective on such unstable situations, which revolve around fluidity. Fluid situations call for a rural development approach labelled ‘go-with-the-flow’. Recognizing the heterogeneity of development situations implies that any singular approach to realise rural development is at best partial.

4.2 Introduction

For several decades, development theory and practice were based on the conviction that development problems could be solved by making use of scientific knowledge, technology, democracy and capital.¹⁰⁷ In the 1960s these elements were expressed in modernisation theory, which held that the delivery of modern, external inputs would trigger innovation, industrialisation and modernisation (Rogers, 1962; Rostow, 1960). These inputs were usually provided in one-size-fits-all forms: mass communication messages, uniform technological packages, universal standards, policy recipes and prescriptions or much later best practices (Lerner, 1958; Schultz, 1964). Modernisation was seen as a fixed, linear structural transformation through a number of different stages and in various dimensions.

Neo-Marxist theories (for instance Frank, 1969) were different in aspects of political economy but very similar regarding assumptions and practices of one-size-fits-all fixes. Both modernisation and neo-Marxist theories were structuralist, abstract, general, ignorant of the complex heterogeneity of the real world and reliant on grand simplifications (Booth, 1994). Both theories were characterised by the use of techniques to fix or solidify realities. The “will to govern or, more specifically, the will to improve” (Li, 2007: 264) generated a desire to control the development process, to fix the problems and to rigidify the institutions. In general, the customary was codified, the informal was formalised, the traditional was modernised, the spontaneous was planned, etc. Inherent in the approach was the fabrication of multiple overlapping binaries (traditional – modern; underdeveloped – developed; stagnant – dynamic; etc.). This fabrication enabled external actors to intervene and fix problems. These theories and practices form illustrations of the fix-the-problem approach.

However, as Booth (1994) notes, in “failing to reflect the diversity and complexity of the real world of development, the earlier theories were incapable of explaining it” (Booth, 1994:4). During the 1980s the need to rethink social development was recognised. New work started to focus on actors and agency (Long, 1989), the social construction of reality (Arce, 1989), practice and policy relevance (Edwards, 1989) and multiple scale levels. This body of work revealed many on-the-ground transfer

¹⁰⁶ This chapter is based on the content of the article: Umans, L. and A. Arce (2014) ‘Fixing rural development cooperation? Not in situations involving blurring and fluidity’, *Journal of Rural Studies* 34: 337–344.

¹⁰⁷ See President Truman’s 1949 inaugural speech (Escobar, 1995),

failures and divergences in development experiences (Booth 1994). Transfers of knowledge and technology were not diffusions (Rogers, 1962) but transformations (Long, 1989) or translations (see Buttel et al., 1990). Local actors did not adopt but adapt technology. External entities could have widely differing workings or consequences in heterogeneous, underdeveloped contexts (Long and van der Ploeg, 1994). Context was no longer perceived as a structure out-there-and-above but as an integral part of a wider system.

System approaches were developed to stress the totality of entities and context. Detaching one entity from this system affected the other parts and the whole. Adding one part to the whole implied it had to fit into the whole. This new approach was seen in farming systems research, agro-ecological systems, agricultural knowledge systems, soft system methodology, management and information systems, and so on. In the field of rural development, system thinking correlated with the emergence of integrated rural development and community development approaches.

Development then is not only a matter of fixing complicated problems. It is about fitting a solution into a complex context (OECD, 2009). The fix-the-problem approach shifted to the fit-in-context approach. Within this fit-in-context approach the protagonist role shifted from the outsider to the insider. The local actor was no longer the object of development but the subject of its own development (Chambers, 1993). Professionals changed their role from interveners to facilitators of local development. Indigenous knowledge and self-determination received recognition. Heterogeneity and plurality were acknowledged within endogenous development paths and multiple modernities (Arce and Long, 2000).

More recently it has become clear that system approaches sometimes fail due to the fact that in practice reality is not always systemic (Ong and Collier, 2005; Jensen and Rødje, 2010). Development situations can be simultaneously heterogeneous and highly fragmented. Such fragmented wholes can be conceptualised as assemblages (DeLanda, 2006). Problem solving of loosely connected fragments can focus on the binding constraints instead of taking all dimensions simultaneously into consideration (Rodrik, 2007). Assembling can also be approached as a practice: the on-going labour of bringing disparate elements together: the “practices of assemblage” (Li, 2007: 263).

However, this thesis demonstrate that beyond system and assemblage theories, development actors face contingency and instability that make situations fluid and difficult to grasp with the fit-in-context approach (see also Vargas-Cetina, 2005). My case study of rural development in the global south is situated in such an unstable situation, involving cooperation in forestry development with the Yuracaré people in Bolivia . My case study points to the need to grasp intermingling and *con-fusión*.¹⁰⁸ It calls for a third and fundamentally new approach to rural development: go-with-the-flow.

4.3 Conceptual framework

The research departs from the practice of introducing external solutions for local problems. This practice is premised on distance and detachment, not unlike conventional science. From the outsider’s position a “striated space” (Deleuze and Guattari, 2004: 399) is created that is instrumental to fixing conceptual boundaries, stable patterns, universality and predictability (Jensen and Rødje, 2010). Within development cooperation the striated space is initially shaped as a world divided in modern, developed countries and traditional underdeveloped countries. Development is seen as the transfer of capital, knowledge and technology from developed to underdeveloped countries. The transfers are either separate entities (capital or a technological innovation) or seamless totalities (systems). In the latter, the seamless wholes, the relations between entities are obligatory and essential to create an internal coherence and external boundary. DeLanda describes these arrangements as “relations of interiority” (2006:10).

¹⁰⁸ *Con-fusión* is both ‘confused’ (see Boelens, 2008) and ‘with fusion’, referring to fluidity.

In rural development the already existing obligatory relations are affected by capital and technology transfers. In the developed world entities are lifted out of their context. Such decontextualization fractures reality and changes entities into fragments. These fragments possess an openness of possibilities for external connections with other fragments in the underdeveloped world where they are inserted. Through such recontextualization the fragments form wholes that often lack internal coherence. These assemblages (Deleuze and Guattari, 2004) lack ‘relations of interiority’ and instead have loose “relations of exteriority” (DeLanda, 2006: 11). Thus, processes of de- and recontextualization can change bounded entities into fragments and transform totalities into assemblages. Decontextualization is often incomplete since historical legacies, imprints and design principles stick to the fragments. During the process of de- and recontextualization these imprints travel along with the fragment as memories, embodiments, experience, etc. This is a source of unexpected transfer spin-offs and high levels of contingency.

In the specific case of forestry cooperation with the Yuracaré in Bolivia, discussed in this chapter, it is argued that intermingling of fragments occurred. The intermingling is a different type of relation than the relation of interiority or exteriority. The field research findings led me to take Deleuzian philosophy beyond DeLanda’s assemblage theory. The conceptual framework elaborated here builds on the concepts of fluidity, viscosity and intermingling mentioned by Deleuze and Guattari.¹⁰⁹ Under particular circumstances fragments connect with the context in such a way that they become co-constituted.¹¹⁰ This co-actualisation of fragment and context blurs the boundary between them.¹¹¹ The conventional dualism of entity-context disappears. Fragments are thus not only interconnected or interwoven but also intermingled into a larger entirety (the Deleuzian immanence). Such a singular entirety has many fragments of multiple dimensions (material, social, political, etc.). This ‘one, many and multiple’ is what I call a multity. A multity is an internally fragmented and intermingled substance. An example of a multity is the Yuracaré territory in Bolivia. It is internally fragmented unit but with unclear, blurred boundaries. In various localities the sub-divisions overlap or intermingle. They cannot be neatly traced because they do not form part of a State geometry but of a “primitive geometry” (Deleuze and Guattari, 2004: 233). The divisions cannot be represented by lines on a map but seem more like Deleuzian ‘lines of flight’: they are a direction of escape.

When such blurred multities click together they do not yield a distinct context but *con-fusión* (simultaneous fusion and confusion). The relations of exteriority dissolve in a flow. Flow here is not the movement of solid entities but indicates the fluid nature of multities. Fluidity resides in a change in the kind of relationship between fragments and the whole. Rankin (2008) locates fluidity in the shift from relations of interiority to relations of exteriority (the shift from a seamless whole to an assemblages). I argue that fluidity resides additionally in the change from relations of exteriority to interrelations (intermingled fragments with dissolved boundaries). As a result, ‘the social’ no longer contains characteristics only of solid entities, seamless wholes, fragments and assemblages but also of fluid multities. The ontology of the social is to be understood as a viscous mixture. My analysis reveals the existence of a viscous mixture similar to “the molar segments [...] immersed in the molecular soup” (Deleuze and Guattari, 2004: 248). The social is (in) a state of flow of events, materialities, expressions, etc.

The multity has similarities to the assemblage: relations between the fragments are optional, contingent and form an “open space of possibilities” (DeLanda, 2006: 29). Unpredictable dynamics emerge from the actualizations of the fragments’ capacities and possibilities of interaction. Like assemblages, multities are subject to processes of territorialization (becoming stable, coherent and

¹⁰⁹ Viscosity is mentioned in Deleuze and Guattari, (2004: 4). This entry into Deleuzian thought is also taken by Ingold (2009).

¹¹⁰ See Latour (2005) for a similar co-constitution of actor and network in actor-network-theory.

¹¹¹ Conventionally context is constructed as an external, separated phenomenon. It might take the form of a constraining structure or enabling environment. Another form of constructing context include pushing chaos to the margin of the context, thus making entities clear, legible, and open for scrutiny (Law and Mol, 2002). Context can also be constructed by grouping all entities which are ‘other’ or deviant and defer them to the context (see Latour, 2005).

solid) and de-territorialization (becoming unstable and fluid). An example of the latter is the deinstitutionalization of regions in the context of municipality amalgamations in Finland (Zimmerbauer and Paasi, 2013).

A multity differs from an assemblage in a number of ways. Where an assemblage refers to the more structural and network aspects of a rhizome¹¹², a multity refers to the possibility of intermingling of the rhizome. The main difference is in relationality: intermingling and *con-fusión* versus relations of exteriority. This translates into fluidity and ontological viscosity.¹¹³ In situations of *con-fusión* the nature of assemblages changes into multities.

Summarizing, my conceptual framework is composed of processes of de- and recontextualization, entities, fragments, assemblages, imprints, stickiness, blurredness, multities, *con-fusión*, fluidity, viscosity and processes of de- and reterritorialization. This framework is itself an example of a multity with reassembled field observations, concepts and theories. In figure 8, these different concepts are visually expressed (and simplified). The sharpness of the lines in figure 8 represents the degree of fluidity.

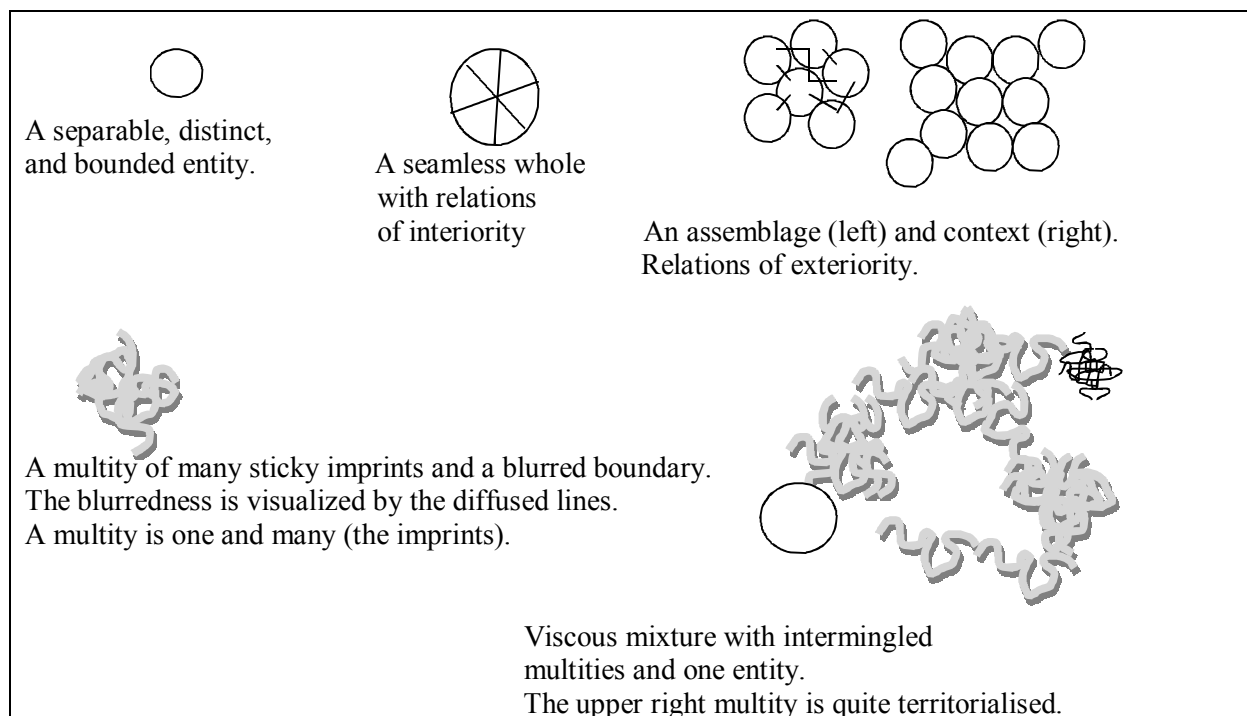


Figure 8: Entity and assemblage; multity and viscous mixture.

In what follows I explain how the conceptual framework came partly out of the puzzling endurance of Yuracaré problem situations. Since these practical experiences and conceptual reflections are related to globalisation, they are most likely relevant to rural development and rural studies in rural spaces around the world. The viscous rural is everywhere.

4.4 The Bolivian context

The research is situated in the Bolivian forestry sector. The present case is a place-based study dealing with various efforts of forestry cooperation in the Yuracaré territory. Since 1992 several external actors have collaborated with the Yuracaré leaders to contain illegal timber trafficking, to stop the

¹¹² See DeLanda, 2006; Latour, 2005.

¹¹³ Several authors use fluidity as a metaphor (Bauman, 2000), but few authors use fluidity in an ontological way (Deleuze and Guattari, 2004; Ingold, 2009).

deforestation of valuable timber species and later to implement the 1996 Forest Law (*Ley Forestal 1700*).¹¹⁴ These efforts were set within the field of community forestry, which emerged in the late 1970s as an alternative to private and state forestry (Umans, 1993). In the 1990s emphasis shifted from implementing external projects to facilitating indigenous forestry (*idem*). These innovative ideas formed the background for the concrete collaboration with the Yuracaré.

The wider political and governance context up to the year 2005 is characterised by policies in the areas of economic liberalization, decentralization, popular participation, land and forestry reform as well as considerable social and political instability (Crabtree et al, 2009). The decentralization and land reform policies enabled the recognition of the land rights and political representation of indigenous peoples. The 1996 Land Reform Law created the possibility for indigenous peoples to obtain and administer collective land and forest rights. Yet, in return for official recognition the indigenous peoples had to comply with the technicalities of the Forest Law.

The period after 2005 can be characterised by constitutional and state reform to advance pluralism and equity, the strengthening of national sovereignty and the nationalization of strategic economic sectors (Soruco Sologuren, 2011). Forestry was not prioritised. Public forest policy only changed recently, which falls outside the scope of the field research.¹¹⁵

A practice-reflection case

The case illustrates the cooperation efforts of external actors and the Yuracaré indigenous people.¹¹⁶ The case was selected on the basis of three criteria. First, my close collaboration with the various actors involved in the case. Second, with hindsight, the cooperative forestry efforts displayed exemplary differences between the cooperative approaches deployed by the various external actors. Third, both Yuracaré and external actors thoroughly reflected on the cooperative efforts. The cooperation was more than a conventional action-research project. It was a practice-reflection experience in which forestry and research practices were enacted and then considered with hindsight. Rather than a case study, the research was a qualitative and interpretative ethnographic assessment of cooperation efforts.

The research methods comprised participant observation and in-depth interviews with a wide diversity of people. Part of the information was based on the International Forestry Resources and Institutions (IFRI) methodology (see Poteete and Ostrom, 2004), at the core of which are the institutions that mediate the relationships between people and forest resources. The methodology is based on extensive comparative empirical research elsewhere (León et al., 2012; Ostrom, 1990).

The rest of the chapter is structured as follows. In Section 2, the case of Yuracaré forestry cooperation is presented. In Section 3, three approaches to cooperation are distinguished and linked to ways in which problems and realities can be understood. In Section 4, the implications for rural development cooperation are discussed. Brief conclusions close the chapter.

4.5 Yuracaré forestry development

The Yuracaré live in the lowlands of Bolivia. They inhabit a densely forested territory of approximately 250,000 ha for a total of about 2,000 persons. In the past, peasants and illegal loggers regularly attempted to colonise part of their territory or extract its resources. To protect their territory from further encroachment, the traditional, clan-based organization evolved into the Yuracaré Council, in which all clans were represented. The Council represented the Yuracaré to external actors, including the Bolivian forestry agency.

¹¹⁴ Hereafter referred to as the Law.

¹¹⁵ The last field visit was conducted in 2009.

¹¹⁶ The aim was neither a comprehensive analysis of the aid encounters nor an ethnographic study of the Yuracaré. The cooperative approaches themselves were the objects of research.

In 1992 the national forestry agency or *Centro de Desarrollo Forestal* (CDF) started to cooperate with the Yuracaré. The CDF was responsible for forest planning, allocating concessions, collecting forest taxes, and controlling illegal logging. It had long neglected indigenous peoples like the Yuracaré. Bolivian law did not recognise customary rights until 1996, so all logging was considered illegal. The CDF became interested in Yuracaré territory to halt timber trafficking, to abate resource depletion, to assist in forest management and to legalise logging. The 1996 Forest Law transformed the CDF into the Forest Superintendence.

Another external actor was the *Centro de Estudios de la Realidad Económica y Social* (CERES), a Bolivian non-governmental organization and partner in FAO's Forest, Trees and People Program.¹¹⁷ This program developed participatory methodologies for community forestry. CERES was interested in cooperating with the Yuracaré for two reasons: to test and innovate action-research methodologies and to support the territorial claim of the Yuracaré.

The following account of the cooperation between the Yuracaré, CDF and CERES is presented chronologically. The description highlights the enactment of three different approaches to cooperation: fix-the-problem, fit-in-context and going-with-the-flow.

Fixing a Rule

In 1992, the CDF intervened in the way the Yuracaré exploited their forests. The CDF defined the annual quantity of timber to be extracted legally (León et al., 2012). Internally, the Yuracaré had to regulate timber quantities per family. The Yuracaré nevertheless continued their customary practice of timber trafficking, despite the considerable harassment by the CDF. CDF was ineffective to reduce the complex repertoires of timber trafficking arrangements to a single rule. Nor did setting a rule fix the problem of resource depletion.

More Rules

The 1996 Forest Law enabled the recognition of Indigenous Peoples' land and forest rights as well as their customary practices (León et al., 2012). Yet, various articles of the Law required changes in Yuracaré practice. The Law prohibited the customary use of chainsaws. Without chainsaws, sawing had to be concentrated geographically around a mobile saw. Another article made technical planning compulsory. Forestry decisions could no longer respond to *ad hoc* family cash requirements but were instead based on a collective multi-annual plan. Another article demanded equity in benefit sharing. This was at odds with the customary arrangements in which powerful families dominated the timber trade.

The Law introduced constellations of new rules. For instance, land-tenure rules, forest-management rules and professional-planning rules. Through such interdependent constellations, the newly created Forest Superintendence demanded the accommodation of customary rules. The Yuracaré used their own 'rules to change the rules' to make the necessary adjustments.

Packaging Forest Management

The Yuracaré wanted to legalise their forest use as a matter of principle and to obtain higher timber prices. Legalisation implied many changes beyond changing the constellation of local rules. The technological change from chainsaws to mobile saws required reorganizing labour, the ability to invest, the appropriation of new skills as well as different forms of planning. The Law in fact imposed a company-based model of forest management. As a constellation of rules, the Law was translated in a fixed package with multiple entities. Cooperation became an effort to transfer this package to the Yuracaré.

Planning a Fit-in-Context

In 1997, the Law's guidelines for the elaboration of Forest Management Plans (FMPs) were approved. The Yuracaré Council requested CERES to facilitate the elaboration of their FMP. According to

¹¹⁷ This community forestry program was mainly financed by Sweden and the Netherlands.

CERES, this FMP should respect customary forest management as much as possible. CERES built on earlier research regarding the Yuracaré's values, institutions, knowledge and specific practices, as well as research regarding the forest's ecology.¹¹⁸

The research revealed that the notion of forest management embedded in the Law differed from the Yuracaré's notions and endogenous interactions with the forest. The Yuracaré didn't use the concept '*bosque*' (forest), but rather '*monte*' (woods). The 'woods' concept not only referred to a big forest but also contained mythical, emotional and spiritual dimensions. They perceived the woods as their offspring; they were raising the woods (León, 1997). Rather than seeing their practice as the *management of forest resources*, as foresters do, they saw it as *caring for the woods*. Forest management relies on the separation of people and forest, the latter being reduced to a utilitarian resource. The forest is instrumental and managed. The Yuracaré practices express the intimacy of people and woods. The people-woods relation is communicative. The Yuracaré are forest-people, mythologically stemming from a big tree. Caretaking was not conservationist in the sense that the Yuracaré did not exploit the forest. They needed logging to take care of the family, but 'caring for the woods' was not distanced, detached and objectified.

The Yuracaré and CERES took on the task to fit the external idea of 'forest management' into 'caring for the woods'. The introduction of notions and practices of management let the Yuracaré 'see the forest' (see Scott, 1998) inside the woods, as it were. CERES facilitated to fit the official guidelines on FMPs into the local context rather than moulding local realities to fit into the legal.

Assembling Forest Management Practice

In 1998, the FMP was successfully completed and approved by the Forest Superintendence. Implementation of the FMP started with the instalment of a mobile saw, which CERES purchased with funds from abroad. The saw was donated to the Yuracaré Council, which was in charge of operations. The Council hired a forest engineer. The first shift of workers operated the mobile saw successfully for three months. Timber production increased substantially, from 8 700 to 11 000 and 36 000 board feet at three-month periods (León et al., 2012). Yet the second shift of workers failed to properly hand over the operation to the third shift. After nine months, the operations stopped due to difficulties in organizing labour, technical failures, high costs, insufficient training, inadequate supervision by the local authorities (Anonymous, 2006) and political friction.

In short, Yuracaré practice could not be stretched to the extent required to accommodate the Law. The Yuracaré could not fit the Law into 'caring for the woods'. One reason for the lack of fit was the division of the territory into *corregimientos* or sections encompassing various communities. The *corregimientos* were demarcated only on the banks of the Chapare River on which all transport took place. These points divided the valuable swiddens between the clans. Inside the forest, by contrast, there were no clear *corregimiento* boundaries, only vague notions of what timber belonged to which *corregimiento*. For planning purposes, the boundaries of the *corregimientos* had to be mapped, turning the points along the river into fixed lines on the map that subdivided the wood. The forest inventory and fixed demarcation of *corregimientos* resulted in various *corregimientos* having different timber stocks. This led to internal tension, eroding the basis for collective Yuracaré action.

The FMP also triggered internal disputes regarding equitable benefit sharing. Equity could not be fit into customary practice and local power relations. In 2001 several Yuracaré were dissatisfied with the internal differences actualised through the forestry cooperation. One member proposed: "Why don't we dump the [mobile] saw in the river if we fight so much over it?" (Anonymous, 2006: 33).

The Flow of Self-Development

After 2001, the Yuracaré intensified commercial agriculture and logging declined. CERES did not succeed in obtaining more donor funds and discontinued its close collaboration with the Yuracaré. In

¹¹⁸ This research was conducted by a mixed team of CERES and several Yuracaré individuals selected by the Council. The team used the IFRI methodology, among others (see Poteete and Ostrom, 2004).

2003, a Chinese company offered to invest and exploit the forest over a 20-year period. The contract was rejected, mainly because the Yuracaré did not want to become contract labourers on their own land, exploiting their own forest resources. In 2004, a group of peasants colonized or invaded the territory. This once again united the Yuracaré, strengthening their leadership. In 2007 and 2008, massive flooding destroyed the agricultural cash crops. The Yuracaré intensified logging and returned to the practice of timber trafficking, resulting in further degradation of the accessible forests. The Council instructed its forest technician, a member of the erstwhile CERES team, to prepare a review of the FMP and anticipate a new planning cycle. All together, these self-development initiatives constituted a loosely planned and unpredictable process.

4.6 Distinguishing three approaches

The practical experiences of forestry and rural development in the Yuracaré territory were accompanied by reflections on the cooperative approaches. With hindsight I distinguish three approaches. Each approach will be discussed below.

4.6.1 Fix-the-Problem Approach

The CDF initially dealt with trafficking and resource depletion as a simple problem. The CDF intended to fix the problem with one fixed solution: stipulating an annual allowable cut. This is the fix-the-problem approach through the introduction of a single entity. An entity is an identifiable, bounded aspect of social reality, whether human or non-human. The fix-the-problem approach is enacted through processes of de-contextualisation and re-contextualisation. The fix approach has three variants, depending on the kinds of entities that are re-contextualised: the single entity fix, the constellation fix and the package fix. Sometimes a single entity is introduced, such as a rule. Sometimes, a constellation of similar entities is introduced, such as the Law with various rules. Sometimes, a package of multiple entities is introduced, such as a new forest-management model comprising new rules, machinery, authorities and knowledge.

In simple problem situations, the introduction of a single entity usually fixes the problem. A problem is simple when it is easily discernible, there are clear cause-effect relationships, there is consensus on the problem's definition and the situation is stable (Snowden and Boone, 2007). In such situations, entities are separable from each other and treated in an individualized manner. Problems can be solved in purely technical, economic or institutional ways. Successful fixes can become universal standards.

In the package-fix variant, heterogeneous entities are recontextualized together. The company model proposed in the FMP is an example of a package-fix combining industrial technology, capital injections, paid labour and so on. The package-fix variant assumes that development problems are complicated in the sense that not everyone understands the causal relations between the multiple entities. For example, the Yuracaré did not see beforehand the implications of the mobile saw in terms of the effects on labour re-arrangements, knowledge requirements, and so on. In complicated situations, the effect of improving things in one relation is assumed to be independent of the state of the other relations. This presupposes the separability of relations instead of entities. Specific relations can be isolated to study their causality. For instance, the forest professionals assumed that the relations in the technical and economic spheres were separated from the cultural relations between the Yuracaré and their woods. The latter were largely ignored. Separability of relations results in an order that can be understood, a solution that can be thought-out logically, engineered pragmatically and subsequently packaged for delivery in a fixed composition. Successful packages can become models or 'best practices'.

Critique of the fix-the-problem approach is not new (Jones, 2011) and typically is of the following three types. The first critique contends that the *way* solutions are imposed reveals that the purpose is not to help but to further Western interests and capitalism (Escobar, 1995). The second critique contends that rigid and inflexible fixes lack context specificity. The third critique contends that the instruments used in the fix-the-problem approach cannot adequately cope with complexity (Jones,

2011). Log Frames and cost-benefit analyses cannot accurately capture the complexity arising out of the interference between different cause-effect relationships.

4.6.2 Fit-in-Context Approach

The effort of CERES to legalise the legitimate practices of the Yuracaré was an attempt to fit a complex external entity (forest management according to legal and professional standards) into the local realities of ‘caring for the woods’. CERES did not intervene to fix management but rather facilitated the accommodation of practices and mutual learning (see Umans, 2012). Nowadays, major development actors have shifted from a fix-the-problem to a fit-in-context approach for two reasons.

First, development is conceptualised in terms of endogenous self-realisation (Ellerman, 2004), no longer in terms of fixing the beneficiary’s problem. The development partner owns the change process. Second, development is increasingly understood as complex rather than complicated. Complex entities and situations are characterised by interactive embeddedness, nonlinear causality, or disproportional effects due to the mutual interdependence of elements or processes (Snowden and Boone, 2007). Complexity makes processes unpredictable and unknowable before they really happen. The distinction between complicated and complex is most often seen as a matter of degree (Jones, 2011). Both the complicated package and the complex puzzle emphasise multiplicity and connectivity.

Within the fit-in-context approach, I distinguish between two variants: the systemic complex and the assembled complex. The variants differ regarding connectivity and relationality. The systemic variant involves discovering, designing, and engineering the component parts, called elements, into a seamless whole. Systemic change is seen to either affect the whole or be resisted by the whole. So development actors choose for integrated programs, comprehensive reforms, and so on. Such systemic interventions might fail because development actors tackle so many issues at once, inevitably including many irrelevant issues (Rodrik, 2007).

Assemblage theory acknowledges that component fragments do not necessarily form a seamless whole. Fragments are self-subsistent, yet capable of interacting, resulting in non-coherent assemblages. Their properties are the result of the actual exercise of the fragments’ capacities (DeLanda, 2006). For instance, cooperation is the contingent result of the interactions, actualisations, and enactments of assembled actors and their resources, networks, intentions, dreams, feelings, and so on.

Each fragment may be detached from an assemblage and attached to another one. In that case, its interactions might be different, which results in high levels of contingency. For example, a de-contextualised fragment of forest legislation (the prohibition of the chainsaw) interacts very differently with technology and social organization in a large-scale company than in a community forestry setting.¹¹⁹ The fragmentation, contingency and complexities limit the abilities to know, plan and enact. These phenomena make development cooperation incomplete, provisional, contradictory and unsystemic.

4.6.3 Go-with-the-Flow Approach

Processes to re-contextualise complex entities often succeed only partially in finding a fit-in-context. This failure is not always due to complexity. It can result from a lack of clarity and from the situation’s instability. With hindsight, it became clear that the unresolved issues in the Yuracaré case involved the ambivalent demarcation of *corregimientos*. The planning exercise revealed their blurred boundaries; *corregimientos* were undefined entities or rather multities. The same blurredness was observed regarding rules. Informality of rules blurred the neat boundary between legal and illegal. Informal rules produced illegal, yet legitimate practices; justice became mouldable rather than rigid. Territorial, social, and legal realities could not be ordered realistically since Yuracaré scales,

¹¹⁹ The prohibition resulted in major shifts in Yuracaré’s ‘caring for the woods’ but did not affect the operations of major timber companies. The Law favoured companies by reducing the competition from communities.

classifications, and institutions were neither neatly separable nor hierarchically nested; they were blurred. Reality was constituted by multities and *con-fusión*.

Blurredness and *con-fusión* also occur when processes of de-contextualisation are incomplete because of sticky imprints. For instance, the rule regarding the allowable cut imposed on the Yuracaré is the sustainable-yield principle taken out of its context of 18th-century forestry (Umans, 1993). The introduction of the rule drags with it a series of assumptions, such as scientific rationality and calculative techniques. The rule embodies its constitutive imprints, making it into a multity. It is both one rule and multiple imprints.

If a multity never completely loses its earlier context, context is not external to an entity. A Yuracaré *corregimiento* without boundaries beyond the points at the riverside has no context but co-constitutes context and co-actualizes *con-fusión*. The intermingling of a multity and context presupposes fluidity.¹²⁰

Fluid situations are volatile, uncertain, unstable or undefined (see also Vargas-Cetina, 2005). Both the sticky imprints, which change an entity into a multity, and the resulting *con-fusión* of a multity with its context, transform separability, connectivity and relationality.

In fluid situations, processes of territorialization stabilise, consolidate and solidify the multities. For instance, the emergence of the Yuracaré Council stabilises space (the geographical territory of its jurisdiction), institutions (procedures to design, enforce and change rules), and political authority (legitimate representation of clans). Processes of de-territorialization destabilise and disintegrate phenomena, rendering them fluid. In the case of the Yuracaré, the external fixing of boundaries and rules destabilised customary practice.

In the Yuracaré example fixed, solid and stabilised entities co-exist with complex assemblages as well as with fluid multities (see the drawing of social mass in figure 8). This nature of social realities is best defined as a viscous mixture. Ontologically, realities have varying intensities (see Deleuze and Guattari, 2004) or gradations of social viscosity. The solidified parts are material entities, fixed packages and territorialised phenomena. The viscous parts are complex systems, assemblages and practices. The fluid parts are de-territorialised multities. I call this result viscous ontology.

In volatile and blurred situations, the fit cannot be established. Context-specific cooperation is no longer sufficient. This calls for an approach based on blurredness and fluidity, which I label flow. The flow metaphor refers both to going-with-the-flow and to getting-into-a-flow as a particularly positive mental-body state. The cooperative approach needs to be aligned at the ontological level. Situations in which realities are solidified into separable entities require a 'singular' ontological position, and a fix-the-problem approach is probably appropriate. Complex situations require a 'multiple' position (recognizing heterogeneity) and a fit-in-context approach. Fluid situations require a 'multities' position (recognizing interrelationality) and a go-with-the-flow approach. Too often the approach is poorly aligned with the situation. Ontological alignment is crucial for success in rural development.

4.7 Framework of Approaches

The findings of the Yuracaré case are here put in perspective by combining three analytical categorizations: the cooperative approaches, the nature of problems, and the nature of realities. The three cooperative approaches (fix-the-problem, fit-in-context and go-with-the-flow) are related to the categorization of a problem. The fix-the-problem approach is related to simple and complicated problems. The fit-in-context approach is related to complex problems. Finally, the go-with-the-flow approach is related to fluid problems.

¹²⁰ This is an inconclusive process. Opposite processes might also be at work. Through territorialization, entities and contexts become solidified, objectified, fixated, polarized, and separated as in the process of emulsion (repel).

The three interlinked categorizations (cooperative approaches, nature of the problem, and nature of social realities) lead to a novel framework for discussing cooperation (see table 4).

Table 4. Cooperative approaches and different situations.

Approach:	Fix-the-problem	Fit-in-context	Going-with-the-flow
Problem (situation):	Simple Complicated	Complex	Fluid
Singular ontology, or separability of entities	Fixed entity Fixed constellation		
Multiple ontology, or separability of relations	Fixed package	Systemic fit Assembled fit	
Viscous ontology, or lack of separabilities			<i>Con-fusión</i>

The abstract collapse of three categorizations in one table is neither fixed nor unproblematic. Tensions and nuances exist within and between categorizations. The cells of the table are blurred; local realities may not neatly fit-in.

4.8 Implications for rural development cooperation

The fix-the-problem approach is widespread in rural development cooperation, especially until the 1990s (OECD, 2009). Rural development actors act as agents of territorialization. Territorialization can take many forms: standardisation, institutionalisation, universalization, etc. Entities are reified by defining their borders or enhancing internal consistency. Through successful territorializations a particular problem situation is stabilised to apply the fix-the-problem approach.

Although development actors can deliver concrete goods, services or advice, they cannot *develop* their object directly, because that is an endogenous process. Therefore, rural development is most often complex rather than complicated and contingent rather than planned. Moreover, globalisation constantly changes connectivity and embeddedness (Hirsch, 2010). In many situations, new technologies have increased connectivity and tightened embeddedness. Phenomena thereby become interrelated or systemic. In other situations phenomena become fragmented and embeddedness has loosened (see Ong and Collier, 2005). In both instances, complexity has increased and fluidity becomes possible.

Rural development cooperation has itself often contributed to complexity and destabilisation through the introduction of external entities, the creation of parallel project structures, the undermining of the national budget as a policy instrument, etc. Cooperation thereby contributes to unintended de-territorialization and contingency.

Despite highlighting complexity and self-development, advances in rural development require on-going conceptual and methodological development (Woods, 2012). my conceptual framework of multities and viscosity seems to have an explicative potential for many other rural spaces where actors increasingly confront messy, unstable or fluid situations (Bauman, 2000). Rural actors have to cope with the effects of various global crises, such as food insecurity, climate change and financial instability (see Woods, 2012). They have to deal with constantly shifting migratory and trade flows. They have to address shifting boundaries (see Zimmerbauer and Paasi, 2013). These crises, flows and changes have important characteristics of fluidity: volatility, fragility, mutability, unclear boundaries and *con-fusión*. Globalisation processes push the rural space beyond 'relational rurals' (Heley and Jones, 2012) towards viscous rurals, with more rigid and more fluid phenomena.

Blurredness, *con-fusión* and fluidity are effects of rural development cooperation and affect cooperation. Cooperation is about finding the appropriate action perspective, mixing reterritorializations in fluid situations and de-territorializations of rigidities (procedures, practices bureaucratic stovepipes, institutions, etc.). In rural development, de-territorialization can be pursued through the encouragement of self-representation and autonomy at lower levels of self-organization (see Ellerman, 2004). Or through de-construction and de-colonization of thinking and acting (Mignolo and Escobar, 2010). These techniques of the cultural turn in rural studies can blur conventional hierarchies and conceptual boundaries. The challenge is to create and pursue ‘lines of flight’ that allow development actors to escape the conceptual, mental or physical rigidities and to go-with-the-flow. Development agencies need to align their course of action, tools and decision-making processes with the ontological situation at hand.

4.9 Conclusions

Studying forest development in the Yuracaré territory yielded a deeper understanding of rural development cooperation and of the rural space. The fix-the-problem approach seems appropriate for well-known situations where entities are separate or have simple relations. Where relationships are more complex the chance of failures increases. In complex situations the fit-in-context approach seems more appropriate. It involves fitting a systemic or assembled whole into a complex context. Yet, this approach might fail in case the external entity that is introduced into the context has many imprints of its earlier context. Where entity and context are co-constituted and blurred, the neat entities or separate wholes become fluid multities. In these fluid and con-fused situations, the go-with-the-flow approach seems most appropriate. With hindsight, the cooperation with Yuracaré took place in social realities constituted by entities, wholes and multities. This ontological diversity and heterogeneity has different degrees of viscosity and forms a mixture of solidified and fluid parts.

These insights obliged me to explore Deleuzian philosophy beyond assemblage theory. The empirical data resonated with Deleuzian concepts of ‘lines of flight’ and ‘body-without-organs’. I thus contributed to a framework on viscous ontology in which “the molar segments are necessarily immersed in the molecular soup” (Deleuze and Guattari, 2004: 248), forming a mixture.

This framework is suitable for the critical analysis of the rural space more generally. The phenomena that constitute the rural space are not only complex but might be fluid as well. This sheds new light on issues of relationality that have gained relevance in the study of rural space and its broad range of contemporary problems in recent years. Relationality is not only about constellations of relations between fixed entities but also about intermingled forms of interrelationality or ‘in-between’ relations. The conceptual framework of multities and viscous ontology points at the ontological mixture, the becoming¹²¹, the *con-fusión* and the in-betweenness of real situations. Aligning the approach with the type of problem and the viscosity of the particular rural space seems to be crucial for appropriate rural development cooperation.

¹²¹ “What is real is the becoming itself, not the supposedly fixed terms through which that which becomes passes” (Deleuze and Guattari, 2004: 262).

Chapter 5. The Aid Architecture is dissolving;

The aid business and doing business with aid.¹²²

5.1 Abstract

The Official Development Assistance (ODA) is challenged by wider global changes. I see three new aid assemblages emerging, including an assemblage that revolves around the improvement of ODA. First, assistance is expanded to the encouragement of self-development. Poverty needs to be tackled simultaneously with inequality. Second, an assemblage emerges which blurs the public and private spheres. Private funding merges with ODA in various forms. Third, an assemblage around global responsibility emerges. Distinctions between poverty, climate change, sustainability, security, and global financial stability are blurred. Finance for global development is central in this post-aid assemblage.

5.2 Introduction

The contemporary Aid Architecture (AA)¹²³ is formed by the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), the Monterrey Consensus on Financing Development, and the Paris Declaration on Aid Effectiveness. The MDGs were signed in 2000 and responded to earlier development objectives. From the 1960s onward, mainstream development has focused on increasing national economic growth. In the 1990s, the goal of ODA expenditure shifted to poverty reduction and good governance. Poverty Reduction Strategy Papers (PRSPs) became lead documents for both recipient and donor governments. Most attention went to the social sectors. During the 1990s, a new political consensus on aid objectives emerged, which resulted in the MDGs. These goals not only provided a clear measurable framework, but also presented a long-missing focus for developing aid and a broad international constituency of donors and partner countries.

The Monterrey Consensus on Financing Development was signed in 2003. It institutionalized a recognition of both the need for developing countries to take responsibility for their own poverty reduction and the necessity for rich nations to support this endeavour with more open trade and increased financial aid. It responded to earlier shortcomings in partner country financial management and donor commitments. The long-established international aid commitments were reaffirmed.¹²⁴ After 2003, the absolute aid expenditures of donor countries increased to a total of approximately 128 billion USD in 2010 (OECD, 2012).

The Paris Declaration on Aid Effectiveness was signed in 2005 and responded to shortcomings in the quality of aid management. Donors realized that development cannot be *delivered*, but rather needs to

¹²² This chapter is based on the content of the article: Umans, L., 2012b. Vertrouwde categorieën vervloeien – naar assemblages van Internationaal Samenwerken [Conventional categories intermingle – towards assemblages of International Cooperation]. In Visser, R., L. Schulp en W. Elbers (eds) *De hulp voorbij? Op zoek naar internationale samenwerking [Beyond aid? The search for international cooperation]*. Amsterdam: KIT Publishers, pp. 37-56.

¹²³ “Aid architecture can be defined as the set of rules and institutions governing aid flows to developing countries” (World Bank, 2008: 1). Most analyses of the Aid Architecture focus on the players-of-the-game (the aid delivering organizations). These pragmatic analyses highlight aid volumes, fragmentation, proliferation, modalities, effectiveness and the channels used. In this paper I take a more institutionalist approach and will focus on the rules-of-the-game.

¹²⁴ In 1970, donors associated with the OECD-DAC committed to spending 0.7% of their Gross National Income on ODA.

be constructed from within the country.¹²⁵ Country ownership and government leadership became important principles for obtaining political will, improving motivation, and ensuring responsibility (see Whitfield, 2009). Donors promised to align their aid with partner country policies and to harmonize the aid procedures among themselves.

The MDGs, the Monterrey Consensus, and the Paris Declaration have together constituted the AA and formed a governance regime of donor and partner countries. They provide focus, indicators, and a timeframe. They boost quantity as well as quality of ODA, which is the international standard used to qualify public expenditures of developed countries as official aid.¹²⁶

The aims of this chapter are to provide an overview of the challenges and debates that affect this ODA-regime as well as to discuss emerging trends. The analysis is informed by the participation in discussions within the Dutch Ministry of Foreign Affairs, a literature review and interpretative analysis. In particular, the section on future developments is a mix of professional judgement and personal interpretation.

5.3 A changing world

Since the emergence of the AA, the world has changed in several ways, and these developments influence the aid business¹²⁷. First, there have been a lot of successes in development cooperation that can be celebrated. Compared to 1990, world poverty will be reduced by more than half in 2015 (United Nations, 2011). To name a few other successes, child mortality has diminished by 35%¹²⁸, and ODA allocations have increased in both absolute and relative terms¹²⁹. Many LDCs have grown over the last decade and have become MICs. The new MICs boosted their tax revenue and aid dependency further diminished (ActionAid, 2011).

Second, aid failures have given rise to continuous concerns about aid effectiveness (Riddell, 2007). These concerns are the outcome of two phenomena. On the one hand, aid sometimes did *not* help because it failed to translate into the planned results or outcomes. For this reason, donors emphasize getting the principles of aid management and development policies right. On the other hand, aid sometimes *did* help, but it helped the wrong people or processes (Van der Veen, 2004). Aid could have perverse effects that hinder targeted development. Such ‘dead aid’ (Moyo, 2009) should be abolished.

Third, geo-economic dynamics have resulted in the emergence of new Middle Income Countries (MICs). At the same time, the OECD countries entered into various crises. Both processes have an impact on the geo-political balance, or rather imbalance. Emerging MICs now account for two thirds of the total foreign exchange reserves¹³⁰. In addition, South-South cooperation is increasing. Due to emerging MICs and growing LDCs, South-South trade is now larger than North-South trade. MICs are moving into the aid business or are conducting business with aid. These countries deploy public-private arrangements and combine their aid with business interest. All of these developments have an impact on the business of aid.

¹²⁵ Development is constituted and seen in different ways. Donors see development primarily as economic growth. Social movements see development essentially as exercising rights and struggles for life, dignity, recognition, and power.

¹²⁶ Two criteria form the basis of ODA: first, public expenditure must be provided by a public agency and second, each transaction’s main objective needs to be the promotion of economic development and welfare of developing countries. In addition, expenditure should be concessional in character and convey a grant element of at least 25% of the total loan (OECD-DAC, 2007).

¹²⁷ We understand ‘aid business’ to be the practices and performance of ‘aid giving’ by development agencies (official, multilateral, and non-governmental organizations) as well as ‘aid operationalization’ by beneficiary agencies (public or private).

¹²⁸ Despite impressive progress, it is not likely that MGD4 will be reached (United Nations, 2011).

¹²⁹ In 1997, ODA was US\$ 68 billion and 0.22% of Gross National Income (an all-time low). In 2010, the figures were 128 billion (an all-time high) and 0.32% (see <http://webnet.oecd.org/dcdgraphs/ODAhistory/>)

¹³⁰ The Economist, Nov. 4th 2010

However, progress is uneven, the most vulnerable groups are not reached, and MDG achievement is lagging behind expectations (United Nations, 2011). Aid observers noted several contradictions within the AA. Where aid is needed most and MDG achievement is most difficult, compliance with governance prerequisites established in the Monterrey Consensus and Paris Declaration is often difficult. There are policy contradictions between suitable partners and governments exercising strong ownership. Many governments that exercise strong ownership pursue non-neoliberal policies, have clientele political structures, or severely limit civic political action. The potential frictions between the more technical aspects of the AA and the political aspects also become an issue in the political pressure to disburse aid for Africa, even when this is mismatched with the limited opportunities for effectiveness (Van der Veen, 2004). Another contradiction is the principle of partner ownership over policies and the tying of aid to the political dialogue by donors in order to influence policies. In short, the AA is not coherent in entirety, and aid effectiveness is reduced.

What has become clear is that aid success and aid failures are difficult to link with global development processes, such as the emergence of new MICs. It is hard to associate the successful transitions of China and Vietnam from LDCs to MICs directly with ODA. The new MICs are not exactly the countries receiving most aid. Poverty reduction in East Asia is not the result of aid, but rather of “policies aimed at (i) macroeconomic stabilisation; (ii) improving life in the rural sector, increasing agricultural productivity and ensuring an ample supply of food; and (iii) liberalising the economy and creating conditions of economic freedom, particularly for peasant farmers and other small actors” (Dong et al, 2012: s5).

Despite a considerable increase in ODA over the past several years, the importance of ODA in the overall financial flows from the North to the South has diminished (OECD, 2012). Together with the rise of the MICs, poverty trends are shifting. The majority of poor people no longer live in LDCs, but rather in MICs¹³¹. In many MICs, growth is becoming less effective at reducing poverty, and reducing inequality is even more difficult (Melamed, 2012). Poverty reduction seems less a matter of North-South aid and more a matter of national redistributions. In Latin America, several governments embarked on policies of resource nationalism and social protection schemes. In particular, the programs that transfer cash to vulnerable families became successful approaches out of poverty and seem to contribute to greater equality (Grugel and Riggirozzi, 2012). At the same time, in Latin America a post-development perspective was developed, articulating alternatives to development based on autonomy and self-determination (see Dinerstein and Deneulin, 2012). Taken together, the experiences of the MICs are starting to stimulate multiple and alternative development paths.

At the same time, traditional donors face different crises. Rich countries are now the countries that are highly indebted, and some are even in need of debt relief. The crisis affects the volume of their aid and has eroded the political and moral support for aid. Most donors consistently fail to meet the international commitment to spend 0.7% of their Gross National Income on aid. Donor legitimacy and the aid business are under scrutiny. Donors are asked to adjust their pretensions (WRR, 2010) and act with greater humility. Moreover, the crisis *de facto* shifts aid from a North-South flow to a North-North flow (the rescue package for Greece) or even South-North flow (IMF contributions by Brazil and China). If the current crises turn into a deep social crisis of unemployment, social welfare cuts, and poverty, then rethinking aid might make poverty reduction an internal affairs issue within the European Union (EU) or a domestic issue rather than a foreign affairs issue.

At the international geo-political level, politics are shifting with the emerging MICs. They demand policy, representational, and governance changes. The MICs criticize the exclusiveness of the OECD. They feel underrepresented in International Financial Institutions. These newcomers tend to give more importance to fair rules and a balanced role of the state in the economy than to free markets.

¹³¹ This is expected to shift again in the future (Kharas and Rogerson, 2012).

In this section, I sketched a series of global changes and concerns that arose during the last decade. The recent crises in the West and the political and material rise of the Rest seem to underscore that the Western development path, with its modernisation policies and ODA regime, is particular instead of universal, and provincial instead of cosmopolitan (after Beck and Grande, 2010). The idea that countries are at different levels of pursuing the same goal is no longer tenable. Different countries pursue different modernities, which interact in unpredictable ways. Contemporary global risks, fragilities, and crises materialise the transcending effects of the plural entangled modernities and constitute the drivers of innovation and diversification of global institutions, including aid. A central question that arises is: how to proceed beyond ODA without giving up on it? To examine this question, the rest of this chapter addresses both aid reform and more fundamental rethinking of ODA.

5.4 ODA and beyond

The changing world challenges the AA in three important ways. First, the challenge is to rethink the word ‘Assistance’ in Official Development Assistance. The challenge I see here is not to move from regime to practice, but to push the AA further. The challenge is to move from ownership of development policy to sovereignty (Whitfield, 2009), trusted partnerships, and balanced decision making regarding development funds. This is the ‘improve ODA’ agenda: operationalize the principles and live up to the agreements.

Second, the challenge is to rethink the word ‘Official’ in Official Development Assistance. ODA is challenged by private financial flows and their developmental impact. I call this agenda ‘the private turn of ODA’.

Third, the challenge is to rethink the word ‘Development’ in Official Development Assistance. To date, the neoliberal development trajectory has been supported. This one-size-fits-all recipe is challenged by countries that have successfully developed their own institutions and development path (Booth, 2011). To date, development is primarily focussed on poverty and largely fails to curb rising inequality. Equality has an intrinsic as well as an instrumental value (fostering both poverty reduction and economic growth). Moreover, poverty reduction can easily be whipped out by conflict and crises. Development has been closely linked-up with the increasing global security concerns, ranging from terrorism, conflicts, and climate change to food security and global financial stability. ODA becomes instrumental for global security and peace-keeping for ODA. This results in the ‘security turn’ agenda. Each of the three challenges and agendas will be elaborated below.

5.4.1 Assistance and self-development

ODA remains important for moral, religious, geo-political, and economic reasons as well as for its monetary volume. There is ample scope for improving ODA performance (see also Easterly and Williamson, 2011). Despite the shift towards the Sector-wide Approach, the Paris Declaration, and the use of budget support, there is still a large unfinished agenda (Wood et al., 2011).¹³² For instance, broad evaluations of the Sector Wide Approaches and of budget support have shown the meagre results obtained in terms of on-the-ground improvements and poverty impact (IOB, 2006; Koeberle et al., 2006; WRR, 2010). Furthermore, the broad evaluation of the Paris Declaration shows important pending issues: the Paris Declaration “was initially interpreted and applied as a technical, bureaucratic process and risked losing the political and wider societal engagement needed to bring change” (Wood et al., 2011: viii). Moreover, “donors have so far demonstrated less commitment than partner countries to making the necessary changes in their own systems” (*idem*: ix). “Of the five principles, managing for results and mutual accountability [are] advancing least” (*idem*: x). Finally, part of the improvement agenda will be to negotiate a better framework of goals for ‘post-2015’ as the successor of the MDGs.

Central to this agenda is the word ‘Assistance’ in Official Development Assistance. Assistance presupposes an unequal relationship, such as in the doctor-patient relationship (WRR, 2010). However, differences in development indicators or development pathways are not necessarily reasons

¹³² This became clear during the 4th high level forum on aid effectiveness in Busan, 2011.

to construct a hierarchy or linearity of some leading and others in need for help. Redressing the inherent superiority claim in much of traditional aid (Tan-Mullins et al., 2010) is part of this agenda. Differences can be respected and valued as equally valid, parallel, or as a legitimate choice. Redressing paternalism and establishing a genuine partnership is essential. Currently donors act too often on the basis of the principle ‘who pays, determines the game’. The space between the principles of ownership and sovereignty provides opportunities for reciprocity and cooperation on equal footing (Whitfield, 2009).

Moving from assistance to international cooperation goes hand in hand with moving from an intervention strategy to strategies of facilitation and encouragement of self-development (Booth, 2011; Umans, 2012). Assistance presupposes an external party delivering aid and bringing development. Yet, development is increasingly being recognized as an endogenous process shaped by local actors who develop themselves (Ellerman, 2004). Increasingly partner governments see the donor’s role as a catalyst of self-development by eliminating external obstacles (unequal playing fields, unfair restrictions, impositions, and others). Partner governments stress an ethics of non-interference. For them, self-development is more effective, since it entails motivational incentives and encourages self-esteem. Partner self-development requires donors to manage political risks instead of avoiding those (Schiltz et al. 2009). Subsequently, the precondition for encouraging self-development is a high level of mutual trust (Umans, 2012).

Partner countries can promote trust by respecting democratic institutions, promoting transparency, and strengthening state legitimacy in the eyes of citizens. Donors can promote trust by ensuring coherence with other policies (OECD, 2009), focusing less on short-term results and more on developmental outcomes, untying their aid, and refraining from unilateral decision making (ActionAid, 2011; Easterly and Williamson, 2011). Mutual agreements within the AA can create a policy space that is driven by open dialogue and invitation.

The importance of political trust leads donors into being selective in their choice for partners, encouraging stability in the partner country, and engaging in political dialogue. Once the partners are carefully selected, the conditions for unconditional encouragement of self-development are fulfilled. Yet, donor reforms to encourage self-development are lagging behind (Wood et al., 2011). High-level decisions are still politically motivated by donor country domestic politics and foreign policy (Hoebink, 2009). Genuine ownership requires political will in OECD parliaments as well as donor capacities to let-go.

5.4.2 Official and private

This agenda primarily deals with the word ‘Official’ in Official Development Assistance. As Dewey (1927) argued, official is the opposite of private. The behaviour of private actors causes extensive consequences that involve others beyond those actors directly engaged in the behaviour. This calls the public to become in charge of supervision and regulation. Currently, this position is heavily debated. According to one position, the role of a regulatory state as embodied in the Washington Consensus has proven to be insufficient, and they argue in favour of heterodox models of state engagement in the economy (Fritz and Rocha Menocal, 2007; Kharas and Rogerson, 2012).

According to a liberal position, the regulatory role of the state is too restrictive. Foreign direct investment, remittances and philanthropy have proven to be state-independent triggers of developmental processes in the South. According to neo-liberalism, the state should favour deregulation and self-regulated private action. Self-regulation of private companies and demands of private consumers have become important drivers of sustainable development. According to liberal politicians, private charity should take over most of the state’s role in official aid.¹³³ According to this view, the state should not burden its citizens with taxes, but should leave its citizens free to decide for themselves or provide incentives, such as tax exemptions.

¹³³ Statement by Han ten Broeke (28-8-12).

The diversity of private actions has become increasingly important for development.¹³⁴ Private sector expertise, technology, and capacities can contribute to poverty reduction, employment generation, environmental sustainability, and human well-being. Among IFC client companies there is a positive correlation between making profit and delivering development outcomes (IFC, 2007).

The potential of private action for developmental public effects can be supported by ODA and non-ODA public expenditure. In case the aim is primarily commercial, the official subsidy to a private firm is excluded from ODA. If the aim is development, then the subsidy is eligible for ODA. Within aid policies, a plurality of mechanisms exist that combine the public and private sector. Considerable amounts of ODA are provided to non-governmental organizations (NGOs)¹³⁵ and private companies to generate development outcomes. Through development banks or directly, donors invest ODA funds in companies and financial institutions in developing countries. As a 'catalyst' financier, these banks' portfolios include commercial loans, equity, and guarantees.

Among OECD donors there is increasing interest in public private partnerships (PPPs). Public financing of PPPs is generally justified when there is a high probability that private activities will result in the efficient provision of a public good, in this case development outcomes. PPPs create three interesting linkages: private businesses are coupled to public goods; public interests are coupled to a business approach; and self-interests¹³⁶ are coupled to mutual benefits. International Corporate Social Responsibility plays a key role in ensuring the materialization of those mutual benefits and developmental outcomes.

The 2011 Dutch aid policy (Ministerie van Buitenlandse Zaken, 2011) defined priorities for those PPPs dealing with one of the four thematic priority areas where Dutch expertise and international competitiveness is high.¹³⁷ The thematic priorities provide chances for Dutch businesses. Without slipping back into tied aid, Dutch companies have a privileged starting position in open tenders, and partner countries gain access to the added-value of Dutch businesses and their co-investment (a minimum of 25%).

A particular innovation in Dutch aid policy was the transition facility for three MICs.¹³⁸ This combination of ODA and non-ODA funds aimed at improving the business climate as well as promoting mutual trade and investment linked to Dutch businesses and knowledge institutes. The obstacles and opportunities encountered by Dutch companies were used as a starting point to identify priority sectors and interventions. The non-ODA funds from the Ministry of Economic Affairs, Agriculture, and Innovation were tied to Dutch business interest. Examples were the financing of trade missions, matchmaking, business support, and even conditional participation in equity. The fact that International Corporate Social Responsibility was a requirement for public funding to ensure positive developmental outcomes of the non-ODA component. Many Dutch companies no longer saw these requirements as a business burden, but rather as a strategic comparative advantage while tendering, especially in relation to companies of MICs. The ODA funds were untied and linked to indirect poverty reduction. Examples were the financing of custom reforms and co-financing private investment for employment generation or infrastructural public works. ODA and non-ODA remained separated, and therefore it was a joint rather than blended mechanism.

¹³⁴ This is not necessarily in opposite to or in contradiction with a renewed importance of developmental states (Fritz and Rocha Menocal (2007).

¹³⁵ The importance, position, and achievements of NGOs and citizen solidarity are extensively debated, but fall outside the scope of this paper.

¹³⁶ Some donors traditionally have a strong link between self-interest and aid. With the shift from the globalization era to the security era after 2001, donor self-interest is increasingly seen as a justification or goal of development cooperation. Self-interest has increasingly become a legitimate motivation for development cooperation.

¹³⁷ These four themes are aligned to the 11 top-sectors of the Dutch economic policy. Development policy is made coherent with economic policy rather than the other way around.

¹³⁸ Vietnam, South Africa, and Colombia.

Several southern development partners¹³⁹ also combine public and private investments, but in other ways. They provide tied aid blending public funds and private investment or interests in trade. The Chinese government provides support to exporting businesses and links aid loans directly to export contracts in order to secure the flow of raw materials. MICs increasingly engage in South-South cooperation in which public private blending takes place (Tan-Mullins et.al, 2010). Often, the Southern development partner legitimizes its business community interests by pointing at the country's own poverty level. Since MICs respect sovereignty and do not attach political conditions to their aid, South-South cooperation is supposedly based on horizontal equality and win-win opportunities.

Another important private flow of funds with a negative development impact is illicit transfer. 'Illicit' is also an opposite term for 'official'. Approximately US\$ 1 trillion of illicit money flows out of developing countries into Western financial institutions (Kar and Freitas, 2011). In addition to losses from commercial tax evasion by multinational corporations, this figure includes the proceeds of corruption, trans-border criminal organizations, and international terrorist groups. These illicit outflows negatively affect domestic revenue mobilization (taxation, royalties, and other parameters) in developing countries.

5.4.3 Development and transformation

The development objective of ODA is ushering convergence between developing and developed countries. This goal has translated into the stimulation of economic growth and poverty reduction. This was initially pursued through supporting the developmental state and later through neoliberal reforms. This interpretation of the word 'Development' in Official Development Assistance has been challenged for several decades (Duffield, 2002). Development is seen differently by the various actors. I distinguish three main challenges to the traditional donors' interpretation of development: post-neoliberal approaches, inequality as a neglected development problem, and the ever-expanding range of global concerns as goals.

The recent emergence of Asian and Latin American countries seriously questions traditional development models laid down in the Washington consensus and the MDGs with focus on social sectors. This development path was not the one that East Asian countries have pursued. They have coined a BeST¹⁴⁰ consensus (Penrose, 2010) in which a developmental state actively promotes technology and industrial development. In concrete terms, this means that less emphasis is placed on social sectors and more is placed on productive sectors. Less importance is given to universal primary education (MDG 2) and more to vocational and tertiary education. In Latin America, contrary to traditional donor approaches, several governments successfully embarked on post-neoliberal development policies, social innovations, and a conceptual framework of well-being rather than welfare (Grugel and Riggirozzi, 2012). Taken together, the MICs challenge the traditional notion of development and promote multiple development models.

A second critique on development is targeting the development goal of poverty reduction. In many countries in the Global South, poverty is diminishing but inequality is increasing. Over the past several decades, inequality has increased in the Global North, in the Global South, and in the North-South relation. There is growing evidence that high inequality is bad in itself as well as bad for growth (UNDP, 2011; World Bank, 2005). Equality has become a development goal: inclusive development. The development problem is no longer poverty in the South, but rather inequity within the global economy. The North is very much part of the problem and is no longer just the solution. Cooperation is no longer shaped along the dividing line separating donor countries and recipient countries. The globalized world has become one village. Simultaneously, new inequalities create new dividing lines between winners and losers of globalization. Both global and national mechanisms of transfers or

¹³⁹ These not only include traditional Southern partners (they don't want to be called donors), such as India and China, but also emerging ones, such as Brazil, Venezuela, Iran, Saudi Arabia, and many others.

¹⁴⁰ BeST stands for Beijing, Seoul, and Tokyo or Taipei

redistribution are needed. “Real aid reduces inequality” (ActionAid, 2011: 8) and transfers need to be additional to ODA. A telling fact of this point is that in 2008, for the first time in history, all African states together raised more tax revenues than ODA that they received (WRR, 2010). Several Latin American governments have changed taxes on extractive industries to pay for social programmes. The challenge is to shift towards pro-poor or pro-equity budgeting. ODA can play a role in this new constellation through budget support, but it can also play a role as a catalyser of national redistribution mechanisms.

A third challenge of development emerges from a critique on limitations regarding the political economic goals and the national scale. Development is ultimately about the provision of Global Public Goods (GPGs) and an ever-expanding range of global concerns. The development agenda is expanded to a globalisation agenda. ODA for poverty and inequality reduction “is becoming increasingly irrelevant as a tool for action” (Severino and Ray, 2009: 1). I distinguish two major global concerns: security and sustainability.

ODA is heavily affected by security concerns, such as the ‘war on terror’, the ‘war on drugs’, failed states, impunity, pandemics, climate change, food security, and systemic financial risks. The “new will to govern [and] international will to intervene” (Duffield, 2002: 1049) is intermingled with “the will to improve” (Li, 2007: 264) in integrated approaches¹⁴¹. Security has become a prime mover of ODA country allocations. Because the ODA standard excludes military expenditures, ODA is a small part of the financial flows spent to safeguard the security and stability provided by GPGs. Several donors and partner governments are in favour of changing the ODA standard. The New Deal for Engagement in Fragile States¹⁴² points to the need to build legitimate security and justice institutions. If security is stretched to include global financial stability, then an entire new area is created with multiple linkages. Linkages between global financial stability and ODA expenditure in the global South are still hardly explored.

The second global concern or GPG is sustainability in a broad sense. Climate change, loss of biodiversity, depletion of natural resources, and pollution have all been on the development agenda for a long period of time. Progress towards sustainable development or green economy has been slow at best. ODA can play a modest role as a catalyst. Climate finance is one example of combining ODA and non-ODA.

5.5 Reassembling ODA and beyond

The emerging trends and agendas of ODA point at the complexity of the development process (partly externally assisted, partly endogenous), the fragmentation (the superseded strict divisions of public and private) and the nexus of themes. The AA is torn in different directions. What are possible ways forward and what is needed for each of them to be realized? I undertake this exercise using a perspective that is aligned with three characteristics of the contemporary aid business that emerge from the previous analysis: complexity¹⁴³, fragmentation¹⁴⁴, and volatility¹⁴⁵. To understand these characteristics, I develop two ideas: the concept of assemblage and the idea of viscosity.

Fragmentation and complexity come together in the essence of assemblages. Drawing on assemblage theory (Deleuze and Guattari, 2004), assemblages are constellations of fragments that do not necessarily form a neat whole or system. Assemblages do not presuppose consistency, coherence, or continuity, but rather contingency, uncertainty, and instability. Reassembling fragmentation is the rule rather than the exception.

¹⁴¹ These approaches combine defence, diplomacy, and development.

¹⁴² The New Deal was negotiated during the HLF-4 in Busan, 2011.

¹⁴³ We see that the interactions of actors, interests, processes, and crises cause complexity.

¹⁴⁴ We see that current divisions, such as public and private, ODA, and non-ODA as well as separate global concerns can cause fragmentation.

¹⁴⁵ We see that security issues as well as the geo-economic and geo-political dynamics cause volatility in the field of development cooperation (in terms of budget allocations, public opinion, donor ethics, etc.).

To understand the volatility of the contemporary complex world, the assemblage theory is linked with the idea of degrees of fluidity (Bauman, 2000). I postulate that the nature of the fragments of assemblages is viscous. In contrast with other assemblage theories to date, the fragments are not necessarily solid, separable, and distinct from each other. Rather, fragments and assemblages can be viscous and they intermingle. Existing classifications, conceptual boundaries, and divisions can dissolve. New categories can emerge where volatility and uncertainties harden into stable differences. This ontological¹⁴⁶ perspective is derived from the messiness and volatility that I perceive in on-going global dynamics, and at the same time helps explain such dynamics. Therefore, I align the framework for understanding the world with what I see happening in the world in order to assemble pragmatic ways forward. This framework contrasts with prevailing scenario analysis in the sense that scenarios are built around distinct features, separated dimensions, and rational analyses. Scenarios are usually defined by fixed end-states, while assemblages are defined by the processes of assembling fragments. In the field of the aid business, I then foresee three possible re-assemblages of international cooperation: the new Aid Assemblage, the Public-Private Assemblage, and the Global Responsibility Assemblage.

5.5.1 The new Aid Assemblage

The first re-assemblage of development cooperation is based on the international commitment “to reform the ways we deliver and manage aid” (Paris Declaration, 2005). With an annual volume of 128 billion US dollars, ODA remains an important business. Compared to other financial flows, such as remittances and FDI, ODA has more potential to be targeted to the LDCs (WRR, 2010). The three principles of ownership, alignment, and mutual accountability provide the potential to intertwine donors and partners into closer relationships of cooperation. In those collaborative assemblages, the neat borders between actors may become blurred. Ownership of the partner country extends into the devolution of decision making by the donor or an invitation of the partner countries into the policy space of the donor governments. Genuine ownership requires development cooperation policy to be based on a blurring of donor country domestic politics and partner country politics. Alignment means donor’s inscription in the partner country’s priorities, systems, and procedures. Blurring boundaries results in intermingling and requires a certain fluidity to cope with difference, uncertainty, and volatility. These trends take the development actors beyond the AA into a New AA, which is the New Aid Assemblage.

The New AA also revolves around the blurring between developed and developing countries. As the world becomes more connected and flatter, the demands for a new version of international cooperation is emerging. Currently, the medical terminology of ‘donor’ and ‘recipient’ is used to label actors in the aid business. These homogenous and hierarchically ordered categories have increasingly lost their relevance in a fractured, unequal world disorder. Therefore, genuine aid reform is more than public sector adaptations in both donor and partner governments. It touches on the politics of aid as well as on identities. The identity labels related to aid-giving will have to give way to those of facilitators or catalysts related to a new cooperation as encouragement (see also Umans, 2012). The donor’s role of trustee (Li, 2007) is displaced by the central role of trust in balanced relationships.

The New AA has several operational implications for donors. Donors could pursue this agenda by specifying a limited list of LDCs that are trusted to the extent that intermingling is likely to occur over a longer period of time. For intermingling to be realized, procedures and aid modalities need to be adapted and flexible. Another implication is a shift from a preoccupation with aid effectiveness, as the better delivery of aid, to developmental effectiveness (Umans, 2012). I define developmental effectiveness as achieving development outcomes with aid. Aid effectiveness is closely linked with the AA. In addition, the concept is too narrow: better delivery of wrongly conceived aid has not resulted in the transformational change that development is supposed to be. Within the New AA, outcome-orientation among donors as well as partner governments should be strengthened and focused. “There

¹⁴⁶ Ontology is the philosophical study of the nature of being, existence, or reality as such. It deals with questions concerning what entities exist or can be said to exist, and how such entities can be grouped.

has been little progress in most countries in giving greater priority to the needs of the poorest people” (Wood et al., 2011: x). In addition, a new framework is needed to define and measure the impact of aid on development and the transformation of structural poverty.

It is likely that the debate on inequality is incorporated as a fragment of the above mentioned assemblage. Global inequality and inclusive development inevitably come higher and more integrated on the agenda. Strict divisions of North-South are replaced by blurred spaces and pockets of well-being or failure. Strict divisions as global-national-local are replaced by new, blurred economic divisions between rich and poor that cut across levels. This blurring and *con-fusión*¹⁴⁷ will have implications for cooperation with LDCs and MICs. The ODA standard could be supplemented with a standard to measure official pro-poor or pro-equity budget allocations within partner countries. Policy coherence for development¹⁴⁸ will emerge as a prominent field of attention for the organizations in charge of ODA. Given that the majority of the poor live in highly unequal MICs, donors could target their cooperation with the MICs, which pursue policies of redistribution and tax reform.¹⁴⁹ ODA will be instrumental for financial innovation, fiscal justice, and economic diplomacy for equity instead of projects or budget support. The political economy will be central in the political dialogue. Poverty and equality can no longer be treated separately. They are intermingled and entrenched in the development pathways of many LCDs and MICs.

The realization of this New Aid Assemblage will depend on political will of influential governments (both from the global North and South) as well as trust in genuine partnerships and multilateralism. Among the driving forces are the multilateral institutions and OECD donors as well as their partners and clients. However, the increasing multipolarity or non-polarity of the world order might seriously fragment this assemblage. It is still too early to predict the political feasibility of deepening the reform agenda along the lines defined above. Currently, the situation is still very fluid since the details of the new SDG and climate finance agreements still need to be pencilled out.

While some donors move forward along the lines of the Paris Declaration, others seem to downplay principles for aid effectiveness to pursue geo-economic and geo-political interests. It is likely that this assemblage cannot count on political support of emerging geo-economic players such as China and Brazil. The assemblage can also not count on support from assertive partner countries with post-neoliberal policies (Grugel and Ruggirozzi, 2012). If the issue of inequality is linked to the assemblage, then support from OECD countries might diminish, while that of Brazil and assertive partner countries might rise. Yet, the sheer size of funds still disbursed as ODA within the AA indicates that it is as yet too early to abandon this agenda of improvement and to focus exclusively on other possible assemblages.

5.5.2 The Public-Private assemblage

The second likely re-assemblage revolves around the blurring of public and private (Kharas and Rogerson, 2012). It focusses on the role of private sector participation in development cooperation and the role of the developmental state embracing a business approach. I propose to elaborate a Financing Development Outcomes (FDO¹⁵⁰) standard for this assemblage. It could be based on outcome measures and the ex-post quantification of the private sector’s contribution to poverty reduction or equality. Donors could pursue the FDO agenda by developing instruments that provide for the multiple articulations between private and public. Emerging MICs experiment with alternative aid

¹⁴⁷ *Con-fusión* refers to confusion as well as ‘with-fusion’ (translated from Spanish), meaning fluid and intermingled.

¹⁴⁸ For instance, in the past the donor countries in the WTO have seriously limited developing countries’ scope to pursue their own industrialisation policies (AIV, 2010), which stands in tense relation to the same countries’ aid policies.

¹⁴⁹ In Latin America, tax bases are very limited and fiscal policy does little to reduce inequality due to low levels of direct taxes and the extensive use of tax deductions and exemptions (OECD/ECLAC, 2011).

¹⁵⁰ The acronym ‘FDO’ is a blending of the acronyms FDI and ODA.

models with post-neoliberal public-private blending. Due to their own poverty, they cannot forego self-interest and do not want to live up to the ODA standard.

FDO could also blur the division between aid and trade. To date, traditional donors perceive these phenomena as separate issues¹⁵¹ or as interlinked in ‘aid for trade’. Reworking these divisions by blurring and intermingling could result in ‘*traide*’: trade and aid. It could entail ‘trade facilitation with aid money’ or ‘trade sustaining aid results’ (market-based approaches). Such a move could lead to very concrete transformations in aid management practices, inter-institutional collaboration, and cooperation policies.

One of the implications of the public-private assemblage is a shift from a preoccupation with aid effectiveness to development effectiveness.¹⁵² In comparison with aid effectiveness and developmental effectiveness, development effectiveness is about achieving development results with any kind of financial transaction, public or private, aid or investment.

This Public-Private Assemblage can be put together by an influential group of countries, private aid foundations, businesses, and development banks.¹⁵³ The countries that might be interested are those emerging and the traditional development partners that are inclined to pursue their geo-economic interests with aid. If the contemporary world indeed shows strong features of neo-medievalism¹⁵⁴, then the next Renaissance of cooperation may be arising with assemblages of dot-gov, dot-org, and dot-com players (after Khanna, 2011). These assemblages show features of viscosity: membership is unstable, the political support base is volatile, and several constituent fragments are viscous rather than fixed. For instance, the FDO standard is not crystalized, although there are institutionally hardened fragments such as the IFC’s Development Outcome Tracking System (IFC, 2007) and the OECD guidelines for Corporate Social Responsibility, which might be solid fragments of the emerging FDO standard.

5.5.3 The global responsibility assemblage

The third re-assemblage revolves around the blurring of national and global. As the world gets more connected and flatter, the national interests become interdependent with international cooperation. It will be increasingly difficult to transfer the national responsibility for Global Public Goods to other countries, while at the same time it is increasingly difficult to solve collective action dilemmas and to cope with emergent risks in the absence of international cooperation. A second process of blurring and intermingling occurs among the hitherto separated Global Public Goods (GPGs). Global well-being is tightly related to security, climate change, sustainability and other factors (Kharas and Rogerson, 2012). ODA as a separate standard is likely to be reassembled into Global Public Finance (Severino and Ray, 2009: 22). This measure could sum up public and private funds and should sum up expenditures for poverty reduction as well as enhancement of equality, security, and sustainability. This would require the development of a new Global Public Finance (GPF) standard, which obviously is much higher than the 0.7% ODA standard. For a green economy alone, an estimated additional investment of between US\$ 1 and 2.5 trillion per annum (or between 1.5 and 3.9% of global GDP) would be required (see UNEP, 2011). The new GPF norm, including poverty, energy, climate, and security (which includes the global financial system) might be quite high, and its nature will not be a North-South transfer. This broad agenda could be pursued by specifying a list of indicators or an integral framework of assessment to determine the ‘value for money’ of intervention options in very different areas (ranging from biodiversity protection to combating piracy).

¹⁵¹ The division is sanctioned by OECD’s fixed definition of Official Development Assistance.

¹⁵² To date, international consensus does not exist on what development effectiveness entails.

¹⁵³ Over the past several years, the World Bank has expanded operations in support of private companies.

¹⁵⁴ Khanna (2011) argues that the kind of contemporary geo-political dynamics is somewhat comparable to the situation in the medieval era. Symptoms of medievalism are economic chaos, social unrest, and a complex multiplicity of diverse actors.

Among the driving forces of this Global Responsibility Assemblage are the non-aid actors, such as government agencies engaged in climate finance, security issues or migration as well as private sector actors. Policy blurring of traditionally separate policy fields and institutional silos will reverse the issue of policy coherence. Other government agencies do not only align their policies to development cooperation goals but aid is now becoming instrumental for other agencies' goals and policies. Particularly the geo-economic and geo-political changes as well as climate change and migration have resulted in a looser link between aid and poverty reduction. Aid serves more aims and poverty reduction is increasingly a matter of national redistribution (AIV, 2012), domestic politics and other financial flows (trade and investment). Such mainstreaming or dilution of development cooperation might result in the further fragmentation of aid. The ODA budget might be plugged into the budgets of line ministries or their implementing agencies.¹⁵⁵ The traditional aid agencies in charge of ODA might disappear or might be reduced to managing emergency aid and policy coherence for development.

These three assemblages are not clear-cut models or fixed scenarios; rather, they are fluid, speculative, and still in a process of crystallizing out. Because they are socio-political-discursive assemblages instead of technical architectures, they may also emerge incomplete, fragmented, and intermingled. The broadening and refragmentation of the aid business shifts the discussion on the division of labour among donors towards a reflection on their labour of division (Hirsch, 2010). The ways donors actively work to separate 'development' from other global public goods at times seems artificial. The way ODA is separated from non-ODA seems questionable. The labour invested to create new divisions will blur the old ones. Therefore, the coming decade donors and aid diplomats will have to deal with blurredness that will require innovative and creative approaches.

5.6 Will future development cooperation be needed?

Despite the lack of solid macro-level evidence of aid effectiveness (Alonso and Ocampo, 2012) and despite a major crisis, the total ODA spending has gone up again. In 2013 ODA reached the highest level ever recorded of USD 134.8 billion (OECD, 2014). Estimation indicates that by 2025 extreme poverty is largely eradicated except for a few so-called failed states (Rogerson and Kharas, 2012). I see two reasons to expect that development cooperation will still be needed. First, several Millennium Development Goals are not met and the Sustainable Development Goals are even more ambitious. The goals of development cooperation have broadened beyond extreme poverty. Moreover, future development cooperation efforts will be undermined by phenomena such as climate change, conflict, tax evasion, etc. Second, in many middle-income countries the reduction of both inequality and poverty might not succeed or might take a very long time if not facilitated by cooperation from outside. Nationally, there is often no political will among the governments to address inequalities.

Regarding the future of aid there is a whole range of outspoken opinions.¹⁵⁶ I distinguish the 'aid undertakers', the 'aid pessimists', the 'aid positivists' and the 'aid optimists'. The aid undertakers advocate the end of aid. Moyo (2009) considers aid to be deadly. Edwards (2014) points at the circumstances that lead to 'toxic aid'. He positions himself as an aid pathologist. Others, among whom Emmerij (2014) anticipate the end of the traditional aid system. The aid sceptics argue that aid should be ended and a business-friendly environment should be put in place for the market to solve poverty. The aid pessimists argue for a radical change, for instance from planners to searchers (Easterly, 2006; Easterly and Williamson, 2011). Aid positivists are scientists who study aid effectiveness, mostly at local levels. Banerjee and Duflo (2011) have evidenced and falsified through random control trials the possibilities of introducing small, smart interventions that make a real difference. Such outcomes feed the aid optimists. Aid optimists proclaim the end of poverty due to planned aid (Sachs, 2005). They praise the achievements of aid also at the macro level. They see aid as a positive catalyst to wider development processes and forces. And the wider developments help aid to be more effective. Kenny (2011) points out that, because of unprecedented advances in technology and medicine, levels of

¹⁵⁵ After the Syria crisis a large proportion of Dutch aid is channelled to other government agencies to pay for the first year's costs of migrants and asylum seekers.

¹⁵⁶ I here categorize several opinions without pretending to cover all or to make the most appropriate division. My intension is to show the diversity and arguments.

welfare can now be raised with relatively little effort. This results in optimism. So my question is whether the development actors will soon see the end of aid, the end of poverty or none of them.

5.7 Conclusion

The practice of aid-giving, the ODA regime, and the Aid Architecture seem to be solid institutions, but since they are embedded in wider global dynamics, they are at the point of becoming fluid. The aid business is unlikely to continue with business-as-usual. With the world becoming blurred and fluid, the aid business will have to align itself to the new divisions, unknowns, uncertainties and flows by becoming itself viscous rather than solid or rigid.¹⁵⁷

ODA faces both a period of change and a change of period. The period of global change is characterised by the geo-economic rise of MICs resulting in the end of assistentialism; the relative decline of ODA as compared to private financial flows; and the importance of a wide range environmental and security concerns. The change of period is characterised by the disappearance of the strict division between developed and developing countries, the separation of public and private, and the strict distinction of scales from global to local. Strict divisions are melting away and being replaced by blurred interlinkages. Globalization has subsumed old divisions in the ‘global village’ and new divisions have simultaneously emerged. In addition, a blurring of boundaries is matched with a reworking of boundaries, which is destabilizing the present ODA regime. The current Aid Architecture will give way to several loosely articulated assemblages in which a diversity of fragments intermingle in new ways. The world of aid-giving seems to move from a period of planned design to a period of contingent emergence.

¹⁵⁷ In other parts of the thesis I call this the need for ontological alignment.

Chapter 6. Understanding the Policy Cycle Paradox;

A spatial view on policy development

6.1 Abstract

This chapter aims to reanimate the topic of the policy cycle model in the development debate. The policy cycle model divides the policy process in various phases. It separates and sequences agenda setting, policy formulation and policy implementation. In spite of empirical and theoretical flaws, the model is still used pervasively in policy science and practice. This is called the policy cycle paradox. The proposed way to understand this paradox is to make a shift from a temporal to a spatial perspective. I will show that policy processes are played out in time as well as in abstract space. Policy procedures, performativity and incentives create a space of order, stability and rigidity. This is a space of points (distinct positions and beings), lines (clear relations), sharp divisions and extensive grids (networks). This space forms the solid ground for controlling the process. However, this solid topography can be destabilized due to collective action problems, fragmentation, contradictions and mediation. Especially when further policy assembling takes place in different settings, things become vague, amorphous and less differentiated. New encounters, relations and contexts open up new potentialities, vitality and instability. The solid topographical space turns into a fluid topological space. This space can no longer be understood in terms of networks and grids. I propose to use the term assemblage to encompass the continuously varying intensities of solid and fluid space-time. The nature of things is always in-between solid and fluid: it is viscous. Viscous ontology encompasses both becoming-a-being and being-a-becoming. I will argue that conceptualizing and enacting topological movements will help understand policy processes and will help curb implementation failures. Topology and viscosity provide a different understanding of failure: it is an effect of immanent fluidity. Failure is not related to the cycle so there is no paradox anymore. Failure is made visible and normal as the fluid nature of becomings. These insights will help policy makers to explore the fluid space, its uncertainties and surprises to reassemble viable policy development trajectories.

6.2 Introduction

This chapter aims to stimulate anew the debate on the policy cycle model and paradox. The policy cycle model distinguishes a sequence of phases, usually agenda setting, policy formulation, planning, implementation and evaluation (Anderson, 2011). This model was first put forward by Harold Lasswell in the 1950s. It was later refined by others but also fiercely contested in the decades that followed. Empirical observations indicated that in practice policy processes do not automatically follow a cycle and that the preconditions for the policy cycle model are often not in place (*idem*). Policy officers are supposed to be intermediaries who transport a clear policy while in practice they act as mediators who translate policy (Lipsky, 1980). The policy science literature is also critical about the assumptions underlying the model (Fischer et al., 2007). The model presupposes predictability, rational choice and institutional control. Alternative models were developed, such as the policy rounds model and multiple streams framework (Sabatier, 2007). Academic interest shifted to topics such as discourse (Hajer, 1995), policy networks (Marsh and Rhodes, 1992), the advocacy coalition framework (Sabatier, 2007) and governance (Bevir and Rhodes, 2010). Yet, policymakers and academics continue to widely use the policy cycle model in practice and in teaching despite the fact that it has been discredited by both empirical and theoretical criticisms. This is called the policy cycle paradox (*idem*).

Over the last decade or more, social scientists and researchers in public administration abandoned the topic almost entirely. However, in my practice as a policy officer I noticed that the dividing line

between formulation and implementation is damaging policy development.¹⁵⁸ I noticed that the concepts of the policy cycle enact a certain reality that invisibilizes another reality, namely the practices of assembling. I am quite confident that nobody in the Dutch MoFA conceives of her or his job as assembling heterogeneous fragments day in day out. Yet, that is what many do. I see them copy-pasting text fragments. I see them matching themes, partners, budgets, desires and plans into seemingly coherent programming. But I also see them struggling with the more-than-complex and fluid situations (see Chapter 4) that constantly arise.

In this chapter, I propose to revisit the policy cycle paradox by resorting to ontology.¹⁵⁹ Reaffirming “that the field [of public administration] benefits significantly from greater attention to ontology” (Raadschelders, 2011: 916), I mobilize the work of Deleuze and Guattari (2004). This enables a different look at policy processes: they are not played out in time but in space-time. Space-time is all there is; all that exists. As explained in Chapters 1 and 4, space is not necessarily place but can be abstract (for instance the policy space). Space is not a priori to policy development but can be its effect. And time is not necessarily linear and sequenced. Space and time are not necessarily separated but can become enfolded, entangled and co-constituted as metaphysical space-time. Space-time is not necessarily extensive, differentiated (topographical) and solid; it can be based on intensive differences which gives space-time an undifferentiated (topological) and fluid nature. In such a space-time the policy processes are more than temporal sequences of phases, enacted in a series of bureaucratic locations. Policy development is the result of practices of assembling fragments (people, texts, procedures, incentives and practices) and becomings (actualized potential) that continuously (re)shape policy processes. These assemblages do not necessarily constitute a neat or logical whole (the perfect policy cycle) but form ever shifting assemblages of loose associations.

Space-time is partly solid, differentiated and relatively stable (the beings). It is partly fluid, amorphous, unknown, unstable (the becomings). The relatively solid and stable beings or entities are always prone to becoming blurred or destabilized. Such blurring and dissolving is called deterritorialization. The ontologically solid becomes fluid, undetermined and open to new possibilities. But in their turn these ‘multities’ (Umans and Arce, 2014) are always prone to being captured again and reterritorialized in a new fixed entity or solid network. The processes of deterritorialization and reterritorialization provide the conceptual framework for a flexible, open, undetermined and spatio-temporal methodology to further my understanding of policy processes. These concepts provide an ontological contribution to the field of policy analysis in order to think and enact policy in different ways.

6.3 Methodology

The research methodology did not start from an a-priori framework such as the policy cycle. Rather, the research developed by following the becomings emerging along with the unfolding of deterritorialization and reterritorialization. The research followed three movements: the expansion of territorializations, the flows of deterritorializations and the reassembling of reterritorializations. The expansions refer to studying new policies, upcoming themes, categories, procedures, growing networks, technologies, etc. These reveal the expanding grid-lines of the striated space. The flows refer to studying the escapes from the striated space or the “lines of flight” (Deleuze and Guattari, 2004: 10) into and through the smooth space. The smoothing of space occurs when rigid classifications, divisions or categories lose their clarity, separateness or coherence. The clear boundaries become blurred, differences dissolve and entities mix or flow-over into each other. Ontologically, the gridded, solid space-time of divisions, entities and relations is transformed into an amorphous fluid space-time in which the entities and their relations are different. Entities have become vague ‘multities’ (Umans and Arce, 2014). It is impossible to single things out. A singular policy

¹⁵⁸ This divide is superimposed with a socio-organizational divide. Too many policy officers responsible for formulation in the Hague, work with their backs towards the policy officers in the Embassies who implement the policies. And vice versa. Yet, this image is not correct. Policy officers in the Embassies are formulating policy, maybe not always in the form of a text but in the form of a policy assemblage fit-for-purpose.

¹⁵⁹ Ontology studies the nature of realities.

concept can have a plurality of interpretations and multiplicity of potential uses. Policy no longer constitutes a stable, logic, neat, seamless whole nor does the policy cycle.

Together the solid and fluid spaces form a viscous mixture (*idem*) in which the one presupposes or co-constitutes the other and vice versa. Both spaces are folding in on each other. Both territorialization and deterritorialization processes are at work simultaneously, creating a viscosity in-between solid and fluid. Territorialization materializes entities that are solid-like, formalized, institutionalized, stable and clear, but simultaneously produces the lines that will become fault lines of contestation and starting points for deterritorialization. Deterritorialization materializes multities that are fluid, unstable, volatile, undefined and flowing. These multities will be captured or enveloped by the expanding grids of the striated space. These reterritorializations happen through practices of reassembling new connectivities among heterogeneous fragments. In this way the research shifts from applying a framework (such as the policy cycle model) to a methodology of 'follow-work'.

This chapter is further based on empirical research on Dutch policy processes in the area of development cooperation. The practical discussion within the administration of Dutch development cooperation focuses on the institutional delinking of policy formulation and implementation. I participated 11 years in policy formulation and implementation as policy officer within the Dutch Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MoFA). This insider position is the basis for experiential learning and a major source of data on the examples given below. Additional participant observation and daily conversations with colleagues gave insight in the performance and motives of other policy officers. The position of an insider also allowed an extensive review of internal communication. Additionally, literature review was conducted.

From the various and contradicting perspectives encountered within the wider policy process literature (Arts, 2012; Fischer et al., 2007; Sabatier, 2007), I derive seven relevant factors co-shaping the policy cycle.¹⁶⁰ These seven factors are grouped on the basis of their (de)territorializing and (de)stabilizing effects. The first three factors (procedures, performativity and incentives) territorialize the policy process as a stable, neat, and cyclical totality. These factors provide the connectivity between policy formulation and subsequent implementation. The next four factors delink the implementation from previous formulation: collective action problems, fragmentation, dilemmas and contradictions as well as mediation. These four factors trigger processes of deterritorialization. This collection of seven factors serves as the outline to present the empirical data on Dutch policy processes. Thereafter, reterritorialization will be discussed to show how as a policy officers I (re)assemble multiple factors and realities in practical and pragmatic ways.

6.4 Territorializing the Dutch development policy cycle

Territorialisation is a process of segmenting space and time, of separating the inseparable, of laying out procedures, formats, networks (Latour's worknets) and of designing a topography of points (positions), lines (relations) and grids (networks). Territorialization constitutes solid space-time. In this paragraph I will show how three factors guide Dutch policy officers in enacting this reality.

6.4.1 Procedures regarding aid policies

The literature on rational planning and public administration provides the basis for the policy cycle and its materialization in the polity, bureaucracy and procedures. According to this literature, scientific knowledge and rational argumentation enable rational-strategic actors to make their choices and design the procedures guiding decision-making (see Sabatier, 2007). I thus distil the factor 'procedures' as relevant for analysing policy processes.

¹⁶⁰ This selection does not pretend to be exhaustive, but rather to illustrative the main perspectives and related factors.

The Dutch policy cycle starts with the political negotiations among the potential coalition partners of a new government. If successful, these negotiations culminate in a government statement. This document contains the main policy lines and political rationalities. On the basis of the government statement each Minister elaborates his or her policies. The Minister for Development Cooperation co-writes the aid policy with a group of senior policy officers. The Minister of Foreign Affairs is involved since in the Netherlands the Minister for Development Cooperation works within the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MoFA).

The aid or cooperation policy entails choices regarding partner countries, budget ceilings and specific themes, sectors, focal areas, instruments and cooperation modalities. These choices are made on personal, professional, political and scientific grounds (see Van Gastel, 2011). The Parliamentary Commission discusses, approves or amends the policy document. Cooperation policy is thus domestic party politics. Following the approval of the Foreign Affairs and cooperation policies, the different Directorates within the MoFA elaborate thematic or regional policy papers.

My example of how a policy is elaborated in practice refers to the writing of the Dutch Latin America policy. In 2011 the Dutch Parliamentary Commission on Foreign Affairs requested the Minister to elaborate his Latin America policy. The Directorate of the Western Hemisphere was tasked with drafting the policy. The responsible policy officer first proposed an outline to the Minister. After obtaining comments the officer requested colleagues in other Directorates and Ministries for textual inputs on their respective areas of competence. External consultation meetings were held with academics, entrepreneurs and NGOs. The officer thus mobilized internal and external networks. Subsequently another policy officer pieced the textual bits together and edited the policy document. The multiple fragments were thus assembled into a coherent totality. The draft policy travelled up and down through the hierarchy of the Ministry and finally via the Ministerial Council of the Kingdom to the Parliamentary Commission.

The formulation and approval of a new development cooperation policy is followed by a planning and programming phase. In each partner country the Dutch Embassy produces its multi-annual strategic plan. Planning takes technical, political and external considerations into account. Technical rationalities revolve around policy content. The Dutch cooperation policy priorities are matched with the local Poverty Reduction Strategy. Political rationalities revolve around ruling parties' interests in both countries. Many leaders in developing countries have a fragile power base and offered aid needs to be translated into political support (Van der Veen, 2004). Donor agencies are sometimes deeply involved in local relationships of patronage, which shape their development practices (Mosse, 2004). Finally, external considerations are taken into account. These refer primarily to commercial and geopolitical interests. "If Western states do not open up their wallets, then there is generally no place for them at the negotiation table" (Van der Veen, 2004: 227).

Based on the strategic plan, programming is done by defining the activities. Since this is well-known by development partners, the Dutch Embassies in partner countries regularly receive funding proposals from external organisations who seek financial support.¹⁶¹ In practice, it is common for the policy officer responsible for the related sector to present the best proposals in internal staff meetings. After receiving recommendations, the officer renegotiates the proposals or starts writing an internal appraisal memorandum. The format of this document guides the policy officer in 'translating' and ordering the details of each proposal according to the internal administrative requirements. The memorandum then starts its journey through the Embassy. First the controller checks internal consistency. Thereafter, the Head of Development Cooperation approves it and finally the Ambassador signs the contract.

The procedures to formulate and implement cooperation policy play two territorializing roles. First, they prescribe the travel through the organization. They map the social space and what is known as

¹⁶¹ This is often parallel to financing the partner government that is not based on proposals but policy frameworks.

‘the line’ (the right routing through the hierarchy and bureaucracy). Second, they play a role in territorializing the policy text. The consultation, negotiation and formulation processes generate a reasonable degree of internal consistency, coherence and wholeness to the collection of loose fragments. The procedures enable a double operation. On the one hand they operate on the division of labour and distribution of work. On the other hand they operate on ‘the labour of division’ (Hetherington and Munro, 1997) meaning the categorization of reality. For instance they require the policy officer’s assessment of the policies to which the proposal contributes, the clarity and logic of the logframe or theory-of-change, the gender sensitivity, the mutual alignment of activities and budgets, the risks, etc. Through the pre-formed decision trees language, thought and performance territorialize in clear categories and gridded divisions. They striate the space. So through the procedures, the bureaucracy develops ‘technologies of governance’ that ‘make legible’ desirable and undesirable traits or what ought to happen and what not. The procedures also homogenize the practices of sequencing, writing and routing. Internal differences are homogenized to fit into one box of the gridded space. This territorialization is a technological prerequisite to develop a singular vision, collective ambition and clear direction.

6.4.2 Performativity

A second factor shaping and territorializing policy processes is performativity. Performativity refers to ways policy discourse is performed, enacted and brought into being. Discourse is “a specific ensemble of ideas, concepts, and categorisations that are produced, reproduced and transformed in a particular set of practices and through which meaning is given to physical and social realities” (Hajer, 1995: 44). Discourse does not describe a pre-existing world but is “part of a practice of handling the world and thereby of enacting one of its versions – up to bringing it into being” (Law and Mol, 2002: 19).

A case that illustrates performativity is the OECD definition of poverty as a multidimensional phenomenon (OECD, 2009a). This definition produces the multiple deficiencies and deprivations that it defines (lack of income, lack of access to services, lack of security, etc.). The definition and its related aid diagnostics make the deficiencies visible and real. The definition materializes in the human development index, poverty maps, etc. The development discourse performs and materializes donors and beneficiaries, aid projects and development experts. An alternative discourse is not focussing on these negative deficiencies but on human rights and positive entitlements. For instance, indigenous peoples are no longer conceived of as ‘poor peasants’ in need of agricultural projects but as right holders and owners of their territory (see Umans, 2012). This discourse on rights performs the support for their self-determination and materializes in core-funding of their organizations.

Policy texts do not only give meaning but play a role in performing the social and enacting their own materialization (Law and Mol, 2002). The performative effects co-shape the step from text to practice and from formulation to implementation. Performativity is a factor stabilizing the policy cycle. Discourse is power through which the Minister can make implementation happen or through which others might hamper implementation.

6.4.3 Incentives

The bureaucratic rules are not only composed of procedures but also of incentives (rewards and punishments). The incentives gear policy officers towards political survival of the Minister, sound budgetary spending, goal achievement, accountability and reputation (see also Ostrom et al., 2002). Appropriate incentives guide the implementing policy officers to stick to the formulated policy. They stabilize the policy cycle in multiple ways.

Formal and informal incentives are tools to exercise power *over* others and to install self-control. Incentives equally construct power *with* those responsible for other policy phases, for instance through encouraging collegiality and collective action. A clear example of how incentives guide policy officers is related to career opportunities. Most policy officers within the Dutch MoFA rotate jobs every four years. The opportunity to obtain an attractive next posting is an important incentive for performing well in the current position. Such a reward falls on those who demonstrated the right competencies,

knowledge and capacity to implement policy. Policy implementation and staff performance are assessed against the formulated policy. Through this incentive structure, deviation of the official policy lines is controlled, loyalty is promoted and the policy cycle is reinforced.

So far three factors to produce and reproduce the model of the policy cycle have been presented: procedures, performativity and incentives. These factors provide the mechanisms and internal control to ensure and steer the policy process. Through them, policy officers provide order and can shape the policy process as a cycle in time. These factors not only divide time (in phases) but also space (in concrete bureaucratic units, in social networks and in abstract assemblages), labour (in tasks), phenomena (in categories) and performance (along a normative frame). These are multiple territorializations. Together they constitute a divided, gridded and segmented space referred to as a “striated space” (Deleuze and Guattari, 2004: 524). This is a closed space, conducive for top-down oversight, survey and (self) control. The policy cycle model is thus a technology to striate space-time.

6.5 Deterritorializing the policy cycle

My literature overview yielded four factors that delink policy implementation from previous formulation: collective action problems, fragmentation, dilemmas and contradictions as well as mediation. These factors render space-time fluid and deterritorialize the policy cycle. They affect the sequential and hierarchical guidance as well as the relevance of the policy cycle model as such.

6.5.1 Collective action problems

The policy cycle could be seen as a collective action situation (Ostrom et al., 2002) prone to information and motivation asymmetries. Both policy formulation and implementation involve many actors (human and non-human) and therefore, outcomes are uncertain and largely unpredictable. When the policy officers seek approval in the formal line of responsibility or in internal meetings, these interactions easily result in unpredictable outcomes. Each policy officer brings particular experiences, interpretations preferences and external meanings to the table. As a consequence, the relation between policy formulation and implementation is mediated by a series of actors who can potentially destabilize the policy cycle model.

The information and motivation asymmetries potentially delink policy formulation and implementation. Information problems arise when actors participating in the policy cycle are not clear and fully informed about policy lines. In practice, the vagueness and open ended nature of many development cooperation policies is a source for information problems. Dutch policies and activities often have qualitative goals determined in terms of ‘contributing to’. Ex-ante vagueness is instrumental to create flexibility and to enable context specificity. But it poses problems for implementation and ex-post evaluation. Vague information hampers a common understanding and demotivates collective action.

Misinterpretation, miscalculation of political risks or a lack of organizational sensitivity can easily result in deviation of the official policy lines. The information problems are enlarged when complexity increases. When policy issues are multifaceted, the lack of clarity increases and the information problems increase as a result.

Besides the information problems, collective action situations have a second set of challenges: motivation. Motivation of staff in donor agencies is generally high (*idem*). However, various phenomena can lead to loss of motivation: the rigidity of internal procedures obstructing approval or progress, differences of opinion within the line of approval, an authoritarian management style, the high workload and misunderstandings in the relationship with the partner organizations (*idem*). Demotivated policy officers might destabilize the policy cycle.

The collective action problems are not only bureaucratic challenges but they fundamentally challenge the model of the policy cycle. The policy does not automatically or by itself travel through an

organisation as on a conveyer belt in a factory. Collective action problems need to be addressed constantly because they cause continuous variations.

6.5.2 Fragmentation

A second source of destabilization of the policy cycle is the fragmented and heterogeneous nature of the elements that need to be territorialized in the policy process.¹⁶² Each policy document is a collection of textual fragments referring to a wide range of goals, issues, actors and activities. This easily translates into a fragmentation of efforts and budget.

A practical illustration of the fragmented policy implementation and budget is the case of the Dutch cooperation efforts in Colombia. In 2013 the Embassy slowly phased out three earlier thematic programmes: environment, good governance and private sector development. Each programme contained a plurality of projects. At the same time the Embassy started up a new transition programme focusing on water, commodities and health. From the central MoFA level additional funds were made available for the human rights, the stabilization, the reconstruction, the UN Security Council resolution 1325, public-private partnerships and private sector development. All these funds were administered by their corresponding Directorate and had their own aims, procedures and internal coherence. Apart from this bilateral funding the MoFA provided funds through multilateral institutions and civil society organizations to implement activities in Colombia. Overall Dutch development cooperation as an entirety was built up of many fragments.

Fragmentation of development cooperation is a topic addressed in various ways. Policy fragmentation is seen in terms of the expanding policy agenda in the absence of an overall vision framework (WRR, 2012). It is also seen as an outcome of the lack of policy coherence for development. Development impacts of other policy areas such as agricultural, environmental or trade policies are scattered and not systematically assessed, addressed or integrated. This results in a fragmented and sub-optimal development effort.

Apart from policy fragmentation there are concerns about various manifestations of donor fragmentation. For instance, fragmentation results in and from the presence of many donor agencies in particular partner countries. And particular donors have a dispersed presence in the global south. Fragmentation of the donor agency's budget is measured as a high number of separate activities in distinct sectors (IOB, 2006).

Since 1998, Dutch governments intended to concentrate efforts in fewer countries and on less themes, to achieve lower transaction costs, better coordination and a division of labour among donors. Yet, it turned out to be easier to add new priorities than to phase out old ones. Thus, the concentration policy was in fact accumulative and reinforcing fragmentation (Van der Wiel and Van Norren, 2012). This is probably related to the dual impact of fragmentation. It enables the creation of divisions, oversight and control while it also hampers uniformity, coherence and effectiveness. These latter aspects destabilize the policy cycle.

6.5.3 Dilemmas and contradictions

Within development cooperation the policy officers act as 'street-level' bureaucrats who encounter many dilemmas. Dilemmas arise through the interrelations between multiple goals, themes or directives. Between 2000 and 2010 the Dutch MoFA produced more than 100 policy documents on development cooperation (*idem*). A practical example of the dilemmas that multiple policy orientations can create, is the selection of partner countries. In 1999 the Dutch government selected countries for bilateral cooperation on the basis of high incidence of poverty, good governance and good socio-economic policies. But this combination was rare because of the interrelations between

¹⁶² Fragmentation is seen as a modern power technique to know, control and discipline actors or processes. The policy cycle model is such a fragmenting technique. But at the same time the model is troubled by the fracturing of realities. Fracturing affects the intended homogenization of the policy implementation.

these variables. Harsh application of the good governance criteria in combination with low average income and pro-poverty policies would yield only six or seven partner countries (IOB, 2006). The aid-governance dilemma was particularly evident in fragile states: where aid was needed most the governance prerequisites were lacking.

The multiplicity of policy directives, principles and rationalities easily result in contradictions and tensions. Various contradictions emerge in “the clash between the compliance side of aid programs — the counter-bureaucracy— and the technical, programmatic side” (Natsios, 2010: 1). Within the aid agencies the pressure to be accountable contradicts the pressure to be effective. “The counter-bureaucracy ignores (...) that those development programs that are most precisely and easily measured are the least transformational, and those programs that are most transformational are the least measurable” (*idem*). Contradictions arise around political accountability when donors increase policy ownership by the partner government but insist on a policy dialogue in which they try to influence partner government’s policies. The multiple rationalities might also contradict.

A concrete illustration of contradictions is the case whereby technical development cooperation and political rationality were opposed. In 2005 the Dutch Embassy in Guatemala received a funding proposal regarding sustainable agriculture and food sovereignty. The proposal was in line with the aims and procedures of the environmental programme. Yet, the concept of food sovereignty was politically different from the Dutch policy on food security. Food sovereignty limits free international trade of food and implies a critique of globalization. This stance challenged both the Dutch and Guatemalan neoliberal policies. Thus, despite a technically rational proposal, the political rationality was the reason not to approve the funding for the proposal.

Contradictions also arise among different policy fields. For instance, on the one hand donor countries stimulate industrial development with aid but on the other hand they seriously limit the developing countries’ scope to pursue their own industrialisation policies through the World Trade Organization (AIV, 2010). This also points at the intractable policy controversies that can arise when contested policy issues are dealt with within multi-level governance settings (especially when these levels are decoupled through fragmentation). Other contradictions arise due to different or competing policies among the various donors. In Bolivia the International Monetary Fund conditioned a loan to a decrease of social spending while other donors conditioned their aid in social sectors to an increased counterpart spending by the Bolivian government.

The dilemmas and contradictions emerge from multiplicities and difference (see Lipsky, 1980). They are sources of complexity, uncertainty and lack of clarity. These uncertainties provide space to the policy officer for interpretation, administrative entrepreneurship, interest-based networking, tailor-made experimentation, creative flexibility and personalized cooperation. This is what I call ‘the creativity space’. It is a space of material and conceptual creation as well as a site for creative expression. The creativity space is additional to the policy space within which the policy officer operates. Uncertainty and contradictions simultaneously blur the boundaries between the policy phases and enlarge the creativity space for policy officers. The empirical observation of creativity space makes clear that policy is actively translated and assembled. The policy cycle is performed and produced, but always with deterritorializations.

6.5.4 Mediation

The policy cycle model assumes that rational and institutional prescriptions as well as discursive inscriptions territorialize the policy cycle. However, in the actual process and at the level of interaction among human actors the policy is not implemented but interpreted, re-invented, mediated, negotiated or translated (Latour, 2005). Due to the actor’s mediation, selection, resistance and creative reworking, a multiplicity of policy translations and responses develops (Arce and Long, 2000). Mediation is rooted in culture. Scott (1998) indicates the mechanisms through which bureaucrats simplify phenomena, selectively develop knowledge and base themselves upon a culturally specific aesthetics. Sabatier (2007) argues that policy is primarily driven by shared belief systems. “Political scientists

should think of the state as a series of contingent and unstable cultural practices, which in turn consist of the political activity of specific human agents” (Bevir and Rhodes, 2010: 1). This view explains the ‘implementation gap’ or flaws in the policy cycle model from the cumulative effect of everyday actions, living traditions, beliefs and practices of street level bureaucrats.

The policy cycle model erroneously negates the policy officer’s agency, social interaction, subjectivity, creativity, emotions, etc. Van Gastel (2011) states that public administrators are meaning-making actors with personal feelings and dreams who act as translators of formal policy into actual practices. They are neither instruments of implementation nor instrumental to policy implementation in a machinelike manner. Rather, the policy cycle affords their entrepreneurial conduct.

A case that illustrates mediation by policy officers refers to the rights based approach in environmental programming. In 2004 the new Dutch Latin-America policy stated that environmental “bilateral programmes (...) emphasize a rights based approach” (Ministrie van Buitenlandse Zaken, 2004: 17). The policy officer in Guatemala City mobilized this idea through citation of the text in the project appraisal document. Yet, neither the procedures nor the performative effects succeeded in materializing this policy fragment into activities. The rights-based approach was too contested. Through the mediation of the policy officer, the meaning of the rights agenda was re-interpreted or translated in the more acceptable terms of the responsibility framework. Only then rights-based activities such as legal defence and litigation became legitimate activities within the environmental program in Guatemala. This policy fragment was never selected, translated and actualized by the environmental policy officers in Bolivia or Colombia. This example illustrates that the policy cycle is not stable enough to create homogeneous effects across different sites. Mediation is needed and creates heterogeneity.

Policy officers are mediators and negotiators who select policy fragments and through whom policies travel in ways that always transform part of the ideas or meanings. Policy officers can fully deploy their agency, imagination, affect and creativity. Policy officers are not mere re-actors, neither strict rule-followers embedded in an institutional structure, nor a mere channel echoing a powerful discursive frame. They are primarily creative mediators rather than intermediaries (see Latour, 2005). They can pursue their own agenda or develop a series of tactics for non-implementation. Knowing that policies will change again, one tactic is to delay implementation (see Van Gastel, 2011). But it would be wrong to detect the creativity and agency of policy officers in instances of non-implementation only. It is exactly through mediated implementation that these creative capacities are mobilized. The necessary deployment of creativity shows the limitations of seeing the policy process and public administration as phased, rational problem-solving enterprises. Any model based on such assumptions will exhibit serious flaws.

In practice, I see four factors deterritorializing the policy cycle: collective action problems, fragmentation, dilemmas and contradictions as well as mediation. These factors affect the grid and the practices of assembling policy. These factors provide space for interpretation, administrative entrepreneurship, interest-based networking, tailor-made experimentation, creative flexibility and personalized cooperation.

6.6 Reterritorializing the policy processes

The default way of the state to cope with the fluidity of smooth space is to reterritorialize or crystalize it into new rules, procedures, organizational entities, instructions, etc. (see Deleuze and Guattari, 2004). This is accomplished through the multiple practices of (re)assembling. Several examples of assembling have been given above. During formulation the policy officers assemble different textual inputs into a policy document. They assemble a policy nexus by linking separate themes. When they perform policy, they reassemble a wide diversity of fragments: texts, procedures, incentives, actors, budgets, etc. The practice of (re)assembling can take various forms or activities (see Li, 2007): forging alignments, creating coherence, facilitating boundary work (containing or excluding refractory processes) and articulating multiple objectives as well as contradictions.

The following example will illustrate how reassembling results in a reterritorialization. One of the 102 action points of the Dutch human rights policy (Ministerie van Buitenlandse Zaken, 2007) stated that the Netherlands will call for the decriminalization of homosexuality and will support capacity-building for local NGOs fighting discrimination against homosexuals. Since at that time I was the human rights policy officer in the Dutch Embassy in La Paz, I acted upon this point. The Dutch NGO HIVOS got me in contact with Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender (LGBT) organizations. This was a new engagement. At first sight, I extended my topographical network. But the LGBT community was a fluid space-time for me, full of unknowns, surprises and new potential openings for cooperation. What was normal for me (LGBT identities and rights) became strange (was sexual diversity a matter of identity, choice, orientation or something else?). And what was strange to me (the queers, dragon queens and Bangladeshi *hijras*) became normal and familiar. An example of this stranger-ness is the beauty contests among LGBTs. This event can be seen as a fragment from a completely other assemblage but connected by the LGBTs to their cause. Yet, their beauty contest is not oriented towards competition but are a part of 'coming out', their visibility, the ludic and the common. Another example of different differences is that for queers, their 'struggles' have only little to do with human rights, but most of all with the definition of the human nature: what is it to be human or as Foucault called it 'normal' and 'a-normal'? They are not that interested in legal matters but in ontological matter: their bodies and aesthetics. This deterritorialized the initial positioning of the 'LGBT rights' in a particular cubby hole of the human rights grid, thus forming connections with other rights and other groups in a solid space-time. Especially the trans and queers efforts were geared towards escaping those grids.

I saw it as my subsequent task to reterritorialize this line of flight into a cooperation activity financed out of the human rights fund. I participated in a series of events, provided funding, initiated diplomatic action and supported campaigns. The loose relations of exteriority with the LGBT organisations became programmatic. Through my practices of assembling, I brought the actors, funds, ideas, affects and energy together in an expanding solid space-time. This reterritorialization was not a rational, planned and abstract building of relations of interiority (as the policy cycle presupposes) but a specific, affective, contingent and empirical process of building relations of exteriority. The reterritorialization was not that straightforward. For example, when the funding of an organization for transsexuals was eventually finalized, I encountered a lost hurdle: to sign the contract, the signatory could only use her former male name. The Bolivian state had not yet recognized her new identity and so the Dutch state couldn't either. This embarrassed me and showed once again how the specification of either 'man' or 'woman' is an extremely striated space-time that enters in all kinds of settings that are subsequently striated along the same divide (irrespective of realities).

In spatial terms, this process, which spanned several years, departed from a *point* of the striated space (the action point mentioned in the policy and its location in the grid of human rights) grew along the *lines* of a network, passed through a fluid *space-time* of the affective encounter of stranger-ness, which was subsequently reassembled into a new assemblage: Dutch engagement with LGBT emancipation. This spatial view differs substantially from the policy cycle model that focusses on processes over time. The spatial view on policy processes shows that context sensitivity is not only important because fragments such as a policy text must 'land' but because fragments in the fluid context are opening-up new potential and innovation.

6.7 Implications

The model of the policy cycle is merely a heuristic framework that exists as an imprint or script in policy officers and their institutions. It is, in Deleuzian terms, a virtual, potent device that is actualized through performing and becoming. The abstract model is real through the effects it generates: the practices of (re)assembling and the processes of (re)territorialization. But the same practices can generate the deterritorialization of the cycle. They can create a fluid space-time in which policy processes that are not linear, not phased, not divided along pre-established categories. The clear laid-out topography upon which implementation is to be based is always prone to deterritorializations.

Policy implementation always differs, departs or escapes the original gridded space. The boundary lines between phases, bureaucratic spaces, tasks, categories and norms are always contingent upon translations and prone to transgressions. Policy officers cannot replicate these lines exactly but always reproduce the grid in slightly different ways. Thereby they add fluidity to the solid space-time. The fluid space-time is amorphous, topological, open, slippery and embodies the possibility of sudden movement (the becomings).

According to me, policy processes should not be seen as movements in space and over time within policy networks or streams, but as movements in space-time. Policy analysis is no longer about up and down movements across hierarchical power differences within the state institutions or networks. In contrast, it is about horizontal movements across intensive differences in the immanent plane of space-time. These intensive differences are the tonalities of viscosity in-between solid and fluid. These are differences in topology (from differentiated to least differentiated spatiality) and stability (from distinct and separate to undetermined and unstable). This ontological take on the policy cycle paradox shows that the paradox is not due to failures but to fluidity.

Seeing policy processes in terms of differently territorialized and viscous space-time has implications for policy officers, the organization, governance and policy analysis. In their everyday life policy officers have to implement, perform, translate and reterritorialize policy. Policy offers “work hardest of all to maintain coherent representations of their actions as instances of authorized policy” (Mosse, 2004: 639). To do this work, they need creativity, analytical skills, intuition, negotiation skills, etc. As mediators they need capacities to both labour the divisions and agglutinate the assemblages. Because they encounter fluid space-time situations, they will also require an ability to go-with-the-flow and a methodology to ‘follow’ the connections and becomings. This will enhance policy implementation and effectiveness (Umans and Arce, 2014).

At the organizational level, one important implication is to combine the extension of its solid space-time with the exploration of the fluid space-time. In stable situations better policy, procedures, incentives, risk management and pragmatic assembling make sense. Policy implementation can be handed over to an organization that is not involved in policy formulation. In stable situations policy implementation can be monitored and accounted for so it could be out-sourced. But in unclear situations deterritorializations occur, which might cause implementation failures. An external implementing agency will have to make political decisions, block flows and control escapes. This would be either an illusion or a pity. The dynamics set in motion by deterritorialization provide new potentiality and vitality that is nurturing organizations with possibilities of change. Organizations should harvest this potency by stimulating creativity of staff, increasing flat connectivity (becoming network-organizations), cultivating diversity and dissent, encouraging mediations and daring to go-with-the-flow. Attention for rule-following hinders following-the-flow. Institutional silos hinder connectivity and the culture of fear hinders creativity. The policy cycle model is stabilized but at the cost vitality. The promise of development organizations “to reform the ways I deliver and manage aid” (Paris Declaration, 2005) will not only come from new policies but will also depend on abandoning or destabilizing the policy cycle model to unleash potential vitality. Development organizations should rethink the way the model is internalised in the organization’s procedures, systems and rational approach to management and governance.

A spatial view on the policy cycle has profound implications for governance. Both positions in the current governance debate, ‘good governance’ and governmentality (see Bevir and Rhodes, 2010), are striating space. Good governance is striated through normative representations and governmentality through the categories of the hegemonic discourse. Both positions assume that the policy cycle model exerts strong influence on those who govern. In practice, the policy model is destabilized and both policy norms and policy discourse are continuously deterritorialized and reterritorialised. In practice, there is no blue print model, general norm, hegemonic discourse, single standard or prescribed path. These ideal types of solid space-time are always prone to deterritorializations, as a consequence, the concept governance needs to be expanded or replaced to encompass fluid space-time,

deterritorialization processes and their potentials. Policy network analysis should expand into policy assemblage analysis.

For the field of development studies and practice one important implication of this research is that no single perspective or framework can grasp the diversity of fragments and the viscosity of multities. Like policy processes, each development process is an unfolding of de- and reterritorializations. In these ever-changing assemblages policy and policy officers play a modest role. These assemblages often exhibit an immanent dynamic which policy officers must follow in order to effectively pursue the desired development goals (see Umans, 2012).

6.8 Conclusion

Policy is performed as a flow of events in which policy officers assemble a diversity of fragments (texts, procedures, programmes, etc.). Assembling territorializes the policy cycle with its phases (time) and bureaucratic units (space). This results in a stable, striated space-time with clear entities. Yet, problems, fragmentation, contradictions, mediation and fluidity always surface and deterritorialize the striated space. This dissolution of the gridded space into a smooth space gives vitality to new dynamics (Deleuze and Guattari, 2004). Policy officers switch from following the logical and procedural sequence of the policy cycle to following the flows of deterritorializations. These moments and sites of ontological fluidity deterritorialize the policy cycle model with the flaws of the model as a result. The outcomes of deterritorializations are fragments that lend themselves to reassembling, from where reterritorialization will take place. This reterritorialization occurs in particular settings or sites and reorders space-time. It is an empirical process. This reterritorialization captures fluidity and revives a model that is seriously flawed. This is how the policy cycle paradox emerges.

The way out of policy cycle paradox is by acknowledging that policy is not only performed in time but also in space. Going through the policy cycle is not a movement through the calendar but on a map: a movement through solid, differentiated or gridded space and through fluid or amorphous space. Policy practice is a mix of striating and smoothing space. Seen as such, policy implementation is less a matter of following prior formulation as it is a matter of following deterritorializations and flows into smooth space. Its importance lies in the possibility to creatively capture the smooth space's fluidity, openness and vitality as well as to be attentive to its inherent uncertainty, surprises and indeterminacy. This slippery space will be left again by a movement of reterritorialization. Through these movements in space the policy has transformed and congealed into a new stability. This spatial view of policy processes is not only helpful to shed light on the policy cycle paradox as a particular singularity. It has a potential to be broadly applicable in studying development processes.

Chapter 7. Diplomats are creative world-makers;

Transformation of the Dutch-Bolivian relation and diplomacy.¹⁶³

7.1 Abstract

Since the announcement in 2011 that Dutch aid to Bolivia will end, the Dutch–Bolivian bilateral relationship has been transforming. The gift relation that divides the donor and beneficiary is shifting to a commercial relation of mutual gain. The disappearance of the division opens the potentiality of a new relation to be based on equality. Lithium, an important and scarce resource used for batteries, has become central in forging new Dutch-Bolivian encounters and relations. Moreover, my case on lithium reveals how the negotiation of a new commercial relation brings to the forefront the negotiation of the nature of lithium. Is lithium a non-human natural resource or is its nature human-like? A new division arises; one between different worlds which are populated by different beings: atoms, spiritual beings, animated matter and so on. Whose material natures are politically acknowledged in these new diplomatic encounters? How then can different worlds be treated as equal within these political and ontological negotiations and within international relationships? My study thus provides an ontological challenge to geo-politics. To advance towards equality I explore the possibility to transform diplomacy as we know it. Diplomacy is no longer merely about human power relations. Diplomats also need to deal with unstable relations of affect within assemblages of human and non-human beings of different natures.

Policy Implications

- When diplomats step outside the conventional divisions (in my case donor/beneficiary or human/non-human), they open up a renewed vitality but also create uncertainties.
- The politics of multiple natures expands the diplomatic terrain of geopolitics and political economy. It enables the participation of non-humans like Mother Earth in politics. What was foreign to politics becomes part of foreign politics.
- Collective action on global problems is not so much inhibited by the selfish nature of humans, institutional voids or different interests. Rather, collective action is difficult due to the different natures of many worlds. Collective action is frustrated by the unquestioned universalization of the Western version of nature. To become equal, Western diplomats will have to negotiate their version of the human and of nature in favour of rearticulated worlds. How do they do that?

7.2 Introduction

In this chapter, I look at the contemporary transformation of the Dutch–Bolivian bilateral relationship. For over 25 years, Dutch–Bolivian relations had primarily been shaped as a donor–recipient relationship. The Netherlands was favorably seen as a stable partner of various Bolivian governments and was respected by other development actors for its active and involved role (IOB, 2011). The Netherlands was widely appreciated for its horizontal and respectful relations with counterparts and its commitment to unconditional forms of aid (Van Dam et al., 2013).

In 2008 the financial crisis triggered a recession in the Netherlands while in countries like Bolivia the economy continued to grow fast. As a consequence, the Dutch government envisaged a policy transition ‘from aid to trade’ and from being a donor to becoming a trade partner benefitting from

¹⁶³ This chapter is co-authored with Dr. Alberto Arce, Wageningen University and Research.

Bolivia's growth. On March 18, 2011, the Dutch Minister for European Affairs and International Cooperation announced that the bilateral development cooperation with Bolivia was to end by 2013 (Ministry of Foreign Affairs, 2011). This unilateral decision was part of the effort to focus development cooperation in fewer countries and to lower its budget. On April 8, 2011, the Dutch Minister of Foreign Affairs announced the closing of the Embassy in La Paz. This unilateral diplomatic decision was part of the effort to shift diplomacy from geo-political pastime to geo-economic interest promotion.¹⁶⁴

In the relationship¹⁶⁵ the pivot shifted from poverty to lithium. Lithium is a metal used in the production of batteries, especially for electric cars. It is a strategic resource for the transition to a low-carbon economy. About half of the world's lithium deposits are located in Bolivia. Bolivia and the Netherlands are both interested in negotiating an economic and scientific cooperation agreement.

In this chapter, I zoom in on a specific event: the diplomatic encounter between the Bolivian Minister of Foreign Affairs, David Choquehuanca, and the Dutch Special Envoy for Natural Resources, Jaime de Bourbon Parme. Through the details of the actual practice and content of diplomatic negotiations, I could identify three crucial phenomena at work in the transformation of the bilateral relationship. First is the reworking of existing divisions. Removing the donor/beneficiary division results in an undetermined and unstable situation and new divisions emerge. I characterize such a situation as fluid. Second, in this fluid situation several non-human beings, such as lithium and *Pachamama*¹⁶⁶ start to play a role in reconstituting the bilateral relationship. I argue such a situation can be understood in terms of humans and non-humans assemblages.¹⁶⁷ These assemblages blur the conventional idea of politics as a purely human affair.¹⁶⁸ The appearances of non-humans in diplomatic encounters raise questions about the natures of human and the natures of non-humans. Third, the different natures of these non-human beings are becoming the topic of diplomatic negotiations. Dutch diplomats conceive lithium as an inert natural resource, while Bolivian diplomats conceive it as a socio-material, cosmological being. Through these differences, these non-human beings are enacted in different ways, acquiring different natures, materialities and discourses that need to be negotiated in specific situations. Whose ontology¹⁶⁹ and reality is accepted in diplomatic talks? This political negotiation is no longer over geo-political or geo-economic interests but over ontological matters. It transforms diplomacy in a rather imperceptible way. The ontological disconnections and reconnections trigger the repositioning of diplomacy as a creative practice.

In this situation without clarity on divisions, beings and natures, it seems inappropriate to think in terms of a simple transition from aid to trade. The change taking place looks more like an exploratory transformation with an open end (see also Henderson et al., 2013). It is a process of becoming. These insights, I believe, are relevant more broadly for the transformation of the practice of diplomacy. I see diplomacy as a creative profession of world-makers. However, my understanding of the political ontological negotiations does not result from a political economy perspective to critique or resist capitalism and free markets, but rather from re-imagining the potentialities of international cooperation. This case sets up the bases for the re-organization of international cooperation policy taking into account the complex, non-linear and co-evolutionary interplay of human and non-human affect. The aim of this chapter is to describe and analyse the morphogenesis of diplomatic action in ways that takes into account matters inherent to the creativity of action (Joas, 1996). In this

¹⁶⁴ Economic diplomacy was understood as “the use of government relationships and government influence to promote the commercial interests of a Dutch company or group of companies in a foreign country (...) This is a narrow interpretation (...) more often referred to as commercial diplomacy” (IOB, 2013: 15).

¹⁶⁵ In the rest of the paper, I use the term ‘relationship’ for the Dutch–Bolivian bilateral relationship (unless specified otherwise).

¹⁶⁶ Although mostly translated as Mother Earth, its meaning is ‘source of life’.

¹⁶⁷ An assemblage is an entirety of loosely associated fragments (DeLanda, 2006). In an assemblage there is no permanent, a-priori, duality between human and non-human.

¹⁶⁸ We build on De la Cadena (2010) and Latour (2013) to overcome the humanist focus in politics, political economy and political ecology.

¹⁶⁹ Ontology concerns itself with the kinds of beings that exist.

morphogenesis I spot the emergence of ontology in the political field of development cooperation. This understanding culminates in the practical question ‘how do renegotiated natures of the worlds contribute new potentialities to solve global problems?’ In the next section, I describe the analytical perspective to explain how one can make sense of these creative negotiation processes.

7.3 Conceptual framework

I build on three interrelated bodies of literature: Deleuzian metaphysics, the performativity of practice and political ontology. Deleuzian metaphysics is increasingly used to understand contemporary events and phenomena (Bøhling, 2015; Dittmer, 2014; Jensen and Rødje, 2010; Ong and Collier, 2005; Prada, 2013; Rankin, 2008). Based on the concepts of striated and smooth spaces (Deleuze and Guattari, 2004), I differentiate a space of fixities and a space of fluidity together with the processes in-between these spaces: deterritorializations and reterritorializations. The space of fixities is a gridded space constituted by heterogeneous entities of beings as well as their relations. Each being has boundary lines that form the grid and ensure stability.¹⁷⁰ The beings form systems or networks. The space of fluidity is amorphous. The beings have no fixed or determined boundaries. They are virtual becomings.¹⁷¹ The notion of ‘fluidity’ is apt to describe those phenomena that are unknown¹⁷², unstable, yet undetermined. I will show how such fluid phenomena are enacted in diplomatic encounters.

Together, solid and fluid space form a viscous entirety (Umans and Arce, 2014). They are not two separate spaces but the one constitutes the other. They are different intensities and topologies.¹⁷³ I use topological thinking in ontology to understand how differentiation, separation, stability and actualization progressively result in distinct beings and solid space. While the reverse results in becomings and fluid space: distinctions can suddenly be watered down and dividing lines can dissolve. The different intensities are the result of processes of de- and reterritorialization. Deterritorialization is the escape from the solid grid of beings and knowns. It is the start of an undetermined trajectory that itself produces fluid space. It opens up stranger-ness (Ybema et al., 2009), potential and vitality until those becomings are reterritorialized as beings into a newly ordered grid. Processes of association and stabilization congeal undetermined becomings into beings with an internal homogeneity and sharp external boundaries.

These emerging beings can be different in nature. In my case, I am confronted with the question whether lithium deposits are a living being or an abiotic natural resource which is part of the gridded space of Chemistry’s periodic table of the elements. These two ways of conceiving the nature of the world, are embedded in two practices of handling the world. Through each practice people enact one of world’s versions “up to bringing it into being” (Law and Mol, 2002: 19). This performativity of practices implies that there is not “one world” (Law, 2011: 1) but that different worlds are being constantly enacted.¹⁷⁴ There is a plurality of world-makings and ontographic research¹⁷⁵ has shown

¹⁷⁰ Building on DeLanda (2006), the grid of assemblages is constituted by not only language or representations but also materialities and their presentations.

¹⁷¹ Beings are defined by what they *are* or have *been*. Their essences, properties and attributes are central. Becomings are defined by their potential, vitality and desire (Deleuze and Guattari, 2004; Nilan and Wibawanto, 2015). Their capacity to affect and be affected is central (DeLanda, 2006).

¹⁷² We refer to the concept ‘unknowns’ used by the US Secretary of Defence Donald Rumsfeld during a press conference in 2002. “There are known unknowns. That is to say there are things that we now know we don’t know. But there are also unknown unknowns. There are things we don’t know we don’t know.” See: <http://www.nato.int/docu/speech/2002/s020606g.htm>

¹⁷³ Topology refers to the variability of conceiving space in the full range from Euclidean geometry to undifferentiated geometry in which figures and forms are blended into one continuum and in which space is non-metric (Martin and Secor, 2014).

¹⁷⁴ Concepts such as the ‘clash of civilizations’ have played an important role in the making of clashes. The concepts used in diplomatic practice are political devices used to enact and create the worlds that diplomats want to organize and admit in their practice.

¹⁷⁵ Ontography comprises the “historical and ethnographic investigations of particular world-making and world-sustaining practices” (Lynch, 2013: 444).

that there are different versions of the nature of the world (Blaser, 2014). In the Western world, people generally conceive of the world as being made up of atoms. In the Andean and Amazonian worlds, people generally conceive the world as constituted by beings that are all part of one spirit (Viveiros de Castro, 1998).¹⁷⁶ Political ontology points out that ‘culture’ is not multiple and negotiable (as in cultural politics) but rather that ‘nature’ is multiple and negotiable. In encounters people not only negotiate different cultural perspectives on nature. They also negotiate different kinds of natures of worlds.¹⁷⁷ Such ontological negotiations are highly political since these natures are treated asymmetrically. “The modern world or ontology sustains itself through performances that tend to suppress and or contain the enactment of other possible worlds” (Blaser, 2009: 16). The political questions are then: are diplomats willing to negotiate their version of the world? In their selection of beings, do diplomats only remain loyal to their own ontological commitments? Are there other versions of nature and worlds they are willing to accept?

The political ontology is not only about asymmetry in negotiations but also about conflict (see also Bonelli, 2012). De la Cadena describes the mining protests in Peru in which the core conflict is about the natures of a mountain. Protesters are primarily worried about the disturbance of the mountain as a living being. For them, the mountain is a physical landscape feature but also an earth-being, the source of life and death. Due to mining the earth-being “would get mad, could even kill people. To prevent that killing, the mines should not happen” (De la Cadena, 2010: 339). This shows that earth-beings are attributed capacities and abilities as actors to affect and take part in politics.

My methodological proposal centers on the inquiry of changes regarding the divisions reflected in the Dutch–Bolivian relationship. For this I interviewed 28 officials from both countries.¹⁷⁸ I start with examples of recent economic and political transformations in both countries. These dynamics are described as deterritorializations of divisions. These set off trajectories into fluid space that along their ways create new potentials, anxieties and desires. My methodology treads a path between understanding de- and reterritorializations within countries as a given context to understanding emerging de- and reterritorializations of Dutch–Bolivian bilateral cooperation. I gradually narrow down this inquiry towards an important moment in the transformation of the relationship: the meeting between a Dutch diplomat and the Bolivian Minister of Foreign Affairs. I then zoom out again to point out the potential of this case to contribute to the transformation of diplomacy as a practice.

¹⁷⁶ Viveiros de Castro claims that in Amerindian thought “the world is inhabited by different sorts of subjects or persons, human and non-human, which apprehend reality from distinct points of view” (1998: 469). Animals and spirits see themselves as humans and they see humans as animals (prey or predators) or spirits. Humans see animals as stemming from humans and being human. In the Amazonian ontology, unity is spiritual and diversity is corporeal. “Here, culture or the subject would be the form of the universal, whilst nature or the object would be the form of the particular” (*idem*: 470). Therefore, Amerindian people do not conceive multiple cultures and one nature but multiple natures and one culture.

¹⁷⁷ Just as territorial boundaries and the classificatory boundaries of beings are political, the diplomats’ struggle over the natures of beings and over ‘what is real?’ are political. Blaser explains how ‘animals’ are radically different entities for the Yshiro indigenous people and for experts. The resulting misunderstandings regarding the sustainability of hunting are not due to different perspectives on animals and the world they are part of, but to different worlds being enacted. In the Yshiro ontology, animal populations are sustained by honoring reciprocal networks and “responsibilities between humans” (Blaser, 2009: 16). Sustainability depends on human–human relations, inclusiveness and generosity. “[E]verybody must benefit from the hunting, otherwise the animals will diminish” (*idem*: 15). By contrast, in the expert ontology, sustainability depends on animal–animal relations and limitations. Hunters, as predatory animals, need to align their catch to the reproduction rate of the prey. Calculations and rules will ensure that animal stocks will not diminish. The expert rules to limit the hunters and hunting areas made no sense to the Yshiro and were not adhered to. As a consequence, the experts qualified Yshiro hunting practices as “depredation and devastation” (*idem*: 16). Thus, through the different practices (reciprocating and rule setting), two different and sometimes incommensurable worlds were enacted.

¹⁷⁸ In September and October 2013 I conducted the interviews with officials from Ministries of Foreign Affairs as well as Bolivian (vice) ministers, social scientists, directors and a Senator.

7.4 A reading of fluidities in both countries

In this section I operationalize the conceptual framework, showing how change can be analysed in terms of deterritorializations. These render the solid space fluid and actual beings transform into potential becomings. It is an unstable space and moment in which it seems anything can happen. Far from being complete and in-depth, this section only highlights a number of events and processes of de- and subsequent reterritorialization in both countries.

The Netherlands

Recent Dutch policy and austerity measures are an outcome of both the economic and the domestic political dynamics. The economic dynamics were triggered by the unforeseen financial and economic crisis of 2008. We conceptualize ‘crisis’ as the blurring of boundaries, the escapes from existing divisions, the emergence of undetermined unknowns and the enactment of new divisions. Seen as such, the financial crisis emanated from the packaging of mortgage derivatives so that nobody knew their true value. These Rumsfeldian ‘unknowns’ co-existed with an immanent fluidity of capital (Vandenberghe, 2008). This volatile combination played an important role in deterritorializing contemporary neoliberalism.

The response to the crisis from the Dutch state was to rescue several private banks in 2008 and 2009. This reterritorialization expressed itself in government ownership of banks and stricter regulation of the financial sector. These government interventions were combined with a reterritorialization of the economy through a stimulus package to counter the recession. This package together with the continuing economic slowdown caused a heavy debt burden and budget deficit. This deterritorialized the treasury and was stabilized through budget cuts, leading amongst others to closing Embassies.

Subsequently, the Euro crisis emerged, revealing the political and plurinational nature of the Euro and its ontological fluidity. Suddenly, the Euro became a political being rather than only a financial currency. Established divisions between economics and politics were blurred and new divisions between Northern and Southern Europe emerged. This fluid Euro-being needed to be congealed in tighter budgets, stronger institutions and stricter policies. These reterritorializations displaced the crisis into social areas such as unemployment and protest movements. In their turn, those fluidities needed to be congealed by security forces in the streets.

The dynamics that ultimately affected the decision to close the Embassy in La Paz need to be traced also within domestic politics. From 2002 onwards, the Dutch polity was in turmoil. Pim Fortuyn provoked great controversy with his statements about multiculturalism, immigration and Islam. His populist mixture of conservative and progressive elements deterritorialized the technocratic politics of traditional parties. The boundaries between left and right became blurred and were redrawn. With his agenda, he created new fault lines within and between parties and coalitions. His movement-like party was a deterritorialized way of doing politics. However, Fortuyn was murdered nine days before the general elections in May 2002.

In the years that followed, conservative populism with nationalist taints was continued by Geert Wilders. Polarization and fragmentation increased in the Dutch polity.¹⁷⁹ In 2010, it was impossible to form a majority government. The unstable minority coalition depended on parliamentary support from Wilders’ party. The political mood in public and Parliament was increasingly hostile towards the European Union and foreigners. This sentiment was called the ‘retreat behind the dykes’. It can be seen as the deterritorialization of earlier liberal internationalism and a reterritorialization of the Dutch nation-state and identity.

The above-mentioned deterritorializations put pressure on the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MoFA). In the media it was depicted as an elitist and isolated group of state officials passing their time by

¹⁷⁹ <http://www.trouw.nl/tr/nl/4500/Politiek/article/detail/3301203/2012/08/15/Uitersten-in-politiek-landschap-winnen-terrein.dhtml>.

generating rather unknown results. As such, it became an easy target for austerity measures and institutional re-accommodations. Diplomacy was ‘modernized’ and embassies were closed. Development cooperation was criticized for not serving the Dutch economic interests. The coalition government cut the budget and transformed development cooperation so that it would benefit Dutch expertise centers and companies.

Bolivia

On the Bolivian side, very different, unforeseen crises and shocks had taken place. Since 1985 neoliberalism, liberal democracy and ‘internal colonialism’ were the cornerstones of the political space. In this gridded space, the vast majority of poor, indigenous citizens occupied a marginal position compared with mestizo political elite. From 2000 onwards, a deep popular discontent was expressed in several years of political turmoil, mass mobilizations of strong social movements, killings of protesters and the ousting of two presidents (Stefanoni and Do Alto, 2006). These civic uprisings could be seen as attempts to escape the solid space of exclusions, crises and neoliberal globalization. Evo Morales emerged as a powerful leader and articulator of the social movements. In 2005, he proposed an economic, political and civilizational ‘refoundation’. This process entailed nationalizations within strategic sectors,¹⁸⁰ various state- and nation-building processes aimed at decolonization and the repositioning of Bolivia in the international community (Crabtree and Chaplin, 2013).

Morales wanted to show the world a new post-neoliberal model (see Cordoba, 2014).¹⁸¹ Central to his policies was the concept of ‘*vivir bien*’ (living well). *Vivir bien* stresses indigenous values and ethics such as solidarity, equality and harmony, with *Pachamama* instead of Western values and ethics such as competition, social disparity and the exploitation of natural resources.

Morales’ government formed an intimate link with the social movements. Popular and indigenous leaders entered positions within the executive and legislative branches of the state. The fusion of the state and social movements brought the movement’s fluidity, new ideas and vitality into the state and deterritorialized the bureaucracy. Political improvisation¹⁸² became the rule. The refoundation or reterritorialization of a new Bolivia was frequently deterritorialized by violence and an autonomy movement in the Eastern lowlands (Crabtree and Chaplin, 2013).¹⁸³ Yet, in 2009 a new Constitution was approved by popular vote.

Bolivia realized high levels of GDP growth, sharp increases in public revenues and spending, as well as increased foreign-exchange reserves. Yet, poverty levels remained very high and strongly linked to indigenous populations and their territories (IOB, 2011). Politically, strong contradictions and tensions remained.¹⁸⁴

Describing the viscous natures of contemporary events through the notions of continuous de- and reterritorializations in both the Netherlands and Bolivia clarifies from where the concatenated disruptions and unknowns arise: the fluid space. The phenomena of change and crisis are not linear or

¹⁸⁰ Rather than classical nationalization, in this case the state captures a larger share of the rent earned through the exploitation of natural resources. This rent is redistributed to social programs and to other economic sectors that generate employment.

¹⁸¹ Bebbington and Bebbington (2011) remind us to be careful with this characterization.

¹⁸² Here, improvisation is not used in a normative or a denigrating sense but as a strategy of creative exploration that is neither good nor bad in itself.

¹⁸³ The ‘*media luna*’ was a coalition of departmental governments and civic movements opposing the policies of the Morales government. Several clashes with resulted in loss of life. In January 2007, Morales supporters ousted the opposition Prefect of Cochabamba. In Sucre the opposition staged a violent upsurge to block the Constitutional Assembly. In Santa Cruz the protests of oppositional groups overflowed into the violent occupation and destruction of governmental and MAS-related offices.

¹⁸⁴ On contradictions, see Petras (2013). For how the contradictions between *vivir bien* and development play out, see the conflict around TIPNIS in 2011 (Crabtree and Chaplin, 2013).

cyclical but immanent, continuous and multifaceted.¹⁸⁵ As transgressions of divisions, deterritorializations create ambiguity and openness for ontological fluidity and new potentialities. This fluidity not only happened in each country separately but seeped into the negotiations on the new bilateral relationship. The emerging becomings in the Netherlands and Bolivia are thus loosely associated in contingent ways. To continue this exploration, I apply the above mode of analysis to the transformation of relationship. In my analysis, I look at how both nation-states have attempted to reterritorialize diplomatic relations through new arrangements around equality and lithium.

7.5 Becoming equal

The Dutch government sought to reshape the relationship in terms of equality. During the interviews, the Dutch diplomats stated that aid implies inequality, since the gift relation is always donor-driven and paternalistic.¹⁸⁶ For Dutch diplomats, the relation can become equal once the gift relation becomes a commercial relation and development cooperation becomes mutually beneficial economic cooperation. Since the Bolivian side has matured, it can pay for the Dutch technologies and knowledge needed to advance further in its development process. The donor–beneficiary relationship thus shifts into a partnership relation.

What makes this change in relationship an interesting and refreshing occurrence today is not only its new reading of the development cooperation tradition,¹⁸⁷ but also its timing. The Bolivian government is also seeking to reshape its development discourse. I suggest that on the brink of a post-development era, the Bolivian government emphasizes a critical post-neoliberal model and the historical redress of injustices -from colonialism to climate debt-. The latter is in line with the Dutch intention to build a relationship based on equality. Yet, Vice-Minister Noel Aguirre points out that the new relation is not only about equality but also about equity or fairness (pers. com., Oct. 2013). He stresses the importance of acknowledging the differences between the two countries. Indeed, he sees power asymmetries between the two economies, highlighting the common, but differentiated responsibilities regarding global concerns.

The transition towards ‘equality with respect for difference’ has an inherent tension between ‘saming’ and ‘othering’ (Blaser, 2014). In the old donor–beneficiary relation, the ‘othering’ exercise attributed to the Bolivian side a difference (poverty) that reinforced the primacy of the Dutch. But now, the Dutch strategy of ‘saming’ might deny the Bolivians the right of difference and subjects them to the rules of the Dutch (e.g. regarding free trade). In short, the act of ‘saming’ may not automatically result in political equality. Neither ‘saming’ nor universalism automatically results in political equality. Universalism seems to underlie the Dutch desire for economic equality. Indeed, universalism “obligates respect for others as a matter of principle, but, for that very reason, arouses no curiosity about, or respect for, the otherness of others. On the contrary, universalism sacrifices the specificity of others to a global equality” (Beck, 2004: 431). Economic equality within one universal market logic seems a world too restrictive for the Bolivian government.

7.6 Lithium: resource or more-than-resource?

After 2005, several governments lobbied the Morales government to get their companies involved in the exploitation and export of lithium. However, given its post-neoliberal model, the Bolivian government sees a strong role for itself in the development of the lithium industry. The Dutch government and companies are willing to support the Bolivian government in playing a productive

¹⁸⁵ See Fraser, Fisher and Arce for reframing the notion of crisis, not as a cyclical manifestation within the global economy or as political predicament but as encompassing “the material conditions of people’s existence in ambiguous and contradictory ways” (2014: 52). See Deleuze and Guattari (2004) for reframing the notion of change, not as a linear movement *in space* from point A to B. Rather; it is a folding, unfolding and refolding *of space*. Crisis and change are not moments but continuous becomings and they are immanent in the assemblages.

¹⁸⁶ Gift and contractual relations are also discussed by Eyben with León (2005).

¹⁸⁷ Development cooperation is reduced to the gift and to donor-driven initiatives. While for decades, scholars and practitioners have pursued real cooperation as reciprocal gifts and local ownership.

role.¹⁸⁸ A Dutch consortium¹⁸⁹ of Delft University and two companies proposed a scientific and economic cooperation with the Bolivian mining agency COMIBOL. Envisaged activities included training Bolivian students as well as selling Dutch scientific knowledge and technology of the future. This cooperation was not seen by the Dutch diplomats as donor-driven. Rather, the Bolivian parties decided because they were buying and paying. The relation was one of equal partners with a respect for differences: Bolivia has the lithium and financial resources and the Netherlands has the knowledge infrastructure for lithium industrialization. To seal the deal and elaborate a bilateral Letter of Intent, the Dutch MoFA sponsored a visit of the consortium members to Bolivia. To sign that Letter, the Embassy invited the Dutch Special Envoy for Natural Resources, Prince De Bourbon. Apart from working within the Dutch MoFA, he is a member of the Dutch and Spanish royal families.

On August 27, 2013, De Bourbon visited Choquehuanca, the Bolivian Minister of Foreign Affairs.¹⁹⁰ Choquehuanca is a renowned Aymara intellectual and the only minister who had remained in office since Morales became president. Before the meeting, there was already a mutual feeling of anxiety. President Morales had asked Choquehuanca to debrief him, particularly on how it was to meet a prince. And De Bourbon felt a bit uncertain because it was his first visit to a Bolivian authority. Quite early on in their conversation, Choquehuanca raised the issue of coca. De Bourbon was wary of the geopolitical sensitivity of this particular theme and the Bolivian stance that one cannot equate coca with cocaine. Surprisingly, Choquehuanca started to talk about the spiritual aspects of coca. De Bourbon, interested in Bolivian policies on indigenous peoples, raised many questions about Andean spirituality and life worlds. Choquehuanca was excited and pleased with De Bourbon's openness towards the Andean world.¹⁹¹ What was scheduled as a short protocol meeting ended up as an animated conversation of almost an hour. The encounter was followed by a quickly improvised joint press meeting. In the signing ceremony, both men paid a traditional tribute to *Pachamama* by toasting and spoiling a bit of their drinks on the floor to honor her.

My informants gave a number of reasons why this encounter became so lively and intensive. First, De Bourbon could convincingly visualize the mutual interest in lithium as compatible rather than competitive. "The Netherlands is not keen on extracting or taking something [lithium] but on bringing something [knowledge in exchange]" (pers. com., Nov. 2013). Second, both men enjoyed discussing politics. For them, lithium cooperation was not merely technical cooperation. For the Bolivian MoFA, the involvement of royalty implied that the issue was primarily addressed politically. Choquehuanca translated the visit into Dutch political support for the Morales government.¹⁹² Third, De Bourbon was respectful and genuinely interested in *vivir bien* and Andean cosmology.¹⁹³ Choquehuanca noticed De Bourbon's empathy and openness towards the entities of the Andean world. Both men sensed the possibilities of accepting different entities in their negotiations.

7.7 Analysing the encounter

My ethnographic position conceives the diplomatic encounter in terms of political territorializations and enactments. For instance, the issue of coca was not discussed in the conventional geopolitical field of illicit substances but was relocated in a politico-cultural space of values and spirituality. Through

¹⁸⁸ The Netherlands is no competitor in lithium battery production. Its economy is not primarily an extractive or industrial economy but a trade and knowledge one.

¹⁸⁹ The Dutch consortium was formed in 2010. Ronald Boom, a former advisor to COMIBOL, played a crucial role in connecting the relevant networks.

¹⁹⁰ Information about this conversation is derived from interviews with Elmer Catarina, Director General Bilateral Affairs, and with De Bourbon.

¹⁹¹ It might have been important that his mother, Princess Irene, and his grandmother, Queen Juliana, were also open to spirituality and alternative life worlds.

¹⁹² De Bourbon was so to say reterritorialized in the space of Bolivian domestic politics. In 2011, the closing of the Dutch Embassy was politically captured by the Bolivian opposition as the direct result of the bad performance of the Morales government. This was the moment to counter this domestic politicization and distortion.

¹⁹³ Cosmology is the body of beliefs based on religion, mythology and philosophy.

this move, coca was de- and reterritorialized as well as enacted in a different way. The nature of coca was not a chemical substance but a cultural value.¹⁹⁴ Regarding the *Pachamama* another deterritorialization took place. At first, she was discussed in the cultural space, where different representations were surfacing. Minister Choquehuanca perceives *Pachamama* as a powerful actor having constitutional rights.¹⁹⁵ A western eye represents *Pachamama* as a mythical Andean entity. These are conflicting views within the realm of cultural politics. But later, a shift from culture to metaphysics took place. De Bourdon and Choquehuanca not only discussed but also enacted the *Pachamama* by offering her a drop of alcoholic beverages. This public enactment portrayed different differences: not different perspectives of the world but different world realities. There are differences regarding ‘what is real and about whose reality do we speak?’. For Choquehuanca and De Bourbon, *Pachamama* exists as a ‘real and actual being’ and for many others not. Making her present and existent, is at the same time making her a real participant in their dialogue.

Acknowledging multiple realities resulted in the implicit question about ‘what is reality like?’. Both men negotiated diplomatically several differences regarding such natures of beings (coca, lithium and *Pachamama*). By doing so, they transgressed the traditional field of one world diplomacy and entered the space of ontology (the kinds of beings that exist). Hence, Choquehuanca and De Bourbon engaged in ontological negotiations over different natures of beings. They entered the realm of political ontology (Blaser, 2014). The term political ontology aims to improve an understanding of encounters and conflicts between differently enacted worlds and their natures. I conceive of De Bourbon’s questions regarding the Andean world not as intercultural sensitivity but questions to politically enact the equality of the different natures of the worlds.

For too long, politicians and diplomats have used Western natural representations of the world and enacted them in their desire to become part of one Western world. This enacted asymmetries, inequalities and ‘disorders’ (Bonelli, 2012). In Choquehuanca’s encounter, I observe an invitation to foreign diplomats to explore an indigenous world. De Bourdon, being a pragmatic and open-minded diplomat, briefly explored the territory of Andean earth-beings. According to me, he embarked on a trajectory into his own imaginary and fluid space of unknowns. More broadly, this trajectory showed the social and political relevance of political ontology for the future of lithium cooperation and maybe diplomacy in general. The willingness to negotiate with Andean people the nature of the world they want and enact against the natures of very different worlds is a welcomed political signal.¹⁹⁶ Due to both men, what was foreign to politics (*Pachamama* and lithium) has become part of foreign politics. In the next section, I wrap up the main argument in light of the transformation of the bilateral relationship and of diplomacy overall.

7.8 Discussion

The topics of this chapter are the transgressions of divisions and of how these may trigger trajectories through fluid space with uncertain political and ontological implications. I first focused on the abolition of the donor/beneficiary divide. I noted the underlying deterritorializations of economic and political divisions in Bolivia and the Netherlands. These created a momentum of ontological fluidity and new becomings. This triggered the reworking of the bilateral relationship through new divisions and networks around the notion of an equal economic partnership. I showed that a diversity of beings (officials, lithium, knowledges, etc.) reconnect on the one hand around sets of clear values and policy lines to legitimize new courses of action in the field of resource diplomacy. On the other hand the assemblages are held together by affect, whereby anxiety, desire and curiosity accompany de- and reterritorializations. The emerging affects drove the further actualization and reterritorialization of the relationship. Lithium became a central non-human being in the new relationship, transforming lithium from a passive natural resource out there to a being that affects other actors’ performances.

¹⁹⁴ Arce and Long (2000) provide more examples of different ways in which to enact coca and cocaine.

¹⁹⁵ The new Bolivian Constitution recognizes *Pachamama*.

¹⁹⁶ In this case, the willingness should be there for both foreign diplomats and the Bolivian government itself.

The implications reach beyond the relationship and affect diplomacy as a practice. I notice the emergence of different practices and through them differently enacted worlds. International cooperation is taken beyond abstract ideas of social justice, the right to development and equality. It is pragmatically relocated not only in the sphere of resource diplomacy. But also in diplomatic dialogues about multiple ontologies and in diplomatic acts of worlds' making. Are these new diplomatic practices a challenge to existing political-economic hierarchies?

Ontologically ambiguous beings such as coca, lithium and *Pachamama* seem to be order-threatening because they blur or erase the established divisionary lines (territorial, conceptual and political) to which diplomats stick. This threat to divisions is the outcome of the enactment of actors (human and non-human) who reside as unknowns or becomings in the diplomats' fluid spaces. Their potential to actualize might cause surprise and disrupt diplomatic negotiations. So diplomats are faced with three challenges. First, diplomats need to develop sensitivity for ontological equivocations (Viveiros de Castro, 1998) and disorders (Bonelli, 2012). Second, knowledge management in diplomacy could be directed less towards mapping fixed positions (the solid space)¹⁹⁷ and more towards the following of deterritorializations and becomings (the fluid space).¹⁹⁸ Third, diplomacy is not so much troubled by unknowns but by the enacting of unknown beings since they invade the solid space and infuse it with fluidity and surprise. My approach to diplomacy is then neither dogmatic nor transcendent but conditional and immanent. It is situated, frail and practically conditioned, as the beings upon which it rests are real actualizations in the encounter of worlds that diplomats experience in their everyday political practices. The approach, however, addresses diplomacy with different questions, assumptions and devices.

When one accepts that ontological encounters have political effects, diplomats can think about the worlds they want to help create (Law and Urry, 2004). So far, diplomacy has been built on an ontology in which nature and things exist only as inert, dead matter. This is enacted into a world that "feeds human hubris and our earth-destroying fantasies of conquest and consumption" (Bennett, 2010: ix). The encounter with Andean ontologies enables diplomats to think about other worlds they want. In Andean ontologies, nature is an animated matter or spirit. This is enacted into a reality of care-taking (Umans and Arce, 2014). This ontology could enrich current policies regarding extractivism, climate change and nature rights (complementary to human rights). Political ontology challenges diplomats, Bolivian authorities and certain scholars to rethink conventional ways of explaining and reacting to political economy conflicts (Hogenboom, 2012), political ecology (Bebbington and Bebbington, 2011) and cultural politics (Stefanoni and Do Alto, 2006).

Political ontology helps to identify the main contemporary challenge for diplomacy. According to me, this is not the geo-political world order collapse.¹⁹⁹ I rather anticipate ontological conflicts. The universality of the Western notion of one nature and one reality has become untenable. Diplomats can no longer assume a universal external and extended reality upon which to ground their efforts to know and act upon one single world. They are facing a fluid space that cannot be properly caught in the webs of inquiry and less in the existing techniques of control or even prediction. My argument is to focus on assemblages to get a feel for the potential of the contemporary fluidity and its vitality.

Diplomats have to sense and enact difference by, first, breaking open dualities or dissolving binaries; such as culture/nature, self/other and life/matter (see Bennett, 2010). Second abandoning the one (Western or Andean) universe to embrace multiplicity, stranger-ness and difference.²⁰⁰ Third,

¹⁹⁷ Diplomatic analysis usually focuses on geopolitical arenas as striated spaces with actors, relations, blocks, positions and power dynamics.

¹⁹⁸ This type of diplomacy analysis would highlight the porosity of boundaries, the intensity of transgressions, the continuous variations in wordings, the viscosity of events, the multiplicity of directions, the flow of affects, etc.

¹⁹⁹ The risk sociology of Beck (2004) has eloquently suggested the capitalist world always has been in crisis.

²⁰⁰ I want to indicate that the enactment of different natures is not only a matter of difference between reified Andean and Western worlds. Mobilized beings cut across such simplifications.

acknowledging the continuous emerging of fluid space. The performance of diplomatic encounters cannot escape instability, ambiguity and surprise. Fourth, humans and non-humans interactions are affective and affected by beings participating in the processes of deterritorialization and reterritorialization of international relationships. In practice, these four points provide options to set up a program for rethinking diplomacy.

The transformation of diplomacy is induced by a transgression of politics into political ontology. Diplomacy must go beyond its traditional geopolitical role of mediating different political and multicultural representations within a singular natural world. This traditional role is based on two basic divides that are rapidly disappearing: nature/culture (Latour, 2005) and culture/politics (De la Cadena, 2010). Diplomacy's potential not only lies in blurring and deterritorializing these divides so that new becomings emerge, like the *Pachamama* as a real participant. Diplomats' potential lies in enacting reterritorializations and (re)assembling multiple worlds. The attempt to enact an equal partnership while acknowledging ontological differences is an example of this orientation.

Finally, a reflection on the nature of humans is also needed. A renegotiation of different natures of the human may contribute to the discussion on global governance. Recent scientific research shows people are much more inclined to collective action than generally assumed in the West. The nature of the human is apparently not so competitive but rather cooperative. This human nature is a potentiality that could be actualized to overcome the existing blockades to global governance (see Messner et al., 2013). As part of becoming equal, Western diplomats can renegotiate their version of the nature of the human in favor of a common ontological commitment and better worlds.

7.9 Conclusion

We argue that the occurrence of several political and economic transgressions deterritorialized the Dutch–Bolivian aid relationship. Both governments explored and desired a relation among equals. Equality was not so much found in mutually beneficial geo-economic cooperation but in political ontology. More specifically, in a horizontal and respectful dialogue that touched on the natures of nature. This exploration led to the exploration of an assemblage with different beings (humans and non-humans), divisions and becomings. This went beyond the political analysis of power and beyond the nature/culture divide. Building the new assemblage entailed the shift from a 'one world' view towards acknowledging the existence of multiple worlds. This has shaped my understanding of diplomacy as a practice and of diplomats as creative world-makers. The challenge is how to enact, through diplomatic practice, the various worlds as ontologically different yet equal?

We conclude from my case that diplomacy as commonly known, is being transformed. Diplomacy is no longer an exclusively human affair. The space of humans, networks, power positions and order is destabilized not only by geopolitical forces within that space, but also ontologically, by the interactions of different worlds. The geo-political is invaded. What was foreign to politics (*Pachamama* and lithium) has become part of foreign politics. In my methodology, power is decentered and affect appears as the core force in diplomacy, displacing both orthodox and heterodox political and economic thinking.

In diplomacy, it not only matters how 'to know' the actual world; it matters how to understand possible worlds. This means that what truly matters is to create worlds (adapted from Prada, 2013). Diplomats then become creative world-makers. The significance of this particular diplomatic practice no longer lies in the negotiation of incommensurable political positions but in negotiating incommensurable ontologies and worlds.

Chapter 8. General discussion

In the discussion chapter I reflect on the research findings and their implications. I highlight the specific contribution of my research to the academic field. This is accomplished by revisiting the conceptual, methodological and theoretical framework. I build on the same conceptual framework as elaborated in the Chapter 1. But I will point out how, on the edge of fluidity, things become different and concepts as well as debates are seen in a different light.

8.1 Introduction

My research findings show that international cooperation takes place in encounters where people, things and worlds meet. These encounters (re)establish relations or associations, which constitute wider networks. But in specific encounters the result of meeting is fusion, which occurs in wider assemblages. Fusion is not a relation between a separate A and a separate B or a connecting line from A to B (A-----B). Fusion presupposes a momentary fluidity and transformation of A and B. It is a line in-between A and B (A / B); a movement in-between A and B that highlights inseparability. This occurs on the edge of fluidity where instability and surprise reside. Such a fusion occurred when I met the Yuracaré indigenous people in Bolivia. Their *corregimientos* have blurred boundaries and a viscous spatiality. My Euclidean and topographical mind set was destabilized and I became con-fused. It also occurred when the sawmill and the Yuracaré met. The stickiness of the sawmill with its many imprints caused the destabilization of their caring practices for the woods. And it must have happened in the encounter between Minister of Foreign Affairs Choquehuanca and diplomat De Bourbon. In their meeting their conceptions of the nature of nature was destabilized because of their differences (lithium as a chemical element or as a living Earth-being). Earth-beings like *Pachamama* participated in the encounter and through their different practices both men enacted different worlds.

In my opinion, these fusions and instabilities can best be understood as becomings. Becomings are the potentialities already existing and immanent in the assemblages as the least differentiated and fluid space-time. Space-time is all there is and constituted by socio-material assemblages of body-expressions (including humans and non-humans). The nature of this 'all there is' is viscous: in-between solid and fluid, in-between stable (territorialized, gridded) and unstable (deterritorialized, amorphous), in-between beings and becomings. There is continuous movement in this in-between. The intensive differences cause such topological displacements (the territorialization processes).²⁰¹

8.2 Conceptual followwork

This section is structured on the basis of the concepts that were selected and elaborated upon in Chapter 1 (see figure 1). These various concepts appeared as cross-cutting issues in the previous chapters. In this paragraph I revisit the conceptual framework to link my research findings to the contemporary conceptual debates.

The central concepts are: development, development cooperation, international cooperation, assemblages, viscosity and space-time. These will be presented in a different order so that the implications of the research findings become clear for development, development cooperation and international cooperation.

Figure 9 shows the conceptual route of this chapter.

²⁰¹ Intensive differences are like air pressure variations that cause wind as movement. In space-time the intensive variations cause dislocations and movement in-between fixed entities and fluid multities, depending on separability, determinancy, stability and potentiality (after DeLanda, 2002).

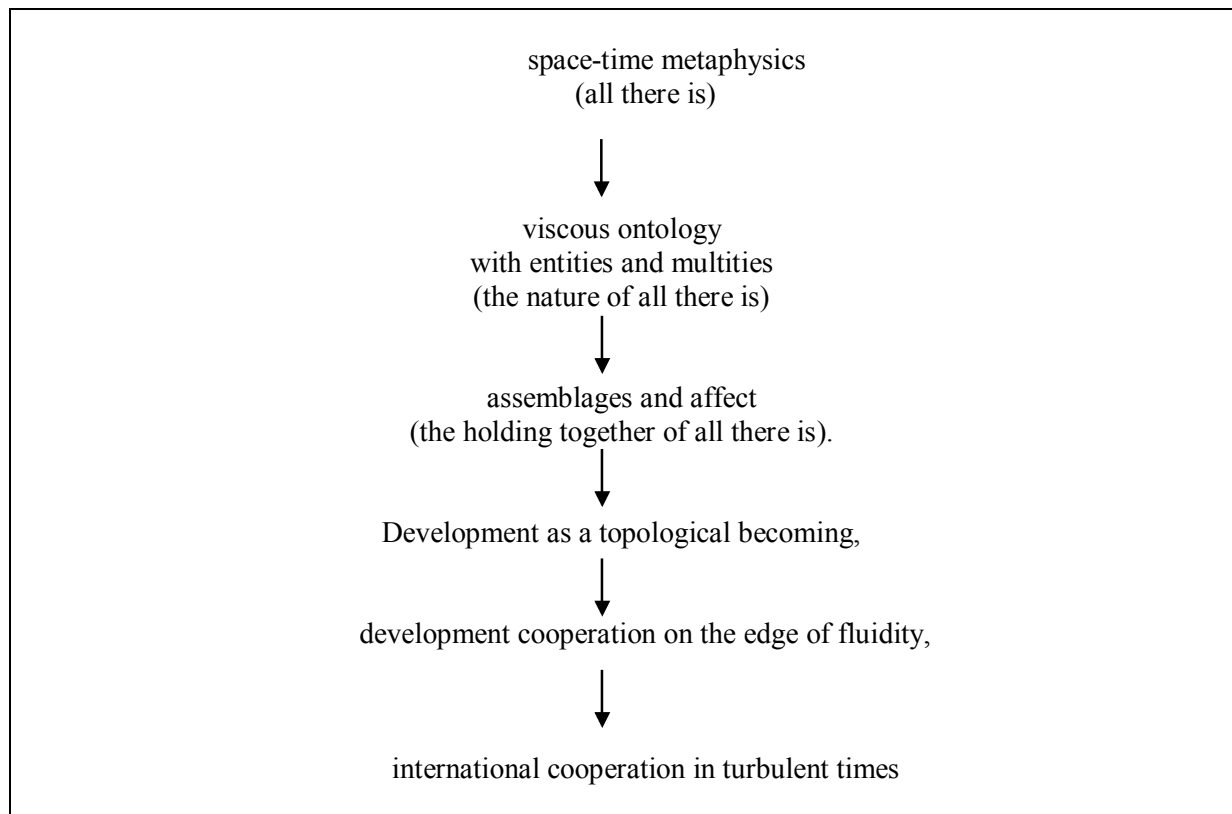


Figure 9. The conceptual map revisited

8.2.1 Metaphysics of space-time

My engagement with metaphysics (what is there or what is real?) and ontology (what is it like or what is its nature?) is a consequence of my ethnographic research findings: the stickiness of the sawmill, the blurred boundary and amorphous spatiality of the *corregimiento*, the viscous nature of the multity as well as the different natures of Earth-beings and enacted worlds.

In order to explore these ‘things that are there’, I will provide an over simplistic characterisation of three different metaphysics that helped me to grasp such realities. I will relate this classification to the concepts of space-time, fluidity and viscosity. In the next paragraph I then switch to the implications regarding ontology (the nature of what is there).

Atomistic metaphysics

I see conventional metaphysics as atomistic in the sense that it assumes that what is there is made-up of distinct, separate and determined entities. This view relies on the metaphysics of entities. In natural and social sciences, entities have been conceptualized as singularities. They are objects, issues (Marres, 2012), enveloped beings (Ingold, 2011) or congealed things (Chapter 4). Each entity is distinct, self-contained, separate and bounded. Science and liberal humanism assume that these entities are characterized by their individuality and internal consistency. This research has shown that this representation of things is but one way out of many. In contrast to these atomistic metaphysics I distinguish relational and process metaphysics.

Relational metaphysics

A relational *perspective* would acknowledge that the atomistic entities do not exist in isolation but in relations.²⁰² As in the case of a husband who relates to his wife. This relational perspective focuses

²⁰² Here I will elaborate the distinction between connectivity and relationality. As Law and Mol (2001) state, connectivity is a narrow form of connection and relationality is a broadened form. The distinction is not sharp and not different in nature. To stress the distinction I deploy the term perspective for connectivity and ontology

less on entities and more on connectivity. It centres on interactions, collectives, networks or societies. Such a perspective is often used (also in this thesis) to overcome duality or binary oppositions by stressing their entanglements or connections. But in fact this perspective still belongs to, and reproduces an atomistic ontology since the entities are the stuff that really exists.²⁰³ In my example, the woman and man are the entities that relate.

In contrast, a relational *metaphysics* would not depart from individuals and then look at their cooperation but would start from relations.²⁰⁴ For instance a husband does not exist outside the relation with his wife, so what exists in a relational metaphysics is only the relation (marriage) and not the separate entities. Beginning with relation rather than pre-existing entities changes everything (Hayles, 2002). The atomised entities are emergent phenomena arising from relations. Topologically, a relational metaphysics would not focus on entities as points but on relations as lines (see Ingold, 2011).²⁰⁵ The point only exists to the extent that it is the site where lines intersect. The relational metaphysics has consequences for humanism and politics. “We do not exist in order to relate; rather, we relate in order that we may exist as fully realized human beings” (Hayles, 2002: 320).²⁰⁶

Process metaphysics

Process metaphysics postulates that what really exists are flows, either through the relations and networks or outside of them. Atomistic metaphysics conceives flows as the movement of entities (e.g. information or resource flows). Still the entities are ‘what there is’. The process metaphysics conceive flows as ‘what there is’. These are for instance flows of activities or events. They form streams in which it is impossible or completely arbitrary to make distinctions of individually separated activities or events. The atomised entities or things are emergent phenomena arising from a dynamic flux. Seeing entities emerging from specific kinds of interaction allows them to come into view not as static objects precoded and prevalued, but rather as the visible results of the dynamic on-goingness of the flux (*idem*). This processual metaphysics is congruent with topology as the least differentiated geometry (DeLanda, 2002).²⁰⁷ In topological space different geometric figures (a triangle, circle, etc.) can be deformed into one and the same figure without cutting or adding to the figure (Martin and Secor, 2014). It is a space of surfaces, where geometric figures remain invariant when twisted and deformed. Topology is not so much interested in shape, position, form, extension, location of things or distances between things but in “what holds them together; that is, the *ways* in which they are

for relationality. An alternative would have been to distinguish connective ontology and relational ontology which would misleadingly stress a difference of kind.

²⁰³ The strength of dualities lies in the fact that it “both binds together and separates the two” (Jensen, 2014: 193). Duality ‘com-binds’. It encapsulates “the dual necessity of separation and the inseparability” (Thacker, 2010: 254) but never overcomes the ‘two’.

²⁰⁴ The thing is seen by Simondon as the outcome of the process of individuation. Deleuze and Guattari however elaborate a particular mode of individuation called *haecceity* which does not produce the thing as ontologically atomistic but produces bodies that “consist entirely of relations of movement and rest between molecules and particles, capacities to affect and be affected” (2004: 288). This opens up the potential for a relational metaphysics.

²⁰⁵ A somewhat mixed metaphysics would say that points and lines mutually constitute each other (as in Giddens’ structuration theory). For Latour the actor is a network and the network is an actor (Latour, 2005).

²⁰⁶ This means that politics is then no longer thought from the particular perspective on power that sees power as a property of a human being or an atomistic entity. Relational metaphysics privileges power-with rather than power-over.

²⁰⁷ According to DeLanda “topology may be said to be the *least differentiated* geometry, the one with the least number of distinct equivalence classes, the one in which many discontinuous forces have blended into one continuous one” (2002: 24). In topological space geometric figures become increasingly less differentiated and less distinct until they blend into the single, amorphous, topological continuum. Where Euclidean geometry relies on external coordinates of space and time, the topological space is immanent, meaning that all points of a surface refer to each other. “Topologists thus treat figures as manifolds – spaces whose coordinates are (...) intrinsic to the surface itself” (Martin and Secor, 2014: 423). Space does not exist *a priori* but *a posteriori*. Space is not a given but is made and remade. Topological thinking is used in social and cultural theory to understand how entities-in-relation make their own space-time (Lury, 2013).

connected, the nature of their relatedness” (Allen, 2011: 285). Post-mathematical topology has become “a way of thinking about relationality, space, and movement beyond metrics, mapping, and calculation” (Martin and Secor, 2014: 420). Topology “can shed new insight into familiar social science objects (...) and situations where relationships are changes, distanced, collapsed or distorted” (Shields, 2012: 28). Its interest lies in spatio-temporal orderings that result in seeing continuities – discontinuities, separation – inseparability and stability – instability in different ways.²⁰⁸

Combining topology with processual metaphysics makes clear that processes can be conceived of without reference to points or lines. Processes could be imagined graphically by blurred, multi-dimensional vectors or flows, vaguely indicating direction, speed and other intensive properties (*idem*). I understand the Deleuzian notion of haecceity in this way: it is neither a point (an individuated entity) nor the site where lines cross (a set of relations) but a set of “relations of movement and rest of (...) particles” (Deleuze and Guattari, 2004: 288). What is there are the movements of de- and recontextualizations of entities (with their stickiness resulting in multities) as well as the de- and reterritorializations of assemblages (with their striated and smooth spaces). In summary, process metaphysics are relational, processual and topological at the same time. This is the kind of metaphysics I mobilized to understand the stickiness of things, their blurred boundaries, the amorphous spatiality, superpositions and different natures of nature which were all encountered in my field research. To account for my findings, I elaborated a topological and processual metaphysics based on the concept of space-time.

Space-time metaphysics

My field research findings indicate the need to explore “the possibility of other, non-Euclidean, non-network, spatialities” (Law and Mol, 2001: 613). To explore the stickiness, blurred boundaries and multities, there is a need for a “looser, less rigid approach to space and time that allows for events elsewhere to be folded into the here and now of daily life” (Allen, 2011: 283). A looser approach would provide a “relief from the more fixed spatial trappings of Euclidian geometry” (*idem*). Things are not positioned in space but space is composed by the things and their relations. Allen proposes to shift from clear-cut topographies to relational topologies. Latham criticizes Allen’s topology for still relying on the notion of the spatial as an extension (the global). Latham is interested in spatial notions that help to understand “attempts to stabilize (...) an entity with incontestable ‘universal’ properties, properties that are invariant across time and space” (Latham, 2011: 315). Latham’s position seems to resonate with the Deleuzian notion of space. Deleuze and Guattari make a distinction between striated space and smooth space (2004: 389) whereby, in contrast to Allen, they do not focus on extension but intensive differences and whereby they mobilize topology to understand stability and what really exists. The striated space is a divided, categorized, coded, gridded and differentiated matrix.²⁰⁹ These arrangements make it a closed, boxed-in space.²¹⁰ The divisions and their gridlines form the starting point for contradictory tendencies, counterwork or ‘lines of flight’. In those events the striated space becomes a “smooth space” (Deleuze and Guattari, 2004: 389). The smooth space is open, slippery and maintains the possibility of sudden movement. For me striated space is about divisions and partial

²⁰⁸ Like the discontinuities of Euclidean figures become a topological continuity, so can political and cultural discontinuities dissolve in certain (or rather uncertain) situations.

²⁰⁹ A good example of a striated space is the globe with its lines of longitude and latitude. This grid is not visible but abstract yet real at the same time.

²¹⁰ A concrete example is the matrix of three strategies of cooperation by four types of practices (Chapter 3). This categorization of three strategies (intervention, facilitation and encouragement of self-development) and four practices (social, political, discursive and performative) creates divisions and boxes. This operation striates space. Yet, it is observed and stressed that the fault lines between strategies, practices and spaces are sometimes blurred. In practice the different spaces (colonial, shared and invited) have no clear boundaries or neat identities because they are generated by the sometimes mixed combinations of the four types of practice. The multiple practices which constitute the strategies, allow for openness, deviations and the blurring of lines. A concrete project might be ‘colonial’ in the social dimension and might be ‘invited’ within the discursive field where it might use local concepts. None of the divisions between the strategies or between the practices is a sharp line. Rather they partially overlap and intermingle into many shades of grey or intensities. These grey areas form the starting point for contradictory tendencies, counterwork or ‘lines of flight’.

connections.²¹¹ Smooth space is amorphous and about the inseparability which precludes relations. What cannot be separated always relates but not through relations.

The topological process metaphysics opens the potential to challenge the separation of space and time. Time is more seen as an extension of space since it is also topological (in the sense of multiple spatialities as used by Martin and Secor, 2014). Time can be segmented and striated.²¹² But time can also be fluid.²¹³ Space and time can be separated but they can also be entangled, forming an amorphous entirety. This topological nature of both space and time is not reflected in the Deleuzian wording of striated and smooth space. For this reason I will use the concept of space-time. The inseparability of space and time helped me to imagine Deleuzian striated and smooth spaces as two interrelated types of space-time: one solid type constituted by entities and one fluid type constituted by multities. Building on the notion of the plane of consistency (Deleuze and Guattari, 2004) I postulate that everything that exists is space-time.²¹⁴ Space-time is the metaphysical site where entities and multities are located. So ‘what there is’ are entities and multities.²¹⁵ They constitute solid and fluid space-time respectively. Entities and multities are two different intensities and distributions of what exists: the fixed and the fluid, the stable and the unstable or the actual and the potential.

In solid space-time the entities are neatly separated, associated and situated in a grid.²¹⁶ Every entity is fixed in space-time and space-time is solid. In fluid space-time entities have lost their boundaries and mutually exclusive divisions no longer exist. That is to say that they are multities. These multities intermingle and generate a flow.

My first encounter with the multity came as a consequence of the superposition of a singularity, plurality and multiplicity. The multity is a singular phenomenon with many fragments and multiple dimensions. An example of a multity is the Yuracaré territory (see Chapter 4). The territory is one terrain with several *corregimientos* which have multiple dimensions (geographic, institutional, social, etc.). It is the notion of multiplicity (not merely being multiple) that affects the solid nature of entities and effectuates fluidity.²¹⁷ I differentiate between entities being multifaceted essences and multities

²¹¹ According to Viveiros de Castro (2010), striated and smooth spaces differ in that the one is about (extensive) relations that vary and the other is about (intensive) variations that relate.

²¹² Time can be divided, fixed, phased, delineated and made linear, sequential or circular. This striation of time makes it more suitable for prediction, strategic planning, scenario analysis and the ‘temporal bracketing’ (Langley, 1999). It imposes rough historical order on events and data. Temporal bracketing enables the demarcation and solidification of differences or discontinuities in transitions or shifts. For example paradigm shifts.

²¹³ Sayings like ‘time flies’ and ‘getting into a flow’ express the experience of fluid time. Time can become discontinuous. The unfolding of an event is the unfolding of the plane of immanence which can tear apart a continuity and cause many discontinuities. Like in Japanese *origami*, two adjacent points in the figure made of the folded sheet of paper might end up far apart after the paper is again unfolded. What was a continuity in the figure turns out to be a discontinuity in the paper or in a newly refolded figure. Fluid time enables an understanding of transformation, turbulence, becomings and surprise.

²¹⁴ The notion space-time refers to the interrelation of space and time (either still distinct from each other or fused through mutual co-creation in trajectories). In quantum physics and space-time philosophy the common sense of linear time and a material spatial background are defied.

²¹⁵ Put in different words: entities, beings and things constitute a specific space-time with their coordinates being defined by monism – dualism – pluralism. In contrast, multiplicity entails a different difference: it is not about one, many or multiple but about one, many AND multiple. This is my interpretation of Deleuze and Guattari’s formula “Pluralism = Monism” (2004: 23). The singular, stripped atomistic entity is not the only space-time substance that is real. It is the very intense or condensed space-time configuration that exists alongside intensive differences (with multities and un-things).

²¹⁶ Not only space can be gridded but also time can be gridded through separations (from space), segmentations (past, present, future and so on) and territorializations in calendars, clocks, etc.

²¹⁷ This seems in line with the concept of “fusional multiplicity” (Deleuze and Guattari, 2004: 170). DeLanda (2006) explains that concept as the totality and uninterrupted continuum of the assemblages. This continuum goes beyond any opposition between the one and the multiple. There is no boundary around each assemblage that makes it one. And yet, there is an infinite number of possibilities which makes that the one continuum is at

being multiplicities of dimensions, relations and processes.²¹⁸ Multiplicity induces blurring, movement and becoming. This enables me to move from two space-times to the movement and processes in-between.

The two space-times are co-constitutive and inseparable. They form an entirety in which neither a solid part nor a fluid part exists.²¹⁹ But only the processes of territorialization, deterritorialization and reterritorialization. This is what makes space-time metaphysics processual. Territorialization stabilizes; it fixes distinct entities and sharp divisions, producing the gridded space-time. Deterritorialization destabilizes, contests, deconstructs or blurs the clear entities, established divisions and existing fault lines. When some-thing or any-thing escapes the gridded space-time, it constitutes a deterritorialization of the grid and with it a fluid space-time is constituted. And reterritorialization enacts and stabilizes a new division, language and classification. (Re)territorializations are the processes through which the fragments “become involved and that [...] stabilize the identity of an entity or assemblage, by increasing its degree of internal homogeneity or the degree of sharpness of its boundaries” (DeLanda, 2006: 12). Reterritorialization occurs through language and through perceptions which work as grid-devices. Every-thing encountered is discursively labelled, given meaning and positioned in one or another cell of the mental and ontological grid. Both the worlds and the representation of the worlds (the signified) are gridded space-times. Each object, each thing, each phenomenon, each expression is part of a grid. The known world exists as gridded space-time. As stated above, things, entities and multities are not positioned in space but space is composed by the things and their assemblages.

So the core of my exploration of topological process metaphysics is the hypothesis that space-time is all that exists and all ‘what is there’. It is constituted by the processes of territorializations taking place as movements in-between stability and instability. These processes result in the continuous becoming of entities, multities and their assemblages. My own research findings reveal three distinct space-time configurations. First, the combination of a concrete physical *terrain* and successive time. For instance the Yuracaré territory and the successive efforts of cooperation: the intervention of the *Centro de Desarrollo Forestal*, the facilitation of CERES and the pursuit of self-development by the Yuracaré. This space-time configuration separates and com-binds (Jensen, 2014) Euclidean space and linear time.

The second space-time configuration is a combination of the conceptual *territory* and phased time. Time can be bracketed and spatialized into stages. For instance the policy cycle and its bureaucratic organization. Space and time mutually constitute each other. Progress is in the form of path creation (networking). In this space-time configuration both the network space and time are gridded.

The third configuration of space-time I distinguish is the *topology* of what exists. It refers to the intensive differences within the entire space-time. It acknowledges the different differentiations in-between the topography of Euclidean, gridded space-time and the topology of amorphous, fluid space-time. Thereby it acknowledges the different differences. In the grid the differences are marked by clear distinctions, lines and extensive distances. In the amorphous space-time, the differences are marked by intensive variations (various degrees of stability, differentiation and determinacy) and the resulting

the same time a plurality of assemblages. Without such boundaries there are no levels, only arbitrary or contingent scales. Where DeLanda refers to an infinite number of possibilities I refer to an infinite number of dimensions to make the superposition of the one, many and multiple viscous.

²¹⁸ “While essences are traditionally regarded as possessing a *clear and distinct* nature (..), multiplicities are, by design, *obscure and distinct*” (DeLanda, 2002: 16). Where DeLanda uses clear and obscure in reference to light, I prefer clear and blurred in reference to boundaries which then translate into solid grids and fluid amorphousness.

²¹⁹ The solid space-time of entities is actualized from the fluid space-time which forms itself around a line of flight of virtual unknowns and multities.

flows.²²⁰ This configuration states that the former, territorial configuration, is enfolded with processes of deterritorialization that are an immanent part of realities. Progress takes the form of a flow, turbulence and sudden disruptions. In this space-time configuration space and time are no longer acknowledged as separate coordinates or background but as inseparable and fluid.

Part of the contribution of this thesis lies in the metaphysical dimension that is given to space-time. This is to say that all what really exists is encompassed in the concept 'space-time'. It is the entirety of the assemblages with their fragments and lines of flight. I use the trope of spatialities to denote the existence of an extensive solid space-time with actualizations, positions, relations and dimensions enfolded with the existing possibilities of an intensive fluid space-time with directions, trajectories and becomings. Fixity and fluidity are attractors in the sense that they can never be reached. Realities are always in-between. Space-time condenses, crystalizes or territorializes in entities and things. But never fully; there are always possibilities for things and space-time to open-up, to escape full enclosure and to set off on a new line of flight. So to engage in an open way with the multiple realities, one has to rethink the logic of three consecutive operations (1) partitioning the one in many²²¹, (2) fixing each single one, and (3) re-establishing relations between the one and the other (the making of two and the ordering through dualities).²²² Each of these operations requires scrutiny in empirical investigations.

8.2.2 Viscous ontology of entities and multities

Processual and topological metaphysics has implications for the ontological questions (what is it like or what is the nature of these processes and flows?). My research led me to conclude that if 'what there is' is topological space-time, then 'what it is like' is in-between solid and fluid, which I label viscous ontology. The nature of the entirety of assemblages is viscous: it is a continuous variation and in-between of fixity (entities with clear boundary lines forming a striated, solid space-time) and fluidity (the multities and flows). To arrive at this conclusion, in this section I will take a number of steps. I will explore the topological nature of space and conclude that space can be striated or amorphous. Then I will argue that the nature of striated space is solid and of amorphous space is fluid. This brings the concept of fluidity one step further: from metaphors using fluidity to fluid ontology. My step from metaphor to viscous ontology is induced by the nature of the *corregimiento* being fixed in one place and fused in another place (Chapter 4). This nature led me to think of the *corregimiento* as one entity that combined both a solid and a fluid part.

However, it is not entirely accurate to see two parts. Solid and fluid space-time are inseparable and co-constituted through the processes of territorializations. So I make another step from fluidity to viscosity to express the in-betweenness of solid and fluid.²²³ The nature of space-time is viscous. Viscosity also seemed the right term to describe the nature of multities (the assembled superposition of singularity, plurality and multiplicity). Hence I arrive at viscous ontology and complete a journey that started with amorphous space.

The topological nature of space

My exploration of loose orderings of space and time is pursued by conceiving space and time not as separate entities but as entangled and mutually co-constituted as space-time. Regarding space my point of departure is the distinction between space as terrain (locality or place), space as territory (conceptual space) and space as ontological topology. Terrain is the realm of geography, place-based ethnography or Euclidean topology (see Law and Mol, 2001). The terrain of one of my research

²²⁰ Intensive variations are like air pressure variations that cause wind as movement. In space-time the intensive variations cause dislocations and movement in-between fixed entities and fluid multities, depending on separability, determinacy, stability and potentiality (after DeLanda, 2002).

²²¹ "Representational thought assumes that beings exist as individual things which are identifiable as each belonging to a certain kind." (Due, 2009: 130).

²²² These operations are also called atomistic partitioning (or differentiation or individuation), essencing (or reification) and creating binary or dichotomist oppositions respectively.

²²³ Although Saldanha (2007) uses viscosity to describe processes of 'sticking together'. In my research the sticking together is conceived as imprints and embodiments (Chapter 4) and as assembling (Chapter 6).

activities was the Yuracaré territory with its soil, rivers, forests and communities. My research revealed how boundaries and divisions are fabricated in the landscape.

The notion territory refers to a conceptualization of terrain. It is a social construction, often presented as states, regions, networks or systems which are represented on maps and in graphics.²²⁴ Territory is thus conceptual and not real unless it is enacted as a reality.²²⁵ In my research, the Yuracaré territory was represented on administrative maps of the Department of Cochabamba, Bolivia. But also on national forest maps and ethnographic maps.

When encountering the territorial subdivisions in *corregimientos*, I became puzzled. How to relate the point (at the bank of the river), the line (close to the river dividing the cultivated riverine forest) and the vector (the direction inside the forest)? I realized these were different, multiple spatialities superimposed and entangled in the entity of the *corregimiento*. This was an entanglement of Euclidean space and amorphous space. Moreover, this was not only territorial (the social construction of *corregimientos*). It was simultaneously ontological: the nature of both spatialities differed. To account for these *corregimientos*, I elaborated a topological ontology which uses spatial notions to touch upon the nature of realities. It differentiates a reality of solid space-time (gridded, positioned, bounded phenomena) and a reality of fluid space-time (amorphous, in-between, in-becoming phenomena).²²⁶

The amorphous nature of things was further reconfirmed by the study of the de- and recontextualization processes of the sawmill. The stickiness of imprints puzzled me and refers again to a superposition of singularity, plurality and multiplicity. This made the nature of the sawmill fluid. For the Yuracaré, the sawmill is not an entity but a multity. It destabilized their ways of managing space (their geographical locations and sequenced timing of their timber harvesting but also their labour organization and social construction of caring for the woods). The implication of stickiness is the fact that context is not necessarily external to an entity (but exists as imprints). This means that space is not necessarily striated by separations but can be continuous and fluid. The ontological transition from entity to multity and from being to becoming resonates with the construction of space as being fluid. This means that entities do not appear as elements in either a solidified or relational space. What appears and exists are flows that form part of the topologically heterogeneous and ontologically multiple character of space. The topology of fluid space with its gradients, intensities and mixtures can be contrasted to the striated space with lines and faults. My research suggests that the striated character is not pointing at the heterogeneity of a space or contradictions within a space.²²⁷ The

²²⁴ I refer to the representations of space in geography, topography, ethnography, etc. Often there is a conflation of these graphics with the represented realities (e.g. a person pointing at a map saying ‘it is here!’).

²²⁵ Regions or networks are not real but the social effects of regional institutions or actor-network mediators are real. This happens to the extent that Blanco (2009) develops the notion of the social life of a region.

²²⁶ Another entry point towards topological ontology came much later from a different starting point. My research findings of three neat development cooperation strategies, three spaces, four practices (all in chapter 3), of three approaches and three ontological characterisations of the (problem) situation (chapter 4), as well as of three development cooperation policy assemblages (Chapter 5), made me realize that each creation of such a categorization produced a striated space and entailed simultaneously the creation of the potentiality of smooth space. The matrix as a territorial, graphic device at the same time provides an openness, in-betweenness and ambiguity which allow blurring to take place along the fault lines differentiating its cells or cubby-holes. Deterritorializations transform the matrix (a static heuristic framework) into processes of becoming (a fluid ontological followwork).

²²⁷ Arce et al. (2015) seem to suggest modernisation is the smoothing of space as a process of homogenization. By “blending and juxtaposition of elements of self-organization, [modernisation] policies and global courses of action” (2014: 216) the “institutional passage from a striated space into a smooth space” (*idem*) is accomplished and “homogeneous control” (*idem*) is established. For Arce et al. this smooth space is “organized and planned by policy makers” (*idem*). In my perspective, their case does show the transition of a policy-led striated space to a market-led striated space. This transition involves a moment of fluidity, which is a trajectory through smooth space but this is not a moment of homogenization or smoothing out of contradictions. Rather, striations or (re)territorializations are the processes that increase internal homogeneity and differentiation. Or as Deleuze and Guattari state: “‘smooth’ does not mean homogeneous, quite the contrary: it is an *amorphous*, nonformal

grooves or furrows of the striated space are not the contradictions but the distinctions.²²⁸ And these distinctions are not either sharp or absent but in-between. These distinctions are intensities of separability, determinacy and stability. In fact, they are only the manifestations of processes of territorialization. So the entirety of space-time is not dual but a movement in-between.

The amorphous and fluid nature of space

In the previous paragraph I introduced atomistic, relational and process metaphysics to highlight differences in ‘what there is’. These differences translate into differences regarding the question ‘what is it like?’. The atomistic metaphysics is closely related to ontology in the traditional, singular sense. Western philosophy used the term ontology to refer to “the ‘things in themselves’ that precede and allow for knowledge, but that can never be grasped because knowledge is epistemically mediated and depends on ‘knowledge categories’. (...) [Ontology is] stable, singular and out of reach” (Mol, 2013: 380). Yet, the exploration of “objects that are ambivalent or fluid” (*idem*) have destabilized ontology and made it multiple, normative and political (the negotiation of contrasting ontologies). In my case, the multities ‘that are there’ and differ in nature from the entities ‘that are there’. In terms of Deleuze and Guattari (2004), multities are the result of the smoothing of space. The multities’ blurred boundaries result in an amorphous space. Building upon these insights, I will move in this section from ‘amorphous space’ to ‘fluid space-time’. This is an acknowledgement that multiplicity, blurring, movement and becoming result in fluidity as “*an ontological dimension*” (DeLanda, 2002: 25) rather than as a metaphor (linguistics) or as an intensive property (physics). The nature of space-time can be fluid.

In my opinion, the ontological debates about the nature of things revolve around the following set of questions.²²⁹ Is the nature of a thing separable or inseparable? If yes, is it material or socially constructed? If material, is it alive or dead? An interesting contribution or example to these debates can be found in Ingold’s work. Ingold does not conceive of objects as enveloped beings but as lines and “fluxes of materials and their transformations” (Ingold, 2011: 26). “Bringing things to life, then, is a matter not of adding to them a sprinkling of agency but of restoring them to the generative fluxes of the world of materials in which they came into being and continue to subsist. This view, that things are in life rather than life in things, is diametrically opposed to the conventional anthropological understanding of animism (...). It is, however, entirely consistent with the actual ontological commitments of peoples often credited in the literature with an animistic cosmology. In their world there are no objects as such. Things are alive and active not because they are possessed of spirit – whether *in* or *of* matter – but because the substances of which they are comprised continue to be swept up in circulations of the surrounding media that alternately portend their dissolution or (...) ensure their regeneration” (Ingold, 2011: 29). Ingold approaches organisms and things by stripping of the veneer of materiality which then reveals them not as objects but as bundles, tissues, lines and flows of materials and activities. Materials do not *exist* but *occur* (*idem*). Their properties are not attributes but histories. For Ingold the nature of things is neither in the materiality of the object nor in the mind of the observing subject but in the thing’s involvement in its total surroundings and its many engagements in the currents of the lifeworld.

Inspired by the work of Ingold and others, I propose that the fundamental ontological question that needs to be asked is: is the nature of a thing solid, fluid or both? Ontologies (in plural) are not only about the (physical) nature of things (the particle-wave nature of sub-atomic entities in quantum physics) but about their nature as the intensity of being enveloped, boxed, fixed, codified, solidified and stabilized. Ontologies are no longer restricted to the philosophy’s ontology in the singular. Ontologies are about ontographics (Lynch, 2013) or conceptions about the natures of things.

space”(2004: 526). “[H]omogeneity did not seem to us to be a characteristic of smooth space, but on the contrary, the extreme result of striation” (2004: 539).

²²⁸ To contradict in the sense of countering is indeed the setting up of distinctions. But a contradiction (in terms) is an incoherence rather than a distinction.

²²⁹ Again I apologize for making over-simplifications.

These reflections allow me to go beyond both metaphorical and conceptual approaches to fluidity. I uphold the idea of fluidity but as an ontological issue. I see fluidity neither as the flow within a network,²³⁰ nor as a detachment from the network. So I do not agree with the “[m]any social theorists [who] suggest that we live in a ‘network’ age of ‘complexity’ and ‘fluidity’ where social relations express a degree of ‘mobility’ as they become detached from the constraints of time and space” (Roberts and Joseph, 2014: 2). For me, the deterritorializations so important to understand fluidity are not detachments of the terrain or territory but are the ontological disarticulations of assemblages. Deterritorialization is the dislocation from a striated space into a smooth space or from the network to the holes of the network. It is not about metaphors, abstractions (such as networks) and fluidity, but about metaphysics, ontologies and realities. It is the nature of reality that is fluid! It departs from my research findings regarding the Yuracaré *corregimientos*. Their nature is partly clear and partly amorphous. The boundaries of Yuracaré *corregimientos* are determinate points on the river-side while in the forest their boundaries are vague or undetermined. There is clear separation as well as the inseparability. In terms of differentiation, there is the Euclidean space of points, divisions and dimensions and a topological space of directions and amorphous substances (building on DeLanda, 2002). In terms of ontologies, there is a solid space-time of grids and a fluid space-time of trajectories. The entities (with clear boundaries) are relatively solid and stable while the multities are relatively fluid and ambiguous. Acknowledging that these realities should not be interpreted as a series of dualities but as different intensities, it becomes clear why ontology is viscous: in-between solid and fluid.

Ontological fluidity

“Fluidity is simultaneously one of the most important concepts in contemporary critical theory and one of the most taken for granted” (Stephens, forthcoming). I will therefore clarify my stance vis-a-vis fluidity by exploring a question Rankin (2008) tries to answer: ‘where does fluidity reside?’. She locates fluidity in the shift from relations of interiority to relations of exteriority (the shift from a seamless whole to an assemblage). I add to that by locating fluidity in the change from relations of exteriority to ‘interrelations’, understood as relations in which bodies fuse, merge, blend or intermingle whereby their boundaries dissolve (without forming a seamless whole). An example of fusion is the intermingling of Yuracaré and expert knowledge and meanings. These relations are always re-late-ions or renewing the recent. Relations are not constituted by the repetitions of the same linkage but are “a frequency band of constant variations” (Prada, 2013). “In the repetition one encounters the possibility of change of the same relation; it is never the same” (*idem*). Thus, interrelations are never stable. Interrelations should not be understood as linkages but as (constituted by) resonance. What is fused cannot link. They do not form part of structural, system, network or assemblage theories but of viscous ontology. Moreover, this fusion results in *con-fusión*. The moment things get fluid they become challenging and uncomfortable. Divisions are not too many for our comprehension but too few: they dissolved in an undifferentiated topology.

A third source of fluidity are the multiple imprints that stick to the entity and blur its boundary. Entities have imprints that are historically inscribed and embodied in the entities. To mention just a few: genetic information, scripts, cultural repertoires, Bourdieu’s notion of habitus and internalizations in general. Scripts are inscribed, embedded, predetermining or prescriptive characteristics or attributes of material entities. For instance many tools embody a script that to a large extent predetermines its use in a certain practice. Cultural repertoires are to a large extent prescriptions of appropriate behaviour, competent conduct and legitimate enactment. All these various imprints change

²³⁰ Flow can be seen as the movement of particles through space and as a process through time. Seen from a different angle, each flow also has its stability or static aspects. The water flows through the river but the river course does not change. A flow can be located and fixed in space. But at a large time-scale or through human intervention, river courses do change and thus generate another flow. Flows are thus phenomena articulating time and space while time and space still remain separate. Flow then remains part of the existing gridded space-time. Flows can also be conceived differently. I am focussing on the overflows of the metaphysical gridded space-time. This creates ontological fluidity. It is not a displacement in space but a change of intensity of space-time as an entirety (Hautala and Jauhiainen, 2014). It resembles less the flows of the river and more the oceanic flows. Fluidity is then phenomenon and medium (Ingold, 2011: 92).

neat material entities into broader, unbounded multities that can exhibit fluidity. All these imprints reveal the ‘stickiness’ of fragments and the social fluid.

Thus, the research showed three empirical entry points to evade ontologically bounded demarcations and to substantiate fluidity. For me, the solid is gridded, boxed and thus fixed; the fluid is line-less and amorphous. Through my empirico-conceptual analysis of stickiness, multities and *con-fusión*, I elaborated an ontology characterised by topology and fluidity. The blurred boundaries, multiplicities, superpositions, undifferentiatedness and indeterminacies are constitutive of the fluid nature of socio-material realities. My use of fluidity is not to analyse a flow of entities in a context or network but a movement in space-time: the dislocation caused by deterritorializations and the wet cement moment of a becoming. Fluidity is useful to characterize situations, crises and change. Regarding the former: situations can be simple (entities and their relations are relatively stable, separable and known), complex or systemic (entities are stable, relations are inseparable, unknown and unpredictable) and fluid situations (not only the relations become inseparable but also the entities).²³¹ Regarding the latter: fluidity resides in the moment of transformational change (not transfer or transition). Change is a new becoming in which an entity travels momentarily through fluid space-time to be fixed again in solid space-time. For instance the sawmill momentarily dissolved the Yuracaré’s fixed labour arrangements and understandings of ‘taking care of the woods’. It generated *confusión*. Subsequently, it was instrumental in inducing a different spatiality and organization of labour. This process was not (only) a transfer from place A to place B or a transition from actor-network A to actor-network B but a transformational movement in-between space-time A and space-time B.

The nature of space-time is viscous

As noted above, space-time is not divided or separated in a fixed part (with entities that are connected, related and distanced) and a fluid part (with the lines of flight that escape connections, relations and dimensions). Space-time is co-constituted by the processes in-between and by both possibilities of enfolding of fixities and the possibilities of flowing of fluidities. Viscosity is the term that denotes the in-between between fixed or solid and fluid. In Physics, viscosity is seen as the property of a physical object.²³² It refers to a sticky substance or blend²³³ in-between solid and liquid. I combine this intensive, in-between property of viscosity with the in-between topological notion of space (different intensities of differentiation). This results in acknowledging the topological and viscous nature of space-time. This I label the viscous ontology of socio-materialist realities.²³⁴

For me, viscosity is important to substantiate the difference of differences.²³⁵ In the case of the Yuracaré territory, it is the topographical point and line which makes the differences between *corregimientos* near the river but it is the topological vector that makes the differences in the forest. These different differences are expressions of the different natures of spatiality. The nature of the Euclidean space differs from the nature of the least differentiated space. So the way differences are

²³¹ A fluid situation is different from a mess (Law, 2004) or meshwork (Ingold, 2011).

²³² A glass window is viscous: it is fluid but hardly flowing and appears to be solid. A house can be seen as viscous when looked at it as a flow of materials coming from different places, these materials being momentarily assembled together in the form of a house and in the future spreading out to other locations again after the house is demolished.

²³³ Wagner takes up the concept of viscosity to avoid speaking of ‘inclusive’ or ‘exclusive’ and private or public (Wagner and Peters, 2014: 417). Wagner (n.d.) uses viscosity to analyse blending. She describes the viscosity of spaces (blending physical spaces along with social characteristics) and of multifaceted groupings (blending traditional sociological attributes of ‘migrant’ and ‘religion’).

²³⁴ I use the term socio-materialist to make a distinction with traditional and historical materialism (caught in the dualistic trap of inert matter / active form) and with the new materialities (many of whom “attend to the activities of matter itself – in its ontological essence” (Mol, 2013: 380). Both seem caught in essentialism. That is why I propose to see materiality as fully entangled body-expression which I think the word socio-materialist rightly captures.

²³⁵ By now I hope it is clear to the reader that I am not satisfied with differences such as the difference between entity and multity or fixity and fluidity. This is too striated and dualistic to interpret my empirical research findings.

fabricated and enacted are different in the two spaces. Therefore, I did not only encounter different differences in the field of linguistics and heuristics (as metaphors, representations and interpretations of the real world) but also in the field of ontology (the nature of things).

My ethnographic research (particularly on the multity) led me to conceive viscosity as an intensive property of assemblages (of entities and multities).²³⁶ What really exists is space-time and its nature is viscous: in-between solid or gridded and fluid or amorphous. In this viscous space-time, there are materialities entangled with immaterialities, but what is crucial is the solidity of the boundaries and grid lines, not the physical solidity of matter. The solidity of boundary lines and the resulting stability is physical-semantic. Viscosity is thus ontology-metaphor.²³⁷

The sticky nature of things

The study on technology and knowledge introductions in the Yuracaré territory made clear that ‘things’ are ontologically sticky.²³⁸ Intangible fragments such as knowledge, form and function act as imprints, embodiments and scripts internalized in the materialities of artefacts. Subsequently, these imprints stick to the materiality of the thing so that they travel through space and networks with the thing.²³⁹ The thing is then more-than-matter and its boundary is not neat (Chapter 4). At their arrival, these more-than-material fragments had to fold into the already existing Yuracaré bodies of knowledge, materialities, experience and sense-making in order to become part of their practices and world. This is where the stickiness of fragments becomes detectable in the form of transfer failures or miss-fits (Chapter 4).²⁴⁰

The stickiness of fragments that are interwoven into the things, blurs the boundary between intangible and tangible, ideas and matter, culture and nature. An example of such intermingling or fusion is the fact that the knowledge about commodities is itself a commodity (Appudurai, 1986). Thus, stickiness and partial fusions account for the social life of things and the thingness of ‘the social’ (in the Latourian sense of ‘the associated’ and not as a separate dimension).

The enactment of natures of nature

Viscous ontology is compatible with the idea that realities are enacted through practices rather than that practices are played-out in a particular reality (space and time).²⁴¹ Practices are ways of handling

²³⁶ The ontological move can be done in various ways. DeLanda comes from mathematics (particularly the manifold) and develops differential and integral calculus, group theory and dynamical systems theory to produce geometrical metaphors. “Metaphorically, the hierarchy “topological – differential – projective – affective – Euclidean” may be seen as representing an abstract scenario for the birth of real space. (...) This *morphogenetic* view of the relation between the different geometries is a metaphor in the sense that to mathematicians these relations are purely *logical* (...). But this cascade of broken symmetries [that means progressive differentiation] may be also given *an ontological dimension*” DeLanda (2002: 24). DeLanda proceeds by shifting from metric and nonmetric geometrical properties to extensive and intensive physical properties. This allows him to conceive genesis “as a concrete physical process in which an undifferentiated *intensive space* (...) progressively differentiates, eventually giving rise to *extensive structures*” (DeLanda, 2002: 25). So he moves from mathematics to physics and from metaphor to ontology.

²³⁷ For me the ontology-metaphor is a way to entangle world and word as well as ontology and epistemology. I agree with Lynch who recommends ontography because “[s]uch investigations avoid making sharp distinctions between epistemology and ontology” (2013: 444).

²³⁸ Saldanha (2007) uses viscosity to describe processes of sticking together.

²³⁹ In Chapter 4 I gave two examples: the mobile saw mill and the sustained yield principle. The mobile saw has many imprints such as levers and knowledge on materials that are subsequently required and supposed to be acquired by the users in order to operate the machine. The sustained yield principle (from a forested area one does not harvest more than its growth) has imprints of a calculative rationality with which to look at forests. These imprints travelled with the machine and with the principle when they were introduced in the Yuracaré territory.

²⁴⁰ When evaluation studies attribute failure to the intervention being ‘too complex’ it is often because there were unforeseen imprints (thus requirements) embedded in the technology or advice.

²⁴¹ In this thesis I use two different but non-exclusive ways to deal with practice. Practice is both acted out in the world (performance) and through practice a particular world is enacted or brought into being (performativity).

the world and thereby of enacting one of its versions – up to bringing it into being (Law and Mol 2002). This way of conceiving practice has profound implications for the question of what is real. Through a specific practice one of the many worlds that could potentially be enacted, is enacted. This means there is no ‘One world’ (Law, 2011).²⁴² In other words: there are not only multiple perspectives on the same world but there are multiple worlds. Nature is not separated from culture but enacted through and in practice (Law and Urry, 2004). Several dualities no longer hold: material – social, object – subject, ontology – epistemology. For this reason I use the term ‘conceive the world’ rather than ‘perceive the world’ since perceptions and perspectives refer to social constructions of the world rather than natures of the worlds.

The worlds that are enacted through different practices might have different natures. In most Western ontologies, the nature of nature is inert (atoms, matter, etc.). Indigenous Amazonian people do not conceive multiple cultures and one nature but multiple natures and one culture (Viveiros de Castro, 1998). In the Andean ontologies, the nature of nature is alive (the Earth-beings). So there is ontological pluralism (Blaser, 2014). And this means there is an ontological politics regarding decisions and negotiations about the possible world we desire and we want to enact (Prada, 2013). Viscous ontology is a framework to explore the encounters and interactions among multiple ontologies with different differences. It might help scholars, diplomats and development cooperation actors in becoming sensitivity to the fluidity and *con-fusión* that occurs when people with different ontological grids meet, talk to each other and try to negotiate a common. The political question is ‘whose ontological grid is becoming fluid?’ due to impositions by the other.

8.2.3 Assemblages

Recent phenomena like globalization and ICT have affected thinking space in terms of separated levels (local, regional, national, global) and to a lesser extend thinking in distinct time frames (tradition, modernization, globalization). This “new order of things” (Ong and Collier, 2005: 3) can no longer be examined as articulations of territories, levels or stages. Ong and Collier propose “global assemblages” (*idem*) to study a specific range of phenomena immanent in globalization: “technoscience, circuits of licit and illicit exchange, systems of administration or governance, and regimes of living, ethics or value” (*idem*).

The concept of assemblage is important in my research to denote the constitution of reality as made up of loosely associated fragments. Second, it directs the analysis to the practices of assembling. Through these practices there is a continuous movement of fragmentation and unification, of homogenization and heterogenization, of boundaries dissolving and emerging as well as the movement of assemblages stabilizing and destabilizing.

The research findings show that assemblages are unified by:

- the relations among entities, holding together the solid, striated space-time
- the stickiness of things (the sawmill)
- the blurring of divisions (the Yuracaré *corregimiento*) and *con-fusión* of entities (Yuracaré body of knowledge and conceptions of caring for the woods fused with the professional conceptions of forest management),

Performance presupposes an a priori world while performativity is prior to the world. Examples of the former are the social, political, discursive and performative practices of development actors (Chapter 3). Together these practices constitute cooperation strategies (intervention, facilitation or the stimulation of self-development) that are acted out in an existing setting or world. Also policy is performed but at the same time policy has performative effects. For instance sectoral development policies mould sector institutions (Chapter 6). Another example of the way that through practice a world is enacted, is through development cooperation. The Netherlands and Bolivia are enacted as donor and recipient respectively.

²⁴² With this phrase Law is not referring to the planet earth as the world but to reality and the nature of the real (ontology). Reality is not only a background out there or “large space-time box that goes on by itself” (Law, 2011: 2). Reals are also the “effects of contingent and heterogeneous enactments, performances or sets of relations” (*idem*: 2).

- a particular common resulting from the negotiation of previous incommensurables (the becoming-equal of Bolivia and the Netherlands).

In all these situations I showed how divisions (between an entity and its context or external and internal actors or humans and non-humans or entities and multities or nature and culture respectively) are dissolved. The boundaries are not only contested but become untenable. Solid, binary differences become one flow.

The making of One (or the ‘One *and* many’) is potentially always existent. In assemblage theory, the One and the many are co-existent. Deterritorialization and reterritorialization are both at work (continuous variation).²⁴³ Singularity is not fixed and opposite to multiplicity but both exist simultaneously. There is a dual necessity of the separation and inseparability of things (echoing Thacker, 2010: 254).

In the ever-changing assemblages of humans and non-humans, the humans (facilitators, policy officers or diplomats) play a modest role. These assemblages often exhibit an immanent dynamic which humans must learn to follow in order to effectively pursue the desired goals. Learning, searching (Easterly, 2009), creativity and pragmatism are important skills and assets for facilitators to accommodate differences (Chapter 3), for the policy officers to pursue the association of entities (Chapter 6) and for the diplomats to negotiate the incommensurable (Chapter 7).

In the previous three sections I revisited the metaphysical, ontological and theoretical part of the conceptual framework (see figure 9). I discussed the research findings in terms of space-time, viscosity and assemblages respectively. In the next three sections I will apply these discussions to the concept of development and the practices of development cooperation and international cooperation. I will draw out the implications of the former three fragments of my conceptual framework for the latter three fragments.

8.2.4 Development as a topological becoming

In this section I will discuss a particular way to conceive of development that is derived from the earlier metaphysical, ontological and theoretical discussions. I will finish with a section on the implications for development thinking.

Space-time metaphysics

Space and time have always played an important role in development thinking. From the onset the space was divided in a developed and underdeveloped world. And time was conceptualized as linear progress with development being seen as the temporal transition from traditional to modern. In this early conceptualization of development, space and time were separated phenomena. Space was a physical background and time was a linear sequence. The terrain or the concrete space was often labelled ‘the field’ (in contrast with the office). The territory or the conceptual space of development, is often portrayed in the dualities of inside versus outside and bottom-up versus top-down. These spatialities presuppose space to exist prior to development. Space is seen as extensive rather than intensive and topographical rather than topological.

²⁴³ My research provides an example of de- and reterritorialization of the Yuracaré territory as well as spatiality. The drawing of lines on the map is an act of deterritorializing the spatial conception of unclear and undifferentiated boundaries (vectors). As shown by Nizami (2013) the transition from historical, legendary or mythological fuzzy boundaries into clear, legal and institutional boundaries is resulting in weak, permeable, contested and unstable boundaries. This process passes through a deterritorialization or ‘wet cement moment’ (Hulsman and Korteweg, 2011) in which boundaries are rather unsettled and fluid. It is through the subsequent reterritorialization and the hardening of the cement that an ordering device is coming into being. In the case of the Yuracaré this reterritorialization of its territory is physical (protecting the outer boundary and progressively splitting inner divisions), legal (complying with the land and forest laws), organizational (strengthening the Council as representation of the *corregimientos*) and institutional (exercising territorial self-governance).

Regarding the relation between space and time mainstream development thinking sees them as separated but related phenomena. Development is a transition in place and over time. And development takes place through transfers from a developed place to an under-developed place. In contrast, I want to elaborate on space and time as interrelated or integrated phenomena: space-time. Shifting to space-time would make clear that development is not positioned in space and time but space-time (realities) is composed by developments. Development is the movement from solid to fluid space-time and *vice versa*. Development occurs when the entity becomes a multity or the multity becomes an entity. It occurs as a change in nature or an ontological disposition in space-time. It occurs as the process of deterritorialization or reterritorialization. It occurs as the spatial change from a differentiated topography to a least differentiated topology and *vice versa*.

Viscous ontology

In academic and policy debates the very nature of development is often implicitly contested. Development is usually conceived and enacted as structural transformation and economic growth.²⁴⁴ The nature of development is primarily material and economic wealth.²⁴⁵ Development is assumed to be inevitable within an evolutionary logics. In the 1990s, Escobar (1995) proposes a completely different reading of the nature of development. He states that the nature of development is discursive. Development is a knowledge/power configuration. This perspective questions the disciplinary workings of hegemonic development agencies and visualizes local resistance to such discursive regimes up to the point of bringing a counter-discourse into being. Sen (1999) proposes yet another nature: development as freedom. So, 'development' is one concept with many interpretations and multiple dimensions (economic, social, political and as will be shown below, also topological and ontological). It is never clear, it has blurred boundaries and thus it is a multity rather than an entity.

Based on my elaboration of multities, assemblages and 'viscous ontology', I will redefine the nature of development as a contingent process of becoming that is immanent in the assemblages. 'Becoming' is seen as a particular type of change.²⁴⁶ It does not assume a logic of necessity. That is to say, there are no components or relations between the components of development that are "*logically necessary*" (DeLanda, 2006: 11) for development to take place. For instance, it does not assume linearity, stages, goals (points on the horizon), human intentionality, direct causality, a priori 'drivers of change' or 'change agents'.²⁴⁷ There is no a priori necessity for democracy, good governance, technology transfer, capital injections, policy prescriptions, etc. None of those 'constituents of change' can be identified or modelled a priori as direct causes of development. There is no a priori space that is striated into outsiders and insiders. Development can only be known by tracing its becoming ex-post and empirically through the affects the above mentioned 'constituents' exercised. The logic of becoming is a logic of "*contingently obligatory*" (*idem*: 11) relations. Those components and relations that affect the contingent course of coevolution and assembling, can be traced through empirical verification. Becoming refers to the contingent dynamics of the relations between the heterogeneous fragments within an assemblage.

Seeing development in the logic of becoming, then development is not bound-up with an evolutionary perspective but to immanence: the potential already exists and is real. The immanence of development is related to topological thinking (DeLanda, 2002; Lury, 2013). Development occurs without external frames that set it or set it in motion.²⁴⁸ There is constant development powered by vitality and the forces of affect. Development is to be regarded as a permanent and normal situation rather than

²⁴⁴ There are notable exceptions such as UNDP's human development index. However, still Gross Domestic Product growth is the most common indicator.

²⁴⁵ Recurring to what I wrote in Chapter 7, this nature of development is linked to an ontology of a 'One world', one nature and one materiality (after Viveiros de Castro, 1998 and Law, 2011).

²⁴⁶ Development is traditionally seen as a normative type of change (progress, economic growth or poverty reduction). Becoming is not normative but experimental or speculative.

²⁴⁷ Agency is not only an attribute of the human actor but is distributed in the network of human and nonhuman actors (Latour, 2005).

²⁴⁸ An example of an external frame is the frame of three axes or dimensions that from the outside sets any Euclidean metric space. An example of immanence is the self-development discussed in Chapter 3.

something exceptional. The strategies to promote development are hence not meant to start development or to logically plan and design it. Strategies should permanently enable practices of assembling actualities and potentialities.²⁴⁹ I therefore remove development from the register of geographical divisions and network topography in order to insert it into topology.²⁵⁰ Topology is here used in the sense of differently differentiated spaces: from the most striated form to the most amorphous form. Development is the transformation of space-time in-between the solid and the fluid. It is a movement of destabilization and restabilization of the nature of things. Development as a becoming is seen as the enfolding of assemblages in space-time. These assemblages oscillate in-between a striated, solid and an amorphous, fluid space-time. Development is not a transition from point A to point B but a movement in-between A and B without starting in A nor ever reaching B.²⁵¹ Development is thus the on-going trajectory of dislocations described as territorialization, deterritorialization and reterritorialization. The saw-mill in the case of Yuracaré is not only dislocated geographically (moved to the territory) but it simultaneously changed from a well determined entity into a rather unknown unknown for the Yuracaré. It became a multity in their world and affected their assemblages (for instance labour relations). These continuous processes affect the nature of entities and multities. Hence, development as becoming is related to ontology. It assumes that the nature of what there is, is viscous.

Implications for development thinking

Development as becoming highlights its effects of rendering realities fluid. This sheds light on the ambiguities and contradictions inherent in development.²⁵² It also sheds light on the political question of whose reality is left fluid? In mainstream development practice this question is hardly posed since the answer seems so obvious: the to-be-developed, subaltern objects of development. Yet, this highlights that development objects are often marginalized in multiple ways: geographically, socio-economically, epistemologically and ontologically. They are located in remote, vulnerable or marginal areas. They are discriminated and deprived from access to resources, rights, public services and markets. Their knowledges are stigmatized as beliefs, neglected and colonized (Mignolo and Escobar, 2010). And on top of that, in the interactions with the development actors, their relatively stable, known and striated world is infused with instability, unknowns and multities. Parts of their assemblages and solid space-time are continuously blurred and dissolved by different divisions and the stickiness of recontextualized multities (see Chapter 4). Over time, they might have learned to retract into the fluid space of turbulence and uncertainty, where they might cherish their incompatibility (for instance the nomad). They might exercise their affect as resilience or resistance movements. They might also threaten in return the solid space-time of powerful groups (for instance in guerrilla, narcotics, *Mara*, crime, fundamentalism and terrorism assemblages).²⁵³ This is a socio-material

²⁴⁹ Looking at Yuracaré development in this way, reveals the problematic distinction that I made in Chapter 3 between development and self-development. Development intervention is not the opposite pole of self-development but both are entangled. The becoming-developed is a mixture or fusion of fragments, relations and their entanglements. In this case the concrete fragments were the 1996 Forest Law, the sawmill, the *corregimientos*, etc. The important relations are the kinship relationships, the labour arrangements as well as the relations in the mixed research and planning team. The important entanglements are the fusion of the concepts 'forest management' and 'caring for the woods' as well as the viscous nature of the *corregimientos*. It is not useful to distinguish the outsiders and outsiders. The affective relations, networks and processes that cross the abstract inside-outside boundary are important but cannot be defined as a priori different or more important than relations and processes in the inside or outside locations. Becomings do not emerge by dividing but by fusing those separations and by the flow that is set in motion by virtue of intensive differences (DeLanda, 2002).

²⁵⁰ Development is played out and measured in the register of dimensions. Progress is seen as growth, planned expansion, incremental modernisation, etc. This incremental and calculative conception of development might be the most perverse power-effect of current trends in numerical accountability (OECD, 2013) Accountability locks-in development cooperation in Excel sheets and the grids of solid space-time.

²⁵¹ Transition is conceived of as a trajectory or a movement in solid space-time from one box of the grid into another box of the same grid. There is little openness towards a contingent becoming.

²⁵² Development is change but not any change. Therefore the term often has a qualifier (e.g. sustainable development or inclusive development) or implicit positive connotation.

²⁵³ Deterritorialization is not good or bad in itself but it does provide specific subjects of development the potentiality to alter or transgress existing orderings (linguistic-material-enactments). "For Irigaray, then, fluidity

rereading of processes of both exclusion and inclusion.²⁵⁴ There are no ‘excluded’ anymore since all actors are included in the assemblages, either as actual or virtual. But there are ontologically destabilized populations. This brings to the fore the importance of ontological conflicts (Blaser, 2013), ontological ‘disorders’ (Bonelli, 2012) and the need for ontological diplomacy (Chapter 7). In the current political ontology the enactment of several different worlds is restricted and raises unease to say the least.

Conceiving of development as played out in fluid space would turn attention of development scholars towards the manifestations of turbulence, transgressions, open trajectories and transformations (see also Henderson et al, 2013). Here trajectories are not the movement of things (for instance the immutable mobiles of Latour) but are reconfigurations of relations (the Deleuzian haecceities²⁵⁵). Movement is not the exceptional state of a being (the temporary displacement from one stable site to another) but beings are always beings-on-the-move (Jensen, 2009).²⁵⁶ Flow is immanent in the continuous variation of de- and reterritorializations. In the flow of events, fragments are constantly delinked and reassembled in new ways. The methodology of following such movement requires a relational and process ontology of ‘thinging’ (see 8.3.4).

8.2.5 Development cooperation on the edge of fluidity

Once development is seen as an immanent, transformational becoming situated in a topological, viscous space-time, the practice of development cooperation is seen differently too. Viscosity sheds a different light on the long-standing debate on failure in development cooperation (Easterly, 2006; Edwards, 2014; Mosse, 2005; Moyo, 2009; Pritchett et al., 2010; Scott, 1998).

Space-time metaphysics

Development cooperation is seen by me as topological in the sense of encompassing spaces with different levels of differentiation (Martin and Secor, 2014). The default assumption within most development cooperation practices is the solid space-time of Euclidean and geographic divisions. This is most clearly expressed in the dualities of developed versus under-developed countries and outsiders versus insiders. Development cooperation is set and fixed by an outside frame of reference. An example of inscribing development cooperation within the register of this geographical and dualistic topography is the discourse on transfers and aid as delivery (from location A to location B).

Much of development cooperation is now embracing complexity and applying a different spatiality. Network or system topographies are elaborated. The geographically distant actors can be very close in the network space and things like information and money can travel very fast in networks. This to some extent blurs geographical boundaries and other boundaries emerge. Each network and system includes certain actors and excludes others, thus again erecting a differentiated spatiality of clear points (positions), boundary lines and a dualistic topography. But these now serve to illustrate systemic change and transitions (from situation A to situation B).

My point is that dualistic spatial topographies have two shortcomings. First, they fabricate levels and scales while I agree with authors such as Deleuze and Guattari (2004), Schatzki (2002) and Marston et al. (2005) who conceive reality as being flat. Second, the spatial topographies focus on the fixed points in the space (the developed, the local, the ‘from below’, etc.). On the edge of fluidity, dualisms, lines and points dissolve and space becomes amorphous or topological in the restricted sense of least

is not unproblematically or unequivocally aligned with the positive and progressive; rather, its dynamic nature, its conceptualisation as a field of forces, means that one must pay attention to the specific instances of each manifestation, instead of making generalising assumptions about its effects” (Stephens, forthcoming: 17).

²⁵⁴ These key concepts of contemporary development discourse assume an ‘in’ and an ‘out’ that I see as problematic when space-times are enfolded and entangled.

²⁵⁵ The thing is not a substance/form entity but the contingent and momentarily congealed outcome of relations. See the sections further down in this chapter.

²⁵⁶ Metaphorically, flow is not referring to the water streaming through a river bed but to the current of the sea (immersion).

differentiated (DeLanda, 2002). Conceiving development cooperation as enacted through de- and reterritorializations in a topological space-time, enables an analysis beyond the actants in a network or elements of a system. These are the multities and unknowns that populate the fluid space where they are enacted as highly turbulent, mutable, nomadic or “similar and dissimilar at different locations” (Mol and Law, 1994: 641). In my opinion, these fluid phenomena can account for transformation (rather than transfer or transition) but also for failures in development cooperation.

Within the default, topographic spatiality of development, development cooperation is about delivering interventions in order to make the transition towards a desired goal. The history of development cooperation could be analysed in terms of the continuous dislocations and flows of entities. I argue, that development cooperation is no longer only about geographical and topographical space but about viscous space-time: the continuous processes of destabilization and stabilization. Originally, the idea of a structural transformation as expressed in Truman’s inaugural address in 1949, could be seen as a trajectory through fluid space-time. Structural transformation would entail a deterritorialization of ‘traditional’ structures in those ‘underdeveloped’ countries. Through de- and recontextualization of capital, technology, democracy and policy, these entities would enter as multities into the ‘traditional’ solid space-time of those societies. These introductions would bring high levels of fluidity into the pre-existing assemblages. As shown in my research, this fluidity would create spill-overs and flows in unexpected dimensions. Through these becomings development would be enacted. However, soon the idea of structural transformation was congealed in the modernisation theory with its logic of linear time which was ordered in sequenced stages (Rostow, 1960). Within the boundaries of each enveloped stage behaviour was coded by prescriptions and the whole process was closed-in by assuming a fixed end point (modernity). In this way and in practice a new gridded space-time was stabilized for development cooperation as transitions rather than transformations. In a similar way the neo-Marxist theory can be seen as a deterritorialization whereby the underdeveloped countries would break loose the shackles of dependence (Frank, 1969). But also this escape was reterritorialized in linear time, the single goal of socialism and one-size-fits-all policies. And the same goes for neo-liberalism and the freeing of market forces.

The default, biased topographical enactment of development cooperation has also guided the discussions on its failures. Much of the debate is framed in terms of unequal power relations within a highly differentiated space. Scholars focussed on the inequitable donor-beneficiary power relations (Eyben, 2006; Quarles van Ufford, 2003), the lack of participation (Chambers, 1993), an expert-driven interventionism (Arce and Long, 2000; Ferguson, 1990; Long and Van der Ploeg, 1989), poor ownership (World Bank, 1998) and unequal partnership (Global Partnership, 2014; Riddell, 2007). The conundrum was framed as: how to bring about internal change by external agency? (Ellerman, 2004). A more viscous and topologically less differentiated analysis would reveal, first of all, the inadequacy of this framing: the division between ‘internal’ and ‘external’ should be deterritorialized. And second, power should not be conceived in a narrow topographical way. I agree that through the use of power a differential and striated space can be enacted.²⁵⁷ Power is exercised through the intervention strategy and fix-the-problem approach.²⁵⁸ Intervention is a strategy to territorialize the Other’s space in such a way that it becomes an extension of one’s own striated space. Boundary work is operated through a momentary blurring of boundaries and subsequent recapturing in one’s own grid (with the same ways of separating, naming, labelling, framing, categorizing, segmenting, etc.). Boundary work opens a fluid, amorphous and potent virtuality which is then transformed into a known, solid actuality.²⁵⁹ Capturing or territorializing is congealing. Capturing alters the space-time,

²⁵⁷ In the development cooperation debate, power is something that can be mapped. It is territorialized in vertical structures. Mostly it is conceived as power-over.

²⁵⁸ By fixing the Yuracaré’s problems, the CDF expanded its own (power) space in multiple dimensions. It expanded its rules, definition of spatiality with clear boundary lines, conception of the nature of forests, etc.

²⁵⁹ “[W]here the actual connotes “the current state of affairs”, the virtual is that dimension of the real that wasn’t taken, the road never trodden, the potentialities (...). The intensive, quite much “in contact” with the virtual, is that process whereby flee-floating matter, energy, and information – the intensive genetic flux – “actualizes”, or better, “contracts” layers of intensive flow into form; i.e. form-giving, “chaotic-contracting” processes according to which matter-energy is given form” (Hansson, 2009).

geometry and mapping. It progressively differentiates from the undifferentiated geometric topology through differential, projective affective and ultimately the metric Euclidean geometries (DeLanda, 2002). Each step deepens the process of separating the inseparable. What is often poorly understood is that the capturing strategy often creates the opposite results which are then seen as failures or resistance.

Summarizing, interventions introduce new boundary lines which can expand the solid space-time of the Other or render it fluid. The latter is transformational but the trajectory through fluid space-time can easily result in failure if measured against pre-set goals. The unpredictable reterritorialization of a transformation can differ from intended impact. This is the essence of self-development.²⁶⁰

Viscous ontology

In line with topological thinking, on the one extreme I see the differentiated space of power and on the other extreme I see the continuous emergence of an undifferentiated space of affects. Reality is in-between this solid and fluid space-time. Its nature is viscous. The default topographical perspective that is common among development actors, is biased to the solid side. Overlooking the fluid topological space-time is a major cause of failure and *con-fusión*. The reliance on control mechanisms and capturing devices make the fluid phenomena invisible and unaccounted for. In general, development cooperation is blind to the rendering fluid of entities as a consequence of development cooperation transfers. For this reason, development cooperation is often not ontologically aligned to the nature of viscous situations. Since intense cooperation and interaction entails dealing with different differences, by default it creates *con-fusión*, instability and inseparability. For this reason development cooperation actors can better assume working in viscous situations than simple or complex situations. Ontological alignment then means exploring (rather than capturing) and following (rather than controlling) the becomings.

Ontological alignment is hampered by the premature ontological closing of multities. Too soon they are considered entities, overlooking their blurred boundaries and sticky imprints. The blurred boundaries of the multities render the situation fluid rather than complex. Sticky imprints are causing failed technology and policy transfers, surprises or accidents.²⁶¹ Further research is needed to confirm my hypothesis that many failures in development cooperation can be attributed to the wrong topological and ontological assumptions and alignments. In a situation of formality, strong institutions, established organizations, fixed categorizations, vested investments, etc. the primary challenge of the donor is to fit in. In a situation of instability, turbulence and confusion, the primary challenge for the donor is to make sense of what is becoming, to see where the flow goes, to follow it and to remain open-minded (carefully labouring the divisions).

Ontological alignment and openness are also important to prevent ontological conflict or violence. The way development cooperation interventions can marginalize or dissolve the Other's categorical divisions is a form of violence.²⁶² My research points out that development failures arose due to the failure to accommodate the indigenous, viscous spatiality and the legal - professional requirements to delineate clear spatial units. The incommensurability could not be rendered commensurable through a diplomatic effort.²⁶³ The ontological negotiation about entities and multities had not taken place.²⁶⁴

²⁶⁰ Self-development here contradicts what is written earlier. In Chapter 3 it was based on the human agency of 'insiders'. Here it is seen in terms of relations of affect in the entire assemblage or space-time.

²⁶¹ Latour (2010) analyses the causes of the space shuttle Columbia in a way that refers to ontological stickiness.

²⁶² This is to say that interventions in the grid of the Yuracaré, meaning reworking their divisions and boundary lines of that what exists, is not only counterproductive but ontological violence. The erasure of conceptual and ontological divisions causes conceptual and ontological fluidity and *con-fusión*. This is well illustrated by the difference between forest and woods (Chapter 4). The nature of the foresters' forest is a 'natural' resource. It implies a natural scientific ontology. The nature of the Yuracaré woods is socio-spiritual-material. Affecting that nature through intervention means affecting their grid, their practice of 'caring for the woods' up to the point of harming the Yuracaré.

²⁶³ This example is one of the connections between development cooperation and diplomacy in this thesis. It is not the connection of fields or actors (the aid worker and the diplomat) but of practices (the will to improve and

The co-production of the Yuracaré forest plan did not adequately depict an indigenous topology of a terrain with vectors rather than lines.²⁶⁵ The co-production was based on the existence of distinct entities and their relations but not on the existence of blurred multities.²⁶⁶ Thus, development actors need diplomatic skills to negotiate peace between different ontologies. They need a sensitivity for political ontology.

Assemblage theory

Development cooperation is enacted through practices of assembling: the on-going labour of bringing disparate elements together (Li, 2007). This contrasts the fixities²⁶⁷ implied in the dualities of development cooperation: outsiders versus insiders, developed versus under-developed, modern versus traditional. All human and non-human actors are part of assemblages and on-going processes of assembling. As the research on the Yuracaré shows, the relations between the elements can be so loose that they need to be understood in terms of an assemblage that is open for fluidity.

Assuming that development cooperation is a dynamic within assemblages, I encounter another source of failures in the disconnect between these assemblages and the networks or systems that development actors presuppose. First, development actors too often assume unity (the household, the community, the district, the network, the system, etc.) where there is fragmentation. Second, they often produce fragmentation (the plurality and heterogeneity of world-making) which leads to failures. Third, they fail to actualize the potential for unification (fusion and reterritorialization).

The first set of failures in development cooperation can be traced back to assumptions on homogeneity and wholeness. Modernisation theories on the one hand assumed a unified, homogenous space upon which to act and assumed that its acting would bring about a homogeneous response. The intervention strategy and the 'fix-the-problem' approach are part of and contributing to this homogenizing effect. These wipe out local differences, diversity and heterogeneity.²⁶⁸ It was not until the 1980s that heterogeneity, fragmentation and conflict received due attention (Long and Van der Ploeg, 1994). Assuming unity where there is fragmentation and assuming homogeneity where there is heterogeneity contributed to development cooperation failures.²⁶⁹ The concept of assemblage enables me a nuanced

the will to negotiate peace). Diplomacy is not about making peace or the "necessity of peace" (Stengers, 2011b: 387) but enabling peace or the "possibility [and] eventuality [of peace]" (*idem*). I would add that enabling peace is showing the potentiality and potency of peace (see DeLanda, 2002 for the difference between possibility and potentiality).

²⁶⁴ As will be shown below, this negotiation is highly political and the realm of political ontology. I argue that the Yuracaré could use their own concepts but could not continue since these were multities for the professional foresters and lawyers. They had to talk, think and act in terms of the professionals' entities. Following the lines of reasoning outlined above, this is an instance of the rendering political of development cooperation.

²⁶⁵ This inadequacy cannot be blamed on the mixed professional-Yuracaré team but on working within pre-established professional and legal standards that are not topological but Euclidean.

²⁶⁶ Blurring was interpreted as an epistemological question of having different perspectives and meanings. For instance, the Yuracaré forest is not a neat forest but (also) a wood (with cosmological imprints), so the overlap of perspectives gave a blurred picture that gave rise to certain confusion. Yet, what this research is revealing is that blurring is also an ontological question. The natures of things are multiple or different and therefore sometimes blurred.

²⁶⁷ By fixities I mean the empirical and conceptual divisions within practices that play an ordering role in the enactment of the world.

²⁶⁸ As in the Yuracaré cases: one rule (the professional foresters' sustained yield principle) will serve all equal (Chapter 4).

²⁶⁹ Important areas of development cooperation, such as community forestry, were based on the assumption of unity and collective action. This professional position tended to idealize the homogeneous community. In my case, research on conflicts among the Yuracaré (Orellana, 1996) showed that this collectivity needed to be approached in a more balanced way. The Yuracaré practices and their underlying rules revealed a complex set of individual, family, clan and community activities, responsibilities and obligations that cannot be homogenized under a single community forestry 'regime' without substantially altering the customary practices. This turned out one of the shortcomings of CERES' support to the Yuracaré, most clearly expressed in the Yuracaré's inability to organize labour for the mobile sawmill at a community level.

analysis of associations in less dualistic and more fluid ways. There is no need to oppose homogeneity versus heterogeneity or fragmentation versus unity.

Within development practice and policy the phenomenon of fragmentation is often the unintended effect of cooperation. This research shows how cooperation produces fragmentation in the Yuracaré territory by introducing new entities, divisions and boundaries. Social reality is actively fragmented by the external inputs or presents.²⁷⁰ These inputs trigger a trajectory through fluid space-time that enables transformation and fit-in-context. The new fragmentation is at the same time giving rise to new interconnections and cooperation with other agents. This newness was partially imposed and largely self-developed. This newness is otherness in relation to their own past and therefore it is a particular modernity (see Arce and Long, 2000). Thus, it is not only critical to monitor the fragmentation of development cooperation, nor the fragmentation caused by development cooperation but the rendering fluid as a consequence of development cooperation. It opens new potential, including the possibility of failure.

If development takes place within assemblages, then development cooperation is relational. It is to be seen as the decontextualization of entities, lifting them out of their original context, transforming thereby the entities in that their relations within their 'original' assemblage are changed or cut off. Since in assemblages the relations form the constitutive part of the entities themselves, the entities (as the expression of the configuration of relations) transform. Their nature might change into multities. The recontextualization of the displaced entities in their 'new' assemblage (usually called context) is again transforming their relations and nature.²⁷¹ These transformations are momentary destabilizations of the entity and its context, blurring this division and resulting in multities. This displacement in space-time can be characterized as an intensive difference that triggers change.²⁷²

If development is immanent, then development cooperation should start from self-development (see Baral and Lamsal, 1991). This implies a shift from the focus on imminent development (the anxiety of what there is to come) to immanent development (Hickley and Mohan, 2004). This is unlocking what I coined as 'developmental affectiveness' (Chapter 3).²⁷³ From a topological and ontological perspective, the stimulating self-development strategy can be seen as a strategy of letting-go and going-with-the-flow into the fluid space-time of the Other. For the donor, encouraging self-development is a trajectory into its fluid space-time where uncertainty, surprise, potentiality and vitality reside. This mixture can trigger changes that fuel the development initiatives but it can also 'explode in the face' of the donor.²⁷⁴ Yet, this research points out that solid and fluid space-time extend into each other so that there is no option but to pass through the fluid space-time. No fusion without *con-fusión*. The advice is to follow these deterritorializations or lines of flight²⁷⁵ that in their trajectory constitute the fluid space-time expressed in sudden turbulence, rare events, unexpected

²⁷⁰ Experts do not only provide fragmented presents but also their presence, presentations and representations of social reality most often reinforce and perform fragmentation (for instance between modern and traditional or inside and outside).

²⁷¹ 'Original' and 'new' are written in-between inverted commas to indicate that this is common language rather than accurate. In assemblage theory there is no beginning and no end. The line does not start in assemblage A and does not end in assemblage B but is passing in-between A and B as a trajectory (not through space but constituting space).

²⁷² Just as the intensive differences in air pressure triggers the wind.

²⁷³ It underscores the importance of feelings, empathy, intimacy, etc. in reaching the objectives. Only later I became aware of the parallel theoretical discussions on the 'affective turn' in Social Science which has more to do with the importance of non-representations (Thrift, 2007).

²⁷⁴ See Arce and Long (2000) for an account of how *cocalero* self-development is at odds with the donors' alternative development. See also Chapter 3 on *cocalero* and Yuracaré self-development in tense relation with the donors' and official development strategies.

²⁷⁵ For example, explore the meanings and implications of the Yuracaré 'taking care of the woods' as the line of flight de-parting from professional forest management.

consequences and unforeseen crisis. By following the deterritorialization slowly several unknowns will become known and can be anticipated in ways to nurture affective development trajectories.²⁷⁶

Implications for development cooperation

The conclusion that development cooperation not only produces its own fragmentation and heterogeneity but renders the worlds fluid, merits the shift from topographical approaches to topological approaches. My research findings point out that otherwise development failures are not adequately understood and ontological alignment is overlooked. More importantly, the continuous ontological tensions and the need for negotiated settlements regarding political ontology are denied. This might backfire to development actors in the form of resistance or the excluded's escapes into illegality (timber smuggling in the case of the Yuracaré, coca cultivation in Primero de Mayo, hunting in the case of the Yshiro, crime, distortion and corruption). 'They' explore 'our' holey spaces and settle there; slowly affecting 'our' solid space-time. In extreme cases, the ontological violence perpetrated by the development actors might be answered by physical violence perpetrated by the 'development objects'.

Implications for development cooperation policies

My conclusions that development is relational, immanent, topological and a becoming has consequences for policy development in the area of development cooperation. I highlighted three aspects: (1) policy is always part of a wider assemblage, (2) the policy process is not a cycle but is part of practices of (re)assembling as well as becoming,²⁷⁷ and (3) politics is about affect and therefore relational and processual. Politics is more than a space of contestation and conflict. It becomes a space of contrast and "intensive difference" (Deleuze and Guattari, 2004: 182). Politics is not only about power but about the capacity to affect and be affected.

Implications for development cooperation agencies

My conclusions that development is relational, immanent, topological and a becoming also has consequences for the management and governance of development cooperation. Transformation is seldom reached by managing cooperation as intervention (hence the problem of sustaining aid results). If the nature of development and development cooperation is topological²⁷⁸, its management cannot be restricted to geometry (inside and outside), metric mathematics (measuring, counting and accounting), excel sheets (boxing-in realities), linear intervention logics and calculative rationalities. Management should encompass different differences: in simple situations blue print might work, in complex situations adaptive system management might work²⁷⁹, but in viscous situations a topological assemblage followwork might be needed.

²⁷⁶ The importance of affect to ensure effect is underlined. Affect is related to the quality of human relations and the empathetic power of cooperating institutions.

²⁷⁷ The policy process is not a sequence of stages in time but a constant oscillation in space between the striated and the smooth space. Policy is territorialized in assemblages and deterritorialized whereby new spaces are opened up. I argue that if policy travels through an organization or field, it is continuously transformed and displaced from solid to fluid space-time and back. If development is a becoming, policy development itself is a becoming. According to me, development cooperation policy is a constant becoming-coherent. Policy coherence is more of an attractor than a realistic, reachable goal or totality. Yet, policy development in terms of practices of assembling can result in a good-enough entirety. The sociological problem is consistency, not coherence. Consistency is the holding together of heterogeneous entities that are constantly on the move due to immanent forces (DeLanda, 2006). Coherence is a feature of a seamless whole. A seamless whole is inconceivable except when presupposing high levels of stability and relations of logical necessity (*idem*).²⁷⁷

²⁷⁸ Here used in the sense that it encompasses the range from the highly differentiated Euclidean geometry to the least differentiated space (Martin and Secor, 2014).

²⁷⁹ Jones (2011) and Ramalingam (2013) see development cooperation as a complex system. Its management is to map, observe, and listen to the system to identify the spaces where change is already happening and try to encourage and nurture it. Most system thinking, however, relies on the separability of relations and the seamless wholeness of the sum of the constituent parts. This cannot always be assumed.

In topological space, development is not linear progress or a transition towards a known end-stage (the developed) yet it is a transformation (Henderson et al, 2013) or constant becoming with no clear form and destiny (sometimes not even a clear point of departure). It is a movement or trajectory in-between points²⁸⁰ and not from one point to another. Development is to be understood in terms of flow and flux. On the edge of fluidity development agencies should consider a strategy that encourages self-development rather than intervention or facilitation. Agencies should consider the go-with-the-flow approach rather than the fix-the-problem or fit-in-context approaches. They should consider an institutional set-up based on aid assemblages rather than the current rule-based aid architecture. They should consider logics of continuous and concrete de- and reassembling of contingent fragments that progressively actualize better lives of the poor rather than a logic of big and thought-out schemes and approaches (livelihoods, sectoral, landscape). Their policy practices should consider empirical processes of policy reassembling rather than the fixed, pre-set and *formal* policy cycle. On the edge of fluidity a particular attitude, ethics and management should be considered. In those situations the instruments which are developed for stable situations which are structured, complex and solid are no longer adequate. On the edge, management and governance rely on capacities to assemble, autonomy, affect, resonance, creative vitality and the flow of multiple processes of becoming. Rather than only responding with capturing flows through frameworks, I would suggest it is safer to rely on ‘followworks’ (see Chapter 1) of improvising, speculating and puzzling.²⁸¹ Put the practice of assembling rather than management and governance at the centre of the organization.

The acknowledgement of assemblages also implies that no single perspective or framework can grasp the situation at hand. The actors involved should develop analytical skills that are based on or open towards multiple frameworks. In this respect, topological thinking is an important skill that seems required to deal with becoming-fluid. The actors involved in cooperation require skills to be critical, especially about boundaries and divisions. Furthermore, the actors need to understand change as continuous, immanent variation. Change and development are not coming from an ‘outside’ of the assemblages but are self-referential, concrete and contingent occurrences on the ground. Cause and effect are both ‘inside’ of the assemblages. “[A] cause is only retrospectively distinguished and realised in its “effects”” (Karaman, 2012: 1287).

8.2.6 International cooperation in turbulent times

It is now common to hear that we do not live in a time of change but in a change of time. The lively debates on contemporary international cooperation gear around the directions of change and the nature of change. Mahbubani (2013) sees geo-political and geo-economic convergence while others see a new bipolar US-China world-ordering emerging. Huntington (1996) sees ‘the clash of civilizations’ where again Mahbubani sees a convergence (Mahbubani and Summers, 2016). Will state actors remain so powerful or will non-state actors take the lead? Regarding the nature of change, many analysts perceive an increasingly complexity. Hulsman and Korteweg (2011) state that we experience a ‘wet cement moment’. This means that we lost a stable institutional world order and now live in a moment of turmoil after which the cement hardens and a new order will remain relatively stable.

Space-time metaphysics

My central theme is (1) to differentiate between two entangled space-times (2) to differentiate between on the one hand simple, complicated or complex situations and on the other hand viscous situations and (3) to see international cooperation as practices of assembling. Mainstream international cooperation actors and analysts are biased towards a topography of positions, divisions and more often

²⁸⁰ The events or elements never fully actualize the becoming in its ideal form / conformity / configuration. The points here figure as attractors (DeLanda, 2002) which are never fully reached. When the assemblage would be reached or fully actualized it would at that very moment stop to be a loose assemblage and become a congealed entity (taking the form of one of the many potential forms). So the continuous variation and processual character of the becoming prevents or delays infinitely the reaching of the attractor.

²⁸¹ I propose ‘puzzling’ in both senses of the word: to puzzle and being puzzled. It indicates the thought-process (logic), play (creativity) and emotions (joy and surprise). To my understanding this is a better term to denote what is meant with the too formalistic term ‘governance’.

than not dualities.²⁸² They acknowledge the instability of divisions but focus on transitions rather than transgressions. Their analyses are basically confined to a solid space-time. Applying a topological and processual metaphysics to international cooperation might make those analyses more sensitive to fluidity, risks and surprises. Entities (policy themes or actors) sometimes have blurred boundaries, have a viscous nature, escape the rigid divisions, fuse and generate an experience of *con-fusión*. These phenomena seem correlated to the empirical occurrence of sudden unpredictable dynamics. For instance, the becoming-president of Evo Morales (Chapter 2), the failure of the Yuracaré to continue the operation of the sawmill (Chapter 4), the emergence of *traide* (Chapter 5), the financial and Euro crises (Chapter 7), the Arab spring, the rise of the Islamic State, the hostilities in Crimea and Eastern Ukraine, the Colombian peace processes with the FARC guerrilla, the drawing together of the US and Cuba, etc. My research on international cooperation suggests that those sudden unpredictable dynamics and ‘strange’ situations could no longer be classified as simple, complicated or complex, but that they were neither chaotic. By intuition, I sensed the possibility of an in-between situation that was neither complex nor chaotic. This viscous in-between is the site that produces the ambiguities, surprises and contradictions inherent in international cooperation. The above mentioned unpredictable dynamics can be seen as ‘becomings’ in the way I conceived of development above.

Viscous ontology

For me, the common denominator of the mainstream analyses is that they assume a solid, differentiated space-time that can be presented geographically or topographically in maps with allies and non-allies, in clear positions (with us or against us; opposing poles; clashing dualities) and with sharp lines (power relations, conflict lines and transition processes) and geometric figures (geopolitical blocks and inner circles).²⁸³ To grasp the change of time and what has always happened, a broad topological perspective is needed. The topographical analyses were biased to the solid space-time and fell short in capturing the fluid space-time since that consists of escapes.²⁸⁴ On the edge of fluidity, positions and directions have never been clear. Lines did never separate but transect. Complexity was complicated by multiplicity²⁸⁵ and fluidity. And change took the form of transformation and becoming. So I argue that we do not live in a change of time, but that we always lived in a continuously changing space-time.

Mobilizing such topological thinking is a necessity to alert us for and align us to a topological reality that exists besides the Euclidean organizational reality of policy *lines*, budget *ceilings*, ministerial

²⁸² Divisions come in many forms: the division of labour, of power and of territory. Management is preoccupied with the division of labour within organisations. Donors are preoccupied with the division of labour and power between organisations that cooperate: the donor-beneficiary relation and donor-donor relations (OECD, 2009 and 2011). Analysis is focussing on the division of labour and power between countries (China as the ‘factory’ or ‘creditor’ of the world; USA as the policeman of the world).

²⁸³ I propose to critically rethink dualities and to look for the available potentiality to bypass them. Using a metaphor: from black and white I do not intend to go to different shades of grey but to look for a prism and explore the white light as a rainbow of colours. An example is the way I investigated and explored the rethinking of the donor-beneficiary relationship between the Netherlands and Bolivia (Chapter 7). Although this black and white division was already mingled into grey tones by the donor giving ownership and budget support to the so-called beneficiary, still there was black and white as originals and reference points. With the shift from aid to international cooperation, a whole spectrum of other actors, relations and potentials developed: lithium, private firms, universities, non-aid governmental agencies, *Pachamama*, etc. This became a very different multiplicity in which the donor-beneficiary duality was bypassed.

²⁸⁴ WikiLeaks is an excellent example to show the escape from this gridded, regulated space and its consequences for diplomacy. The leaking boundary and emerging information flows streamed into the public and generated unstability, indeterminacy and potential. They de-parted from the US codes (in the diplomatic sense of cables but also more broadly as moral codes, institutional rules, categorizations, etc.) and evaded those codes. Julian Assange literally escaped. The US diplomacy and its network entered a moment of destabilization and uncertainty. US allies and opponents nurtured themselves with this stream. The US government not only tried to capture Assange but also tried to block this leak and the fluidity by reterritorializing its coding operations in more stable and secure ways.

²⁸⁵ International cooperation has multiple dimensions: geo-political, economic, cultural and ontological. The ‘one, many and multiple’ is what blurs boundaries and introduces fluidity.

silos, deadlines, excel-sheets, etc. This is why in this thesis topology is taken out of mathematics (DeLanda, 2002) and of social and cultural theory (Lury, 2013). Topology has become an ontological concept. The nature of multities is topological, fluid and amorphous.

What might have changed in the 21st century is that increasingly the world is enacted as topological. Topology is not only a theoretical construct or an analytical device to study reality but also to enact a certain reality, up to bringing it into being. Marres (2012) sees topology as “a device that is deployed in social life in a variety of ways” (Marres, 2012: 288). She argues that by deploying certain material apparatuses, “topological imagination (...) *takes form* in material practices” (*idem*: 289). Particular digital topological technologies structure, enable or disable phenomena in practice. Lury sees “the emergence of a topological culture” (2013: 128). In contemporary culture, movement (e.g. by migrants) is not “the transmission of fixed forms in space and time but rather movement (...) composes the forms of social and cultural life themselves” (*idem*: 129). Thus, “the elaboration of a cultural topology is folded into the topological characteristics of culture they describe or enact” (*idem*: 130). Just as most of the international cooperation practice is enacting a solid space-time, the increase in undifferentiated topological events and analysis could translate into an increasingly topological nature of realities. This would be a phenomenon that triggers a transformative and ontological change of (space-)time.

Assemblage theory

Like development cooperation, international cooperation is equally a set of practices of assembling a continuously varying ‘becoming’. This implies that international cooperation like development cooperation also deals with the processual and topological nature of realities. However, international cooperation is inscribed in the topographical perspective on globalization which emphasizes networks and processes played out over time and in space. Globalization has winners and losers, included and excluded. But globalization itself has affected thinking space in terms of separated levels (local, regional, national, global) and to a lesser extend thinking in distinct time frames (tradition, modernization, globalization). This “new order of things” (Ong and Collier, 2005: 3) can no longer be examined as articulations of territories, levels or stages but as “global assemblages” (*idem*). Furthermore, with globalization being seen as becomings, it seems appropriate to think of globalization in topological terms of alternating solid and fluid space-times.

Implications for international cooperation

The viscous nature of realities is an ontological categorization that has political implications for international cooperation and geo-politics. The ‘excluded’ are not only geographically, socio-economically, epistemologically and ontologically marginalized by development cooperation but also by the formal and informal international security operations (the military, police, guerrillas, United States Drug Enforcement Administration, anti-terrorism agencies, para-military groups, etc.). In the interactions with these internationally supported or operating actors, the worlds of the ‘excluded’ are infused with instability, unknowns and multities. Over time, they might have learned to retract into the fluid space-time of turbulence, danger, resistance, rebellion and terrorism. They affect and ‘threaten’ in return the solid space-time of so-called powerful groups. Just as the multities introduced by the powerful international actors can affect and destabilize the assemblages of the excluded in progressive ways, the excluded’s entities can become multities that affect and destabilize the grids of powerful actors. The excluded occupy the holey spaces of the powerful and cause a turbulence that affects the net of the networks. The *Maras* in Central America and the BACRIM in Colombia are examples of excluded actors taking over concrete terrains, establishing territorial rule as well as rendering the space-time partly fluid and slippery (extremely uncertain, risky and dangerous). Their inhuman treatment of victims raises the question how they conceive of the nature of the human. I see this also happening through the practices of fundamentalism, terrorism, crime and Caliphate-building (rather than state-building). The Deleuzian ‘war-machine’ is no longer the nomad’s machine but the terrorist’s machine.

The ontological question I see here is ‘what is the nature of *Janna* (Heaven)?’ if terrorists refer to it. And subsequently, what is the nature of earth, of nature, of the human? If terrorists or counter-

insurgency agents treat certain humans as animals, they become-animal and turn into beasts. Is it time to review the Western ontology that by nature humans are animals (apes)? The Amer-indian ontologies conceive of animals as being human, which promotes respect and care (Chapter 4). Is terrorism besides environmentalism another reason to seek more symmetry among the multiple ontologies (particularly between the Amer-indians and the Rest) in order to negotiate a less cruel common of worlds?

Though not part of my research, I think a rereading of terrorism can help to follow its affective impact, for instance on the division between the freedom of expression and the freedom of religion. Or on the division between the state's responsibility to ensure respect for human rights and to ensure security and rule of law. Or the xenophobic and nationalistic surges in parts of Europe that was supposedly so liberal and tolerant.²⁸⁶ In much of the 'West' the solid grid has been affected. This rereading of terrorism as a fluidity-enacting device might also be helpful to design different countervailing strategies and enact more effective military and non-military operations.

Implications for international cooperation agencies

It encourages organisations to value people who think radically different and are good at following deterritorializations. Enable them to open-up space (physically, politically, organizationally and normatively). Human resource management could team them up together as well as with people who are good at reterritorializing (planning, programming, designing, framing, etc.). Encourage controversy, dissent, positive deviance²⁸⁷, ambiguity, intuition²⁸⁸, speculation and escapes without explicitly organizing those (but recognizing and acknowledging it), without explicitly coordinating those (as is done in network management), without fixing boundaries (imposing policy frames), without preordained order, scale or hierarchy as well as without *a priori* priorities. This type of so-called management is not about giving out-of-the-box thinkers a space²⁸⁹ but about becoming sensitive to the spaces they are co-creating and enacting.²⁹⁰ In short the challenge is to let a line-less and grid-less space emerge in-between the other spaces.

I conducted ethnographic research on diplomats to show how, through their practices, they enact and make worlds. These multiple worlds²⁹¹ might entail multiple conceptions of natures. These differences imply contrasting positions and (implicit) negotiations within diplomatic encounters. For me, this political ontology is pushing diplomacy beyond political economy, political ecology and cultural politics. The agencies of international cooperation should get ready for this type of negotiations. This means in the contemporary setting that they do not only develop their capacity to follow the nomad (as the Andean Earth-beings could be labelled) but more challenging, to follow the terrorist. This does not refer to following and chasing them in Syria or Iraq. Nor following their networks through their financial transactions or mobile calls. It means following 'them' in 'our' holey space and fluid space-time since 'they' escape our solid space-time. And hopefully 'we' can negotiate an ontological peace-agreement, transforming solid incommensurable positions into a common, viscous in-between. This is a proposal to make the military practices more diplomatic²⁹² and sensitive to political ontology rather than only combining Defence, Diplomacy and Development in a 3D-approach.

²⁸⁶ In our turbulent time xenophobia and nationalism on the one hand and terrorism, islam and migration are not dual and causally related but entangled and mutually affective.

²⁸⁷ In Wikipedia positive deviance is described as an approach to behavioral and social change based on the observation that in any community, there are people whose uncommon but successful behaviors or strategies enable them to find better solutions to a problem than their peers, despite facing similar challenges and having no extra resources or knowledge than their peers.

²⁸⁸ Green, 2008.

²⁸⁹ This is the mainstream logic of accommodation, which for me is indicative of what Deleuze and Guattari call the plane of organization and development (2004: 558). See also below.

²⁹⁰ This is the rhizomatic logic of openness, which for me is indicative of what Deleuze and Guattari call the plane of consistency (2004: 558).

²⁹¹ Here I refer not to the worlds as terrains or planets. Nor do I refer to the world as territories (life-worlds). I use the term worlds in a topological sense (ontological space-time).

²⁹² As Stengers (2011b) outlined, there is a certain degree of betrayal and pragmatism in diplomacy

The relevance of this thesis for international cooperation in general and specifically the Dutch MoFA does not lie in proposing solutions to the contemporary problems within international cooperation. The emphasis was on understanding ‘solutions’ (liquid states) as the ontological fluidity of space-time. Nevertheless, acknowledging metaphysical ‘solutions’ could very well translate in practical ‘solutions’ of persistent, wicked or ‘thick’ problems.²⁹³ I suggest that the MoFA could push the aim of becoming a modern network-organisation a bit further. To engage with and enact the different reworkings of boundaries, the MoFA and diplomacy in general face six difficult tasks:

1. rework the public! Diplomacy for furthering national interests has always encompassed more actors and more interests than the public sector’s self-interest; the blurring of the boundary between public and private is increasingly evident in the twenty-first century.
2. rework the nation! National interest is transnationalised, cosmopoliticised and fragmented in such ways that distinctions between levels (global, national, local) is no longer insightful nor effective; as was argued in Chapter 7, central in contemporary diplomacy are not the boundaries between nation states but between worlds. Diplomacy is not limited to negotiating interests but is also about negotiating what world exists and which world we want.
3. Rework the human! Diplomacy is no longer an exclusively human affairs since the boundary between human and nonhuman is no longer tenable.
4. Rework power! In development cooperation and diplomacy the assemblages are not hold together by power but by affects;
5. Rework management! The viscous organization could encourage controversy, dissent, positive deviance²⁹⁴, ambiguity, intuition²⁹⁵ and escapes. Let a line-less and grid-less space emerge in-between the other spaces.
6. Become an empathetic organisation with creative and intuitive staff, able to follow the transgressions and dissolutions of boundaries wherever these are reworked and capable to anticipate surprise!

8.3 Implications for the theoretical followwork

In my fieldwork as development practitioner and researcher, I came across strange entities that have blurred boundaries, that could not be distinguished from each other or from their context, that were viscous (partly solid and partly fluid) by their nature, that were one, many and multiple at the same time, that were not only perceived differently but were enacted as different beings and natures as well as entities that were in continuous variation (becomings rather than beings). I labelled them multities. These multities form part of reality but require another engagement with reality. The multities sit uneasy with social theory and seem incommensurable with ontology. By mobilizing the notions of assemblages and affect, by exploring topological thinking and by elaborating ontological viscosity I searched for a more satisfactory way of knowing the realities.

This thesis addresses a series of theoretical topics or tasks.²⁹⁶ It challenges the binaries of culture/nature, inside/outside, Self/Other, subject/object, human/nonhuman, structure/agency alive/inert by showing that there are enfoldings across these divisions. These enfoldings make the boundaries, which mark these divisions, to be at least porous if not blurred or outright untenable any longer. Any rigid division of categories and separation of entities is to be conceived as always being accompanied by contingencies, embodiments, imprints, *confusión* and struggles (boundary lines are

²⁹³ Here I should caution not to mentally ‘construct’ a line from problems to solutions but to search for the lines that exist in-between problems and solutions.

²⁹⁴ In Wikipedia positive deviance is described as an approach to behavioral and social change based on the observation that in any community, there are people whose uncommon but successful behaviors or strategies enable them to find better solutions to a problem than their peers, despite facing similar challenges and having no extra resources or knowledge than their peers.

²⁹⁵ Green, 2008.

²⁹⁶ This work is inspired by a number of scholars among which Gilles Deleuze and Felix Guattari (2004), Alberto Arce and Norman Long (2000), Annemarie Mol and John Law (1994), Bruno Latour (2005), Tim Ingold (2011), Mario Blaser (2013) and Jane Bennett (2010).

simultaneously fault lines). The solidness of this gridded space-time invisibilizes, obscures or occults the other side of matter-energy: the fluid multities and lines of flight. These flows vibrantly escape the fixed frame and explore the existing potential and vitality.

In terms of metaphysics, I argue that ‘what is ultimately there’ is space-time. In this space-time, through processes of territorialization, there is a continuous becoming of extensive differences (the emerging entities and things) and intensive differences (the emerging multities and trajectories). What is space-time like? The nature of space-time is viscous: the ontologically solid and fixed entities and boundaries are co-constituted with the ontologically fluid multities and becomings.²⁹⁷ Space-time is also topological, encompassing different differentiations.

The one-sidedness of our current practices and way of knowledge production ignore the fluid space-time. This is a major cause of the suddenness, spontaneity and vigour with which catastrophic events can happen in unforeseeable and undetermined ways. In turbulent times, the default reaction is often clinging to control, rationality, interventionism, othering and homogenization.

The political is no longer conceived in terms of contestation of powers but as contestations over gridded frames. It is about the distributive movements of affecting frames (privileging particular frames while displacing others; rendering them fluid).

The above mentioned metaphysical, ontological, methodological and political topics and tasks inform my reflection on social theories, particularly Actor-Network Theory. In this paragraph I will relate my research findings to recent developments and debates in the field of sociology. I will point at the implications for the quest to leave structuralism and poststructuralism behind as well as for the further elaboration of the Actor-Network Theory (ANT).

8.3.1 The implications for structuralism and post-structuralism

The recent surge in the use of fluidity as concept or metaphor is a way to overcome the legacy of structuralism. “It is as a conceptual category that fluidity has been most influential. References to identities, for instance, as “fluid and contingent” are ubiquitous in critical theory, usually set in contrast to a popular assumption that such things are “fixed and stable.”” (Stephens, forthcoming).

The concept of viscosity enables the enactment of a social science that is freed from (1) the excessive rigidities of structuralism, (2) the atomistic characteristics of actor theories, (3) the traces of an ontology (in the singular) that has a bias towards natural sciences and which is transported to social sciences neglecting that ‘natural’ and ‘social’ realities cannot always be divided into two, and if so, might have different differences (at least their natures might differ in terms of entities and multities).

In the 1980s post-structuralism emerged as an alternative for the dominant position of structuralism in social sciences. However, it has an excessive focus on representation, meaning and linguistics. Fluidity is seen by me as a turn away from this focus. It is a concept to address a perceived “neglect of material phenomena and processes in cultural and critical theory, which privileges language, discourse, culture and values. Fluidity is proposed or identified as an important corrective element of what is come to be known as new materialism” (*idem*). More so in my research, where fluidity is neither post-structuralist metaphor nor material but ontological. My use of the terms fluidity and viscosity is to qualify the nature of ‘what there is’. Inspired by the Deleuzian metaphysics, I see as the overcoming of conventional structuralism and poststructuralism as necessarily and simultaneously being topological (in terms of the entirety of a differential, projective, affective or metric geometry²⁹⁸), ontological (the nature of beings and becomings) and processual (the de- and reterritorializations constitutive of space-time).

²⁹⁷ Solid and fluid do not refer to the physicality or materiality of things but to their stability and potentialities.

²⁹⁸ DeLanda (2002). See also Martin and Secor (2014).

8.3.2 The implications for actor and network theories

The topological and ontological findings of my research provide a way to look more closely how Actor-Network Theory (ANT) addresses differentiation and the nature of things. I will describe how, from that perspective, ANT can be understood in terms the way it conceives of entities, their relations and their assemblage. ANT is a theory of associations in which actors (human and non-human) constitute networks. ANT is contrasted with most social theory because it extends the social to all kinds of associations. Thus, it does not privilege the human but seeks symmetry between human and non-human actors. Latour (2005) differentiates therefore ‘the sociology of the social’ and ‘the sociology of associations’. But initially ANT had a number of similarities with the actor-oriented approach or with network theories. With the former it shared the notion of agency as the capacity to act or to do. With the latter it shared the topography of entities (mediators), their relations, the internal dynamics and the entirety.

As explained in Chapter 1, ANT initially put a lot of emphasis on the individual mediators (Latour, 1987 and 1999) as distinct entities and points of intersection as well as on the properties of these self-contained entities (such as their agency). The network was arrived at by first creating atomistic entities, depriving them of their constitutive relations. Subsequently the interactions of the atomist entities obviously resulted in emergent phenomena and unintended consequences at the superior level. Later Latour acknowledges that if the entities are not stripped bare and simplified in the first place, the entity and network are reversible: “an actor is nothing but a network, except that a network is nothing but actors” (Latour, 2010: 5). Gradually, the entity-based topography of separate, enveloped actors (human and non-human) is replaced by a relational topography of mediations and their continuities.²⁹⁹ Over time Latour takes more distance from network theories by introducing what I would call social relativity (not relativism): “any entity can be seized either as an actor (a corpuscle) or as a network (a wave)” (Latour, 2010: 5). Secondly, he introduces a processual perspective, stressing the labour that goes on in laying down networks and the movements of mediators. He proposed the concept “*worknet*” (Latour, 2005: 132). Thirdly, he increasingly uses the concept ‘assemblage’.

Regarding relations, Latour moves away from a focus on relations between entities towards a relational metaphysics of in-between spaces. In his earlier work he conceptualizes this space as hybridity. Yet, this still presupposes two ideal-type and separate entities to begin with. In his later work, he refers to the chain of references in-between entities and no longer choose for either of the extremes (a knowing subject or a known thing). “The sign and the thing (...) are only provisional stopping points (...) both products arising from the lengthening and strengthening of the chain (...) [and] from the *same operation* as the two sides of the same coin. [...] In fact, what are usually called the “knowing mind” and the “known object” are not the two extremes to which the chain would be attached; rather, they are *both* products arising from the lengthening and strengthening of the chain” (*idem*: 79-81). Latour conceives of the line as in-between and indirect. Point A and point B are not connected by a line between them but by an indirect line through point C (the constitutive operation or resulting hybrid).

Regarding the entirety of the assemblage, Latour reinforces the non-corpuscular character of an actor-network by stating that “[n]etwork is a concept, not a thing out there. It is a tool to help describe something, not what is being described” (Latour, 2005: 131). The actor-network is not what there is, but the representation of what is. It is a conceptual mode of enquiry. It is about a topographical territory instead of a geographical terrain or topological space-time. This point seems contradictory to Latour’s interest in empiricism (towards the terrain) and in tracing what really goes on (in metaphysical space-time). But it points at three shortcomings. First, ANT is tied up with performance in the sense that it presupposes an already existing world in which networks or worknets develop. It falls short on dealing with the performativity of practice.³⁰⁰ Second, ANT is biased towards

²⁹⁹ As a result agency is delinked from the actor and conceptualized as distributed throughout the network.

³⁰⁰ The practice turn stresses that actors (re)construct (literally or figuratively) reality, they ‘do’ reality (as opposed to the idea of agency, conceived as the capacity to do or perform in an already existing reality).

representational theory and ‘the privilege of the eye’. It falls short dealing with affect (Müller and Schurr, 2016). Third, due to ANT’s focus on social topography it falls short on explaining the nature of things (topological and viscous ontology).³⁰¹

8.3.3 Making ANT more Deleuzian

How can ANT be made to account for situations I encountered in the field, where inseparability reigns and when there are neither clear entities nor relations (the viscous Yuracaré *corregimientos*)? Where cosmo-beings (*Pachamama*) pop-up and when indeterminacy reigns due to multiple worlds being enacted in different ways with different natures? ANT as a social topography of mediators can benefit from an infusion of topological thinking and viscous ontology. In this section I will highlight some of the differences between ANT and Deleuze. To my understanding, these differences lend themselves admirably to the purpose to expand ANT and its explicative power.

Hybrid and haecceity

An early critique on ANT, developed by Mol and Law (1994), distinguished three different ways to deal with space: the region, the network (as a critique on and extension of the region) and the fluid space (as a critique on and extension of the network). In their research on anaemia, they found that some “places are neither delineated by [regional] boundaries, nor linked through stable [network] relations: instead, entities may be similar *and* dissimilar at different locations within fluid space” (Mol and Law, 1994: 641). When I interpret them correctly, they argue that just as entities being close regionally can be far apart in a network, entities being close in a network can be far apart in fluid space.³⁰² Mol and Law do not only shift from social topography to topology but they think differently about entities and their nature. They move towards topological ontology.

Regarding entities, Latour com-binds an entity-based metaphysics with relations between actors and mediators by a relational metaphysics of networks. The entities are only provisional stopping points or hybrids. It could be said that in this way Latour comes closer to Ingold (for their debate see Chapter 1) but not to Deleuze. The hybrid is a fusional entity with a clear boundary and hence located in the solid space-time. It is not a haecceity or fusional multiplicity.

Both ANT and Deleuze are less interested in the properties of entities and more interested in the capacities of entities. ANT looks at the actor’s capacity to act (as in actor-oriented approaches) and to mediate. Deleuze looks at the body’s capacity to affect and be affected as well as the rhizome’s capacity to fuse (and con-fuse). “In Deleuze and Guattari’s work, (...) [t]hings, material or psychical, can no longer be seen in terms of rigid boundaries with clear demarcations. Nor, on an opposite track, can they be seen as inherently united, singular or holistic. Subject and object are series of flows, energies, movements, strata, segments, organs, intensities – fragments capable of being linked together or severed in potentially infinite ways other than those which congeal them into identities” (Grosz, 1994: 167, cited in Wagner, n.d.). For this Deleuze and Guattari (2004) developed the concept of haecceity, indicating their disinterest in entities-as-such or entities-in-themselves and their interest in the realities of the constitutive relations, processes and movements of multiplicities.

ANT’s emphasis on entities (whether pure or hybrid), embedded in its social topographies of actor-networks, indicates its bias towards the solid space-time. It ignores the metaphysical fluid space-time which in my opinion would not undermine but expand or complement ANT.

Practices are performative. It goes beyond perspectivism by stating that perspectives are not only ways to describe ‘the one world’ (Law, 2011) but to enact multiple worlds.

³⁰¹ The ‘ontological turn’ in social science is a perceived shift from epistemological questions (how can we know the world) to ontological questions (what is the nature of the world). Whether it is a turn (Escobar, 2007) or “different ontological moves” (Irmi, 2013: 53) is still open to debate (Mol, 2013; Van Heur et al., 2013; Woolgar and Lezaun, 2013). See also Paleček and Risjord (2013).

³⁰² In my own words: an instrument to measure anaemia might be part of the same network in a Dutch laboratory and in an African laboratory (proximity in the network). Yet, its stability might be very different in the different locations (distant in fluid space-time).

Tracing and mapping

The empiricism of ANT is biased towards ‘following the social actors’ in their localities and over time as well as ‘tracing the mediators’ in their networks and over time. ANT produces conceptual territories (the networks) that are topographical abstractions (neither actors nor networks exist in everyday life). It fixes an a-priori Euclidean space (both terrain and territory) as well as a sequential time in which actors and networks exist. For social ties to exist, they must be traceable and “[i]t’s traceable only when it’s being modified” (Latour, 2005: 159). “To be accounted for, objects have to enter into accounts. If no trace is produced, they offer no information to the observer and will have no visible effect on other agents” (*idem*: 79). They are no longer actors.

For Deleuze and Guattari (2004), existence is not a matter of accounting and tracing but of affecting and mapping. A being is real when it affects or is affected within or by a wider assemblage. The affects can be tracings (following the boundary lines of solid space-time) or mappings (following the lines of flight constituting fluid space-time). A tracing is “closed in upon itself (..), a map is open and connectable in all of its directions” (Deleuze and Guattari, 2004: 13). The map “is entirely oriented toward an experimentation in contact with the real” (*idem*). The two are not fully separate but entangled: “*the tracing should always be put back on the map*” (*idem*: 14). In my own terms, this means that the investigator has to follow the to-and-fro movements in-between solid and fluid space-time and in-between concrete terrain, conceptual territory and the topological ontologies.

ANT’s emphasis on tracing indicates that the deployment of social topographies (whether class, structure, system or actor-networks) is biased towards the solid space-time. It ignores the metaphysical fluid space-time and the conceptualizations that can be derived from it (such as Latour’s own concept of plasma). I propose that ANT’s elaboration of plasma enables scholars to follow ontological fluidity as transgressions and deterritorialized flows within the network holes.

Topography and topology

The key element for ANT to become more topological is the way fluidity is treated.³⁰³ Latour elaborates an explicit difference between and combination of “both the formidable inertia of social structures and the incredible fluidity that maintains their existence” (Latour, 2005: 245). He develops the concept of plasma. The “background *plasma* (..) is not yet formatted, not yet measured, not yet socialized” (Latour, 2005: 244), unassociated and uncalibrated.³⁰⁴ Elsewhere, he states that the labour of mediators leaves behind a trace through the social fluid and “by the social fluid” (Latour, 2005: 133). However, Latour is not very clear on the plasma, the social fluid and how it relates to actor-networks. This might be because he states that the rightful ‘domain’ of ANT is “*only* when new associations are being made” (*idem*: 79) and isn’t this exactly the moment when the fluid turns into a solid form of associateness? Isn’t plasma the topological dimension in ANT? Isn’t it the not yet differentiated, amorphous and fluid space-time?³⁰⁵ The concept of plasma aligns ANT to viscous and

³⁰³ Mol and Law’s concept of fluid space resonates with topology. DeLanda (2002) distinguishes a continuum of different geometries: Euclidean, differential, projective, affective and topological geometries. Euclidean space is metric and figures are highly distinct. When moving towards topology figures become increasingly less differentiated and less distinct.

³⁰⁴ For a critique on the plasma see Schatzki (2011) who argues that there is no vaster backdrop, plasma or milieu outside of the plenum of practices from which these emerge. To my understanding, the difference between Latour and Schatzki has to do with the contrast between the event approach of Latour (2005) and the site approach of Schatzki (2002). I elaborate an approach that conceives of the plasma as immanent in the realities enacted through practices. The flat ontological space-time is not the ‘plenum of practices’ (Schatzki, 2002) nor the background (Latour’s plasma according to Schatzki (2011)). But the flat space-time is the viscous plane of consistency with stable, determined fixities as well as unstable, undetermined fluidities.

³⁰⁵ To rethink networks and network theory I am inspired by the concept “the molecular soup” (Deleuze and Guattari, 2004: 248). In the same way as one does not serve the soup with a skimmer (so that only the corporeal part is served), so one should also not analyse space-time with a network (so that only the corporeal things are examined). The need to go beyond the network is illustrated by another metaphor: when a fishing net is pulled up, the network analysis gives information on the net and the fish. A network analysis fails to address the holes.

topological ontologies once plasma is no longer seen as a background but as an immanent characteristic of social realities and assemblages (see also Müller and Schurr, 2016). For this to happen, the layered topography of ANT, with plasma in the background, must be flattened along the lines suggested by Deleuze and Guattari (2004) as well as Schatzki (2002). This is realized by making fluidity immanent (the holes in the whole are part of the entirety) and topological. A topological approach will include the fluid space-time in which lines of flight develop, fluids flow, uncertainty reigns and the *unknowns* reside.

The network space and the holey space

ANT as a social topography is biased towards the net and neglects the holes in the net. The holes are either not considered or considered to be empty space (no association or mediation established). I argue that it is in the holes of the network that I find a topological space where the fluidity resides. These in-between spaces need to be accounted for in social analysis. The entry point to explore plasma and the holes of the network is to mobilize the notion of “holey space” (Deleuze and Guattari, 2004: 459). This notion exposes network theories as theories of the network’s net (the solid, striated space-time) but not of the network’s holes (the fluid, holey space-time). It is in this holey space from where surprise and risks emerge. International cooperation should therefore not only lengthen the networks but sense what happens in the network’s holes. These holes are not only the caves where the Taliban hid out (the holey terrain). They are not only the missing linkages in the growing personal networks (the holey territory). But they are also the multities and unknowns that are constantly amongst us, in our everyday life, in our institutions, in our practices (the holey topology).

Mediators or multiplicities

Latour conceives of the nature of mediators or entities as provisional or fusional (the hybrid is a fusion). Now that I explored the plasma in a rather Deleuzian way, my remaining question is: what is the nature of this plasma or the things in plasma? They are ‘not yet’ (the Deleuzian virtual or potential) and they are ‘un-’ (the Deleuzian unstable). In the assemblage literature a lot of attention is paid to the ‘not yet actualized’ or virtual. Multiplicities are seen as expressions of these multiple potentialities. Lines of flights are seen as the potent trajectories. My research adds the ‘un-’ to that: the unclear boundaries and the unstable entities (multities). Multities are seen as superpositions generating multiple dimensions. Lines of flight are seen as escapes from entity-hood. Together, the virtual and the multities constitute the plasma or fluid space-time.

Chains and lines of flight

In ANT most lines are relations, associations, chains of mediators or chains of references. They are lines between points, connecting both the continuities and discontinuities of the social topography into a tracable totality. However, Latour also develops the in-between point (not a line) in two ways. Either as the hybrid (one entity emerging out of two original and separate entities) or by showing that two entities originate from the same original, “*both* products arising from the lengthening and strengthening of the chain” (Latour, 2013: 80) [or] “from the *same operation* as the two sides of the same coin” (*idem*: 81). The Latourian chains and in-between points make his assemblage still resemble a network or the rhizome tissue.

In contrast, the Deleuzian assemblage is a plane of consistency in which striated and smooth space are immanent. To characterize the Deleuzian assemblage, it is important to highlight the differences in lines and movements in both spaces. In striated space, lines of power are constitutive relations or classificatory fault-lines. Movement in striated space is along the continuous lines of power and mediations. These movements are expanding the grid or grid’s density. The lines in smooth space are lines of flight, escapes or trajectories rather than mediations or threads. The movements in fluid space

This should be corrected. To catch fish one needs both the net and its holes for the water to escape and flow out. The water that flows out of the net might contain valuable information to understand the entirety of a particular event. Moreover, the whole and the hole are “a furtherance of one through the other” (Deleuze and Guattari, 2004: 526). Their natures differ but there is no net without both threads and holes. Despite ontological differences they form one inseparable plane (of immanence).

are not along lines but in-between. The lines of flight themselves constitute space. Smooth space does not pre-exist movement, affect or desire but constitutes itself around or along the line of flight. To move along this smooth space one must first constitute it. So lines and movement are different in both types of space and make both types of space different.³⁰⁶

In my reading, the above makes clear that the Latourian line is still a line in the striated space of dimensions and extensions of the network. The chain of references are continuities in the topographical territory rather than a line of flight de-parting from the network into fluid space-time. So Latour has come closer to Ingold (2011; see also Chapter 1) but not to Deleuze.

I see the differences between striated and smooth not as a difference of level (the Latourian background plasma) but as a difference in geometry (dimensions versus directions), a difference in topology (differentiated versus amorphous), a difference of differences (extensive versus intensive differences) and as differences in nature (from solid to fluid space-time). Despite being different, both types of space form one plane of immanence. The lines of flight de-part from the boundary-lines, differences and distinctions within the striated space. The gridlines form starting points for escapes and slippage into the smooth space. The striated and smooth spaces emanate from each other, one being a recapitulation in the other, “a furtherance of one through the other” (Deleuze and Guattari, 2004: 526).

Fluidity and process

In ANT, movement and dynamics occur along the established lines and within these relations of the network. Processes are seen as “lengthening and strengthening of the chain” (Latour, 2013: 80). They are seen as being played out in time.³⁰⁷ I propose to conceive processes as being played out in space-time through specific and identifiable processes of territorialization, deterritorialization and reterritorialization.

The very notions of flows, fluidity and viscosity constitute a line of flight for ANT, transgressing the ways process, time and space are conceived. Instead of only seeing the flows through the network, flows and fluidity are being interpreted as the state of affairs. This means, there are not fixed entities that move (through the network) but there are only movements, trajectories, traces, etc. There are no beings but only becomings, that at best can temporarily approach the form of a being. Realities move back and forth in-between a solid space-time of fixed entities and a fluid space-time of multities and escapes. In general terms, I propose to encompass a topological analytics in which things unfold as intensive differences (beings or becomings) in space-time.

Agency and affect

In ANT the concept of agency is not restricted to human agency. It is distributed among human and non-human mediators in the assemblages (Latour, 2005). The human existence can no longer be privileged over the existence of nonhumans. The nature of the Latourian actor is not human (as in the actor-oriented approach) but associative. Power is conceived as the capacity to associate. Power no longer refers to structural domination, to the disciplinary working of apparatuses, or to the capacity of knowledgeable actors to experience, to act independently and to make free choices.

³⁰⁶ Escobar argues that “the smooth space (..) is constructed by local operations and local knowledges that are place-specific rather than universally valid” (Escobar, 2010: 204). But according to Jensen and Rødje (2010) smooth space is not local, particular and place-specific as opposed to striated space being global and universal. “The conceptual difference between smooth and striated space concerns not so much scale as position and relation to the field of study” (Jensen and Rødje, 2010: 12). Jensen and Rødje see striated space as the space of an external observer and smooth space as the space of the follower. To my understanding, the difference between striated and smooth is neither a difference of level or scale nor of position or relation (attributes of striated space).

³⁰⁷ Both AOA and ANT tend to apply a kind of an archaeological analytics in which the social subjects pursue a historic trajectory through time and in which they are confronted with past traumas or overdetermining regimes of power and knowledge (Biehl, 2013).

In Deleuze, agency and power are replaced by the capacity of a body to affect and to be affected (Massumi in Deleuze and Guattari, 2004: xvii).³⁰⁸ According to Müller and Schurr “[w]e have seen that on the issue of fluidities and the virtual, ANT is closer to Deleuze and Guattari’s assemblage thinking than much previous scholarship would concede. But there remains at least one key difference: ANT stops short of conceptualising the capacities of bodies, both human and non-human, to affect and be affected. (...) Deleuze and Guattari’s notion of affect (...) should form (...) a necessary complement to ANT” (2016: 8). It connects the network and the plasma, making clear which processes bring actor-networks into being. The ontological implication is that the nature of Deleuzian body is affective. The body is a viscous in-between or a becoming-being (never fully solid, never fully fluid). Because it has a degree of amorphous fluidity and inseparability, it cannot relate or associate through mediators.

A second way in which affect should enter into ANT is to criticize Latour’s tendency to rely on the *gaze* of a bodiless observer.³⁰⁹ The observer’s role is to account for visible traces. This gaze overlooks that the human relation with the world is mediated by the whole body, all senses, passions, attitudes and impressions.³¹⁰ Moreover, with the gaze a certain degree of perspectivism enters into ANT. The dualities of the body/out there/object/matter and the mind/in here/subject/idea that Latour criticizes seem to reappear. And so does the duality between the present and the represented for which he criticizes the ‘sociology of the social’.³¹¹ The starting point of social research should not be an epistemology or hermeneutics of representations but affect and an ontology of real becoming. This is addressed in Deleuze’s concept of body-expression: the assemblage of a subjectivity that is embodied and the body that is subjected matter.³¹²

ANT and Deleuze have a number of differences that need to be acknowledged but to me these are not necessarily incommensurable. ANT’s metaphysics of presences, actualizations and solid space-time can and should be complemented with Deleuze’s metaphysics of potentials, virtualities and fluid space-time. This enables a fuller account of how realities come into being (deterritorializations and reterritorializations) and of what nature that becoming-being is.

In order to make ANT more Deleuzian, the following suggestions are made:

- ✓ regarding the geographical terrain, analysis should not give priority to the entities that are associated or assembled but to the assemblages that stabilize or destabilize entities;
- ✓ regarding the topographical territory, analysis should not give priority to the entities that mediate or relate but to the relations that stabilize or destabilize entities;
- ✓ regarding the ontological viscosity, analysis should not give priority to the entities that flow but to the flows and plasma that stabilize or destabilize entities;
- ✓ regarding the topological space-time, analysis should not give priority to the entities that move but to the movements that stabilize or destabilize entities, relations and assemblages.

³⁰⁸ Affect is not the personal feeling of affection but “a prepersonal intensity corresponding to the passage from one experiential state of the body to another and implying an augmentation or diminution in that body’s capacity to act” (Massumi in Deleuze and Guattari, 2004: xvii).

³⁰⁹ The affective turn points out perspectivism’s bias of the sight and of the eye as the privileged sensory device to produce representations of reality. “Representational thought (...) assumes that what happens to the thing is observable and causally explicable” (Due, 2009: 130). Because of this bias, ANT neglects affect in terms of feelings and emotions.

³¹⁰ See non-representational theory (Thrift, 2007) and more-than-representational theory (Paterson and Dodge, 2012).

³¹¹ Representations present concepts to explain social reality while in fact these concepts themselves are in need to be explained (see Latour, 2005) and new concepts need to be produced. The social cannot be reduced to previously and independently constituted representations, which subsequently figure as determinations in the explanation of the social.

³¹² Rather than material versus discursive (or materialism versus idealism) Deleuze and Guattari use body (in a broad sense) *and* expression. They propose a new way to see the material: entangled rather than separated, vital rather than inert, a set of relations (a haecceity) rather than something in itself, a multiplicity rather than an essence (see DeLanda, 2002).

8.3.4 Speculating on the un-thing

Over the past several decades different scholars have accounted differently for ‘things’.³¹³ Several contribution to the debate on things can be grouped around the following dualities: material – discursive; alive – dead; vibrant – inert; ontology – epistemology. For Deleuze and Guattari to characterize the thing and its nature, it is important to overcome the duality of material versus discursive (or materialism versus idealism). They use body (in a broad sense) *and* expression.³¹⁴ Furthermore, they conceptualize both the actual and the virtual in order to inject vitality and a capacity to affect into the nature of things.

Ingold (2011) continues along this line of reasoning. First he points out that “the very objectness of things lies in the separation and immiscibility of substance and medium” (Ingold, 2011: 87).³¹⁵ Then he argues that the thing’s involvement in its total surroundings and its many engagements in the currents of the lifeworld turns things into matter that is alive.³¹⁶ “Things are alive and active not because they are possessed of spirit – whether *in* or *of* matter – but because the substances of which they are comprised continue to be swept up in circulations of the surrounding media that alternately portend their dissolution or (...) ensure their regeneration” (Ingold, 2011: 29).

Bennett develops the idea that things are “vibrant matter” (Bennett, 2010: xvi) rather than inert. “[M]aterial vibrancy is not a spiritual supplement or “life force” added to the matter said to house it. (...) I equate affect with materiality, rather than posit a separate force that can enter and animate a physical body” (*idem*: xiii).³¹⁷ Bennett combines vibrancy with the notion of assemblage to point out the vitality of matter to conglomerate heterogeneous groupings. “In this assemblage, *objects* appeared as *things*, that is, as vivid entities not entirely reducible to the contexts in which (human) subjects set them” (*idem*: 5). In my own words this would mean that due to vibrancy the object escapes the subject (and a direct relation between the two). Within speculative realists (Harman, Meillasoux and others) the key debate is about forms of realism and forms of materialism. They have “begun speculating once more about the nature of reality independently of thought and of humanity more generally” (Bryant et al., 2011: 3).³¹⁸

³¹³ This brief list is not intended to be a complete overview but has rather been the source of my inspirations.

³¹⁴ They propose a new way to see the socio-material: entangled rather than separated, vital rather than inert, a set of relations (a haecceity) rather than something in itself, a multiplicity rather than an essence (see DeLanda, 2002). Expressive and material dimensions (DeLanda, 2006) are not separate domains or properties but immanent capacities to affect and be affected. “The multiplicity develops consistency, becomes something specific and determinate, through the forces that work on it and within it. When a multiplicity is affected it is organized as a set of relations. The ontology [of Deleuze and Guattari] is thus organized as a gradual specification and differentiation [moving in-between] the indeterminate capacity to be formed (...) and the specific determination of series” (Due 2007:131).

³¹⁵ This he calls the process of enveloping (the logic of inversion). I see this as a dual process, simultaneously hardening out the fluidity of the undifferentiated and indistinct amorphous space-time. But, as I showed in the case of the Yuracaré *corregimientos* and the saw mill, things cannot always be separated from the context due to imprints, embodiments and indeterminacy (Chapter 4). The ‘objectness of things’ does not materialize in those instances or it is not completed. In Ingold’s terms, the envelop never completely closes.

³¹⁶ “Bringing things to life, then, is a matter not of adding to them a sprinkling of agency but of restoring them to the generative fluxes of the world of materials in which they came into being and continue to subsist. This view, that things are in life rather than life in things, is diametrically opposed to the conventional anthropological understanding of animism (...). It is, however, entirely consistent with the actual ontological commitments of peoples often credited in the literature with an animistic cosmology. In their world there are no objects as such” (Ingold, 2011: 29).

³¹⁷ Bennett argues that things have thing-power. Thing-power exceeds the status of passive object. Thing-power manifests aliveness and vitality. Bennett’s thing-power is characteristic for human and non-human conative bodies and affects that dichotomy too. “[T]he us and the it slip-slide into each other, (...) we are also nonhuman and (...) things, too, are vital players in the world” (2010: 4).

³¹⁸ Despite the internal differences among speculative philosophers (Bryant, Srnicek and Harman, 2011), most can agree to the following propositions:

- the human and human phenomena have no special place,

My interest is not only in the vitality of things or in the things-in-themselves. It lies also in the nature of things and the stability of things. My research findings on entities and multities points at the variations of stability that differentiates things and what I call un-things. ‘Un’ is used here in the sense that Bram Stoker uses it of Dracula: the un-dead are neither dead nor alive, they are something different that we do not fully understand or comprehend (referred to in Snowden, 2005).³¹⁹ The un-thing is neither no-thing nor some-thing but in-between (for instance the ‘not yet’). Yet, they are real although not actualized. They exist but can neither be characterized by form and substance nor as body-expressions. They are unstable, not yet individuated, not distinct, not differentiated, not separated or not-quite-realised (Law and Lien, 2013). They have unclear boundaries. The un-thing is not fully actualized, congealed, enveloped, coded, fixed or materializing into an object or being. The nature of these un-things is fluid and they are in continuous becoming. Un-things are not in a state of being but in a process of ‘thinging’. Thinging is a particular (re)territorialization. Because unthings are unstable, sticky and have blurred boundaries they are not thinged, not fixed, not ‘entified’. My research adds the ‘un-’ to the analysis of social realities. Together the virtual and the un-things constitute the fluid space-time.

The differences between things and un-things here refer to a distinction different from substance and form (in the sense of Aristotle), material and social or matter and wave (in the theory of relativity). It refers to what exists in the solid space-time as a consequence of territorializations and what exists in the fluid space-time as a consequence of deterritorializations. The thing needs to be thought of as the constitutive parts of solid time-space. The un-things are constitutive of fluid space-time. Fluid space-time is the space of noise (rather than enunciation), the constitutive (rather than the constituted) and intensity (rather than extensity). I argue that the nature of the un-things that exist, can only be described using the least differentiated geometry: topology.

The differences between things and un-things bring me also to a different treatment of relations. The relation among things is like the line connecting two points. The relation with un-things is like a line passing in-between two points. “[T]hinking relationally about things is by far the more challenging lesson to be learned from the recent “material turn” in philosophy (...) [It] means prioritizing relations over substances or essences” (Richardson and Weszkalnys, 2014: 18).

If the un-thing is not some-thing but a constellation of processes of becoming (a haecceity), then ‘thing’ is not a noun but a verb: to thing. To thing is a process of territorialization. To become anything signals an intensity of becoming more solid and stable. Deterritorialization is the fusion of a thinged entity into an un-thing. Stable objects can turn into things that exhibit “forces with trajectories, propensities, or tendencies of their own” (Bennett, 2010: viii). Objects suddenly act as catalysts. Or they constitute “*material recalcitrance* [and a] *resistant force*” (*idem*: 1).³²⁰ I argue that in this ways the things escape thinghood and become un-things. And reterritorialization is the becoming more distinct and stable of a potential thing. This means that any-thing has the potential to become a more-than-thing or un-thing. Invoking another of Deleuze and Guattari’s notions: to thing is ‘continuous variation’. Even the thing is never stable and fixed. Let alone the un-things. The thing is perhaps what DeLanda (2002) calls an attractor: a point that is asymptotically approached but never reached and never actualized. There is no ‘thing’ but always only thinging. There is only the process of becoming-

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- there is no need to start with an analysis of something pertaining to the human (mind, history, language, power, signs, etc.),³¹⁸
 - everything else shouldn’t be subordinated to the human,
 - nonhuman objects or actors are key components of the social that make their own contributions and which aren’t simply vehicles for signs or power,
 - the correlation between thinking and being (subject and object) is opposed, the social cannot be studied in abstraction but only through conceptual-empirical investigation or verification.

³¹⁹ The same goes for Zombies, they have died but still walk around: they are undead.

³²⁰ In the words of Mol: because of vitalism reality is not only ‘out of reach’ (correlationism) but ‘reaches out’: “objects, as they are variously *enacted*, are also afforded to *act* in a striking variety of ways” (Mol, 2013: 380).

something, of mutation or of on-going enactment. The thing is dead.³²¹ The interest lies no longer in things but in understanding how thinging comes about (or fails to come about whereby un-things remain un-things³²²). This points out a politics of ‘thinging’. For instance, in the case of the Yuracaré, the drawing of boundary lines was simultaneously the making of things (*corregimientos*) and the doing of politics (professional and legal world-making dominated indigenous world-making).

Concluding

Actor-Network Theory is an abstract contributions to understand events. In my research I came across entities and relations that cannot be characterized as distinct, separable and determined and thus cannot be ‘captured’ by conventional actor-network analysis. They exist in the in-between, amorphous and viscous space-time immanent in the assemblages. Latour’s lack to account for ontological fluidity makes it necessary to develop new theories and concepts. In ANT the actors are limited to associating and mediating actualized things and thinged actualities. These intensities of differentiation, resulting from the processes of reterritorialization are only a part of the assemblages. In an assemblage the relations of affect hold both the actual and virtual, both the becoming-a-being and the being-a-becoming. To encompass this entirety of viscous space-time, I propose the need for the concept of un-things, as additional alternative to matter being ‘alive’ (Ingold, 2011) and ‘vibrant’ (Bennett, 2010). Metaphysically, un-things are undifferentiated; ontologically they are viscous. The un-thing prevents premature conceptual closing and shows the vitality of potential as well as of life. The un-things are real space-time intensities that are characterized by their unstable, undetermined and viscous nature.

Why do I need the concept of un-things? If things are considered as the constitutive parts of networks, of grids and of solid space-time, then what happens outside the sphere of things? How to characterize the escapes from the solid space-time, the blurring of boundaries, the deterritorializations? And if things are considered as the enactments of differentiation, individuation and territorialization (as entities), then there are also the enactments of multities, amorphous flows, lines of flight and *confusión*. So scholars also have to account for these processes of thinging and un-thinging. Latour foresees the need of accounting for this fluid plasma but does not elaborate on it. I propose this fluidity is not a background but is immanent and constituted by un-things. It is the in-between flat space of the actor-network, the holes in the whole. This site of viscous, amorphous, undetermined instability is where failure, risk, surprise and un-things reside.

Both things and un-things are in principle unknown because never fully actualized. In the words of DeLanda (2002) they are opposed attractors that can never be reached. Therefore, every thing has some (potential) aspect of thinglessness and every un-thing has some (potential) aspect of thingness. Realities are never fully fixed nor fully fluid and hence their nature is viscous. The quest for knowledge is therefore not a quest for truth but a challenge to understand the processes of thinging.

8.4 Implications for the methodological followwork

The research methodology should not only be designed in a way to ‘build an understanding’ or to ‘capture’ a certain reality but to explore. This means particular attention is required for (1) a review of boundaries, divisions and dualities to detect intensities of fixity-fluidity, (2) the following of potential flows and lines of flight (3) an alignment to the nature of that reality (simple, complex or viscous; geometric or topological), (4) the postponement of ontological closing (separating, categorizing and congealing) in favour of speculation, and (5) the acknowledgement of political ontology and world making.

Boundary lines are more often than not unclear, arbitrary, contingent and contested socio-material constructions. They are enacted manifestations of the dual necessity of the separation and

³²¹ According to my view, Nietzsche’s ‘God is dead’ and Foucault’s ‘Man is dead’ (as the subject) can be extended into ‘Thing is dead’.

³²² The Yuracaré space-time was also populated by many multities or beings that remained unknown to the staff of CERES (see Chapter 4).

inseparability of things (echoing Thacker, 2010). They are congealed distinctions³²³ cutting through the fluid, amorphous space-time of relations and becomings. Boundary lines are real but conceptual. I am not so much interested in boundaries as such but in boundary work or the labouring of divisions (Hetherington and Munro, 1997). Boundary work is operated through a capturing device (separating, naming, labelling, framing, categorizing, segmenting, etc.). It transforms the open, fluid, amorphous and potent virtuality into a known, solid actuality.³²⁴ Capturing is congealing. Capturing alters the space-time, geometry and mapping. It progressively differentiates from the undifferentiated geometric topology through differential, projective, affective and ultimately the metric Euclidean geometries (DeLanda, 2002). In every step the process of separating the inseparable is deepened and the balance between the dual necessity is shifted from inseparability to separation.

The boundary lines act in multiple ways. They can be a device to create a tunnel-vision and atomistic ontology of separate things. They can cut out things whereby at the same time a context is created to which other things can be deferred or downgraded.³²⁵ They can also obscure, for instance the entirety of solid *and* fluid space-times or of actualities and virtualities. Although very useful in situations of complexity or where control is required (Chapter 4), these boundaries and this congealment quickly lose relevance or create frictions³²⁶ in situations of viscosity and *con-fusión*. In those situations capturing devices might easily fail or they fail to yield the relevant distinctions.

One consequence of questioning and reworking boundaries and divisions is the destabilization of dualities, binary oppositions and dichotomies.³²⁷ This characteristic mode or logic of thinking is a powerful instrument to construct coherent grids. It is also an instrument to smuggle-in hidden value judgements, since one of the two poles has priority or is hierarchically higher. So reworking dualities is a powerful way to address boundaries, grids and hierarchy (without claiming to overcome dualities or to get rid of them).³²⁸ In this thesis I deploy the processes of deterritorialization to rework dualities. I provide various examples of dualities that shape international cooperation and try to destabilize these: inside/outside, intervention/self-development (Chapter 3), fix/flow (Chapter 4), solid/fluid, human/non-human, whole/hole as well as thing/un-thing (Chapter 8).

Regarding the second methodological advice (follow the flows and lines of flight), this thesis' research departed from network methodologies. Network theory (Castells, 1996) has considerable influence on international cooperation (see for instance WRR, 2010b) while actor-network theory (Latour, 2005) has gained considerable influence in the academia. Networks as conceptual tools and networking as part of the practice of international cooperation are very useful. However, usually there is a methodological bias to follow the actor, to trace the chain of mediations or to analyse the flow through

³²³ Distinctions are based on difference and individuations, particularly haecceities (see Deleuze and Guattari, 2004: 288).

³²⁴ “[W]here the actual connotes “the current state of affairs”, the virtual is that dimension of the real that wasn’t taken, the road never trodden, the potentialities (...). The intensive, quite much “in contact” with the virtual, is that process whereby flee-floating matter, energy, and information – the intensive genetic flux – “actualizes”, or better, “contracts” layers of intensive flow into from; i.e. form-giving, “chaotic-contracting” processes according to which matter-energy is given form” (Hansson, 2009).

³²⁵ What many development scholars and policy-makers downgrade as ‘context’ – history, ways of making meaning, political disputes – are often central to explaining development practice (Venkatesan and Yarrow, 2012). Boundary lines obscure the blurring of entity-context which generates multities (Chapter 4).

³²⁶ The example here is the way the Yuracaré territory was subdivided by lines instead of respecting their vectored spatiality. This resulted in social tensions (Chapter 4).

³²⁷ Such as the Western dualities of mind/body, rational/emotional, freedom/determinism, man/woman, nature/culture.

³²⁸ There are several ways to rework dualities. Deleuze reworks dualities by replacing them by multiplicities and by opening up the in-between space of binary oppositions. Regarding the latter, he both proposes the fold as an in-between space and what I labelled as the logic of two-tiered binaries. In the latter logic, one pole of a binary is further divided in a dualistic way in order to end up with three terms of which one could be the in-between space. In this piece of text I just followed that logic to create three terms: multiplicity, fold and two-tiered binary. These operations do not establish a dialectical relation or Latourian hybrid to overcome the duality but a relation of mutual or multiple presuppositions to rework duality.

the network. This is to say that network theories are theories of the striated net, which is the solid space-time of entities, connections and dimensions. My advice is to follow deterritorializations that de-part from the net and lead into the holes in the net. In actor and network theories, the only way the holes are conceived of is emptiness and non-existence (the lack of a relation). The only way the hole can be filled is through a new connection across the in-between space. There is a negation of the in-between site as a place to lodge oneself in order to follow the deterritorializations (Deleuze and Guattari, 2004: 178). Although the destiny of deterritorializations is open-ended and unknown, their direction (the vector) is the indicator. Although these deterritorializations do not lend themselves for *a priori* policy measures, I suggest policy makers and researchers look for them and follow them in their own fluid space-time. For example Jaime de Bourbon was capable of going-with-the-flow into the unknown Andean world populated by cosmo-beings (Chapter 7). Another example is derived from the cooperation of CERES and the Yuracaré. They encountered blurred multities and sticky imprints (Chapter 4) resulting in fluidity, *con-fusión* and flow. There was no predetermined, fixed and separable context or external grid (classifications, institutions, space or time). So there is no fit-in-context. That is why, according to me, CERES intended to go-with-the-flow, to explore its own fluid space-time of unknown concepts (like ‘taking care of the woods’) and to follow the deterritorializations of professional forestry practices to come up with a common together with the Yuracaré. This indicates that cooperation on the edge of fluidity requires special methodological skills: to go-with-the-flow, to follow, to reassemble and to negotiate the incommensurable.

To acknowledge viscous ontologies, the methodological strategy needs to be baroque: continuously travelling, adding, expanding, following the becomings and exploring new spaces on the border areas of the known-unknown (Tapia, 2002). It is exactly in these borderlands that the diplomatic skills to acknowledge, respect and negotiate incommensurable positions are very much part of such a methodological strategy. Diplomacy enriches the methods of baroque epistemology by establishing loose articulations where particularity, multiplicity and diversity co-exist.³²⁹ This articulated entirety or *common* “does not mean having the same interest in common, only that diverging interests now need each other” (Stengers, 2011a: 60).

8.5 Conclusion

I depart³³⁰ from perspectives that see the world in an atomistic way, distinguishing binary oppositions, fixed in categorical grids of things (material and immaterial) that constitute a solid or fixed space-time.³³¹ That perspective is questioned in this thesis by mobilizing the concepts of sticky fragments, blurring boundaries, *con-fusión*, multities, space-time, ontological viscosity and un-things. A key question is how to escape from the above mentioned biased perspective and world? How to prevent premature conceptual closure and ontological lock-in? How to open-up for the creative vitality of the potential, the becomings and the un-things?

The attempt to respond to these questions is by proposing to complement ‘doing and being in time and space’ with ‘flowing and becoming in space-time’. Central to this effort is the acknowledgement of a co-constituted solid and fluid space-time. This space-time is constituted by entities (things) and multities (un-things) simultaneously, but differentiated according to the degrees of stability, separability and determination. The solid and fluid space-time mutually presuppose each other and form a viscous entirety. This *entirety* is a plane of immanence that contains everything there is. It has no essence and one could argue that it has not even an existence since what really exists are the processes that link the solid and fluid space-time: dissolving, congealing and escaping.

³²⁹ See also John Law for a critical stance on the normativity of methods and the recognition that methods are performative. “[M]ethod assemblage is a continuing process of *crafting and enacting necessary boundaries between presence, manifest absence and Otherness*” (Law, 2004: 144).

³³⁰ I depart both in the sense of the point of departure and in the sense of escaping that position.

³³¹ This is obviously not the only way the world is thought but this has been the mainstream in Western science and philosophy.

Development as becoming occurs in the instances (moments and places) where divisions are dissolved, boundaries are blurred, people think out-of-the-box or bodies³³² escape from their fixed position in the solid gridded space-time. In these instances assemblages become fluid, open and affected by the flow of events, things and un-things. And development as becoming-a-being occurs in those instances where amorphous un-things are reterritorialized or captured in a gridded space-time. Both these dynamics constitute what really exists: the processes of becoming, which never completely congeal into beings or dissolve into un-things.

Based on this conceptual and methodological take, I make my contributions to contemporary policy and academic discussions. Regarding policy debates I focus on aid effectiveness, the policy cycle and power relations within diplomacy. I relate failure in development cooperation to interventionism and its inherent inside-outside dichotomy. Shifting the perspective from such Euclidian topography to topology (as the least differentiated space) yields an appreciation of (1) practices of (re)assembling across and in-between the inside and outside, (2) strategic openness (let-go) and indeterminacy and (3) metaphysics rather than representational theory (insiders and outsiders do not exist as real). I also relate failure in development cooperation to the rendering fluid of frameworks (beyond causing fragmentation). Shifting the analysis of failure from the register of agency, power and ownership (inscribed in the solid space-time) towards the register of affect (the capacity to affect and to be affected) highlights the importance of development affectiveness as precondition for effectiveness. This thesis' research enhances the understanding of failures in development cooperation, development policy implementation and diplomacy by mobilizing the concepts of stickiness, blurredness and fluidity.

In a similar way policy processes are conceived as practices of assembling and processes of becoming. This provides an appreciation for empirical efforts to establish the contingent, obligatory relations required to attain successful policy implementation (rather than designing the logical necessities). Regarding diplomacy, the shift from topography to topology touches upon the way power relations are conceived. This thesis does not focus on the larger shifts in geo-political power but rather on the ontological politics at work within diplomatic encounters. This contributes towards understanding successful diplomatic negotiations of ontologically different worlds that are desirable to enact.

I also focus on several academic debates. My research moved from an actor-oriented critique on development, towards a critique of the actor-oriented approach and Actor-Network Theory. I challenge their methodology, concepts and underlying metaphysical assumptions. I contribute by proposing a turn towards viscous ontology and by exploring the enacting, making and *thinging* of worlds through development (policy) practices. I argue that due attention should be given to topology and flows, flights and becomings. This results in a sensitivity to their specific effects on and consequences for international cooperation. Ontological alignment is required for creatively assembling and enacting the worlds that we value.

³³² Bodies is used in a very general sense, encompassing things, ideas, practices, etc.

Chapter 9. Conclusions

International cooperation is defined as a number of assembling practices through which actors attempt to enact, enfold and make better worlds. International cooperation traditionally focuses on the coming and working together of human beings. These social networks are mostly not simple (like an assembled car) but complex since the relations are neither stable nor separable one from the other. Therefore, the dynamics become unpredictable. Yet, my field research indicates that the fragments which are assembled together are not only human beings but include non-human actors as well. Non-humans affect the assemblages and are affected by them.

Moreover, international cooperation can take place in situations beyond complexity or creates these situations. In those cases, not only the relations between the fragments are unstable and inseparable but the fragments themselves become unstable and inseparable. When things start to blur, con-fuse and flow this happens at an ontological level: the nature of reality becomes fluid. In these viscous realities fixed, bounded entities co-exist with fluid, amorphous multities. The appearance of multities enhances the risk of failure and surprise. A change from complex situations to viscous situations has consequences for conceiving change. Change is no longer the transition from one being into another being but beings change into becomings and vice versa. The actual and the potential are both real and affect the course of action and events. For international cooperation to be successful and effective in these viscous realities, the actors have to align their strategies, approaches, policies and assumptions to viscous natures of entities and multities.

In this thesis I take up the dual challenge of ethnographic and philosophical research. I focus on international cooperation, building on my action-research in development cooperation and its policy making. I studied development practitioners and policy officers to understand their practices of assembling. On the basis of field data on cooperation practices from three locality, I distinguish and analyse three development cooperation strategies. Further study of cooperation efforts with the Yuracaré Indigenous Peoples revealed three approaches to development cooperation. Each approach is related to the complexity and fluidity of the situation at hand. I participated in policy discussions and writing within the Dutch Ministry of Foreign Affairs. On the basis of these experiences, I analyse the use of the policy cycle and its problems. I also analyse and propose developments in the policies regarding development cooperation. Finally, I studied the diplomatic efforts to transform the Dutch-Bolivian bilateral relationship. To this end, I develop philosophically grounded methods of social research that allow for the elucidation of ways of world-making. I conclude that social inquiry (by scholars, practitioners or policy makers) can benefit significantly from greater attention to viscous ontology. I acknowledge the importance of political ontology (Blaser, 2013) for ethnographic studies, development cooperation and diplomatic encounters.

I will first revisit and answer the research questions as formulated in Chapter 1. Then I will go into more detail regarding the conclusions on change, ontology and space.

9.1 The research questions answered

In this section I will answer the original research questions and draw some conclusions. I will first deal with the practice of development cooperation. Then I turn to the practice of policy development and implementation. Next, I look at diplomacy as a practice. Finally, I address several theoretical questions and implications for the Actor-Network theory.

9.1.1 How is development cooperation shaped in practice and as a practice?

As a result of extensive fieldwork and research in Bolivia, I conclude that development cooperation is shaped in the form of three strategies and three approaches. The three strategies are: intervention, facilitation and encouragement of self-development. These strategies are differentiated by 'locus of initiative'. In intervention the locus of initiative is with external agents. Facilitation is characterized by mutual initiatives and encouraging self-development are efforts led by endogenous initiatives. Each strategy can be characterized by 4 types of practices: social, political, discursive and performative.

My study of the Jatun Sach'a project in the Primero de Mayo community gave me the idea to classify intervention as one of the strategies and gave me the information to specify the practices that shape it. Socially, the project divided outsiders from insiders and subdivided insiders. The aid delivery mode endowed the outsiders with agency and technical knowledge while insiders were the passive recipients of help. Discursively, project staff actively produced negative connotations regarding certain labels (e.g., *cocalero*) and associated positive values with others (e.g., shareholder) in order to steer development. Politically, the project's aim to change land-use patterns and *cocalero* identity was accompanied by efforts to substitute the collectivist power of the *sindicatos* by individual rights and voice of timber entrepreneurs. The performative practices refer to behavioural patterns of intervention. I observed the project's behaviour of entering, injecting (capital, technology or knowledge) and exiting (or abandoning). This lent a colonial and masculine character to the project.

My study regarding the interactions of CERES with the Yuracaré Indigenous People resulted in classifying facilitation as another cooperation strategy. Socially, CERES and the Council created a mixed research team to foster mutual learning. Discursively, the differences and similarities between 'sustainable forest management' and 'taking care of the woods' were explored together. Politically, both organizations constituted a shared space for collective action and decision making (mingling legal requirements and indigenous customs). Performatively, their 'caring space' was marked by intimacy, affect and reciprocity. Both the Yuracaré and CERES displayed strong 'feminine' characteristics.

The third strategy, encouraging self-development, resulted from my study of the activities undertaken by CENDA in Raqaypampa. Socially, the self-organization of social life by the Raqaypampeños formed the starting point and CENDA was invited to participate. Discursively, ownership and authorship of labels and meanings was embedded in the concept of *usos y costumbres* (uses and custom). This discursive frame created a dualism between 'self' and 'other' since a distinct, separate 'self' was the precondition for self-development. Politically, the strong *Central* was the sindical body that ensured self-determination and self-governance. It had its technical arm. CENDA's strategy was one of non-interference and active restraint. It was held accountable by the General Assembly of Raqaypampa. Performatively, CENDA pursued a de-colonial strategy. Differences did not prevent both organizations to interact on an equal footing and based on trust.

My conclusion of this part of the research is that none of the strategies is good or bad in itself. It is likely that intervention works better in simple situations with high levels of control; facilitation in complex situations with high levels of interaction; and self-development in fluid situations with high levels of trust, where local subjects collectively take development into their own hands. Effectiveness of developmental outcomes is likely to be highest in the case of the latter. However, intervention is still too often the default choice despite being criticized as unhelpful help. By drawing on the insights of multiple practices and situational differences, development actors engaging with communities should be able to modify their intervention strategies more towards facilitation and the encouragement of self-development. Policy guidelines that promote facilitation and the encouragement of self-development as cooperation strategies are to be welcomed.

My characterization of three strategies and four practices makes different differences than hitherto analysed. It allows for descriptive work on existing development cooperation efforts as well as for comparative studies. The divisions of the locus-practices matrix are neither static nor absolute; they allow for transgressions, ambiguities and inconsistencies (seen positively as superpositions of different strategies or practices). Therefore, the matrix is not only about the boxes and their content but about

the (blurred) boundaries and the 'labouring of divisions'. The framework thus allows for analytical work on processes and for managing efforts to change practical development cooperation efforts.

The interventions in combination with the fix-the-problem approach are based on external logics. This reliance can further be conceived as a reliance on Euclidean geometric reasoning. In Euclidean geometry every point is related to the external X, Y and Z-axis. By the same way of reasoning, interventionists relate everything to an external frame (e.g. the Millennium or Sustainable Development Goals). The major difference with the strategy that encourages self-development is that the latter is topological in the sense of self-referential (each point of a surface is related to other points of that surface). Endogenous change is not isolated or independent and opposite to external change but it is departing from the immanence of the on-site and on-going dynamics. Both intervention and self-development trigger progress as the expansion of their own clear entities (points), relations (lines) and logics (vectors). Intervention emanates from within the Western, Euclidean world and expands that world. It furthers and understanding of the world in terms of differentiated geometry of points, lines, dualities, stable references, etc. Through intervention as a practice, development actors enact an Euclidean world. This is political ontology. My conclusion is that the often unintended consequence of intervention is the expansion of the Western epistemological and ontological space and marginalization the other spaces. Development cooperation not only produces the results it reports and accounts for, but it furthers the Western 'one world' and its differentiated topographical ontology. Yet, there is always the potential escape from such a tunnel vision and ontological marginalization.

In contrast, the facilitation strategy has the potential to escape the self-referential gridded space of both partners. In the intense encounters the incommensurable differences between both grids surface. Divisions are challenged, boundaries are blurred, entities become multities and ontologically the situation turns into a viscous entirety. This less differentiated topological ontology is characterized by different differences with regards to the Euclidean geometry. For instance the circle and the square are no longer different shapes in topology. These different differences are reflected in how different people have different conceptions of the nature of realities and make different differences. For instance many Indigenous Peoples of the Americas consider animals as human in nature while Western science considers humans as animals by nature?

Development cooperation is not only shaped by strategies and practices but also by the approaches taken. I studied the various cooperation efforts of different agencies with the Yuracaré. I looked at the experience of the CDF to impose a rule that limited timber extraction to a sustainable level. Introducing this single solution for a single problem did not work out as expected. The Yuracaré are not mere rule-followers. Subsequently, CERES came in to elaborate a participatory forest management plan. This recognized the Yuracaré as Indigenous Peoples with territorial rights, institutions and customary practices. Introducing a complex plan in a complex environment was challenging. The plan was written and owned by the Yuracaré with technical support from CERES. But in its implementation it failed, mainly due to difficulties to operate the mobile saw mill and to elaborate equal benefit sharing. One underlying factor was that the spatiality of the forest management plan with clearly delineated areas was not compatible with the spatiality of Yuracaré *corregimientos* which were rather blurred and partly amorphous in nature. This finding resulted in an insight that some situations are beyond complexity and can best be characterized as viscous. In those situations there are no clear, distinct entities but rather unstable multities.

On the basis of the case material, I came up with differentiating the approaches on the basis of problem perceptions and situational analysis. This results in three approaches: fix-the-problem for simple problems, fit-in-context for complex situations and go-with-the-flow for undetermined, ambivalent and unstable situations. All three approaches start with the transfer of an entity (technology, knowledge, capital, etc.) from the outside space into the to-be-developed situation. The fix approaches assume that the to-be-developed situation can be known and predicted. The problem and the entities that already exist in that situation as well as their relations are knowable and separable. The nature of the entities is assumed to be bounded and singular (one entity is distinct from another entity). The nature of the relations is assumed to be causal and singular (a change in one relation does

not affect another relation). The fit approaches equally assume that entities are bounded and singular but acknowledges that the problem and the relations among entities are too complex to know in advance. Relations are entangled and by nature they are characterized by multiple causality (e.g. complex feedback loops). The flow approaches not only acknowledge that relations are unknown or unpredictable but also the entities are neither stable nor separable. Rather than being bounded and distinct, the entities have blurred boundaries and superpositions of dimensions. In these undifferentiated or topological situations there are no entities but multities. The nature of things is not a-priori fixed: ontologically there is no fixity but fluidity. This is labelled viscous ontology. The go-with-the-flow approach does not rely on an a-priori problem but on accompanying and following continuous variations and changes in viscosity. The approach does not rely on controlling, steering, designing or guiding but on letting-go and following.

In order to answer the research question on how development cooperation is shaped, I needed to question how realities are shaped and how things come about. Things do not only materialize, actualize or territorialize but ontologically they thicken, crystalize or solidify. But these change processes are always accompanied with the opposite movement towards fluidity. So change and development can be an incremental actualization or a transformative becoming of potentialities. The latter goes mostly undetected, can cause failure and always triggers surprise. Sensitivity to fluidity could precaution practical development cooperation and diplomatic efforts in unstable and volatile situations. On the edge of fluidity it might pre-empt turbulent and violent transgressions.

Finally, to theorize how development cooperation is shaped, it is important to underscore that according to me, ontology is not only viscous but also topological. Development cooperation is shaped by and shaping differential stabilities. To understand these processes of shaping stabilities, I mobilized topological thinking. Post-mathematical topology has become “a way of thinking about relationality, space, and movement beyond metrics, mapping, and calculation” (Martin and Secor, 2014: 420). Topology “can shed new insight into familiar social science objects (..) and situations where relationships are changes, distanciated, collapsed or distorted” (Shields, 2012: 28). Topological ontology can shed new insight on the nature of things, un-things and processes of thinging. Topological thinking enables a conception of change as neither incremental growth³³³ nor transition³³⁴ but as enfolding transgression and transformation (Henderson et al., 2013). Based on this notion of topological ontology, change, development and modernisation are redefined as ‘becoming’. This is to say that there are no ‘beings’ that change but there is constant change, the continuous variations of becoming-a-being³³⁵ and being-a-becoming. What there is, is continuous movement in-between becoming-a-being and being-a-becoming. These movements result in a topology of differentiated intensities (viscosity) and stabilities.

I conclude that development can be conceived of as different movements: transition or transgression. Or in other words becoming-a-being or being-a-becoming. There is a bias to perceive it as a transition from point A to point B. This bias has an effect on development cooperation. Development cooperation is shaped and takes shape as a practice that itself co-shapes realities. Development cooperation actors deploy different strategies and approaches to make transitions. However, these transitions need alignment to the realities in which they operate and again also co-shape those realities. In practice development cooperation is still biased towards intervention and fixing problems. This works out well in simple situations where point A and B are clear. But development cooperation often takes place in topological spaces without clear distinct points and pathways. This increases the risk of failure and surprise unless in those fluid situations other strategies and approaches are deployed (encouraging self-development, following, go-with-the-flow, let-go).

³³³ Incremental growth theory is here not only found in theories of economic growth. This conception of change can also be found in the social realm (expansion of networks and social capital), the political realm (empowerment, the ‘rising powers’) and others.

³³⁴ Transition is change from point A to point B *along* a line that does not connect A and B.

³³⁵ Examples of becoming-a-being are the Deleuzian becoming-animal, the becoming-modern of development, the becoming-coherent of policy, etc.

9.1.2 How is Dutch development cooperation policy shaped and implemented?

Dutch policy is firmly rooted in the international Aid Architecture (AA). The AA is formed by the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), the Monterrey Consensus on Financing Development and the Paris Declaration on Aid Effectiveness. These documents stipulate objectives, commitments and principles for the Official Development Assistance (ODA). They can be seen as the ‘rules of the game’ of a governance regime that links donor and partner countries. This AA assumes stability within which the international aid community gradually moves forward towards its goals (MDGs, harmonization and alignment targets, financing agreements, etc.). The nature of the rule-based AA is a rather static, structural totality, fixed in negotiated texts and fixing practices.

In contrast with these fixities, my study of development cooperation policy revealed that policy texts and policy processes are more fluid. The becoming-policy of a text and the practice of implementation of that policy are more-than-complex processes. They are laden with ambiguities, uncertainties, dilemmas and unknowns. Policy processes encounter problems of collective action and require the active mediations of policy officers. I identified three relevant factors (procedures, performativity and incentives) that territorialize the policy text and process as a stable, neat, and cyclical totality. These factors provide the connectivity between policy formulation and subsequent implementation. Four other factors delink the implementation from previous formulation: collective action problems, fragmentation, dilemmas and contradictions as well as mediation. These four factors trigger processes of deterritorialization. They affect the sequential and hierarchical guidance. They disturb linear time and topographical space. They even undercut the accuracy and relevance of the policy cycle model. They render policy processes topological and fluid. This lack of fixity in practice, makes the notion and enactment of an architecture incompatible with the situation at hand. The AA presupposes a stability, predictability and level of control that is non-existent in the policy realm of development cooperation. The actors involved are not intermediaries and docile rule-followers but are active mediators (Latour, 2005). They are part of wider actor-networks in which human and non-human actors (such as texts and budgets) are associated. Yet, even policy network analysis only accounts for the continuities and tracings in the network and does not look into the escapes from the network which account for the fluidity encountered in practice. My conclusion is then that policy architectures and networks are insufficient to understand the fluidity of social and policy processes, the practices of reassembling unstable, heterogeneous fragments and to accommodate for non-humans. For these reasons I applied the concept of assemblage in order to answer my research question regarding what shapes policy and policy implementation.

In their simplest form assemblages are compounds of fragments that link and delink rather autonomously. The assemblage is not a neat, logical whole but a contingent, emerging entirety. Its loose associations open-up the analysis of ambiguities and escapes from the territorialized entities. The on-going processes of linking and delinking, territorializing and deterritorializing, give assemblages an innate dynamic of continuous variations and immanent potential.

Analysing Dutch development cooperation policy as being assembled, I distinguish three emerging assemblages: the new aid assemblage, the public-private assemblage and the global responsibility assemblage. The first is the un-finished development cooperation agenda (beyond aid). It no longer focuses exclusively on poverty but addresses inequality and exclusion as intermingled with poverty (leave no one behind). The second is the *trade* agenda (beyond development cooperation). Development cooperation is intermingled and leveraged with trade and investment. The third assemblage deals with global concerns such as climate change, the loss of biodiversity, epidemics, etc. Here, the intermingling is framed as the nexus of hitherto separate themes or issues.

Content-wise the default development cooperation policies assume that change is a transition and a movement in a stable world. Change is the exception. ‘Development’ is a singular change that can be

separated from other changes and can be considered in an isolated way.³³⁶ This conceptualization of development is also applied by people involved in policy *development*. Policy officers think in terms of transiting, travelling or jumping from one fixed policy of the previous government to one fixed policy by the new government. My research and conclusion is that change is continuous and immanent in each policy and policy process. The world exists of all-encompassing ‘becomings’. Therefore, it is to my understanding misleading to use the term ‘policy development’ and I suggest it would be more appropriate to use ‘becoming-policy’.

Regarding the implementation of policy, I studied the use of the policy cycle model within the field of Dutch development cooperation. Policy writing is a political process of negotiation (giving and taking fragments) and an administrative process of assembling textual fragments to arrive at a coherent totality. Policy implementation is guided by procedures, performativity and incentives. But implementation is never a straightforward actualization of the text into practice. It is dependent on resolving collective action problems, fragmentation, dilemmas and contradictions as well as mediation. Implementation is therefore characterized by me as processes of assembling heterogeneous fragments (texts, budgets, networks, multities, etc.). In practice and in reality policy is actually not implemented through a network of human actors but it is (re)assembled. Policy fragments and ‘context’ are constantly being deterritorialized and reterritorialized up to the point that entity-context distinctions are untenable (hence the aptness of the concept assemblage).

To understand how policy is shaped and implemented, the concept and ontology of policy assemblage seems more apt than the concept of policy architecture or network. It is sufficiently flexible and open for contextual dynamics. It is ontologically aligned to the fluidity that exists in the real world where constant blurring of boundaries is happening. The major difference of difference between the architecture and assemblage is that the first focusses on a stable, negotiated process in time and over time while the assemblages focus on processes in space: deterritorializations and reterritorializations. Assemblages with their constituent fragments, their relations and their dynamics have two intensities. One is stable (the gridded, solid space-time) and the other is unstable (fluid space-time). The AA only conceives the geometrical, fixed, structural, territorialized intensity. The policy assemblage also accommodates for the undetermined, fluid, contingent and deterritorialized intensity which is constituted by multities, un-thingly haecceities and becomings. Together, the entirety of the assemblage is ontologically viscous. This spatial and viscous rapprochement of the policy processes provides the analysis with the potential to disclose the manifold affects at work within the closed-box of the AA. Due to its fluid nature and vitality of (de)linking, the assemblage does not contextualize anything and is therefore not assuming a stable environment in which an architecture or practice can be gradually changing.

The major difference of difference between policy cycle and policy assemblage is that the first focusses on a phased process in time and over time, while the assemblages focus on processes in space: deterritorializations and reterritorializations. The critique on the rather arbitrary and reality-concealing divisioning of time into fixed phases is not new. However, the spatial and viscous rapprochement of the policy processes provides the analysis the methodology to identify the potentialities to escape from the cycle. This spatial analysis might overcome the policy cycle paradox³³⁷ since it makes clear that the policy cycle is only real whenever enacted.³³⁸ And the model is untenable in situations of deterritorializations since in those instances of escape and fluidity the cycle cannot be enacted. The paradox itself is only real whenever enacted through the critical practice of

³³⁶ For instance many policy documents contain a section with an historical description that then serves as a passive background against which an active, singular development initiative is profiled.

³³⁷ The paradox is that in spite of several acknowledged flaws, the model is still used pervasively in policy science and practice.

³³⁸ Thus I criticize those critics that state that the policy cycle is not real.

analysing policy implementation failures, showing that the model is different from reality. The paradox relies on a duality of model versus reality as well as the discontinuities of their relation.³³⁹

For an understanding of how policy is shaped, the concept of assemblage is also helpful to analyse policy coherence. This is a recurring topic in development cooperation. The bad news is that according to my research policy coherence is an example of DeLanda's attractor: one can "approach it *indefinitely close but never reach it*" (2002: 29). The good news is that coherence does not matter that much as compared to consistency. In line with Deleuzian thought it is the 'plane of consistency' which matters. Where policy coherence is focussed on getting the right "seamless whole" (DeLanda, 2006: 11), policy consistency is focussed on getting the right connections, relations, assemblages and processes of becoming (see Chapters 5, 6 and 8).

9.1.3 How are multiple ontologies negotiated within diplomatic practices?

My third research question underlies my efforts to understand diplomacy. Diplomacy is conceived as the practice of negotiating a common (peace, interest, agreement) out of incommensurable initial positions. My ethnographic research focused on the changing bilateral relationship between Bolivia and the Netherlands. The two countries are commonly situated in two distinct positions, not only geographically but also in terms of political economy. The Netherlands has been the donor for over 40 years and Bolivia has been the beneficiary. Several events led to the dissolving of this division and the search for a more equal relationship based on mutual economic cooperation on lithium. This search was evident in a diplomatic encounter between the Bolivian Minister of Foreign Affairs, Mr. Choquehuancu and the Dutch special envoy for natural resources, Mr. de Bourbon. During their talks the blurring of the donor-beneficiary divide became embedded in a number of wider divides. The dialogue exposed fundamental Western divides such as nature-culture, human-nonhuman and nature-politics. The two men implicitly discussed two conceptions of the nature of lithium. One conceives of lithium as an inert chemical substance while the other conception is lithium as a living earth-being. Addressing these seemingly incommensurable positions on each side of the divides has implications for the effort to become equal and for diplomacy in general. Equality is no longer only in geo-political terms but in ontological terms. Equality would mean that diplomats commit themselves to a different, mutual ontology.

The importance of this political ontology lies in the fact depending on the nature of things, people shape their practices and through these they enact their world.³⁴⁰ If the world is to a large extent enacted through practices, then the multiple practices bring into being not one world but multiple worlds. Social science is thus not only about the multiple perspectives on the one world. It is about ontological plurality. The different worlds can differ in their nature (atoms or spirits). Ontology is no longer a singular term dealing with singularities (one nature and many cultures). Acknowledging, this ontological difference brings to light the power differences embedded in the negotiation over these worlds, for instance in the context of natural resource diplomacy. This acknowledgement enlarges the practice of diplomacy: there is a contemporary need to renegotiate a peace treaty between the multiple worlds that have different natures. This acknowledgement infuses the diplomatic practice with a new vitality and challenge.

9.1.4 How is ANT falling short in explaining realities on the edge of fluidity?

My encounters with the multities, the stickiness of things, the amorphous topological nature of the Yuracare territory, the unknowns, the cosmo-beings and the becomings (the not-yet-beings), resulted in a dissatisfaction with social theory. The explanatory power is limited. Most theory is apt for understanding simple situations in which developments can be controlled and steered. Network and system theory is apt for complex situations in which developments can be designed and managed. The

³³⁹ As Latour (2011: 79) shows, the chain of references between a mountain in the landscape and that mountain on a map, or between the thing and the sign, is mediated by movements and operations.

³⁴⁰ For instance, particular architectural and construction practices shape the nature of the buildings we live in.

actor-network theory (ANT) is according to me more elaborate. Its switch from intermediaries to mediators is key in assuming intrinsic unpredictability. ANT focuses on the whole actor-network as a topographical constellations of things, their relations and their dynamics. Fluidity is basically seen as a flow through the relations and chain of mediators. But ANT has several shortcomings. It is very much focused on capturing the reality (the net to catch fish), tracing the chain (the net's substantial threads) and observing phenomena (the empirical privileging of the eye). These shortcomings are all related to the topographical bias. According to me, a topological and expanded version of ANT is needed to account for what happens in the holes of the whole net. These are the in-between spaces rather than the relations between things (actants and mediators). This work is initiated by Latour introducing the concept of plasma but is never elaborated. Moreover, it is conceived as a background rather than an immanent intensity in a flat ontology. I concluded there is a need for such an elaboration in order to develop a baroque³⁴¹ metaphysics of a co-constituted solid and fluid space-time. For this I tied-up ANT with assemblage theory and viscous ontology. Especially to account for surprise my focus shifted from things to thinging: the 'differentiation' (becoming distinct) as well as 'differenciation' (becoming discontinuous). In-between the things that are (not-yet) materialized or actualized there are the un-things or socio-material substance that is outside the solid space-time.

My empirico-conceptual research highlights three in-betweens:

1. separation – inseparability³⁴²: association and fragmentation or unification and division are often neither properly recognized nor adequately conceptualized. There is no dualism but a dual necessity (Thacker, 2010). I see the need to see the intensity of individuation and process of thinging.
2. determination – indeterminacy³⁴³: I see simple, complex and viscous situations depending on intensities of differentiation and stability. Cooperation should be aligned to the situation-specific level of determinacy.
3. stability – instability: I see process as continuous variation which infuses instability and vitality, even in seemingly solid space-time or inert matter. The different intensities of differentiation and stability result in realities that can be characterized as in-between being-a-becoming (the movement towards fluidity) and becoming-a-being (the movement towards fixity).

These three issues constitute important axes of tension, intractable controversies and ambiguity that shed light on the contingencies so characteristic of international cooperation.

9.1.5 Methodological reflection

Social research methodology should not only be designed in a way to 'build an understanding' or to 'capture' a certain reality but to explore multiple realities. The methodology should enable a baroque exploration or a movement to follow the processes and movements in space-time. This means particular attention is required for (1) a review of boundaries, divisions and dualities to detect intensities of fixity-fluidity or rest-movement, (2) the following of potential flows and lines of flight (3) an alignment to the nature of that reality (simple, complex or viscous; geometric or topological), (4) the postponement of ontological closing (separating, categorizing and congealing) in favour of speculation, and (5) the acknowledgement of political ontology and world making.

³⁴¹ See section 1.5.4 of this thesis for an elaboration on baroque.

³⁴² Thacker (2010) refers to the dual necessity of separation and inseparability of things.

³⁴³ "Social life unfolds between these two orders of determination, the indeterminate capacity to be formed, which is the multiplicity, and the specific determination of series through one another which is the abstract machine" (Due, 2007: 131).

9.2 Conclusions regarding change: a transition in space and time or a becoming fluid or solid in space-time?

This thesis started with the fall of the Berlin Wall and the divides that broke down with it. This thesis' research resulted in understanding such type of changes and events from two rather unconventional angles: (1) the world is not (only) changing; it is constantly in-becoming and (2) the real divide that breaks down in a change process refers to metaphysical transgressions in-between solid and fluid space-time (the movements within a topology of stabilities).

This thesis distinguishes the notion of change as a process of transition in time (e.g. development and the policy cycle as enacted through time) and change as a process of becoming in space-time. The latter process is a trajectory in which space and time are entangled in the movement.³⁴⁴ The processes of territorialization, deterritorialization and reterritorialization fold space and time together. In this folded space-time there is no linear, simple transition from one point to another. "[O]ne does not reach becoming or the molecular, as long as a line is connected to two distant points (...). A line of becoming is not defined by point that it connects, or by points that compose it; on the contrary, it passes *between* points, it comes up through the middle, it runs perpendicular to the points first perceived, transversally to the localizable relation to distant or contiguous points. (...) [A] line of becoming has neither beginning nor end. (...) A becoming is neither one nor two, nor the relation of the two; it is the in-between" (Deleuze and Guattari, 2004: 323). So becoming-animal is not a transition from a human being to an animal being. If the shaman is becoming-jaguar he is in-between, communicating, escaping on a possible line of flight, transgressing a boundary (and the code that belongs to bounded territory) up to the point of deterritorialization. Our becoming-child is not a movement going back to the point in time when we were a child. Rather, it is a movement to become proximate to the child that coexists with us or within us.

My conclusion is that realities move in-between becoming-a-being and being-a-becoming. There are temporary resting points in this in-between space but these are never fully fixed, stable, solid or actualized. Nor are they fully amorphous, fluid or virtual. Realities are everywhere and always on the edge of fluidity.

Change partly emanates from new concepts, language, thought and performativity. What is said and thought is enacted in practices and shaping the world. Language and classifications are not separated from realities but are mediating and co-constituting realities (Butler, 1993; Law and Mol, 2002). The linguistic *différance*³⁴⁵ and categorization is the work of drawing lines and labouring divisions. This work is part of practices, notable practices of assembling. It is in and through these practices that change is enacted.

The world of things, or better, the things in the world can then change when their boundaries or their relations deterritorialize. The entities momentarily become amorphous rather than distinct as well as fluid rather than fixed. This change in 'the world of things' happens in the movement or passage through fluid space-time where things dissolve in un-things. Their meaning and categorization become undetermined. Their constitutive relations (see Law and Lien, 2012) become unstable. They become enacted as spatio-temporal un-things. Or the other way around: change is the reterritorialization of fluid un-things in the gridded space-time where they acquire a position, a determinacy, a distinctiveness and a meaning. Both these types of changes are in-becomings.

Who or what then generates the in-becomings? The fold line in solid space-time is always a fault line where energy builds up to fuel the potential of boundary work. The divide between more solid and

³⁴⁴ This means a departure from Euclidean space with its external reference frame (the axes) to a topological notion of space-time whereby differentiation is least and space-time is self-referential.

³⁴⁵ Derrida's combination of making a difference and deferring a meaning through an endless chain of signifiers

more fluid space-time within the assemblages,³⁴⁶ is the site of intensive difference. DeLanda (2002)³⁴⁷ states that the different intensities in space-time form the energy and force that make processes of becoming and flows happen. Just like the difference in air pressure causes the wind, so would intensive differences in viscosity propel processes of de- and reterritorialization. And so is any encounter between people and things or among people always an encounter of different grids with intensive differences that make these encounters affective.

I see the differences between solid and fluid space-time not as a difference of level (background) but as a difference in geometry (dimensions versus directions), a difference in topology (differentiated versus amorphous), a difference of differences (extensive versus intensive differences) and as differences in nature (from solid to fluid space-time). Despite being different, both types of space form one plane of immanence. The lines of flight de-part from the boundary-lines, differences and distinctions within the striated space. The gridlines form starting points for escapes and slippage into the smooth space. The striated and smooth spaces emanate from each other, one being a recapitulation in the other, “a furtherance of one through the other” (Deleuze and Guattari, 2004: 526).

9.3 Conclusions regarding ontologies

In my research I came across ontology when I needed to explain the nature of the territoriality of the Yuracaré *corregimientos*. After many discussions and reflection I concluded that their nature is partly fixed and partly fluid. In terms of Deleuze and Guattari (2004) it is partly striated space and partly smooth space. This resulted in the conclusion that realities are not only constituted by separate entities with a fixed, solid nature but also by multities with a fluid nature (Chapter 4). As a result of both the empirical fieldwork and literature research I developed the notion of ‘viscous ontology’. Heavily influenced by Deleuze and Guattari (2004) I developed the idea that reality is constituted by a plane of immanence with different intensities of viscosity covering both solid space-time AND fluid space-time. In my further field research this notion was applied to the study of policy, the policy cycle and diplomacy. This research enabled a deeper understanding of where fluidity resides and how it is linked to (epistemological) unknowns and (ontological) un-things (Chapter 8). Through empirical research in La Paz I could assume the notions of enactment and of political ontology. I reintroduce practices in my thinking but now as phenomena through which realities are enacted. These different enactments obviously result in politically different outcomes and contestations. Finally, through further reflections on things and un-things I temporarily rounded off this thesis with a vitalist, viscous, topological and baroque metaphysics. This means that what is real are things realized through the enactments of differentiation, individuation, territorialization and thinging (as entities). Besides that there are also the enactments of multities, amorphous flows, unknowns and lines of flight: the un-things (Chapter 4). This acknowledges that phenomena like blurred boundaries, *con-fusión*, multiplicity, stickiness and superposition generate flows and ‘un-things’ (like the multities) whose nature are inseparable, viscous, undifferentiated and undetermined.

My exploration of ontology evolved through questioning three basic ontological premises and assumptions quite common in science. The first premise is that things and beings exist. This presupposes the existence of distinctions, differences and determinacy. The second premise is that things and beings constitute relations but they exist prior to those relations. This presupposes the separability of A and B in order to relate them. These relations are relations of functionality, power, logic (DeLanda, 2006), association (Latour, 2005), etc. The third premise is that things and beings change or develop over time into other things and beings. This process presupposes fixed states A and B.

Critical questioning of ontology (in the singular) evolved into exploring ontologies (in the plural) and different premises. The first different premise is that what really exists, are becoming-a-being and

³⁴⁶ As explained in the discussion, I conceive viscosity as an intensive property of assemblages with entities and multities.

³⁴⁷ Following Deleuze, DeLanda distinguishes between extensive and intensive properties. Extensive properties can be divided in space (length, height, etc.). Intensive properties not (temperature, concentration, speed, etc.).

being-a-becoming (not only beings and things). Besides distinct *entities* there are undetermined *multities* (Chapter 4) and viscous bodies (Chapter 3). Besides things there might be un-things and amorphous beings (Chapter 8). What really exists is not only that which can be differentiated, determined, separated and positioned in a socio-material gridded space. There are phenomena and events that escape (from) those determinations, that remain blurred, open, unstable and in a state of flow. Hence, the nature of realities is a viscous in-between intensity of existence. The second premise is that the becomings are held together by affect forming a plane of immanence (Deleuze and Guattari, 2004). This plane of bodies and expressions is what exists. This flat and baroque ontology is not an actor-structure or actor-network-plasma geometry of relations but a topology of affects. The third premise is that processes or dynamics are not changes over time but continuous variations in time and transgressions of space (movements from solid space-time to fluid space-time and back; deterritorializations of what exists as distinct, determined, separated and stable as well as reterritorializations of what exists as amorphous, fluid and unstable). This ontological assumption on change contributes to the viscosity of space-time. Viscous ontology thus results in a profound questioning of spatial conceptions dominant in social enquiries. It de-parts from the Euclidean layered actor-structure or actor-network-plasma spaces and the separation of space and time.

The acknowledgement of ontological viscosity has many more implications. Situations, events and realities are not only characterised by being simple or complex but can be viscous. Viscosity points at both (1) being partly fluid and solid simultaneously and (2) in-between fluid and solid. It entails an openness and ambiguity (the *multity*) rather than distinctness and determinacy (the *entity*). Viscous phenomena are difficult to grasp (they require topological thinking), to study (they require alternative methodologies), to describe (they require alternative concepts), to prove their existence (they belong to the realm of speculative philosophy) and to operationalize (they escape concreteness). It requires different ways of thinking and doing (practices) which in turn enable other sensitivities towards hitherto unknown or unacknowledged realities. These sensitivities help to engage in new ways with failures, turbulence, risks and surprises. According to me, this engagement will help policy makers and practitioners to act upon an increasingly fluid world and to enact better ways of cooperation up to the point of bringing into being better worlds (whatever 'better' may entail). This is most relevant in an era of rapid geo-political, geo-economic and geo-ontological turmoil whereby humanity approaches several planetary boundaries.

The implications are three-fold, touching upon 'what is there' (metaphysics), 'what is it like' (ontology) and 'how to go about it' (political ontology). The first imperative of ethno-ontographics is to study differentiation or 'thinging': the simultaneous making the distinct, different and determined. This is the separation of the inseparable and the stabilization of the unstable. It is the becoming of a being, enacted through the remaking of boundaries, the labouring of divisions, the reworking of dualities, etc. These differentiations are operations constituting solid space-time. These are only secondary in relation to viscous ontology. The imperative regarding differentiation is to make different differences, namely using the difference of both solid and fluid space-time as the starting point. The triple task is (1) to undo the metaphysical divide between solid/fluid, arborescent/rhizomatic or sedentary/nomad; they are co-constituted in one and the same movement, (2) to rework the dualistic divides within the solid space³⁴⁸ and (3) to undo or surpass the metaphysical duality of solid/fluid by proposing viscosity as an intensity and in-between. This thesis is but the beginning of developing a

³⁴⁸ For instance the donor-beneficiary divide in Chapter 7. These dualities often refer to fundamental dualities such as material/idea, nature/culture, body/mind and object/subject. Speaking in metaphors, so far the 'Moderns' have mainly looked at reality through a microscope to study things. With one eye they looked at a particular side of reality: the either/or dualities. Amongst others, contemporary Science and Technology Studies, social sciences and philosophy scholars provided us metaphorically speaking with new instruments: the binocular. This enabled us to look with both eyes at both sides of the binary to see the both/and dualities. It might even give an insight into the intertwining of the concepts (the hybrids or the linguistic use of the hyphen one sees so often today) and into the dual necessity of separation and inseparability. Although extremely useful, the conceptual binoculars only give us wide panoramas of solid space (the networks, the grids) or what I label as territory. These conceptual binoculars are not yet the device that enables one to see simultaneously the solid and the fluid space-time; to see the un-things that move through a topological space.

methodology that brings both solid space-time and fluid space-time into perspective for the study of being-a-becoming and becoming-a-being.

The different difference is made by redefining things and distinguishing them from un-things. Things are bounded separate entities (materially, socially, conceptually, semantically or otherwise). They are defined and thereby at the same time enclosed, positioned and fixed in grids. This is an ontological status or state of being. Un-things are neither some-thing nor no-thing. Their boundaries are blurred and they are a mutable, open, vital matter-force. For the Yuracaré the mobile sawmill was an un-thing. For the professional foresters the Yuracaré territorial subdivision (*corregimientos*) and their practice of 'caring for the woods' were un-things. For the Dutch diplomat the Andean earth-beings and cosmo-beings were un-things.

The second imperative is to challenge ontology as a singular term referring to the study of the nature (also a singular term) of things in their state of being. To understand continuous variation and becoming it is imperative to acknowledge multiple ontologies and natures. Ontographics is not about 'one world' (Law, 2011) and one natural-science-nature but is about multiple ontologies. Different practices enact the world in different ways up to the point of bringing different worlds into existence. My study of diplomats shows that they do not only develop their practice in the world but that through their practice they shape the world in ways whereby the different worlds might be different in nature. Where Dutch diplomats conceive the nature of coca and lithium as chemical substances, the Bolivian Minister of Foreign Affairs conceives their nature as spiritual-socio-material. Such differences provide diplomats with an ontological challenge in their own area of expertise: transforming incommensurable differences into a common or middle ground. The ethno-ontographic account of the transformation of the Dutch-Bolivian bilateral relation provides initial insight on how to do this.

The third imperative is to consider political ontology. The political is not only the struggle for power and the emergence of relations of domination or privilege. In assemblages the political is the capacity to affect. This means that the political is no longer restricted to human actors but is extended to all kinds of actors that mediate in associations (De la Cadena, 2010; Latour, 2005). It also means that the political space is not topographical (an extensive network of positions and relations) but topological. The constant tensions and flux are derived from intensive difference and continuous variation. The political space is a space-time where different, existing and unstable frameworks affect each other. The political is situated in the making of different differences. There is a constant distributive or disruptive movement due to processes of territorialization and deterritorialization. One dimension where different differences are affecting frameworks and are being renegotiated is regarding the nature of things. This is political ontology. When, through different practices, different ontologies are enacted in different worlds, the 'political' is immanent. To understand and deal with the political implications of ontological differences, actors in international cooperation can learn from ethnographers and ethnographers can learn from diplomats. There is a need for development actors and diplomats to become sensitive to their own ontological commitments and framework and to be open to different frameworks (which implies being open to follow-work out-of-the-box). There is a need for ethnographers to acquire the diplomatic skills to negotiate incommensurable positions in more pragmatic ways (Stengers, 2011b), to negotiate ontotrans (Mol, 2013) and to do ontographics (Lynch, 2013).³⁴⁹

9.4 Conclusions regarding space

My exploration of space took place in quite different fields of investigation. One conclusion from this research is the appropriateness to distinguish terrain, territory and topology. Terrain centres on space as biophysical place.³⁵⁰ My ethnographic fieldwork took place in multiple localities: three Bolivian communities and the offices of various Bolivian and Dutch organizations.

³⁴⁹ Here I make a parallel move to the way Stengers (2011b) relates diplomacy and philosophy.

³⁵⁰ Arturo Escobar points at the importance of local 'constructions of place' and social movements' "place-based struggles" (2001: 139) to counter the tendencies of globalocentrism that tend to effect an erasure of place. Here I

Territory is its abstraction, conceptualization and graphical representation (cartography, geography, ethnography, etc.). The network is an example of a territory. It projects actors, relations and network features onto a differentiated space of coordinates, positions and dimensions. In this thesis I take a critical, fresh look at some of such spatial conceptualizations that are commonly used in development cooperation: top-down, bottom-up, inside-outside. My exploration of Yuracare space pointed out the distinction between a territoriality of points, boundaries, lines, grids and positions on the one hand and a sectoral territoriality of amorphous space on the other hand (Chapter 4). My exploration of international cooperation is also situated in a time-period that seems to require a fresh yet abstract look at regional divisions: East-West and North-South have changed since the fall of the Berlin Wall in 1989. The continuous rise of China reconfigured the geopolitical territory. The financial crisis in 2008 triggered major changes in the geo-economic territory. And through mass migration, the recent Syrian crisis triggered series of changing divisions in the political cultural territory (up to being a major factor in the Brexit). These are just a few significant events that disrupt clear and stable divisions in imaginary, conceptual territories.

In terms of conceptual and metaphorical territories, I came up with examples of different ways in which space is performed. Through intervention strategies, space is shaped as a colonial and masculine setting where invasion, conquering, harassing and (symbolic) violence can take place. Through the facilitation strategy a shared space is created and performed. It is a rather feminine setting where horizontal cooperation takes place. Through the encouraging self-development strategy an invited space is created in which the development actors participate.

During my exploration I also studied the dominant theories and conceptions of social space in terms of actor arenas (Long, 1989), actor-structure configurations (Giddens, 1984) or actor-networks (Latour, 2005). I examined how, in these theories, the analysis of concrete people-thing interactions turns into their representation in conceptual terms of society or networks (the conceptual territory).³⁵¹ All these theories are focused on territorial mappings or tracings of power, agency, action and association. This is a bias towards social topography (for instance actor mapping) and typology (for instance actor classifications).³⁵² My conclusion is that all these theories are conceptual and topographical.

Topology is even more abstract than territory. It constitutes the least differentiated notion of space (DeLanda, 2002) where form is unstable or multiple, things are fluid and space and time are not separated (Chapter 8). It highlights another spatial feature: the holey space in-between the whole network's net. In my research topological thinking is applied to ontology and the question regarding the natures of realities. I propose a topological ontology composed of a solid space-time of the things that exist and a fluid space-time of unknowns and un-things. I argue that the nature of the un-things that exist, can only be described using the least differentiated geometry: topology. To come to grasp with un-things it is necessary to turn space and time from "a priori" to "a posteriori" categories (Lury, 2013 referring to Lash, 2009). This means that fluid space-time is constituted by the trajectories of deterritorializing assemblages rather than the other way around (things moving through a pre-existing space). The lessons learned from this research into topological ontology is that not the space-times in themselves are important but the processes that entangle them: the de- and reterritorializations.

My exploration touches upon the geometrical conception of space defined by the three axes and the separation of Euclidean space and time. I explore core elements of a topological space. First, the self-

intend to go even beyond this socio-cultural construction or "experience of a particular location with some measure of groundedness (however, unstable), sense of boundaries (however, permeable), and connection to everyday life, even if its identity is constructed, traversed by power, and never fixed" (*idem*: 140). Here I would like to emphasize the materialities of place and their affect on people, other beings and things.

³⁵¹ This is in line with Bruno Latour's statement that "[n]etwork is a concept, not a thing out there" (Latour, 2005: 131).

³⁵² The relations between topography, typology and topology are not simple oppositions. DeLanda (2002: 177) contrasts typological thinking (with its categories of essence, resemblance, identity, analogy and contradiction) with topological thinking (with its categories of multiplicity, interrelations, intensity and becoming).

referential conception of topological space. Second, the least differentiated conception of topological space (DeLanda, 2002), where boundaries are blurred and differences are different (for instance different forms become similar; the circle, triangle and square can all change into each other without cutting the outer line). Third, topology as the variability of conceiving space in the full range from Euclidean geometry to undifferentiated space (Martin and Secor, 2014).

Apart from the geographical, territorial, metaphorical, topographical, social and mathematical spatialities, I conclude there is a need for an ontological spatiality. In order to understand international cooperation, I develop the concepts of solid and fluid space-time to elaborate a baroque and speculative analysis of what exists (metaphysics), what it is like (ontology) and how to go about it (political ontology). I stress the connectedness of space and time. The processes of assembling and becoming are movements in space-time rather than developments over time or transactions within network spaces. Change is the continuous variation immanent in deterritorializations and reterritorializations of whatever exists. Boundaries between things and un-things are constantly done, undone and redone. Space-time is constantly folded, unfolded and refolded. These dynamics may help actors in international cooperation to understand *con-fusión*, the unknowns, strangeness, surprise and inherent instability.

To conclude, viscous ontology no longer acknowledges space and time as separate coordinates or backgrounds. Space is no longer considered to be an extension but entangled with time it becomes a varying intensity. To come to grasp with viscous realities it is necessary to turn space and time from “a priori” to “a posteriori” categories (Lury, 2013 referring to Lash, 2009). Many developments are not transitions in space or through a pre-existing space but they are trajectories that constitute fluid space-time. Viscous ontology recognizes space-time as the only metaphysical substance that there is: the plane of consistency and intensities. This plane is a constantly varying intensity of both fixity (body-expressions with clear boundary lines forming a striated, solid space-time of entities) and fluidity (the multitudes and un-things). Space-time condenses, crystalizes or territorializes into the entities and things that exist. But never fully; there are always possibilities for things and space-time to open-up, to escape full enclosure and to set off on a new line of flight forming the un-things that exist.

Epilogue

This thesis is about international cooperation in turbulent times and confusing situations.³⁵³ It contains a reflection on the viscous situations in which I participated. This PhD-thesis is itself viscous.³⁵⁴ The thesis is an assembled set of chapters that form a book which is neither a coherent whole nor incoherent. The chapters as fragments do not cover the whole space of ‘international cooperation in turbulent times’. Yet, there are story-lines and lines of flight that make the connections between the chapters. In this epilogue I will first elaborate on that what connects and subsequently on the lines of flight that escape the structured wholeness of a book or research practice.

Lines of reasoning connecting the chapters

Looking back at the research process and the previous chapters, I discern a number of lines of reasoning that run through the thesis. One line runs from development cooperation in the ‘field’ (part 1) to development cooperation policy (part 2) and then to both theory (Chapter 8) and diplomacy (Chapter 7). This line has to do with major practices of international cooperation.

The other lines of reasoning look inside these practices of international cooperation for their content, asking ‘what really happens?’ Content-wise there are several lines discernible that start with the concrete, practical or common sense understandings of the social and progressively develop a Deleuzian perspective. One such line runs from technical to political. Part 1 focuses on technical issues of development cooperation, such as the transfer of technology and certain planning technicalities. It is indicated that the “will to improve” (Li, 2007: 263) is accompanied by a rendering technical of problems and solutions. But technical questions are entangled with politics or what Foucault calls technologies of power. This is expressed in the political practices of development actors (Chapter 3) and the bureaucratic technicalities of the policy cycle (Chapter 6). With the move to diplomacy, normally seen as a highly political affair, it is not that all technicalities are left behind (see Stengers, 2011a). But I focus on the political in order to argue for a transgression of geo-politics into cosmo-politics and political ontology (Chapter 7). What I mean with that is that in contemporary diplomacy and politics there is more than the negotiation of peace among peoples. Diplomatic negotiations are needed for humanity to come to peace with the planet (political ecology) with the cosmos and with cosmo-beings too (political ontology). As will be explained below as well, a challenging part of politics is the negotiation of contrasting conceptions about the natures of natures. So the line running through the thesis goes from the technical to techniques of power to politics as the exercise of power. Finally, in the Deleuzian perspective, power is no longer conceived as domination or force, but as affect.

Another such content-line runs from the notion of performance to the notion of performativity. Performance is the behavioural acting out of a practice. It is about human action in the world (the performative practices in Chapter 3 and the performance of indigenous people and professionals in Chapter 4). Performativity is the enactment of reality through practice or discourse. The performativity of policy lies in the fact that discourse not only describes the world but according to Butler (1993) produces the effects that it names (Chapter 6). In a similar way practices not only give meaning to the world but according to Law and Mol (2002) are ways of handling the world up to bringing it into being (Chapter 7). So the line of reasoning discernible throughout this thesis runs from practices as constellations of doings, sayings and things in the already existing world (Schatzki, 2002) to practices as shaping reality and being prior to the world.

³⁵³ Confusion is used in both senses of the word. Confusion as discomfiture or discomposure. And con-fusion as ‘with melting’ or ‘merging together’.

³⁵⁴ This is similar to the way Deleuze and Guattari state that their book on rhizomes *A thousand plateaux* is a rhizome connected with the world, and the way Ingold’s book *Lines* is but lines. In contrast Latour’s *Assembling the social* that is not conceived by him as an assemblage but as a travel guide.

The line from performance to performativity has another dimension to it. Performance as behaviour is embedded in natural science and presupposes an object, a terrain and a natural world (Chapter 8). Philosophically, performance studies focus on what there *is* in the world (ontology in the singular). Performativity, however, points at the socially constructed nature of the world. It presupposes a subject and a social world. For instance, the construction of space as colonial or gendered (Chapter 3) is not about terrain but about power-knowledge relations. Philosophically, performativity studies focus on how power-knowledge is produced and is productive (epistemology). Yet, the use of the concept of performativity has evolved beyond discourse theory and into practice theory. This opened up the potential for reconsidering ontological issues but as ontological pluralism. Through their practices humans and non-humans enact multiple worlds (Law, 2011) with multiple natures of nature (Chapter 7). One nature of nature is the way natural sciences understand Chemistry, Physics and Biology. But outside natural science (both in the ‘West’ and elsewhere) there are other conceptions of the natures of nature or the natures of the human (Blaser, 2013; Viveiros de Castro, 1998). This line of reasoning from ontology to epistemology and to ontologies is touched upon in several of the chapters and runs through this thesis.

My research findings and the literature on ontological pluralism led me to rethinking ‘things’. My initial position (Chapter 3) of distinguishing separate and distinct things, phenomena or entities was no longer that comfortable. The processes of de- and recontextualization of inputs (technology, knowledge, rules, etc.) problematized the thing (Chapter 4). My fieldwork data pointed towards the need to distinguish on the one hand clearly bounded and separable entities and on the other hand blurred multities (things composed of many fragments and with multiple dimensions). I felt the need for a theory that is sensitive to the untenable divisions between human and non-human (Latour, 2005), material and immaterial (Deleuze and Guattari, 2004), dead things and alive beings (Ingold, 2011 and Bennett, 2010). The assemblage theory (DeLanda, 2006) and Deleuzian metaphysics bring this out. Questioning the divisions and separability of things also touches upon the question on the nature of things. If realities are more-than-things, then there are also un-things (which are neither no-thing nor some-thing). These un-things could be my multities, collections (Heidegger’s notion of *Ting*), haecceities³⁵⁵ (Deleuze and Guattari, 2004), cyborgs (Haraway, 1991), undifferentiated, topological attractors (DeLanda, 2002) or plasma (Latour, 2005). All these phenomena are somehow relating the un-things with movement, flow, fluidity or viscosity (either as metaphor or to indicate the nature of un-things). This is reflected in my preliminary and speculative onset of a metaphysics of un-things (Chapter 8) that further deepens viscous ontology (Chapter 4). The metaphysics of un-things is an in-between epistemologies and ontologies. This in-between is neither about representations and perspectives nor about presentations and essences of the world but the ways the worlds are conceived of. They *con-fuse*³⁵⁶ in the notion of ‘multiple conceptions of the natures of natures’. These are entangled conceptions of the world and world-makings. This entanglement is strengthened by a focus on the process of thinging.

Lines of flight

The initial assumption underlying this thesis is that situations become confusing because of merging or intermingling. In other words: when ‘things’ start to fuse, coincide or mix they get out of hand or out-of-the-box and people get confused. Normality seems to rest on clarity, structure, order, distinction and separation. Normality becomes affected when ‘things’ become blurred, fluid or intermingled. Or when the (story)lines become unclear. One loses grip and understanding so modern governance and science are challenged. Exactly these situations are central to my experience in both international cooperation and scientific inquiry. Confusing situations are interesting sites for further research on international cooperation. These confusing situations form escapes from normality. Or this confusion gives a practice perspective (*Handlungsperspective*) when a-normality has become normality (for instance erratic climate events have become normal in some parts of the planet). The con-fusion or

³⁵⁵ I understand a haecceity as a thing that is not a substance/form entity but the contingent and momentary entirety of “relations of movement and rest between (...) particles” (Deleuze and Guattari, 2004: 288).

³⁵⁶ *Con-fusión* (derived from Spanish) is used to denote both ‘with fusion’ or ‘through fusion’ and confusion (see Boelens, 2008 and Chapter 4).

escapes from normality are philosophically comprehensive as ‘lines of flight’ (Deleuze and Guattari, 2004).³⁵⁷ The line of flight refers to “a take off in an unknown direction, moving towards as yet unmapped territories, outside of conscious planning and previously known values” (Due, 2007: 19). It is a movement beyond modern rationality; it is an escape from the rational system of differentiation; it is a becoming. As will be elaborated in this thesis, the line of flight not only escapes normality. It also escapes the difference between normality and a-normality, that is to say it escapes duality. The choice is not between on the one hand a clear, rigid and regular world of norms and on the other hand confusion, fluidity and unruliness. These worlds are reciprocal presuppositions and mutual predispositions. The line of flight is the movement in-between, the in-becoming of both of these worlds at the same time, the collapse of difference in superpositions of ‘both and’.

The thesis somewhat escapes the professional field of diplomacy and development cooperation as well as the institutional fields of public administration and foreign affairs. I physically moved from the Dutch Ministry of Foreign Affairs to the Social Sciences Group of the Wageningen University to finalize this thesis. At the same time the thesis somewhat escapes the social sciences. Much of the contemporary social sciences constitutes a ‘striated space’ with disciplinary parcels, managerial ‘kingdoms’, status-based turfs, hierarchical stratifications, etc. This state science or major science is but the starting points to delve into nomad science or minor science. The research de-parted from this striated space in search for a smooth space along various lines of flight. One line of flight against the current trend is venturing into theoretical and abstract work (sometimes wrongly perceived as metaphorical). Abstract and concrete are not opposed but mutually constitutive; they are both real. “A true abstract machine has no way of making a distinction within itself between a plane of expression and a plane of content because it draws a single plane of consistency” (Deleuze and Guattari, 2004: 156).

The other line of flight out of conventional social sciences is into experience-based and interpretative research (in contrast to external observation and measurement). The scientific production of knowledge on ‘the social’ cannot be limited to systematic or rigorous research and frameworks (norms governing the striated space of state science). This thesis is, therefore, not a classical ethnography of the state. The research highlights the public role and relevance of social science in the twenty-first century. Its public value lies in the full engagement with the future of humanity while also remaining committed to science (see The Academy’s Annual Lecture 2013 given by Professor John Brewer AcSS, Professor of Post-Conflict Studies at Queen’s University Belfast and former Chair of the British Sociological Association). Conversely, I pretend to contribute to social sciences from experiences, reflections and conceptualizations derived at while playing a public role. Science not only speaks the truth to governance³⁵⁸; governance can also speak with authority to science. That is why I departed on a line of flight to develop a social theory of con-fusion and a viscous ontology.

Even the original object of study (development cooperation) had nearly escaped the researcher. While I studied development practice in concrete situations in Bolivia, the debate centred on ‘dead aid’ and some announced the end of aid as we know it (Emmerij, 2014) or the end of the need for that aid by 2030. The ‘beyond aid’ discussion within the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MoFA) incited me to write about ‘aid and beyond’. Aid is still very much needed and helpful, yet it should be transformed, escaping amongst other things its legacy of interventionism. This partly instrumental and partly normative starting position based on empirical research in Bolivia. The purpose was to write a critical analysis of development cooperation, very much in line with the work of Moss (2004) and others. The idea was to centre on a fundamental dilemma of development organizations: they want to promote certain internal dynamics and agency through an outsider’s intervention and agency. Yet, the object of study seems to take a ‘line of flight’ towards its own dissolution.

³⁵⁷ Flight covers not only the act of fleeing or escaping but also flowing, leaking and disappearing into the distance. It has no relation to flying.

³⁵⁸ Hoppe shows that the statement that science “speak[s] truth to power” (1999: 202) is highly contested.

The reiterative process of field research, reflecting and reading resulted in adapting the research plan to the course of events, particularly to follow the emerging lines of flight. The first article (Chapter 3) or line of flight was an effort to escape the dominance of interventionism within conventional development cooperation. Intervention was the default strategy but there were alternatives emerging. The study of interventionist and non-interventionist strategies to cooperate in forestry development led to the appreciation of the ‘go with the flow’ approach (Umans, 2012). The processes of cooperation were quite fluid and needed ‘following’ (much later in the research process this turned out to be a Deleuzian concept) rather than ‘predetermining, intervening and controlling’. The line of flight inevitably led to the escape from the problematic duality of internal and external agents, agencies and logics that structure the field of development cooperation. Development cooperation rests on this duality which at the same time conceals its contradictory nature: how can one develop ‘the other’; how to bring about internal change by external agency? To move development cooperation forward it seems crucial to escape this structuring duality of interventionism.

The second article (Chapter 4) and line of flight is based on the Yuracaré experience and the realization that thinking in separable and fixed entities, categories and divisions is a scientific deformation. In development cooperation the introduction of new things or entities (seeds, machines, knowledge) is not a transfer of neat things but always a transformation that involves the ‘dragging along’ of imprints, legacies, partial histories, etc. When entities are taken out of their original context and put back in into a new context, the imprints ‘follow’ the entity and follow its line of flight. Moreover, the imprints constitute the virtual sources of new lines of flight. The research pointed at the importance to go beyond system thinking towards assemblage thinking and subsequently even beyond assemblage thinking. Actors not only piece their life worlds together but multiplicities, uncertainties and volatility induce blurred boundaries and intermingling (fluidity and viscosity). Yuracaré territorial units are concrete examples. These empirical data led me towards the work of DeLanda (2006), Bauman (2000) as well as Deleuze and Guattari (2004). the development of concepts like blurredness, multiplicity, stickiness and fluidity.

The subsequent article (Chapter 6) addresses another long-time battle: understanding policy processes in different ways that the sequence from formulation, took the concepts of assemblage, fluidity and viscosity as starting points to study the policy development process and my personal experience in the MoFA. Deleuze and Guattari (2004) provided the inspiration and openness towards the ‘becoming’ which resonated with the experience of the ‘wet cement moment’ (Hulsman and Korteweg, 2011) in world politics as well as the creativity and confusion that helped reframe the conceptual framework (see Chapter 8).³⁵⁹ Deleuze and Guattari are indeed seen “as the thinkers of productive connections, the creation of deterritorializing processes escaping fixed identities, transgressing boundaries and static classifications” (Stengers, 2010: 39). Deleuzian analysis “facilitates an arguably increasingly important rethinking of the relations between science, technology, culture and politics. And it suggests different ways of conceiving the links between these fields and the practices they study” (Jensen and Rødje, 2010: 1). Based on the conceptual richness and openness of Deleuzian thought further field research within the Dutch Ministry of Foreign Affairs was conducted. Moreover, Deleuzian thought was moved away from the more structural concepts (rhizome, plateau, plane of consistency, plane of immanence, assemblage, the different dualities, concepts, metaphors) towards the viscous concepts (line of flight, topology, becoming, in-between, affects). The research process itself became understandable as a line of flight rather than chronological sequence or trace.

The line of flight this thesis took also escaped the duality of practice and science in multiple ways (science is a practice; a reflexive praxis is scientific work; practice theory is a scientific practicality). Escapes the duality and discrepancy of policy and practice (Heijmans, 2012). The multiple lines of flight in this thesis and in my professional life have also blurred and transgressed many boundaries. I

³⁵⁹ Actually, the nomad learns how to follow and not how to frame. Thus the word followwork would be more appropriate than framework. The followwork is necessary for two reasons: to be able to let-go and to be able to anticipate the unknowable in-becoming. Followwork is also an alternative for the academic debate about network versus meshwork (Ingold, 2008)

operate across the disciplinary boundaries of Biology, Anthropology, Forestry, Sociology, Philosophy and Political Science. I worked in several organizations crossing boundaries from one to the other. I worked in several countries and within countries always crossing the boundaries of the office and the 'field'.

This thesis is produced by a nomad (Deleuze and Guattari, 2004) who travelled extensively and worked on four continents. I feel part of a Dutch nomadic tradition lived by discoverers, colonists, pirates, entrepreneurs, diplomats, scientists, development experts, migrants and many others. With hindsight, I seem to have followed Deleuze and Guattari's advice: "Lodge yourself on a stratum, experiment with the possibilities it offers, find an advantageous place on it, find potential lines of deterritorialization, possible lines of flight, experience them, produce flow conjunctures here and there" (2004: 178). As a nomad I lodged in de MoFA, explored the possibilities the work in an Embassy provides, found a privileged place as Strategic Policy Advisor, encountered a line of flight into the University and intended to establish conjunctures among diplomacy, science and art/activism.

Now that this thesis is finalized I am confident that it will be performed (more than explained) during my new assignments in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

Glossary and conceptual relations

Aid	A transfer (mostly of capital, knowledge or technology) from a donor to a beneficiary to help the latter develop into the direction of the former. Aid is given or delivered (in contrast with development cooperation which is mutually worked out in a partnership).
Assemblage	An entirety of loosely associated heterogeneous fragments that does not necessarily form a whole, stable totality (in line with DeLanda, 2002). The fragments can be delinked and relinked to another assemblage (so-called relations of exteriority). It is important to stress that in my case the heterogeneity of fragments not only refers to different fragments (a policy text, a policy officer, a budget line, a partner organisation all assembled into one entirety or 'activity'). Assemblage contain fragments that differ in nature (solid and fluid), depending on different degrees of differentiation. This makes assemblages topological. Within the assemblage there are different differences.
Becoming	The transformation process of a being triggered by the vitality of the virtual (potentialities). It is a trajectory or movement through fluid space-time whereby space-time is constituted. As a noun the becoming refers to a multity or un-thing that is not yet distinct, solid, territorialized, determined or stabilized.
Cooperation	Conventionally, it refers to the way people collaborate in the pursuit of a common aim, an affection, a shared intention, a practice or otherwise. Here it is used for the effort of multiple human and non-human actors to work together or affect each other to create a common.
<i>Corregimiento</i>	A subdivision of the Yuracaré territory. The territory is the forested and partly cultivated land with the Chapare river running through it. The <i>corregimientos</i> are slices of the territory. Near the river the border between two <i>corregimientos</i> is a clear point and there is a dividing line. Further inland, the boundary is blurred and merely a direction differentiates one from the other. For this different differentiation, the <i>corregimiento</i> 's nature is characterized as being viscous.
Deterritorialized	The process of rendering the associations of fragments within an assemblage unstable, undifferentiated and loose. It results in an topological spatiality (everything gets blurred in a flow) which I call fluid space-time. It is the being-a-becoming.
Development	Conventionally it refers to the process of progress or advancement towards a well-defined goal (the modern and developed). Here it will also be used as a contingent process of becoming, which is immanent in assemblages. It is the becoming-a-being (territorialisation) and the being-a-becoming (deterritorialization). Development is the movement from solid to fluid space-time and <i>vice versa</i> . In space-time, development is not only imminent (to come) but immanent (become).
Entity	A separate socio-material thing, unit, singularity or building block. The things or beings that are enacted through differentiation, individuation and territorialization processes or practices.
Fluid	Unstable, amorphous, blurred socio-material in-betweens and becomings (it is not substance but relational and processual like a movement).
Followwork	An unframed 'compass' that indicates direction without predetermination and without a priori assuming a space. It enables some sort of anticipation or pre-emption of the potential immanent in the actual.
Haeceity	Sets of movements and rest in-between some-things and un-things. These are dynamics of becoming-a-being and being-a-becoming. It can also refer to relations, not between entities but constitutive of entities. The entities and

	things are expressions or temporary outcomes of the relations. Haecceities as movements are un-thingly matters rather than thinged matter.
Line of flight	An escape from the solid, gridded space-time. A de-part-ure from the gridlines (with their extensions, connected points and fixed network figures) that has neither a pre-determined starting point, nor an end point. It does not pass through space but is prior to space, constituting it (path creation, an actualization or a becoming).
Metaphysics	The branch of Philosophy that addresses the question ‘what is there, what is real?’ All there is, is space-time which is constituted by continuous movements or processes in-between becoming-a-being and being-a-becoming.
Multiplicity	The manifold (rather than multiple). “[A] fusional multiplicity (...) effectively goes beyond any opposition between the one and the multiple. A formal multiplicity of substantial attributes that, as such, constitutes the ontological unity of substance” (Deleuze and Guattari, 2004: 170).
Multity	A superposition one, many and multiple at the same time: one whole with many fragments and multiple dimensions (or potentialities). It is an undifferentiated combination of singularity, plurality and multiplicity. It entails the combination of more, different and entangled. A multity has blurred boundaries and a fluid nature. A multity is one of the un-things.
Network	A totality of entities, their relations and the processes that take place within it. The network form a whole with emergent properties.
Ontology	The branch of Philosophy that addresses the question ‘what is the nature of the real?’ The nature of realities is a viscous, in-between intensity of being-a-becoming and becoming-a-being.
Practice	It can refer to a set of activities or behaviors performed in space and over time. E.g. practices of assembling. It can also refer to a way of doing things or enacting the world. E.g. diplomacy as a practice. Practice can thus be acted out in the <i>a priori</i> world (performance) and through an <i>a priori</i> practice, a particular world can be enacted or brought into being (performativity).
Reterritorialization	The process of capturing a deterritorialization and rendering the associations of fragments stable, differentiated, coded and dense. It is the striation and congealing of space-time. It is the becoming-a-being.
Self-development	I use the term to refer to endogenous development based on the agency of insiders as subjects of their own development (Chapter 3). I use it in later chapters to refer to the continuous, immanent dynamics of assemblages that are the result of the relations of affect.
Solid	Fixed, stable, determined, structured, differentiated and bounded socio-material entities and grids. Solid space-time is the world as present or represented in its stable and territorialized entities, beings or body-expressions.
Space-time	All there is. All that exists (the actual and potential). Space-time is not only constituted by things, matter, bodies or beings. These are merely the emergent outcomes of the relations and territorialization processes that take place in space-time. The processes are co-constituted by intensive differences in-between solid (becoming-a-being) and fluid (being-a-becoming).
Territorialization	The process of rendering the associations of fragments within an assemblage stable, differentiated, coded and dense. It results in a striated spatiality (everything fits neatly into a box) which I call solid space-time. Territorialization is the formation of a solid space-time, either by lengthening and strengthening the grid and network or by capturing the fluid socio-material substance.
Topography	A way of depicting space through graphics using points, lines, demarcations, geometric figures, and external reference (the axes), etc. It not necessarily depicts a geographical place but can also be used to depict a conceptual territory (actor mappings, social networks, etc.)
Topology	A way of thinking about relationality, space, and movement beyond metrics,

mapping, and calculation. I use it in two ways. First, as the least differentiated space where different geometric figures (a triangle, circle, etc.) can be deformed into one and the same figure without cutting or adding to the figure (DeLanda, 2002). It is a space of surfaces where space is self-referential (points relate to other points on the same surface). Topology is not about shape, position, form, extension, location of things or distances between things but about what holds them together. The second way I use topology it to indicate the totality of spaces that are differently differentiated (see Martin and Secor, 2014). It progressively differentiates between the least differentiated, the differential, the projective, the affective and the metric Euclidean geometries (DeLanda, 2002). I use topology to characterize an ontology of differently differentiated intensities (in-between things and unthings, in-between becoming-a-being and being-a-becoming). These also refer to intensities of stability. Topology is useful to go beyond topography in order to acknowledge the fluid space-time and with that, to understand different differences. Topological ontology is elaborated here to shed new insight on the nature of things, un-things and processes of thinging.

Un-thing

A real space-time intensity that is characterized by their unstable, undetermined and fluid nature. An example of an un-thing is the multity and haecceity.

Viscosity

Viscosity can be seen as stickiness or as an intensity in-between solid and liquid (like syrup or glass). I use the latter meaning and couple it to ontology: the nature of what exists is viscous, never fully solid nor fully fluid.

Summary

This thesis reflects the results of action-research carried out in development cooperation, policy development and diplomacy. Research was conducted in three communities in Bolivia as well as in the offices of development practitioners, policy makers and diplomats. The research focuses on international cooperation in practice and as a practice. In this thesis I share my insights on how strategies, approaches and policies affect and shape international cooperation. *In practice*, development practitioners tend to shape their practices as interventions in order to fix the recipient's problems through transfers. They shape the so-called beneficiaries' social, discursive, political and performative practices. They assume policies will guide their actions through straightforward implementation. This might work very efficiently and effectively in rather simple situations in which entities (singular things or phenomena) and relations are separable, processes are linear and causality is easily understood. Both this interventionist type of development cooperation and simple situations are characterized by assumptions regarding high levels of differentiation, segmentation, predictability and stability.

If the situation becomes complex rather than simple, which is often the case in development cooperation, then entities are still separable but relations have become inseparable (one relation affects other relations). And processes have become non-linear (feedback loops). I argue that in such a complex situation, development cooperation can best be shaped by the facilitation strategy and the fit-in-context approach. And it is better to understand policies as not being transferred through intermediaries but as being translated through mediators during implementation. To understand how 'shaping' takes place in such complex situations, the Actor-oriented approach and Actor-Network Theory are a useful frameworks.

In my field research I noted that besides being complex, the reality I encountered can be fluid. This occurs when even the entities are inseparable, unstable, undifferentiated, volatile, turbulent or undetermined. I will give four examples. First, the Yuracaré *corregimientos*. These are territorial subdivisions. My research revealed that near the river they are demarcated by clear points and lines and that inside the forest their boundaries is blurred. So their nature is partly bounded and neat as well as partly amorphous and fused. The second example is about a sawmill. The sawmill the Yuracaré received from a development organization, has multiple, sticky imprints. These make its boundary blurred. Its nature is not a material singularity (one machine) but a socio-material assemblage of materialities and embodied knowledges, meanings, etc. Its sticky, blurred nature makes it inseparable from its earlier context. The third example is about inseparable policy issues. My research revealed that *traide* is an emerging policy assemblage which merges aid and trade and dissolves the traditional dividing line between those policy fields or practices. Finally, the example of Earth-beings. These are unknowns rather than determined entities. These various rather undifferentiated 'objects' that I encountered in my research, are causes for failure and surprise. They escape the common practice and notions used in international cooperation. Therefore, I propose different concepts to analyse them: *becomings* rather than *beings* and *multities* rather than *entities*.

These *becomings* and *multities* render the situation fluid rather than complex. This poses challenges for development cooperation, policy development and diplomacy in practice. Instead of intervention or facilitation I argue there is a need to encourage self-development and to not be afraid to let-go. This strategy requires a different set of social, discursive, political and performative practices. Instead of the 'fix-their-problems' or 'fit-in-context' approaches, this research shows a need for a 'go-with-the-flow approach'. Instead of controlling or mediating the policy cycle, there is a need to give space for creative reassembling.

In these ways fluidity affects international cooperation *as practice*. *Becomings* and *multities* reveal a viscous reality of different differences. The entities constitute a topographic, solid space-time of points (positions), lines (relations, transitions), figures, extensions, phases, calculations and external

references. The multities constitute a topological, fluid space-time of vectors, manifolds, intensities, flows (transformations), escapes and self-references. The solid and fluid are not separable but co-constituted and form an immanent viscous entirety. In this thesis, the viscosity does not refer to the nature or physicality of materiality but viscosity refers to the nature of realities, that is to see, it is ontological. Realities of different natures are enfolding in a continuous movement in-between becoming-a-being (stabilizing, differentiating) and being-a-becoming (destabilizing, deterritorializing). In such dynamic realities, development is not an externally aided or imposed transition from A to B but is always self-development of a partly amorphous assemblage. Development as a becoming is a transformation and movement in-between A and B (solid and fluid). Development cooperation is neither shaped by transfers nor actor-networking but by the continuous practices of assembling in the midst of processes of de- and reterritorialization. And policy development is not a cyclical process in time (where formulation is followed by implementation) but a movement in space-time, with stabilizing forces and escapes affecting the assemblages (see Chapter 6).

As part of working in and studying international cooperation I also engaged with the practice of diplomacy (see Chapter 7). My research focuses on the changing bilateral relationship between the Netherlands and Bolivia. Both governments explored and desired a relation among equals. Equality was to be found in mutually beneficial geo-economic cooperation. In the new bilateral relationship, the lithium deposits in Bolivia became central, but the nature of lithium was differently perceived. Lithium can be conceived of as a passive natural resource out there. It is a chemical, inert substance placed in the periodic table of the elements. However, in Andean ontologies, lithium is an animated matter, an Earth-being. *Through Andean practice*, lithium is enacted as being alive and it must be taken care of. These different natures of lithium were negotiated in the diplomatic encounter I studied. What was foreign to politics (the natures of nature) has become part of foreign politics. This ontological politics is a transformative force for diplomacy as a practice. Diplomacy, seen as the art of overcoming incommensurable differences, is no longer merely a geopolitical or geo-economic affair but it became an ontological affair. It is needed to address peacefully the different ways of shaping, thinking and enacting worlds. The world is not only prior to practice (in terms of acting and performing) but a practice is prior to the world. The performativity of practice is enacting the world. Diplomats then become creative world-makers.

Through a different practice, people bring different and multiple worlds into being. These multiple worlds can have different natures. I argue there is a need for acknowledging the different natures of the natural and of the human. The political nature of negotiating and enacting (often implicitly) different ontologies has to be acknowledged and should become part of diplomacy. The significance of this particular diplomatic practice no longer lies in the negotiation of incommensurable political positions but in negotiating incommensurable ontologies and worlds. In turbulent times, diplomacy is needed more than ever but simultaneously in need of transformation and expansion.

Finally, diplomatic skills are needed in social sciences to address certain biases towards the topographical, particularly in Actor-Network Theory. A Deleuzian complementation, focusing on the varying intensities of separability, differentiation, stability and determination, would bring in more symmetry between the topographical and topological.

Samenvatting

Dit proefschrift is de weerslag van de resultaten van actie-onderzoek naar ontwikkelingssamenwerking, beleidsontwikkeling en diplomatie. Het onderzoek is verricht in drie gemeenschappen in Bolivia en ik de kantoren van ontwikkelingswerkers, beleidsmakers en diplomaten. Het onderzoek richt zich op internationale samenwerking in de praktijk en als praktijk. In dit proefschrift deel ik mijn bevindingen ten aanzien van de manieren waarop strategieën, benaderingen en beleid bepalen hoe internationale samenwerking vorm wordt gegeven. In de praktijk neigen ontwikkelingswerkers er naar om te interveniëren en zodoende de problemen van de doelgroep op te lossen met behulp van overdrachten. Zij vormen daarmee de sociale, discursieve, politieke en handelingspraktijken van de doelgroep. Zij nemen aan dat het beleid richting geeft aan hun activiteiten en dat daarmee het beleid rechtstreeks kan worden uitgevoerd. Deze werkwijze van ontwikkelingswerkers kan heel efficiënt en effectief zijn in vrij simpele situaties waar entiteiten (afzonderlijke dingen of fenomenen) en relaties van elkaar gescheiden zijn, waar processen lineair zijn en waar causaliteit gemakkelijk te begrijpen is. Zowel de interventionistische werkwijze als de simpele situaties vooronderstellen hoge niveaus van differentiatie, segmentatie, voorspelbaarheid en stabiliteit.

Als de situatie complex in plaats van simpel wordt, wat vaak het geval is in OS, dan zijn de entiteiten nog steeds van elkaar te onderscheiden maar worden de relaties onafscheidbaar (de ene relatie beïnvloedt de andere) en processen worden niet-lineair (*feedback loops*). Ik stel dat in zulke complexe situaties OS het beste vorm gegeven kan worden met de facilitatie strategie en de *fit-in-context* benadering. En het is beter om aan te nemen dat beleid niet wordt doorgegeven van beleidsmakers naar beleidsuitvoerders maar dat het wordt vertaald in uitvoering. Om te begrijpen hoe ‘vorming’ van IS plaatsvindt in complexe situaties, zijn de actor-georiënteerde benadering en de Actor-Netwerk Theorie geschikte kaders.

In mijn veldonderzoek kwam ik er achter dat de werkelijkheid naast complexiteit ook vloeibaar kan zijn. Dit gebeurt als zelfs de entiteiten onafscheidelijk, instabiel, ongedifferentieerd, vluchtig, turbulent of ongewis worden. Ik zal vier voorbeelden geven. Allereerst de Yuracaré *corregimientos*. Dit zijn territoriale onderverdelingen. Mijn onderzoek toont aan dat deze *corregimientos* nabij de rivier gemarkeerd zijn door duidelijke punten en lijnen. Maar in het bos zijn de grenzen doezelig en vervaagd. Dus de natuur van deze *corregimientos* is gedeeltelijk begrensd en keurig en gedeeltelijk amorf en vervloeid. Het tweede voorbeeld gaat over een zaagmachine. De zaag die de Yuracaré van een ontwikkelingsorganisatie kregen, heeft meerdere, kleverige ‘indrukken’. Deze zorgen ervoor dat de grens van de zaag doezelig is. De natuur van de zaag is niet een materiele enkelvoudigheid (één machine) maar een sociaal-materiele assemblage van stoffelijkheid en ‘ingebakken’ kennis, betekenissen, etc. Deze kleverige, doezelige natuur maakt de zaag onlosmakelijk van diens eerdere context. Het derde voorbeeld gaat over onafscheidelijke beleidsterreinen. Mijn onderzoek toont aan dat *traide* (‘handulp’) een beleidsassemblage in opkomst is dat hulp en handel vermengt en waarin de traditionele grenzen tussen deze beleidsvelden of –praktijken vervloeien. Tot slot als voorbeeld de Aard-wezens. Deze zijn veeleer ‘ongekenden’ in plaats van duidelijk bepaalde entiteiten. Deze verscheidene, ongedifferentieerde objecten die ik in mijn onderzoek tegen kwam, zijn oorzaken van falen en verrassingen. Zij ontsnappen aan de gangbare praktijk en noties gebruikt in IS. Daarom stel ik andere concepten voor om deze objecten te analyseren: wordingsprocessen in plaats van wezens en meerheden in plaats van eenheden.

Deze wordingsprocessen en meerheden zorgen ervoor dat de situatie vloeibaar en niet alleen complex wordt. Dit creëert uitdagingen voor OS, beleidsontwikkeling en diplomatie in de praktijk. In plaats van interventies of facilitatie, beargumenteer ik dat er de noodzaak ontstaat om zelfontwikkeling te stimuleren en om niet bang te zijn om zaken op hun beloop te laten gaan. Deze strategie wordt vormgegeven door een verschillende set van sociale, discursieve, politieke en handelingspraktijken. In plaats van het oplossen van ‘hun’ problemen of de *fit-in-context* benadering, gaat het om een

‘meebewegen op de stroom’ benadering. In plaats van het beheersen of bemiddelen van de beleidscyclus, is er de noodzaak tot het geven van ruimte voor creatieve herassemblage.

Op deze wijze beïnvloedt vloeibaarheid de internationale samenwerking als praktijk. Wordingsprocessen en meerheden tonen een stroperige werkelijkheid van verschillende verschillen. De entiteiten vormen een topografische, vaste tijd-ruimte van punten (posities), lijnen (relaties, transities), figuren, lengten, fases, berekeningen en externe referenties. De meerheden vormen een topologische, vloeibare tijd-ruimte van vectoren, veelvouden, intensiteiten, stromen (transformaties), ontsnappingen en zelf-referenties. Het vaste en vloeibare zijn niet gescheiden maar samen gevormd als een immanente viscositeit geheel. In dit proefschrift refereert viscositeit niet naar de aard of het fysieke van materialen maar naar de natuur van realiteiten; dat wil zeggen: vloeibaarheid is ontologisch. Werkelijkheden van verschillende natuur ontvouwen zich in een continue beweging tussen de wording-van-een-wezen (stabilisering, differentiering) en het wezen-van-een-wording (destabilisering, deterritorialisering). In zulke dynamische werkelijkheden is ontwikkeling niet een van buitenaf geholpen of opgedrongen transitie van A naar B maar is het altijd een zelfontwikkeling van een viscositeit assemblage. Ontwikkeling als een wordingsproces is een transformatie en beweging tussen A en B (vast en vloeibaar). OS wordt noch door overdrachten vorm gegeven noch door actoren die netwerken. Maar door de continue praktijken van assembleren te midden van processen van de- en reterritorialisering. En beleidsontwikkeling is niet een cyclisch proces in de tijd (waar formulering wordt gevolgd door uitvoering) maar een beweging in tijd-ruimte, met stabiliserende krachten en ontsnappingen die de assemblages beïnvloeden.

Als onderdeel van het werken in en het bestuderen van IS ben ik ook betrokken bij de diplomatieke praktijk. Mijn onderzoek richt zich op de veranderende bilaterale relatie tussen Nederland en Bolivia. Beide overheden verlangden naar een relatie onder gelijke. Gelijkheid werd gezocht in de vorm van wederzijds profijtelijke geo-economische samenwerking. In de nieuwe bilaterale relatie kwamen de lithium voorraden centraal te staan. Maar de natuur van lithium werd verschillend opgevat. Lithium kan worden opgevat als een passieve natuurlijke hulpbron in het milieu. Het is een chemische, inerte substantie, gelokaliseerd in het periodiek systeem. Echter, in de Andes ontologieën is lithium een bezielde materie, een Aard-wezen. Dóór de Andes praktijk wordt lithium ‘volbracht’ of ‘opgevoerd’ (*enacted*) als levend wezen waar voor gezorgd moet worden. Deze verschillende naturen van lithium werden uit onderhandeld in het diplomatieke gesprek dat ik bestudeerde. Wat vreemd was voor de politiek (de naturen van de natuur), werd deel van de buitenlandpolitiek. Deze ontologische politiek is een transformatieve kracht voor diplomatie als praktijk. Diplomatie, gezien als de kunst van het overwinnen van schijnbaar onverenigbare verschillen, is niet langer slechts een geopolitieke of geo-economische zaak maar het verwordt soms tot een ontologische zaak. Diplomatie is nodig om op vreedzame wijze om te gaan met verschillende manieren van vormgeven, denken en volbrengen van werelden. De wereld is niet alleen voorafgaand aan praktijken (in termen van handelingen en gedragingen) maar een praktijk is voorafgaand aan de wereld. De uitvoerkracht van een praktijk volbrengt de wereld. Diplomaten worden daarmee creatieve wereld-makers.

Dóór een verschillende praktijk brengen mensen verschillende en meerdere werelden voort. Deze meerdere werelden kunnen verschillende naturen hebben. Ik beweer dat er een behoefte bestaat voor erkenning van de verschillende naturen van de natuur en van de mens. De politieke aard van het onderhandelen en volbrengen van deze veelal impliciete ontologieën dient onderkend te worden en dient deel te worden van de diplomatie. Het belang van deze specifieke diplomatieke praktijk ligt niet langer in het onderhandelen over schijnbaar onverenigbare politieke posities maar onverenigbare ontologieën en werelden. In turbulente tijden is diplomatie meer dan ooit nodig maar tegelijkertijd is er de behoefte om diplomatie om te vormen en uit te breiden.

Tot slot zijn diplomatieke vaardigheden nodig in sociale wetenschappen om bepaalde vooroordelen ten aanzien van het topografische te adresseren, vooral in Actor-Netwerk Theorie. Een Deleuziaanse aanvulling gericht op de verscheidene intensiteiten van scheidbaarheid, differentiatie, stabiliteit en bepaaldheid, zou meer symmetrie brengen tussen het topografische en topologische.

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Front cover photo: the copper market in the *medina* of Fès, Morocco. The blurredness of the people who move stands for the fluidity elaborated upon in this thesis. The leg of the moving person on the right and the blueish figure in the foreground can be seen as an ‘un-things’: unclear, amorphous, without sharp boundary and not determined (see chapter 8). By Laurent Umans.

Back cover photo: the High Toe Spring Runner by ceramic artist Petra de Vree. This bird depicts an assemblage of parts that stands for the assemblage theory of realities mobilized throughout this thesis. The statue is the expression or actualization of the potentiality of clay and metal. Or the potentiality of the creative mind since the springs (used for the tail) in Dutch language are called ‘veren’, which is the same word the Dutch use for feathers. Springs have become potential feathers.

