

**SOCIAL ENTERPRISE AND
COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT:
THEORY INTO PRACTICE IN TWO
CAMBODIAN VILLAGES**

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For Star

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Acronyms and Abbreviations

ADB	Asian Development Bank
AMK	Angkor Mikroheranhvatho Kampuchea
BSDA	Buddhism for Social Development Action
CBO	Community Based Organisation
CDD	Community Driven Development
CE	Community Economies
CNRP	Cambodia National Rescue Party
CPP	Cambodia People's Party
DeLPHE	Development Partnerships in Higher Education
EMES	EMergence des Entreprises Sociales en Europe (European Social Enterprise Research Network)
FI	Friends International
GBF	Grassroots Business Fund
GDP	Gross Domestic Product
GIZ	Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit (Germany Agency for Technical Cooperation)
GNI	Gross National Income
IDE	International Development Enterprises
IFC	International Finance Cooperation
NGO	Non-Governmental Organisation
INGO	International Non-Governmental Organisation
LDC	Less Developed Country
LNGO	Local Non-Governmental Organisation
KAPE	Kampuchean Action for Primary Education
MFI	Microfinance Institution
MAFF	Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries
MoP	Ministry of Planning
MoYES	Ministry of Youth, Education and Sport
ODA	Overseas Development Assistance
PRK	People's Republic of Kampuchea
PRPK	People's Revolutionary Party of Kampuchea
PTSD	Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder
RCG	Royal Government of Cambodia
RUPP	Royal University of Phnom Penh
UK	United Kingdom
UNCG	United Nations Global Compact
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UNTAC	United Nations Transitional Authority of Cambodia
US	USA – United States of America
USD	United States Dollar
WISE	Work Integration Social Enterprise
VDC	Village Development Committee

Abstract

Social enterprise (or business driven by social objectives) is a prominent focus of development policy. In higher income countries it has become a strategy for regional development or regeneration by creating optimal levels of social value out of under-utilised resources. In developing countries, social enterprise is seen to offer hope for sustainable development by reducing dependency on aid, developing markets and improving the basis for economic growth. Social enterprise is widely linked to microfinance, corporate social responsibility and ‘business at the bottom of the pyramid’ and there is particular attention to heroic, socially entrepreneurial individuals. But critical literature shows there is a tension between the top-down ‘development’ driven view of social enterprise and a bottom-upwards grassroots community development approach driven by wellbeing. This thesis explores the second agenda in the context of Cambodia, a post-colonial and post-conflict, aid dependent developing country that has undergone rapid economic transition since the late 1990’s. Support for the top down, development driven view of social enterprise in Cambodia has become a prominent focus of international development institutions while NGO’s are increasingly turning to social enterprise as a substitute for grants as the nature of developmental aid assigned to the country has changed. The thesis asks – *How are social enterprises likely to be understood at the grassroots community level in Cambodia? and What discourses of social enterprise are likely to yield sustainable effects at this level of society?*

This research is multi-disciplinary, drawing from economic geography and substantive economic anthropology as well as the social enterprise management and social entrepreneurship literature. It engages with and critiques some of the most widely held theoretical approaches concerning social value and economic value, social capital, collectivity and solidarity, the attributes of social entrepreneurs and the naturalised ethics of social entrepreneurs. Theoretically, I make the case for seeing social value in pragmatic terms as an embodied process that is situated in context. This allows for an historicised analysis of reciprocity and mutual self-help that is oriented towards contextualised outcomes vis-a-vis wellbeing. The actions of some socially entrepreneurial actors give hope for social economies at the grassroots but they also call

ethics into the question. It has to be appreciated that economic solidarity is processed through a host of competing interests and obligations.

This thesis was undertaken using an action research project in two adjacent peri-urban villages in Kampong Cham Province, Cambodia. The project was undertaken in collaboration with ten villagers with different skills and a partially shared interest in community development. It began with activities to stimulate new economic subjectivities and to amplify latent subjectivities and moved onto opportunities for social enterprise development that could foster sustainable and democratic development pathways. Significant barriers to grassroots led, cooperatively managed social enterprises were encountered. But in the research process ‘little narratives’ were uncovered, embodied within basic economic activities that underwrite villagers’ survival while also having social, stabilising effects within the villages.

The findings court controversy, as far as past traumatic events are found to have an enduring impact on economic subjectivities and grassroots reciprocity which intermeshes with the more recent impact of development strategies including microfinance and ‘free trade zones.’ The research has implications for how projects to promote social enterprise development within village communities might be approached by Third Sector organisations in Cambodia.

Introduction

This thesis is situated within the tension between a top down approach to social enterprise as a strategy for economic development and a bottom up approach to social enterprise as a means for community development. The research takes place in Cambodia – a country with a recent past of social terror and trauma where villagers have also been exposed to the rapid advancement of monetised, capitalist economic relationships over the past 15 years.

Social enterprise is generally considered to be a business that is enacted to achieve social objectives. These objectives can range from employment for hard to reach groups, to the provision of underprovided social goods and services (Nyssens 2006). Social enterprises are part of the social economy (Amin 2009; Pearce 2003, 2009) and they are also a vehicle for an activity commonly referred to as social entrepreneurship (Tandon 2014). Social enterprise has been a prominent part of welfare policy discourse ever since the 1990's in Europe and the USA and more recently it has become so in North East Asia (Bidet & Eum 2011; Defourny & Nyssens 2010; Park & Wilding 2013).

Social enterprise is also incorporated into policy makers' strategies for 'development.' In Europe social enterprise is a focus of 'regional development agencies' seeking inclusive economic growth and it has an important role to play in regeneration programs (Haugh 2005; Kerlin 2006; Toner et al. 2008). In the developing world, however, social enterprise is subsumed within general talk about new markets, economic growth and 'business at the bottom of the pyramid' (Castresana 2013). In this context social enterprise has gained currency in contemporary discourses of 'international development' and as such has become a focus for international development institutions including the World Bank and United Nations Global Compact (Koch 2010; Power et al. 2012). Social enterprise has broadened the interest of such agencies in how markets can be harnessed to achieve diverse objectives including female empowerment, improvements in education standards, sanitation and care for the environment (Hackett 2013).

This thesis ultimately aims to find out what the *raison d'être* for social enterprises might be at the grassroots village level in Cambodia, where the 'social economy' is under-researched. The academic contribution is contextual as well as theoretical. The importance of amplifying under-recognised grassroots narratives, or 'little narratives', in social enterprise research in the developing world has been pressed upon me through nearly three years of prior work in the social enterprise field in Cambodia. In particular, my experiences of helping to set up and coordinate the National Social Enterprise Conference of Cambodia has brought me into contact with international development agencies and 'impact investors' that shape the social enterprise terrain in certain ways. Narratives of the grassroots and community and 'community development' seemed not to feature in their thinking very much. Instead the language I encountered was built upon inclusive business, waged employment, under-served markets and financial services. Little of what I heard seemed driven from the bottom upwards.

The thesis draws on the principle that research is performative and that in engaged research with communities, performance is as bodily as it is linguistic. This principle draws from performative research in the arts and media, being a practice-led strategy which in itself commands particular approaches to research design, conduct and reporting (Haseman 2006). It draws on this alongside geographical perspectives on performativity and subjectivity – that is, new, transformative horizons that are encountered by individuals and communities through their bodily experiences and relations with the environment and other people (Gibson-Graham 2006b). It is informed by pragmatic views on how people's knowledge making shapes and is shaped by the world around them – a view of *being in the world* that Varela, Thompson & Rosch (1992) call 'embodied cognition.' The research project importantly responds to the call for real-time research on social enterprise and entrepreneurship that delves into the unfolding of different actor's narratives, a research strategy otherwise called 'multi-voicing' that increases the scope for inputs into social enterprise discourse (Steyaert & Dey 2010).

This research follows to some extent in footsteps of other researches that have provided substantive, community-focused input into research on social enterprise development (Amin et al. 2003; Farmer et al. 2012; Zografos 2007). Geography is a useful discipline for social enterprise research because, as Muñoz (2010) writes, it has 'the potential to address current knowledge gaps related to why social entrepreneurialism develops,

thrives and fails to differing degrees within different locales' (305). The addition of geography is also one instance of multi-disciplinary input which is needed in a field that is often constituted by the synthesis of management concepts (Steyaert & Dey 2010, 244).

Most critically, if social enterprise is explored as a way in which new economies are brought into being, then this is likely to require an understanding of the relational and situated (otherwise geographical) nature of these new economies. This follows from economic anthropology and the understanding that markets and economies are situated in specificity of context (Polanyi 1957, 1977) and the social economy (within which social enterprises tend to be situated) is no different (Amin 2009). To be clear, I am adopting, one part of Karl Polanyi's foci, which is to show that rational maximisation of utility is not intrinsically a good predictor of the behaviour of individuals as they go about creating their livelihood because their behaviour cannot be disembedded from the environment within which it takes place. This goes alongside feminist economic literature which shows how economic decisions are not driven only by economic reasoning and that economies are also diversely constituted by different ways of working, exchanging and organizing (Gibson-Graham 2006a, 2006b; 2008). In this thesis, this substantivist geographical focus is combined with other substantive approaches to the economic relations of village life in South East Asia (Scott 1972, 1977; Scott & Kerkvliet 1973) and Cambodia (Krishnamurthy 1999; Ledgerwood 1998; Ledgerwood & Vijghen 2002; Ovesen & Trankell 2014; Ovesen et al. 1996).

This research explores the villagers' appetite for collective action related to social enterprise and community development. This exploration is open ended as people's subjectivities are not assumed to be purely individualistic or wholly relational. People can have both subjectivities, sometimes at the same time. Given that collectivity is contingent and slippery, and thus always needs to be framed in its own particular context, my argument is that the concept of a social enterprise is also slippery and situated. I make this argument regardless of the view held by some academics, that definitional debates in the social enterprise literature are nowadays an out of date concern (Doherty et al. 2014). Whatever *social* enterprise really means still has to contend with the multiple, constantly unsettled and conflicting subjectivities and values of its constitutive stakeholders.

Chapter One initiates the thesis, by unpacking the research question ‘How is social enterprise understood at the grass roots level in Cambodian communities and what discourses of social enterprise are likely to yield sustainable effects?’ This chapter addresses the key issues inherent in this question and explains where this question has come from, as a result of prior empirical observations and engagement with literature on social enterprise and entrepreneurship. The first section of the Chapter begins by dealing with the circumstances giving rise to Cambodia’s on-going aid dependency. In particular, decades of conflict and trauma are outlined, which includes the 1965-73 US bombing campaign as part of the Vietnam War, the rise of the notorious Khmer Rouge regime throughout the 1970’s, subsequent civil war throughout the 1980’s and the heavily aid-funded international interventions from the early 1990’s. While the Khmer Rouge period in particular provides a distinctive backdrop to the thesis with profound social effects, including long term consequences for village life according to various accounts, the thesis is premised on a strengths based approach to social enterprise and community development. Cognizant of the advice that practitioners in Cambodia who dwell on this point in time can render incapacity to act as a self-fulfilling prophecy, I have tried to focus on successes within village communities to date including ways in which resources and social relations are mobilised in situ. It is therefore in the course of data analysis at later stages in the thesis, particularly in Chapter Seven, where the Khmer Rouge legacy is revisited in greater detail.

Chapter One continues with discussion about social enterprise as a form of revenue generation for NGO’s in Cambodia, in the context of their declining access to aid. This is followed by coverage of the wider rise of social enterprise in Asia and the place of social enterprise within ‘international development.’ Personal empirical experiences from teaching a post-graduate social enterprise course at the Royal University of Phnom Penh and coordinating the National Social Enterprise Conference of Cambodia from 2011 onwards are interwoven with this discussion. Emerging concerns are then identified as: the instrumental focus on social enterprise and entrepreneurship; conceptions of social entrepreneurship emanating from US business schools and foundations that support social entrepreneurship and finally the tension between social enterprise as a model for an NGO’s revenue generation and social enterprise development as a means for grassroots community development and wellbeing.

Chapter Two analyses the theoretical literature related to the emergence of social enterprises, their role in social change and their role within communities. Definitional issues and different discourses (including social capital, the public sphere, civil society, collectivity and social value) are looked at critically and also related analytically to the Asian context. The contribution to scholarly research from the European Social Enterprise Research Network (EMES) is considered. Modes of thinking about diverse community economies and potential role of social enterprise as part of local economic development and resilience are brought into the discussion, to provide ways of reframing social enterprise from an anti-essentialist perspective. This Chapter enables me to arrive at finalised, refined research questions.

In Chapter Three the methodology for my field work is set out. This begins with an exposition of performative research, justified in part by the principal that social enterprise and entrepreneurship research is itself performative. The potential contribution of action research to social enterprise in theory and practice is addressed by responding to calls for ‘real-time’ analysis of narratives in situations that reconstruct processes of social entrepreneurship. Performative action research for community development is contrasted with conventional participatory action research approaches. Ontological foundations are set out including the embodied learning process, generating data as opposed to only collecting it and also the need to attend to ‘little narratives’ to broaden the discussion about what social enterprise means and why people might choose to get involved with this. A discussion about ‘Asset Based Community Development’ and appreciative enquiry follows. Sampling methods for initial interviews and the recruitment of a ‘*hybrid research group*’ (involving ten villagers with different types of knowledge and interests) are set out. The research group members are introduced before I finish the chapter by outlining the design of activities in a three phase action research cycle.

In Chapter Four I lay out an economic geography of two villages in Kampong Cham Province, Cambodia, where action research fieldwork was undertaken. A preliminary analysis of field data from semi-structured interviews and focus group discussions with three prominent categories of labourers, namely informal local market traders, construction workers and garment factory workers sets the preliminary economic context for my research project. Modes of welfare provision, market mechanisms to meet basic needs and forms of social solidarity (including non-monetary exchange and

reciprocity and associational life that revolves around religious practices) are three axes for exploring the nature of the existing social economy in the two villages. Practices of care in the village community, in the absence of a welfare state, are set out using data that the action research group members collected. Market mechanisms are explored via survival strategies of local market traders and circumstances of garment factory workers, leading into analysis of microfinance as the main market-based safety net provided by NGOs in the locality.

In Chapter Five the use of Asset Based Community Development and appreciative enquiry is elaborated further as a means of initiating embodied learning processes. The first two phases of action research activities are covered, integrated with the analysis of emerging changes in the hybrid research group members' affective registers. Through a range of activities in the first phases, I sought to facilitate changes in subjectivity and to try and embed new subjectivities, at least temporarily, before proceeding with experiments with social enterprise development in Phase 3 of the action research cycle. Activities included workshops where group members undertook needs and asset mapping exercises, representing the community from perspectives of deficit on one hand and sufficiency on the other. Other workshops included exercises to help group members understand themselves as researchers in their community and also to develop conceptual understandings of social enterprise that can be related to local economic activity. The main analysis of subjectivity and affect is narrowed down to two significant interventions. Firstly, a field study visit, to a Local NGO's vocational training centre within one kilometre of the villages and secondly a visit to the National Social Enterprise Conference of Cambodia where the members of the hybrid research group took part in a workshop presentation.

Chapter Six discusses two undertakings in Phase 3 of the action research project, where social enterprise development was introduced. These undertakings were firstly bamboo furniture training and the secondly the development of a vegetable supply chain from the villages to a local school canteen. Focus group and workshop data leading to the identification of bamboo furniture training as an opportunity for villagers is set out. This is followed by problematic issues for participation that were presented by villagers' precarious livelihoods, their sense of dependency and routine indebtedness that necessitates a regular daily income. A form of community economy, embodied in the manufacturing bamboo barbecue skewers, emerges as a justifiable constraint on value

added activities that make use of natural bamboo resources. This particular economic activity is unpacked through the analysis of patron-client relationships, villagers' protection of their natural resources and also ways in which these arrangements might be reframed as a means of natural resource management. The vegetable supply chain development is explored through field notes and group discussion. The villagers' unshakable preference for 'family business' emerges as the most prominent concern in their appraisal of and deliberation on this economic opportunity. Theoretical concerns are raised relating to collectivity in much of the social enterprise literature and ways to reframe collectivity are sought out via the uncovering of 'little narratives.'

In Chapter Seven group members exit interviews are analysed alongside some of the data throughout the research cycles. The chapter reflects on the extent to which reflexive and active economic subjectivities and positive registers related to the community had been embodied. The results are very mixed. Subjectivities that emerged in the first two phases were not embodied enough for participants to welcome collective economic undertakings, although situated reflexive ethical and economic subjectivities were evident among some group members. Past traumatic experiences, during years of conflict and life under the Khmer Rouge particularly, were touched upon in two instances.

While I have endeavoured to avoid the saturation of the thesis by a narrative of deficit and damage, traumatic experiences such as those during the Khmer Rouge era in the 1970s cannot go neglected. They give dramatic explanation to deeply embedded reluctance to become collective economic subjects. It is therefore at this later point in the thesis, after bringing the exit interviews of hybrid research group members into focus, that I choose to look closely at local history during the Khmer Rouge period, including the Eastern Zone purges from 1977-1978. This puts social enterprise development into a very particular historicist context, considering the legacy of issues pertaining to community trust and villagers concerns with taking risks. The inter-generational impact of these traumas is also considered alongside the inadequacy of government provisioning for mental health issues. The successes of villagers in rebuilding their community in the aftermath of trauma are emphasised and the implications for Asset Based Community Development and social enterprise development are discussed. The chapter shows how villagers' sense of wellbeing and of future possibility is shaped by past and present circumstances in the present, concurring

with Winter (2004) that Khmer people's histories are ongoing and reconstituted in different ways.

Chapter Eight contains two case studies of actors who might be considered as local grassroots social entrepreneurs in different ways. The chapter fundamentally questions the way that the ethics of social entrepreneurs are naturalized in general and calls for different ways of approaching social entrepreneurs as subjects. The most well-resourced actor is a Village Chief. His business connections and connections with institutions including local authorities and microfinance institutions (MFIs) are considered, bringing out the role that patron client relationships play in local economic development. The conduct of the Village Chief is used to highlight tensions between individualistic and relational subjectivity. The less well-resourced actor is a teacher who exhibits socially entrepreneurial behaviour with limited resources. Ethical tensions in the enactment of social entrepreneurship are considered alongside local norms and narratives that determine how the 'moral economy' works within the villages. Ethical analysis of both studies employs a framework for ethics that is derived from care-of the self (Foucault 1984, 1997). This chapter culminates in ethical considerations induced by historic and present day considerations in the aftermath of the Khmer Rouge time and the more recent emergence of a political system built on patronage from the top of Cambodian society down to the village level.

In the conclusion of this thesis the main arguments are brought together in response to three research questions that were refined during the theoretical exposition in Chapters One and Two. These questions are:

- *What diverse forms of social enterprise will yield sustainable effects at the grassroots level in Cambodia (and also other developing countries)?*
- *What are the important processes of social valuation at the grassroots village level? How do these processes develop intersubjectively and how do they contrast with ideas about social value in the social enterprise literature?*
- *What kinds of subjectivity would promote, or can be linked to, acceptable forms of grassroots social entrepreneurship in the Cambodian village?*

I address these questions by considering whether specific models of social enterprise are likely to be embedded at the village level or whether a broader way of thinking about diverse economies, resilience and villagers' livelihood portfolios might be more

productive. I offer a pragmatic focus on valuation that zooms in on wellbeing and 'peace of mind' as a means by which social value can be appraised as a process (rather than a singular noun). I finally turn to matters of subjectivity including family values, community citizenship, leadership and a critical appraisal of the ethics of social entrepreneurship before proceeding to make recommendations and suggesting avenues for further research.

Chapter One: Evolution of a Research Question

Section One: Introduction

The central question that motivates this thesis has emerged from thinking and writing about social enterprise since 2007, firstly in the United Kingdom and then from 2008 onwards in Cambodia in Southeast Asia. I have been left asking – *How are social enterprises likely to be understood at the grassroots community level in Cambodia? And what discourses of social enterprise are likely to yield sustainable effects at this level of society?*

To unpack the research question that motivates this thesis this chapter proceeds as follows. Section Two sets the context for social enterprise development in Cambodia in its broadest sense. I begin to unpack contextual issues by looking at events that preceded the recent influx of international aid, including years of conflicts in Cambodia, followed by the proliferation of Non-Governmental Organisations (NGOs) and the more recent emergence of a discernible social enterprise sector in the country. Section Three integrates insights from the emergence of impact investment in Cambodia with the wider rise of social enterprise in Southeast Asia, and considers this as part of a paradigm for international development in the 21st Century. Bottom of the Pyramid Business is given critical consideration because this has driven much of the discussion about social enterprise in the international development discourse. Section Four integrates discussion on the role of social enterprise in international development, with empirical insights drawn from previous work. This includes my role as the coordinator of a partnership program that promoted social enterprise as an academic subject for postgraduate students in Cambodia and also initiated the National Social Enterprise Conference of Cambodia, starting in 2011. This role has helped me to better understand institutional perspectives on social enterprise development in Cambodia.

The final section of the chapter draws together some of my concerns. Taking social enterprise as a potential model for community well-being and empowerment, I unpack

my specific concern with grassroots meaning-making. I raise concerns with the entrepreneur focus and enterprise focus in some of the literature on social enterprise. I also critically review the role of NGOs in the emergence of civil society and the noticeable distance between NGOs and grassroots-level community organising in Cambodian villages.

Section Two: Social enterprise development in Cambodia: Setting the context

For more than a quarter of a century Cambodia has been one of the most aid dependent nations on earth. In the mid-2000s Cambodia was among 30 countries in greatest receipt of Overseas Development Assistance (ODA) in proportion to the Gross National Income. Only Afghanistan (among countries where the figures are available) was more dependent on ODA as a constitutive part of Government expenditure (Hughes 2009a, 136). In 2011, aid receipts (in grants and loans) from international development agencies and bilateral donors for social services, cross-sectoral programs, infrastructure and economic development came to more than 1.23billion USD, equating to around half of the Royal Government of Cambodia's national public budget (CDC 2011, 16).

Cambodia has been historically dependent on foreign assistance dating back to the French protectorate and colonial period that lasted 90 years from 1863 up until 1953 (Chandler 2008b, 171-209). Before that the Cambodian ruling classes were variably dependent on the patronage and protection of courts in the neighbouring larger Kingdoms of Siam (Thailand today) and Vietnam, over several hundred years following the decline of the Angkor Empire (96-115, 136-140).¹ As Khieng (2014b, 1444) writes, one can conclude that Cambodia is historically a donor dependent nation as much as it is an aid dependent one. However, as much as this implies a longstanding culture of dependency in the Kingdom of Cambodia, the current state of affairs does boil down to more recent events.

The population of Cambodia notoriously endured three decades of conflict and trauma in the late 20th Century. This started with communist insurrections in 1967 taking place alongside a US bombing campaign during the Vietnam War, targeted at North

¹ During the Angkor period between the 9th Century and 15th Century, the Angkor Empire that preceded Cambodia today was the strongest military force in Indo-China, extending through Siam into Myanmar and also into Laos and Vietnam (Chandler 2008b, 35; Tully 2005, 27).

Vietnamese (or communist ‘Vietcong’) forces that were launching incursions from inside Cambodia into Southern Vietnam. The total 2,756,941 tons of ordnance dropped between 1965 and 1973 (most intensively from April 1970 onwards) means ‘Cambodia may be the most heavily bombed country in history’ (Owen & Kiernan 2006, 65-67). The number of civilian casualties is unknown but the historian Ben Kiernan (2003, 850) estimates between 50,000 and 150,000. At least 1,400,000 refugees were created (Journal of Contemporary Asia 1972, 101). There is contestation about the social consequences, but Kiernan consistently asserts that the bombing campaign underpinned the rise to power of the Maoist Khmer Rouge. The bombing destabilised Cambodia and created propaganda for a communist force that grew from a disorganised band just 1,500 strong in 1969 to more than 200,000 soldiers by 1973 (Kiernan 2002b, 16-19; 2003, 851; Owen & Kiernan 2006, 67-68).²

Whether the bombing campaign primarily instigated the ascendancy of the Khmer Rouge or not, the trauma that ensued after their fighters overran the Cambodian capital Phnom Penh on the 17th April 1975 was unimaginable. During the Democratic Kampuchea period (1975-79) – sometimes called the ‘Pol Pot times’ in reference to the notorious Khmer Rouge leader (Meas 1995), in less than four years roughly 20% of the national population are estimated to have died through starvation and disease and increasingly execution after paranoid brutality took hold of the Khmer Rouge leadership and cadre (Heuveline 1998). The Khmer Rouge were ousted in January 1979 by Vietnamese backed Khmer Rouge defectors, who subsequently formed the People’s Revolutionary Party of Kampuchea (PRPK) and coined a new name for Cambodia – *People’s Republic of Kampuchea* (PRK). However, Cambodia was engulfed by civil war throughout the 1980s, the Khmer Rouge retained strongholds in the countryside (most prominently in northern provinces) and more than 300,000 Cambodians ended up in refugee camps in Thailand at the northern borders (Lischer 2006).³

² Henry Kissinger, the US Secretary of State during the campaign, remains dismissive of Kiernan’s ‘masochistic imperatives’ on the grounds that the bombing was (mainly) restricted to unpopulated areas (Kissinger 2003, 479).

³ The international community refused to accept the Vietnamese occupation of Cambodia which was sponsored ultimately by the Soviet Union. At the United Nations, three insurgent parties held the Cambodia seat. The Khmer Rouge were supported by China while two ‘non-communist’ resistance parties were supported by the US and UK. In reality US/UK/Chinese military support blurred together and munitions supplied by the West routinely fell into Khmer Rouge hands during the 1980s civil war (Findlay 1995; Ganesan 1995).

In 1991 the Paris Peace Agreements were signed by three out of the four warring factions and the United Nations Transitional Authority of Cambodia (UNTAC) instilled relative peace running up to political elections in 1993.⁴ The Paris Peace Agreements also precipitated the most heavily financed post-conflict reconstruction effort ever seen in one country. More than 3 billion USD of international aid – or Overseas Development Assistance (ODA) – was pumped into Cambodia in 10 years (Hughes 2005). The reconstruction effort was designed to instil procedural democracy, liberal capitalism and foreign direct investment into the economy, in the shortest time possible. Central imperatives were to prove that communism could be surmounted in this part of the world (particularly after the end of the Cold War) and to develop a model for post-conflict reconstruction that could be rolled out elsewhere in the world (Hughes 2009a; Richmond & Franks 2007).

Due to the funding available through the 1990s for post-conflict reconstruction and emergency relief work, International NGOs (INGOs) clamoured to enter Cambodia. This precipitated Cambodian nationals setting up Local NGOs (LNGOs) to draw down funds, either directly from bilateral country donors or by being local implementing partners for donor funded projects (Downie & Kingsbury 2001; Hughes 2003).⁵ The NGO sector became an industry in its own right. Cambodia today has one of the highest concentrations of NGOs on earth in proportion to its population of 17 million people (Frewer 2013; Ou & Kim 2013) employing 52,650 people in 2012 according to one survey (Khieng 2014b, 1446). However, the grants that LNGOs were set up to draw upon also became harder to access through the 2000s. Some international development agencies grew frustrated that investments into Cambodian NGOs failed to instil a counter-balance to political power and pressure for public accountability (Hughes 2003; Öjendal 2013; Ou & Kim 2014). With the notable exception of USAID and the European Union, international development agencies and bilateral donors have moved towards direct government budget support and sector specific support, focusing

⁴ The 1993 elections did not bring peace to Cambodia. The Khmer Rouge refused to accept the elections at all and continued insurgency until they were demobilised through deal making in 1997 and 1998. The PRPK, led by Prime Minister Hun Sen since 1985, renamed itself as the Cambodian People's Party (CPP) in 1991 before the 1993 election which it lost to the Royalist FUNCINPEC. Hun Sen refused to accept the result and forced a power sharing agreement (Strangio 2014, 58-59). In 1997 Hun Sen turned military forces on FUNCINPEC, seizing sole power before a new election in 1998 which CPP won (Downie 2000; Kiernan 2002a). CPP has won every election since, but the 2013 election was closely contested by a newly constituted opposition called the 'Cambodian National Rescue Party' (McCargo 2014).

⁵ Local NGOs proliferated from around 160 in 1996 to possibly 900 in 1999 (Hughes 2003, 142).

heavily on capacity building in Ministries and the decentralisation of development planning (Alonso et al. 2006; Boak & Ndaruhutse 2011).⁶

While Cambodia has remained an aid dependent nation, the NGO industry has been placed into increasing competition for scarce grants. As one interviewed manager puts it, there has been a fundamental shift from ‘money chasing NGOs’ to ‘NGOs chasing money’ (Öjendal 2013, 30). In recent years studies have looked at the effect of this on Cambodian NGOs revenue diversification strategies (Khieng 2014b; Khieng & Dahles 2015b). These NGOs are turning into ‘hybrid organisations’ as they turn towards ‘earned revenues’ which impacts on their governance and accountability (Khieng & Dahles 2015a; Lyne et al. 2015). Other research has explored NGOs need of incubation services to develop social enterprises and also the risks of commercial activities from the point of view of NGO professionals (Lyne 2012).

Research has also brought the diversity of emergent social enterprises within Cambodia to life, in sectors such as: hospitality and tourism; apparel; handicrafts and artisanal products; renewable energy; health services; water and sanitation; IT services; media services; organic agriculture and farming support (Khieng & Dahles 2015a; Lyne et al. 2015). Different typologies of social enterprise have also been explored. Some NGOs for instance are adopting partnerships with private sector companies and investors (otherwise known as ‘social business’) while others are forging partnerships with cooperatives in the agricultural sector (Lyne et al. 2015, 9). But most prominently of all NGOs are assuming the model of a ‘trading non-profit’, in other words using a business model to deliver social goods and services and also, where possible, to replace grants with trading profits (15-16).

The vast majority of social enterprises in Cambodia have emerged from the NGO sector (which can be called the Third Sector using Western terminology) since the early 2000s. Khieng (2014b) found that the percentage of Cambodian Local NGOs pursuing earned income as part of their funding mix rose by more than 15 per cent (from six per cent to 21.2 per cent) between 2006 and 2011 (1458). This trend mirrors what is elsewhere referred to as the emergence of ‘organic hybrids,’ with pure non-profit

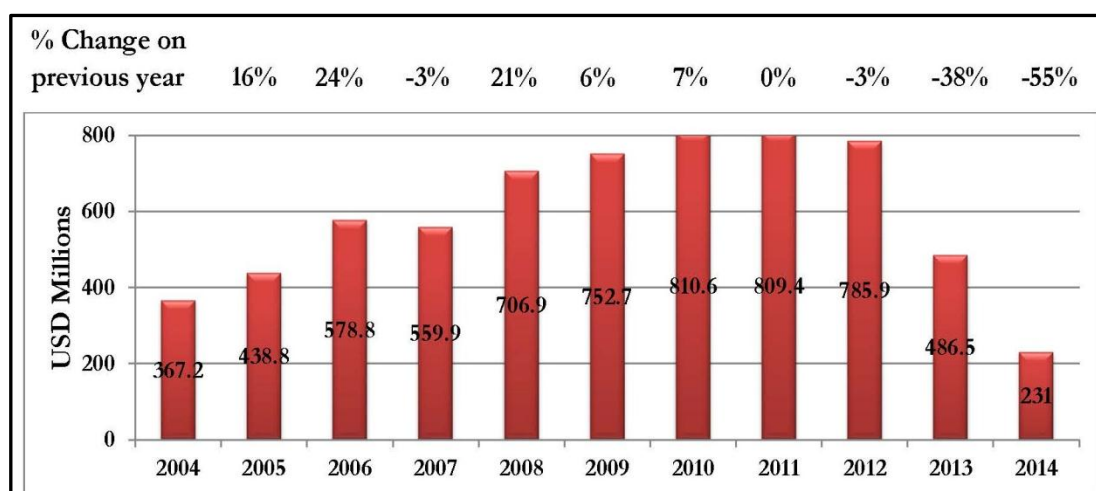
⁶ In 2011 just under 10% of the total ODA disbursements from international agencies and bi-lateral country donors still went to NGOs (\$87million USD in total). 82% of aid transferred to NGOs directly came from only two development agencies - USAID and the European Union. In contrast, less than 3% of aid disbursed by United Nations agencies and less than 1% by the World Bank went to NGOs directly. From disbursements by the Japan International Cooperation Agency, just over 2% of funds went direct to NGOs (CDC 2011, 34).

organisations evolving into social enterprises, in contrast to ‘enacted hybrids’ that are social enterprises at the outset (Doherty et al. 2014, 421).⁷ However, with the notable exception of microfinance institutions (MFIs), the majority of social enterprises in Cambodia that are operated by NGOs tend not to be registered as separate, formal businesses. ‘Hybridity’ seems somewhat unclear under these circumstances. The ambiguous legality of non-profit trading in Cambodia provides a loophole allowing NGOs that rely mainly on aid to easily integrate earned income into their funding mix, without having to change much about their organisational structure or mode of governance. For now this sets the social enterprise terrain apart somewhat from other Asian countries where social enterprise is driven more by market opportunities than by aid from overseas (Kerlin 2009, 2010). However, this is also likely to change in future as overall international grant-aid disbursements to Cambodia are now in sharp decline.

In the 2000s Cambodia has witnessed strong economic growth. There was double digit growth in Gross Domestic Product (GDP) annually between 1999 and the 2008 global financial crisis (Jalilian & Reyes 2014, 17) and growth has been above 7% per year since 2010 (World Bank 2014). This economic growth has been accompanied by supposed poverty reduction from 53% of the national population in 2004 to 20.5% by 2011 (World Bank 2013).⁸ A rise in GDP per capita to \$1,007 in 2013 put Cambodia at the cusp of ‘lower-middle income’ country status on the World Bank’s terms (World Bank 2015a). International donors are consequentially looking at more needy causes elsewhere (Jalilian & Reyes 2014) and pledged grant-aid (ODA excluding loans) has been in decline since 2010. This was slow at first, but it was dramatic after 2012 when pledges fell by more than 70% – from 785.9 million to 231 million USD – in the space of 2 years (Graph 1). It is therefore plausible that aid will drive the social enterprise sector in Cambodia less in the future than it does at present and that the Cambodian terrain will appear more aligned with that in other Southeast Asian countries.

⁷ ‘Hybrid’ is a widely used term. Simply put, a social enterprise is an organisational form in its own right that mobilises resources from across sectors, including profit, private investment, volunteers and assets handed over from the state. All of this induces hybrid economic exchanges. Besides this, social enterprises are hybrids because they use private sector practices to pursue Third sector objectives and also sometimes, if public policy is conducive, public sector objectives too. Social enterprises can additionally adopt hybrid forms of governance and ownership that are not specific to one sector alone (Alter 2007; Doherty et al. 2014; Gardin 2006; Nyssens 2010; Ridley-Duff & Bull 2011, 73-77).

⁸ World Bank figures in 2013 show that the figure of 20.5% in poverty (the parity measure of \$1.25 or less per day) would double if the statistical poverty line is raised by a mere 30 cents per day (World Bank 2013). This casts doubt on the extent to which economic growth really has equated with poverty reduction, especially outside of Phnom Penh and particularly in the countryside (Renwick 2011, 75; Strangio 2014, 141).



Graph 1: ODA grant-aid pledges from 2004-2014 adapted from data provided by the Council for the Development of Cambodia (2013, cited in Khieng 2014a, 5).

Section Three: Social enterprise promotion in Southeast Asia: Development for the 21st Century?

To put social enterprise development in Southeast Asia into context, one can start with the observation that, however social enterprise is looked at, there is a fundamental concern with *development*. But then one has to consider the contextual differences. In ‘developed countries,’ social enterprises are part of policy makers’ strategies for *regional development* and regeneration by creating inclusive employment markets and additional value from existing local resources (Haugh 2005b; Kerlin 2006; Toner et al. 2008). In Less Developed Countries (LDCs), meanwhile, social enterprise is part of *international development*. It is subsumed within the terminology of ‘inclusive business’ and is being approached by international development agencies as part of ‘Business at the Base of the economic Pyramid (or *BoP*).’ BoP business has moved on from being a potential fortune for large companies who are able to develop markets. Nowadays is a means by which three previously disparate streams of development are synthesised, namely: NGOs – now reconfigured as ‘catalysts or promoters of business among poor people’, which applies to MFIs especially; social enterprises and Corporate Social Responsibility (Castresana 2013, 253).⁹

⁹ CSR is as a win-win scenario promoting corporate self-regulation in order to restrain social and environmental damage while maximising the positive contribution that corporations make to economic development and poverty reduction. It is not a matter for strong attention in this thesis, but there is much criticism of the type of ‘light touch regulation’ regulation promoted by CSR programs and by the United Nations Global Compact in particular (Morvaridi 2008; Williams 2008).

The BoP approach typifies the efforts of the United Nations Global Compact (UNCG)¹⁰ to promote a framework for impact investment and technical support for social enterprises which create conducive socio-economic conditions for BoP business. This framework is premised on leveraging the incentives of corporations (that stand to benefit from newly emerging markets) to partner with and invest in social enterprises. The entry of these larger companies into the emerging markets will in turn scale up development and improve the labour market (Power et al. 2012). More recently the UNCH established a ‘social enterprise action hub’ to join more closely together the *ecosystem* constituted by social enterprises, impact investors, corporations, intermediaries (including NGOs) and policy-makers (UNCG 2015). Asia represents the world’s largest market place for BoP business (Nielsen & Samia 2008, 446). Considering the approach to social enterprise as part of international development just outlined, it is not surprising then, that social enterprise development garners more interest in Asia than it does in other regions of the developing world.

Empirically Kerlin (2009, 2010) finds that the emergence of social enterprise in Southeast Asia is driven much more by market opportunities than by international aid. One signification of this trajectory has been the rise in ‘impact investing’ that the UNCG seeks to leverage. Asia Impact Investment Exchange (ASIA IIX), based in Singapore, is striving to establish a functional ‘Social Enterprise Stock Exchange’ for Southern Asia and is backed by the Asian Development Bank (ADB). Impact investing as a model for social enterprise promotion has also been adopted by the Grassroots Business Fund (GBF) which makes investments into ‘High Impact Businesses.’¹¹ In Cambodia, impact investment has also become a significant part of the social enterprise development landscape (despite being inapplicable to NGOs). Hagar Social Enterprise Group (HSEG) is a for-profit equity fund registered in Singapore since 1997. Investors include the World Bank’s International Finance Corporation. HSEG has initiated social enterprises including: a commercial catering company; garment factory canteens; apparel companies; a soya milk company and bakeries, with up to \$1millionUSD of capital in

¹⁰ The UN Global Compact was inaugurated at the 1999 World Economic Forum by the then UN Secretary-General Kofi Annan. It is synonymous with terms like ‘globalisation with a human face’ (Williams 2008, 229). Most simply the Global Compact promotes Corporate Social Responsibility.

¹¹ Grassroots Business Fund emerged out of the World Bank’s private lending arm - the International Finance Corporation, beginning life as ‘Grassroots Business Initiative.’ GBF provides loans, capacity grants and equity investment. It has invested in three ‘High Impact Businesses’ (HIBs) in Cambodia. HIBs are ‘a distinct segment of businesses at the intersection of Small and Medium Enterprises (SMEs) and Social Enterprises (SEs)’ that ‘support farmers, artisans, micro entrepreneurs, and other beneficiaries at the base of the economic pyramid’ (Grassroots Business Fund 2010, 2; 2011).

each instance (Lyne et al. 2015, 10).¹² Besides HSEG, Insitor Management, Arun Capital LLC and Uberis Capital are ‘investment platforms’ that source ‘impact capital’ from overseas and work out of offices in Phnom Penh (18-19). Their investment portfolios include agricultural marketing, hotels, solar energy, water systems, handicraft exports and housing finance for low-to-middle income Cambodian households.

Academic literature on social enterprise in Southern Asia seems broadly supportive of the BoP synthesis and social impact investment. Literature is particularly attentive to the market-based strategies that social enterprises use to extend financial services and create supply chains that empower the poor as business people and integrate the poor with formal labour markets (Brown 2014; Dacanay 2004, 2009; Hasan 2005; Nielsen & Samia 2008; Santos et al. 2009; Tan et al. 2005). Brown (2014) goes as far to say that the ‘social business paradigm’ that is specifically geared for impact investing and attributed to microfinance pioneer Muhammad Yunus, is the definitively ‘the Asian approach.’ It has importantly arisen from within Asia as opposed to being transposed from developed/Western countries. This approach, involving social enterprises in partnership with corporations is cited as a critical means for conflict mitigation and improving human security via improving economic security in the Asian region (Brown 2014, 4-5; Santos et al. 2009, 73-74).

However, it also seems that the strong attachment between social enterprise, BoP business and impact investment might also limit the roles that social enterprises can play in community development and helping the poor to instil security into their livelihoods. The UNGC approach appears to follow Dees’ (2008) enunciation, that the *raison d’être* for social enterprises in the developing world is to create markets for under-provided social goods that then become a viable proposition for the formal economic sector. When these goods become part of mainstream markets, they will be provided more efficiently and on a wider scale. Social enterprises nurture opportunities ‘*that would escape the notice of larger firms*’; the prime example is that ‘*major banks are getting involved in microcredit only now that the market is established*’ (Dees 2008, 7). This amounts in my view to asserting that not only is ‘developing markets’ the primary means by which social enterprises promote social change, but also that markets generally yield uniform results from one place to the next. Karl Polanyi (1957, 2001) shows that this is not the case.

¹² The impact of these enterprises on the capabilities of women who have been victims of sex trafficking and domestic violence has been the subject of a PhD thesis (McKinnon 2012).

One of Polanyi's main substantive contributions to understanding markets is to show empirically how they are socially embedded and contingent on the balance between four different forms of economic interaction: reciprocity, redistribution, householding and exchange. Out of these, it is 'exchange' that is most readily connected with modern market economies (North 2015, 5). In Polanyi's (2001) view, liberal economists who arrive at a teleological, abstracted reading of markets that excludes everything but 'exchange', make the political choice to take a short-term view of economic history that does not stand up to scrutiny against the way that markets work in practice (46-47).

The prime example Dees (2008) makes mention of – microfinance – is pertinent at different points throughout this thesis. It can also be considered as the prime exemplar of the 'exchange' based narration of social enterprise and 'economic development.' The Microfinance Institution (MFI) – which gives small loans to the poor, often on the premise that they will use them productively to improve their livelihoods – is enunciated as a 'quintessential social enterprise' in developing countries (Alter 2007, 6). In Cambodia, MFIs have their roots in the NGO sector. In the early 2000s microfinance was incorporated into the government's Financial Sector Development Plan. It proliferated from the mid-2000s when NGOs gained greater access to international capital markets, transitioning and restructuring from a small, benevolent non-profit sector into a massive profit-driven industry (Bateman 2014; Bylander 2015; Norman 2011; Ovesen & Trankell 2014). The number of MFI branches in Cambodia rose from 254 branches in 2005 to 1,051 branches in 2013. The number of active borrowers rose from 493,754 to more than 1.8 million in the same period (Bylander 2015, 535). According to the CIA Factbook (2016) this amounts to 17.4% of the national adult population. Something that also cannot go unnoticed is the World Bank's commitment to microfinance world-wide, with a total portfolio of \$4.3 billion USD (World Bank 2015b).

What suffices here (in lieu of more critical engagement with microfinance later) is to say while the role of social enterprise in the developed world remains largely wedded to innovations in welfare services (Defourny et al. 2014) the overwhelming focus of international development converges on the consensus that markets are the best way to *empower the poor* (Khandker 2005). As Castresana (2013, 261) points out, while social enterprise provides fertile space for thinking about development from new angles, BoP tends to close normative re-evaluations of development down. Like Castresana, I am

also drawn towards the desire to seek out imaginative ways of thinking through a wider range of economic interactions pertaining to social enterprises than those afforded by a monological narration of ‘exchange.’ The exchange based narration provides a narrow view of what social enterprises are and what it is that they should be seeking to achieve. Not only does this narrative privilege business over aid when the former might not always provide the best solutions for certain problems (for instance advocacy issues), but there is also in my view, a privileging of investment ready business over democratic community development pathways and enhanced wellbeing. I next turn to some empirical encounters in Cambodia to further explicate some of my concerns and also the research questions that emerged prior to and during the early stages of the thesis I am writing.

Section Four: Empirical concerns in Cambodia: Journeying towards research questions

My interaction with social enterprises and actors in the ‘social enterprise ecosystem’ in Cambodia began in September 2009. At that time, I arrived to take a coordinating role in a partnership project between the University for Bradford Centre for International Development, the Royal University of Phnom Penh (RUPP) and the award winning social enterprise Friends International (FI).¹³ This project developed a course module called ‘Social Enterprise and Non-profit Management’ for postgraduate students of Development Studies at RUPP. It was funded by Development in Higher Education Partnerships (DePHE) administered by the British Council.¹⁴ In June 2009, when we were told that our application was successful, the feedback was short. The only statement from the reviewer was that:

¹³ FI had been known to me since my first visit to Cambodia in 2008. FI is a child protection NGO that has initiated businesses including restaurants, a manicure saloon and a mechanics garage that provide vocational training to vulnerable youth and street children. FI’s ‘home based production’ programme also commissions bags and jewellery, often using recycled materials, from these children’s parents or elder siblings. This means that a child’s street-work is no longer essential to the household income and the child can attend school (Lyne 2008).

¹⁴ The Master of Arts in Development Studies at RUPP is taught in English, making the partnership viable. The course module continued after the DePHE program ended and was finally taken over by Cambodian academics. Information is available at: <http://www.rupp.edu.kh/projects/delphe/>

‘The ‘social enterprise’ sector has a particularly important role to play in the processes of economic growth and poverty reduction – so a proposal in this area is especially pertinent’ (Personal Communication from the British Council 2009).

While the feedback does not say much, in retrospect the emphasis on economic growth was instructive. It succinctly represented the priorities of donor institutions when it comes to social enterprise. But beyond that, the growth focus also typified the analytical lens of numerous other supportive actors in the social enterprise sector that I grew familiar. This familiarity was deepened further as I helped to initiate and coordinate the 1st National Social Enterprise Conference of Cambodia in August 2011 and further Conferences in 2012 and 2013, alongside other members of the DelPHE team.¹⁵



Figure 1: The National Social Enterprise Conference of Cambodia 2011-2013

While networking for the National Conferences I met representatives of social impact venture capital funds as well as international and bilateral development agencies. Throughout these encounters a consistent emphasis on *‘inclusive economic growth’* brought back to mind the DelPHE application feedback. A phrase I heard repeatedly was *investment ready social enterprises*. Overwhelmingly, there was a focus on well-developed businesses that are already proven to be viable and are in a position to absorb significant equity capital to grow the business further. The Grassroots Business Fund invests at least \$500,000USD rising to \$2.5million USD (Grassroots Business Fund 2014); ASIA IIX sought to leverage investments of at least \$250,000; a consultant to the Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA) met me to discuss a proposed fund that would invest roughly \$6million USD into 6 different social enterprises in Cambodia.

¹⁵ In 2014 I handed over my coordinating role. The conference was continued by members of the DelPHE team alongside the founders of an organisation called Social Enterprise Cambodia. I was able to visit from Australia as a workshop facilitator.

Grameen Crédit Agricole Foundation was looking to bring a \$42 million USD investment portfolio to Cambodia. It was notable that microfinance rode most highly on their agenda although they wanted to invest in other enterprises that fit Grameen's 'social business paradigm.' Arun LLC and Insitor could invest more modest sums, from around \$50,000USD upwards as I understood it.

Impact investment can be highly inspirational. Someone interested in social enterprise would probably find it impossible to be uninspired by the HSEG model that I mentioned earlier. This type of investment is viewed as an evolutionary step forward from the mere 'screening-out' of investments, for instance the refusal to hold stocks in tobacco companies, towards investments that purposefully tries to solve specific social problems (Nicholls, A 2007). However, while I have encountered 'high impact businesses' the pool of such 'investment ready' social enterprises in Cambodia is still quite small.¹⁶ I was really left wondering, where might assistance come from for small-scale, community-based start-up enterprises founded by Cambodian social entrepreneurs?¹⁷ I saw and documented the pervasive need for appropriate incubation services to hatch or develop fledgling social enterprises (Lyne 2012), but it was clear that development agencies and impact investors were mostly disinterested in anything small.¹⁸ This was brought home in a meeting with the co-founder of a well-financed network for '*transformative businesses*.' When I asked him if he had any views on social enterprise development programs for Cambodian nationals I was bluntly advised to:

¹⁶ International Development Enterprises (IDE) have a strong record for initiating highly capitalised 'social businesses.' In Cambodia this includes farmers' business advisory services and an agriculture technology franchise (Lors Thmey) that leveraged private investment, technical support from US chemical conglomerate Du Pont and awards from the transnational food and beverage company Nestlé. This would no doubt be considered as an exemplary social enterprise partnership to promote BoP business. IDE also established Hydrologic which markets the Rabbit Water Purification Filter for household use. This was set out with a structure to allow equity and debt financing (Greenhill 2013). Meanwhile: Sustainable Green Fuels Enterprise make charcoal bricks from coconut husk to reduce the health risks and deforestation associated with traditional cooking charcoal; So Nutritious Company Ltd. make vitamin fortified soya milk and support child nutrition programs; CEDAC Shakreas support farmers' associations by marketing organic vegetables, organic rice and wild honey. All of these social businesses are set up to receive equity investment.

¹⁷ Social entrepreneurs are people who enact processes of social entrepreneurship. Just as commercial entrepreneurs use their talent to combine resources and make strategic decisions in the initiation of a private business and ongoing operation, social entrepreneurs (usually but not always) perform the same roles in relation to social enterprises (Thompson 2002).

¹⁸ At the time of writing, new services have begun to emerge. In April 2015 Social Enterprise Cambodia set up the Impact Hub in Phnom Penh which is networked to other Impact Hub's internationally. There is reason to hope that suitable incubation services for Cambodian nationals might emerge from this.

'Stop using this silly term 'social enterprise,' because it is just 'enterprise.' Using 'social' makes people think it is a special case, that it is not good enough to be real business.'

Clearly unimpressed by academic research on social enterprise, he expressed that what Cambodia needs is impact investment to address the problem called the *'missing middle'* – that is, the insufficient number of medium sized enterprises which employ at least fifty people and preferably more than a hundred. Along similar lines the Deputy Country Director of the ADB Cambodia Resident Mission, in a meeting 2 years later, expressed that the problem with social enterprise is how it moves from *'high impact low yield, to high impact high yield.'* It seems clear then, that *low yield* was seen negatively under any set of circumstances.

The term *'missing middle'* had been unknown to me before. But I heard it often in my different meetings in Phnom Penh. Without expressing any doubt that the *missing middle* is a critical developmental issue in Cambodia, in my view focusing upon this alone means taking a narrow and selective view of what social enterprise could be capable of when it comes to community development. There is scant regard for small-scale social enterprises that have significant impact on communities elsewhere in the world. This includes *'social solidarity cooperatives'* in Italy, which choose to remain relatively small but often coordinate their work as part of a larger consortium (Borzaga & Loss 2006; Thomas 2004), community-based enterprise models in Canada (Mendell 2009; Quarter et al. 2009) and also closer to Cambodia, in the Philippines (Gibson, Cahill, et al. 2010; The Community Economies Collective & Gibson 2009). All of these models contribute towards diverse, resilient local economies and enhanced wellbeing. Seeing such enterprises so readily dismissed, after 3 years of living in Cambodia, researching social enterprises, delivering a post-graduate module on the subject and coordinating three national conferences, I was really left asking:

How can the emergence of social enterprises be supported locally, at the grassroots-community level (as it has been elsewhere in the world) when the priorities of the well-resourced supporters reside with rapid economic growth and business models that seemingly bypass the grassroots level of society entirely?

One further omitted issue which constrains the outreach of impact investing in Cambodia is the overwhelming prominence of the informal economy. In Cambodia 90% of the population make its living in the informal sector (Mendizabal et al. 2012)

and less than 8% of enterprises are formally registered businesses (Chhair & Newman 2014, 6). Bureaucratic complexities and corrupt extortion by public officials are noted deterrents of formal business registration (Chan 2013; Chhair & Newman 2014; Feinberg 2009). Arguably, just as corruption deters formal private sector business registration, it probably deters NGOs from registering their businesses too. Regardless of how much money is invested into social business development, and irrespective of the extent to which informal workers are incorporated into supply chains for handicrafts and so on, because impact investing necessarily looks away from the informal economy as a place to nurture social enterprise, I again see limits to the outreach. At the grassroots, where informal economic processes are inevitably multi-faceted (Pellissery 2013), I have concluded that community development practicioning might be a means of social enterprise development that reaches places impact investing cannot. In this respect, I am also left asking:

What are the particular processes and activities that Cambodian people have reason to value, should they participate in a social enterprise in their community?

Section Five: ‘Socially entrepreneurial individuals’: The heroic narration of social entrepreneurship

In one way or another, the enactment and ongoing operation of social enterprises as an *organisational form* involves the activity or *process* of ‘social entrepreneurship’ (Ridley-Duff & Bull 2011, 78).¹⁹ But the manner of social entrepreneurship’s enactment is a matter of debate. From the extensive literature on the subject one can conclude that differences in approach are (more or less) cultural. In the US there has been a strong focus on the profile of social entrepreneur or *heroic individual*, *change maker* or *social innovator*. In Europe entrepreneurial individuals are valued but social entrepreneurship is viewed as a *collective process*, inspired by solidarity and cooperativism that engages cross-sectoral actors at different levels of society (Defourny & Nyssens 2010, 2013b).

¹⁹ Social entrepreneurship is by no means limited to social enterprises alone. Enough literature demonstrates that it is readily enacted in other spheres including governmental policy and philanthropic activities whereby people use and combine resources in different ways in order to achieve a higher yield of *social good* (Austin et al. 2006; Dees 2007; Huybrechts & Nicholls 2012; Weerawardena & Sullivan Mort 2006).

The heroic narration of social entrepreneurship was popularised by US business schools in the 1990s (Lounsbury & Strang 2009). One of the most widely cited theorist is John Dees who explains that ‘*social entrepreneurs are one species in the genus entrepreneur*’ (Dees 2001, 3). Dees, Emerson and Economy (2001, 1-4) put this at the centre of a construction of social entrepreneurship that firstly draws from 19th Century economist Jean Baptiste Say who wrote about ‘higher productivity and greater yield’ or ‘value creation.’ They add classical work from Joseph Schumpeter on entrepreneurship and in particular the process of ‘creative destruction’ (or ‘innovation’) – which in Schumpeter’s own words means the iterative testing of ‘untried technological possibilities’ (Schumpeter 1996, 132). Finally, more recent conceptions of resourcefulness in management psychology (citing Pete Ducker and Howard Stevenson) are added, including an orientation towards opportunities and an intrinsic inclination to see the glass as half full (Dees et al. 2001, 3-4). They explain that social entrepreneurs differ to commercial ones as far as the value creation that they seek is ‘*social value*’ – solving social problems in a more effective way. Their opportunity recognition and appetite for creative destruction, together with their relentless determination, is thus oriented towards solutions to a social problem that they deeply care about (4-6). A summary of Dees conception of the necessary attributes of social entrepreneurs is provided by Peredo and McLean (2006) as follows:

‘(1) the recognition and “relentless” pursuit of new opportunities to further the mission of creating *social value*, (2) continuous engagement in innovation and modification and (3) bold action undertaken without the acceptance of existing resource limitations’ (48, my emphasis).

Ever since this view on *how social entrepreneurship happens* came about (Waddock and Post (1991) were early pioneers) literature on the subject has proliferated.²⁰ Social entrepreneurs are marked out as *leaders* who turn good ideas into functional realities (Barendsen & Gardner 2004; Bornstein 2007; Drayton 2002). They have an outstanding aptitude to seek or create and subsequently exploit opportunities to solve a social problem (Müller 2012; Weerawardena & Sullivan Mort 2006; Zahra et al. 2009) and also turn social problems into revenue generating businesses (de Bruin et al. 2014; Miller et al. 2012; Schöning 2013). Because social entrepreneurs bring under-utilised resources into more productive use and combine them in new ways to yield social change, they are *necessarily innovative* (Dees & Anderson 2006; Mair & Noboa 2006). This stands in

²⁰ Literature reviews indicate that academic literature started to proliferate after 1995 and then accelerated rapidly in the 2000s (Cukier et al. 2011; Douglas & Grant 2014).

contrast to commercial entrepreneurs who are sometimes not innovative (Leadbeater 1997; Nicholls & Cho 2006).

On account of the inspiring leadership of social entrepreneurs and the undisputed integrity of their motives, their greatest asset is commonly the trust that other people have in them (Drayton 2002; Maak & Stoetter 2012; Shaw & Carter 2007). Their awareness of the resources that can be leveraged through networks makes them highly sensitive to the motivations of potential sponsors (Alvord et al. 2004; Bhowmick 2011). They also exploit different kinds of networks to disseminate their innovations (Bornstein 2007; Dees et al. 2004; Martin & Osberg 2007; Nicholls 2009; Singh 2014). Similarly, social entrepreneurs leverage ‘social capital’ (or norms of trust) make their innovations, such as those based on microcredit group lending, work in practice (Ashta et al. 2013; Hasan 2005; Mair & Martí 2006). Because the ambitions of social entrepreneurs only cease when they see their social mission achieved in full, their focus of attention is on solutions that can be replicated and ‘scaled up.’²¹ As the widely cited adage from Bill Drayton, the founder of the Ashoka fellowship association goes:

‘Social entrepreneurs are not content to just give a fish or teach how to fish. They will not rest until they have revolutionized the fishing industry!’ (cited in Fleishman 2009, 18; Moss et al. 2011, 822; Neck et al. 2009, 17).²²

Ashoka is a fellowship association that supports socially entrepreneurial individuals who are or who have the examined potential to become ‘change makers.’ Together with the Skoll and Schwab Foundations, these three organisations invest capital and assets into social entrepreneurship on a scale comparable to or greater than that of government agencies and bilateral donors (Nicholls 2010). The legitimating discourse of all three of these organisations hangs on the ‘hero entrepreneur’ in different ways. Skoll focuses on the leadership of resourceful, results-focused individuals; Schwab also support results-focused, visionary, determined risk takers; Ashoka support determined, ambitious individuals who exhibit the highest standards of ethical fibre (Nicholls 2010, 621).

²¹ The ‘World Bank Development Marketplace’ (WBDM) has globally supported more than 1,200 socially enterprising initiatives with seed grants. Their main criteria is also that the initiative is ‘scalable or replicable’ (World Bank 2012a). The terminology of ‘scalable’ or ‘scaling-up’ is pervasive in the academic and institutional literature on social entrepreneurship (Alvord et al. 2004; Bloom & Chatterji 2009; Bornstein 2007; Dees 2010; Drayton 2002; LaFrance et al. 2006). Scale in this literature relates to whether a social enterprises way of solving a problem could be replicated in more than one context.

²² Seventy six texts were found on Google Scholar which cite this quote either in full or in partial reference, for instance by simply asserting that social entrepreneurs ‘revolutionize the fishing industry’ (Huddart 2010, 5). This quote can thus be considered representative of the social entrepreneurship field.

According to Drayton (2002) the ‘strong ethical fibre’ of ‘leading social entrepreneurs’ is one of four ‘necessary ingredients’ – the others being creativity, widespread impact and entrepreneurial quality – by Ashoka founder (123-124).

It is perhaps because of the size of the BoP market in Asia, or perhaps because of the tendency for social enterprise to be market driven, that social entrepreneurship in Asia attracts more attention from social entrepreneurship organisations than elsewhere in the developing world.²³ Nicholls (2010) also notes that the investments of these organisations into ‘paradigm building’ activities, does much to shape how social entrepreneurship is seen more widely, both in academia and among other institutions. The Skoll World Forum for Social Entrepreneurship is especially noteworthy. The prizes to be gained from establishing the accepted paradigm, in terms resources from governments and corporate support, are clearly worth fighting for. It is perhaps also because of the influence that these foundations have, as vastly well-resourced ‘paradigm builders’, that the heroic narrative seems to typify literature on social entrepreneurship in Asia, as strongly as it does in the US context. Visionary Asian individuals gaining the most consistent interest are:

- Fazle Abed, founder of the Bangladesh Rural Advancement Committee that provides microfinance and uses specialised microfinance products to support social businesses that connect the rural poor with markets in the livestock, fisheries and textiles sectors (Drayton et al. 2006; Elkington & Hartigan 2008; Mair, Mart, et al. 2012; Seelos & Mair 2009; Smillie 2009);
- Bunker Roy, founder of the Barefoot College that has ‘gone to scale’ in India providing low cost education in villages (Elkington 2008; Kummitha 2013; Muscat & Whitty 2009);
- Microfinance pioneer Mohammed Yunus who founded the Grameen Bank in Bangladesh that has since branched out into textiles, telecommunications and dairy products. Yunus is found to get highly disproportionate attention in one extensive survey (Cukier et al. 2011).²⁴

²³ In a study of 200 ‘socially entrepreneurial organisations’ (read largely as social enterprises) supported world-wide by Ashoka and Schwab, Asia was the most well-represented region (Mair, Battilana, et al. 2012, 363).

²⁴ In their content analysis of case studies in developing countries, Cukier, Trenholm, Carl, & Gekas (2011) found that the two most widely cited social entrepreneurs, Mohammed Yunus (most prominently) and Fazle Abed, both originating in Bangladesh, account for 20% of texts. This is not problematic *per se* because Grameen and BRAC have achieved success with market strategies. Collectively they provide

It is precisely because social entrepreneurs are still deemed to be a ‘rare breed’ in the view of some academics that they continue to merit further research (Lepoutre et al. 2013, 710). However, it is not as though the positive evaluation of the heroic paradigm goes without criticism. There is much critique of the ‘heroic narrative’ that points towards political concerns. Representing social entrepreneurship as the activity of ‘unique individuals’, suppresses the chance of people in marginalised localities becoming collectively entrepreneurial (Spear 2006; Steinerowski & Steinerowska-Streb 2012). The heroic narrative not only simplifies success by ignoring the way economic opportunities are co-produced with supportive actors (Mulgan 2012; Spear 2006, 2011; Steyaert 2007), it also simplifies failure by rendering individuals liable for bad business choices and playing down the impacts of flawed policy, flawed procurement and lack of business support (Scott & Teasdale 2012). The heroic school of social entrepreneurship also ignores people running social enterprises who do not want to be social entrepreneurs or who are uncomfortable with the language in this discourse (Cameron & Hendricks 2013; Dacin et al. 2011; Froggett & Chamberlayne 2004; Parkinson & Howorth 2008; Seanor & Meaton 2007).

A particular concern in this thesis is with the ethical propositions that the heroic narrative entails. Ashoka founder Bill Drayton (2002) is by not alone in placing emphasis on the strength of ‘ethical fibre.’ In other accounts, social entrepreneurs are ‘highly ethical problem solvers’ whose ethical fibre is both ‘distinguished’ and ‘unquestionable’ (Praszkier & Nowak 2011, 10-13; Praszkier et al. 2010, 157-158). Shaw, Shaw & Wilson (2002) enunciate that social entrepreneurs are ethical because they ‘Ensure ...that ideas are not corrupted by vested interests’ (13). As Bornstein (2007) has it, the difference between a social entrepreneur and commercial one lies not in their abilities, or the way that they approach problems, but instead in their vision. Bornstein writes that: ‘It is meaningless to write about social entrepreneurs without considering the ethical quality of their motivation: the why’ (244). It is clear in summary, that ethics is naturalised in accounts of social entrepreneurs who are projected to be morally superior to commercial entrepreneurs. This does not go unnoticed or unproblematised from critical perspectives (Chell et al. 2014; Dey & Steyaert 2012a, 2016; Mueller et al.

public welfare on a larger scale than the government does in Bangladesh (Nicholls 2013). What is troubling, is whether social entrepreneurship (or more specifically microfinance which their models are largely based upon) is deemed a panacea for poverty on the basis of such studies. Decades after microfinance started, human development in Bangladesh was still classed as barely above ‘low’ in the 2014 Human Development Index statistics (UNDP 2014b).

2011). In my view, critical questions also need to be asked about the naturalised ethics of social entrepreneurship at the grassroots level of communities in Cambodia. I argue this point based on extensive observations of the ethical ambiguities inherent in narrative systems that are rooted in local norms, spiritual beliefs, hierarchical culture and patron-client relationships in Cambodia (Chandler 1984; Edwards 2008; Ledgerwood 2007; Nissen 2008).²⁵

The academic construction of social entrepreneurship arises mostly by fusing extant management concepts and then turning them onto social problems. For this reason, the *great man school of entrepreneurship* is critiqued as the underpinning of a grand or master narration of social entrepreneurship that excludes multi-disciplinary perspectives (Dey & Steyaert 2010; Froggett & Chamberlayne 2004). What is problematic in summary, as Dey and Steyaert (2012a) put it, is that the focus on specific heroic individuals as a basis for theory, enforces a ‘selective understanding of what is good for society as a whole’ (267-268). This selective understanding is seemingly also pervasive among the supportive ecosystem actors that I have encountered in Cambodia. It does not therefore seem that studying the social entrepreneurs behind the social enterprises that these organisations support, will get me any closer at all, to answering the following question that I am concerned with:

How would social entrepreneurship be understood by grassroots actors in Cambodia?

Section Six: Socially innovative, efficient and competitive: Mainstream narratives of social enterprise

In this section, the components of a narrative whole that is embodied by dominant views of social enterprise are brought to light. On the whole, social enterprises are represented as innovative organisations. Social enterprise and BoP business are

²⁵ Patronage and patron-client relationships are interchangeable terms, amounting to person-to-person (dyadic), instrumental friendships between a powerful agent (patron) who provides security to a less powerful agent. The latter agent reciprocates with personal services and loyalty which give legitimacy to the more powerful actor (Hosking 2000; Scott 1972a). In Southeast Asia, patron-client relationships are historically documented as a means by which the peasantry seek to ensure their chances of survival with access to work or land for farming (Scott 1972b, 1977) and Ledgerwood (2007) explains that these relationships continue to have explanatory force in the strategies of people in Cambodia today as they try to secure their livelihoods or prospects for employment. With regard to employment prospects, a common terminology in Cambodia is the ‘string’ (*kehsae* or *kehsay royevak*), which formalises peoples’ positions in lines of patronage that extend through all facets of the public sector (Edwards 2008, 233; Marston 1997, 212).

essentially poverty reduction strategies that are grounded in private sector innovation, but which have roots in different types of institutions (Cooney & Williams Shanks 2010, 30). The innovative dimension of social enterprises is cemented firmly into place explicitly by bringing practices of *private sector business innovation* to bear on solving social problems (Alter 2007; Smith et al. 2013). This view is embodied in the coining of alternative terms for social enterprise like the ‘social entrepreneurial venture’ (Perrini & Vurro 2006) or ‘socially entrepreneurial organisation’ (Mair, Battilana, et al. 2012). The Schwab Foundation for social entrepreneurship meanwhile, also express that innovation is the foremost quality of a social enterprise. Schwab’s assessment is that:

‘...social enterprises all share certain characteristics. The first is innovation. The innovation can take the form of new products and services, new production and distribution methods, or new organizational models’ (Schwab & Milligan 2016).²⁶

Other writers, albeit in slightly different language, concur with the Schwab Foundation’s summarising. Social enterprises innovatively reconfigure existing social products or services to create greater value (Austin et al. 2006). They combine resources in new ways to better meet social needs (Mair & Martí 2006). It is not clear if the Schwab foundation put applied private sector innovation above other kinds of social innovation. But from the perspectives outlined so far, it seems clear enough that social enterprises are an entrepreneurial way to create and distribute new services, adapting more or less conventional business methods, in harmony with mainstream market mechanisms.

When the application of private sector innovation is linked with a complementary narrative of *private sector efficiency*, more elements of strong theory begin to cohere. Exemplary in this regard is an extensive study by Mair, Battilana & Cardenas (2012) of 200 self-descriptive texts from ‘socially entrepreneurial organisations.’ In this study, it is found that the unanimous self-narration of these organisations is that they solve social problems more *efficiently* than other means. The analysis is derived from Luc Boltanski and Laurent Thevenot’s (1991) framework for ‘narratives of worth.’ This framework identifies six different ‘worlds’ inhabited by organisational decision makers when they develop justifications for their actions (151-153). Invariably narrations of worth fuse features from more than one of the six worlds together. However, it is the ‘industrial world’ which prioritises ‘narratives of efficiency and productivity’ that Mair, Battilana &

²⁶ The innovations Schwab speak of are otherwise widely called ‘social innovations’ – read in general as innovations with ‘the potential to improve either the quality or the quantity of life’ (Pol & Ville 2009, 881).

Cardenas (2012) find to be the only world that *all* of the surveyed socially entrepreneurial organisations recourse to in their self-descriptive texts. From a critical point of view, the productivity and efficiency narrative looks like one instance of performative *truth regimes* that prevail in managerialist discourses of social enterprise and entrepreneurship. This narrative is commensurate with the *progressive emphasis* on ‘good behaviours,’ exemplified by the intolerance of wastefulness (Dey & Steyaert 2010, 89). Moreover when Mair, Battilana & Cardenas (2012) single out socially entrepreneurial organisations, the narrative as a whole coheres. ‘Most worthy’ in their view are those organisations that combine narratives derived from the ‘market world’ which prioritises *competitiveness* with narratives derived from the industrial one. Most specifically, these are organisations that mobilise economic capital into ventures by incorporating microfinance lending (361-365).

My argument is that a reading of social enterprises, as competitive, market-driven, efficient organisations that harness business innovation to achieve social objectives, can lead to top-down conceptions of social enterprise that are not conducive to democratic processes at the grassroots. Neither is this top-down view conducive to grassroots communities finding ways to configure diverse economic transactions and ways of labouring (monetised or otherwise) into novel enterprising forms that are fit for their particular purposes. Like BoP, which leaves little room to re-appraise the values of ‘development’, this top-downwards overview of social enterprise appears to give little room for rethinking what ‘markets’ and ‘economies’ really mean. Social enterprise begins to look very much like the technical, managerialist blueprint critiqued elsewhere (Curtis 2008; Dey & Steyaert 2010) and leaves me with reason to ask therefore:

What discourses of social enterprise will yield sustainable effects at the grassroots level of society in Cambodia?

As a first step towards plotting out the theoretical positioning of this thesis in Chapter Two, I turn next to some of the specific contextual issues in the Cambodian NGO sector, where the profile of social enterprise has been rapidly rising. These are matters that give reason to critically approach what grassroots in Cambodia really means.

Section Seven: What constitutes a ‘grassroots focus’ in Cambodia?

To explore how discourses of social entrepreneurship and enterprise can be deciphered at the grassroots level in Cambodia, on first impressions one might wish to explore the narratives of managers and practitioners in LNGOs that have turned towards social enterprise. This is where most of the social enterprises are emerging from. Moreover, in most countries the Third Sector in which NGOs and other non-for-profit organisations are situated, is directly associated with ‘civil society.’ However, I also see severe constraints on research if this focus is adopted. LNGOs are largely implementing social enterprise models that are commensurate with the ‘earned income’ school for sustainable non-profits (Alter 2006; Defourny & Nyssens 2010, 40-41). This limitation might in itself generate a limited outlook on social enterprise discourses. But my real concerns go far deeper. The chief concern of LNGOs with financial viability points to the basis upon which they can commonly be distinguished from ‘grass-roots organisations’ at the ‘community level.’

While grass-roots community-level organisations often represent a particular village or some adjacent villages, LNGOs work instead at the ‘locality level’ (Uphoff 1993 cited in Hughes 2003, 143). This distinction between NGOs and grassroots associations in Cambodia is particularly profound. As outlined earlier, LNGOs in Cambodia emerged in direct response to the largest amount of money ever spent on post-war reconstruction in one country alone. Thus most LNGOs have not emerged from *within* communities at all. The extent to which many of them respond the *real* needs of communities is open to debate (Christie 2013; Malena et al. 2009; Ou & Kim 2014). LNGOs emerged under the tutelage and scrutiny of international donor agencies or larger international NGOs. By the late 1990s they were becoming ‘professional organisations’, adopting western modes of management which distanced them from their constituencies (Hughes 2003; Hughes & Pupavac 2005). Downie and Kingsbury (2001, 50) note that the lack of cooperation between LNGOs and grassroots associations at the turn of the millennium typified the lack of trust within society at large.

This distance between LNGOs and grassroots action is attributed in large part to the absence of traditional precedents (beside religion) for civic institutions, that mediate between the family and the state (O’Leary 2006, 102-103). NGOs are very new organisational forms that have struggled to forge unique identities. Consequentially, the

language that they use when representing themselves to villagers can be problematic and sometimes authoritarian (Meas 2001, 328-329). LNGOs have replicated Cambodian traditional social hierarchies. Their managers are prone to believing that their technical knowledge puts them above villagers, leading to antagonism when villagers do not adopt the technical solutions that they have to offer (Frewer 2013; O'Leary 2006). More harshly (but very widely) it is asserted LNGOs in Cambodia often look less like models for community service and building civil society than they look like employment schemes providing University graduates with far higher salaries than workers in the public and private sector (Christie 2013; Frewer 2013; Meas 2001; Menon & Hal 2013; Öjendal & Ou 2015; Ou & Kim 2013, 2014).

In summary, a close examination of the way that LNGOs understand social enterprise and their reasons for initiating them (substituting for grants and preserving salaries) might not be commensurate with the way that grassroots community actors would approach the concept of a social enterprise. To understand the *raison d'être* for social enterprise from the grass-roots upwards in Cambodia it is therefore necessary to delve deeper than the commercial turn in the Cambodian non-profit sector. It is necessary to find a way into grassroots village level society and find out from people whether and how they can relate to the concept of a social enterprise. This point is embodied in the words of Ledgerwood (1998) who writes that '*in most discussions of Cambodian political and economic development, the vast peasant majority, living at subsistence level, is generally invisible and silent*' (128). The premise taken in this thesis from this point forward is to explore some matters that the sole focus on NGOs cannot. Returning to matters that emerged in this chapter, questions to be addressed are:

- How is it, that social enterprise would be understood at the grassroots by *Cambodian village level actors*?
- How do grassroots *Cambodian village level actors* interpret and enact the process of social entrepreneurship?

Chapter Two: Social enterprise as a building block for community development

Section One: Introduction

The aim of this thesis is to understand: what social enterprise might mean from the grass-roots upwards in rural localities in LDCs; what would be its legitimate priorities and why might people have reason to engage with this, particularly as a way to develop their communities? To set about this, I contextually and flexibly approach the consensus that social enterprises inevitably take form as *organisations* for practical reasons (Doherty et al. 2014; Ridley-Duff & Bull 2011). To fit the context of my fieldwork, I look towards ‘associational forms.’ These can be embodied in any organised activity, including for instance people who look after children, or who develop a shared vegetable garden or provide transportation arrangements. Associational forms are groups of organised people that do community work, regardless of their registered legal status and even regardless of whether they have yet given themselves a name or put somebody ‘in charge’ (McKnight & Kretzmann 1993). In Cambodia where around ninety per cent of the population make their living through informal economic activity, I define a social enterprise as:

‘An identifiable ‘group’ (of one type or another) that undertakes surplus generating activities (among other things), with some degree of intention toward generating benefits for other people in the community.’

Having set out what I take forward as a definition it needs to be born in mind that any model of a social enterprise is only as useful as the context allows it to be. As Mair and Martí (2006) express:

‘The choice of set-up is typically dictated by the nature of the social needs addressed, the amount of resources needed, the scope for raising capital, and the ability to capture economic value’ (39).

It is clear enough then that the *social needs* that a social enterprise sets out to pursue are contextually determined and that the desirability of a social enterprise is subject to the possibility of meeting these needs. This in turn is impacted by the scope of other institutions that determine what needs go unmet and what possibility there is for mobilising the required resources and securing a viable business proposition. Or as Amin (2009b) puts it, the nature of social enterprise is situated, determined by the scope of welfare provision, culture of social solidarity and functional markets.

In the chapter ahead I deal in greater depth with theories related to social enterprises objectives and how they strive to achieve them. Standard characterisations of ‘social value’ and ‘economic value’ are problematised. The standard outlook in my view reifies a narrow reading of what counts as ‘economic.’ I also find problems with the idea that social and economic value ever could be taken as discrete, somehow separable categories. I underline these points by drawing on texts from within the social enterprise literature and also to a greater extent from texts outside of it that offer broader insights into ‘social life’ and the political economy of economic discourse.

As part of a strategy to read ‘social value’ differently, I turn towards social enterprise as a mechanism for community development. This starts out with general observations about the role of social enterprise in community development and then veers towards the analysis of social enterprise as a means for building social solidarity. In particular, an overview of an established school of thought originating in European research is provided, one that attends to cooperative origins of social enterprise and theorises their existence as a means for instilling the role of civil society within economic affairs. As Peattie and Morley (2008a) put it, this cooperative approach is the theoretical counterpoint to heroic, individual social entrepreneurs, it is a ‘foundation stone’ for studies loaded with ‘an opposing philosophical charge’ (98).

I see the social solidarity approach as conducive to focusing on social enterprise as a building block for democratic, participatory community development. But without the intention of criticising this particular trajectory too much, the way in which theories that go with it travel into a non-Western, post-colonial context, must be critically reviewed. Concepts like ‘social capital’ are also not without controversy in literature on ‘development’ while the ‘public sphere’ associated with European civil society is also questioned in the post-colonial context. This leads me to think again more closely about social value. I see a potential theoretical contribution to be made by thinking

pragmatically about value as a material, embodied, dialogical and thus performative ‘*process of valuation.*’ This strategy connects me to the ‘community economies’ school of thought which gives more impetus into the theorising of community itself. This proposes an anti-essentialist economic discourse in which social enterprise is positioned within a language of ‘diverse economies.’ The community economies approach gives ethical impetus to the rights of individuals to negotiate the terms upon which they can be considered ‘relational beings’ as opposed to self-interested ones.

The community economies literature is also grounded in numerous experiments with community development, using tools that can mobilise people and resources towards the enactment of more diverse and therefore resilient local economies constituted by diversely constituted enterprises, including social ones where possible. This body of literature in particular helps me to pick up the questions I have outlined in Chapter One, founded both on literature review and empirical experiences, and to then refine these questions further as I head onwards to the exposition of an action research methodology.

Section Two: Social Value and Economic Value: Problems with discrete categories

Doherty, Haugh & Lyon (2014) claim that social enterprise literature has matured beyond definitional debates. Beyond saying that social enterprise ‘concerns the use of business means to pursue social ends’, other criteria including a non-for-profit structure and democratic governance come down to particular ‘ideal types’, rather than being definitional features of social enterprise in every instance (Peattie & Morley 2008a, 95-97). At this point it could be concluded that discussion about the *true meaning* of social enterprise can only advance with recourse to the only more or less unanimous point, which is that: social enterprises are ‘*hybrid organisations*’ because they combine the resources, methods and objectives of the private sector, ‘Third Sector’ and sometimes public sector (Billis 2010; Doherty et al. 2014; Evers et al. 2004; Hockerts 2006; Nyssens 2006; Peattie & Morley 2008a; Ridley-Duff & Bull 2011). In so doing, social enterprises create, sustain and reproduce ‘*social value*’ alongside ‘*economic value*’ (Doherty et al. 2014; Galera & Borzaga 2009; Haugh 2005a; Weerawardena & Sullivan Mort 2006).

However, regardless of the hybrid conception, the delineation of social and economic value also creates considerable causes for concern because it means that *economic value* is treated as a discrete domain. Doherty, Haugh & Lyon (2014) for instance seem to have no difficulty equating economic value with financial sustainability and they are accordingly at ease with the separate logic of two discrete domains that underpin the competing demands placed on social enterprises, namely:

'the market/commercial logic to achieve business success and the social welfare/community logic to create social value' (421);

This way of seeing the 'SE dual mission to generate economic and social value' (424) renders the economic to be based upon a narrow reading of market exchange, invariably monetised exchange. It is the 'other' components which operate according to 'other logics' that fall into the 'social' category. This reading of the economic domain rests most comfortably in the ongoing assertion within social enterprise literature that there is a *double bottom line* which renders *social sustainability* and *market orientation* as the inextricable features of the constantly evolving business paradigm called social enterprise (Volkman et al. 2012; Wilburn & Wilburn 2014).

What seems unappreciated in these readings is that the 'economic' is not at all a discrete entity. The economic domain (relating to the production, usage and management of resources) is in reality one 'social domain' within the wider 'social whole.' The economic domain is, in other words, *one* component of the conditions that reproduce social life, alongside other components that include politics, culture and ecology (James 2015, 51-57). The 'economic' might have arisen as a self-governing 'modern' domain in history but it did not do so 'naturally' and moreover it arose from social concerns. Foucault (2002, 206-212) for instance shows how 'economic value' repeatedly mutated since the European enlightenment without adhering to specific rules but rather in accordance with changing attitudes to knowledge. However, because the economic domain is somehow naturalised or treated as self-explanatory when social enterprise literature enunciates the 'double bottom line' – or a 'triple bottom line' when theorists add the environmental category, then the conditions for *the social* are artificially thin because *the economic* is removed in the first instance.

Conceptual problems related to economic value have not gone unnoticed. Cho (2006) is critical of the idea that political problems can be solved by markets alone and writes that

narrow conceptions of social enterprise leads to a monological (as opposed to dialogical) theory of social change. Rory-Ridley Duff and others similarly assert that theorising social enterprise merely as a way to meet social needs by correcting the distributive failures of markets, is a straightjacket that promotes unilateral decisions, discourages continual critical inquiry and the public testing of new ideas, and limits the places from whence social enterprises might emerge (Ridley-Duff & Bull 2011, 142-145; Ridley-Duff & Southcombe 2012, 192). For Dey (2007, 568), the narration of social enterprises as *hybrid organisations* with a double bottom line means, *a priori*, social enterprise is being oriented towards the incorporation of very narrow readings of economic activity and markets.

Such a reading of social enterprise (according to the double or triple bottom line) becomes arguably constitutive of what of what Gibson-Graham (2006a) coin a ‘capitalocentric discourse’ of economy. With its de facto ‘market orientation’ social enterprise becomes ‘the complement of capitalism’ or at least it exists within ‘capitalism’s space or orbit’ (Gibson-Graham 2006a, 6)²⁷. This rendering is explicit in numerous renditions of social enterprise. Whether it is ‘caring’ or ‘inclusive’ capitalism (Dacin et al. 2011; Hibbert et al. 2002) or ‘capitalism with a human face’ (Strategic Direction 2013) or the *future* of as yet incomplete capitalism (Yunus 2007, 2011) or even indeed if the Marxian view is taken that social enterprise amounts exclusively to neoliberal public welfare regimes embedded within ‘social capitalism’ (Cook et al. 2003), the referent of social enterprise is inescapably capitalism.

The debate to be had seems to pertain to the contribution that social enterprises make to society if the modus operandi is ‘capitalism with more positive externalities.’ Is social enterprise a simple modification of capitalism that amounts to the best way of distributing goods? Or as Leadbeater (2007, 2) puts it, a ‘more creative capitalism’ that modifies markets to better meet human needs? Or is the contribution of social enterprise better thought through in other ways: for instance, social enterprise as one organisational form that enacts diverse economies (capitalist and non-capitalist) which, when synthesised with other organisational forms, contributes to *resilient communities* (Gibson, Cahill, et al. 2010)? Along similar lines, Calás, Smircich, & Bourne (2009) ask if we could disassociate ‘entrepreneurship’ from conventional ways of thinking, drawing significantly from the reframing of entrepreneurship as a verb – ‘*entrepreneurising*’ – which can more

²⁷This position extends feminist theory and the description of male dominant ‘phallogocentric’ discourses of society (Gibson-Graham 2006a, 35).

clearly elicit the creative processes entailed in the full spectrum of ‘inventive human activities’ (Steyaert 2007, 453). They ask:

‘What would happen, theoretically and analytically’ ... [if one’s focus moves from]... ‘economic activity with possible social change outcomes to entrepreneurship as a social change activity with a variety of possible outcomes?’ (Calás et al. 2009, 553).

This broadening of horizons relating to *social entrepreneurship* that Calás, Smircich, & Bourne (2009) imply is useful. But some degree of further elaboration to their question might also be suggested. The second part might be read more imaginatively still as:

‘what might happen if the focus shifts to entrepreneurship as a social change activity with a variety of possible outcomes that are both economic and social at the same time?’

One way to focus on *a variety of possible outcomes* at the grassroots level – the focus of this thesis – in my view, is to turn to the different roles that social entrepreneurial subjectivities, embodied in the creation of social enterprises, can play in the development of resilient local economies and democratic pathways for community development.

Section Three: Social solidarity perspectives and the EMES point of view

The strength of communities is a traditional foundation for thinking about social enterprise. Social enterprises are viewed to be a good building block for community development because they:

- Mobilise and strengthen norms of social reciprocity (or social capital) (Kay 2006; Laville & Nyssens 2001);
- Make more creative use of and extract more value from the locally existing stock of resources that communities have (Di Domenico et al. 2010; Haugh 2005b);
- Empower communities by putting them in control of local asset management and the solutions to their own problems (Gunn & Durkin 2010, 46-48; Mason et al. 2007);
- Help people to identify with their community in a positive way (Cornelius & Wallace 2013; Haugh 2007) and instil confidence in the skills and competences that other community members have (Munoz et al. 2015).

In some instances, social enterprises emerge from community activism. They promote a ‘counter-acquisitive culture’ (Amin et al. 2002, 9) and hold public spaces open for community use that are otherwise at risk of enclosure by private business interests (Banks & Butcher 2013; Pearce 2009; Somerville & McElwee 2011). This resonates with the view that social enterprises strengthen civil society by promoting particular kinds of ‘active citizenship’ (Evans 2008; Hulgård 2010; Jiao 2011).

The active citizenship discourse is prominent in scholarship emanating from a European research network called EMES,²⁸ which focuses on the ‘social solidarity economy’ and counts among the most widely cited social enterprise literature. The EMES school focuses on social enterprise at different scales, however community development via community building and citizen engagement, is highly prominent. One of the central criteria that the EMES school employs is ‘an explicit aim to benefit the community’ (Defourny & Nyssens 2006, 5-6; Hulgård 2011, 207-208). EMES can also be counted as a school of thought that does put considerable distance between social enterprise and capitalocentric economic discourse. Scholars tend to see social enterprises as part of a ‘non-capitalist economy’ (Hulgård 2011; Laville 2010). In contrast to some of the dominant narratives raised in Chapter One, Hulgård (2011) sees social enterprises not strictly speaking an innovative, efficient means of service delivery (although he neither denies they are this), but instead, more importantly as experiments with ‘new forms of solidarity and collectivism’ (213).

EMES research has advanced the discussion about innovative trends in community development, particularly with research on the ‘co-production’ of welfare services by ‘social services cooperatives.’ It has done so in a way that harnesses reciprocal behaviours and community resources, and reduces the distance between service users and producers (Borzaga et al. 2011; Defourny et al. 2014; Laville & Nyssens 2000; Pestoff 2006, 2009b).²⁹ Social care services are an illustration of the way that social

²⁸ The European Social Enterprise Research Network – or ‘EMergence des Entreprises Sociales en Europe’ (EMES) – emerged from a research project across 15 European Universities between 1996 and 2000. Since then it has been formalised as an institution that encompasses 10 University-based research centres (Defourny & Nyssens 2006, 4; 2010, 51-52).

²⁹ In the narrowest sense, co-production is taken to mean ‘the involvement of individual citizens and groups in public service delivery’ (Brandsen et al. 2014, 233).

enterprises find niches in markets for ‘relational goods’ (Vidal 2014).³⁰ Social services cooperatives are deemed to be an increasingly important response to changes in European welfare policy (Borzaga & Spear 2004) and part of an alternative architecture for welfare states, creating a greater role for the Third Sector firms instead of for-profit companies (Defourny et al. 2014; Pestoff 2009a). Meanwhile a second strand of EMES research zooms in on Work Integration Social Enterprises (WISEs) that provide sheltered employment or training for disadvantaged groups.³¹ This research has brought to attention means by which social enterprises provide disadvantaged people in the community with access the economic sphere that is not usually provided by private sector enterprises. WISEs also strengthen communities by leveraging diverse resources through the goodwill of community groups, public officials, supplier networks and the support of consumers (Borzaga & Loss 2006; Campi et al. 2006; Nyssens 2010).

From the EMES point of view, the operational logic of social enterprises is different to conventional capitalist enterprises because social enterprises fuse the democratic principles of civil society with the running of a business. Firstly the ideal-type cooperative ‘one member one vote’ structure means that people’s rights to make decisions are not tied to their ownership of the capital (Defourny & Nyssens 2010, 46-48). But further still, the ideal type of social enterprise from the EMES point of view is a *multi-stakeholder* one. This means that a social enterprise gives a voice in decisions to representatives of disadvantaged people who might not be members but who are nonetheless dependent on the benefits that it generates (Borzaga & Loss 2006; Defourny & Nyssens 2008, 2010).

In summary in the EMES ideal-type social enterprise not only are decision rights untied to capital ownership but they are also untied to membership. At the root of social enterprise in general is the cooperative tradition of collective social action (Defourny & Nyssens 2006, 2010). In this regard, the multi-stakeholder social enterprise in particular – otherwise called a ‘social solidarity cooperative’ – is a democratic evolution from traditional cooperative mutual organisations which contain benefits within their membership (Münkner 2004). This also signifies in a strong sense, a fundamental

³⁰ From the EMES perspective relational goods are also conducive to proximity between the producer and the user (Laville & Nyssens 2000). This can make service provision democratic and give users greater voice to ensure their needs are met (Vidal 2014, 178-179).

³¹ Friends International’s training restaurants are an example of WISE in Cambodia. This model also fits the description of numerous other social enterprises operated by LINGOs in Cambodia that are set up to provide vocational training to disadvantaged groups (Lyne et al. 2015).

departure from capitalocentric economic discourses of property rights. Along these lines, EMES scholarship, by drawing together different economic practices and resources, shows how social enterprises are part of the ‘plural economy’ (Defourny & Nyssens 2006, 2012; Laville 2013; Laville et al. 2006). This is theoretically underpinned by drawing together two historic contributions, from the economic anthropology of Karl Polanyi on one hand and the sociology of Marcel Mauss on the other.

3.1: The plural economy drawing on Karl Polanyi and Marcel Mauss

The economic anthropology of Polanyi is employed in EMES scholarship, to underline that markets and society are interconnected (Laville 2013). Markets in other words do not function independently of their context. Even if social enterprise does almost inevitably have a ‘market orientation’ as Huybrechts and Nicholls (2012) claim, it can still be considered, drawing from Karl Polanyi (1957), that a ‘market economy’ in itself is situated and its cross-contextual homogeneity artificial. In Polanyi’s view, the universal market economy *makes for good economic theory rather than for good economic history*’ (261). It is inescapable that markets, along with prerequisite supply crowds and demand crowds, also involve functional elements like law and customs (266-267). In Polanyi’s view, the ‘formal market economy’ (otherwise meaning ‘supply-demand-price’) which is universal and somehow disembedded from social and political variables, is a conjuring trick – or ‘economist sophism’ (Laville 2013, 4). It may have heralded the ‘great transformation’ and given birth to the modern nation state, but it is also an economic fallacy that reduces the broader *human economy* (that sustains livelihoods through *actually existing diverse markets*) to the market economy alone (Polanyi 1957, 267; 1977, 20-21).

The sociology of Marcel Mauss is deemed important in the EMES scholarship because if *actual* markets are the result of socio-cultural norms, then Mauss shows how reciprocal socio-cultural norms on the part of state and civil society are under constant negotiation. It is within this negotiation that the space for social enterprise and the social economy is possibly widened (Laville 2013). Besides the theorisation of these particular norms and obligations, a further contribution of Mauss considered valuable in EMES scholarship is the undermining of *homo economicus*, or rational economic man, as the basis for interpreting economic interaction. In particular, the focus on *gifts* establishes cyclical obligations of generosity, enlightening different economic practices which ‘push the limits of society outwards’ (Hart et al. 2010, 8).

What is being said here, by fusing Polanyi and Mauss together, is that society or ‘socio-cultural norms’ underpin the functional objectives of both markets and states and that neither operates in isolation. From here the move of EMES scholars is to show that a central objective of *hybrid* social enterprises is to forge new combinations of resources and economic practices in the plural (or ‘tripolar’) economy that is constituted by the market economy, non-market economy (state redistribution and welfare) and non-monetary economy (reciprocal exchange) (Defourny & Nyssens 2006, 2012; Laville et al. 2006). It is through the combining of these three economic spheres that hybrid social enterprises emerge as one point where self-organisation meets social protection and where social protection can be obtained by harnessing the widest possible economic means (Laville 2013, 2).

3.2: Social capital is the *raison d’être* for social enterprise

Social capital is widely cited as an analytical framework for trust and reciprocity that enables people to make transactions in good faith and form networks that help to leverage or mobilise resources (Fukuyama 2001; Narayan-Parker 1997; Ostrom 2000; Putnam 1993, 2000). It is considered as ‘capital’ definitively because it requires investment (time and sometimes money) and also because it is ‘an accumulated stock from which a stream of benefits flows’ (Grootaert & Bastelaer 2001, 12). This perspective is however preceded by other points of view on social capital: Bourdieu (1986) writes from a Marxian standpoint that social capital works for the specific benefit of powerful individuals who can subordinate group action to their own advantage. But it was Robert Putnam’s (1993) analysis, focusing on ‘bridging social capital’ or ‘weak ties’ between different social groups, which purportedly shows why some societies are democratic and accountable and others not, that was seized upon as the basis for all manner of international development programs from the mid-1990s onwards (Hickey & Mohan 2004).

It is also Putnam’s articulation of social capital as a *public good* that underpins much EMES scholarship where social capital is positioned as the *means and ends* of a social enterprise. Instrumentally, social capital helps social enterprises to mobilise public support and resources (Evers 2001; Hulgård & Spear 2006), reduce costs (Laville & Nyssens 2001) and survive in competitive markets (Tani 2009). But beyond this, the particular type of social capital that social enterprises mobilize, which is embedded in communities, improves people’s quality of life and assists community development by

further strengthening the stock of social capital that communities have already, making it easier to distribute social goods and services (Borzaga et al. 2010; Defourny & Nyssens 2006; Laville & Nyssens 2001). Social capital is in short, as Evers (2001, 306) writes, intrinsic to the very idea of social enterprises as a strategy for community development. The EMES position concurs with the assertion of Putnam (1993, 170) that social capital is ‘ordinarily a public good’, perhaps replacing ‘*ordinarily*’ with ‘*definitively*’ when it comes to the mobilisation of social capital by social enterprises. This affinity with Putnam underpins hypothetical propositions (or ‘theoretical axes’) stated at the start of one widely cited EMES research volume which deals with how social enterprises: achieve their diverse goals; mobilise market and non-market resources and also how they can engage with public policy and public officials (Defourny & Nyssens 2006, 10-11).

A normative EMES theoretical advancement from here is that social enterprise aligns with the theories of Jürgen Habermas (1987; 1994) related to *communicative action* within the public sphere (or ‘life-world’). The public sphere is a discursive domain or web composed by institutions and practices. It mediates private interests, orientates social actions toward mutual understanding and allows the iterative forging of new balances between money, administrative power and social solidarity (or the private sector, government and civil society) (1994, 9). At an early stage in EMES research it was established that a critical *social* innovation of social enterprises, is the transfer of social capital from the ‘private sphere’ – where Bourdieu (1986) situates it – to the ‘public sphere’ where it services a stronger and more assertive civil society (Evers 2001; Laville & Nyssens 2001). From the EMES point of view the public sphere is the *natural habitat* of a democratic multi-stakeholder social enterprise. It is a space which enables collective voice through freedom of assembly, rights of association and the forging of autonomous public spaces or ‘new ground for public deliberation’ that supports understanding of the common good (Hulgård 2010, 59; Laville & Nyssens 2000, 76-77; 2001, 320-321). It is also a space where agenda setting in ‘micro public spheres’ can emerge and gain ground as part of a wider movement for a social economy that reaches meso or even macro levels (Eschweiler & Hulgård 2012, 4).

Section Four: The trouble with social capital

Without wishing to distance myself from the important contributions that EMES scholarship makes to the case for economic democracy, explicit public welfare benefit and community development as the normative output of social enterprises, I do contend that the EMES approach is constrained by the reliance upon ‘social capital’ as an organising concept for analytical enquiry. There is much critique of social capital. In development studies literature especially social capital has been viewed as part of de-politicising development. Contra Putnam, it is argued that literature expounding social capital leads to the undermining of accountability rather than strengthening of it. Social capital summarily squeezes political economy and strips out alternatives to neo-liberal values (Fine 1999, 2001; Harriss 2002). There is also potential for divisiveness. Along the lines of Bourdieu, social capital is observed as a resource for the non-poor who benefit more from development projects because of their greater capacity to join and influence groups (Cleaver 2005). Rankin (2002) finds that programs premised on social capital burden households and by extension women with greater responsibility for the welfare of their community, while Schuurman (2003) writes that such programs enable the poor to be blamed when social capital is lacking. The latter line of argumentation brings social capital into focus as a means of ‘responsibilisation’, synonymous with ‘moral conservatism’ in policy discourse on social enterprise. Summarily, the presence of social enterprises serves policy makers as an indicator of the *right type* of social capital that delineates ‘active’ poor communities from uncooperative, pernicious and/or dangerous ones (Amin 2005; Amin et al. 2002; Evans 2008; Toner et al. 2008).

Much (not all) of the above critique arises from structuralist analysis of social capital, focusing particularly on how it marginalizes the state as a developmental actor. From a post-structuralist understanding of local economy and community, however, social capital is problematic not because it distances development from the state but rather because it homogenises the diversity of economic practices within communities. Social capital is self-evidently a capitalocentric discourse. When liberal theorists invoke the Prisoner’s Dilemma to explain how social capital works, and how tit-for-tat exchanges can be eventually anticipated (Fukuyama 2001, 16; Putnam 1993, 163-164), then social capital is really no more *social* than economic capital. It means ‘*do ut des*’, or ‘I give in order that you give in return’ (Dey 2007, 37) which is, according to Lyotard (1992, 58 cited in Dey 2007, 568) ‘the simple canonical formula’ of the capitalist genre. For EMES

this should be problematic. Far from enabling the visualisation of economies in all of their diversity, social capital renders economic exchanges that cannot be reduced to the logic of capital and accumulation meaningless. Social capital becomes, as Gibson-Graham (2006b, 58) put it, a ‘grab bag category’ into which social relations are dumped, decontextualised and reasserted as components of ‘social inclusion’, much in the same way that economic relations are decontextualised by the artificially homogenous market economy.

On the part of EMES scholarship, it is perhaps recourse to Mauss that generates so much attention to social capital. Mauss claimed that a ‘gift’ is *never free*, for a gift given freely denies its very purpose in society which is to generate reciprocity, without which solidarity would be allegedly impossible (Douglas 1990). For Mauss (1990) reciprocity underwrites a type of *social security* that is far more valuable than the landlord’s protection or wages from the employer (69). It has been central to the progress of societies as far as it has stabilised social relations between both groups and individuals, it was ‘*only then [with reciprocity] did people learn how to create mutual interests, giving mutual satisfaction, and, in the end, to defend them without having to resort to arms*’ (82). Anthropology drawing on Mauss, has historically followed this trajectory by understanding the Gift as a means by which social relationships are established and kept in motion (Laidlaw 2002). It is not so surprising then to find Mauss cited in the theorising of social capital, related to membership of groups with structured norms of exchange (Wall et al. 1998) or to one’s ability to ‘acquire social capital (...) by giving and in that way indebting others’ (Flap 2002, 37). It is this latter proposition that draws the ire of Derrida (1992) in particular, for whom gifts that create *debt* are *poisonous gifts* which undermine the simple notion that is it ‘good to give’ (12).

4.1: Collectivity: A done deal or a work always in progress?

A further contextual concern also emerges from the EMES literature’s recourse to the notion of the ‘public sphere’ and theorising of Jürgen Habermas in particular. EMES network scholars are by no means alone in theorising social enterprise through Habermas. Ridley-Duff and Bull (2011, 94) write that social enterprises create ‘ideal speech’ situations which prevent dominant actors from organising communicative action toward their personal advantage. Suzanne Grant is notably reliant on Habermas. In her view social enterprises lie at the intersection of the ‘life-world’ (social) and ‘system world’ (enterprise) and maintaining their pedagogic value social enterprises

requires alertness to and strategies for resisting the colonisation of the former by the logic of the latter (Grant 2008, 2013; Grant & Dart 2008).³² It is also through this resistance that social enterprises can instil ‘relational ethics’ in communities that help to build a ‘shared world’ controlled by people instead of ‘markets’ (Grant 2008; Humphries & Grant 2005).

Herein however, also lays critique of the normatively *collective* identity that Habermas engenders. Cho (2006) draws attention to the hegemonic project of Enlightenment thinkers - namely the ‘discursive consensus’ and a ‘unitary social agenda’ – which Habermas set out to rehabilitate through communicative action (39). These doubts are compounded by wider critique. Nancy Fraser (1992 in Cho 2006, 41-42) asserts that within Habermas’s comprehensive ‘public sphere’ inequality is exacerbated because communicative action (contrary to postulated ‘ideal speech’ scenarios) is indeed distorted by imbalances of power. In Fraser’s view, as less powerful actors are integrated further into the ‘public sphere’ they are rendered less able to resist its modes of deliberation and get absorbed into ‘a false “we” that reflects the more powerful.’ Margaret Kohn (2000 in Cornwall 2004, 79-80) also observes that in deliberative spaces which constitute the public sphere, only ‘particular voices and versions’ are allowed to enter into a debate. Critical literature on social enterprise mainstreaming and the enforcement of a governable terrain for civil society (Carmel & Harlock 2008; Mason 2012) certainly brings such assertions about questionable means of public deliberation to bear on what Dey and Steyaert (2010) refer to as the ‘grand narration’ of social enterprise discourses.

It is evident then that academia is not in unanimous agreement about communicative action and the public sphere as a means for societal transformation and betterment of the poor. But perhaps more problematic still than all of the above critique, at least in the context of this thesis, is that Habermas’s ‘public sphere’ is deemed more valid as a general history of civic culture emerging in the Enlightenment period in Western Europe, than as a historic reading of civic culture in the developing world (Reinelt 2011). It is contested in India for instance, that civil society might have been the locus for social change under colonial rule but in the postcolonial era, with the rise of nationalism, ‘political society’ is much more pertinent (Chatterjee 2004, 65). Chatterjee’s

³² This seems similar in essence to the point made elsewhere, perhaps made more simplistically, that social enterprises over time can begin to encounter ‘mission drift’ and changes in their organisational culture as a result of commercially enterprising activities (Toner et al. 2008).

analysis travels to Cambodia when one considers the post-colonial era under King Sihanouk. At this time nationalist politics came into its own with Sihanouk's personal political party that he sought to extend into all aspect of Cambodian life (Ayres 2000a; Chandler 2008b; Peang-Meth 1991)³³. In Cambodia today it is also observed that the main reason massive aid investments into LINGOs in the 1990s failed to yield a strong civil society (or 'public sphere') that could counter-balance political power, was because donors badly underestimated the ability of political elites to quickly formulate networks of patronage (in other words loyal factions) and also their ability to move politics into the backrooms, away from public scrutiny (Hughes 2009a).

The above issues in Cambodia are dealt with more elsewhere, partially in Chapters Five and Six and largely in Chapter Eight. They are cited here to signpost a problematic issue. There is much to be gained theoretically by considering how the social enterprise literature helps to understand the plural nature of economy and the role of social enterprise in strengthening economies by non-capitalist means (Hulgård 2014). But there are also problems with the reliance firstly on social capital and secondly upon a discourse of widespread collective public deliberation which might not reflect realities in developing countries. Considering that context is found to matter critically in stakeholders' perceptions of social enterprises from one country to another one (Skerratt 2012), it is vital in my view to think about other theoretical models which can be mobilised to explore the *value* that people at the grassroots might place on social enterprises.

³³ Norodom Sihanouk was appointed King by French administrators in 1941 and led Cambodia to full independence in 1954. In 1955 Sihanouk abdicated his title as King to his father, adopted the title of Prince and pursued political office with his newly devised *Sangkum Reastr Niyum* – translating as *People's Socialist Community*. The *Sangkum* was proclaimed not as a political party but instead as a *society*, something beyond the realm of politics that united people across the political spectrum. Despite not being a political party, it stood for and won every election from 1955 until 1966 without any opposition politicians entering the National Assembly (Ayres 2000a, 33-35; Chandler 2008b, 167-168).

The *Sangkum* was founded on Sihanouk's idea of '*Buddhist socialism*', meaning redistribution from rich to poor not through the re-appropriation of surplus but instead through acts of merit (*bunni*). Sihanouk's 'patron politics', obligatory acts of kindness to his subjects (or *children*), signified a contradictory concoction of collectivism without collectivisation, socialist revolution without the proletariat. It was supposedly an *authentic* Khmer Buddhist society that did not import doctrines from abroad. The *Sangkum* symbolised Cambodia's Buddhist crusade for modernity that paradoxically proliferated casinos and death sentences for political opponents (Ayres 2000a, 34-36; 2000b, 449; Chandler 1997, 40-41; Harris 1999, 60-61).

Section Five: Reframing the ‘social value’ of social enterprises

As noted earlier, *social value* is a univocal enunciation of a social enterprise’s output. It is problematic enough when social value is viewed in separation from economic value if this means *economic* value intrinsically conforms to the logic of capital. But perhaps what really compounds problems with the notion of social value, is that it remains poorly defined. In large part this is because of the rhetoric that continually surrounds it. At a time when so much was being written on the subject, Young (2006) wrote that social value ‘appears to strike the majority as so obvious that it has evaded much comment’ (56). It is not clear how far things have since really progressed. Literature on social bricolage that shows how social enterprises bring underused resources into public use, extends the idea of social value creation and gives social value some substance (Di Domenico et al. 2010). However, as Choi and Majumdar (2014) maintain, social value is value laden and implies lots of different things. It is ambiguous precisely because ‘*the ‘social’ itself is...highly complex...and contested*’ (367). Moreover, the obfuscation of this ambiguity represents social change as something that is unrealistically predictable and harmonious (Dey & Steyaert 2010).

It can consequently be said that social value is not only imprecise but also (through rhetoric) *performative*. Butler (1993) uses performativity theory to show how gender has been materialised through ‘reiterative and citational practices’ leading to the situation where ‘discourse produces the effects that it names’ (2). Much the same can be said about the iterative enunciation of social value along with literature from supportive foundations (that invariably uses the term ‘social impact’). Social value has been *produced* at least as much as it has been impartially reflected (Steyaert & Dey 2010, 232). Social value emerges through enunciations or speech acts as a stabilising feature of the social enterprise discourse. This is especially evident where management literature endlessly approaches social value as something *measurable* (Dees et al. 2001, 2002; Lynch & Walls 2010; Lyons 2012; Whiting et al. 2012) sometimes formulating monetised proxies for it (Hall & Arvidson 2014; Nicholls, J 2007).

One concern with measurement of social value lies in the origins of social enterprise itself as a western-centric discourse, targeted at western welfare concerns and western forms of market failure (Hackett 2009). The way in which any value measurement associated with social enterprises carries into non-Western contexts is thus also

questionable.³⁴ It is arguable in Dey's (2007) view that measurement is a means by which credentials are *derived* for the social enterprise field as much as they are earned, mainly by making social enterprise accountable to the technical imperatives of investment (126). What must be conceded most critically of all, is that what is being 'measured' is actually an organisation's *social purpose value* (which involves value judgements) rather than anything that could *per se* be called *pure social value* (Gibbon & Dey 2011; Ryan & Lyne 2008, 228).

In summary, social purpose value, or instances of social bricolage, or anything else that might be considered as tangible examples of social value, can only be considered as *one specific instance of social value*, enacted in its own context. It could be no more accepted as the actually complete articulation of social value than capitalism could be accepted as the complete articulation of the word 'economy.' However, drawing from Young (2006), all of the above concerns with social value can also be viewed as a research opportunity. Because social value is situated in its context, it is implausible to exclude cultural values because they affect how exchanges take place and are more often than not reflective of the balances of power between transacting parties (58). Furthermore, social value also relates to how people live their lives. Therefore people who are the focus of social value are necessarily, through its consumption, also its co-constructors (57).

5.1: From value to valuation – a different way to look at social value

Whatever social value means is *produced* in the situated act of its creation and consequent consumption or effect. But *reframing* social value once the performativity of it has been recognised requires greater effort than the mere recognition of its situated meaning. As Steyaert and Dey (2010) put it, reframing social value should be enacted by 'putting prime emphasis on its particular dialogical properties' (258). A proposition of this thesis

³⁴ The measure of Social Return on Investment (SROI) – a monetised proxy for social value – is a case in point. Here monetised proxies amount largely to cost savings from public budgets. One might, for instance, quantify the social value delivered by training or employment for ex-offenders by: i) totalling money saved by the removal of ex-offenders from the welfare and the criminal justice system (by preventing re-offending); ii) adding the taxes contributed by their entry into the labour market and iii) communicating this in ratio to the currency spent on bringing it about. Other matter cited in SROI documents (that can be monetised in this way) include reduced use of homeless services, health services and policing as well as taxes paid by the enterprise and its contribution to the conditions for economic growth (Ryan & Lyne 2008, 229). From a critical perspective, this focus on public budgets and taxes has limited utility in countries like Cambodia where welfare expenditure is minimal and most business lies outside of the formal taxation system. Some might counter-argue that cost saving alone is not the sole basis of the SROI calculus. For instance the service provided and 'willingness to pay' (WTP) is another part of the route towards a monetised social value proxy (Arvidson et al. 2010). But this is also contested on the grounds that WTP only suits evaluations when the population is of sufficient magnitude, such as public program evaluations (Mertens et al. 2015, 16).

is that one way to achieve this is to lose the idea that ‘social value’ is exclusively a noun. Mair and Martí (2006) provide a preliminary inroad: they claim that social enterprises ‘create social value by stimulating social change or meeting social need’ (37). Here a *process* is sketched (albeit using terms that yet again point to ambiguities and context) leading to social value creation although social value remains unambiguously a tangible singular *thing or noun*. I am drawn towards reframing that may be possible if one moves beyond this, towards the understanding of *social value as a process*. This does not mean social value ceases to be a noun at all, but rather that it can be both at once a *noun and a verb*. A process is a tangible *thing* that can even be the output of other processes, but it is also action at the same time.

To clarify my hypothesis, I call on Muniesa (2011). Muniesa shows how a pragmatic approach to ‘value’, which gives due emphasis to it as a *verb* – (to value), can address dissatisfaction with the historic argument about whether value is inherently subjective or alternatively external to individuals, amounting to a problem addressed only through correctly used, appropriate metrics. Drawing on the sociologist John Dewey’s ‘flank movement’, Muniesa shows how the shift from value to valuation pulls away from the bipolar ‘subjective-objective’ scheme. These two domains are less mutually exclusive when one is talking about what is being ‘done’ as opposed to when one is talking about what something necessarily ‘is’ (25-26). Muniesa shows that Dewey’s flank movement puts aside ‘signs’ that might be used to determine what value is, to look from a pragmatist’s perspective, at how *signification* works as an action process. This not only approaches value more agnostically but it also brings out the performativity of ‘value’ by showing that the process of reaching it (through valuation) involves ‘considering a reality while provoking it’ (32). Putting all of this together, to arrive at an approach to social value as a ‘process of valuation’, I make three moves as represented in Figure 2:

1. Valuation is not a ‘fixed singular’ *thing*;
2. Valuation is a dual process, at once a subjectively encountered source of ideas *and* objectively a *thing* or practice that puts primary emphasis on the dialogical properties of social valuation (its properties are negotiated with others);
3. This dual process renders value intrinsically performed and infused with material value for the actors who are involved in it.

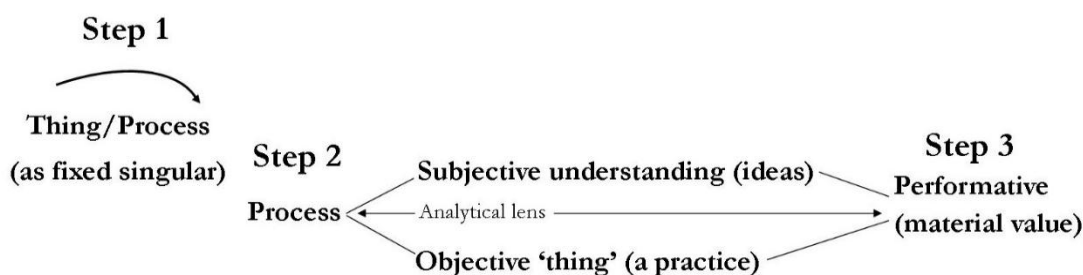


Figure 2: Steps toward reframing social value as processes of valuation (with primary emphasis on dialogical properties)

This ontological framing benefits from principles in Varela, Thompson and Rosch's (1992) critical appraisal of cognitive science. These authors show how a cognitive act, explained as 'embodied action,' collapses the divide between the first-person subjective perspective and objectivity by pointing to their coexistence. One analogy is the way people experience colour. It is found that people in one cultural context see greater difference between green and blue than people in another culture and that this results significantly from linguistics (in the latter context people have one word for green and blue combined). Colour is thus, in contravention to the world of the objectivist, experiential. But contrary to the subjectivist, it is neither consigned to the inner laws of one's cognitive system. Rather colour exists within biological and cultural world that is shared with others (Varela et al. 1992, 169-172). In short, the meaning of the world lies in people's interaction with it (there is no independent reality) however cognition (meaning making) stems nonetheless from people's sensorimotor capacities which are embedded in the shared world around them.

I not only propose that social value is a process, but that it is a process that can render democracy and continual deliberation as the ends of social enterprise and also the means of achieving it. This is pertinent also if one returns to the widely held assertion of various scholars (particularly those in EMES) that a social enterprise is valuable as a pedagogical site (or vehicle) for economic democracy (Borzaga & Galera 2012; Defourny 2014; Humphries & Grant 2005; Laville & Nyssens 2001; Ridley-Duff 2007; Ridley-Duff & Bull 2011; Spear 2011). At this juncture I also propose that a reframed conception of social value (as a result of the embodied processes that valuation entails) more readily allows subjects to readily become 'active economic citizens'. To position this as a benchmark of social value, I draw from post-structuralist contributions which keep the constitutive features of economic citizenship open ended (Gibson-Graham et al. 2013). These contributions uphold an ethical commitment to exploring what it is that people value and what affect does it have upon people when they go about this. It

enables me here to embed a new question into the discussion of the Cambodian grassroots context which is:

What processes of social valuation are important at the grassroots level of a Cambodian village?

To help set up ways this question might be approached through appropriate data, I move into the final section of this chapter by giving consideration to one more body of theory and research that touches on the social economy and social enterprise at the community level in particular – namely the ‘Community Economies (CE)’ literature.

Section Six: Social enterprise and entrepreneurship: An anti-essentialist view informed by community economies (CE) research

A ‘community economy’ is not a ‘structure’ constituted by crystallised economic forms. Rather it is a collection of processes, practices and assets that support people’s material wellbeing. These all cohere in spaces where people recognise themselves as both social and economic beings that ethically negotiate and sometimes extend their interdependence with others in the act of directly creating their economy (Gibson-Graham & Roelvink 2013; Graham & Cornwell 2009; Hill 2011).

Hu, Bhatt & Qureshi (2013) argue that by deconstructing and then reframing economy as ‘discursive space’ and recognising economies as inherently diverse (rather than existing only in the orbit of capitalism), the CE approach makes a profound contribution to how one might see the ‘social economy.’ It becomes easier in these authors view to move from the ‘reformist’ social economy that supplements capitalism by catering for the people capitalism excludes (otherwise called ‘correcting market failures’), towards a ‘transformative social economy’ (8). This assertion underlines one point of agreement between EMES and CE scholarship – economies are plural and always grounded in social relations. A similar line of argumentation from Laville, Lévesque & Mendell (2006, 16) and Gibson-Graham, Cameron & Healy (2013, ix-xx) is that connections between the economic and socio-political dimensions of society are central to understanding how (and why) economic opportunities can be oriented towards people ‘living well together.’ In this reading of how people can live well together, there is also a consensus on seeing social enterprises, most fundamentally, as building blocks for the development of communities.

6.1: The community economies approach to subjectivity: Implications for social entrepreneurship

There is at least one critical point of philosophical divergence between much of the EMES literature and CE approaches. Gudeman (2001, 81) observes that texts which bring the neglect of social reciprocity in mainstream economics (invariably citing Mauss) to attention, tend to adopt an essentialist approach to the subject. That is, where mainstream economics essentialises the self-interested individual (*homo economicus*), texts citing Mauss tend to emphasise the oppositional but equally essentialist ‘relational subject.’ However, a challenge from the CE point of view is to see people’s subject position as essentially neither self-interested nor relational. This is, in essence, what underpins an ‘anti-essentialist’ research posture towards subjectivity. This is not a concrete non-essentialism (which would be in itself essentialist) but more of an ethical position, or *motive*. It is a position that extends directly out of the view that people’s identities are not fixed, they are formed at the intersection of all types of identity and there is no ‘invariant core’ (Gibson-Graham 2006a, 16-29).

What the CE perspective also means in theory, is that the economic subjectivities of individuals and groups can change at any given time and that individuals and groups can plausibly also occupy different subject positions at once. The open-endedness of economic subjectivities is compounded by consideration of the economic processes within which all economic actors (social entrepreneurs included) are embedded. These processes do not have a stable essence or central cause which *determines* them. Economic processes rather, are processes constituted at the intersection of other processes which *overdetermine* them: As Gibson-Graham (2006 b xxx) note:

‘...for un-thinking economic determinism, overdetermination brings a rigorous anti-essentialism to the understanding of causation, working against the nearly ubiquitous impulse to reduce complex processes of eventuation to the operation of one or several determinants.’

It is through overdetermination, that CE scholarship arrives at the point where economies are considered plural. Capitalism is not in itself a stable singular notion of ‘economy,’ it is an unstable accumulation of contradictory processes and practices. And capitalism also exists among a galaxy of other types of actually and potentially enacted non-capitalist economies. Embedded within all of this, economic actors’ subjectivities

need be neither inherently capitalist nor rooted in any other mode by which economic surplus is to be produced, appropriated and distributed.

When one considers the proposition that people commonly adopt different economic subjectivities at the same time, one can also encounter social entrepreneurship as a good illustration of this in practice. As a process, social entrepreneurship puts people simultaneously into different places. It requires prosocial, entrepreneurial dispositions (Ernst 2012, 60). It can simultaneously invoke the subjectivities of a business developer, financial manager, fundraiser, service provider, social worker, community developer and volunteer. It renders entrepreneurs accountable to a greater range of stakeholders on a greater range of issues than conventional business entrepreneurship tends to do (Bacq & Lumpkin 2014; Lumpkin et al. 2013). Social entrepreneurship can also be a site of struggle for freedom of practice and resistance to prescriptive discourse. It entails, simply put, the struggle to keep subjectivity open ended (Dey & Steyaert 2016).

The open-endedness of subjectivity, turned onto ‘the gift economy’, also signifies a further point of departure in the CE approach from EMES scholarship (particularly on the matter of ‘social capital’). CE scholars contemplate ‘the gift economy’ in a way that treads more lightly in Mauss’s footsteps than the critique of Derrida,³⁵ but they still delineate different kinds of gifts to distance their position from that of Mauss. While reciprocity in Mauss’s terms anticipates reciprocal equivalences though gifts that keep counter-gifts in motion, *gift* in their view does not *always* mean ‘return’ and where there is return it is open-ended, allowing unexpected returns within undetermined time frames (Gibson-Graham et al. 2013, 105).

In the process of placing gifts among a host of diverse economic transactions, CE scholars have productively coined and widely employed the conception of ‘social surplus’ (Cameron et al. 2011; Gibson-Graham 2006b; Healy 2015; Hill 2011). This refers to the instances where labour surpluses are distributed into social spaces, rather than appropriated by people who own the capital. Gibson-Graham (2006b) explains that the moments where social surplus is produced, appropriated and distributed, are moments when community is strengthened or *produced*, or at least when the production of community is rendered more plausible (91). In a sense this does some of the work of ‘social capital’ as far as it enhances networks, but it does something also that social

³⁵ In blunt commentary on the solely *functional* Gift, focusing for instance upon how the act of gift-giving means ‘*raising the stakes*’, Derrida (1992) asserts: ‘One could go so far to say that a work as monumental as Marcel Mauss’s “*The Gift*” speaks of everything but the gift’ (24).

capital does not - if social capital amounts to self-interested reciprocity, which is to cultivate economic subjects who take greater interest in why surpluses are produced and also in their own role is in making surpluses work for their community.

The production and distribution of social surplus is a process through which, according to Cameron et al (2011) economic subjects can ‘*collectively learn to be affected*’ by what it means to live well in a shared world (497). It stands to reason also, that surplus can be distributed with diverse rationales. Sometimes it might be reciprocal but otherwise it might be distributed as an open ended gift. Social surplus can also vary in material form. There can be surpluses of a food, knowledge, free-time, equipment and pooled financial contributions – all of which provide the potential not only for bricolage or ‘new combinations’ in an entrepreneurial fashion but also pedagogical ends (Cameron et al. 2011; Gibson-Graham 2006b). It is not a great leap to think that social surplus production captures much of what lies at the heart of social entrepreneurship. What also seems reasonable then in my view, is to propose that social entrepreneurship is a process where people ‘learn to be affected’, and at risk of a circular argument, to also propose that social enterprises are a site where this learning can take place.

6.2: The CEC language of ‘diverse economies’: Implications for social enterprise

Through the anti-essentialist conviction, CE scholars – drawing considerably on the Polanyian tradition of substantive research on culturally embedded economies (Polanyi 2001) and livelihoods (Polanyi 1977) – strive to support the enactment of ‘diverse economies.’ This renders more visible and credible the *submerged* transactions, diverse ways of labouring, economic forms, property regimes and so on that provide the basis for economic citizens to ‘live well’ (Gibson-Graham 2006b, 2008b; Gibson-Graham et al. 2013; Gibson-Graham & Roelvink 2011; Healy 2009). From the CE perspective, in summary, an open posture to economy as a ‘space of difference’ makes it possible to think about economies that are *alternative to* capitalism without being *weak next to* capitalism (Healy 2009, 338-339).

Deliberation along the lines of ethical coordinates bears much in common with ideal-type democratic social enterprise, as part of a plural economy, from the EMES point of view. But this deliberation also stretches things by bringing into question the ‘not-for-profit’ criteria that EMES tend to stick with. To begin making this point, I draw from Ridley-Duff and Southcombe (2012, 181-182) who note that the social enterprise

literature is delineated by the *socialisation* perspective which looks towards mutualism in the social economy and the *social purpose* perspective which is prevalent in non-profit management. EMES scholars hold that ‘ideal type’ social enterprises are ‘*not-for-profit private organisations providing goods or services directly related to their explicit aim to benefit the community*’ (Defourny & Nyssens 2010, 43).³⁶ The non-profit criteria are thus explicit and backed up by the explication of the *social purpose* of the goods or services. Exemplary in this regard are the previously mentioned social care cooperatives on one hand and ‘work-integration’ social enterprises on the other. At times the non-profit criteria do seem a little fuzzy from the EMES point of view. Bacq and Janssen (2011) clarify things somewhat, writing that when a social enterprise distributes its benefits it ‘*must avoid a behaviour that would lead to profit maximization, [it] can distribute profit, but in a limited manner*’ (387). But despite the flexibility, the non-profit orientation still seems paramount. Borzaga and Galera (2014) express that alongside democratic governance, social enterprises use the non-profit constraint ‘to further lock [its] social and inclusive dimension’ (98).

From the CE perspective, the non-profit orientation is more questionable or *less essentialist*. What really matters, is how the use of profit (or surplus) is deliberated and how the legitimate claims upon it are extended. This can be drawn out through reference to ‘ethical coordinates’ for economic practice. Matters for consideration include: what is necessary for survival; how surplus production (over that deemed ‘necessary’) should be appropriated; whether and how goods and surpluses should be consumed, utilised or reinvested; and what can be done to produce and sustain collective goods (Gibson-Graham 2005a; Gibson-Graham & Roelvink 2010, 331-335; 2011). In other words, from this point of view *surplus is an ethical point of deliberation*. Social enterprises need not be non-profit ones because just as the monolithic notion of capitalism is destabilised by CE scholarship, so too are non-capitalist transactions destabilised as essentialist practices.

It can be deduced from a CE perspective that the configuration of diverse economies is a process that leads to the development of social enterprises along with other enterprising forms. The *social* emphasis in these configurations falls largely on the delineation between ‘necessary labour’ (what workers need to survive) and the use of

³⁶ From the EMES point of view this also rules out ‘commercial non-profit enterprises’ that produce goods unrelated to a social mission and operates like any other business, in order to generate profits that subsidise a charitable organisation (Defourny & Nyssens 2010, 45).

surplus after that point. There will be deliberations on whether the surplus is to be used for business running costs, productive capital (retained earnings) or to be assigned as ‘social surplus’ (other words ‘collective wealth’) to achieve a range of social outcomes (Healy 2015, 351-352). The focus on *producing community* through the creation and distribution of surplus (Gibson-Graham 2006b, 91) would potentially find allies among researchers advocating the renewal of the *socialisation* perspective in social enterprise literature (Ridley-Duff & Southcombe 2012; Smith & Teasdale 2012). As Ridley-Duff (2007, 382; 2008, 308) puts it, social enterprises are grounded in ‘socially rational thinking’ whereby the distribution of economic capital across different stakeholder groups (including employees) is actually a core pedagogic, socialising feature of a legitimate social enterprise that is geared towards sustainable economic democracy.

Section Seven: Conclusion

In this chapter I have looked at academic literature that positions social enterprise as a building block for community development. I have concerned myself with debates about how social enterprise can enhance and channel peoples’ socio-economic relationships. I have considered post-structuralist perspectives that make space for thinking about difference and identity in a way that allows people to assume different economic subject positions and negotiate their independences with other people.

It does not require a great leap in my view, to move from the cultivation of economic subjects to the cultivation of social entrepreneurial subjects at the grassroots community level. Thinking about different kinds of ‘social surplus’ is particularly fertile terrain. I remain at this point open minded as to whether social entrepreneurship is more likely to stem from the actions of particular individuals or whether it is better understood as being driven primarily by a collective effort for community development. The CE approach to subjectivity, reconciled with some of the literature on social entrepreneurship, enables me to refine the question presented regarding social entrepreneurship in Chapter One – ‘How do grassroots Cambodian village level actors interpret and enact the process of social entrepreneurship?’ – into a final research question that is put as follows:

What kinds of subjectivity would promote, or can be linked to, acceptable forms of grassroots social entrepreneurship in the Cambodian village?

It is also the CE approach to diverse economies, combined with other approaches to social enterprise, that enable me to refine another of the questions raised in Chapter One – How is it that social enterprise would be understood at the grassroots by *Cambodian village level actors*? Combining the ‘socialisation perspective’ with post-structuralist conceptions of a ‘community economy’, the question can be put as follows:

What diverse forms of social enterprise will yield sustainable effects at the grassroots level in Cambodia (and also other developing countries)?

I have also identified reason to question the standard theorising of social value, economic value and non-profit orientation in light of process-focused, performative perspectives. Following a potential contribution to theory, I intend to get to the heart of people’s ethical negotiation of economic relationships and interdependences, that in totality produce (or perform) ‘social value’ as a contingent or contextualised phenomenon. It leads me to a further research question which can be posed as:

What are the important processes of social valuation at the grassroots village level? How do these processes develop intersubjectively and how do they contrast with ideas about social value in the social enterprise literature?

This question is also one entry point into the action research methods that I chose to employ during my fieldwork. The methods are in one sense a response to the social enterprise and entrepreneurs literature as I see it. If we recognise that social enterprise is performed through language that legitimises specific business models as a means for solving social problems (Dey & Steyaert 2010, 2012b; Teasdale 2012) methods can be devised to make something of the opportunities presented. Beyond that, action research methods were chosen as a means of getting as close as possible to seeing how villagers’ economic subjectivities unfold and change as they contemplate social enterprise as a means of community development.

Following these lines of inquiry into economic subjectivity, the data collection process I have undertaken responds to the call for ‘multi-voicing’ research strategies on social enterprise and social entrepreneurship. This entails ‘reconstructing the entrepreneurial process and interweaving the voices, discourses and positions’ (Steyaert & Dey 2010, 239). Multi-voicing is performative precisely because it is dialogical. It puts different actors into conversation and sees the formulation of narratives and identities as something that can only take place *with* others (Reissman 2008, 106-107). Going further,

it is my contention that by focusing on valuation and the meaning of social value from a process point of view, a multi-voicing strategy is an invitation to explore the socially entrepreneurial process *in real time* to observe its workings closely. To pursue such a strategy, I again call upon CE scholarship which has also advanced the use of participatory action research methods with a performative orientation (Cameron & Gibson 2001, 2005a, 2005b; Gibson-Graham 2002, 2006b) to think through ways of generating data *in real time* with other actors. An exposition of this approach in greater depth follows in the next chapter of this thesis.

Chapter Three: Methodology

Section One: The performativity of social enterprise: A research opportunity

Whatever route one chooses in social research, theoretical preferences enable or disable the representation of particular realities. Research is performative because the choices of methods ‘enact different worlds’ (Beyes & Steyaert 2011, 103). But why is it that some realities are reproduced more routinely and with less effort than others? The mainstreamed variant of social enterprise is a case in point. It is performed or narrated as a managerialist, ‘post-ideological’ market-based blueprint that solves social ills (Curtis 2008; Dey & Steyaert 2010) not only for political reasons, but also because the blueprint version is most easily replicated. This point really reiterates one in the previous chapter - this *least challenging* option (in terms of replication) is also the least reflective or dialogical (Ridley-Duff & Bull 2011).

However, by focusing on realities that emerge during the research process, one also encounters the liberating potential of performative research. Some worlds may indeed be harder to perform than others, particularly when there seem (initially at least) to be imbalances in supportive resources. But the possibility to perform them as a consequence of the chosen research methods remains nonetheless. This has now become accepted in the form of ‘performative research’ otherwise called ‘practice-led’ (Haseman 2006, 99) or ‘praxis-orientated’ research (Cameron & Gibson 2005a, 277). According to Haseman (2006) this is a research method that differs from orthodox qualitative research which – as far as it is concerned with practice – only researches *on* practice as the object of the study. In performative research, *practice is the research process*, or in other words the ‘necessary pre-condition of engagement’ and moreover ‘the material outcomes of practice [are] all-important representations of research findings in their own right’ (103).

Interestingly, Haseman (2006) cites commercial interests as one reason why performative research is gaining in importance. Content creation in the creative and

cultural industries is fuelling demand for end-user focused research and the kind of prototyping commonly seen in commercial research and development (104-105). In literature on critical management studies there is something of a debate on these matters. Haseman's focus typifies the target of Fournier and Grey's (2000) assertively 'anti-performative' position. In their view performativity is the essence of 'non-critical management study', its objective is only to improve management's efficiency and knowledge of the subject as its trajectory already stands. This stands in contrast to *critical* management studies that denaturalise management and bring assumed truths into question – for instance about the imperatives of globalisation and competitiveness – and seek to expose contrasting emancipatory narratives (180-182). However, it is also arguable in response that Fournier and Grey's reading of 'performative intent' is narrow. Spicer, Alvesson & Kärreman (2009) argue that the intrinsic connection between performativity and productive efficiency excludes 'subversive mobilizations' that performative strategies can generate when hegemonic discourse is attended to and new potential discourses are accentuated. Far from taking management concepts as a given, performativity in critical management studies in their view focuses on potential *heterotopias* which are normatively geared towards people's emancipation *at the micro-level* (544-546).

I have chosen to undertake performative participatory action research (PAR) as a mode of *data generation* – where co-production renders the process in contrast to 'data collection' alone (Dey & Steyaert 2012b, 98). I do so in order to investigate how it is that people at the grassroots level in Cambodia see 'value' in a social enterprise. To avoid the scent of an arbitrary methodological choice, it is necessary to go through a process of elaboration starting from Action Research proceeding briefly to conventional Participatory Action Research (PAR) and then a longer exegesis on PAR from a post-structuralist point of view.

Section Two: An action research model

Action research is necessarily research *with other people*. There are a variety of techniques but the common thread is 'collaborative effort' (Coghlan & Shani 2005, 534). Denscombe (2007) expresses that 'The participatory nature of action research is probably its most distinctive feature' (61). Action Research is a method used to observe

problem solving *as it takes place*. It involves the simultaneous pursuit of ‘change’ *and* ‘understanding’ – thus action *and* research (Altrichter et al. 2002, 130; Bryman 2004, 277). Action research is seen as a methodical and interactive way to identify problems, plan activities and then implement, evaluate and reflect on them so that new activities can be modified. This is brought together through the ‘Action Research Spiral’ in a cyclical fashion involving ‘action and reflection, theory and practice’ (Altrichter et al. 2002, 130-131 see Figure 3; Brydon-Miller et al. 2003, 10).

If action research is ‘undertaken as *part of practice*’ rather than a bolt on addition to it as Denscombe (2007, 59) suggests, then it stands to reason that it is also one means by which one might try to capture understanding of the actual *doing of practice* in performative (*practice-led*) research. Haseman (2006, 104) concurs, citing action research as one mode of inquiry alongside interviewing, reflective practices, participant observation, biographical or narrative inquiry as qualitative methods that are ‘repurposed’ in performative research processes. To clarify my position further still, it is not my view that the functional type of content creation Haseman (2006) focuses on should be discarded – even if it does inscribe knowledge production with a ‘means-end calculation’ that Fournier and Grey (2000, 17) associate with ‘non-critical’ management studies. I argue instead that content creation and prototyping is actually critical as a research strategy that fosters reflection and new possibility and that it is no great leap at all to employ this strategy in research that strives to promote local economic development.

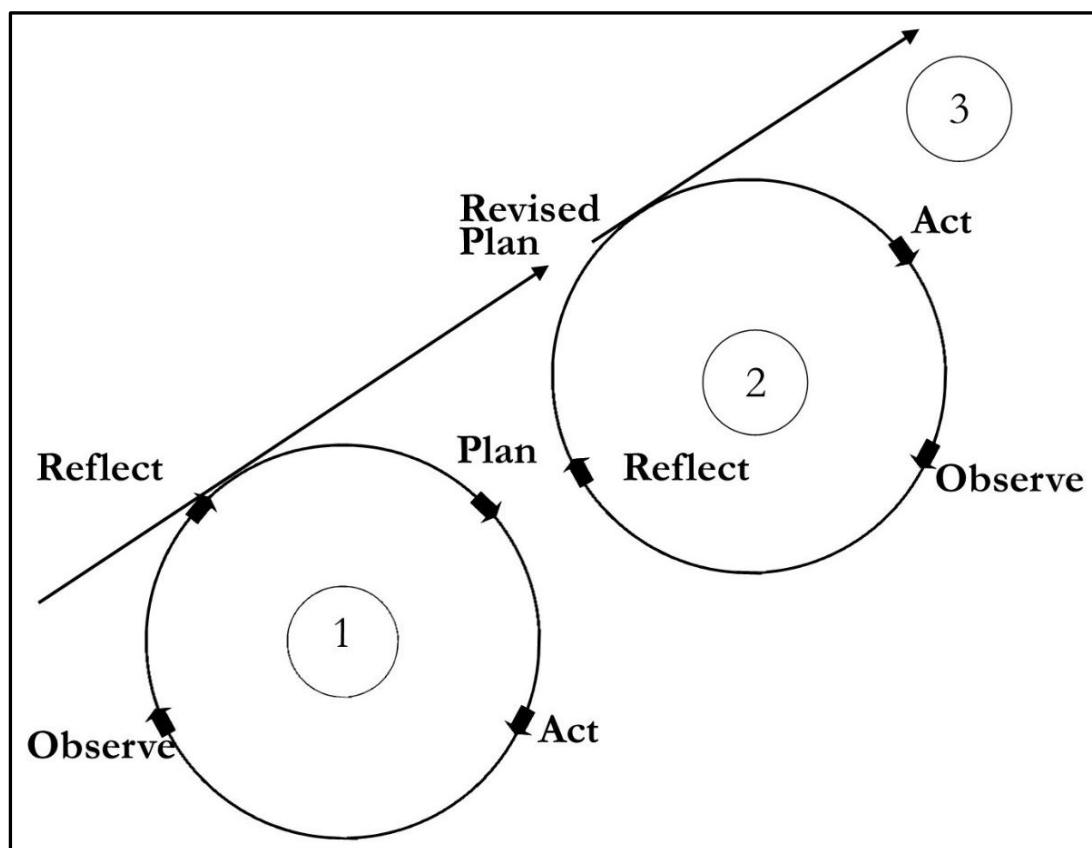


Figure 3: Action Research Spiral: (Zuber-Skerrit (2001) cited in Altrichter et al. 2002, 130)

The rendering possible of ‘heterotopias’ in this respect through economic experiments is precisely where the performative agenda of CE scholarship and methodologies some of these researchers have developed becomes pertinent. For instance, in the Philippines researchers experimented with a multiplicity of ways in which economic resilience can be strengthened (Cahill 2008; Gibson, Cahill, et al. 2010). One particular part of this project is highlighted in a text setting out experiments with community-based social enterprises that harness diverse natural, physical and social assets, giving insights into mixed results (The Community Economies Collective & Gibson 2009). These examples point towards the enactment of social economy as a site of ‘post-capitalist possibility’ (Amin 2009b, 5). This work is also consistent with the ‘prototyping’ Haseman (2006) writes about as the objective of performative research.

2.1: Participatory Action Research

Participatory Action Research (PAR) has emerged as a popular variant of Action Research in the Global South which strives for *democratic effects*. It is also seen as a way to democratise the research process itself – which is a legitimate priority when research has effects on others (Brydon-Miller et al. 2003; Ozanne & Saatcioglu 2008; Pietrykowski

2015). PAR is conventionally a modernist political project that strives to liberate the oppressed through self-education, radical awareness and ‘conscientisation.’ In other words drawing from the critical pedagogy of Paulo Friere (1970) PAR promotes critical awareness of social reality through processes of action and reflection – leading directly to the erosion of unequal power structures (Fals-Borda 1991; Roux 1991). Conventional PAR in the South in summary has a Neo-Marxist orientation and is born out of the conviction that: ‘The only serious answer to poverty and oppression is a fundamental alteration in the distribution of power’ (Greenwood & Morten 1998, 176).

At this juncture I flag a departure from PAR as it has conventionally gained currency. Drawing from Asset Based Community Development and PAR in a ‘post-structuralist vein’ (Cameron & Gibson 2005a, 2005b; Mathie & Cunningham 2003, 2005), my emphasis is on the capacity of action research participants, through contemplation of social enterprise, to attend to their own ‘self-creation.’ Instead of directly confronting power, it can be reasoned that approaches to community empowerment might:

‘appeal to the higher motive of using power to act in the shared interests of the common good, and to uncover the strengths of those who might otherwise be less valued’ (Mathie & Cunningham 2003, 483).

I am in summary focusing on: what participants *do have* rather than what they do not; how power might be engaged constructively; and how resources that people do have within their locality can be mobilised or made to flow in different ways through a social enterprise. This reasoning is born out of critiques of structuralist interpretations of society, theoretically from Foucault, particularly in his later commentary of self-creation and care for and technologies of the self (1987; 1988a) and through the practitioning research of Gibson-Graham (2006b; 2008a) which focuses on the ways that people individually and collectively can change narratives. As Foucault (1988b) puts it, themes that have been initiated at a certain moment in history, ‘so-called evidence’, are open to challenge and the role of social theorists is to show people they ‘are much freer than they feel’ (10). As Gibson-Graham (2008a) puts it, it is a failing of academia not to see performativity as a liberating narrative of self-creation. In her view it is our ‘existing academic selves’ that are bent on *reflecting* the world (in denial of the way that we enact it) that stands in the way of performing new economic worlds (630). From this point onwards, without denying at all that PAR conventionally undertaken in the South

according to a neo-Marxist world view is also performative, I proceed by coining the term ‘performative PAR’ as a point of departure from PAR’s traditional leaning.

2.2: Objectives of performative PAR: Attitudes, dispositions and the positive register

PAR in a post-structuralist vein adopts the position that researchers are affected by and collaboratively work to affect what happens in the co-production of diverse ethically negotiated economies (Cameron et al. 2011; Gibson-Graham & Roelvink 2010, 2011, 2013). This follows the general principle that PAR is experienced ‘intersubjectively’ by participants – PAR is ‘research *with* people rather than research *on* people’ (Altrichter et al. 2002, 130 my emphasis).

Earlier tangible outputs from the use of PAR as part of a social enterprise development program in the Philippines are cited in some literature (Cahill 2008; Gibson, Cahill, et al. 2010; The Community Economies Collective & Gibson 2009). What should be borne in mind however is that despite these tangible results, practitioners are urged to focus less on outcomes and more on fostering Other-related attitudes and dispositions that enable people to embrace and place value on *difference* and consequently to welcome new and unexpected experiences (Gibson-Graham 2006b, 155). When the focus is on predetermined outcomes, as is generally the case in modernist narratives of ‘development’ and ‘change’ (Rist 2002), read otherwise as ‘order’ and ‘control’ (Dey & Steyaert 2012b, 98), it is likely that unexpected opportunities are closed off. As Dey & Steyaert argue, it is only by exposing tensions and differences that challenge conservative assumptions that people can imaginatively ‘produce the space in which the unexpected can take flight’ (101).

As a site of experimentation, a performative action research project may or may not then lead to the development of social enterprises. What is of higher importance is the way in which different participants come to experience emotions that open them to deliberation about ethical economies and the potential for taking economic action. Action is rendered possible when people encounter changes in their subject position and movements from a negative register of ‘needs’ to a positive register of ‘active economic citizenship’ (Cameron & Gibson 2005a, 282; 2005b, 320).

2.3: Embodied learning

From the CE point of view the focus of action research is, at the risk of labouring the point, on the *experience* that people have. This vitally means that the effects one is looking for are not born out of thought and speech alone – rather they are both bodily and mental effects (Cameron et al. 2011). Succinctly put, the action research project becomes in itself a type of ‘*body-world that learns*’ (Gibson-Graham & Roelvink 2010, 322). Varela’s (1999) work on the ‘praxis of ethical learning’ for instance, stemming from an embodied ontology of human action, is an important source of inspiration here. According to Gibson-Graham (2006b) Varela shows how subjectivity is constructed at the intersection of discourse and materiality (or mind and body). Action research can thus provide space where the ‘self’ is disassembled and the desire for its reconstitution in the same old ways is suspended (129).

Embodied action arises from out of constructivist ontology. It stands in contrast to realist ontologies that posit a duality between the human mind and a world outside of it or between ‘real’ underlying causes of events and human intervention (Outhwaite 1987; Sayer 2000). The rejection of this dualism is elaborated in the proposed ‘enactive approach’ towards cognition which holds that (contrary to popular cognitive science) there is no pre-given reality of the cognitive process (Rado 2014, 3; Varela et al. 1992, 9). From this point of view embodied action or ‘structural coupling’ (or loops of perception and action) is embedded in the cultural and biological history of living systems. This leads to associations between objects and experiences – colour is illustrative when blue is deemed a cool colour and orange is a warm one (Varela et al. 1992, 171-173). It is through these associations that the real world (or ‘environmental regularities’) is ‘brought forth’ (1992, 201), highlighting a performative ontological position in its fullest sense where realities are constituted not just discursively but also through the nature of *experience*.

2.4: Learning together through difference and attention to ‘little narratives’

What is also critical as an addition to embodied learning is that through the performative approach to action research changes in people’s subject position are sought in partnership with others. In a nutshell, the CE approach intertwines three themes, namely: a politics of language (how we frame diverse economies), a politics of the subject (how we view and construct citizenship, identity and personal

transformation) and a politics of collective action (how we actively pursue economic mobilisation and interdependence) (Gibson-Graham 2005b, 120). Pertinently to this thesis, the focus on these themes as embodied positions resonates theoretically with the turn of Varela towards Buddhist practices of mindfulness and striving for ‘non-self.’ These are embodied practices through which subjects have observably collapsed the body-mind duality, become closer to their *ordinary experience* and consciously changed cognitive processes by accentuating the ability to break with ‘habit’ (Varela 1999, 36-41; Varela et al. 1992, 24-27). But there is a caveat. Following other literature on Buddhist practices it is open to debate (to some degree at least) how far mindfulness is intrinsically conducive to collective action and any connection between the two needs to be contextualised.³⁷

Post-structuralist action research is necessarily collective. Although this could be stated about any action research, this community economies approach in particular extends the nascent tradition of ‘praxis-orientated’ research with an agenda to *change inequality* by bringing different types of knowledge into contact. In the context of ‘community partnering’ to explore local economic development for instance, this means academics work alongside everyday members of communities, some of whom become ‘community researchers’ (Cameron & Gibson 2001, 40), along with other local practitioners, community-based organisations and also local business people, authority figures and different ‘experts’ on technical matters (Cameron & Gibson 2005a, 277; Gibson-Graham & Roelvink 2010, 324). One term for such a group that constructively includes all stakeholders in community development projects is a ‘*hybrid research collective*’ (Gibson-Graham & Roelvink 2010, 327).

Learning together does not mean that participants are expected to sacrifice their individuality. On the contrary, as stated earlier, fostering appreciation of difference is the central objective. In its broadest sense the hybrid research collective involves human actors with diverse knowledge combined with the ontological input of non-human actants. Engagement in these circumstances fosters an environment where people can ‘learn to be affected’ in the process of making ethical economic deliberations (327-329). Through ‘difference’ a space for socio-economic transformation and visualising new opportunities can be held open instead of being closed off. One can take in this regard

³⁷ There are for instance certain differences between the practice of Theravāda (dominant in Cambodia, Thailand, Laos, Burma and Sri Lanka) and Mahāyāna Buddhism (in North and Central Vietnam, China, Korea, and Japan) regarding the pursuit of ones ‘enlightenment’ or ‘nirvana’ that can impact on people’s sense of responsibility for others (Conze 2003, 122-127; Tomalin 2007, 34).

the understanding of the term ‘community’ itself. This is a problematic term often used to homogenise plural singularities into one abstract singularity whereby people ‘live together.’ Drawing from Jean Luc Nancy³⁸ economic difference can be rescued from the perils of a ‘common identity’ by recognising Being as simply meaning ‘being in common’ with others (Gibson-Graham 2006b, 81-86). As Miller (2013, 352) describes, it is the *spaces between people* who simply have their ‘Being’ in common which makes sharing possible and therefore makes it possible to speak about community at all.

This emphasis on ‘difference’ is found also in literature on social entrepreneurship. It is proposed through the ‘ruthless discipline of context’ (which I read as: ‘situated practice’) that ‘difference’ in accounts of social entrepreneurship can be rendered recognisable and released through the multiplication, to the maximum extent possible, of ‘little narratives’ that reside outside of what is thinkable in the grand narration of social enterprise and social entrepreneurship (Dey 2010, 32; Dey & Steyaert 2010, 87). Little narratives are a ‘genre’ borrowed from Lyotard to optimise imagination and inventiveness. This is achieved, for instance, by eliciting ‘relational paradoxes, complexities and dilemmas’ found in ‘everyday practice’ of social enterprise (Dey & Steyaert 2010, 98). Little narratives resonate with the project of CE researchers, considering that a fundamental objective has always been to demarcate the actually constituted ‘outside’ of capitalism which is embodied in everyday economic practices (Gibson-Graham 2006a, xxiii; 2008b; Healy & Graham 2008).

While little narratives have low prevalence in social enterprise literature, without them there are inevitable limits to the ways that social enterprise can be thought about (Seanor et al. 2013). Some research has now accordingly started to pick up on the need to amplify such narratives. In contrast to the assumption that social enterprises hand marginalised people a passport out of social exclusion by incorporating them into the labour market, Cameron and Hendricks (2013) find that ‘work’ on its own is not enough to produce a confident human-being. They find that people involved in social enterprises attach the most significance to the way these organisations provide their members with a sense of identity in relation to others and the environment. Amin (2009a) makes similar points about people working for a social enterprise because they feel it is compatible with their particular values while the work itself might otherwise

³⁸ Nancy’s (1991) thesis takes existence as evidence in itself that Being is a priori ‘in common.’ Nancy also deems that Being has the power of subversion, which makes critical thinking possible. In this reading, ‘being-in-common, or being-with’ is a stance that renders Being as simply ‘the position of position’ and community as the space to negotiate between the positions people have (2).

just be deemed ‘ordinary.’ Seanor, Bull, Baines & Ridley-Duff (2013) meanwhile encounter points of paradox where social enterprise representatives see the formulation of an enterprise as the best way to achieve the *social* as a process. But this does not at all mean more *business-like*. Elsewhere, multiple contradictory identities and ways of working show how paradox (as opposed to ‘balance’) is an inherently valuable feature of social enterprises (335-359). It is the intention of this thesis to make further contributions to the project of amplifying little narratives of social enterprise in a novel context.

Steyaert and Bachmann (2012) state that engaged approaches to data *generation* can also be considered as ‘enactive research’ – that is, that *the social* itself is being enacted in different locations by the research process (70). It is unclear whether ‘enactive research’ here is a semantic coincidence when positioned next to the ‘enactive approach’ that Varela, Thompson & Rosch (1992) advanced two decades earlier. But conceptually there is strong compatibility between both positions that resonate also with the embodied learning embraced in CE research generally. What enactive research means succinctly is that the social is not a *domain*. The social is instead something that *happens*. It can be read sympathetically with Nancy’s (1991) ‘community’ because it *happens* ‘in the course of the encounter between the self and Other’ (Dey 2007, 557). Moreover continual hard work is the centripetal force that keeps the social *social* – the social is in summary a process of ‘continuous becoming’ (557). It is in this spirit of continuous becoming that I have made use of Asset Based Community Development, which is a ‘strength based’ practising approach to community economic and social development which I now elaborate on further as a research method.

Section Three: Asset Based Community Development (ABCD)

ABCD involves practitioners working in partnership with community members to focus on the creative harnessing and combination of local assets. This includes extant skills, relationships, practices, networks, institutions, services, infrastructure and other physical resources that can be counted as *Assets* in the development of stronger community fabric and enhanced wellbeing (Mathie & Cunningham 2003, 2005; McKnight & Kretzmann 1993). I have endeavoured to follow applications of ABCD that import *appreciative inquiry* (AI) from constructivist approaches to Organisational Change. AI

works along seemingly similar lines to embodied cognition: inquiry and change are not separate moments but rather simultaneous ones – or ‘change starts when people talk about it’; change occurs through discourse of the future (‘the anticipatory principle’) and change also requires momentum in terms of joy and desire for creation (the ‘positive principle’) (Cooperrider et al. 2003, 7-9). In ABCD, practitioners making use of AI are encouraged to bring past successes to the surface in a group setting as a way to help participants identify where, in spite of differences, they also have some shared priorities and a partially shared interpretation of community development (Cunningham & Mathie 2002, 2; Mathie & Cunningham 2003, 478). AI in ABCD is thus a means for people to recognise their locality as an abundant site of valuable resources that have already been used in creative ways, making the proliferation of other ‘social innovations’ (or creative social changes) more likely in a community setting (Kunnen et al. 2013, 294).

ABCD is not focused on social enterprise development per se. Nonetheless as a way of mobilising and combining under-used or neglected resources in a creative (read ‘entrepreneurial’) manner ABCD resonates with social bricolage in literature on social enterprise and entrepreneurship (Di Domenico et al. 2010; Leadbeater 1997). Moreover, ABCD is a tool that can build appetite for social enterprise development among other things. McKnight and Kretzmann (1993) showed, at a point when social enterprise was not yet widely written about, how ABCD practising helped communities to identify and develop opportunities to harness recyclable waste to generate work for disadvantaged people and revenues to support community projects (McKnight & Kretzmann 1993, 329-340). Ersing, Loeffler, Tracy & Onu (2007) make associations between ABCD and initiatives in Bangladesh (including Grameen Bank interventions) that connect vulnerable workers, helping them to generate their own economic resources. In Korea ABCD was used to mobilise resources for social enterprises after the 2008 global economic crisis when the government had reduce support for the social economy. ABCD has also assisted the emergence of cooperatives that support community objectives in the US, Australia, the Philippines and Japan (Cameron et al. 2014; Laratta & Nakagawa 2013; Majee & Hoyt 2011).

ABCD is compatible with action research, as far as the precondition for action research is that it has practical value for the ‘researched upon’ (Brydon-Miller et al. 2003, 10). But it is particularly compatible with performative action at variance with the conventional PPAR in the Global South because it does not focus on what people *lack* or on how

demands for the meeting of *needs* are asserted from a rights based point of view. ABCD provides an alternative to the ‘needs focus.’ It emerged from observation that focusing on needs often achieves the opposite of empowerment when communities must prove their deprivation to access resources from authorities, development agencies, NGOs and so on (Mathie & Cunningham 2003, 476).³⁹ ABCD works with a steadfast conviction that communities are built not upon outside resources or expertise but instead upon the capacities of local people and their associations. ABCD is in summary, an agency focused approach where questions about ‘unmet social needs’ – the iteratively recited focus of social enterprises (Bhowmick 2011; Chand 2009; Defourny & Nyssens 2013a; Shaw & Carter 2007) – are to be addressed from the position that you ‘start where you are and build on what you have’ (Gibson-Graham 2006b, 169).

According to O’Leary (2007) ABCD also has much in common with longstanding participatory approaches in international development projects including Participatory Rural Appraisal. One commonality is that both approaches are populist with regard to indigenous technical knowledge and the assertion that communities or the peasantry can do research on themselves. Robert Chambers (1997) – a widely credited exponent of PRA – writes that ‘the poor and exploited people can and should be able to analyse their own reality’ (106). Tools like mapping, scoring, estimating and diagramming must be entrusted from ‘uppers’ (practitioners) to ‘lowers’ (indigenous people) who time and time again show capability far beyond the expectations of professional outsiders (132). Mathie and Cunningham (2005) concur with similar points. In critique of the technical focus that often permeates the ‘sustainable livelihoods approach’ (SLA) to community development, they assert that ABCD is not just ‘people-centred’ (like SLA) but also ‘citizen-led.’ It has led to ‘practical tools and methods that can be used by community members’ (Mathie & Cunningham 2005, 180-181). To promote ABCD in an action research setting, these tools have been also developed and adapted by Cameron and Gibson (2001). This document (titled ‘Shifting Focus’) includes:

³⁹ A study of local authority regeneration programs and project management in the Bradford Metropolitan Council District in northern England came to similar conclusions (Lyne et al. 2009). The term for dependency identified there is a ‘deprivation deficit’ model which resulted in low self-esteem in Asian communities and peripheral Caucasian communities. Members in each community adopted accusatory positions towards the other about favouritism from local authorities. This eventually helped to ignite the worst riots seen in England in more than 20 years in 2001 (3). Since then a change in approach through the development of ‘community hubs’ by Bradford Trident has harnessed strengths to promote local economic development along with work spaces for the foundation of some social enterprises (25-28).

- Adapted tools for mapping a neighbourhoods' 'needs and assets' – categorised in terms of: 1) businesses and physical resources; 2) local associations and institutions and 3) people and practices (9).
- Activities to allow participants to: find out more about each other; understand themselves as researchers (instead of assuming researchers are only 'other people' like academics or development professionals) and also to think about different ways of representing the local economy (39-53).
- Tools for data collection that can be used to develop a 'Portrait of Gifts' which places value on what people care about (gifts of the heart) know about (gifts of the head) and different skills (gifts of the hand). This portrait makes a 'gifted community' visible. It creates new representations of localities that can be shared more widely to encourage a therapeutic narrative of a 'caring' or 'connected community' in place of a distressed one where people are driven by self-interest alone (Cameron & Gibson 2001, 68-70; 137-150; Gibson-Graham 2006b, 146-148).

ABCD as part of action research is otherwise referred to as an approach to 'community partnering' (Cameron & Gibson 2005a). This can arise in the form of partnerships between NGOs, municipal authorities, community members and academic researchers (The Community Economies Collective & Gibson 2009). Before proceeding to elaborate on the action research undertaken, inspired by ABCD, I set out *how* it came to be initiated in partnership with a seemingly grassroots focused Local NGO.

Section Four: Meeting Buddhism for Social Development Action Based in Kampong Cham

During preparation for the 2nd National Social Enterprise Conference of Cambodia on the 25th August 2012, it was decided among the coordinators that we needed to find at least one Cambodia social entrepreneur to take part in the main afternoons panel discussion. I was put in contact with a local NGO called Buddhism for Social Development Action (BSDA) by an associate, Sothy Khieng, who researching social enterprise strategies as a means of Local NGOs revenue diversification. BSDA's Executive Director, Venerable Thorn Vandong, agreed to take participate.



Figure 4: Panel discussion at the 2nd National SE Conference of Cambodia – 25th August 2012: Dr. Meas Nee Facilitates; the Executive Director of Friends International, Mr. Sebastien Marot sits at the centre next to the Executive Director of BSDA – Venerable Thorn Vandong; other participants (left to right) are Ms. Jose Vahl, General Manager of innovation at BD Link, Dr. Ty Makararavy and Ms. Satoko Kono, President of Arun Capital.

BSDA is based in Kampong Cham Province in Eastern Cambodia, located in close proximity to the provincial capital, Kampong Cham Town. This NGO has encountered variable success with social ventures including a training restaurant (called SMILE), a traditional scarf (*Kroma*) weaving program, a language school teaching English and Chinese and a traditional Cambodian dancing enterprise. During a post-Conference visit to BSDA I visited its emerging vocational training centre called the Rice Fields Kids' Village (RFKV). At the front gate opening onto 2.5 hectares of land, was a master plan laid out on a 2-metre-high sign board. Along with training buildings, the plan was to build accommodation for 100 orphans and vulnerable children. There were also plans for an organic farm on land at the back together with a meditation retreat for tourists. At that time, some basic wooden accommodation was in place alongside a catering training centre and foundations for new construction work.

RFKV looked like an exciting prospect for local economic development. Through subsequent emails and Skype conversations I established that BSDA could be a good research partner as it appeared to fit the description of a 'community-based organisation' (albeit one with ever growing access to resources from a well-resourced sponsor based in Switzerland). I shared ABCD materials with BSDA management. After consideration of an online resource called 'Community Partnering' that provides tools and ideas for *'grass roots research that helps people to imagine and enact new pathways for local development'* (Gibson, McWilliam, et al. 2010) BSDA's senior management determined

that a partnership was worthwhile. As negotiations about collaboration (which included making clear ethical positions and the purpose of research) reached a conclusion, personal correspondence from the Executive Director Venerable Vandong Thorn read:

‘As you now BSDA is going to establish the Social Enterprise Policies and Social Enterprise Strategy Plan. There are many things to do now for preparation. We need some more ideas and experience to do that. In this case it is beneficial for BSDA to learn about ABCD’ (personal communication: BSDA ED, 13th December 2012).

I arrived in Kampong Cham to start my fieldwork in the first week of June 2013. I gave a further presentation to the BSDA Board of Directors and a Memorandum of Understanding was drawn up related to a research project. BSDA’s newly appointed Social Enterprise Manager (hereafter Seanghath) was assigned to assist me for roughly 30 days over 10 months. It was agreed that Seanghath should become conversant with ABCD and that together we would disseminate the approach within BSDA. Our collaboration was subject to review should concerns arise. It was also decided that research would focus on two villages in close proximity to RFKV vocational training centre to allow exploration of the opportunities that the centre might engender for local constituencies.

In addition to Seanghath’s interest in social enterprise with BSDA, it was helpful that he had worked for more than four years as an English language teacher. Having lived in Cambodia for nearly three years previously (much of that with a Khmer family), my proficiency in conversational Khmer language was elementary and by no means strong enough to follow conversations or catch the full meaning of interview responses. Seanghath provided consistent translation throughout the action research. This meant that I was working with the same interpretation of Khmer to English throughout the research process. In a sense therefore, the data generated has been processed through Seanghath’s interpretations alongside my own.

Section Five: Initiating the research – training Seanghath

The research process was guided from the outset by the principle of ‘communicating across cultures.’ That is, simply translating terms into Khmer language, no matter how simple, was not deemed sufficient. Following Altrichter, Kemmis, McTaggart & Zuber-

Skerritt (2002) it was necessary for terms or concepts to be deconstructed and re-enacted in a pertinent way for the host-culture (127). It was imperative that Seanghath sufficiently understood the research and its concepts. I deemed this only possible by re-enacting the types of experiences I hoped to generate and set out to achieve this by harnessing Seanghath's own story telling. I took prior advice from Cambodian academic Dr. Meas Nee, author of *'Toward Restoring Life: Cambodian Villages'* (Meas 1995). This book identified problems with participatory development projects in Cambodia which were not cognoscente of villagers' realities or the pace villagers were prepared to go at in the aftermath of one trauma layered on another. Project practitioners had rarely cared for plans that less powerful villagers could dream up themselves when given sufficient time and sense of being listened to (Meas 1995, 40-47). This engaging text mirrors critique levied at 'tyrannical participatory projects' that reinforce inequality, consume the resources of the poor and ultimately foster resentment (Cooke and Kothari 2001). I was particularly mindful of two problems Meas (1995, 51-52) identified:

1. Practitioners approaching villages with a 'local assistant' tend to be perceived as a 'powerful' outsider. This was pertinent to my dependency on Seanghath for assistance.
2. Practitioners who 'bring people to meetings' instigate the anticipation of propaganda or dogmatic speeches. This was pertinent because my research design heavily incorporated group discussions and workshops.

After being fortunate to be given time with Dr. Meas Nee to discuss these concerns I began preparatory work with Seanghath by doing a situational analysis of local economic development that engaged with his personal stories. 'Problem tree analysis' – a tool that enables development practitioners to analyse problems in terms of 'root causes' before they identify projects (Cracknell 2000, 99-102) – was used to probe the statement: 'Local economic development does not provide security for the poor.' After working through layers of effects and causes Seanghath established that in his view the lack of access to information about local planning was a 'root cause' of problems. He expressed that people '*who know about developments*' had cheated villagers out of land in strategic places (often where roads would subsequently emerge). Lack of consultation was also deemed responsible for people's suffering. For instance, villagers lost their fisheries and their soil quality for agriculture was eroded when the nearby 130 hectare lake (named *Boeng Snay*)

was allocated to Oknha Chann Thary,⁴⁰ whose company (Thary Investment Co., Ltd) dredged it for sand in advance of a proposed real estate development. This allocation was granted several years earlier by Kampong Cham Provincial Governor Hun Neng (brother of Prime Minister Hun Sen) without any competitive tender or any local village consultation process whatsoever (Kuch & Kinetz 2007).



Figure 5: Boeng Snay, once a lake: Kampong Cham July 2013

We were establishing in effect the ‘half-empty glass’ – a ‘focus on all the things that are wrong, all the problems, needs and deficiencies’ (Cameron & Gibson 2001, 60). This was compounded by working with a ‘needs map’ (9, see Figure 6). Again the loss of the lake was quickly identified by Seanghath as a constraint on villagers’ livelihoods. Lack of trust and local associations were also viewed to be problems. Interestingly (concurring with literature I encountered) Seanghath claimed that local NGOs (BSDA included) are not very well connected with village life. Outward migration to Thailand due to lack of local economic opportunities was also important information. After drawing out the needs map, simplified material from the postgraduate module ‘Non-profit Management and Social Enterprise’ that I taught at RUPP was used to provide a basic academic definition of social enterprise, illustrated with examples in Cambodia. On the basis of the needs map and problem tree Seanghath claimed that the development of a social enterprise in his village was an impossibility. Fundamentally, he expressed that people must have access to capital. This includes BSDA, which initiated SMILE restaurant with a \$10,000USD contribution by a donor. Seanghath said that people in villages could not muster the resources to start a social enterprise and neither would they have the appetite because they do not trust each other.

⁴⁰ ‘Okhna’ (‘Lord’ in English) traditionally signified someone in close proximity to the monarchy. Today it is established by proximity to political power in a manner more synonymous with ‘crony capitalism.’ Ostensibly the title is bestowed for ‘contributions to national development.’ In reality it amounts to the purchasing of rights to benefit from corruption or the enclosure of public resources. The title is a continuation of feudal relationships, showing how non-market exchanges dominate Cambodia’s economic development. Okhnas can gain rents from ‘special economic zones’ and gain also from land appropriation and customs and excise arrangements (Davis 2011; Verver & Dahles 2014; Walsh 2012).

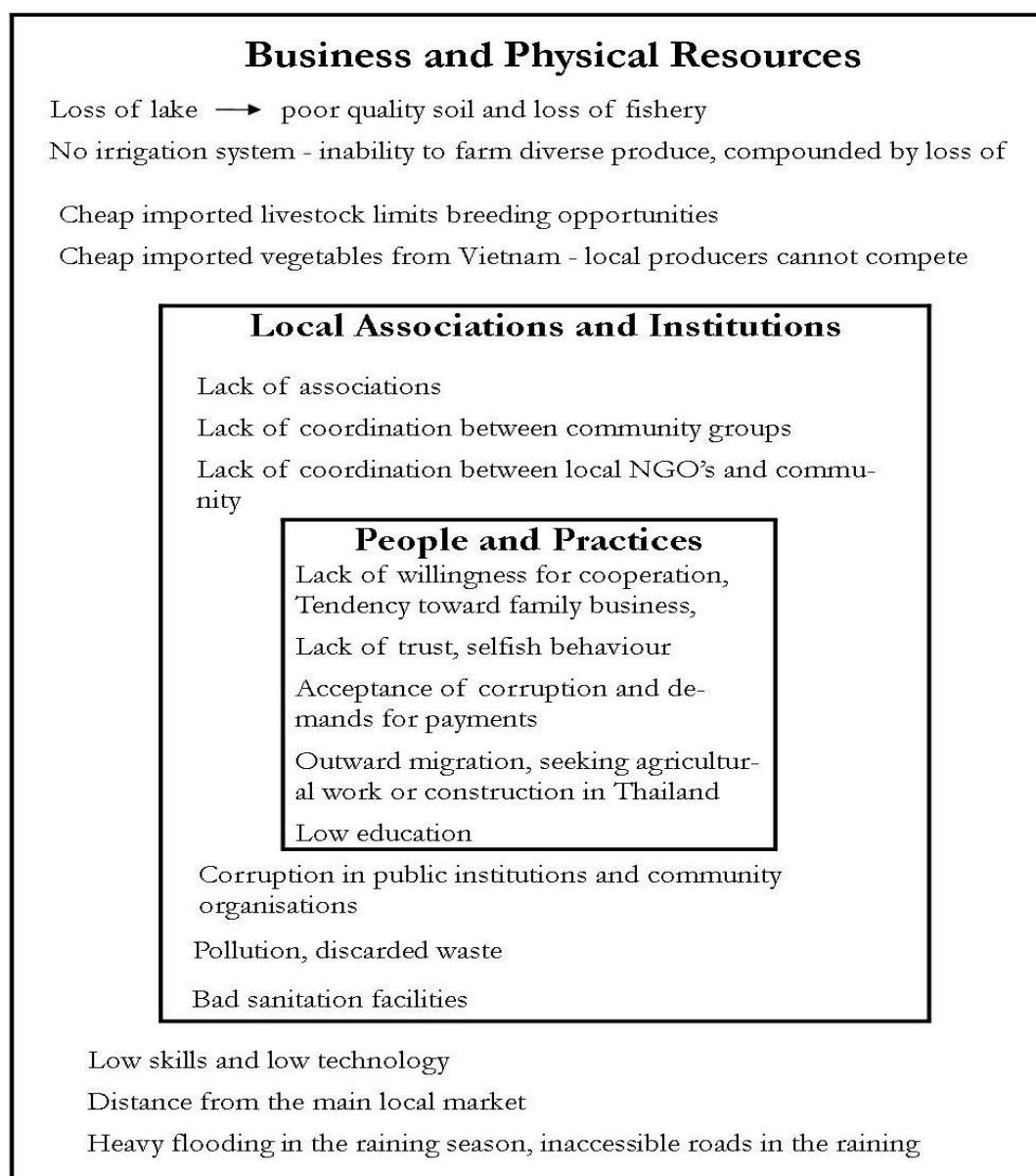


Figure 6: Needs map compiled in training with Seanghath on 27th June 2013

After hearing Seanghath's views about the impossibility of 'community-based' social enterprises where he lived, we discussed other stories in his village. His wife's family had established a small coffee shop; a small market had emerged at a nearby crossroads. Seanghath later showed me around vegetable allotments near to his house – some people still managed to grow some produce although the loss of the lake had drastically affected things. We also discussed his previous life as a Monk and volunteer at BSDA's Angkor Language School which was operated each evening using the local primary school buildings. The school was made possible by mobilising teachers voluntarily at first and coming to an agreement with the local school director. It was recognised that BSDA's connection with the Pagoda had also helped to secure this agreement.

I subsequently introduced Seanghath to the 'asset map'. A representation of his village replete with assets in contrast to needs emerged: there are artisans, builders, traders, teachers, a small local market, the Pagoda, a school, space for public meetings, an abattoir within reasonable distance. There are customary practices of care, gift-exchange and festivities. Seanghath agreed that the glass started to look 'half full' and that new economic activities were possible if not very probable. We then viewed a DVD documentary on social enterprise development in the Jagna municipality, in the Philippines. This video was made as part of a Community Partnering action research project - case studies include the development of a coconut oil enterprise and ginger tea cooperative (Gibson et al. 2009).

Discussing with Seanghath how resources had been mobilised in these case studies and how relationships mattered, and then making comparisons to the BSDA language school, helped me to prepare for a fuller presentation of the research project as the last part of his training. Using simplified materials from the MA course module I delivered at Royal University of Phnom Penh, we worked through concepts including social value, diverse economies, bricolage and innovation. We then worked through the schedule for initial semi-structured interviews with questions focused on:

- key local economic events;
- local institutions and associations;
- perceptions of economic development and economic resources;
- perceptions of economic cooperation;
- perceptions of innovation and economic risk;
- perceptions of social benefits that business brings to the community;

By going through questions in a semi-structured interview schedule, then revisiting central research concepts and the personal stories elicited during his training, Seanghath became familiar with the principle of probing for underlying data which is pertinent to the research project. We worked together on question scenarios, thinking through what probes might be.

Section Six: Semi-structured interviews

Within three weeks of my arrival in Kampong Cham and on the basis of village tours with Seanghath and other BSDA staff, and information from local authorities gathered at the Ampil Commune Office, two adjacent focal villages called respectively Chonghuk and Veal Sbov were identified. I conducted 18 semi-structured interviews. The sampling strategy used was ‘heterogeneous sampling’. This is a variant of purposive sampling. It is appropriate when the investigator requires respondents that are relevant to particular questions and concepts under investigation, and where ‘key themes’ make it necessary to select interviewees with particular attributes (Bryman 2012, 418; Saunders et al. 2009, 234-236).

In this case interviewees were selected on the basis of ‘key knowledge themes,’ that is, particular experiences that might affect answers to particular questions. These themes were also a priority because the interviews were the first step in my attempt to constitute a ‘*hybrid research group*’⁴¹ (which could bring different types of knowledge into contact). Interviewees were selected on the basis of their professional interests, interest in community affairs and knowledge of issues affecting local economic development in Ampil Commune (within which the two villages are situated). In summary I interviewed:

- 4 ‘community organizers’ (the village chief in each village and a committee member in each village);
- 2 BSDA staff who live within the villages;
- 4 people with small business experience (2 restaurateurs, 1 construction business operator and 1 local market vendor);
- 2 University students (both studying business management);
- 2 teachers;
- 2 Commune Councillors located at the Ampil Commune Office.

The sampling process also made the standard use of ‘snowball sampling’ where one introduction leads to another one (Becker 1963 cited by Bryman 2012, 203). I relied on contacts made through BSDA staff to local community organizers in the first instance.

⁴¹ I use the phrase ‘hybrid research group’ to reflect the language that I used with participants. It is a synonym for the ‘hybrid research collective’ coined in community economies research (Gibson-Graham & Roelvink 2010). In Cambodia there is a semantic concern with terms like ‘collective’ which have an overwhelmingly negative association with the Khmer Rouge regime. This matter is addressed in depth later in this thesis. Needless to say ‘collective’ was not deemed to be a good way to phrase the action research undertaking.

These community organizers then put me into contact with other prospective interviewees in the village who had the backgrounds I was looking for.

Section Seven: A hybrid research group

On the 19th August 2013, subsequent to the semi-structured interviews (see Appendix 2) and some data analysis, 12 of the interviewees were invited to a workshop where I set out to explain the action research. I hoped that this would be a step towards the constitution of a hybrid research group. The shortlist excluded 2 local commune officials who reside outside of Chonghuk and Veal Sbov. I was mindful of advice about ‘gatekeepers’ – people with clear allegiances who claim to speak for others and who also can impose on others preconceived ideas about the interests of the community (Cameron & Gibson 2001, 40). To my mind, this also rendered commune councillors unsuitable as participants. The Veal Sbov Village Chief who is well-connected and exercises observable power over others was also deemed unsuitable (although he does constitute a case study in his own right in Chapter Eight of this thesis). He stands in contrast to the Chonghuk Village Chief (Sat) who *was* invited. Sat lives in relatively modest circumstances. His responses did not reveal agendas related to his personal position. Moreover, in the semi-structured interview it emerged that Sat had journeyed north to Siem Reap for agriculture training in order to share this with the villagers on his return, exhibiting an appetite for undertaking research that could be beneficial to others.

The reason for this research had been introduced to all workshop participants at earlier interviews (in accordance with ethics requirements) but in this workshop I sought to make the research aims as clear as possible. I tried to adhere to ‘communicating across cultures’ by restricting a preliminary presentation to the use of pictures. This began with pictures of field trips to other social enterprises in Cambodia with RUPP students and pictures to represent the conceptual idea of a social enterprise and community development. We also looked at pictures of community based social enterprises in action in the Philippines along with pictures of BSDA’s social enterprises. The presentation explicated three points:

1. Why a range of things can be called ‘assets’ for community economic development;

2. How a range of different ‘assets’ are the actual output of enterprises, along with contributions that these assets can make to communities;
3. The basic idea of a ‘social enterprise’ as a way to think about community improvement.

Halfway through the presentation, data on village assets collected via semi-structured interviews, was used to illustrate these three points. I used cartoons to depict focus group discussions and workshops. Photographs were used to explain the notion of field study visits. Finally, it was explained to participants that they would be compensated for their time. Compensation was set at \$10 USD per day (or \$5 USD for a half day of activities). This mirrored the stipends paid to female beer promotion workers for focus group participation, in Laos, Vietnam and Cambodia. This amount was deemed sufficient to ensure respondents did not suffer loss of earning while also being ‘not so large as to be coercive’ (Webber et al. 2012, 3).

While not all of the villagers who attended wanted to participate, it came as a pleasant surprise that nine of those invited expressed an interest. Of these, one village committee member said she could not go on a proposed trip to Phnom Penh as her daughter (who has a learning disability) needed to be cared for overnight. A teacher said he might not be able to take part in every activity because it depended on his work commitments. But nonetheless both were happy to play a role. A hybrid-research group thus began to emerge from this point onwards that was constituted as follows.

Community organizers:

Sat (male aged 65): Village Chief in Chonghuk, and Village Development Committee Member. Sat had lived in Chonghuk for his whole life. He was one of the first people to be introduced in the snowball sampling process. He commanded much respect among those living close by. Two years earlier Sat had mobilised villagers to construct the Chonghuk Ceremonial Centre with materials either donated or bought using revenues generated from the sale of donated rice surpluses rice during the harvest festival. One of Sat’s main duties was to process the claims of poorer members of the village for an ID Poor card which can help with access to subsidized hospital



treatment through a scheme called the Health Equity Fund. Sat supported himself by farming rice on two plots, cattle trading and growing leafy vegetables besides his house.

Kiev (female aged 50): Village Development Committee member in Chonghuk and volunteer at the local health centre. Kiev had lived in Chonghuk Village for her whole life. She was recommended as a further interviewee by Sat. Kiev's main work in the health centre (where she had volunteered since it was set up five years earlier) in her own words was to '*work on the plans*' and '*communicate to villagers about anything [health issues, vaccinations, risks of outbreaks] at village meetings.*' Kiev was a widower who took care of a daughter with a learning disability. She also kept a piggery underneath her house which had yielded two litters in each of the previous two years.



Torn (male aged 61): Village Development Committee member in Veal Sbov, and Deputy Village Chief. Torn had lived mostly in Veal Sbov Village since an early age. He was relocated for some time in the 1970s and returned early in the 1980s. He had surviving relations in the villages. Torn was recommended as a contact by the



Village Chief and performed tasks on his behalf as part of the Village Development Committee. This mainly involved calling villagers for meetings and collecting data as requested by the Commune Council. In the past Torn had worked as a machine operator in a local factory. He cultivated long beans on a plot close to Veal Sbov in the wet season and earned occasional money by making wooden beds for other villagers.

NGO staff in BSDA:

Seanghath (male aged 29): Social Enterprise Manager. Seanghath grew up 20 kilometres from Ampil Commune and joined the Monkhood at an early age to gain his education. He had completed a Bachelors' Degree in 'English for Communication' in



2008. As a monk he taught English in the BSDA Language School for two years as a volunteer and then taught English at a private school after he de-robbed. He had worked in private sector marketing outside of Kampong Cham for three years before returning and re-joining BSDA as the Social Enterprise Manager. While Seanghath was recruited to assist me in my work, he was also an actively contributing member of the hybrid research group. Seanghath also had private entrepreneurial interests in a restaurant belonging to his father in law at the edge of Roliek Village (within one kilometre of Veal Sbov).

Sreyrov (female aged 23): Social Marketing Officer. Sreyrov grew up in Chonghuk. She had done well in school and was studying for a Bachelor's Degree in management in the evening. Sreyrov had worked for BSDA for 3 years on different projects. Her latest role combined entrepreneurship with health advice – marketing water purification kits in villages across 5 Kampong Cham Districts while also running workshops on children's diarrhoea prevention. At the outset of the research Sreyrov expressed a desire to develop business opportunities in the village and she had also explored the potential for some private enterprise of her own.



Venerable Kosal (male aged 24): Project Manager – HAPHRODA health project for drug users at risk of HIV/AIDS. Venerable Kosal resided in the living quarters at *Wat Nokor Bachaey* Pagoda complex, at the edges of Chonghuk and Veal Sbov villages. He grew up ten kilometres from there but moved to the Pagoda, taking up life as a monk at the age of



16 after being orphaned. Venerable Kosal had made good progress within BSDA over the space of three years, becoming the manager of a local HIV project which was part of a national program supported by the Global Fund. In the initial interview with Venerable Kosal he addressed a question about the social externalities of business in the community with some good examples, such as the community interaction generated by

more cafés (alluding to concepts of social capital). He was also interested to explore how the local resources at *Wat Nokor Bachaey* might help enterprise development in the local community.

Small business operators:

Nuon (female aged 42): Vegetable vendor in Kampong Cham Town market (*Psa Boeung Kok*). Nuon had grown up in Chonghuk with her mother. She had not attended school and could not read or write. Occasionally she had spent time in Prey Chhor District, 50 kilometres distance from Ampil Commune, where she had other relatives. Nuon was one of several vegetable sellers in Chonghuk village. She



struggled to make ends meet, her husband was in the armed forces which returned meagre income but did provide other kinds of welfare safety nets. Her household was without land for farming, although relatives in Prey Chhor sent rice to her house after their harvest. She also used contacts in Prey Chhor to secure supplies of vegetables to sell locally. In her initial interview Nuon exhibited a strong desire to explore ways of developing her own business. She was open to the idea of exploring opportunities in partnership with others.

Duol (female aged 20): Restaurateur. Duol grew up in Chonghuk. She was selected by BSDA for vocational training when she was 15 because her family are poor. After graduating from BSDA's catering training SMILE restaurant, she set up a restaurant with two other graduates called *Samaki* (meaning *solidarity*). Samaki had recently relocated next to BSDA's SMILE restaurant on the riverside in Kampong Cham Town in a bid to attract tourists.



The restaurant was struggling but had been assisted by the innovation of new business supplying meals to patients at Kampong Cham Hospital. Duol said that she enjoyed working in a team. She was interested in thinking with them about economic opportunities and said that she would also like to get to know other villagers better.

Teacher:

Kimhour (male aged 33): Secondary school teacher and administrator. Kimhour lived with his wife and child in the family home where he grew up in Veal Sbov. He had graduated with a Bachelor's Degree in History and progressed as a teacher. His family had diversified their livelihood a little with livestock which was one of Kimhour's specific interests. Kimhour emerged as an entrepreneurial individual in several



ways. He was also a community mobiliser who drove efforts to bring electricity to Veal Sbov and Chonghuk villages. Kimhour proved to be a constant critical thinker and he is the subject of an individual case study in the Chapter Eight of this thesis.

University student:

Sreynit (female aged 21): Studying for Bachelor Degree in Management. Sreynit lived with her family in Veal Sbov where she grew up. Her family ran a catering business, catering mostly for weddings and some festivities. She helped out with this but was set on gaining secretarial work for a business in the town or possibly a microfinance institution. Sreynit



expressed in the initial semi-structured interview a strong belief that business is good for the community and after the introductory workshop also a desire to join the research project as it might enhance her studies at University. She was also motivated to join in a project that might be useful for the community.

7.1: Action research model

The action research model followed the 'classic' three stage models of PAR. Cameron and Gibson (2005b) set this out as: documenting the current situation; contextualising the current situation and working towards change (321-327). Chiu (2003) uses synonymous three stage terminology: problem identification; generating potential solutions and the subsequent implementation and evaluation of these solutions (168-169). PAR for data generation in this instance consisted of 3 phases in the action

research spiral involving focus groups, workshops, field study visits and practical experiments.

Activities took place mainly in two venues. Initially they were held in the BSDA gift-shop which lies within 50 metres of the *Wat Nokor Bachaey* temple complex (Figure 7). It was fortuitous to have this facility allocated, which was perfect for a group of 10 people. The congenial hut provided intimacy during discussions with enough space to accommodate a whiteboard (also serving as a VCD projection screen) and room to walk around during workshops. Pink drapes inside lent ambience when the sun shone inwards between vertically aligned strips of bamboo, while maintaining sufficient darkness for projections to be clearly seen. Later activities and discussions were held at BSDA's Rice Fields Kids' Village (RFKV) which had developed rapidly since I first saw it (Figure 8). Where foundations stood before there were now finished buildings. It was hoped that activities situated there would help to tap into participants' positive affective registers but results were mixed. The environment was not conducive to intimate discussion or clear projections, so activities returned to the gift shop.



Figure 7: BSDA Gift Shop next to Wat Nokor Bachaey where most workshops and group discussions were held



Figure 8: BSDA's Rice Fields Kids' Village vocational training centre under development

The gift shop also proved to be the better locality as some group discussions and workshop activities were to be filmed (with participants signed consent). Video filming has enabled me to revisit the data in a way that audio recordings alone would not have done. Although I am wary of reading too much into visual data, for instance, one cannot tell what participants are thinking on the basis of their facial expressions, heightened states of animation at different points were nonetheless instructive. One of the chief reasons for filming in summary is that there is a focus on affect at different points in the research process. There were times when sensitive issues came up for discussion when things did not go so well, at other times there were outpourings of happiness. Alongside field notes, filmed footage has helped to put me back in the moment during writing up, recapturing things that might escape my memory or which my memory might since have distorted.

Section Eight: Research activities

8.1: Focus Group Discussions

The first activity was a focus group discussion. This means of data generation was then used iteratively throughout the action research in accordance with a principle of AI – ‘maintaining momentum’ (Cooperrider et al. 2003, 9). Focus groups are a recognised means of generating or co-producing data (Bryman 2012; Cameron 2000; Krueger & King 1997). They are a setting where group processes are put into action and it is precisely for this reason that they are useful in PAR (Chiu 2003). Focus groups can also generate the democratic effects that PAR strives for if the researcher cedes enough control over the research process to community members. Ideally these discussions are, alongside democratic spaces, pedagogical and dialogical ones in which people can address real world problems (Kamberelis & Dimitriadis 2011; Krueger & King 1997).

Focus groups are also helpful at an early stage in PAR for different reasons including: preliminary data collection; documenting situations; generating certain ways of looking at a problem which are helpful at latter stages, and establishing the local availability of practical knowledge on specific issues (Bloor & Wood 2006; Cameron & Gibson 2005b; Chiu 2003; Gibson-Graham 2006b; Shin et al. 2010). Following Chiu (2003) the first focus group was an attempt to introduce two ‘ways of knowing’: *experiential ways of knowing* (or ‘learning through encounter’) whereby group members reflected together on economic problems and *propositional ways of knowing* whereby participants had the opportunity to reflect on their personal narratives of these problems (175-178). Chiu shows that these ‘ways of knowing’ are the prerequisite to later stage endeavours to seek solutions to a problem. In other words, they are commensurate with the principles of embodied cognition and were guiding principles for this action research undertaking.

8.2: Workshops, field trips and participant observation

An important question Silverman (2015, 226) asks is whether, if the researcher is interested in human interaction, other ways of getting data than focus groups are not sometimes better suited, considering that focus groups are manufactured by the researcher to some degree. Arguably this depends on the degree of democratic control ceded to community members. But the point of importance is that focus groups alone might not be enough to capture human interaction in the way an academic (who wants to understand *community life*) would desire. Moreover, as a means of empowerment, or embodied learning, focus groups on their own also fall short. Chiu (2003) for instance argues that an ‘extended epistemology of PAR’ is appreciative of the transformational potential of focus groups only alongside other kinds of capacity building activities (66).

Group discussions in this research undertaking were accordingly interwoven with other experiential activities including workshops, research exercises, community meetings and field visits. Participant observation in community events and meetings was also undertaken. In some situations – particularly during trainings and in later experiments – I sensed my position as participant-observer being transcended when I became more of an *observing participant* who is personally involved ‘in the flux of the unfolding storyline(s)’ (Steyaert & Bachmann 2012, 71). In this case there are instances (if *enactive research* is taken seriously) where a researcher’s own experiences in the research process are data in their own right as long as the use of this auto-ethnographic style does not lead to the researcher losing sight of what is going on around him/herself (71-72). I contend this

was a part of my research pathway prior to arriving in Kampong Cham. It was for instance personal experiences of engagement with social enterprises and ‘ecosystem actors’ through the coordination of the National Social Enterprise Conference of Cambodia, which left me with questions born from empirical observation and personal frustration with the priorities that I repeatedly encountered.

8.3: Action Research Phase 1

Activities to *document the situation* are outlined in Figure 10. Subsequent to planning activities that led to the recruitment of the hybrid research group, a preliminary group discussion took place to establish representations of local economic development. This was followed by a workshop where members used the needs and the asset map from ABCD materials with the aim of starting to unsettle the subject positions of group members. Activities and further group discussions were also integrated on occasion. For instance, as a way to get discussion going about the idea of social enterprise and the pertinence of it in Chonghuk and Veal Sbov Villages, the viewing of a video about ‘community partnering’ and community-based social enterprises in the Philippines (Gibson et al. 2009) was integrated into one group discussion.

This particular group discussion also preceded a field visit to the BSDA vocational training centre at the Rice Fields Kids’ Village. The day as a whole constituted an exercise in embodied cognition or enactive research, as far as it harnessed the connection between thought and sensing – or bodily sensations of ‘enchantment’ that can be aroused in certain circumstances (Gibson-Graham 2004, 416). A further workshop introduced research participants to the understanding that research is not just the work of academics or the ‘development agencies’ but is the work of anybody seeking to improve their community. Exercises where members found out more about each other helped to affirm their roles as data collectors and research analysts and also to further refine their thinking through the identification of particular economic interests.

There is some scepticism toward PAR on the basis of its ‘objectivity, distance and controls.’ However, Brydon-Miller, Greenwood & Maguire (2003, 25) respond by claiming that action research is uniquely suited to the testing of knowledge by those who are affected the most and are best placed to do the testing. I set out to bring this understanding into the research design, beginning with a workshop before the *Pchum Ben* holiday to document stories and gauge members’ feelings about the action research so

far.⁴² We also had some discussion about the meaning of Pchum Ben festivities. Their stories were used to create content for a four-page village newsletter. A further group discussion took place one week later where members reviewed the newsletter, verified the content and suggested changes. This discussion was my means of validating data at the end of the first phase of the research cycle. Over Pchum Ben I also took the opportunity to hold two focus group discussions with other villagers. The first discussion was with informal market vendors and the second was with workers in a local garment factory.



Figure 9: Pictures of Phase 1 activities in the action research spiral: Top left ‘becoming researchers’: Top centre, drawing a map with villagers’ resources; top right, bottom left, on walk through the village; bottom centre a field study visit to BSDA; bottom right, asset and needs mapping.

⁴² Pchum Ben – the Khmer ‘Festival of the Dead’ or ‘Hungry Ghost’ festival – is the most important religious event in the Khmer Calendar. It takes place over two weeks in total in *Potrboth*, the lunar month coinciding with September and October (Daravuth 2005).

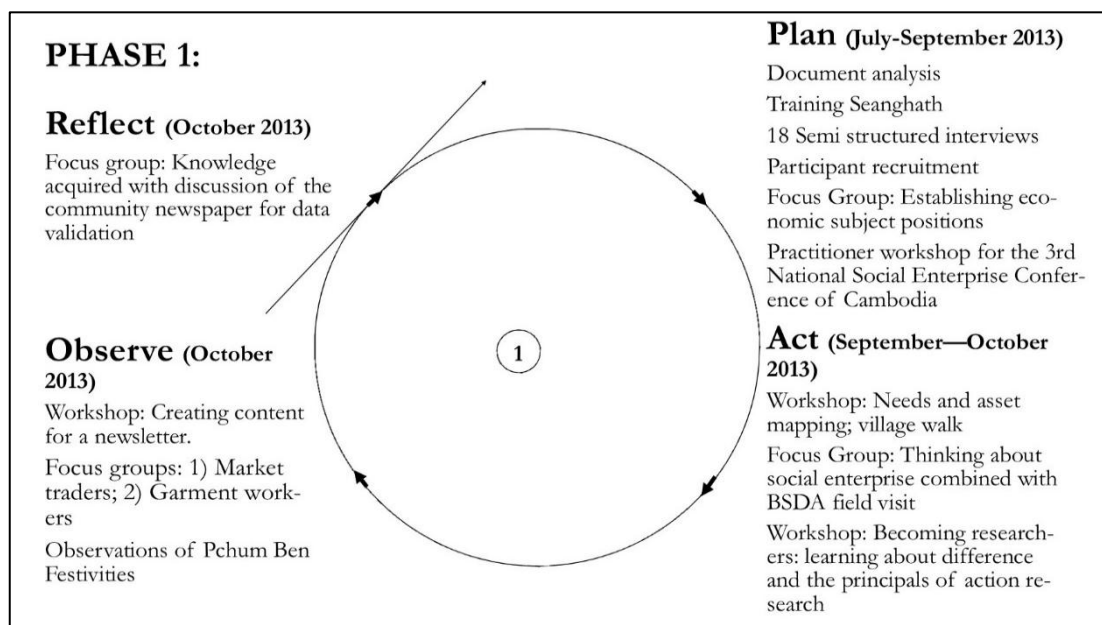


Figure 10: The first phase of the action research: Documenting the situation of local economic development: narratives, dispositions, skills and resources in the villages

8.4: Action Research Phase 2

The second phase of activities – which can be called *contextualising* (Cameron & Gibson 2005b, 324) – are those where alternative understandings of the local economic situation can be put on offer. This began over the *Pchum Ben* holiday when the hybrid research group members collected data of their own using a ‘Portrait of Gifts’ questionnaire. The questionnaire was adapted from the Shifting Focus resource kit (Cameron & Gibson 2001) and predominantly entails items that can be ticked by participants (under categories of gifts of the head; gifts of the hand and gifts of the heart) with open ended questions inviting qualitative data at the end. 45 questionnaires were returned (some more detailed than others). Data was processed using Microsoft Excel for ticked boxes and content coding (using NVivo) for qualitative responses. Printed outputs served as materials for a subsequent workshop, designed to allow me to observe – from the perspective of ‘positioning theory’ which relates to the performative effects of focus groups (Halkier 2010) – changes in members subject positions regarding economic action in collaboration with others.

This morning workshop was also part of preparations for the National Social Enterprise Conference of Cambodia on the 25th October 2103. It was followed by a group discussion in the afternoon that incorporated a case study analysis of the Peri Urban Farmer’s Cooperative (PUAC) initiated by the Belgian NGO Aide au Développement

Gembloux (ADG). In this discussion members reflected on what they thought social enterprise means and its pertinence to Veal Sbov and Chonghuk Villages. They collaborated on drawing a resource flow chart of the Rice Fields Kids' Village to help develop their conception of a social enterprise. The PUAC case study was also an advance viewing of ADG's work which was presented at the National Conference. Preparations for the visit to Phnom Penh also included communal preparation of lunches using food contributed from group members' vegetable plots and rice harvests along with market produce paid for with my fieldwork allowances. The Conference visit was undertaken as a way to further develop experiential ways of knowing or embodied cognition through exposure to a new environment. Participants were immersed in wider discussion about social enterprise and also immersed in their role as community researchers by assisting with a conference presentation on the work we had been doing together. Attendance at the National Social Enterprise Conference was followed up with video recorded discussion of this exercise as part of collective data validation at the end of Phase 2 where participants reflected on the value of the research to date.



Figure 11: Pictures of Phase 2 activities: Top left, team building through communal food preparation; top right, focus group and workshop on the portrait of gifts; middle right, thinking about economic opportunities; middle left and bottom left at the 3rd National Social Enterprise Conference of Cambodia; bottom right, conference follow up, focus group discussion and data validation.

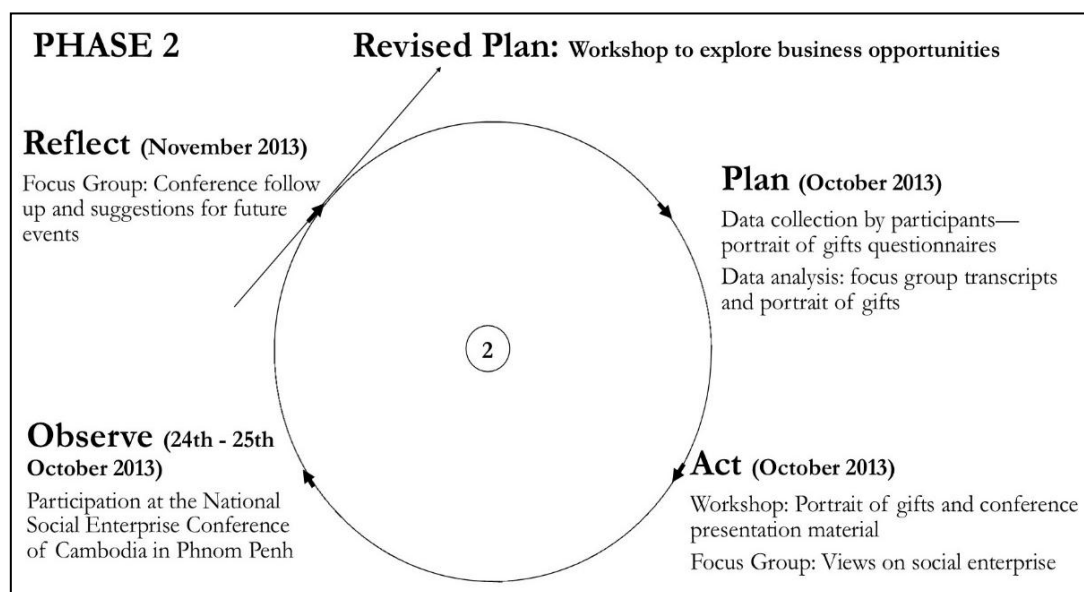


Figure 12: The second phase of action research: Contextualising the appetite for social enterprise development

8.5: Action Research Phase 3

The third phase of the action research cycle began with meetings in Phnom Penh with social enterprise practitioners at Sovannak Palm Sugar who had an interest in expansion into Kampong Cham Province. Analysis of transcripts along with further analysis of field notes and transcripts from the second research phase group discussions was undertaken to further draw out themes of interest and develop new materials for use in a business ideas workshop with research group members. This workshop led to some interest in and an experiment with bamboo furniture making. I later engaged in a focus group discussion with construction workers, mostly to source additional contextual data on the need for social enterprise, but also to help with my reflection on the bamboo furniture experiment. At more or less the same time as the bamboo furniture experiment was going on, some of the group members also came together in meetings with BSDA management (including Seanghath in his capacity as Social Enterprise Coordinator) to consider opportunities presented by a proposed catering enterprise located at a local school canteen. These meetings and the experiment with bamboo are treated both as participant-observation data. Reflection on a tangible business opportunity was undertaken at the end of Phase 3 in group discussion that gave insight into how group members approach the proposition of a social enterprise in practice. Exit interviews served as a final means by which group members' subject positions could be validated.

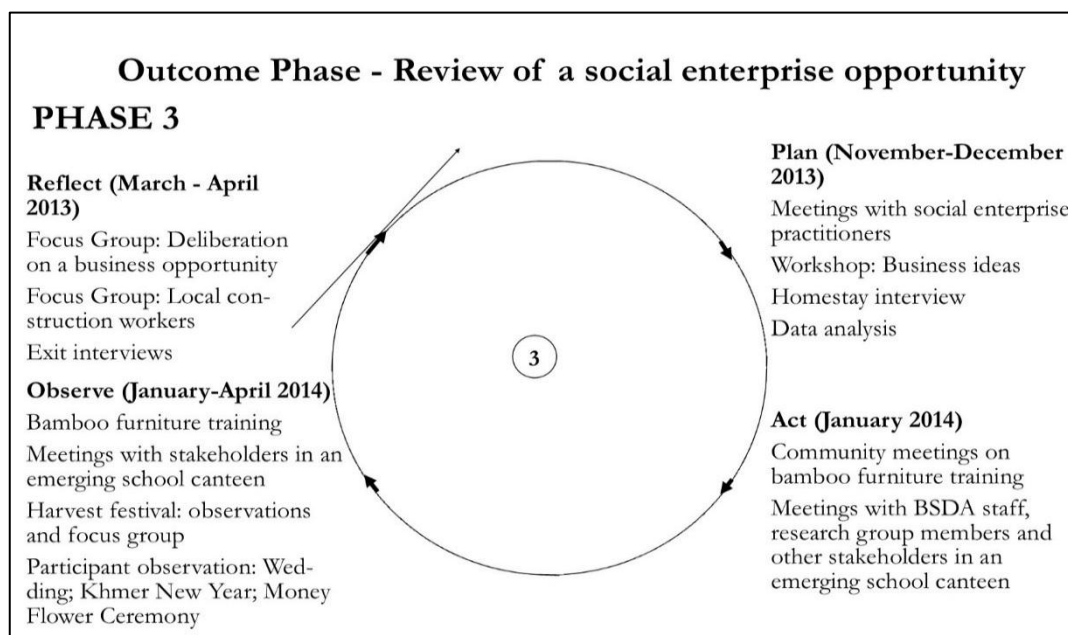


Figure 13: Phase 3 of the action research spiral: Working towards opportunities for a social enterprise

Section Nine: Conclusion: A reflection of the methods and presenting the results

I chose an action research design for this thesis because action research can give insider knowledge into how real world problems are solved and also because it serves the dual purpose of understanding social phenomena and promoting change (Coghlan & Shani 2005; Denscombe 2007). I selected the method on the premise that observing how people interpret social enterprise development in real time requires observance of the emergence or amplification of empowered economic subjectivities. Action research is suitably a means by which empowerment can happen (as one mode of subjection) as participants (or co-researchers) exercise problem solving skills and attach value to new identities (Cameron & Gibson 2005b, 328; Chambers 1997, 106-108).

I also chose action research as a method in order to engage in a first-hand way with the perspectives of a practitioner. As Denscombe (2007) writes, action research 'needs to be undertaken *as part of practice* rather than a bolt-on addition to it' (124). In part, a benefit of these methods has been personal 'professional self-development', as I have gained insights into running workshops, group discussions and activities aimed at embodied learning. My exposure to cultural dynamics that determine the way activities can work out has been instructive. I am able in the conclusions of this thesis, to make suggestions

for approaches to social enterprise development in a particularistic context that another methodology might not have delivered.

Some of my research findings concur with Munoz, Steiner & Farmer (2015) who have recently given an expositional account of a five stage participatory research process, for developing community-led social enterprises in rural localities across Europe. They identify points at which the process can falter in different ways. In Phase 3 of my fieldwork, an intervention that was aimed at harnessing the natural bamboo resources surrounding Veal Sbov and Chonghuk villages met with resistance for different reasons. But what this research approach also showed me was that the points at which social enterprise development can falter are also points that can give rise to the unexpected and yield data that might not be accessible by other research methods. The rejection of bamboo furniture training brought to the surface the value that villagers attached to a pre-existing economic activity that maintains a sense of social protection as well as their ongoing access to a natural resource. This is one example of the unexpected little narratives that action research can inadvertently reveal and fundamentally shows how the unexpected can be the most valuable data of all.

The findings resulting from action research are set out in the thesis mainly in the form of case studies. Interview data is the preliminary basis for the provision of an economic geography of the two villages in the next chapter. After that, Chapter Five provides an expositional account of the action research process up to the end of Phase 2, looking at how changes in subjectivity were brought about, giving impetus into reflection on the results at the end of the action research process. Chapter Six presents two case studies of experiments with social enterprise development in Phase 3 of the action research cycle. In Chapter Seven, findings are presented in the form of case by case analysis of members of the hybrid research group. This leads into the consideration of contextual factors that inevitably render social enterprise development at the grassroots village level in Cambodia a particularistic process, bringing into question western-centric discourses. Lastly in Chapter Eight, two case studies of entrepreneurial individuals residing in Veal Sbov village are presented. These studies arose inadvertently as the importance of their roles within the village and their pertinence to literature about social entrepreneurship in particular became more evident over time. These are studies that bring to attention the need for nuanced consideration of the ethics of social entrepreneurship at the grassroots village level.

Chapter Four: Chonghuk and Veal Sbov Villages: Economic Geographies in Context

Section One: Introduction

Village economies across all of Southeast Asia have traditionally been constituted by diverse economic practices, including waged labour, self-employment, subsistence, barter, reciprocal exchange and gifts. These practices can be commensurate with reciprocal economic behaviours observed elsewhere that extend beyond self-interest and combine to enact a grassroots social solidarity economy which meets people's different kinds of social needs (Amin 2009b; Laville 2013). However, under the rapid advancement of capitalist agriculture in Southeast Asia, elements of these grassroots village social economies have been historically transformed by growing inequality and changes in the nature of obligation from more to less powerful actors (Scott 1972a). While villagers' subsistence and reliance on 'the land' and informal, non-monetary transactions has long ceased to fully represent Southeast Asian villages, Johnathan Rigg (2005) shows that alongside off-farm incomes and monetised, market exchanges, these practices do still persist. Terms like 'occupational multiplicity, pluriactivity, and a 'portfolio' approach' (Rigg et al. 2004, 994) are enlisted to describe how rural villagers make a living nowadays.

In this chapter I introduce the economic geographies of two Cambodian villages, Chonghuk and Veal Sbov, both of which have undergone change over the past fifteen years. I discuss the diverse economic practices that constitute village economies and identify the contours of a grassroots social economy in each, as my aim is to establish a rich understanding of the context in which my action research aimed at developing social enterprise took place. Any economy is always situated in its practice (Polanyi 1957, 2001). The social economy is no exception. According to Amin (2009, 11-14) the social economy is shaped by cultural, institutional, and economic practices including:

1. The cultural practices of solidarity and social activism;
2. The institutionalised practices of care and welfare; and
3. The extent to which market practices meet peoples' needs.

After a brief discussion of diverse economic practices found in each village, I will explore these three aspects of the social economy in turn.

Data in this chapter draws from primary and secondary sources. In addition to published materials I draw on interviews and the Portrait of Gifts generated with data that group members collected in their villages. Group discussions on reciprocal practices of care and labour exchange, gifts to the poor and relations with authority figures add nuance to the context. Additionally, focus group discussions with garment workers, market traders and construction workers in the villages contribute depth to my understanding of solidarity and welfare safety nets provided by market mechanisms.

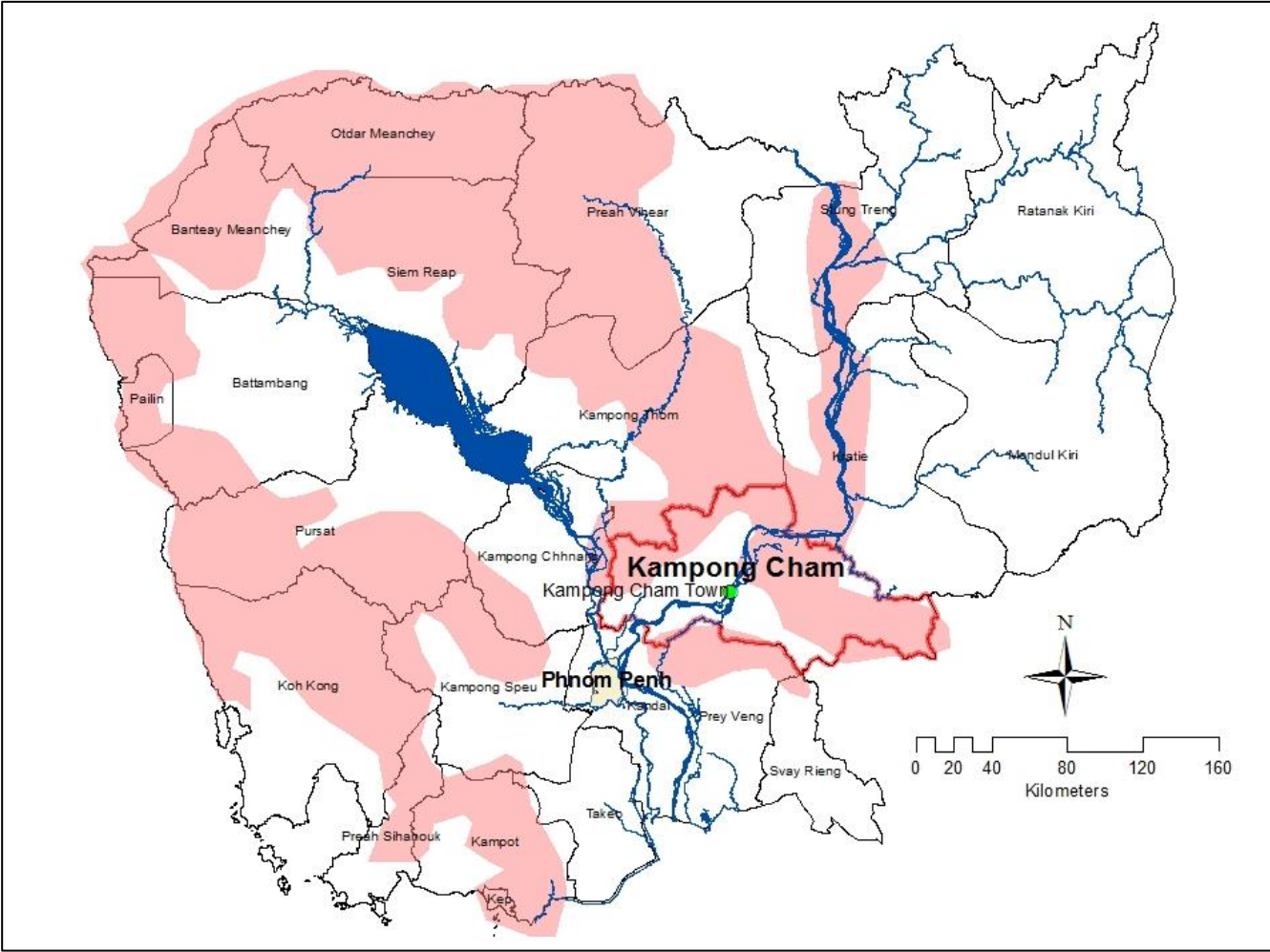
Section Two: Chonghuk and Veal Sbov Villages, in Kampong Cham Province

Chonghuk and Veal Sbov are adjacent villages (*phum*) in Ampil Commune, in Kampong Siem District, in Kampong Cham Province. They are classified as rural villages because they are part of an administrative Commune (*Khum*) as opposed to a *Sangkat* (which is comparable to an urban 'borough') (Hughes 2007; Kimchoeun 2011). The villages merit the term 'peri-urban' because they are situated just 2 kilometres north-west of Kampong Cham Town, the Provincial capital and sixth largest urban centre in Cambodia (RGC 2008, 173). Kampong Cham Town lies on north side of the Mekong River, 125 kilometres east of the Cambodian capital city Phnom Penh. The Town was an important trading post during the French colonial period. It was taken out of the hands of the Khmer Rouge in 1979 during their ousting from control over Cambodia, although the data on Map 1 shows that Khmer Rouge insurgencies were never far away during the subsequent civil war. Indeed through the 1980s Khmer Rouge forces held influence, by exercising violent and non-violent (political) guerrilla activity within ten kilometres distance northwest of Kampong Cham Town, although for the most part they were operative on the opposite side of the Mekong River.⁴³ Since the

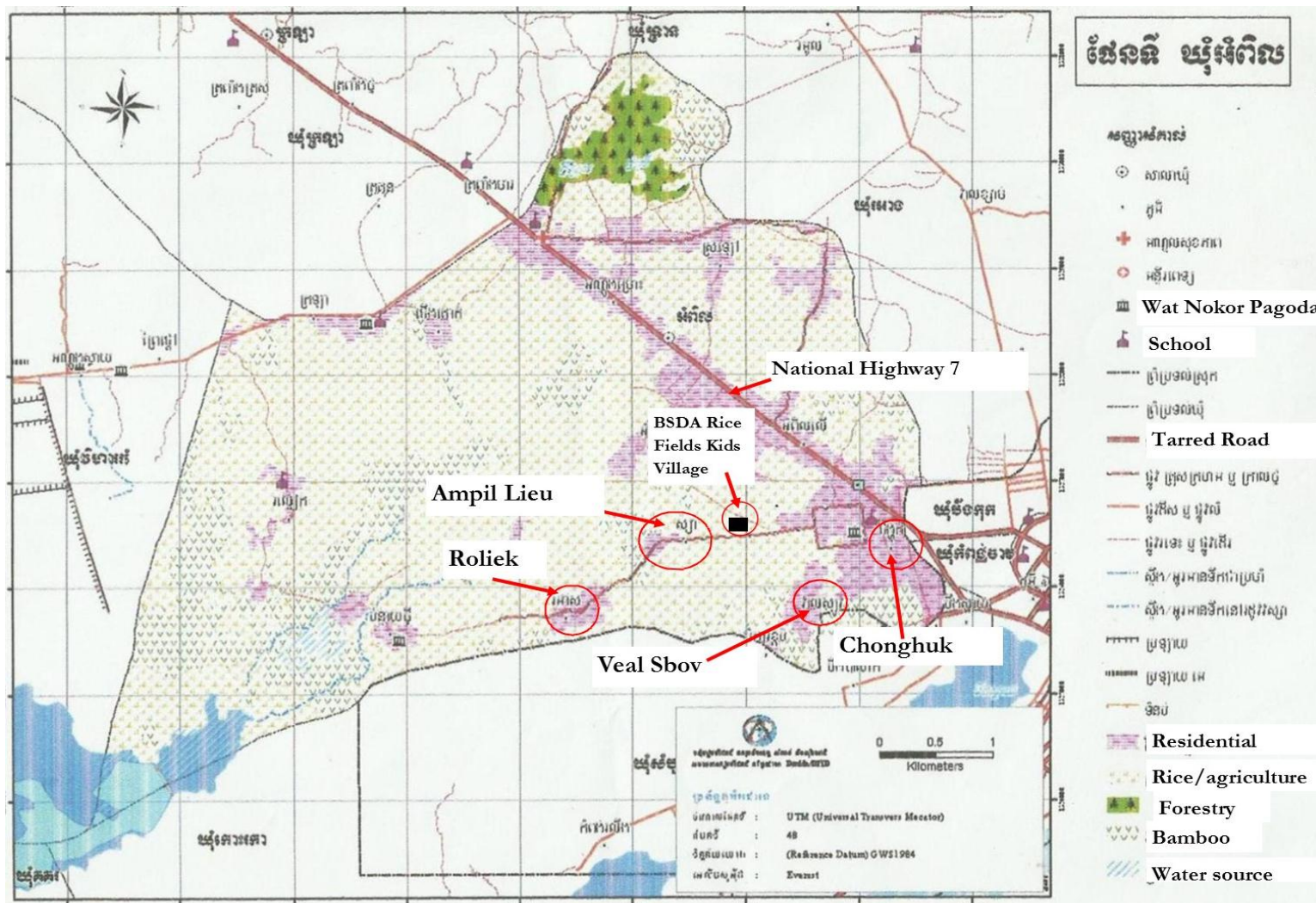
⁴³ As laid out in introduction to the thesis, the Khmer Rouge period and conflicts before and afterwards is a backdrop against which this thesis must inevitably be written. However, it is not a further topic of discussion here. It is my intention in this Chapter to allow the local economic geography to speak for itself without being so heavily determined by trauma. As a consequence, I am able to make more room for an in depth and more sensitive treatment of this particular episode of Cambodian history, rooted in the local context, in Chapter Seven where it is most strongly called on by the fieldwork data.

Paris Peace Agreements in 1991 Kampong Cham has enjoyed relative peace, although the vacuum of Khmer Rouge insurgency was filled during the 1990s by organised political violence and fear of other powerful elites who exercised violence without fear of reprisal (Hinton 2005; Human Rights Watch 2002; Kumar 2002).

Ampil Commune, where Chonghuk and Veal Sbov villages are situated, is constituted by twelve villages in total (Map 2 is a map of Ampil Commune, provided by the Commune Hall). According to Ampil Commune Hall data there are a total of 381 families in Chonghuk and Veal Sbov villages. The population density is 4.4 persons per household. As shown in Map 2, Chonghuk lies between National Highway 7 on the eastern side of the Village and Veal Sbov Village which lies to the west. There is little more than a few hundred metres between Chonghuk and Veal Sbov. At the back of Veal Sbov, rice fields head extensively further west. In their examination of natural resource management in Prey Chhor District, Kampong Cham Province, Siriwattananon, Mihara, & Ichikawa (2010) note that the loss of biodiversity has been induced by mono-cropping and also by Khmer Rouge intervention when villagers were forced to clear forestry to make way for rice paddy. In Veal Sbov and Chonghuk Villages I found the picture much the same. As the map of Ampil Commune indicates, virtually all of the land between Veal Sbov and Ampil Lieu and Roliek Villages to the west/north west has been cleared for rice paddy. There is no woodland of note surrounding either Chonghuk or Veal Sbov although there are bamboo groves to the back of Veal Sbov and between Chonghuk and the Town. The bamboo groves became a recurrent focus of attention and they are revisited in Chapter Six of this thesis.



Map 1: Kampong Cham Province in Cambodia and presence of Khmer Rouge influence through the 1980s. Sourced from Peschoux (1992, 286-289), data reproduced with the author's permission.



Map 2: Map of Ampil Commune provided by the Ampil Commune Hall in Kampong Siem District, Kampong Cham Province

2.1: The diverse economy of Chonghuk and Veal Sbov Villages

Village economies are not inherently capitalist, they merely contain capitalist activities amongst other ones (Gibson, Cahill, et al. 2010). At a considerable distance from Chonghuk and Veal Sbov, elsewhere in the Kampong Cham Plateau, rubber estates dating back to the early 1900s historically created concession revenues for French colonial administrators and reorganised property ownership and labour along capitalist lines for the first time. But these estates were also an anomaly in the economy, in Slocomb's (2007) words acting as: *'a market system existing like an island in a wide sea of traditional subsistence farming, part of the whole, yet essentially different'* (154). Things are not so different today. Special Economic Zones (mostly constituted by garment factories) and 'Economic Land Concessions' for cultivating rubber, palm oil, sugar, cassava, cashew, pepper, coffee and cotton, are a central government strategy for economic growth and waged employment (Scheidel et al. 2013). But even so, subsistence agriculture remains the most pressing issue for rural food security (Ecker & Diao 2011, 6; FAO 2011, 1).

Data collected during 18 semi-structured interviews at the outset of my fieldwork in July and August 2013, shows the diverse economy of labour in Chonghuk and Veal Sbov Villages (Figure 14). Most villagers are, in one way or another, self-employed and engaged also in some 'self-provisioning' activities. Virtually all of the businesses residing within the two villages are informal family businesses. The only exception is a bottled water factory at the back of Veal Sbov Village which arrived early in 2012. The factory employs more than ten people in the dry season. There is less work there in the monsoon season, which usually lasts from May until October each year.

While my data identified diverse economic pursuits within the villages, many of them applied to relatively small numbers of villagers. At the edge of Chonghuk village there were three family-owned café businesses. Wedding beautician businesses were mentioned by three villagers that I interviewed, but only one woman in Veal Sbov was really doing this. She was the daughter of the Village Chief. Besides the moto-bike repairer with a garage at the entrance to Chonghuk who employed two younger males, only one more villager in Veal Sbov repaired moto-bikes for a living from outside his house. There were two families in Veal Sbov known to run catering enterprises, catering mostly for wedding ceremonies and sometimes for other ceremonies. There were two

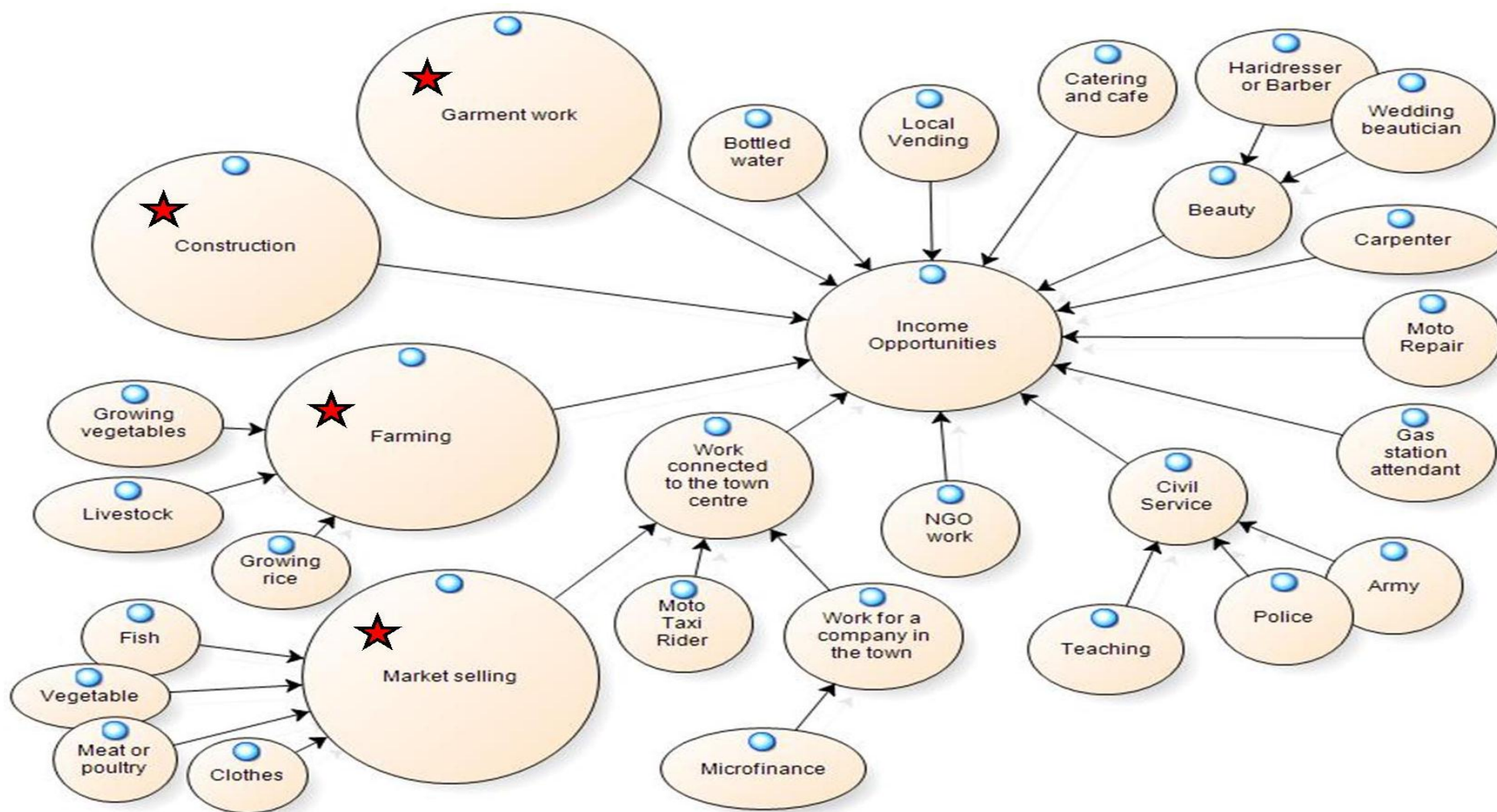


Figure 14: Income streams and livelihoods in Chonghuk and Veal Sbov villages. Sourced from initial interviews 19th July - 9th August 2013 using NVivo software

hairdressers in the villages and three small sari-sari vending outlets selling canned drinks, toiletries and petrol out of glass bottles. A relatively small number of village households, no more than five or six, had snack vending stalls around the Wat Nokor Bachaey Pagoda complex, but their incomes were meagre and stalls were regularly abandoned. Similarly, most forms of waged labour that interviewees mentioned were not applicable to villagers in large numbers. Only a handful of villagers were full time teachers, only one I knew of was in the police force (which is not to say there were not more). Only four of BSDA's NGO staff altogether lived within these villages.

The main labouring activities are ultimately reducible to four main pursuits, signified on the left hand side of Figure 14. These are namely:

1. Rice farming, vegetable gardening and livestock raising (this could take various forms of labour including income generation, waged-labour for other villagers, reciprocal labour and also self-provisioning).
2. Waged labour in a garment factory, situated within a nearby industrial park. This was mainly pursued by young females but numerous males worked there also.
3. Construction labour, taken up mostly by male villagers.
4. Informal market vending, which was a means of daily survival in alternative markets taken up mostly by women over the age of 30.

The majority of regularly paid waged labourers in the Villages work for one large capitalist enterprise. This is a garment factory operated by MEDTECS International Corporation Ltd., located within two kilometres distance from Chonghuk and Veal Sbov on National Highway 7. They make protective clothing for use in hospitals and scientific laboratories, both inside Cambodia and for export overseas. MEDTECS lease the factory from the Manhattan International Co. Ltd Industrial Park or 'Special Economic Zone' (SEZ). This is operated by Manhattan International Co. Ltd on a 70-year concession from the Royal Government of Cambodia (RGC). In 1998 \$50 million USD of foreign investment was put up for this by Taiwanese and US based investors (Shao-hua 2000; Shiraishi 2013, 98).



Figure 15: MEDTECS garment factories in Ampil Commune on National Highway 7

The MEDTECS garment factory employs around 5,000 workers. According to the Ampil Commune Chief about 500 employees come from Ampil Commune, the rest migrate from further out in the Province or elsewhere in Cambodia. By working seven days a week, workers can earn \$150 a month (Sunday is essential because it provides double time pay). This is supplemented by 2,000 riels (50 US Cents) per day food allowances, a \$10USD monthly bonus for 100% attendance and \$7USD for monthly travel which goes largely to a tuktuk taxi driver that provides daily transportation. Data from 2013 shows that 90% of Cambodia's garment factory workers are female (ADB 2013, 21) although it is not entirely clear if this statistic describes MEDTECS so accurately, where men work in different roles including cutting, maintenance and operation of heavy machinery as well as sewing. Data also shows that 78% of Cambodian female garment workers are under the age of 29 (ADB 2013, 21). Most of the remaining 22% are not much older than that.⁴⁴ Garment workers told me MEDTECS only gave 6 month contracts, primarily in their view so that they can be easily disposed of. A worried female worker aged 31 added:

'I have seen they fire some staffs that are getting older...Elder people from the age of 35-year-old up.... Only very few people over 40 years old are still employed...with different position such as cleaner, food cook...When the workers get older from 35-year-old up, they start firing them one by one because they think those workers are not productive at all.'

⁴⁴ In a report for Levi-Strauss no factory workers were aged over 40 (Levi Strauss & CARE 2013, 8).



Figure 16: Garment workers returning from work to Chonghuk Village by tuktuk

Many women over the age of 35 in Chonghuk (who are ‘too old’ for garment work) make their living in alternative markets. Mostly, they take up informal market selling (*psa louk*) of vegetables, fish, poultry or clothing. They do this either at the fringes of the main market called *Psa Boeng Kok* in the Town, or at two other smaller markets closer to the villagers, or at smaller market stalls at local road intersections. Some men with salaried work like primary school teaching also sell chicken to gain supplemental incomes. Besides garment work, the next most prevalent form of paid work in the villages is informal construction work. There are three construction managers in the village, running small family firms. They specialise mainly in building traditional wooden housing, with the house itself mounted on cement piles to cope with flooding in the monsoon season, although brick construction work has become more widespread in recent years. These construction managers call on their team (*kerom*) – usually younger male villagers – whenever they get a job. Paid construction labourers earn between \$5 and \$10 per day depending on their skills. One attraction for the waged-labourers is that they get a payment at the end of each working day which meets immediate consumption needs. A second attraction in their view is the flexibility. There is no obligation to work when they have other commitments.

Construction workers in Veal Sbov are also usually rice farmers in the wet season. The two activities are an interdependent livelihood. Rice farming is both vital for subsistence and a means of cash income. However, rice farming is complicated by the absence of irrigation. Apart from those with access to a small area of paddy fed with groundwater from a tube well, villagers are dependent on just one rain fed rice harvest per year. It was only after I experienced these realities during the onset of the dry season, six months after I arrived, that this truly pressed on me. I saw the landscape change (see Figure 17) and also saw Veal Sbov Village become quickly quiet. A week after the

harvest in February 2014, a construction manager in the village told me that he struggled to find labourers at this time of the year. Most had gone either to neighbouring Kratie Province where informal artisanal gold mining is a common pursuit of seasonal migrants (Spiegel 2014) or to Sihanoukville on the west coast to take construction work on a new shipping port. A small number of men also regularly travel to Thailand to perform agricultural labour.



Figure 17: Rice paddy situated between Chonghuk and Veal Sbov in the wet and dry season, top picture taken September 2013 lower picture taken February 2014

Commune data shows half of the families in Chonghuk do not farm rice. Among those that do, none have access to more than one hectare of land for this purpose. In Veal Sbov in contrast, 90% of families farm rice and more than half have access to more than a hectare of land for this purpose (NCDD 2012). The more settled residents in Veal Sbov tend to be owner farmers, but more recently arriving families, some of which are destitute families evicted from places closer to Kampong Cham Town, are tenant farmers. The plight of some of these families is addressed in Chapter Eight.

Without much land for farming rice, Chonghuk villagers turn in greater numbers than those in Veal Sbov to small scale vegetable gardening as a source of self-provisioning subsistence and also small scale income generation. Many families in Chonghuk tend small plots of land (invariably less than 50 square meters) around their houses. They cultivate leaf vegetables including salad, spinach (*spay*), a water spinach called *tra kuon* (in non-Asian contexts known as ‘morning glory’) which is popular in Khmer cookery and

bitter melon and winter melon in some instances on suspended bamboo trellises (Figure 18). In Veal Sbov Torn (the Veal Sbov Village Committee member who joined the research group) cultivates string bean – *sandechk kour* – on land about 200 metres from his house during the wet season only. This is impossible for him in the dry season without a sufficient local water source. On a walk through Chonghuk and Veal Sbov, research group members pointed out some mango, papaya, banana and coconut trees that grew intermittently outside every third or fourth house in Chonghuk. They were much sparser in Veal Sbov. With the exception of a banana tree plantation spanning roughly 200 square metres in Chonghuk Village, all fruit trees in the village were for subsistence. Occasionally a vendor in the Town comes to buy coconuts from villagers, paying 700 riels (less than 20 US Cents) for each one.



Figure 18: Subsistence and semi-commercial agriculture: top, Torn’s yard long beans (*sandechk kour*) in Veal Sbov; bottom, household cultivation of gourd and leaf vegetables in Chonghuk

The term used for livestock, *satchenbchem*, translates as ‘pets.’ Sixty per cent of Chonghuk villagers keep poultry – mostly chickens but also ducks – compared to only 20% in Veal Sbov. But on account of having less land, Chonghuk villagers rear poultry much more for subsistence. Despite the far smaller proportion of poultry breeders in Veal Sbov, far more chickens from this village go to local markets (NCDD 2014). Other livestock raising goes on to a smaller extent. Around 5% of families in Chonghuk keep cattle, only 3 families keep pigs. In Veal Sbov 10% of families keep cattle and 12% keep pigs (NCDD 2012). Cattle and pig raising is capital intensive and shortage of feed is a

problem in the dry season (the thin cattle in Figure 17 are illustrative). But this is also seen as a safe way to store money and gain periodic windfalls from the sale of offspring. An abattoir within easy reach on National Highway 7 supports this activity.

In summary, there are numerous ways in which villagers in Chonghuk and Veal Sbov earn income and sustain their livelihood. Another peripheral income which went unmentioned in preliminary interviews but emerged from observation is derived from harnessing bamboo resources to make skewers that supply local barbecue businesses and street food vendors. This is given much closer attention later on in Chapter Seven. Almost every family relies on self-provisioning in some way as part of their survival strategy, underlining a diverse economy of paid and alternatively paid labouring. This includes a lot of self-employment. These activities can actually involve different kinds of labour all at once. Alongside production of surpluses for sale, surpluses are personally consumed. Among those who farm or raise livestock (or do both) it can be produce of their own cultivation/rearing while among market vendors it can be the goods they have been unable to sell. In both activities there are also instances of reciprocal labour-exchange to get specific tasks completed, which is, in itself, another alternative way of being paid. These issues are elaborated in the next section, where I examine different manifestations of solidarity between villagers in Chonghuk and Veal Sbov.

Section Three: Economic solidarity in the villages

What are the contemporary practices of solidarity that villagers in Chonghuk and Veal Sbov adhere to? In this section I present insights into present-day reciprocal practices of villagers elicited through workshops, group discussions, interviews and the Portrait of Gifts exercise. The following discussion gives an empirically based picture of solidarity that can be analysed in light of historical and contemporary accounts in the literature.

Historical accounts of Cambodian village life from the anthropologist May Ebihara suggest a lack of groups that extended beyond close kinship networks (Sen 2012, 6). Agricultural cooperative organisations in the post-colonial Sihanouk era were formed, but they were more prominent in some provinces than others (Ngin 2010). The only non-familial groups that have mobilised historically across the entirety of rural Cambodia have mobilised around religious practices, mostly Buddhist (Kent 2003; O'Leary 2006, 101-103) but also those of Cham Muslims in some localities (Trankell &

Ovesen 2004). Despite the lack of strong associational life, there are other historic (pre-revolutionary) forms of exchange through which the rural poor have exhibited solidarity (*samaki*) and collective capacity to secure their livelihood (Krishnamurthy 1999; Ledgerwood 1998). Under the pressure of market forces these practices have been in decline. However, as I show below indicators do point to still viable practices or reciprocal solidarity. My findings reveal a sense of optimism but also realism about villagers' good will and support for others, together with insights into their particular interests that might provide impetus for participation in a social enterprise.

3.1: Associations in the villages

In Veal Sbov and Chonghuk villages there are no formally recognised village associations to speak of. At least, there are not any that resemble organisational forms with drawn up statutes, bylaws and so on. There is no women's association or youth association. There had been an elderly people's association in Chonghuk Village but it did not last long. Money had been collected but it was not paid out for funeral assistance or when the elderly got sick. Finally villagers stopped making payments. Neither are there any farmer's groups in the villages despite there being more than 13,000 of them in Cambodia nationally (Julie et al in Ngin 2010, 8). It might be speculated that the absence of NGOs working locally on agriculture is one reason for this, seeing as recognisable farmers groups have tended to receive NGO support with collective bargaining arrangements (Ngin 2010, 8-10). But it is also plausible that farmers in Veal Sbov and Chonghuk, on account of their close proximity to markets in Kampong Cham Town, like to make their own arrangements with local traders.

The only thing close to being a recognisable agricultural association is the collective management, by 8 families, of a medium-sized vegetable garden in Chonghuk Village (Figure 19). Returning to the focus provided by McKnight & Kretzmann (1993) outlined earlier on page 26, this group of families can be discerned as an 'organisational form', routinely engaged in organised activity such as the running of a shared vegetable garden. In this instance, the families had collectively secured cheaper government water that allowed them to keep growing green leafy vegetables in the dry season. While the garden management is recognisable as an associational form, there is no indication that producers bargain with middle-sellers collectively. They sell surpluses in the markets themselves or to market vendors acting as the middle-person, such as Nuon who had joined the hybrid research group.



Figure 19: Family managed vegetable garden, in the basin of Chonghuk Village

3.2: Provas: Mobilising resources through reciprocal acts

Provas (the Khmer word for *exchange*) signifies both reciprocal labour and also ‘barter.’ Meas (1995) remembers his childhood in Svay Reing Province during the Sihanouk era, when a multiplicity of *provas* enabled villagers to meet urgent needs. As a child he saw *Provas with chickens, ducks, cows, labour, buffalo, rice fields, sugar palms*’ (16). The *provas* Meas recalls, signified mixed exchanges. The barter aspect (swapping commodities like livestock and sugar palms) represents the enduring ‘customary economy’ – or ‘production-exchange relations (including tribal subsistence and extended subsistence living)’ (James et al. 2012, 219) – among the rural population. As a reciprocal form of labour *provas dei* (meaning *exchange of the hand*) is also the main historic means by which rural peasantry achieved the tasks needed to secure their livelihood in a low cash economy (Krishnamurthy 1999, 33-39).

Since the 1990s *provas* has diminished in comparison to the Sihanouk era. Meas (1995, 38) cites the collective trauma caused by the Khmer Rouge era and subsequent conflicts as a reason. However, others pin this more on market forces, the remonetised economy and rural penetration of an exploitative business community that provides more off-farm income and renders villagers’ interests less homogenous. In addition the coordination that *provas* requires is increasingly seen as burdensome next to cash exchanges (Krishnamurthy 1999, 34-36; Van Acker 2003, 31-32). Concurring with this, Chonghuk and Veal Sbov villagers demanded cash transactions wherever possible. The nearby garment factory overdetermines the appropriate way to exchange labour. In interviews when I asked about *provas* I repeatedly heard, from one interview to another, words to the effect of ‘*people are smarter now, so they only work for money.*’ An elaboration was that people exchanged their labour more in the 1980s when money was scarce under the

Vietnamese occupation. But now everything has changed and making money for the family means that villagers' only need to focus on one thing alone.

None of the above is however, to say *provas* has disappeared completely. Rather it is less frequent and narrower in scope. Barter has almost gone completely and the main enduring form is labour exchange or *provas dei*, which is viewed by some scholars to be 'traditional social capital' (Ear 2012a; Kea 2005; Krishnamurthy 1999). Krishnamurthy (1999) found *provas dei* has become so rigid that villagers agree to transplant or harvest one-another's rice in exactly equal numbers of bundles, in contrast to the 'Sihanouk days' when people would simply exchange an equal number of labour days (34). My data partially departs from Krishnamurthy's. Rice farmers I spoke to said *provas dei* is still '*one day for another one*', there is no precise calculation of rice bundles. But this is neither to refute Krishnamurthy's data entirely. Work of *equal value* is ensured in another way – farmers only partner with another of the perceived physical ability. This means the same sex and invariably the same age group. Rigidity is also instilled by strictly *like for like* exchange, or 'balanced reciprocity' as identified in other studies of Cambodian village life (Kim 2011). Sat (the Chonghuk Village Chief) said for instance in a workshop that men *provas* to accomplish house repairs, but that both parties must have the same building skills to offer. It also normally happens when both men need a job done at the same time – labouring debts are not therefore normally deferrable to later dates.

Provas dei can also be differentiated between the two villages. In Veal Sbov it is needed much more for rice farming on larger plots of paddy. It also takes place among construction workers as a way for them to organise their farming work into gaps between construction jobs. As with findings elsewhere, land tenure, which dictates the size of agricultural tasks, usually determines if *provas dei* is used or if paid labour is hired to get a job done in the fields (Diepart 2010). In Chonghuk, there are forms of *provas dei* among market sellers that are uncommon in Veal Sbov. On days when sellers manage to clear out all their goods, they may help a friend who had not yet completed selling. The favour will be returned, although such successful days are admittedly rare. Noun also exchanges her labour with a friend who sells vegetables next to her at *Psa Boeng Kok*. They sell each other's vegetables in the one another's absence and hand over the takings in full – without expectation of keeping a share of the profit. Between them they can guarantee their incomes when either has other commitments. Noun used this system to organise her attendance at activities throughout the action research. She said that this

was based on more than five years of friendship with her neighbour in the market and that they made their arrangements well in advance. She readily agreed that this was *provas dei*.



Figure 20: Nuon (left) sells next to her friend (right): they sell each other's produce by prior arrangement

Beyond *provas dei* there is also *provas ko (cow)*, which is again a form of labour exchange and not a form of barter. Here one villager tenders another's cattle and keeps the first, third, fifth offspring for as long as *provas* endures. This is a potentially valuable arrangement for the poor because a healthy calf at 18 months can be sold for \$300 USD upwards. One further example of exchange is not like-for-like, but still a widely enacted payment in kind. In Chonghuk and Veal Sbov there are three owners of rice milling machines. They mill villagers' harvested rice free of cost as long as they can retain the rice husk for livestock feed or to sell it for this purpose to other villagers.



Figure 21: *Provas ko* in Chonghuk Village



Figure 22: Rice milling in Veal Sbov Village provided in return for retaining the rice husk

3.3: Religious practices

The leadership of the Pagoda is the main enduring driver of associational life in Cambodian villages today (Kent 2003; Pellini & Ayres 2007) and the Pagoda Committee is an indigenous type of community based organisation (CBO) (Henke 2011). In different ways the local Pagoda (*Wat Nokor Bachaey*) supports mutual self-help. It represents in short – ‘the social, cultural, and religious centre of collective action’ (Pellini & Ayres 2007, 405).

One interview after another elicited the role of religion in social solidarity and gift-giving (*dana*) or ‘fruitful giving’ in the Theravāda Buddhist tradition (Tomalin 2007, 9) when I asked about the significance of religious festivities. This is framed as ‘merit-making’, or doing and receiving good (*twer bon baan bon*) which accumulates merit (*bunn*) and will bring manifest rewards in this life and/or the next one (Ledgerwood 2008, 149). Gift giving also influences the understanding of ‘right livelihood’ and appropriate uses of wealth (Kim 2011, 166). In Cambodian villages, thinking in generic terms about the Pagoda as a ‘social centre’ is insufficient because this fails to capture *why* collective action happens or how it is motivated. To illustrate I reflect on two religious practices (*bon Pka Prak* and *bon Dalien*). These festivities are engaged by villagers as material-semiotic forms in which ‘things’ and ‘concepts’ get connected (Lea 2013, 142), which is

significantly reflected in the way that spiritual outcomes (such as the accumulation of ‘merit’) is linked to economic ones.

Bon Phka Prak (a flower-money-tree ceremony) is a practice to raise money for maintaining Pagoda temple buildings and also local school buildings.⁴⁵ Villagers tie money to a wire tree ‘*according to their willingness.*’ Contributions can also include cement, timber and statues. People contribute in accordance with belief in *Dharma*, signifying moral laws and the fulfilling of duties that denote one’s place in the world in the present life cycle and in lifecycles thereafter (Jacobsen 2008, xvi; 75; 81-83). Besides the transcendent consequences of fruitful giving, villagers’ giving is also motivated by a more immediate concern with ‘*face and respect in the community*’ (Ledgerwood 2008, 155). In Cambodia, ‘face’ (*mukh*) is a salient cultural dynamic that shifts along an axis of shame and honour (Hinton 1998a, 101). It significantly drives participation in public events and ceremonies (people *show face* by participating), although the extent to which people with less status in community hierarchies ‘participate’ as opposed to ‘attend’ is an issue that troubles development practitioners (Knowles 2009, 71).



Figure 23: *Bon Phka Prak* (Money Flower ceremony) at *Wat Nokor Bachaey*

Through *bon Phka Prak* Cambodian villages have continually mobilised significant sums of money for Pagodas and schools. The NGO Kampuchean Action for Education have documented this in Kampong Cham where the donations that most households made collectively amounted to sums of money exceeding governments expenditures on education in the villages (Pellini 2005, 210). At the edge of Chonghuk Village, lies

⁴⁵ *Bon Phka Prak* commonly takes place at *Kâthîn*, the ceremony held after the monks have finished a three month retreat for intensive meditation and learning (*Chaul Vossa*) that takes place during the rainy season (Marcucci 1994, 165 n.1).

Angkor primary school. Here the extent of contributions to the school buildings is displayed outside (Figure 24). The principle is that everyone’s contribution, no matter how small the amount, is recognised and can help villagers to gain merit.



Figure 24: Recorded donations (some in USD and some in Khmer Riels) on display outside Angkor primary school at the edge of Chonghuk Village. More than 230 people are listed although not all are residents of the two villages.

Bon Dalien is the annual harvest festival.⁴⁶ It was first brought to my attention by Sat when he told me, in accordance with the animist beliefs that he mixes with Theravāda Buddhism, that he manufactures buffalo statues with soil and water in preparation for this festival. The statues are dedicated to local spirits (*Neak ta*) to seek protection for the whole community from bad spirits (*Preay beysach*), to ask for in (*som touek pliang*), more food cultivation and a good rice harvest in the next year. Perhaps resonating with the philosophical thrust of subjectivity in community economies scholarship, Sat’s reasoning is at once oriented towards personal and collective good.

⁴⁶ *Bon Dalien* is a term with three components. Zucker (2006b, 530) elaborates that ‘bon’ is the Khmer term for holiday or festival, ‘Da’ signifies an offering or rite for the dead, etymologically connected with a ‘protector,’ while ‘lien’ in this specific instance signifies a square area on which the offering is to be made.



Figure 25: Sat's animist practices: Clay bulls are dedicated to the *neak ta*, seeking a good harvest for the whole community in the next year

There is a lot of village pride in *bon Dalien*. Representatives of neighbouring villages are invited. The Monkhood and the Achar⁴⁷ are brought into the village and people find solidarity in their collective dedication of gifts to and summoning of ancestral spirits who are finally sent back by the Achar. At *bon Dalien* villagers also contribute rice from their harvest. The pooled rice is sold to develop or maintain village infrastructure. Given that villagers only yield one crop of rain fed rice per year, this is a highly significant demonstration of economic solidarity in Chonghuk and Veal Sbov. In a group discussion of *bon Dalien* at *Wat Nokor Bachaey*, I was informed that more than 18 million riel (\$450) was contributed toward building the road from the back of Veal Sbov that connects the villages to the Town. One of the Achar was at pains to emphasise that any contribution was welcome depending on people's harvest and personal budget, that '*sometimes they contribute rice in just one or two cans, sometimes they have paddy rice.*' In recent years, contributions of surplus were also used for the construction of the ceremonial centre in Chonghuk. Sat had largely orchestrated this, by mobilising villagers' donations of surplus rice along with labour and materials.

⁴⁷ Achar (visible on the right in Figure 26) are 'lay preceptors', males who have previously been monks, usually over the age of 50 with specialist knowledge. They can lead the chanting but their principles roles are liaising between the Pagoda and the village regarding festivities and ceremonies, announcing dates, schedules and so on (Hodges 2012; Kent 2003; Kobayashi 2008).



Figure 26: *Bon Dalien* Ceremony in Ampil Commune, February 2014



Figure 27: Chonghuk Ceremonial Centre built with resources mobilised through *bon Dalien*

3.4: Overview of solidarity

Section Three of this chapter illustrated that despite the lack of economic associational life beyond the family in Cambodian villages, some forms of economic solidarity endure for practical reasons. Even if *provas* has rescinded under the advancement of the capitalist economy and demand for monetised transactions, it still helps: poorer villagers to access the livestock value chain; precarious market vendors to sell their goods and other villagers to fit farming tasks between waged off-farm jobs. Associational life in Chonghuk and Veal Sbov is at a lower level than other villagers possessing farmers' associations that practice collective bargaining. But it is unclear whether this should be

attributed to the lack of intervention from an NGO or the proximity of the villages to the local markets in Kampong Cham Town. Both factors might be involved.

The main form of associational life is crystallised by religious practices and community leadership from the Pagoda. This raises some important points. While it seems that spiritual solidarity and economic solidarity sometimes go hand in hand, I argue that calling this definitively ‘social capital’ involves contentious assumptions. Spiritual interest in collecting merit and the desire for ‘face’ or honour are personal matters that show how contributions are made for quite specific reasons. The use of donations for maintaining the Pagoda and building the ceremonial centre signify religious practices to be both the means and ends of solidarity. School buildings are testament to the economic resources that can be mobilised, but extending this to all facets of community development is questionable. Informal welfare provision (in lieu of a non-existent welfare state), which I turn to next in Section Four, is yet another example of contingent solidarity within the villages.

Section Four: Care and welfare: diverse customary village practices

In Cambodia there is no welfare state to speak of (Lyne 2008; Norman 2011). This is partially due to budgetary constraints but perhaps in greater measure due to the neoliberal free market policies implemented in the 1990s which abandoned the state’s welfare role more or less entirely (Chandler 2008a; Springer 2009). In Veal Sbov and Chonghuk welfare needs are met by informal care practices at the village level. While some emergency health, food and education support programs for certifiably poor families are administered by NGOs,⁴⁸ I explore how most welfare needs are met through customary practices. Bringing some of these practices to visible attention can have a positive influence on affective registers, helping villagers to more readily see their community as a site of assets that can be mobilised to different ends, including perhaps

⁴⁸ One important safety net that cannot go unmentioned is the Health Equity Fund. This is a national policy whereby donor agencies partner with an NGO to administer payments for emergency public hospital treatment for the poorest villagers (those holding an ID Poor Card). In Kampong Cham the fund is managed by the Reproductive Health Association of Cambodia (RHAC 2015). In addition there is: occasional distribution of rice to the poorest villagers by the UN World Food Programme; food distributed to some of the poorest female-headed households by the LINGO *Spie-en* (translating as ‘The Bridge’), the local partner of a Dutch Christian NGO with the same name (The Bridge 2015). Thirteen children in Chonghuk and eleven in Veal Sbov were also given scholarships to help with the cost of keeping them in school, provided by BSDA’s ‘God parenting’ program for sponsored children in 2013.

a social enterprise that improves perceptions of the villages and enhances villagers' sense of wellbeing.

4.1: Customary practices of care and voluntarism

Data on customary practices of care was collected through the completion of 45 'Portrait of Gifts' questionnaires that hybrid research group members took into their villages. In a workshop prior to the *Pchum Ben* holiday, nine co-researchers were each issued with five questionnaires to take back to their village and collect data over the holiday period. This excluded Seanghath who did not reside in Chonghuk or Veal Sbov villages. Each co-researcher was asked to help the villager respondents to complete their questionnaire. Training on administering the questionnaires was provided in the workshop.⁴⁹

A tentative sample structure was drawn from commune level data (NCDD 2012) which shows that among the adult population across both villages:

- 23% are female between the ages of 18 and 35;
- 21% are male between the ages of 18 and 35;
- 20% are female between the ages of 36 and 60;
- 16% are male between the ages of 36 and 60;
- 10% are female over the age of 60;
- 10% are male over the age of 60.

In accordance with the age and sex profile of the villages, co-researchers were asked to target particular demographics (broken down in Table 1). Questionnaires returned were consequently representative of the age and sex of villagers according to the commune level data.

Table 1: Assignment for data collection via Portrait of Gift Questionnaires in accordance with village level demographics

Specification	Identified by
10 female respondents under the age of 35	Duol (4), SreyNit (3) and SreyPov (3)

⁴⁹ The decision to interview only 45 people (which was a relatively low sample of only 2.7% of the village population) was made 1) because qualitative depth of information was being sought and 2) because the capacities of the research team precluded a larger data collection exercise. Each questionnaire required (in theory) significant time to be spent with the villager completing it. Considering the co-researchers' busyness with *Pchum Benh* and their livelihoods generally, it seemed realistic to ask them only to return five completed questionnaires. In the case of Nuon who was unable to read, Kiev worked through the questionnaire with her and agreed to assist her with the data collection from five other villagers.

9 male respondents under the age of 35	Kosal (4), Kimhour (3), Sat (1) and Sreynit (1)
9 female respondents between the age of 36 and 60	Nuon (3), Kiev (2), Sreypov (2), Sreynit (1), and Duol (1)
7 male respondents between the age of 36 and 60	Kosal (1) Kimhour (2) Torn (2) and Sat (2)
5 female respondents over the age of 60	Kiev (3) and Nuon (2)
5 male respondents over the age of 60	Torn (3) and Sat (2)

The Portrait of Gifts questionnaires were designed to collect data about things that villagers care about and know about and the skills they have (see Appendix 2). Two sections in the questionnaire focused on practices of care for others including gift-giving, assistance with problems, practical help, children's care and elderly care. The data of interest here in relation to village level welfare provisioning is child care arrangements, elderly care including caring for older villagers who are taken ill, neighbourly assistance and assistance to destitute villagers.

4.2: Reporting the results

Child care: Most childcare arrangements are made within the family. Elderly relatives or the eldest child are relied on heavily by garment workers and some of the market vendors when they are working. There is a crèche at the garment factory which MEDTEC's have a duty to provide, but no staffs are employed to watch over children there and garment workers do not make use of it. Of the respondents, 20% provide childcare for 'other households', slightly more are female but men are also common providers. However, the data also suggests this childcare is most commonly provided to extended family rather than un-related villagers. Family-ties thus tend to pervade in childcare roles. Only four out of the 45 respondents said that they provide child care for non-family members. However, more than 25% of respondents had provided care for neighbours' children at times when they are taken ill, exhibiting quite substantial solidarity in this regard with other families (see Chart 1). This care tends to be provided to the greater degree by younger females under the age of 35, although on the whole the female/male ratio is not highly unequal.

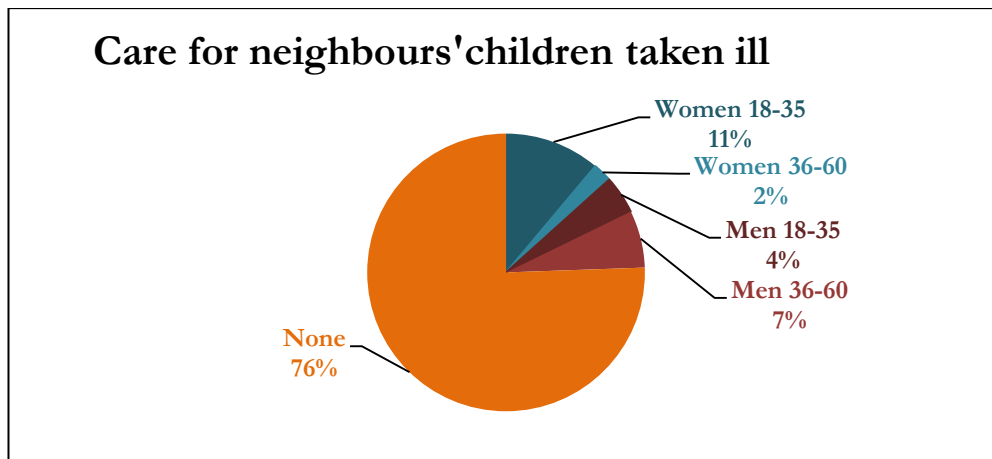


Chart 1: Care for neighbours' children at times when they are taken ill in Chonghuk and Veal Sbov Villages. N=45. Female = 23/ Male = 22.

Elderly care: More than 40% of the respondents have an elderly relative residing in their house. In lieu of any kinds of social services for elderly people, elder care is overwhelmingly a family obligation (Chart 2). Elderly villagers do not live alone. Invariably they live with their offspring or with nieces or nephews, but sometimes they are taken in by non-kin. Elder care includes the provision of meals, help with bathing and mobility, washing clothes, running errands and help with transportation. Men provide this care in slightly greater measure to women and the majority of women who provide it are under 35, possibly reflecting the demanding nature of some tasks or possibly the busyness of older women with income generation. On the whole, the fact that elderly villagers do not live alone shows that elder care is 'co-produced' at the household level. Villagers strongly uphold duties of care for elderly people however this does not extend beyond the household very much. Only two respondents said that they provide care for elderly people living outside of their house.

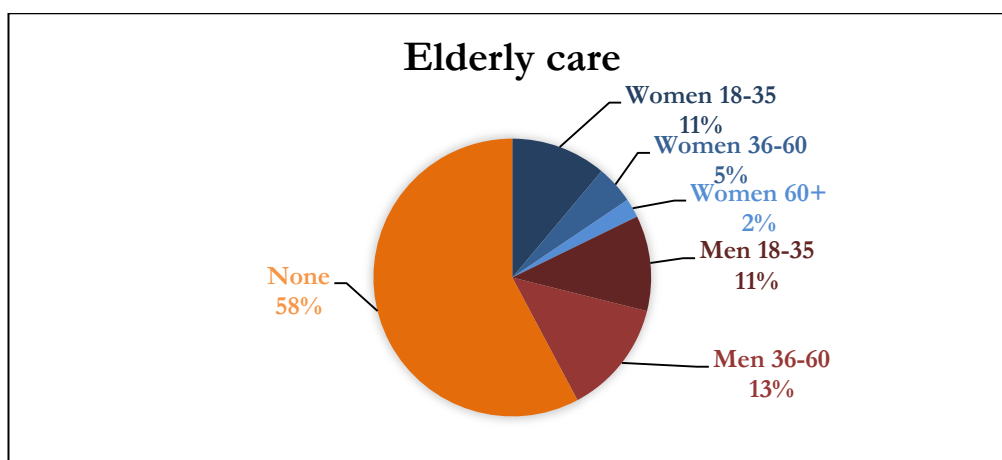


Chart 2: Care for the elderly in Chonghuk and Veal Sbov Villages. N=45. Female = 23 / Male = 22.

Caring for people with medical problems: Three quarters of villagers provide care for other people during times of illness. Women and men do this in almost exactly equal measure (Chart 3). Most of this is family care. This often involves traditional medicine and for the elderly, when sickness is worrisome, it involves prayer and house visits from a monk and the local Achar. Even though most customary care for the sick takes place in the family, nearly half of the villagers extend this help to neighbours on occasion. When sickness is worrisome, they step in to provide care if neighbours need to leave their house or they run errands that allow their neighbours to remain at home. This assistance is provided by women to a greater extent than men and it is most notably provided by younger women, although 41% of all men on the whole (9 out of the 22 respondents) also do this (Chart 4). This shows substantial solidarity between neighbouring villagers at times of crisis.

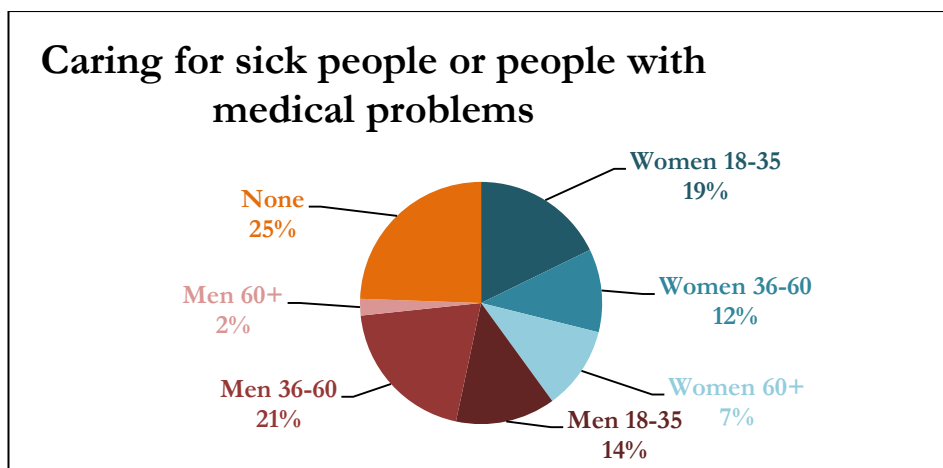


Chart 3: Care for people taken ill or people with medical problems in Chonghuk and Veal Sbov Villages. N=45. Female = 23 / Male = 22.

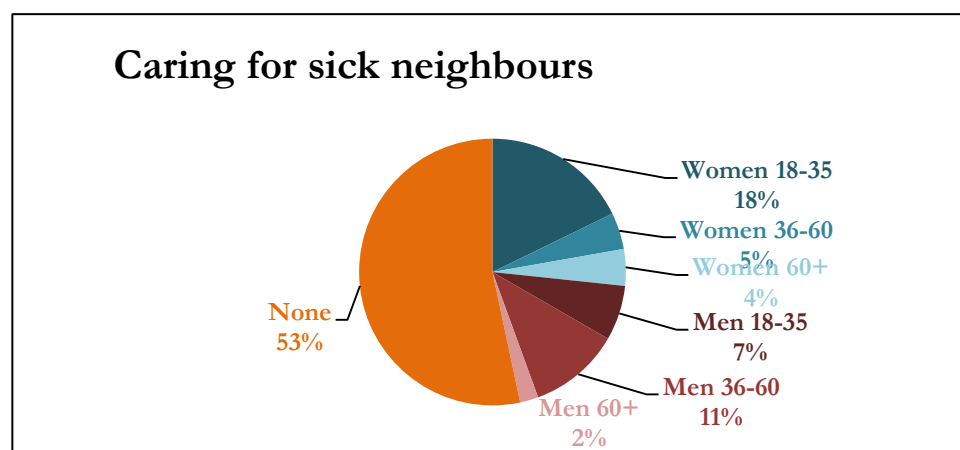


Chart 4: Care for neighbours who are taken ill in Chonghuk and Veal Sbov Villages. N=45. Female = 23 / Male = 22.

Neighbourly help and assistance to the poor: The amount of routine neighbourly assistance in the villages is unclear. Care for neighbours in sickness seems widely practised, but it is also viewed as happening in mainly exceptional circumstances. One highly exceptional instance is in the event of a funeral. At this time the majority of villagers can be readily mobilised to support a family with donations towards the cost of the funeral and also with labour. But in general there was scepticism about routine neighbourly assistance. This was reiterated in some of the group discussions when group members expressed that people are very busy with their livelihoods. However, aspects of support elicited in the portrait of gifts do provide some optimism. For instance 40% expressed that they occasionally helped other villagers with transportation or helped them with shopping. Younger women and males aged in the late thirties up to 60 years of age were doing this to the greatest extent (Chart 5).

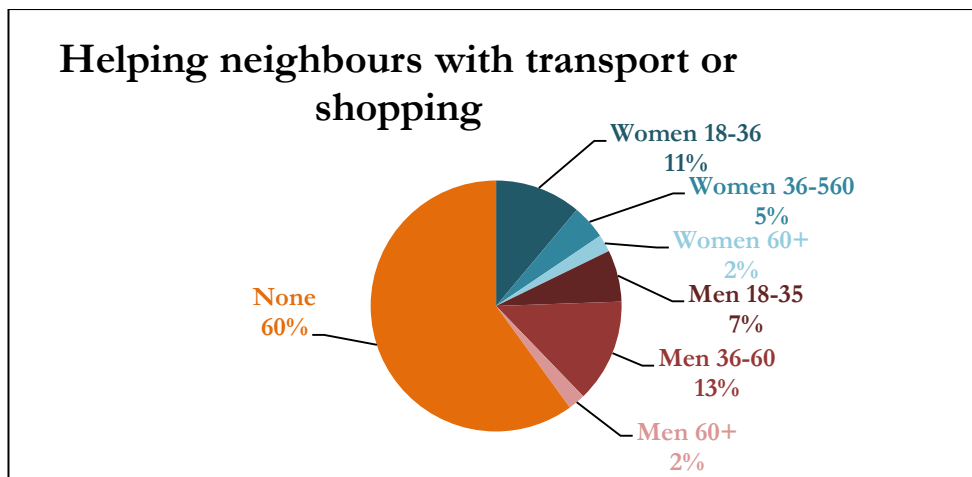


Chart 5: Helping neighbours with shopping or transport in Chonghuk and Veal Sbov Villages. N=45. Female = 23 / Male = 22.

One third of respondents have helped destitute families to build a house at some point (Chart 6). This assistance is provided in the space of one day. Some money will be raised for materials and labour will be mobilised to construct a very basic dwelling. In the initial round of semi-structured interviews, I was also told about this by five different villagers although I got the impression that this was only for those deemed utterly destitute and without relatives to help. A construction manager in his sixties said that this was emphatically the case on his part. Some beneficiaries of the practice have been families who have lost land due to debts, sometimes exacerbated by sudden illness, or who have arrived after being evicted from land in or near to the Town. While men provide this help to a slightly higher degree than women do, this help is also noticeably prevalent among younger women in the villages.

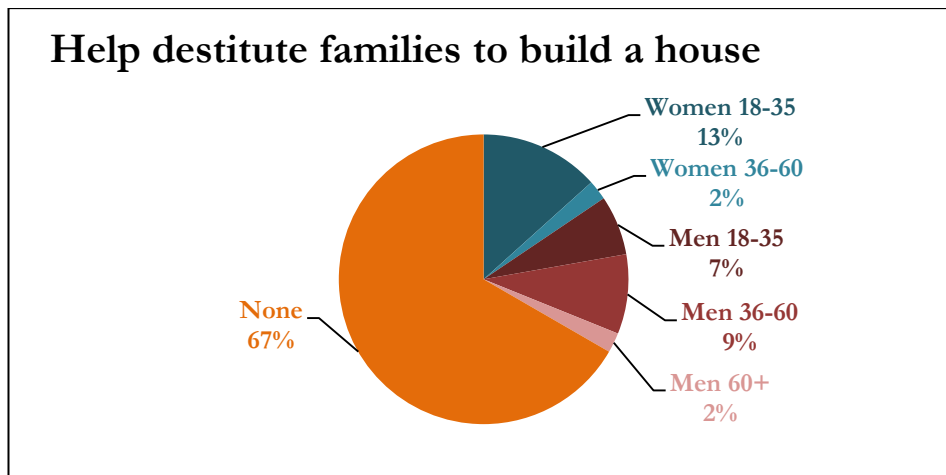


Chart 6: Helping destitute families to build a house in Chonghuk and Veal Sbov Villages. N=45. Female = 23 / Male = 22.

Nearly half of those who completed a questionnaire expressed that they gave charity to the poor. However, a lot of this is indirect giving that goes through the Pagoda firstly. In Theravāda Buddhist practice, the compulsion is not to give to the poor *per se*, instead it is to give alms to the monks. However, because generosity and compassion are highly valued as a means to acquiring merit, charity is encouraged if not exactly demanded (Pryor 1990, 344-345). Indirect transfers of welfare to the poorest villagers through the Pagoda, thus make more sense for the gift-giver who can accumulate the appropriate amount of merit from the gift transaction. *Pchum Ben*, the Cambodian festival of the dead (Kent 2003, 12), is an illustrative instance of indirect charitable giving. At *Pchum Ben* families dedicate food and gifts to the spirits of ancestors through the monks. Once the Monks have eaten each day, the poor collect surplus meals at the Pagoda. Venerable Kosal spoke about this on several occasions throughout the action research. By distributing surplus to the poor in this way, *Pchum Ben* recreates social order by the 'distribution of moral gifts' (Ledgerwood 2012, 202).

Spiritually, a successful *Pchum Ben* festivity absolutely depends on solidarity. The successful effort of the whole village, with dedications of food and gifts to ancestors, channelled by the monks as blessings, means *all* spirits are assisted, wherever possible, to a peaceful journey into their next cycle of reincarnation, life and death (Daravuth 2005; Ledgerwood 2012). The successful effort of the village requires a lot of coordination on the part of the Achar, who ensures that certain sections of the village attend at different times. *Pchum Ben* is thus, out of necessity an act of *spiritual solidarity* with other villagers. The village as a whole determines how well the spirits will be assisted. As Sat put it in a group discussion at *Wat Nokor Bachaey*:

‘At Pchum Ben all the spirits are together, if we do it in the **right way** the Ghost King can release all the bad spirits and protect our ancestors’ (Sat).

While charitable giving happens indirectly through the Pagoda and spiritual solidarity in the village is required for the ceremony to be successful, *Pchum Benh* does not however, seem to translate into direct acts of social solidarity between non-kin. In a group discussion just before the *Pchum Ben* holiday Nuon and Kimhour iterated that people only support family members with gifts, including money and clothing to ensure that they can make appropriate dedications and wear the correct dress at the Pagoda. Gift giving in this respect tends to be from younger adults to older ones. Sometimes gifts are also given by extended family members for the festivals, but in summary, as Davis (2011) writes, the idiom for reciprocity at *Pchum Ben* is *sach niet* – or ‘kin of the same flesh’ (332).

In summary, practices of customary care and charity suggest types of ‘co-production’ that meet different social needs. While this is a form of reciprocal solidarity, the contextual form it takes means there is a need for realism regarding whether this might be harnessed for other community development initiatives including social enterprise development. Religious merit making especially is typified, as also observed in other village settings (Kim 2011), by ‘intra-household’ relationships. As such, it sometimes involves extended relatives but very seldom unrelated individuals.



Figure 28: Pchum Ben festivities and ceremonies at Wat Nokor Bachaey, October 2013

Section Five: Market mechanisms and safety nets

Following Amin’s (2009b) attention to the ways that constituted social economies are situated in practice, what also needs to be sought out is the type of welfare safety nets

that are connected to market mechanisms. Furthermore, following the understanding that markets are not universal, value free institutions, how these safety nets really work in practice for the most vulnerable villagers also needs consideration.

Constant growth in the ‘market economy’ is credited as the greatest contributing factor to rapid poverty reduction in Cambodia over the past 15 years (Fukuda-Parr et al. 2012; Go & Quijada 2012). In Ampil Commune, Government data shows extreme poverty has fallen continually and rapidly from 27.6% in 2004 to 15.4% in 2012 (MoP 2012, 21).⁵⁰ But inequalities that have proliferated hand in hand with market forces in Cambodia (Un 2011, 558) have also made life worse for some of those who remain among the group that are, in development speak, the ‘poorest of the poor’ (Chandramouli 1991). The loss of fisheries when the local lake *Boeng Snay* was sold off in murky circumstances is one example. Moreover, beyond the 15.4% of extremely poor villagers, many more remain acutely vulnerable to poverty. This section looks at some of the most vulnerable villagers who rely on markets to survive – informal market sellers. I look at their circumstances and the feasibility of a standard solution to their problems – microfinance. I also proceed to consider the wider impacts of microfinance loans on village relationships.

5.1: Market welfare and vulnerability – selling to survive

A previous study in Kampong Cham Town, based on 2007 data, found that informal market sellers were literally *selling to survive* each day (Hak et al. 2009). In October 2013, I invited villagers who were sellers for at least 5 years to a group discussion. This was partly to see if their ways of coping could inform approaches to social enterprise development. It was also to explore if much had improved in their view. I found that little had. Conditions had actually worsened as trading became more competitive. The photograph of the main market *Psa Boueng Kok* (Figure 29) illustrates the competitive conditions. Sellers worked 7 days a week, starting as early as 4am. They seldom made more than 10,000 riels (\$2.5 USD) in profit and never more than 20,000 on a ‘normal day.’ Meagre 5% profit margins meant that every day they risked significant capital to make a living. They regularly lost money or went to other markets later to clear more produce. They made better money at festivities like *Pchum Ben*, Khmer New Year and the Chinese New Year but their rents were also higher.

⁵⁰ This is not the money-metric measure of the World Bank but instead a UN assisted measure which includes: expenditure; housing structure; transport; electricity; professional maternal care; latrines; education and child nutrition (MoP 2012, 4).



Figure 29: Informal market selling at the edges of *Psa Boueng Kok* in Kampong Cham Town

Considering market sellers are usually the main income earner (Hak et al. 2009, 8)⁵¹ in an average household of more than four people, their income barely kept their families out of poverty. They spoke of the difficulties of feeding children and keeping them in school when teachers charged money for classes. One woman, who despaired, explained that she lost money at least twice a week and that her working capital was being eroded. At the end of a bad day she had to clear her remaining fish at less than the wholesale price she paid to buy it. On one disastrous day she lost 150,000 riels. Other discussants sometimes laughed and joked, but she never did so once. They looked sympathetic when she spoke, seemingly aware of her circumstances. She was a widow with four children, bringing to attention the problems that are disproportionately faced by female headed households.

Hak, Oeur, Khuon & McAndrew (2009) found that the uncertain legal status of market sellers encouraged exploitation by market inspectors. They were routinely evicted or threatened with eviction if they did not pay extortionate taxes (*Pheasi*). They commonly had goods confiscated (10-11). Informal market sellers had since been supported by a human rights NGO, causing some improvement in sellers' security. Now their spaces were recognised with rent and fees set at 1,500 riels per day. But with formalisation also came other risks. The market authorities introduced changes which enticed the market inspector to confiscate a 'seat' that was vacated for a week without good reason. The 'seat' would be replaced a 'developed' one, consisting of a 1.2 square metre table and a chair, costing 600,000 riels per year. This was not a large increase on what sellers paid already over the course of a year, but the lease was now absurdly payable *8 years in*

⁵¹ Hak, Oeur, Khuon & McAndrew (2009) found 68% of informal sellers in the Kampong Cham Town markets were the sole or primary household income earner.

advance. As well as posing a risk to existing sellers, this also posed barriers to new entrants. Some villagers who sold in other places said that *Psa Boueng Kok* was full up long ago and that no space ever came available. But there was no doubt that the gentrification of this market was also keeping them out.

5.2: Microfinance: The market-based safety net for the poor in Cambodia

On National Highway 7 heading into Kampong Cham Town there are now 9 microfinance institution (MFI) branches (Figure 30), all within 3 kilometres of Veal Sbov and Chonghuk.⁵² Many development and social entrepreneurship scholars would see this as the foremost solution to market sellers' problems. When a micro-entrepreneur needs capital to enter a market or to grow a business this is precisely where a MFI loan comes in (Ghosh & Bhandari 2014, 50). More widely, it is also written that the transition of a small microfinance sector to a profit-driven industry brings new technology, better corporate governance and improved productivity (Bos & Millone 2015; Norman 2014; Tahir & Tahrir 2015). This should in turn lead to less risk averse MFIs that are more inclined to provide loans to the poor who were denied them in the past, thus helping to raise welfare levels (Lahkar & Pingali 2016).

At face value then, the widespread availability of commercial microfinance is a big step forward for villagers' economic opportunities. But assumptions that go with this, for instance that market sellers become micro-entrepreneurs through choice, are questionable. On the subject of informal entrepreneurship Williams (2007) makes a pertinent distinction between those driven by necessity on one hand and opportunity on the other. Of those I met, only Nuon had other work experience, briefly as a hotel cleaner.⁵³ Her market selling did at least provide a better income than that. Nuon was illiterate (but joined the hybrid research group and became a researcher in the villages nonetheless). She felt market selling was her only option without an education. In contrast to Nelson (1998 in Leonard 2000, 1076), who found in Columbia that informal vendors chose informal vending over formal waged employment, largely due to the dire consequences of redundancy without a welfare state, I found that market sellers in Kampong Cham were seldom entrepreneurs through choice. They were generally older.

⁵² I include ACLEDA which is has been registered as a bank since 2003 but nonetheless still makes most of its money providing microfinance products (Bateman 2010, 101-102; 2014, 16-17). ACLEDA was also the most widely cited microfinance provider in my interviews and discussion groups.

⁵³In Hak, Oeur, Khuon & McAndrew's (2009) study 80% of vendors had not known any other work, only 34% had completed high school and 18% had not attended school at all (8).

Younger women, who could do so, chose the garment factory. Informal vendors were, to repeat, *'selling to survive'*, faced with a lack of choices. Moreover, if they did chose informal vending, taking on a significant amount of debt to invest in this made little sense. Their incentive to invest was fundamentally undermined by their constant experiences of losing money.



MFIs on the highway from top left:

- 1) Kredit Microfinanc was founded by World Relief US which retains 27.8% of shares, the rest are held by Phillip Capital in Singapore.
- 2) Hattha Kaksekar Ltd. has equity investment from Oikocredit and Novib Mikrokediet fund (both in the Netherlands) and Norfund backed by the Norwegian government.
- 3) Ly Hour MFI is owned by private business individuals.
- 4) Sathapana Ltd. began as a community building NGO supported by the German Development Agency (GIZ). GIZ retain shares but the majority holder is MARUHAN Japan Bank Plc.
- 5) VisonFund Cambodia is owned and operated by the international development organisation World Vision.
- 6) ACLEDA started as an NGO for wounded soldiers. It is now the largest registered Cambodian bank but is still most well-known to rural customers as a microfinance provider.
- 7) Angkor Mikroheranhvatho Kampuchea (AMK) was founded by Concern Worldwide which retains shares. Other holders include Incofin Investment Management in Belgium and Agora Microfinance Partners in the UK.
- 8) PRASAC emerged from a project funded by the European Union, shareholders now include Dragon Capital Group in Vietnam and a Sri Lankan subsidiary of ORIX Corporation Japan.
- 9) Niron Mikroheranhvatho Plc. Little information is available. All share capital is held in Cambodia.

Figure 30: Microfinance institutions on National Highway 7, between Chonghuk/Veal Sbov Villages and Kampong Cham Town Centre

I did not meet many villagers who had used MFI loans for micro-business investment. Three sari-sari owners had done so. Three villagers, who sold grilled corn or fish in the Town, did so from street carts paid for with a loan. The fact that more did not choose this was largely due to the Town being already saturated with micro-financed street-food sellers. Construction managers used loans to buy building materials whenever they secured a contract. Some transport workers (tuk-tuk taxi riders or mini-bus drivers) may have used loans, but they were few in number. A neighbour of Kimhour – a high school teacher living in Veal Sbov who became a member of the hybrid research group – took the research group to Phnom Penh for the 3rd National Social Enterprise Conference of Cambodia in a minibus that he bought using microfinance.

The majority of villagers that I encountered with MFI loans were waged workers. This came to my attention when I met Kimhour who had taken three loans in the past. Construction workers took MFI loans to smooth consumption when work was scarce or to buy a moto-bike. In a group discussion with six garment workers, half had MFI loans. One had bought a moto-bike and finished his repayments. The situation of the other two astonished me. A female garment worker, aged 31 living in Chonghuk with her husband and 3 children, made repayments of \$190 per month to ACLEDA on a 24-month loan that she took to build her house. Repayments *were more than she earned*. Her husband's wages, also from the garment factory, completed the repayment and left \$130 per month – if they both worked 7 days a week. Another woman, 28 years old, lived with her husband and 2 children at the back of Veal Sbov on land rented from the Village Chief. She had two separate loans. Repayments of \$120 per month consumed 80% of her maximum monthly salary. For money to live on, she relied on her husband's construction work and chicken raising. Her first loan set the chicken raising venture up. Her most recent (larger) loan was acquired when the Village Chief vouched for her credit-worthiness to PRASAC MFI. This loan was taken to pay informal debts accumulated while her husband had been sick.

Overall it was unclear how 'productively' MFI loans were used. The amount used for livestock investment – another 'productive use' of MFI loans (Pum & Thun 2010) – was also unclear. Sat, the Veal Sbov Village Chief, was one of the 5% of cattle raisers in Chonghuk. He had never had an MFI loan. Kiev – the 50-year-old female health committee member who joined the research group – was one of only 3 pig raisers in Chonghuk. Her piggery was set up by BSDA with donations from US students, not with

microfinance. Other livestock raisers in Veal Sbov may have made more use of MFI loans for this purpose. But Kimhour's family who kept livestock (chickens and cattle) had not done so – their loans were for a new moto-bike and consumption. The garment worker living behind the Veal Sbov Village Chief appeared to be an anecdotal instance.

5.3: Informal borrowing and microfinance

My group discussion revealed that no garment workers could make their monthly salary last a month. In the week or more prior to pay day (the 10th of every month) they borrowed from family or friends. They frequently borrowed from informal private lenders. For smaller sums (*luy reap* translating as 'count money') private lenders charged daily interest. For larger amounts (*changkar prak*) one commented, 'if I borrow 10 I must return 12' – equivalent to traditional Asian 'five-six' moneylending (May-an 2002). The garment workers with MFI loans borrowed not just to make ends meet but also to make their monthly MFI repayments. Market sellers also relied on informal loans on bad days to avoid the erosion of their working capital that was needed for their next day of trading. All of this questions one of the core beliefs in microfinance as a social innovation – that it reduces the reliance of the poor on private lenders charging predatory interest rates (Alter 2006; Chowdhury 2009; Hartarska & Nadolnyak 2007; Vasimalai & Narender 2007). I found on the contrary that despite the competition from so many MFIs', informal lending was endemic and that both types of lending were actually inter-connected.⁵⁴

In Chonghuk, I spoke with a female University student of Business Management, in her family's well maintained garden outside a house larger than those of her neighbours. She had studied microfinance and spoke about it in purely positive terms, both as a business opportunity and as the foundation for community development. Becoming a local micro-credit officer was her resolute career path. She knew several ('more than five') micro-credit officers at the local MFI branches. She knew them because they were friends with her parents, who were well established private money lenders.

In Ovesen and Trinkell's (2014) ethnographic work on microfinance in Cambodia, they found that the local credit officer communicated with private lenders when villagers

⁵⁴ One study based on 2004-2011 data does find that informal private moneylending has generally declined due to the growth of MFIs (Pidé 2013). But other data from 2009-2014, shows the pattern is not linear and arguably inconclusive. In the years 2010 and 2012 private moneylending, as a share of lending overall, *increased* on the year before. In 2012 it notably increased to 19.4% of overall lending from 13.9% in 2011 (NIS 2015, 99).

loans were to be paid off. Private lenders provided *changkar prak* to smooth the villagers' consumption until a new loan was disbursed by the MFI. This kept villagers permanently indebted, but enabled the credit officer to achieve loan disbursement targets and maintain a cycle of salary bonuses (192). What I found, was a multiplicity of local credit officers from various MFIs who were friends with the main private money lenders in Chonghuk. Their daughter was, in all likelihood, highly aware of the opportunity to synthesise a credit officer's job with her parent's money lending, having seen how villagers' indebtedness works in both parties' interests. Ovesen and Trankell (2014, 191) also observe that informal lenders often source collateral from microfinance in the first instance. There is little doubt, given the friendly relations between this University students' family and numerous credit officers, that they did borrow at interest rates of around 2.5% per month from MFIs what they lend out in the villages at the five-six or 17% loan interest rate. Summarily, given the way that microfinance and private lending can be easily synthesised, the wider extent to which microfinance drives indebtedness merits strong consideration.

5.4: Village level lending institutions

In Veal Sbov and Chonghuk there were no institutions like the so called 'Village Bank', that is set up for non-collateralised group loans from MFIs. Angkor Mikroheranhvatho Kampuchea (AMK) provides such loans using a similar model to the Grameen one popularised in Bangladesh. However, I found in Veal Sbov and Chonghuk that the trust between villagers to run a Village Bank was low and also that nobody wanted to take responsibility for managing it. Consequentially, the only MFI loans taken from nine MFIs on the highway on the highway were individual ones, usually collateralised – requiring a land title. The requirement of collateral was consistently taken for granted and seen by several villagers as one of the most significant threats to their security.

The only thing that does resemble the village level saving groups in Veal Sbov is a *Ton Tien* (tontine) circle. *Ton Tien* is a saving and lending group. Contributors bid in each round to keep their personal payment and take a loan at an interest rate set by other members. Successful bidders become inactive in future bidding rounds but must continue to make their contributions (Liev 1997; Phlong 2009). Historically in Southeast Asia tontine games are not just financial instruments, but also '*a mechanism for strengthening the overall-solidarity of the village*' (Geertz 1962, 251). But there are also risks. Those who become inactive bidders following their making of a successful bid, may cease to

contribute in further rounds (World Bank 2006). Kimhour concurred with this experience. He ‘played’ *Ton Tien* with 20 other villagers, making a significant contribution of 80,000 riels per month.⁵⁵ In the past trust was damaged when some villagers did not pay and nowadays the only ‘players’ allowed to join his group were those with a regular salary. This shows that even though there may be potential to harness existing informal institutions in Veal Sbov in order to extend micro-credit, the emergence of exclusionary norms over time makes it questionable if social solidarity would improve significantly as a result.

Section Six: Concluding discussion: A diverse economy in Chonghuk and Veal Sbov Villages

Findings in this chapter are consistent with much contemporary literature on Cambodia that shows how advancing market forces have embedded waged labour and monetised transactions at the significant expense of other forms of livelihood including reciprocal exchange and access to natural resources (Hughes & Un 2011; Keating 2013; Krishnamurthy 1999; Meas & McCallum 2009; Padwe 2011; Slocomb 2007). In Chonghuk and Veal Sbov waged labour and the proliferation of microfinance overdetermine villagers’ interpretations of a *good* economic exchange for labour or goods and services.⁵⁶ Many of those who are excluded from the formal labour market become informal small-entrepreneurs (including market sellers) who depend on meagre and unreliable cash-profit margins for their day to day survival.

Some take encouragement from these changes. For example Colletta and Cullen (2000, 11-13) view the replacement of ‘traditional reciprocity’ with rigid cash-reciprocal relations as a signification of the ‘bridging social capital’ that is necessary for a ‘developed modern economy.’ From this point of view, reciprocity becomes reinterpreted, via cash, as a step towards capitalist entrepreneurialism and villagers’ empowerment via their inclusion in the market place. Microfinance is exemplary in this respect. It provides a gateway for villagers to enter into the market economy as

⁵⁵ Kimhour repeatedly used the word ‘*play*.’ This is consistent with the calculated component of members bidding behaviours and their prediction about how others will take part based on their circumstances (Liev 1997). As Meas (1995, 16) writes, *Ton Tien* is ‘*half game and half business*.’

⁵⁶ The electrification of the villages and introduction of private water supplies in recent years, addressed in more depth in Chapter Eight, are also developments which compound villagers’ need for monetary revenues.

entrepreneurs. Microfinance increases the circulation of money and therefore also the supply of potential consumers for the products that micro-entrepreneurs make or sell. In summary, it is argued that microfinance empowers villagers as entrepreneurs and consumers in markets that give them more choice and efficiency in their transactions than barter or traditional exchanges (Clark 2006; Prasso 2001).

Views that I encountered during interviews with villagers and group discussions with garment workers and local construction workers, appear to lend support to this particular empowerment thesis. They see traditional kinds of exchange as burdensome in general. Making money to support the family is a more straightforward affair. *Provas* has declined because – to repeat the words I heard on numerous occasions – ‘*villagers are smarter now.*’ I also found, however, that while microfinance would otherwise be considered a central constitutive component of a social economy in social enterprise literature, it has mixed effects and mixed levels of utility depending on the vulnerabilities of villagers.

The question this raises is how the lubrication of the cash economy (through microfinance and waged labour, particularly in the garment factory) impacts on the likelihood for social enterprises to emerge at the grassroots village level. The rigidity of cash-reciprocal relations and decline of other transactional means for mobilising resources is detrimental to community-led social enterprise development when one considers the long-standing consensus that social enterprises mobilise under-used *non-monetary resources* by harnessing good will, social reciprocity and networks (De Cuyper et al. 2015; Di Domenico et al. 2010; Gardin 2006; Haugh 2005a). This can otherwise be called the enactment of diverse economic transactions (Gibson-Graham 2006b; 2008a; Gibson, Cahill, et al. 2010).

On closer inspection however, there is much in Veal Sbov and Chonghuk that could be promising vis-à-vis social enterprise development. I started out this chapter by expressing that village economies in Southeast Asia, despite the advancement of the capitalist economy and market transactions, are not inherently capitalist. Following Amin’s (2009b) articulation of the situated social economy, I have documented diverse practices in Chonghuk and Veal Sbov that are constitutive of the social economy as it stands. All of these practices have economic value. They sustain livelihoods and co-produce welfare. Practices of care and voluntary labour also reveal that unpaid labour co-exists with contractual formal waged work and less regular waged work. Volunteering

is mobilised for tasks including road construction and maintenance of the Pagoda buildings, school buildings and building infrastructure such as the ceremonial centre in Chonghuk Village. There are also forms of labour that gain payment in alternative ways, either through self-employment among those excluded from the local off-farm labour market, or through self-provisioning of vegetables, rice and livestock, which can be considered part of a 'livelihood portfolio' (Rigg et al. 2004).

Following a framework used in CE scholarship, which dislocates economy from 'the naturalized hegemony of the capitalist economy' (Gibson-Graham 2006b, 60) I have made use of a 'diverse economies inventory' in Table 2. The inventory reframes all manner of economic phenomena ranging from activities (such as childcare or housework) to enterprising forms and also economic subjects themselves who act with multiplicities of reasoning (73-75). The diverse economies inventory can be used to disaggregate whole local economies, making more visible the diverse elements of a potential resilient, transformational economy that sustains livelihood and promotes wellbeing in different ways (Gibson, Cahill, et al. 2010). The inventory has also been used to render all of the assets that might be harnessed in the development of community-based social enterprises more visible. These types of social enterprises can provide alternatives to the common types of subsistence and self-employed labour found in rural communities, thus helping to diversify and strengthen local economic development in this context (248).

Table 2: A diverse economies inventory of Veal Sbov and Chonghuk

Transactions	Labour	Enterprise
<p>Market</p> <p>Goods: Fertilisers; groceries; clothes; household goods</p> <p>Services: Water; electricity; mobile telecommunications</p> <p>Credit: 3 banks and 9 micro-finance institutions on the highway</p> <p>Leasing: Mechanical plough (<i>ko-yon</i>); land for rice cultivation.</p>	<p>Paid</p> <p>Factory workers; construction workers; government employees (teachers, police, military, civil service); NGO field workers and micro-finance credit-officers; petrol station attendants; migrant workers sending remittances back to families</p>	<p>Capitalist</p> <p>Manhattan Industrial Park; Bottled water company</p> <p>Merchants: 1 retail trader with employed staff</p> <p>4 construction managers who hire staff</p> <p>1 moto-bike repairer with hired staff</p> <p>Petrol station on National Highway 7</p>
<p>Alternative Markets</p> <p>Local trading: Toiletries; second hand clothes; bottled petrol; snacks; fruit; bottled water and other drinks; incense; CDs and DVDs</p> <p>Alternative credit: <i>Ton tien</i> – rotating saving and credit; food on credit for catering and festivities; BSDA interest free business loans for training graduates</p> <p>Underground market: Drugs; moonshine; illegal timber; stolen goods; bribery, extortion and service fees; police fines</p> <p>Alternative currency and barter: None that villagers could readily identify today</p>	<p>Alternative Paid</p> <p>Self-employed: Market sellers; moto repairers; moto-taxi riders; carpenters;</p> <p>Self-provisioning: Subsistence farming and livestock</p> <p>Reciprocal: <i>Provas</i> – reciprocal labour of different kinds</p> <p>In kind: Sharecropping rice paddy; free rice milling in return for keeping rice husk</p> <p>Indentured: Migrant work involving debt bondage and repayment of agent fees</p>	<p>Alternative Capitalist</p> <p>BSDA dance performances at weddings and ceremonies where the manager earns commission</p> <p>BSDA gift shop where an assistant earns commission on sales after dance performances for tourists</p>
<p>Non Market</p> <p>Household flows: Sharing (<i>chek romleg</i>) - share food; share clothes (especially around ceremonies); help each other (<i>chuey khnie</i>) - neighbours in sickness;</p>	<p>Unpaid</p> <p>Volunteering: At festivities (washing dishes, cleaning); restoration and maintenance Pagoda or the ceremony centre; village health committee;</p>	<p>Non Capitalist</p> <p>Communally run business: Music band for weddings</p> <p>Social enterprises: BSDA social enterprises -</p>

<p>child care and children's education</p> <p>Charity to the poor: <i>chuey niak krey keror</i>: Build basic shelter for destitute others without relatives (rare); distribute food to the poor after festivities</p> <p>Donations and gifts: <i>Pechai buon</i> - ceremony for a house; rice after Harvest (<i>bon Dalien</i>) to raise funds for community infrastructure; money and materials for funeral assistance</p> <p>Religious obligations: <i>Luy pka</i> - donation for work on the pagoda, school or ceremony centre at the annual 'money flower' ceremony; <i>kathena</i> - take alms to the Pagoda after the raining season; <i>pchum ben</i> - festival of the dead.</p> <p>Religious flows: Blessings (<i>choun po chey</i>) and merit (<i>bunn</i>) for villagers in return for alms and donations</p> <p>Lending: Bicycle; motorcycle (rare); tools; cow for ploughing (rare); loan of bamboo to be returned upon the harvesting of one's personal crop;</p> <p>Theft: Livestock theft; land grabbing; stealing motorcycles</p>	<p>road construction</p> <p>Housework: Cooking, cleaning, child care and teaching</p> <p>Helping others: help with funerals; connecting electricity to a house; help with shopping and transport</p> <p>Care work: Looking after the elderly; care for people during illness</p>	<p>language schools and <i>keroma</i> scarf weaving</p> <p>NGO projects: BSDA 'Mekong Kampuchea Kids' vocational training; BSDA HIV and drug awareness project; Kampuchean Action for Primary Education (KAPE) scholarships and school support;</p> <p>Lapsed NGO projects: WATERSHED subsidised latrine program; <i>Spie-en</i> chicken raising program.</p> <p>Independent producers: Rice; vegetables; poultry, pigs and cattle; barbecue skewers; jewellery;</p> <p>Independent traders and family business: 3 sari-sari outlets; 4 family run cafes; CD and DVD shop; 2 barbers/hairdressers; 2 catering companies; 1 wedding beautician;</p> <p>Feudal: Tenant farming arrangements</p> <p>Organised associations: Pagoda association</p> <p>Other associational life: Management of the vegetable gardens Chonghuk accessible to 6 families; teams formed for land clearance labouring; <i>ton tien</i> credit circle</p>
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The inventory in Table 2 more fully sets out the myriad forms of transacting, labouring and enterprises in Chonghuk and Veal Sbov that are commensurable with diverse justifications for actions, diverse processes of economic negotiation including diverse ways of appropriating surpluses. It extends the data shown in Figure 14 at the beginning

of this chapter, which only addresses peoples' diverse pursuits of livelihood. The diverse economy inventory accounts for economic phenomena that emerged in interviews, workshops and group discussions and also from my observations throughout the fieldwork.

One of the main reasons for compiling an inventory of the diverse economy, is to map out the possibilities for multiple pathways for local economic development. By bringing together the diverse forms of and reasons for villagers' labour, alongside diverse ways of transacting and the diversity of constituted enterprising forms, it is possible to broaden economic subjectivities somewhat. What seems particularly promising, is that despite the ways in which social solidarity has changed, solidarity has proven to be resilient in religious practices which meet *personal and collective needs at the same time*. In my view this supports the articulation that it is within the *spaces* between people that their interdependences are negotiated (Gibson-Graham 2008a, 623; Miller 2013, 521). While elsewhere this might focused upon more directly as negotiated economic interdependence, the context here is negotiated spiritual interdependence which is a mobilising force for not-for profit undertakings. It is an instance where 'concepts' and 'things' meet with tangible economic outcomes that constitute the basis for wellbeing in a variety of ways that people partially have in common.

These are instances of community in practice, or enacting of the social, that profoundly affect villagers' economic subjectivities. I turn to economic subjectivities in more depth in the next chapter of the thesis, through the analysis of other exercises that resonate with the diverse economies inventory. This includes discussion of group members' deliberations over the Portrait of Gifts and also asset mapping which brought the possible use of diverse assets into closer focus. It also includes a field visit which gave research group members' more reason to think about the potential enactment of diverse enterprising forms within the villages and a visit to the 3rd National Social Enterprise Conference of Cambodia.

Chapter Five: Action research and subjectivities

Section One: Introduction

If community development is to be equated with community empowerment, then it is likely to involve ‘a strategy or technique for the *transformation of subjectivity* from powerlessness to active citizenship’ (Dean 2010, 83 my emphasis). Subjectivity can be succinctly described as people’s thoughts, both conscious and unconscious, and their ways of relating to the world around them (Weedon 1987, 32-33). Subjectivity is not then merely one’s identity, it is the basis on which agency is exercised. Community development that employs a post-structuralist action research approach recognises that subjectivity is often in flux and never stabilised (Cahill 2007; Cameron & Gibson 2005b).

During Phases 1 and 2 of the action research (between late August and Mid November 2013) in Veal Sbov and Chonghuk Villages I embarked on a series of experiential exercises with the hybrid research group. These exercises were targeted at bringing active subjectivities into being or making extant active subjectivities more prominent. Iterative group discussions harnessed dialogue across positions of difference, as a way to are designed to represent group members and their community in new ways. This included needs and assets mapping, and activities designed to help group members see themselves as researchers. Additional activities aimed at embodied learning included a field visit to BSDA and a visit to the National Social Enterprise Conference of Cambodia in Phnom Penh.

In these exercises knowledge was not approached as a ‘reflection of reality’. Instead I sought to generate enactive or ‘actionable knowledge.’ Beyes and Steyaert (2011, 110) call this a ‘constellation of encounters’ that enacts the social. Or in other words — drawing from Gibson-Graham (2002, 97) — knowledge is a *social process* with more value lying in its particular effects than its concrete accuracy. I propose that actionable knowledge was generated and that new subjectivities did materialise during the second phase of the action research cycle. Satisfaction with certain aspects of the research

endured beyond this point, however new subjectivities were not finally embodied enough for the group to accept the credibility of collective forms of social enterprise.

This chapter will show that subjectivities were collectively negotiated along the lines of needs, deficits, desires, and performative forms of knowledge (that I also contributed towards). The processes involved in the first two phases of the action research are addressed in a way which shows *the social* to be constantly in motion. The social is enacted through performative research that brings subjectivities into being as much (or more so) through bodily encounters as it does by linguistic means. The chapter focuses on group members' senses of anticipation and excitement – or affect. It explores how group members negotiated tensions between emerging (or amplified) active subjectivities and reluctant ones as they contemplated strategies (including social enterprise development) to secure their livelihood and improve the community.

Section Two: Documenting a community in need

Needs and asset mapping was developed as an ABCD tool by McKnight and Kretzmann (1993, 3-7) as a way to challenge the deficit understanding of community. What is identified as a problem in the first instance (through needs mapping) becomes reframed as something useful to the community on closer inspection (through asset mapping), generating the experience of moving from a sense of lack to a sense of possibility (Cameron & Gibson 2001, 7-10). This exercise was undertaken in an early Phase 1 workshop.

In the first instance needs mapping gave the representation of a 'disadvantaged community', commonly typified by spatially located needs, mistrust and malaise (Amin 2005; Cameron & Gibson 2005a). Out of three categories (Business and Physical Resources/Local Associations and Institutions/People and Practices) by far the greatest attention was paid to Business and Physical Resources (see Figure 33). Villagers could not compete with economic competitors elsewhere and meagre business opportunities led to seasonal outmigration that impacted negatively on family life. Even successes such as the instillation of electricity and reliable water sources were viewed negatively, as they had no utility for agriculture.

The needs map resonated with a deprivation-deficit discourse that was discernible in the prior semi-structured interviews that I conducted in preparation for the action research project. Deprivation-deficit is a model of development where ‘success requires arguing that your area is more deprived and dreadful than the next’ (Ouseley 2001, 11). During interviews Chonghuk respondents said that villagers elsewhere have larger plots of land. Veal Sbov respondents said other villages have better soil and cheaper water. In short, other places were viewed as comparatively advantaged, and deprivation-deficit became a mode of thought that made redistribution from outside of the village a prior necessity to any constructive exercise of agency.⁵⁷ The group’s intersubjective narration of the economy in the first group discussion also bore this out. Following the way Seale (2004, 14, 508) describes intersubjectivity, group members arrived at a *partially* shared and mutually understandable sense/story of the present (economic) situation. In this discussion, things regressed in a mostly linear synergistic fashion following the NGO worker Sreypov’s preliminary statement - *‘I think the economy is great.’* Duol said *‘the local economy in my village is average.’* Kiev backed still further from Sreypov’s assessment, stating that *‘resources are insufficient and narrow’* although *‘people try hard and sell more in the markets now.’* Kiev showed that villagers are not passive but do they operate under constraints. Optimistic avenues opened when Kimhour expressed the desire to focus diversifying the village economy, which he labelled as *traditional*, concluding *‘I want to experience it from new idea.’* But this opportunity receded when Sat took a backwards step, saying:

‘... we would like to talk about how to improve our business but we still have the lack of capital for investment, lack of seed for plantation, lack of technical support, insect disturbance... the rice became really dry and damaged last year. We seek for financial and more technical support’ (Sat).

⁵⁷ This reading of deprivation-deficit borrows from ‘cultural deprivation/deficit theory’ coined by Henry Giroux (1997 in Diaz 2007, 50) to show how educators label particular groups as beleaguered and absent of enriching experiences. While marginalising groups further, educators also get positioned as their saviour. I extend this to the international development industry in Cambodia where similar effects are described in readings of the political economy of aid and institutionalised aid dependency (Ear 2012b; Hughes 2009a). This also plays out in village level dependency on projects, whether they be administered by government agencies or NGOs (Courtney 2007; Thomas 2005).

Deprivation-deficit is arguably compounded by embedded networks of patronage that create saviours and loyal constituencies. Despite budgetary decentralisation, and in partly because of the ways in which decentralisation is co-opted by the ruling Cambodian People’s Party, patron politics endures in the form of neo-patrimonial development. This form of patronage renders schools, health centres, roads, irrigation and the maintenance of Pagoda buildings as ‘gifts’ from political elites and their associates (invariably business tycoons) rather than the Government’s discharge of its functions (Hughes 2013; Strangio 2014; Thavat 2010; Turner 2013; Un & So 2011). This mode of development, residing between tradition and modernity actually, has longer history stretching back into the Sihanouk era (Ayres 2000b; Chandler 2008b) that lends justification to Cambodian People’s Party leadership who legitimate practices by presenting them as ‘authentic cultural practices’ (Hughes 2013, 151).

Nuon repeated Sat's words almost identically before Kimhour landed the discussion squarely back at deprivation-deficit, commenting that:

'...the business opportunity in other places is better. They have more chance... because they have irrigation system, water stock' (Kimhour).

This discussion is one among numerous instances where desire was awakened but quickly shut down, typifying the simultaneous challenge and opportunity that desire presents. On one hand, as Graham, Healy, & Byrne (2002) put it, *'fantasies and desires are not illusionary but are the medium through which subjectivity is constituted and maintained.'* On the other hand, desire, meaning *'lack of being'* and perhaps the opposite of enjoyment (Braunstein 2003, 102-103; Fineman 1988, 90-91), might not be conducive to a positive affective register. As it is in this instance, the sense of lack and impossibility wins out signifying that the perceived deficit of institutional support compared to more favoured villages with better links to authority (read patron) figures is deeply embedded.

In the needs mapping exercise, identified deficits related to Local Associations and Institutions to a lesser extent than other categories. This may be simply due to the absence of institutions altogether beyond the Pagoda, local schools or health centre (as addressed in Chapter Four). Notably no issues were raised with corruption, despite the focus on it in a prior group discussion. Perhaps members did not want to mention it. Or perhaps it was not viewed as a problem but instead as a routine part of life, embedded in people's exercise of power. As Ledgerwood (2007) notes in Cambodia, power and morality are separate issues. The problems/needs that were identified lay not so much with existing institutions, but instead with community dynamics that inhibit new institutions from emerging. This included lack of trust and reluctance to assume responsibility for anything outside of the household. This overlaps with entries in the category called 'People and Practices' where lack of socialising was lamented alongside lack of solidarity with villagers in need. Help with construction always came at a price, *in cash*. Help with transport was hard to find. Theft was touched upon ambiguously in terms of 'things go missing.' After this exercise, group members claimed they could do little to improve their economic situation: their community was inferior, villagers were too busy surviving to participate or care for non-kin and they did not trust each other.

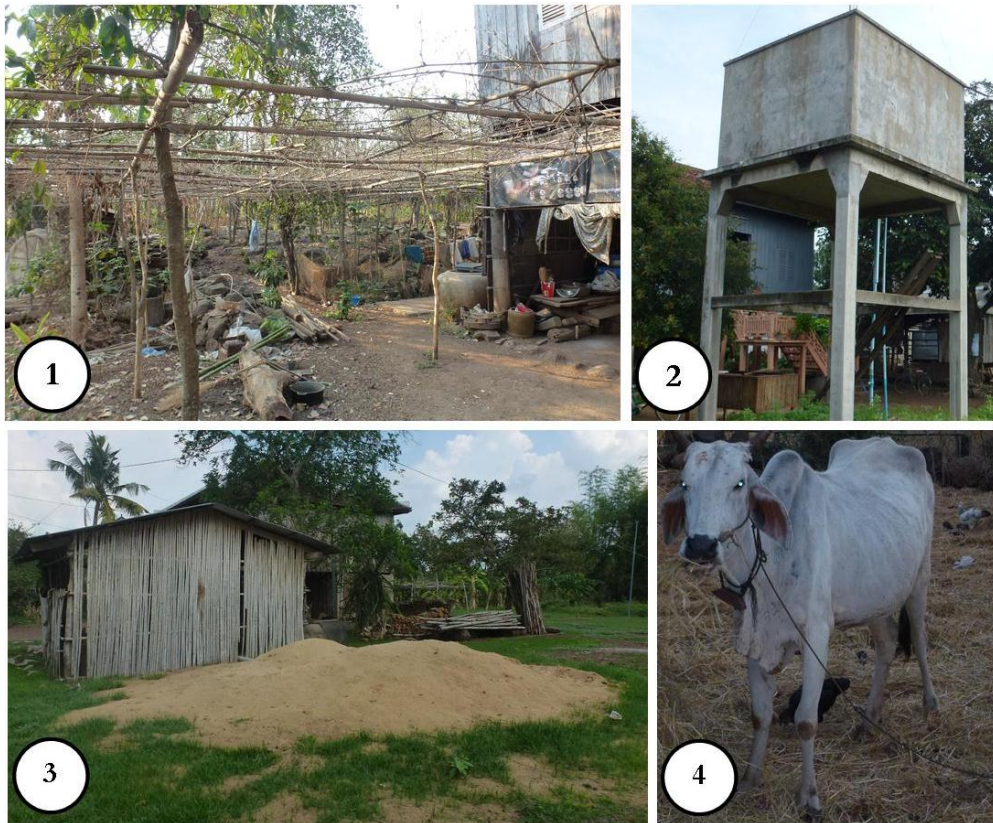


Figure 31: Representations of a needy community. Picture 1: Baron vegetable garden in the dry season; Picture 2: Private water is cost prohibitive for vegetable gardening; Picture 3: Rice milling facilities are not modern; Picture 4: Larger livestock are hard to feed in the dry season.



Figure 32: Representations of a needy community: Picture 1: Veal Shov is quiet in the dry season with high outward migration; Picture 2: Vending brings meagre incomes, stalls are abandoned (at the front) and vendors in the background have few customers.

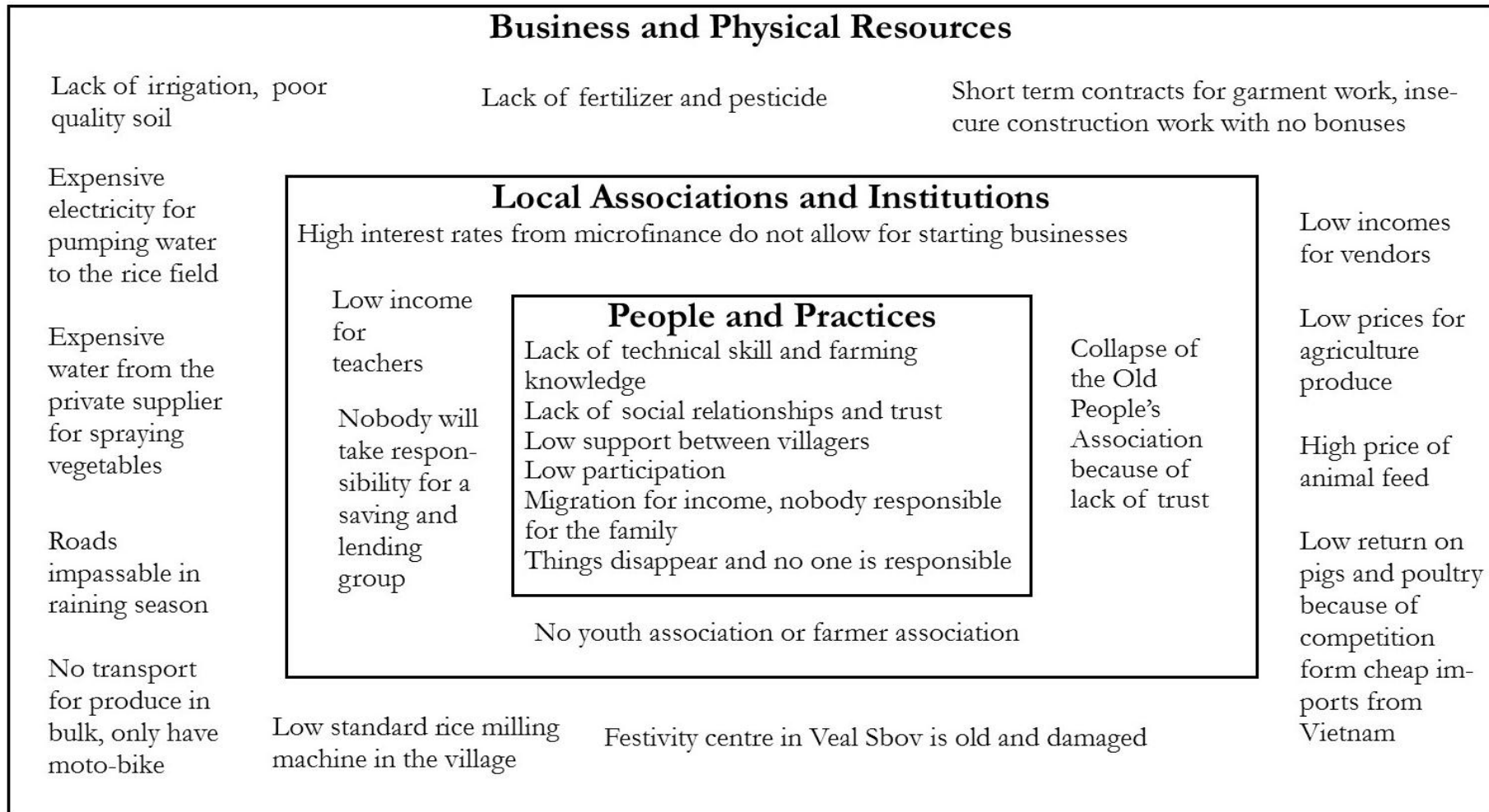


Figure 33: Needs map in Chonghuk and Veal Sbov. 1st hybrid research group activities workshop, September 3rd 2013.

Section Three: Identifying assets: The beginning of a journey

In contrast to the needs map, the group's creation of an asset map (Figure 35) led to more conversation points than the needs map did. There was also more even distribution of entries between the categories 'Business and Physical Resources' and 'People and Practices.' Agriculture and subsistence were the first things mentioned. While most households only had a moto-bike or bicycle, there were five mini-bus owners and perhaps ten families with cars in the two villages. Discussion consequently moved from the needs map where lack of transportation (beside moto-bikes) made business difficult, towards talk about how such vehicles might be mobilised. Statements about lack of skills also turned into a recognition of a lot of different skills and local knowledge. The rate at which villagers adopt new technology was discussed. For instance, use of a mechanical plough (*Ko-yon*) prior to rice transplanting was now pervasive in the villages. A family business in Chonghuk also repaired excavators and other heavy construction equipment.

The category 'Local Associations and Institutions' was also well populated compared to the needs map.⁵⁸ Religious leadership from the Pagoda, community festivities and different obligations (particularly related to funerals) drove associational life and mobilised resources. The exercise led to optimism that villagers could take action to improve their chicken raising and important links were made between their community's assets. Their proximity to the markets was deemed advantageous. Water supplies were sufficient for poultry which could be fed with waste food or with rice husk from the milling machines (milling machines thus became assets as the focus moved away from their low quality). The focus on poultry raising is one illustration of the way that asset mapping identifies things that communities do quite well already and that might be built on further. Moreover, the view that assets might be mobilised for a *collective* purpose signified the tentative making of new economic subjects in a specific place.

⁵⁸ If microfinance institutions (MFIs) were counted among 'Local Associations and Institutions', then categories would even out considerably. But group members consciously listed MFIs as businesses and chose to list them as such. They did not associate MFIs with NGOs, despite their initial origins as such.



Figure 34: Needs and asset mapping: Chonghuk Village (top presented by Duol) and Veal Sbov Village (bottom presented by Kimhour), September 3rd 2013.

Combining assets in new ways is fundamental to a ‘regenerating community’ (McKnight & Kretzmann 1993, 6). Following this reasoning, the connections members made between assets allowed me to explain the premise of ABCD more clearly: the glass is half-full and, without denying needs exist, assets within communities already are often the initial basis for community improvement (Kenny 2011, 205-206). However, there was apprehension on this point. Kiev, just as she had expressed when I first met her, still felt that villagers are too busy to develop the community. Nuon expressed that people only want to help their families, just as she did also in during my first encounter with her. Sreyrov and Venerable Kosal arrived at a more optimistic assessment: *‘there is nothing to solve the big problems, but something small is possible to start with’* (Sreyrov). Venerable Kosal added *‘Once we try we have experience, and then we can improve things further.’* From this position, initial positive experiences can spur further effort, concurring with *momentum* in appreciative inquiry which is built on reinforcement and people’s bonding in the processes of change (Cooperrider & Whitney 2005, 53). On a cautious note Sat added that he had witnessed villagers become de-motivated when hopes amount to nothing or when they feel that their time has been wasted.

In the needs/asset mapping exercise, tension between active and reluctant subjectivities is actively induced by drawing a line between positive and negative feelings. Critics of strength-based approaches write that feelings generated by such events can be disempowering when participants submit to positive biases in a manufactured environment that is commonly weighted in favour of the facilitators' interests (Fineman 2006; Voronov & Coleman 2003). I argue however, that the performance of participants does not render their reactions un-authentic. What I saw was a 'to and fro' process between active and reluctant subjectivity. This tension shows that group members were not submissive. Instead they were making sense of the new positions that they were being invited to adopt. The challenge of performative action research in this context is not just to hold the space open for active subjectivity where it surfaces, but also to create circumstances that facilitate (as opposed to force) different subjectivities through new embodied experiences. With this in mind, I arranged a field visit to look at one of BSDA's emerging vocational training facilities – the Rice Fields Kids' Village.



Figure 35: Chonghuk and Veal Sbov have assets. Top – Businesses and skills include: pictures 1 & 2: catering at weddings; 3: repairing heavy construction machinery; 4: construction work; picture 5: villages have a social life before the dry season starts.

Middle - Pictures 6, 7 and 8: villagers are experienced at raising livestock; picture 9: vegetable gardening.

Bottom – Picture 10: villagers will help each other in the rice fields; pictures 11 & 12: they have fruit trees (coconut and papaya are shown); picture 13: Duol takes me to an open well in Chonghuk; picture 14: rice farmers have access to labour saving machinery such as the mechanical plough.

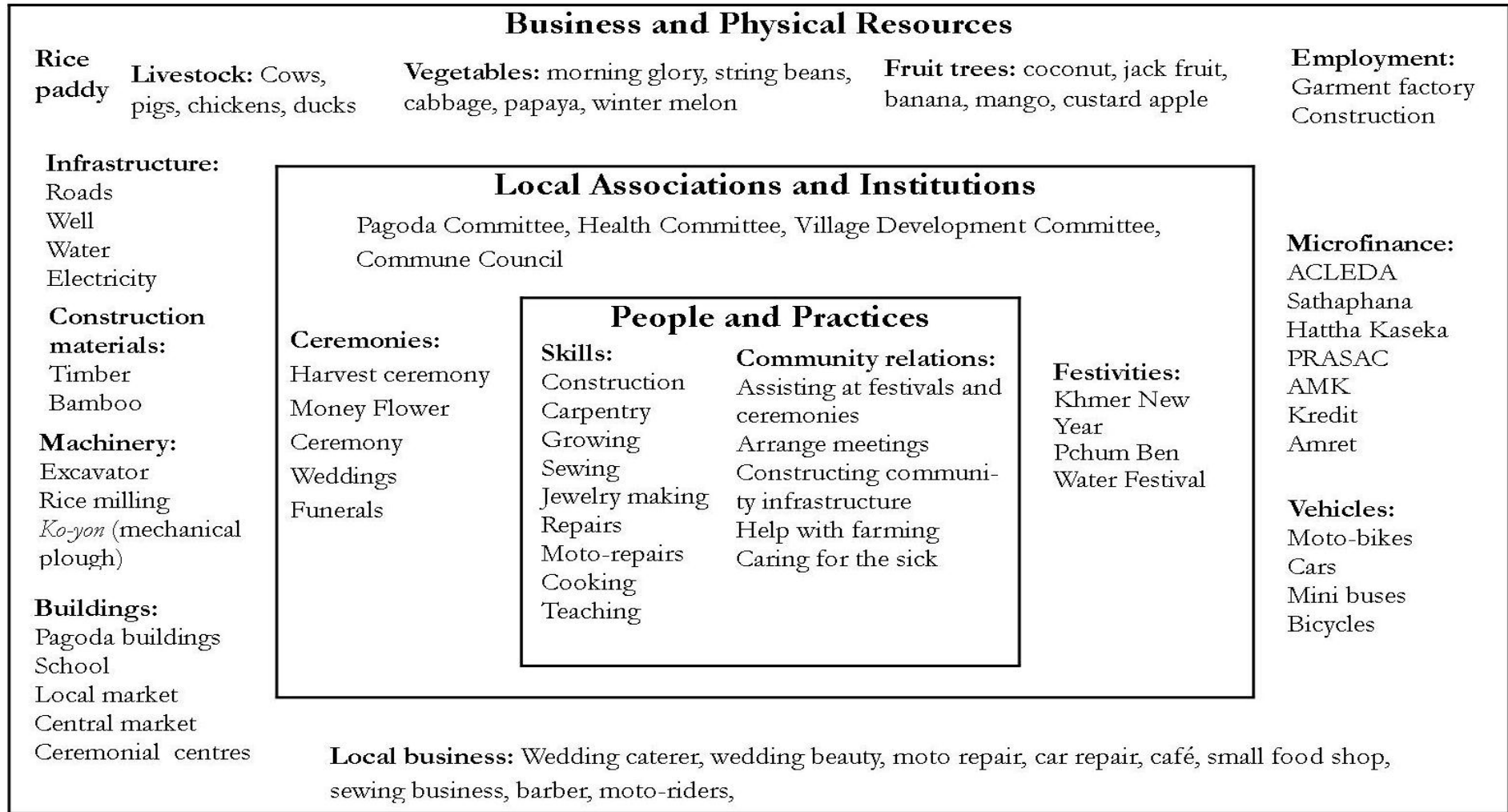


Figure 36: Asset map in Chonghuk and Veal Sbov. 1st hybrid research group activities workshop, September 3rd 2013.

3.1: Field visit to BSDA's Rice Fields Kids' Village

Field visits enact embodied learning through sensitivity, visioning and solidarity with others (Cahill 2008; Cameron et al. 2011). Field visits to view successful economic initiatives in action are also potentially a space for new forms of self-identification to take hold through people's simultaneous encounters with different subjectivities, including those of economic agents, community citizens and planners (Gibson-Graham 2006b, 131-132). The visit to the Rice Fields Kids' Village aimed to strengthen the group and the positive affective registers of members and also sought to develop clearer imaginaries for the use of documented assets.

RFKV sits on 2.5 hectares of land. When we visited, the front hectare accommodated finished (but as yet unused) dormitories and a kitchen and dining area. In use buildings provided a sewing training centre, computer classes, culinary training, space for scarf (*krōma*) weaving and accommodation for students (Figure 36). After 20 minutes taking in facilities and activities we listened to BSDA's Executive Director Vandong Thorn, speaking about the RFKV master plan. He set out a vision for an organic farm and tourist meditation retreat with a swimming pool and restaurant on land at the back, which would help to fund BSDA's community work. Vandong's vision represented the 'enterprising non-profit' view of social enterprise, where business is mainly enacted to substitute for donations and/or grants.



Figure 37: A field visit to the BSDA Rice Fields Kids' Village: Top: RFKV under development; Middle: visiting the weaving centre; Bottom: the sewing training centre

Vandong spoke optimistically about sourcing rice from local villagers and using rice milling machines in Veal Sbov. He talked about *'good networking'* and mobilising people's skills and resources for business in the community. In BSDA's interests this would *'reduce expenses and make higher income'* while the community would benefit from RFKV procurement: in Vandong's words – *'if I buy here I would help more people...'* Kimhour quickly grasped the implications, responding: *'We clearly understand after we can see the reality like this. What is being done is a process, it runs in a cycle'* (Kimhour). It did seem at this point, referring to Vandong, that an alternative narrative to the enterprising non-profit which was more attentive to community development lay beneath the surface. Much of the

group however, were less interested in Vandong's plans than they were in discussing the road under construction, out of the back of RFKV that will connect with National Highway 7. It was also clear that local villagers had been talking about this road for some time. Torn, asked if the electric lighting in the compound will be extended to the highway. He then asked of Vandong: *'I will ride in and out in the future. Can I? Can I travel through this shortcut way?'* (Torn).

Short-term interests, such as a connection to the highway that is safer after dark, did not eclipse community visioning completely. This was evident in reflection on the visit after lunch at BSDA's SMILE restaurant. This started in a light-hearted mood. Sat was captivated by the happiness of BSDA trainees and comments: *'There is no such a thing like this in some poor villages. We appreciate it so much.'* Sat was now moving away from the deprivation-deficit narrative to one of comparative advantages. Film footage (Figure 37) suggests a positive response to Seanghath's question as to whether people were happy with the day's events.



Figure 38: A happy reaction from group members in the post-field visit reflection

Critically, the resonance of embodied or enactive learning experiences with group members became apparent. Despite my prior efforts to communicate research objectives 'across cultures' (Altrichter et al. 2002), objectives were still not clear at all up to this point. Sat said that he did not understand the project after the first group

discussion and that he had wanted to stop. Now he felt happy to continue. Kimhour felt an incremental sense of ‘*understanding into the brightness*’ and proceeded to say that communication felt more natural in this setting: ‘*...today I could share ideas, could communicate. I think this is the development.*’ Kimhour had moved from a descriptive statement about the lack of understanding to a reconstruction of the spatially engaged *ways group members learn*. He made an eloquent further contribution:

Without trying first, we cannot know...Like we learn how to write the letter, if we don't start with the pen drawn out, how can we say we cannot write? That is my point. (Kimhour).

Kimhour’s view of *trying* before saying what is possible or not, is commensurate with enactive perspectives of community development (Rado 2014). Through ‘*trying*’, the learning subject is ‘a being-in-the-world’ whose ‘coming-into-being’ also immanently brings the world around the subject into being (Ingold 2000, 168). In other words, returning to Varela, Thompson & Rosch’s (1992) approach to embodied cognition, ‘structural coupling’ is the medium through which subject making and the enacted environment within which the subject dwells are codetermined (203-204). Afterwards Sreyrov says she also understands the project better. Nuon follows suit with comments doing similar work to Kimhour’s contribution:

‘Before I did not understand why he [Isaac] creates the team like this. In my heart I thought it is impossible... I am illiterate and think alone by myself. Before I think I cannot, but now possible means I can. I feel much brighter in my idea.’ She continues: *‘I can see a picture for the community improved. In the future grow vegetables, pig raising, chicken raising, duck raising. BSDA build swimming pool, new things...I imagine there are nice places’* (Nuon).

In Nuon the advance of self-confidence, despite her illiteracy, signified a concrete movement in her affective register. Nuon’s *stance* arose in-between having been acted upon and an emerging state of willingness to act.⁵⁹ She subsequently moved towards community visioning and the detection of an undeniably different future. Seanghath engaged emotionally, expressing that:

⁵⁹ I make claims about affect while recognising that some scholars might take issue with conflation of affect and emotion, the former being viewed as mobile and impersonal and the latter personal and constrained. I draw from Ahmed’s (2014) response, that affect does not so readily transcend emotion because emotions *do things* when they inspire movements to or away from other objects. Far from being reducible to ‘bodily space,’ emotions shape social space too (207-209). Perhaps another way of seeing this, is to say that Noun’s ‘stance’ has changed, taking *stance* as ‘both an emotional and an affective positioning of the self in relation to thought’ (Gibson-Graham 2006b, 1).

'I think that everyone has better understanding after we visit the field.... I am so pleased ...when we understand about it [this research] we can have an idea what business to start with and how to strengthen our communities.' (Seanghath).

Duol, who otherwise remained quiet, joined in saying: *'Isaac tries to teach...show how to open a new business in the community.'* Despite my strenuous emphasis that group members will learn more from each other than they can from me, the onus in Duol's view was still on *me teaching*. This is not to say that I could ever have positioned myself as *not a teacher*. Rather, in the hybrid research group, all members are ideally teachers with different knowledge. Duol's understanding, in all likelihood resulted from her prior education. Studies show that child-centred, active learning pedagogies in Cambodia continue to be constrained by teachers 'teaching from the front' and ubiquitous rote learning (Bunlay et al. 2010; Song 2015). Duol probably found a more active and engaged way of learning quite hard to comprehend.

Two matters are signified here. One is that the *feeling* of understanding the action research may not equate with an *actual* understanding of the research as I was trying to present it. Secondly, the expression by one group member after another that they felt better understanding, suggested a contagious performance whereby members were indeed submitting to positive biases and perhaps taking it in turns to say what they thought that I would like to hear. But as much as the reflection was positive, the reluctant subject was not far away. When I tried to keep community visioning going Kiev agreed the future can be different but did so from a passive point of view, expressing *'I like and appreciate the way he [Vandong] collects those drop out students who are unemployed and have nothing to start with.'* Kiev narrates a better future than the past to the benefit of the next generation of villagers, but not her own generation. Moreover, the phrase *collecting them* implied yet a form of patron-client relationship between Vandong Thorn and poor families in the villages. Torn meanwhile was impressed with the construction work at RFKV, he wanted to ride his moto-bike through the compound, but his final contribution was: *'I am very happy and follow the activities that Mr Isaac and Vandong Thorn support.'*

The data presented so far shows subjectivities were constantly ambivalent, typified by to and fro between the two '*yes/no*' or '*active/reluctant*' positions. Group members were not entirely submissive in the environment being generated. Instead they engaged with the action research on their own terms.

Section Four: Becoming researchers

Action research is research *with* people instead of being research *on* them (Altrichter et al. 2002, 130). Exercises designed to help group members to see themselves as researchers in their community were designed not just to bring the important role of research in community development to their attention, but more importantly to heighten the economic subjectivities that come with *being* researchers. However, the results were mixed.

4.1: The value of new information

Group members came to see value in finding out new information about each other. Some recognised themselves as people who already do some research and this led to the idea that they might do more organised research to improve the local economy. After one exercise, which involved members writing things down about their interests and regular activities in private (Nuon was helped by Seanghath) and then trying to identify the authors the other sheets of paper (Figure 38), comments included that:

‘Sreyrov also studies management at a different University... Maybe we can study together sometimes’ (Sreynit).

...now I know more about Kiev’s work at the health centre, maybe it can help my work about HIV awareness’ (Venerable Kosal).

‘I did not know that Sreyrov had a study tour in Vietnam. I studied agriculture in Siem Reap. Study tours reduce stress and we can share information in the village’ (Sat).



Figure 39: Becoming researchers, discovering the importance of people’s differences. 19th September 2013.

Nuon and Kiev consequently identified that they are *already* researchers through vegetable trading. Nuon's job is to know what the market prices are and what sells well in the market. This did not bring new subjectivity into being *as such* but it reframed prosaic entrepreneurship as involving research skills and in the process amplified latent subjectivity, infusing it with a greater sense of value. This positive affect spurred conversation between Nuon and Kimhour, then involving Kiev and finally Duol, about potential research on customer preferences for organic vegetables at *Psa Boeung Kok* and at Samaki Restaurant, which might then be conveyed to vegetable growers in the villages. In Nuon's words: '*we can know if people do not want the chemical vegetable and prefer the organic one, if we can produce it in our village we can get the market*' (Nuon).

4.2: Portrait of Gifts

A 'Portrait of Gifts' challenges negative representations of a community with a picture of a 'gifted community' replete with things that people care about (gifts of the heart) know about (gifts of the head) and different skills (gifts of the hand) (Gibson-Graham 2006b, 146-147). Common concerns which are prerequisite to community improvement projects can be elicited in this Portrait, based on what people have *partially in common* – thus maintaining the ethical principles of difference and negotiated interdependences. When shared more widely, the Portrait can help to disseminate a therapeutic narrative of a 'caring' or 'connected community' and can also be a good basis for brainstorming strategies for community development (Cameron & Gibson 2001, 68-70; 137-150; Gibson-Graham 2006b, 146-148). Data for a Portrait of Gifts was collected via questionnaire. With group members I went through a Khmer language translation of a questionnaire provided elsewhere (Cameron & Gibson 2001, 137-146), striving to generate a questionnaire to fit the context while also stimulating their interest in its content.⁶⁰

Despite the prior work that was undertaken, the extent to which the questionnaires returned by different members were filled out varied widely. Data collection was either more familiar or interesting to some group members than others. Nonetheless the data did bring attention to shared concerns with better health, livelihoods, infrastructure and community relations and also compassion for people with a disability. It also

⁶⁰ This ended with additions and amendments to items including religious practices, locally employed machinery such as the *ko-yon* (a mechanical plough translating as '*cow machine*') and transport such as moto-bike and tuk-tuk. See Appendix 5 to view the questionnaire.

represented a skilled community where villagers have many hobbies and interests. Highlights of the Portrait (presented as pie charts in the workshop as well as in the written form viewable in Appendix 4) were well received. Kiev expressed that *'gifts are good for the community'*, Venerable Kosal added *'helping is our culture.'* Sat took a closer look at detail in the data and said that transportation had improved. But hope of a continuing affective flow were stymied when he astutely observed that while numerous villagers *can drive* a car, truck or minibus, very few *actually own* one. The data was flawed in his view because those who do own such a vehicle will only freely help their friends or relatives. Seanghath tried to put a positive accent on the discussion by asking if group members thought new associations are desirable in the villages. Torn agreed they are. Seanghath then asked if the transport, combined with other gifts in the Portrait might be useful for starting a new association. I added to this by turning attention to a 'tree map', showing skills that respondents were willing to share with others (Appendix 4).⁶¹ Members were not entirely won over. Sreynit said perhaps there could be a sewing group, but added the caveat that teaching more difficult skills would only happen if people paid money to the teacher. Nuon concurred – *'we have to pay money if we want knowledge and skills.'* Sreynit finally arrived at a compromise: *'if we have friends who have knowledge they may charge half price.'* Regardless of compromise on the amount, cash payment was deemed non-negotiable. Nuon again expresses: *'It will never happen free of charge.'*

In this instance Sat, Sreynit and Nuon engaged critically with the Portrait data. The notion of 'social surplus' in the community economies literature, which can include knowledge alongside other goods being made available for collective uses, was not denied entirely but it is safe to say that it was not met with the greatest sense of optimism. Pessimism remained about the amount of goodwill towards new business that could be freely mobilised in the villages. But this in itself showed that having collected data, group members were able to *critically analyse the results*. The Portrait did finally instigate some brainstorming among the group members, subject to the contingency of their everyday realities.

4.3: Newsletter and contestation

The group members' capacity for critical engagement with some of the data that we generated in the action research project was also apparent in the appraisal of a

⁶¹ This data required written responses on the questionnaire. It was constrained by that fact many questionnaires were returned without any response at all to questions needing written answers.

community newsletter. In a workshop to develop the content, after the field visit to BSDA, the group's overall engagement was not high. It was hard to elicit ideas for stories for the newsletter. Content therein finally amounted to our work to date and statements of the groups' objectives (see Appendices 6 and 7). When we reconvened to evaluate the newsletter and in the process validate Phase 1 of the action research, group members drew satisfaction from seeing a newsletter in print. But mostly, their assessment merely told me that they *like the project*. The only criticism of the newsletter was that pictures were not so clear in black and white.

Finally, contestation did arise. The back page featured a call-out for a villager who could make bamboo chicken cages, to give up time for teaching others. A week beforehand Nuon was most enthusiastic for this content. But now she was first to question it, insisting '*nobody would teach without a payment [in cash].*' I asked if any other kind of gift exchanges might be an incentive, leading to discussion about *provas die* (exchange of the hand) before Sreynit interjected, asking incredulously '*If people exchange forever then how will they eat? How will their children live if they do it for free?*' Sat questioned whether anyone would share this skill at all – they would be giving up '*special knowledge*' (or intellectual property). Kiev added '*if people want to have the training, then they need their own materials and equipment.*' This illustrates two points. Firstly, despite Phase 1 activities, group members were reluctant to shed the subjectivity of the self-maximising individual. Secondly (on account of this), just as in the workshop to discuss the Portrait of Gifts, there remained strong scepticism towards the notion of creating a social surplus of knowledge. People's intellectual property, bluntly put, was the property of individuals alone.

Section Five: Thinking about social enterprise conceptually

After viewing a video about social enterprise development in the Philippines, group members voiced their understanding that social enterprises involve cooperation between people. A connection was made with their general understanding of the term *association*. Sat expressed that enterprises such as those we viewed would be desirable – *if only they were possible* – as part of a profoundly important contribution:

After we watch the video, I want to see it is possible and see this progress in the community, a great outcome. We don't have to depend on other people we depend on our community and resources. If we

can make it work forever that would be fantastic. We don't have to borrow microfinance or wait for any bank transfer. We just make income in our communities (Sat).

Sat had moved from a general statement about progress to a more specific statement about community wealth, self-reliance and the desire for alternatives to microfinance and heavy reliance on remittances. He again brought to attention variable views about microfinance. Sat said at other times that he saw microfinance as an unacceptable risk to a family's security. His mentioning of the 'bank transfer' (namely remittances) also brought concerns with the impact of migration on family life back to attention. Bearing in mind that participatory projects in Cambodia often lead to the opinions of 'knowledgeable men' being represented as the opinion of the whole group (Ogawa 2004, 375), I cautiously view Sat's contribution as a step towards the embodied valuation of social enterprise and a situated articulation of its *raison d'être*. Sat's appraisal of social enterprise development was oriented towards less replicable but more dialogical forms. While his main focus was on *making income*, perhaps subsistence and self-provisioning would not have been far away if his statements about self-reliance and community resources had been probed further.

The conceptual understanding of social enterprise was taken further in an afternoon group discussion at the Rice Fields Kids' Village following our second self-prepared lunch, this time using the kitchen facilities there. The discussion began with a 15-minute presentation about an agricultural cooperative called the 'Peri-Urban Agriculture Cooperative' (P.U.A.C) based in Kampong Speu Province, 50 kilometres west of Phnom Penh. This cooperative emerged in 2009, following eight years of prior input of resources and capacity building by the Belgian NGO called Aide au Développement Gembloux. As well as supplying non-certified organic produce (including premium value tomatoes, carrots and capsicum) to local markets, this cooperative supplied produce to 68 contracted hospitality businesses. It had eight paid employees, 62 farmer members and had turnover of 32,000 USD in 2012 (Goossens 2013).⁶²

Needs quickly surfaced in the analysis of P.U.A.C. Nuon, Torn and Sreyrov all at once identified the things provided by the Belgian NGO. There was technical support, a

⁶² This information comes from a presentation by Christophe Goossens, Asia Coordinator at Aide au Développement Gembloux, to the 2013 National Social Enterprise Conference of Cambodia. I am grateful to him for permission to use the presentation slides in my workshop with the hybrid research group members. The ADG presentation slides can be viewed at: http://www.rupp.edu.kh/projects/delphe/?page=program_2013

training centre, now there were vehicles with P.U.A.C branding. They could not start to build such an organisation without similar resources. I tried to set this aside by asking for a discussion about the purpose of P.U.A.C, instead of thinking instantly about what is possible or not. Venerable Kosal spoke lucidly, making three points:

‘...firstly the citizen should have a job to do and the second thing is the training they can receive. The other point is that they can share their experiences with each other’ (Venerable Kosal).

Seanghath prompted things further with a question of his own:

‘Since our first few workshops, if we do social enterprises in the community like this... do you think it will create the relationship and increase the communication between the villagers? Is there any peace in the community?’ (Seanghath).

Seanghath had once again become an invested participant in the group learning process, acting on his own desire for stronger social relations. On a personal level he had also moved from seeing social enterprise merely as a way to create finance for an NGO (the earned income school), towards seeing it as a broader model for community wellbeing. From Seanghath’s question other comments followed:

‘I want to say we should help the community to provide training in the family and help each other to progress. No drug users and reduce the poverty. There is a lot of important reasons’ (Nuon).

‘...it helps the people with employment and the social development’ (Sreynit).

‘...have a lot of advantages. It helps to reduce the poverty, it educates the next generation...Like this Rice Kids’ Village centre where the trainings are provided including sewing, weaving, the restaurant and meditation...’ (Torn).

‘...it can bring a lot of meetings... We help each other in certain tasks, we can survive, the purpose is to improve the villages too’ (Sat).

This exchange shows group members processing social enterprise conceptually, in accordance with their everyday realities. It also shows that when the deficit perception was put to one side, social enterprise was once again deemed to be *desirable* (just as it was deemed by Sat after watching the video on social enterprise development in the Philippines). Contemplation of the role that social enterprises can play in the improvement of wellbeing gave impetus for community visioning, which Dacanay (2012, 117, 305) expresses is a fundamental feature of social enterprises that have a

transformatory impact on the poor. Taking up Torn's comments about RFKV, I invited further thinking about this facility as an *actual* social enterprise. How could RFKV do business while distributing benefits to different places? What benefits could it deliver? And to whom? Using a flipchart, we brainstormed different benefits or externalities, extending the imagination of resource flows from a social enterprise.

With a considerable amount of prompting, a detailed, illustrated analysis emerged of who stands to benefit from RFKV and what the spin-offs might be in both the short and long term (Figure 39). Deficit thinking was displaced as the planned RFKV farm began to resemble the agricultural training centre that P.U.A.C farmers benefitted from. In Sat's view revenues generated by villagers selling produce to RFKV could be invested into new rice milling machines. Sreynit said that RFKV could be a good place to hold weddings in future, or community events with catering (possibly thinking of her family's business involved in some way). Torn wanted to meditate there once the facility is ready. Seanghath asked whether new associations might be started if people to did more social activities. Sreyrov, Torn and Kosal felt on this occasion that perhaps this might be the case. In summary, group members could envisage RFKV as an enterprising establishment that benefits a wide range of stakeholders and which delivers a range of positive socio-economic outcomes. In particular, the facility could invite a more active community.

This exercise reinforced understanding within the group, that a social enterprise does much more than generate financial surpluses. There seemed to be a sense of satisfaction on arriving at such a broadly thought out view of what a social enterprise might do. However, the level of prompting needed did underline the need for other forms of embodied learning that could expose group members to social enterprise concepts from a range of sources. This, along with the desire for further group bonding and trying to instil a sense of self-belief that group members can co-design aspects of the action research process, underpinned our visit to the Third National Social Enterprise Conference of Cambodia.

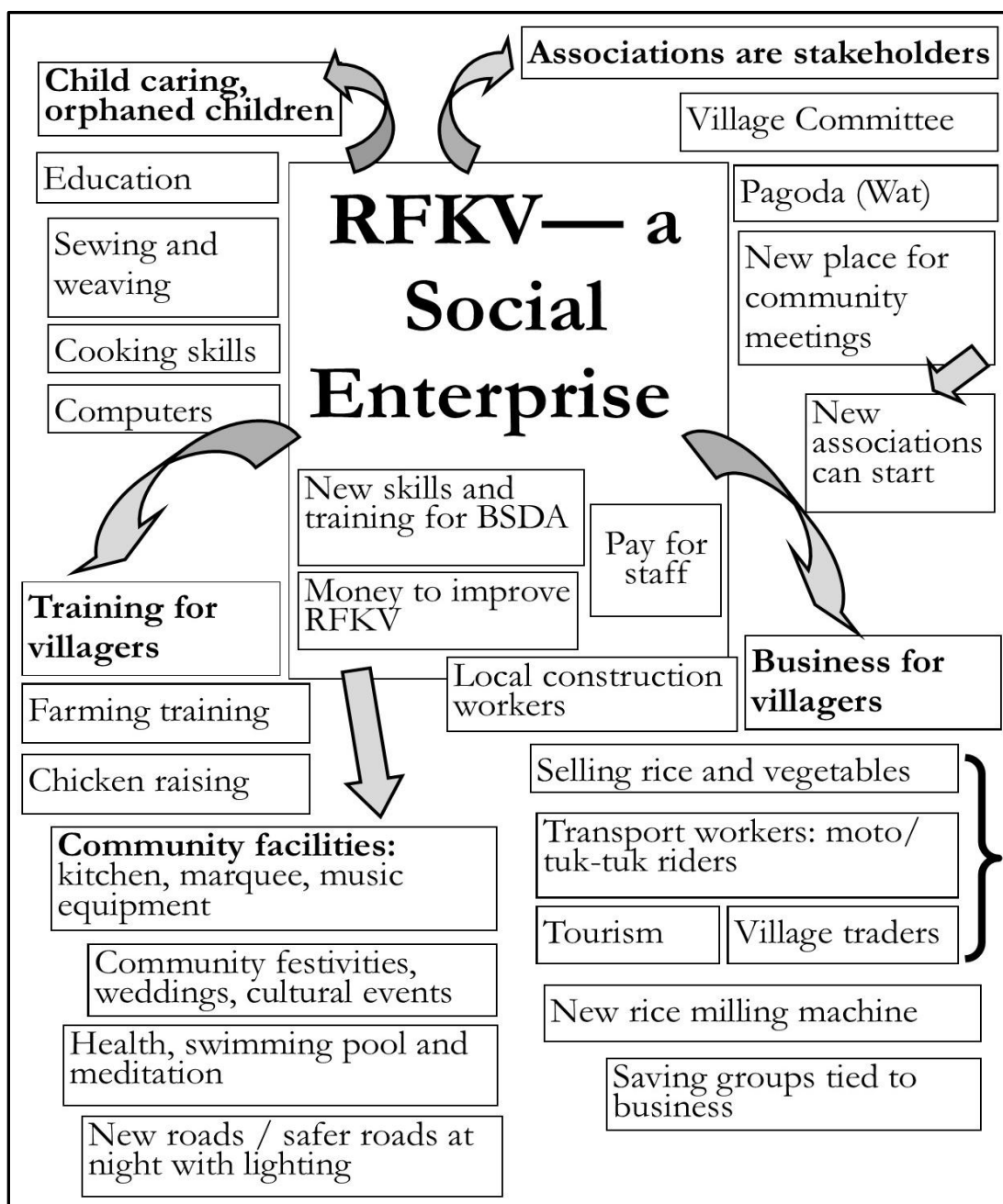


Figure 40: Resource flow sketch of Rice Fields Kids' Village arising out of brainstorm with hybrid research group members (18th October 2013)

Section Six: Team building and further conceptual exposure to social enterprise

All members of the hybrid research group besides Kiev travelled to Phnom Penh, the day before the Third National Social Enterprise Conference of Cambodia on the 25th October 2013, at the Cambodia-Korea Cooperation Centre on the Royal University of Phnom Penh Campus. A mini-bus taxi owned by Kimhour's neighbour was procured (after considerable price-bargaining) – largely to demonstrate a commitment to the

premise of making use of village assets. The Conference received 350 participants. In the morning presentations in the main hall (serviced with headphones and translation) were succeeded by 4 parallel breakout presentation sessions that addressed: 1) social enterprise and vocational training; 2) ICT opportunities for social enterprises; 3) agricultural social enterprise and 4) social enterprise and sustainable energies.⁶³ BSDA staff were presenting in the vocational training discussion so the BSDA entourage, Seanghath, Venerable Kosal, Sreyrov and Duol went there, also along with Sreynt and Kimhour who were interested in this theme. Sat, Nuon and Torn joined me in the agriculture session that was most pertinent to their interests. I arranged translators to sit with them to cover presentations in English language and afterwards they joined in a discussion with Aide au Développement Gembloux, finding out more about the Peri Urban Agriculture Cooperative in Kampong Speu Province.

I delivered one of four parallel workshops in the afternoon, simply entitled ‘Asset-Based Community Development in Cambodian Villages.’ Eighty participants attended including Cambodian academics and students along with Cambodian and expatriate NGO workers and development practitioners. After a 40-minute presentation on the framework for my thesis and some work to date, group members spoke for nearly 20 minutes. The workshop finished with 45 minutes of activities where participants worked in groups on asset mapping. When the hybrid research group members spoke, they took turns to introduce themselves, say something about their villages, their experiences in the research project and also about the work of BSDA locally. Some members spoke for longer than others, but all readily found something to say. Torn was quick to express his pleasure to be there, in an environment unknown to him beforehand:

‘Primarily I pay my respect to the workshop and the participants because I have never been here in my life. Without the workshop I never know where the Royal University of Phnom Penh is [a lot of laughter from Torn and the audience ensues] ... Until I die I still would not have known, so I am lucky to be here’ (Torn).

⁶³ Each parallel session featured representative of four separate social enterprises providing a seven-minute presentation with a question at the end. After all presentations were delivered participants joined one of the four representatives for discussion depending on the question they were most interested in. All presentations are presently viewable at: http://www.rupp.edu.kh/projects/delphc/?page=program_2013



Figure 41: Attending the Third National Social Enterprise Conference of Cambodia on the 25th October 2013, at the Cambodia Korea Cooperation Centre, Royal University of Phnom Penh. Top – A group photo outside. Middle – The opening presentation sessions in the main hall. Bottom – Sat receiving translation during a presentation on social enterprise and agriculture.

The positive emotions among group members visibly wore off on Nuon. In a final group briefing, ten minutes before the workshop started, Nuon had been highly apprehensive about speaking to the audience. Now she seemed most happy in this situation, expressing to the audience that:

'I am a vegetable seller and vegetable farmer. In the agriculture field I never show myself, I am so shocked, I never imagine I stand here today. I am so excited and pleased to meet all of you' (Nuon).

Overall the group spoke about BSDA more than anything else, relating to BSDA's work in general and also to RFKV particularly. BSDA's employees, Venerable Kosal and Sreypov (BSDA employees) along with Duol, a BSDA training graduate, spoke about BSDA's activities in the local community. Kimhour said BSDA is an inspiration for villagers seeing as *'it originated only as an association at the Pagoda'*. He also spoke on matters close to his heart – BSDA trains children who, because of poverty, were unable to finish their education. There was also an expressed sense that RFKV will improve economic opportunities and wellbeing. Torn repeated a point made elsewhere – he looked forward to meditating there in the future. Sat partially reflected our resource flow analysis of RFKV saying:

'... the construction worker is employed which is contributing to make the workers family better. Before the children's village created the road it was terrible and muddy, but afterwards the association (BSDA) has completed the road and the new buildings' (Sat).

Group members' explicated their involvement in the action research project, albeit to a lesser extent than matters related to BSDA. Some suggested that the project could be useful for community organising. Nuon spoke of villagers becoming better organised for agricultural business. Duol hoped more people in Chonghuk might start business as she has done. Kimhour and Venerable Kosal saw the project as a way to forge stronger bonds between BSDA and the local villages. Venerable Kosal said that after understanding social enterprise better, he would now like to help the community benefit more from social enterprises operated by BSDA. In Venerable Kosal's commentary, once again the view was stated that a social enterprise operated by an NGO should be more than a solution to its' funding issues. Finally, Venerable Kosal also spoke about Buddhism and likened the distributions of food from the Pagoda to the poor after festivities to the distributions of a social enterprise. Sreynit saw potential in the research

for community enhancement while also contributing an understanding of the diverse economy, when she spoke of community assets being used in new ways:

'I have joined Isaac's project to study about social enterprise. I have learned particularly about what is in our community already and that we can transform our household material' (Sreynit).

While four members touched upon the idea of being or becoming a researcher, it was only Sreyppov who made clear the basic premise of the action research, that all group members have particular skills and they are co-researchers in the action research process:

'I have learned from Isaac's project...about research. Previously I thought research was only applied by scientists that could do the research. But what I learned from him is that all can do research, the farmer, the businessman, the NGO staff and even the villager. It also includes every one of you here' (Sreyppov).

It is possible that Sreyppov's contribution was impacted by her pursuit of a Bachelor Degree in Management and also by her greater familiarity with research than other group members had in the first instance. Neither Sat nor Torn said anything about the action research while Nuon and Duol only touched on the objectives of it indirectly. But this is not to say that they did not engage with the research process at all. Arguably, the project was merely processed through their personal concerns. The emphasis from Torn and Sat especially (alongside Kimhour) on newly imagined village futures (featuring RFKV) was a form of their engagement. Imagining a future better for all villagers (rather than themselves alone) signified the embodied development of self-reflexive economic subjects, which was the ultimate objective of the action research process.



Figure 42: Asset mapping group work in the Conference Workshop



Figure 43: Hybrid research group members participating at the National Social Enterprise Conference of Cambodia, 25th October 2013

It is evident (as Figure 42 above captures) that group members enjoyed participation in the Conference. A post-conference evaluation three weeks later signified that the experience was empowering as much as it was enjoyable. The evaluation began with the group viewing a video of their participation in the Conference workshop. Reactions ranged from contagious happiness to stern concentration. Kimhour made notes at different points. The video was followed by a group discussion which revealed that group members had encountered new feelings of motivation.⁶⁴ Sat, who had not been overly interested in adopting the subjectivity of a researcher, said he would like to initiate a research project on the productivity of rice in different weather scenarios. Torn said that on returning to the village he wanted to develop a new agricultural plantation which could help to further improve the community. Kimhour placed constraints on

⁶⁴ In Chapter Eight I describe how Kimhour was motivated to set up a school food stall. Feeling motivated turned into concrete economic action in this instance.

this, saying that the raining season was not due for at least six months. However, Nuon had contracted positive emotions, and said that outside of the raining season there was still a lot work that villagers could do in preparation. Such was the impact of the Conference visit on Nuon that she was now less readily a reluctant subject.



Figure 45: Nuon's happiness to be at the Conference Workshop speaking to the audience (projected from the laptop) is contagious in the reflection



Figure 44: Group members are attentive to the replay of Kimhour's address to the Conference Workshop participants

Being part of a group that began to bond also inspired a stronger sense of ownership of the action research project. When Seanghath asked, what might be improved at a similar event in the future? Kimhour responded that another presentation could happen in one of two ways: *'Either the community do it for themselves... the farmer can do their own presentation directly in the conference, or he [Isaac]... can have the report and present on our behalf'* (Kimhour). Sreynit promisingly contributed *'I want the community to do the presentation by themselves.'* Sat saw reason to develop a presentation to their own villages in the next instance, to explain what might be done to improve their livelihoods. Kimhour suggested that at a future conference, farmers elsewhere could take part, envisaging a workshop with representatives of other villages where *'we can learn together.'* When others were asked if they thought this plausible Torn and Sat expressed in unison - *'It is possible.'* When

Seanghath asked members who were yet to respond, Sreynit, Nuon and Kosal, if they wanted to participate again, the answer coming back a second later was a resounding yes! Torn laughed and asked '*can we go again soon?*'

Section Seven: Concluding discussion

The conference visit instilled a change in affective registers. Things were thought possible that would not have been before. This was especially born from group bonding and a sense of collective strength. As Cooperrider and Whitney (2005) propose in the practice of appreciative inquiry, bonding is pre-conditional to momentum in the change process because it renews faith in what can be accomplished. Research drawing on Asset Based Community Development shows that bonding reconciles the interests of people with different backgrounds and circumstances pertaining to factors like age, health and education, instilling incentives for cooperative work (Gibson & Cameron 2005). In this case, hybrid research group members of different ages with different education and interests, encountered activities that they might like to work on together. Research also suggests that while the issues faced by communities incentivise community bonding, the capacity of community members to identify shared values and make *strong emotional ties* is of greater importance (Sanoff 2006, 135). Empirically, I go further, by staking that the recognition of community issues by community members, without their identification of shared values and making of connections with others, precipitates deprivation-deficit thinking. In the deprivation-deficit scenario, there is incentive to bring the issues to attention, but addressing them becomes someone else's duty.

At the start of this chapter I drew on socially constructed approaches that treat knowledge as a process that is more valuable for its enacting of the social, than for its accuracy *per se* (Beyes & Steyaert 2011; Gibson-Graham 2002). Here among group members, I saw conceptual and knowledgeable readings of social enterprise emerge that set aside the understanding that economic action equates with self-interested behaviour. Satisfaction with the conference in particular was enduring. It remained prominent in group members exit interviews more than five months later. Sat was animated when he told me how he reported back to other villagers that the conference, with multinational languages and headphone translation was like '*heaven.*' He had told villagers that the conference had convinced him of the need for action, that '*if we do not have organisations we*

need to develop something more. Torn said *'it looked like the mushroom coming up... it was good to see people like this in the country now.'* He gained comfort from seeing Cambodians outside of Kampong Cham Town, travelling a different path to the one he had known during past decades of trauma. Duol signified in her exit interview that her experience of participating in the conference was as empowering as it was enjoyable:

'I worried about my English language and my knowledge; I was a bit nervous around so many educated people and foreigners. Before I was speaking I was shaking, but after I stand up I was more self-confident to talk about something I know. I was so excited to see people clap for me, I felt welcome. Even the foreigner clap for me' (Duol exit interview).

Overwhelmingly, at the outset of the action research process I encountered villagers who saw their communities as devoid of meaningful economic opportunities in comparison to other places, who felt opportunities only emerge because of the actions of 'other people' and who had little faith in the skills and positive dispositions of other villagers. From the vantage of this moment, at the end of Phase 2 in the action research, I say that despite the weight of disincentives, a succession of experiences led group members to exhibit preferences for active and relational economic subjectivity. Cognitively embodied, both intersubjectively and personally, the first two phases of the action research project became a foundation for imagining streams of benefits, via business development, that might be more reliable than dependency on other people.

However, a matter that must be contended with, is that subjectivity is made in time (through processes) and in its own specific space. Whether positive affective registers were sustained and embodied enough to be entice group members to consider collective models of social enterprises truly plausible is a very different matter. Phase 3 of the action research yielded mixed and unpredictable results when experiments with social enterprise development were introduced into the action research project. While group researchers felt open to the proposition of social enterprise at the end of Phase 2, this came up against deeper the seated commitments and concerns. This is not necessarily a bad thing at all. In Chapter Three I pointed out that allowing unexpected experiences to take flight is the whole point of a research approach that is sensitive to *difference* (Dey & Steyaert 2012b; Gibson-Graham 2006b). Some of the concerns that social enterprise development came up against, as I set out next in Chapter Six, can be elaborated as manifestations of 'little narratives' that allude to diverse ways of framing social enterprise, that might yield sustainable effects at the grassroots village level in Cambodia.

Chapter Six: Community economic practices and development possibilities

Section One: Introduction

In Chapter Five I followed ten villagers who became co-researchers in a hybrid research group through the first two phases of an action research project. I documented and analysed encounters with various subjectivities that included: a collaborative researcher and research analyst; a person with specialised valuable knowledge; a person who moves from focusing on deficits to focusing on useful existing assets; a prospective entrepreneur and visionary agent of local economic development. In addition, these co-researchers developed a conceptual understanding of social enterprise through bodily encounter, group work and their attendance/presentation at the Third National Social Enterprise Conference of Cambodia. This Chapter moves chronologically, by dealing with events that took place in Phase 3 of the action research, when social enterprise development was added into the project. The objective of this Chapter is to generate a meaningful basis for analysing the degree to which new subjectivities or strengthened latent subjectivities were embodied and embedded in the following months.

Succinctly, this Chapter deals with two experiments with social enterprise development that were initiated to see whether and how economic opportunities are interpreted as social opportunities by grassroots village actors. In the first case study, an identified opportunity for villagers to develop furniture making skills by using their bamboo resources is examined. Justifications for the study are threefold. Firstly, the data questions conventional 'common sense' assumptions about social enterprise development that derives from the identification of added value activities, market opportunities and business at the base of the economic pyramid. This revives discussion about certain themes in Chapters One and Two. Secondly, reviving themes in Chapter Two specifically, this case study provides reasons to consider the form and *raison d'être* of a social economy from a community economies perspective. It invites a situated

reconsideration of economic solidarity and questions whether promoting social enterprise as a tangible form should really be the priority of practitioners or whether promoting ethical economies that maintain stability in people's livelihoods and wellbeing is more productive. Thirdly, the case study profoundly raises concerns with the realities of ABCD practising as a mode of action research in precarious village communities. This returns the focus of attention to some of the methodological themes in Chapter Three.

The second case study documents the development of a vegetable supply chain from Chonghuk Village to a newly established school canteen facility (in itself a form of social enterprise run by BSDA) on National Highway 7. The justification for this particular case study is that it returns to themes in Chapter Two, by problematising readings of social enterprise as a collective and democratic activity that are particularly prevalent in the EMES social enterprise literature. In this instance, I concur with researchers who find that people's particular values are a driving feature of their desire to initiate or work for a social enterprise (Amin 2009a; Cameron & Hendricks 2013). However, in Cambodian villages it is 'family values' that are of over-riding importance although the collective subjectivity of a family member does coexist with that of a community member at the same time. The discussion gives impetus to comparing family business with social business, as far as both forms of enterprise involve subjectivities that extend beyond that of a business person alone.

I argue on the basis of the data gathered in both case studies, that villagers find 'loose forms' of economic cooperation plausible in the process of putting the conditions for enterprise and livelihood in place. However, this does not necessarily equate with collective forms of enterprise *per se*. This raises questions about the organisational form that *social* enterprise at the grassroots takes. Through considering enterprise as a complex site of different monetary and non-monetary transactions, input can be gained into the answering of a research question posed in Chapter Two - namely:

What diverse forms of social enterprise will yield sustainable effects at the grassroots level in Cambodia?

The overall approach to these case studies has been informed by post-structuralist approaches to action research that attend to people's self-empowerment (Cameron & Gibson 2005b; Gibson-Graham 2002) along with calls for research that 'multi-voicing'

social entrepreneurship by reconstructing the processes and weaving different narratives together (Steyaert & Dey 2010, 239). My claim as the chapter progresses is that a focus on little narratives, which sometimes get explicated out of direct view of the researcher, is vital if one is to understand what roles social enterprise or the social economy might play in promoting wellbeing in the fullest sense at the grassroots village level.

Section Two: Focusing on bamboo resources

When the hybrid research group first came together, the bamboo groves near Veal Sbov and between Chonghuk and Kampong Cham were peripheral in members' vision. Bamboo was listed as a construction material in an asset mapping exercise (detailed in Chapter Five) but it was not discussed in depth. It was raised more prominently in a subsequent group discussion where BSDA's Executive Director Vandong Thorn was also present. Discussion was preceded by a video on community-based social enterprise development in the Philippines (Gibson et al. 2009). Seanghath provided commentary on the three case studies: a ginger tea making enterprise; a coconut oil enterprise; and, a tailoring enterprise. Subsequent discussion began with scepticism. Sat, Torn and Kimhour built the consensus that Veal Sbov and Chonghuk offered no comparable natural resources to those harnessed by the ginger tea and coconut oil enterprise. But after Vandong Thorn expressed that bamboo is an abundant resource and that we were sitting in a building made of bamboo, talk became more optimistic. Kimhour agreed that alongside vegetables, bamboo was a resource they *did* have. The combination of vegetables and bamboo prompted Nuon to add that:

'We have bamboo which has a lot of benefits such as net for bitter melon growth and gourd. When we build it to the higher trellises it is supportive to all kinds of vegetable growth. In general, bamboo always give a lot of benefits' (Nuon).

Vandong Thorn interjected again, asking if the members present now thought that they have one abundant resource that perhaps some villagers in the Philippines do not have, meaning that they need not compare themselves to the villagers in the video but just borrow the ideas in the video for a social business. Kimhour adopted a more inspired subject position:

‘What do we think of having business? I mean, don’t ever think about failure first...more or less we have tried the best to do something. Unless we try, we will never know if we don’t try. For example, if we want to have a spinach field plantation...’ (Kimhour).

Nuon turned to Kiev saying that making a team to sell spinach might get a bigger market. Kiev did not respond and Torn interjected that *‘it is all impossible without irrigation.’* Despite relapsing into the negative register, fleetingly there seemed to be, back and forward between Kimhour and Noun, an ‘Aha! moment.’ This is observed elsewhere in ABCD approaches, where powerlessness is challenged with a contrary perspective (Mathie et al. 2016 forthcoming).



Figure 46: A tentative ‘Aha moment.’ Discussion after bamboo was raised as a natural resource, Nuon (centre) engaging with Kimhour (right). Film footage 10th September 2013



Figure 47: Bamboo groves between Chonghuk and Kampong Cham Town (left) and behind Veal Sbov Village (centre and right). In the centre bamboo culms have been cut and left to dry.

Bamboo also came up prominently later on the same day during the BSDA field visit. We had lunch at the SMILE training restaurant where bamboo is extensively incorporated into the décor. This bamboo synthesizes SMILE branding with a prominent feature of Kampong Cham Town, a 1.5 kilometre bamboo bridge constructed each year in October that connects inhabitants of Koh Paen Island in the Mekong River with the Town. The bridge withstands vehicles and heavy traffic. It

washes away as the river rises in the monsoon season. Between June and October, islanders use a ferry. The bridge has 100 years of history and was revived in the 1980s after the Khmer Rouge period as a toll bridge. Today a local business man employs 30 construction workers to build the bridge and five workers afterwards to perform maintenance on it. In discussion after lunch Sat, Kiev, Nuon and Torn spoke about the way BSDA's restaurant used bamboo, expressing that maybe people in the villages could think about using their bamboo in new ways.



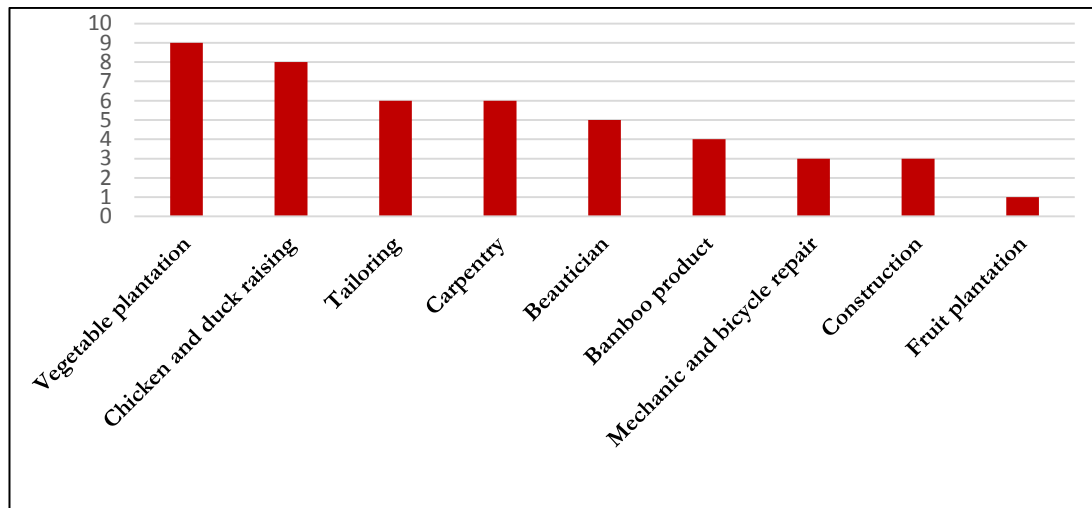
Figure 49: Bamboo Bridge connecting Kampong Cham Town with Koh Paen Island



Figure 48: Lunch at SMILE during field study visit, 10th September 2013. Still image from film, Torn is talking about the bamboo décor.

Nine days after the BSDA field visit I ran a workshop to introduce group members to the principals of becoming co-researchers. In a final exercise, group members were asked to individually identify five areas of income generation that could be worth

exploring further. This brought out skills and natural assets that were foremost in group members' minds as a source of economic opportunity (Graph 2). Vegetable gardening and poultry raising were foremost, but bamboo products also made four group members' lists, suggesting that perhaps discussions during the field visit and prior workshops earlier had entered into their minds as they completed this exercise.



Graph 2: Identified commercial research interests, 19th September 2013

After this workshop we had our first self-prepared lunch together as a research group, taking place at Sreynit's house (her family ran a catering business and had good facilities). We consumed food that group members contributed along with items paid for at the market. Over lunch, bamboo poultry cages came into the discussions. Sreynit's family keep a large yellow chicken cage in the front garden which garnered Sat's interest. Sreynit said it was bought at *Psa Boueng Kok* market. There was subsequent discussion about whether villagers would benefit from knowing how to make this item. Two weeks later this was revisited when we collaborated on content for a community newsletter. Sat stated that the only person he had known to make these cages had passed



Figure 50: The bamboo chicken cage at Sreynit's house became a recurring conversation topic

away. We finally decided to put a call-out on the back page on the newsletter, asking if any villagers who could make a chicken cage would be willing share this skill with others, in order to restore valuable local knowledge to the villages.

Section Three: Uses of bamboo as a means of livelihood and potential new uses

After the monsoon season from November 2013 onwards, I started to witness the numerous villagers manufacturing bamboo barbecue skewers, more in Veal Sbov than in Chonghuk. This home-based activity was almost exclusively undertaken by female household members over the age of 40, who were too old for garment work. It became a more prominent activity as the dry season progressed from February 2014 onwards, when more bamboo was harvested and moisture in the bamboo culms dried out more quickly after they were cut.⁶⁵ One female producer told me that in return for the skewers she could make in five hours, she received 6,000 riels (\$1.5USD) from the middleman who came to her house. The middleman sold these skewers to local barbecue restaurants on the roads going into Kampong Cham Town and also to street food vendors that set up in the Town each day. She did this activity five or six days a week. One better equipped male manufactured larger skewers and expended four hours of labour to get 6,000 riels. He spent less time on this than some other producers, mixing it with other income generation and subsistence such as rice farming and occasional construction labour.



Figure 51: The produce of a frequent barbecue skewer manufacturer (left) and bamboo skewers left for collection by the middleman (right)

⁶⁵ Bamboo culms take more than six weeks to dry. Villagers were in the habit of drying bamboo culms close to where they have been cut down and there was generally a supply of dried culms in the dry season.

At the outset of the third phase of the action research, co-researchers came together in December 2013 in a workshop to brainstorm business opportunities. This began with the presentation of an opportunity for villagers to work with Sovanak dried palm sugar social enterprise that was seeking to expand into Kampong Cham. But it hit a quick dead end. Care services enterprises were mooted drawing on data in the Portrait of Gifts. But group members did not see the practicality or even point of such an enterprise. Villagers could not afford to pay for care and the breakdown of the elderly people's association was again cited as evidence of lack of trust. Most importantly, villagers were satisfied with existing informal care arrangements that boil down to a sense of duty and family values.

With the plight of some skewer producers in mind, and given continual recurrence of bamboo as a theme in Phase 1 of the research cycle, I raised the prospect of bamboo furniture. This was received more positively. I projected photos of bamboo furniture from my laptop that I had obtained more than two years earlier from the Rattan Association of Cambodia (RAC).⁶⁶ I took encouragement when Kimhour exclaimed:

'instead of showing us examples of other businesses, why don't you arrange training for people to make these products?' (Kimhour).

As we discussed the possibility of training on bamboo furniture more positive affect was generated. Torn said training might be good for villagers who did carpentry already. We were able to make connections with other data. In the workshop where group members each listed five areas of income generation, carpentry had also scored quite highly. Data gathered by group members for the Portrait of Gifts questionnaire also revealed that 22% of all respondents had some furniture making skills, 40% were female and 60% were villagers over the age of 30. Revisiting this as a pie chart led to the view that perhaps older people in the villagers (who were not busy with garment or construction work) might be interested in an opportunity to develop furniture making skills. We discussed what training should involve, finally settling on 'training of trainers' – meaning

⁶⁶ RAC are foremost known for rattan furniture and handicrafts, but also market bamboo products. In August 2011 they displayed their products at the First National Social Enterprise Conference of Cambodia. RAC was founded in 2009 by 11 small-to medium enterprises (SMEs) with technical support from the World Wide Fund for Nature and the Artisan's Association of Cambodia (AAC). This support generated quick successes. In 2011 RAC became a member of the World Fair Trade Organisation and secured export contracts with the Swedish multinational furniture company IKEA (WWF-Cambodia 2013).

I should try to find a trainer who could teach villagers furniture skills, that they could then share with other villagers.

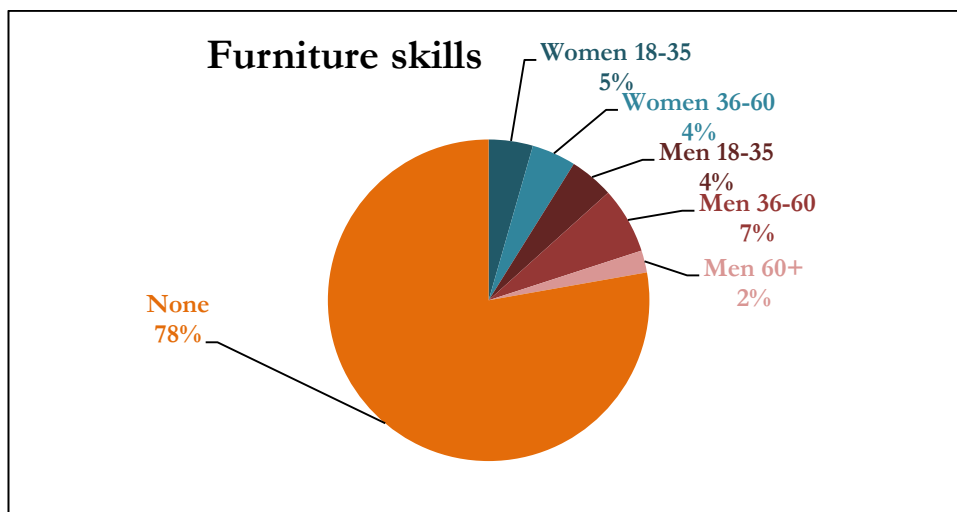


Chart 7: Furniture skills among the respondents in the Portrait of Gifts Questionnaire (N=45. F=23/M=22.)

A week after the workshop I travelled with Seanghath to Phnom Penh and met the Secretary of RAC. After seeing furniture in RAC's retail outlet we were attracted to the products of an artisan called Sarong (see Figure 53), who named his micro-enterprise 'Bamboo Node Tiles' (BNT). Preparations in Veal Sbov and Chonghuk began with group members giving out promotion leaflets. Portrait of Gifts questionnaires were revisited to identify respondents listing carpentry among their skills and interests. They were specifically targeted with leaflets and we also visited households that manufactured barbecue skewers. With Venerable Kosal, I met the Achar at *Wat Nokor Bachaey* who agreed that we could use a Pagoda building that was once BSDA's offices.



Figure 52: Building at Wat Nokor Bachaey, made available for the bamboo furniture workshop



Figure 53: Chairs made by Bamboo Node Tiles in Cambodia

Section Four: Challenges of mobilising in a precarious community

Two community meetings to discuss the training opportunity took place in January 2014. They were differently charged. In Chonghuk there was a more positive reception of the training on offer in the first instance, while in Veal Sbov negative affect contagion quickly took hold of the meeting. These are two different stories which each offer different insights into villagers' realities. About 20 adults attended in Chonghuk and 32 attended in Veal Sbov. In each instance more than a quarter who attended were female. A scarce proportion were young adults (they were already mostly occupied by other work). At both meetings BSDA was involved, as they were interested in establishing a supply chain with the artisan-trainer we recruited for a new potential franchise restaurant. Information sheets were distributed setting out the idea of 'training of trainers' and the hope that this might make a contribution to community development.

The first responses in Chonghuk were encouraging. One female asked '*can women participate equally as men?*' and secondly '*can people without any furniture skills at all take part?*' Seanghath replied *yes* on both counts. A male in his fifties asked '*can we register immediately?*' After Seanghath explained villagers can register with Sat who will keep them up to date, the same male villager raised his hand again, smiling and pointing into his

chest while saying ‘*me*’ (*kenhom*). The meeting felt highly charged and positive but eventually came a question that I feared. A middle-aged female raises her hand and asked – ‘*how much are people going to be paid for their attendance?*’ While the question came as no real surprise, I was mindful of Courtney’s (2007) observations that projects in Cambodia are commonly viewed by villagers as ‘something directed from the outside’ with a start and finish. Between these points, projects are a temporary means of access to resources, rendering sustainable change problematic. Similar points about the impact of stipends in Cambodia are also made by Turner (2002). I felt the signals sent by stipends could undermine the idea of ‘training of trainers’ which requires longer term commitment. With Seanghath’s help I expressed that while there was no budget for attendance fees, it was hoped that villagers could foresee the value of the training and that food and refreshments would be provided.

In Chonghuk things started well but ended worryingly. In Veal Sbov however, things went badly from the start. After the BSDA Deputy Director spoke, there was no response. Eventually an elderly male put up his hand and exclaimed ‘*the bamboo we have here is no good for furniture, it cannot work.*’ Another immediately concurred: ‘*our type of bamboo is peng poueng, it does not bend at all. It breaks.*’ Two elderly men were laughing loudly, perhaps at this ludicrous idea for furniture training but maybe more so at the *barang* (European, invariably *white* European) in their midst who knew nothing of their life. An older woman stood and walked towards me with her hand extended, holding out barbecue skewers as if to say ‘*this is the only thing we can do with the bamboo that we have.*’ I asked Seanghath to explain that the furniture we are looking at doesn’t require highly flexible materials, but he was also dispirited. If I gained insight from this, it was just how quickly the negative register and perception of *lack* can spiral in a village meeting.



Figure 54: Meeting at Chonghuk Ceremonial Centre on 11th January (top) and Veal Sbov Ceremonial Centre on 16th January 2014

Seven villagers (four in Chonghuk and three in Veal Sbov) finally registered their interest. None were female. The registration of one in five attendees at Chonghuk was not disappointing when I thought about it. But the Veal Sbov meeting had gone as badly as I feared – only one who attended had registered his interest. The other two had not attended the meeting but registered after seeing photographs of Sarongs' chairs. This included Kimhour's brother, the construction manager who had told me of his difficulty recruiting labourers in the dry season. All who registered were given a tool list and asked to tick tools at their disposal and return the list to Sat or Torn. They were also asked to bring two dried bamboo culms to the training.

I hoped that if seven villagers did participate alongside Sat, Torn and Venerable Kosal making ten in total, then there might be the opportunity for 'affect contagion.' That is, where facial expressions and bodily movements interact, becoming 'sympathetic communication' that shapes verbal communication as much as it accompanies it (Gibbs

2002, 337-338). Having seen negative contagion at work in Veal Sbov, I held out hope for three days of positive embodied experiences that could build tangible social assets to draw upon at later dates. These hopes were somewhat dashed before the workshop started. When Seanghath spoke to Sat by mobile phone 24 hours before the training, Sat (who had prepared his bamboo when I visited him two days earlier) expressed he would not be coming due to a wedding. When Seanghath asked about the second and third day, I heard Sat say ‘*rovul*’ (busy) back out of the handset – he could not attend on any day. When Seanghath phoned Torn (who was also preparing his bamboo when I visited his house), I heard the word ‘*rovul*’ again. I requested Seanghath to ask Torn if he could spare any time at all and ask also if Torn thought this training might complement his carpentry. Torn was candid about his non-attendance when he proclaimed down the phone that ‘*tomorrow I will have diarrhoea*’.

On the first day of the training four of the seven registered villagers arrived along with Venerable Kosal and his friend, a BSDA training manager. The older male who had exhibited considerable enthusiasm at the Chonghuk meeting was notably absent. It did not help much that the trainer Sarong felt it necessary to teach participants using a whiteboard through the morning, as opposed to getting on with making furniture. By the afternoon three of the four villagers left, leaving only Kimhour’s brother who imparted at a later point that from their point of view: ‘*The trainer seemed to talk too much and too long until all the participants feel too bored.*’ Venerable Kosal suggested we invite beneficiaries of a HIV awareness program for young drug users (which he managed at BSDA). After some phone calls two of them arrived for the training in the afternoon. Halfway through the second day Kimhour’s brother also had to leave for his construction work.



Figure 55: A lower turnout than hoped for at the bamboo furniture training workshop



Figure 56: Making bamboo furniture at Wat Nokor Bachaey 19th-22nd February 2014

With just four participants remaining (none of whom were villagers that the training was specifically targeted towards), we moved to the BSDA gift shop. To put a positive slant on this, the beneficiaries of the BSDA drug user program keenly stuck with the training with Venerable Kosal and his BSDA colleague, even working after dark to get the chair that they were working on finished. Arguably bamboo furniture could have potential as a vocational training program for drug users. But this is hard to determine as things did not progress beyond this training, partly because the SMILE franchise restaurant in Phnom Penh did not materialize. However, in 2015 discussions between BSDA Executive Director Vandong Thorn and Sarong at BNT reopened. BSDA have acquired new land for a potential Buddhist meditation retreat and their interest in BNT furnishing for this venture gives some cause for optimism.

I do not wish to put an unduly positive spin on an exercise which completely failed to achieve its main objectives – namely skills development, community mobilising and a widely felt positive affective register within the villages. The first thing to say was that lots of people came to meetings. In Chonghuk villagers did want to come to training, but only as a way to gain three days of stipend income. The action research thus came up against villagers' everyday realities. Data cited in Chapter Four (MoP 2012, 21) shows villagers were mostly not *extremely poor* by official standards. But the livelihoods of most of them *were* precarious. I saw this when I spoke to market vendors for whom a day without income was likely to be day without food for their families. Torn expressed later when I sought to reflect with him on matters, quite simply that '*people will not come without a payment... they have to worry everyday about feeding their family.*'

In her exit interview Sreypov concurred. She said that the training could have given villagers something different to do with their bamboo, but then spoke critically about ABCD through her own experience as an NGO project worker:

‘The words in your country... they are not the right words here. You cannot apply your foreign culture... for example to collect people you have to pay them or give gifts or things like phone cards, otherwise they will give the excuses not to come. Here everything is payment.’

Arguably ABCD is a good approach to developing local economic opportunities up to a certain point. In precarious villages there are going to be dilemmas. The anticipation of stipends could be considered disempowering if ABCD is taken literally. Villagers’ dependency on outsiders seems like the opposite of communities ‘starting where they are, using what they have’ (Gibson-Graham 2006b, 169). What needs more consideration is context because concepts like ‘dependency’ often stem from Northern/Western perspectives on welfare provision. In this action research ABCD came up not just against practicalities but also profound ethical considerations that throw up into the air what it means to be ‘empowered.’ Given the circumstances many villagers are up against, one could surely ask: why should they *not* evaluate development projects or training opportunities on the basis of the stipends that they offer?



Figure 57: Customary practices of redistribution observed at a meeting on tourism development in Kampong Cham Town. February 2014.

This question arises not just from the empirical data provided so far but also from other encounters. Attendance fees were routine in trainings I observed in 2011 aimed at indigenous minority resin tree tappers in northern Cambodia, paid for by the UN Creative Industries Program (Lyne et al. 2013).⁶⁷ I was left wondering at that time if trainings were attended mainly for the stipend payments. Two weeks before the furniture training I attended a meeting in Kampong Cham Town about a tourism project, funded by Canadian Municipal Partners for Economic Development. It lasted less than 45 minutes. On the way out more than 20 people in attendance collected 6,000 riels for lunch and travel (Figure 56). Fundamentally, there appears to be a conflict between local views on ‘stipends’ and those of Western consultants who claim that they undermine participation and empowerment.⁶⁸

Stipends were not, however, the only or most prominent constraint on participation. I found that villagers sensed the training was not relevant to their livelihoods. In his exit interview Sat explained that this was the main reason for his non-attendance and that stipends were not his concern. He also told me that the construction manager living four houses from him (who I had interviewed prior to the action research project) was

⁶⁷ Resin tappers produce dipterocarp oleoresin, which has a domestic and international market for boat caulking and boat sealant and an international market for paint, varnish, perfume and cosmetics industries (Andaya-Milani 2011).

⁶⁸ The dilemmas and culture of stipends is also addressed in depth in Vietnam by Hostovsky, MacLaren & McGrath (2010, 418-419).

also sceptical about the value of the training and said so to others in the village. Sat agreed with him, saying that: *'Construction is money today, garment factory is immediately. But the success of furniture... is not clear.'* In summary, while bamboo furniture production *might* pay off in the future it was not attractive to people who need an immediate, guaranteed income. Sat's commentary illustrated shortcomings in my postulation that the desire of some villagers to develop carpentry skills (exhibited in the Portrait of Gifts) was a good basis for community mobilising. It was not. Kiev (the female health committee member in Chonghuk) dropped in to hear Sarong talk on the first day but left within 30 minutes. In her exit interview she told me simply that *'people did not go in. People are very busy.'* Torn made this point more assertively:

'People here need money today...they need money today, you understand?' (Torn exit interview).

ABCD literature emphasises the need for 'quick wins'/ 'quick hits' (Stoecker 2003, 501; Torjman 2007, 16) or 'small but significant concrete victories' (McKnight & Kretzmann 1993, 353) to build confidence and maintain action. But in the villages, a quick win normally means cash income on the given day. A quick win is not necessarily a training experience that further develops existing skills and which might affectively build confidence for more ambitious undertakings. A compounding factor also seemed to be the local proliferation of individualised microfinance. This is not to say that indebtedness is something somehow new. Peasantry in Cambodia have been indebted to money lenders or creditors for centuries or even millennia. It was not uncommon historically for peasantry to be indebted to the extent of their whole forthcoming harvest (Praso 2001). However, the nature of cash indebtedness that microfinance lubricates is less negotiable in the timescale of repayment and also in terms of what might be given by way of repayment.

I do not know the exact extent of microfinance penetration in the Chonghuk and Veal Sbov. However, a study by Liv (2013) indicates that five per cent of villages nationally have seven or more MFIs providing credit to their inhabitants (28). The listing by group members in the asset mapping exercise of seven operating MFI's puts Chonghuk and Veal Sbov within this five per cent of villages that is prone to microfinance 'saturation.'⁶⁹ The level of microfinance penetration without doubt compounds the need among villagers for reliable and immediate cash returns from economic actions. In

⁶⁹ *Saturated* is a category Liv (2013, 28) reserves for the 9% of villages where she found a greater number of MFI loan accounts than the actual number of households.

Chapter Four, I illustrated the synthesis of microfinance with private lending. This without doubt compounds further still the rise in overall indebtedness and also acts as a deterrent to villagers' expenditure of time on economic activities with less than certain outcomes.

Section Five: Challenges of mobilising for social enterprise that are presented by existing community economies

Mobilising villagers in Chonghuk and Veal Sbov, for a training exercise came up against different problems that boil down to their precarious livelihood. If the action research had gone in a different direction, for instance, leading to more immediately relevant training on chicken-raising or vegetable cultivation, then perhaps things might have been different. This is conjecture. There was also a third matter that furniture training came up against which took me by surprise. The *raison d'être* for the furniture training was to help villagers visualise the benefits of 'value added' activities. To an outsider, the existing activity of receiving \$1.5 USD for 6 hours of labour cutting skewers seemed like an extremely low or zero value added pursuit. But my distance from villagers' realities was made startlingly clear when Sat told me that not only were villagers disinterested in the training, they were *frightened of the damage it might do*. Sat expressed that:

'They were worried about losing the bamboo in their village. It is the use of the bamboo. It belongs to the family and they use it for the beef stick. It is what they know' (Sat exit interview, 11th April 2014).

Bamboo skewer making was much more important to villagers' lives than I had given credit for. To those who did this work it was a valued safety net providing regular, reliable money.⁷⁰ While the training was not a success, what it did reveal was an already existing 'community economy' that is (to recap from Chapter Two) not a crystallised economy as such, but a collection of processes and practices that underpin well-being, that give people some control over their resources and that allows them to negotiate their interdependence. Villagers were very protective of this and rejected bamboo furniture because they saw it as a threat. A strong case in point was their safeguarding of

⁷⁰ This was brought home further still in March 2014, when I followed up with a young male garment worker from an earlier group discussion. In December 2013 there were garment worker strikes over pay across Cambodia. Strikes were constant in Kampong Cham with up to 3,000 MEDTEC's workers taking part in some demonstrations (Radio Free Asia 2014). The garment worker I visited had been an identified strike 'organiser.' His contract was terminated by MEDTEC's and he was not hopeful of regaining his job. In the absence of garment factory income household members had turned to making bamboo skewers to feed themselves.

relations with the middleman, which was one type of ‘patron-client relationship.’ I will set out in the paragraphs ahead, how it became clear that the strength of this dyadic (person-to-person) relationship between different villagers and this middleman sustained the bamboo skewer economy, which in turn incentivised the collective maintenance of bamboo groves as a resource.

In Chapter One, I illustrated that according to various scholars’ patron-client relationships remain as a prominent survival strategy among the Cambodian population at large. Historically, these relationships have put precarious rural families, trapped between subsistence and capitalist encroachment, in the service of less precarious ones (Davis 2008a). It has also been observed in the past that in Southeast Asia, inhabitants of less remote villages take opportunities to diversify their patron-client relationships where possible. Their ties begin to look like a ‘horizontal web’ of dyadic (person-to-person) relations as opposed to one dyadic bond alone (Landé 1973, 105-106). Concurring with this, the barbecue skewer middleman was one among other patrons who could be called on for short-term advances on future skewer production at religious festivities or when there was a crisis. This form of credit advance between supplier and middleman is called ‘*bandak*’ which, as documented elsewhere also, depends on iteratively proven trust between both parties (Phlong 2009, 90-91).

The extent to which this relationship was valued was borne out in later discussion with one producer. The suggestion that producers might find markets of their own and earn more money from their labour met antipathy. Firstly, barbecue businesses and street food sellers already had their own supplier. Secondly the skewers had to be sold quickly. After 10 days they became too brittle and broke easily. It was the middleman who knew the customers and quickly made the sales. What went unsaid in this conversation was that my suggestion for seeking new outlets in order to raise profit margins was a most unwelcome interference.

The services that the middleman provided to villagers, was one reason why my suggestion was most unwelcome. Another factor was that this particular patron’s presence among the villagers underwrote an ecologically intelligible livelihood. Because his ongoing presence in the village guaranteed a basic livelihood, villagers had the incentive to manage bamboo resources. This leads me to wonder if the prospect of a more commercial bamboo value chain (via furniture making) led villagers to worry about that powerful outsiders would take interest in their groves. As Sat said, ‘*They were*

worried about losing their bamboo.' The threats of outsider interest to villagers' resources have become an ever more acute concern across Cambodia since the 1990s, as the government turned from socialism to the modern capitalist free market economy. This transition has been accompanied by a narrative of 'economic development' that is heavily dominated by people with power, who determine what is and is not considered to be the productive use of natural resources. This in turn has underpinned the enclosure of resources via the granting of economic land concessions to well-connected tycoons (Meas & McCallum 2009; Un & So 2009).

Berkes and Davidson-Hunt (2007) write that threats to the local management of natural resources that have intensified with globalisation can be mitigated by 'commons-based social enterprises.' These social enterprises enable communities to embed themselves in supply chains to more remote economies, for instance through the production of artisanal products that are sold further afield or the production of niche inputs for goods processed elsewhere, while also retaining a degree of sovereignty. Communities that depend on natural resources can become more resilient as a consequence. Bamboo skewer making cannot be called a social enterprise in its present form, but this activity did actually connect the villagers to an outside economy as far as their skewers were used by businesses in and around Kampong Cham Town. At the same time, from villagers' perspectives this activity might not have been so significant as to bring their bamboo to unwelcome outside attention. It was also because enough villagers made skewers that the middleman came there to collect them. The more producers that there were, the more reliable the middleman's visitations were, and the stronger the villagers' individual relationships with the middleman became.⁷¹

Section Six: Bamboo as a privately owned community commons

Another critical difference between skewer making and the 'commons-based' enterprises that Berkes and Davidson-Hunt (2007) write about, was that skewer making is not strictly speaking 'commons-based.' I had mistakenly thought the bamboo groves were part of a well maintained 'commons' – quite simply meaning property 'that is

⁷¹ This assumes no oversupply of skewers, which it seemed there was not. Even though the skewers must be sold quickly, placing limits on what can be stored, there was no issue with the middleman being unable to buy whatever villagers produced.

shared by a community' (Gibson-Graham et al. 2013, 130).⁷² The continual replenishment of well-maintained bamboo resources and continued availability of cut dried culms for skewer makers suggested usage rules existed, which expose the fallacious assertion that people will inevitably wear a commons down. The classic example is cattle herders who add ever more to their herd, maximising returns from grazing while at the same time sharing the cost of resource depletion with other users, eventually annihilating the commons completely. De Angelis and Harvie (2014) show this is a fallacy because it speaks not of a commons at all but instead an open access resource without rules of use. It also speaks only of *homo economicus* or 'rational self-interested profit maximising individual' while Elinor Ostrom (in De Angelis & Harvie 2014, 284-286) has shown how it is the existence of rules that injects the agency of communities (not just individuals) into commons management.

The commons as a line of inquiry was stymied somewhat when I found that bamboo groves were not a common property resource. Instead they were carefully managed private family resources, even though they were at some distance from many villagers' houses. Having said this, agreements in place within the villages also contradicted the notion that the bamboo groves were completely enclosed. People can borrow bamboo from other families as they need to and return it when their own supply has grown back, or buy bamboo from time to time. Among villagers I spoke to it was unknown for a family to decline this request. They would almost certainly be looked on badly if they did so. Skewer making was thus a recognised safety net, treated more or less as an entitlement among villagers. Theft of bamboo was also unheard of, perhaps because requests to borrow it were unlikely to be declined.

Gibson-Graham, Cameon & Healy (2013) describe 'commoning' as 'the ongoing production and reproduction of commons' (138). Commoning is a practice that gives ethical impetus to negotiations over people's rights to benefit from different resources and how these resources should be cared for in a way that keeps the wellbeing of present and future communities in mind. To assist with thinking about 'ways of commoning' they have developed a 'Commons Identi-Kit' that pays attention not only

⁷² This is not to say only biophysical resources are part of a commons. Knowledge (or intellectual property) including medicines and scientific advancements can be part of a commons as too can be health systems, works of art, music, the internet and so on. All of this works in accordance with the notion of a 'social surplus' and the principal is simply that it is not a privately designated resource which permits one entity to exclude others from using it. As Walljasper (2010) puts it "The commons is a new use for an old world, meaning "what we share"' (2).

to legal ownership of property but also to: access rights; use of property; how benefit is distributed; how resources are cared for and who takes responsibility (135). Using this Identi-Kit, Table 3 compares enclosed property (usually that of private individuals or groups but sometimes also property of the state) and the prerequisite features of a commons related to the concerns above.

Table 3: Commons Identi-Kit sourced from Gibson-Graham, Cameron & Healy (2013, 148)

WAYS OF COMMONING						
	Access	Use	Benefit	Care	Responsibility	Ownership
ENCLOSED	Narrow	Restricted by owner(s)	Private	Performed by owner(s) or employee	Assumed by owner(s)	Private individual Private group State
COMMON	Shared and wide	Negotiated by a community	Distributed widely to community and beyond	Performed by community members	Assumed by community	Private individual Private collective State Open access

Applying the Identi-Kit, all kinds of property, including private property, can be commoned. What matters most is the way that property (or a resource) is managed. As a means of identifying whether activities are constituting a commons or not, this framework invites investigation of who the ‘commoners’ are – or who are the people involved in bringing a resource into common use and also how might they respond to things that pose a threat to the commons that they have created (Gibson-Graham et al. 2013, 148-149). As shown already, villagers deemed bamboo furniture to be a threat to their resources and they did not engage with furniture training because of this and other reasons. The question that I grapple with, with the Identi-Kit in mind, is: do skewer making activities have the effect of commoning resources and if so do patron-client-relationships between villagers and the middleman have a role to play in this?

While bamboo is a privately owned household resource, villagers’ arrangements give all skewer makers an on-going entitlement to a basic safety net. Norms that come with this entitlement mean that requests to borrow bamboo are not declined. Access to bamboo is thus not narrow, but shared and wide among villagers. The use of bamboo is also negotiated and in the process, agreements have become institutionalised. The benefit

that accrues from this is accordingly distributed widely among those villagers who rely upon the bamboo skewers as a safety net, but there are still wider benefits than that. The bamboo groves are excellently maintained. When villagers borrow bamboo they cut it in a way that thins the bamboo, allowing light into the groves and also helping pest control. In other words, in the application of technical knowledge to the process of borrowing of culms, households help each other tend to the groves and maintain them. The other main use of bamboo in the villages is for construction purposes. While most construction is private, some of it is not. The Monks boarding houses around *Wat Nokor Bachay* were partially constructed with bamboo. Some of BSDA's buildings that accommodate vocational training activities are made from bamboo. Bamboo is also sometimes donated as a construction material to newly arriving destitute families in need of an immediate dwelling.



Figure 58: Bamboo used as construction material by a recently arrived family in Chonghuk Village

Arguably the skewer economy provided a fundamental incentive for conserving bamboo groves and without this undertaking it is questionable how readily bamboo would be available for other community focused activities. This comes back to the question of how do villagers who do the work of commoning, respond to perceived threats like a commercial furniture business. Sat's reporting to me, as the Chonghuk Village Chief, of villagers' concerns that led to disinterest in furniture training, presented insight into the collective sense of responsibility for security of bamboo resources. This did not manifest in 'front stage' performances that participatory development practitioner's access whenever they hold meetings. On this stage I only saw the rehearsed performance that brought attention to stipends. The collective responsibility for these resources instead manifested in the unrehearsed back stage performances. This

is observed elsewhere to be the place where villagers usually deal with matters in a way that is not for the consumption of outsiders (Kothari 2001, 148-151).

Table 4: Impact of skewer making on the commoning of private bamboo resources, using the ‘ways of commoning’ framework (Gibson-Graham et al. 2013, 148)

WAYS OF COMMONING						
	Access	Use	Benefit	Care	Responsibility	Ownership
ENCLOSED	Narrow	Restricted by owner(s)	Private	Performed by owner(s) or employee	Assumed by owner(s)	Private individual Private group State
BAMBOO RESOURCE	Shared and wide – bamboo skewer making is a safety net that villagers are entitled to	Negotiated by a community – norms of access have been institutionalised by negotiation	Distributed widely to community – villagers have the right to livelihood, newly arriving destitute families have basic building materials	Performed by community members – interconnected with borrowing of resources	Assumed by community – stewardship of resources is established backstage, in discussions away from the view of outsiders	Private individual

Having established that bamboo skewer making incentivises practices that render private property as a commoned resource, the further question that I grapple with is what role the patron-client relationship that villagers have with the middleman has to play in this. The question seems counter-intuitive at first. James Scott (1972a) shows historically that in Southeast Asia, when villagers had access to ‘a commons’ they had more independence. It was enclosure of common resources that rendered dependence on a patron of greater necessity. As Scott puts it:

‘Just as enclosures in England had destroyed the scratch-as-scratch can subsistence economy of the poor – the cow or geese, fuel from the commons...so the weakening of traditional relief mechanisms in Southeast Asia increasingly made dependence the only route to survival’ (Scott 1972a, 26).

In one sense bamboo in Veal Sbov and Chonghuk is enclosed as private property in a way that brings owner households and middleman closer together. This means that the household (as client) and the middleman (as buyer/patron) each have something that the other wants. This is the most basic prerequisite of a patron-client relationship (6-7).⁷³

⁷³ The bargaining position required stands in contrast to the historic circumstances when the poor have nothing that the patron wants and in place of a ‘lopsided-friendship’ (another euphemism for patron-client relationships) the poor in Cambodia enslaved themselves to survive, either by having enough to eat or by having some protection from rapacious others (Chandler 2008b, 127).

However, the strength of reciprocity within this dyadic relationship is not enough on its own to keep the relationship in motion. As already stated, it is only because there are enough producers that the middleman comes at all. This means that the normative practices of commoning which render skewer production by as wide a group of villagers as possible (without depleting the resource) are also the practices that keep people's personal relationship with the middleman in motion.

Arguably, there is one feature of commoning that the patron-client relationship stymies, depending on how one looks at 'ways of commoning.' Gibson-Graham, Cameron & Healy (2013, 148) express that for a commons to be named as such the use of a resource needs to be negotiated by a community. A further question that might be asked, is '*negotiated by a community to what end?*' The dyadic relations between the middleman and individual households which might seek '*bandak*' or other forms of assistance, deters the incentives of households to collectively use bamboo, for instance by making a handicrafts or furniture as part of an association.

However, on closer consideration the above quandary is not antithetical to commoning as Gibson-Graham, Cameron & Healy (2013) have described it. 'Use' does not *necessarily* include people employing a resource in joint community ventures at all. The only principle that really applies is that *the community decides how* it is to be used. As much as the patron-client relationship deters the use of bamboo in a group venture, it might equally be the preferences of villagers not to form a group venture anyway. Torn gave insight into this (in his exit interview) when he commented on the refusal to countenance collective use of bamboo for something like furniture, saying '*If we have a long time...or if we have big Associations then maybe it is possible to plan like this. But we do not have.*' In Torn's view the relation with the middleman is more expedient, paying money here and now. The idea of an association is a lofty long term (possibly hazardous) notion without basis in reality. It might be, for instance, that due to a host of other factors villagers have preference for family business as opposed to going into business with others. These are matters for consideration in the second case study of this chapter which explores an opportunity to develop a socially inclusive vegetable supply chain extending from Chonghuk and Veal Villagers to local business.

Section Seven: Collective dynamics of social enterprise: contextual problems in Chonghuk

Between Chonghuk Village and Kampong Cham Town, a public school on National Highway 7 had been transformed by the NGO Kampuchean Action for Primary Education in partnership with the Provincial Government. This was one of three ‘demonstration schools’ which had formalised the informal fees routinely charged by teachers for ‘private tuition’ (KAPE 2014). In other words, middle income families paid fees to the school and not the teacher directly, but they gained better education for their children by doing so. Meanwhile children of means tested poor families (one third of placements) gained better quality education without fees of any kind (10). The modern school facility replete with ICT laboratories, a library and media centre and a model farm for teaching agriculture was truly remarkable set against public schools generally in Cambodia (Figure 58). As one way to start generating revenues to fund the school, KAPE had put a contract out to tender for running the newly built school canteen.



Figure 59: Demonstration school on National Highway 7, within 1.5 kilometres of Chonghuk

7.1: An opportunity to increase the market for village vegetables

Over the space of almost three months from January until April 2014 I worked with BSDA on an eventual bid for the school canteen contract. Progress was strenuous at times but continually instructive. BSDA management were initially reluctant to bid for the contract because they sensed it could not make a significant profit. The idea of the canteen as an independent business opportunity for some vocational training graduates was mooted. Some of those in training at SMILE expressed interest and it would have needed a loan from BSDA to get them started. But it was finally decided this was not a

good idea. BSDA had supported three vocational training graduates to start their own restaurant (called *Samaki Restaurant*) two years earlier. One of the graduates was Duol – who joined the hybrid action research group. *Samaki* was now in heavy debt and routinely subsidised by BSDA whose management did not want to go down this road again.

After a visit to discuss the canteen with school administrators and two further BSDA management meetings, it was finally settled in a mid-March management meeting that BSDA would make a bid. It was hoped that if the canteen could be run well and ways of making profits optimised then it could pay worker's salaries, cover rental costs, and somehow return profits to BSDA. The canteen was thus interpreted as the standard type of 'enterprising non-profit' conceived firstly by consultants in the US, as a way to make the non-profit sector more sustainable (Defourny & Nyssens 2010, 38). It was also envisaged as a way to deliver salaried work placements for vocational training graduates even if they did (problematically) remain tied to the NGO. On the condition that the canteen's vegetables would be sourced as much as possible from villagers in Chonghuk and Veal Sbov, I agreed to help BSDA complete the application paperwork and develop a short business plan.



Figure 60: BSDA visit to the school canteen after meeting with administrators. 18th February 2014

At the same time that I worked with BSDA on thinking through the school canteen I also began to work with Sat, Torn, Noun and Kiev. I sought their perspective on whether villagers in Chonghuk and Veal Sbov might benefit from the school canteen by developing a supply chain for the vegetables that it would require. Our first visit to view the canteen facility was on the 26th of February. The first thing we encountered when we went into the school, on route to the canteen, was an agriculture and aquaculture training centre to the back of the main building which included a fish and frog pond with an organic vegetable garden and composting units. The effect on all was notable. Noun repeatedly and joyously proclaimed ‘*L’or na*’ (really great). When we got to the canteen, Sat took interest in the kitchen. He began to check the fixtures, the doors, visibly impressed with the workmanship. Torn looked around aimlessly at first but then followed Sat. Kiev and Nuon continued talking to each other about the vegetable garden and fish pond on the way in. Ten minutes after we arrived I asked Noun, Kiev, Sat and Torn what they thought about the opportunity for villagers to work together on supplying vegetables to the canteen. The question prompted immediate excitement from Nuon. Kiev and Torn wore happy looks. Sat smiled broadly and continued to look at canteen fixtures with a look of contemplation. Noun was the first to speak, as Seanghath translated:

‘This is great. We have our long bean, spinach, tra kuon and cucumbers. We can provide a lot of the things they will need to feed the people here. I think this is so great... wonderful’ (Nuon).

Nuon could not stop smiling. She spoke with clarity about how the opportunity might be taken up. She seemed in her comfort zone. The first time that I met her, 7 months earlier, Nuon was cutting *tra kuon* from Sat’s garden. It was into the monsoon season – optimal conditions for cultivating *tra kuon* when new plants take root within a week and can grow at up to 4 inches per day (Lehtonen 1993, 2-3). As I interviewed Nuon late in the afternoon, her concentration sometimes lapsed as she hurriedly attended to cutting the produce that she would take to *Psa Boueng Kok* in the morning. Now here Nuon was, presented with a potentially new market for this produce almost on her doorstep and I could see the affective register change in ways it had before when she thought about business opportunities in a positive way. It was another ‘Aha moment.’

Kiev was more reserved but was smiling nonetheless. She sold pumpkin in a local market every morning to make a daily income for herself and a daughter in her late teens who was unable to work on account of a learning disability. Kiev’s husband had

passed away ten years earlier. Perhaps Nuon's enthusiasm was hard to follow. Kiev made a simple contribution, saying:

'I agree with Nuon, it is great for the village... We can sell things here' (Kiev).

Sat seemed composed. He still wore a contemplative look as he gave his opinion that:

'This can be good for us. This can work. We live near here. We can just bring the vegetables to sell here. Then we don't have to go all the way to the market, and people do not have to stay there all day and sell. There are other things they can do when they sell the vegetables quickly' (Sat)

Torn was last to speak. It was quite brief

'It is a good idea. Thank you to Mister Isaac who can manage this thing for us' (Torn).

I was left concerned. With Seanghath's help I explained that it was not for me to manage this. It needed a direct relationship between the villagers and the people who will be managing the canteen business. Torn then elaborated briefly further adding (and laughing briefly afterwards):

'I think it will work if Mister Isaac is at the top to control it' (Torn).

As on certain other occasions, something beginning positively left me reflecting on where I had been going wrong. I reiterated that I hoped villagers might forge a direct relationship with the canteen operators and that I would be returning to Australia within two months. We were heading towards the end of this work. It was agreed that Sat, Nuon, Torn and Kiev would go back and speak to villagers about this opportunity. We would hold a meeting two weeks later with the people that might be involved in running the canteen.

The next meeting was not until the 23rd March. Indecision within BSDA about who would take responsibility for running the canteen delayed matters again. The meeting took place at the school. BSDA management had been told the application was viewed favourably by school administrators and it seemed good sense to meet at the school to bring all parties together. Ominously, only Sat and Nuon attended from the hybrid research group. BSDA were represented by the Deputy Director and Catering Manager along with Seanghath. The meeting was short and not much was said. Nuon remained quiet throughout. When BSDA's Deputy Director asked Sat about the capacity of villagers to provide vegetables, Sat pointed out that the variety of vegetables that

villagers cultivate was limited, but much of what they did grow was sold at the local markets by villagers like Nuon. Sat also expressed that if villagers had enough information in advance about what was needed, perhaps a week at a time, then they might be able to organise themselves. Less notification would be bad because villagers were busy everyday trying to earn money. Sat finally said that he would let vegetable gardeners in Chonghuk know that this opportunity to supply the school canteen was making progress.



Figure 61: Sat and Nuon met with BSDA and a school administrator to discuss vegetable supplies for the canteen: 23rd March 2014

Section Eight: The realities of ‘working together’: A group discussion

The last time that the hybrid research group members met together for a group discussion, in the BSDA gift shop, was on the 8th April 2014. This group discussion was held primarily to deliberate the opportunity to supply vegetables to the school canteen. Deliberation focused mainly on the way that villagers might organise to take advantage of this opportunity, although there was also consideration of the way that the canteen itself could contribute to children’s wellbeing. It was evident that group members in attendance took pleasure in the notion that the role of villagers, as suppliers to the canteen, could also be considered as taking a role within a business that would be good for community development. However, the overriding insights to come out of the discussion, pertained to how villagers would, in practical reality, approach social enterprise as an *associational or organisational form*.

On this occasion only five of the group members attended. But alongside Venerable Kosal, the group discussion did at least bring together the main stakeholders in the vegetable supplying opportunity – namely Kiev, Nuon, Torn and Sat. Sat grew vegetables that Nuon sold in the market. Torn grew long beans when it was practical to do so and Kiev sold pumpkin that she sourced from local growers.⁷⁴ Past group discussions had normally begun with a short video or presentation. On this occasion both were used both. I started with a video that profiled the KAPE demonstration schools (KAPE 2012). Seanghath then gave a presentation that we had designed together. He began with benefits of the school facilities for children’s education and then ran through the contribution of healthy meals to children in the villages. The canteen was envisaged as a children’s nutrition program. BSDA hoped to incorporate products made by So Nutritious Co. Ltd.⁷⁵ such as vitamin fortified soya milk and children’s food supplements. Seanghath also spoke about work placements for BSDA vocational training students, some of whom like Dou, came from Kampong Siem District.

We finally arrived at the connection between the canteen and villagers in Chonghuk and Veal Sbov and finished with a familiar image – a ‘duck and rabbit’ puzzle (Gombrich 1972, 4 in Cameron & Gibson 2001, 7). This image was introduced six months earlier as an analogy to explain that research gives people different options by helping them to look at things they are familiar with in new ways. The question remaining, was how the group members would choose to view the school canteen. I came with a set of questions:

1. How can the selling of vegetables to the canteen work with a number of villagers involved? Do they foresee problems with this?
2. If they foresee any problems, how do they think these problems might be solved?
3. What support do they think would be required to help the villagers get organised to take this opportunity?

⁷⁴ We were joined by a volunteer who was due to become involved in BSDA social enterprise (including the school canteen). She is visible in on the far left still images of film footage used.

⁷⁵ So Nutritious presented at the 1st National Social Enterprise Conference of Cambodia in 2011, and also accommodated field study visits from post graduate Development Studies student in Phnom Penh. Product development has been supported by the World Food Programme. So Nutritious also works with two NGOs on programs for malnourished children (So Nutritious Co. Ltd 2016).

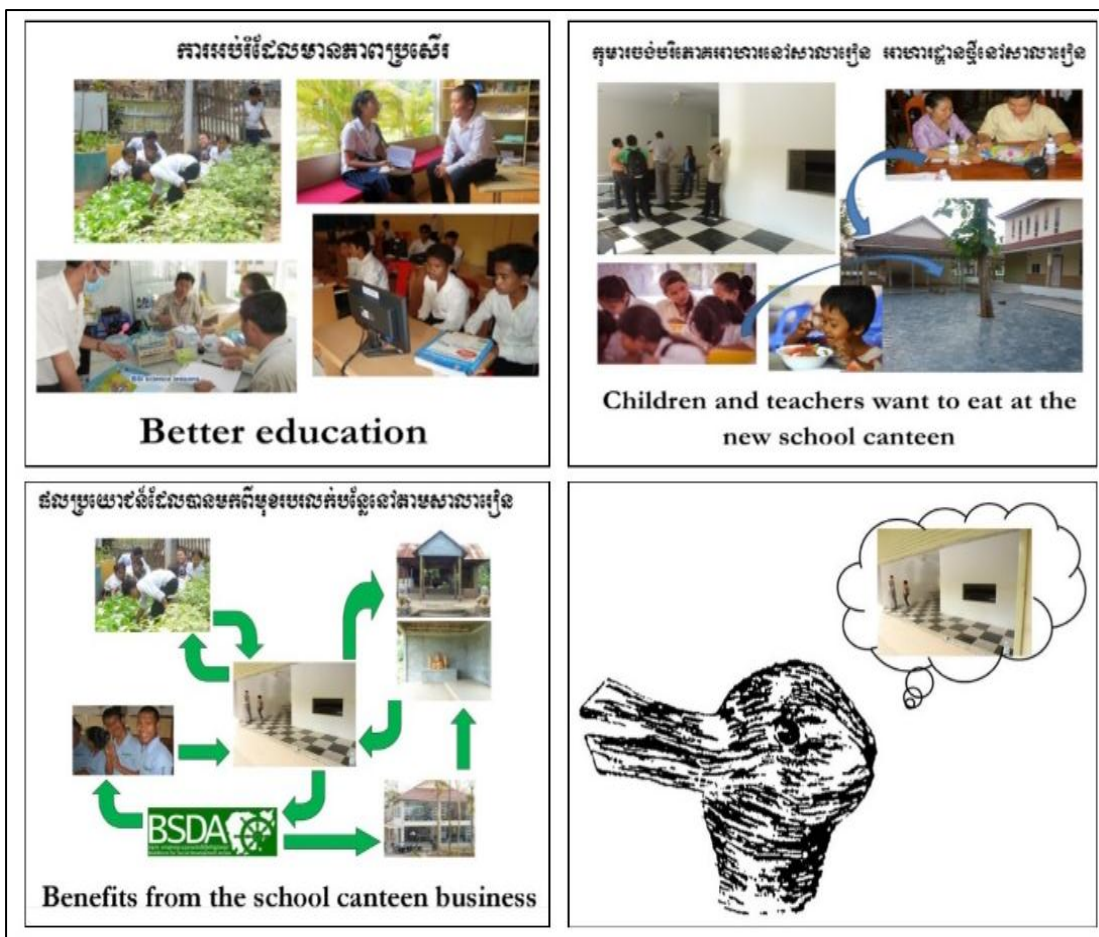


Figure 62: Slides designed with Seanghath for a discussion group. April 2014. Bottom right picture makes use of illustration (Gombrich 1972, 4 in Cameron & Gibson 2001, 7). The text at the top of each slide is a Khmer translation of the text in English language underneath.

After Seanghath asked group members to think once more about the duck and rabbit and to try and think creatively about the canteen, the trajectory of deliberation was established almost straight away. After ten seconds Sat contributed:

I could see the possibility is that, once the canteen business is running smoothly, then Noun ... will have better opportunity to sell her vegetable. Firstly the travel time and cost is more efficient because it is closer to her house, secondly she doesn't have to sell and wait ... like in the market (Sat).

Sat had reiterated almost word for word what he said when we first visited the school canteen six weeks earlier. The only difference was that *we* in that instance now became *she* or namely *Nuon*.



Figure 63: Sat (furthest right) gestures toward Nuon (5th right) who will sell the vegetables

It felt as though my opening question - How can the selling of vegetables to the canteen work with a number of group members? – had been answered immediately. It could not work at all. Nuon remained quiet. I invited Kiev's input. Kiev explained that she bought pumpkins from wholesalers and sold them closer to Chonghuk. She did not sell the vegetables that the villagers grew. I asked if Kiev thought selling produce that she acquired at wholesale to the canteen might also help her. Kiev was not swayed. She smiled, gesturing her hand to Nuon next to her until she ended patting Nuon's leg while replying:

'I would leave this opportunity for Noun... who is good in the vegetable business already' (Kiev).

Nuon put her case as the vegetable supplier. She already supplied a hotel near the Town where she once worked as a room maid. She sourced necessary vegetables that villagers could not grow from contacts in Chamkar Leu District who sent produce into Town each day by minibus. She could thus supply the canteen with everything it needed. I was still set on pursuing whether other market sellers would stand to benefit. While Nuon lived in a basic ground level iron house providing insufficient protection from monsoon rain, her business operation was more sophisticated than some of the other sellers whom were in a worse predicament than her. I asked Nuon what might happen if she could not deliver vegetables on a given day. She replied: *'I have my daughter or my husband.'* I asked what might happen if her family was busy on a given day. She avoided answering this and instead repeated her assurance that she had good contacts to supply the canteen.



Figure 64: Nuon (centre) states her credentials as the vegetable supplier to the school canteen

Torn had nothing to add. Instead he contributed that Nuon needed to ensure smooth communications to the villagers about the canteens' requirements, compounding the consensus that it was indeed Nuon's role to sell the vegetables while at the same time taking discussion in a different direction. In answer to my second question (if they foresee problems with a number of villagers being involved, how do they think these problems might be solved?), there *were* no problems with sellers working together because this proposition was not on the table. However, as Torn was illustrating, there were envisaged communication problems for the growers. This raised the same issues that Sat had raised in the meeting at the school. Villagers were busy, so they needed to know what would be required. Logistics and practicalities were mulled over for some 40 further minutes. Torn was concerned with water supplies and the viability of the supply chain in the dry season. I tried one more time to put villagers selling as a group to the school canteen back onto the table. We had looked at BSDA's sample menus (submitted in the application process), to gauge the use of vegetables grown within the villages. Kiev noted that pumpkin was included in desserts and soups. Seanghath asked if the canteen supply could be rostered, bringing a role for Kiev back into things. Sat interjected to answer the question:

'If we offer the opportunity to other suppliers then I'm afraid it would be overlapping responsibility. The supplier will be mistaken, double to the demand of the canteen' (Sat).

Kiev followed with comments to the effect that this was undesirable and unnecessary:

'It is not possible... It should be only one person who can be definitely responsible and reliable to guarantee the vegetable supply, completed to the demand. How could you find other supplier? And what for? Since one person can manage everything?' (Kiev).



Figure 65: Kiev (centre-left) was again dismissive of there being more than one supplier for the canteen, even after seeing items that she sold on the sample menus

I accepted that talk about collective benefit for market sellers could not go further. This is not to say that collective benefit for the villagers could not be foreseen from the opportunity. Sat expressed that there would be collective benefit for the vegetable growers. He qualified this with important points about the increase in volume of villagers' produce that might be sold. Sat explained that Nuon sometimes returned to the village with vegetables she couldn't sell, preventing her from taking new vegetables for the following day. If Nuon sold all her vegetables, then growers could sell more to her. In Sat's own words:

'If we talk about the business potential, I would say it is really a great and better opportunity which can release the pressure of our product sale. We will not be too concerned about the remaining vegetable to bring back home from the market.'

'What I think is that the benefit will be shared among most people, which will develop the economy in our villages progressively. Once the order motivate the growers to supply, then the productivity is increased so Noun can trade with the canteen' (Sat).

There was thus in Sat's astute view collective benefit for growers, even if there wasn't one at all for other villagers who sold to survive each day in the markets. Quite simply, if Nuon sold more vegetables then so too did the villagers who grew them and this in turn would incentivise improvements in vegetable cultivation. What is notable however

in the transcript is that all of this discussion about how growers will benefit collectively was really coming from Sat. The extent to which other group members were in agreement about this was unclear.

8.1: Digesting the vegetable supply chain

Market sellers in villages seemed on very friendly terms. If one finished selling early they would help another out. Nuon and her friend in *Psa Boueng Kok* sold vegetables in one another's absence without taking cash payment. This was all *provas* requiring reciprocity between sellers. But it belied another reality. In Nuon's exit interview I asked if she thought any connections with other villagers might help progress her vegetable selling. She said no. I mentioned Duol who runs a restaurant. Nuon replied that Dual could not help because she has a supplier already. The same went for other local restaurants. She was scared to approach them because they almost certainly had a supplier already. When asked about the competition between suppliers Nuon said '*It is very hard, very aggressive, competitive, angry, there is a lot of fighting.*' When I asked if she thought it possible to run a vegetable selling business with others, Nuon asserted:

'No it cannot. This is impossible... The first time we might do it but we will argue later' before adding that '*If people want this at the school, I don't want to do it.*'

Unlike most others in the group, Nuon felt that worker cooperatives might be attractive for *some kinds* of business venture. She had been inspired to see examples of social enterprises run by NGOs at the National Social Enterprise Conference. But the reality she knew as a vegetable seller was 'family business.' As she said in the final group discussion, she had her daughter and husband to help out if need be.

At the outset of the action research, I was aware that more than eighty per cent of the informal sector in Cambodia is constituted by family businesses (Arnold 2008). One study of social capital in Cambodian rural localities found that *all* village businesses were family businesses (Inada 2013). Moreover, this study found that while 100% of rural villagers expressed strong trust for family members little more than 5% did so for 'co-workers' (185). My initial semi-structured interviews concurred with the existing knowledge. The only economic activity identified as involving teamwork was construction. Half of the respondents who mentioned this also stressed that this was just the nature of the work – people did not work together out of choice. They were just

hired labour for the construction manager who runs a family business. A construction manager elaborated in an interview that:

‘In the past we worked together, 5 people in a group... when we finished we shared the money equally. But in the present time... the expert becomes the organizer and hires the other workers. The organizer negotiates with them and pays each day according to their skill’ (Construction business owner aged 60, Chonghuk Village: 5th August 2013)

Repeatedly it was expressed that people doing business only want to run a family business. Seanghath put it as a constraint on local economic development in the needs map during his training. Villagers did not start family business due to lack of other options. It was an explicit preference. Quoting one BSDA vocational training graduate when I asked her if people ever work together in a business:

‘... I can only think of my personal experience to start Samaki [restaurant]. I am not sure if people will do it [work together] in the next village... they will not in my village because people only want to run a family business. I think it would be very hard to change this. If they have this idea, it is okay. But it is not okay to force them’ (Female BSDA training graduate aged 21).

The last sentence struck me at the time. Perhaps she was defending things that she was accustomed to. Cambodian society is not historically individualist. Rather, like many Asian societies, and following seemingly infamous cultural characterisations developed by Geert Hofstede, it is collectivist (Chan & Chheang 2008; Hipsher 2010). However, more nuanced analysis shows that collectivism in Cambodia is particularistic. Buddhist beliefs in merit making instil a degree of individualism while collectivism also tends to be exhibited in small groups, boiling largely down to family duties (Berkvens et al. 2012; Tan & Ng 2012). What really is at issue here is the way family values are embedded in how Cambodians make sense of themselves. In pre-modern Southeast Asia, ‘family values’ were the basis for a particularistic governmentality (people’s regulation of themselves) that rendered states less structural and more omnipresent (Day 1996, 425). In modern Cambodian society, family values have again become espoused as the basis for a moral and peaceful society (Brickell 2015; Clayton 2005). Given three decades of recent conflict, this may seem to villagers like a compelling case.

Six days before the final group discussion, I attended Nuon’s daughter’s wedding. There had been a lot of build-up. Nuon and Sat were unavailable the week before and our final group discussion had to be put back. At the wedding I found out that Nuon was Sat’s

god daughter. Nuon was born in 1971 when Veal Sbov is documented to have been a site of constant fighting between ascendant Khmer Rouge forces and deficient government forces serving General Lon Nol in the newly coined ‘Khmer Republic’, subsequent to the ousting of King Sihanouk in 1970 (Bunthorn 2009). Noun’s father was killed during the Khmer Rouge purges that swept Kampong Cham from 1977-1978 (Gottesman 2004, 5-6). Sat had helped Nuon’s mother to raise her through the 1980s. I realised, eight months after I first encountered them that Sat was her perceptible father figure. With this information to hand, the turn of events in the final group discussion was not so surprising. Patronage came into things as Sat exerted his position as the Village Chief to ensure that Nuon was accepted as the canteen supplier. But perhaps it is much more accurate to simply say that ‘family’ came into things.



Figure 66: Nuon’s daughter’s wedding, Chonghuk Village, 2nd April 2014

Section Nine: Concluding discussion: Thinking about common resources, values and economic solidarity

In Chapter Three I cited literature on social enterprise and entrepreneurship that calls for more attention to ‘little narratives’ found in unheard voices: narratives that keep creativity and possibility open, rather than closed off (Cameron & Hendricks 2013; Dey & Steyaert 2010; Seanor et al. 2013). Having seen how seductive the grand narration perpetuated by well-resourced foundations and international development institutions has become in Cambodia, whether it be in relation to microfinance or impact investing, there is vital a need to focus on little narratives at the level of village communities. Little narratives are, simply put, critical in an open-minded approach to the question posed in Chapter Two, namely: *What diverse forms of social enterprise will yield sustainable effects at the grassroots level in Cambodia?*

The little narratives stumbled upon in this action research are revealing. I found that a form of economic activity – barbecue skewer production – which would not be considered to be social by standards generally set in social enterprise literature is considered social by villagers for intelligible reasons. Through this activity, villagers kept private property open as a common safety net. While the bamboo groves were not communally owned, neither were they an entirely private resource. The arrangements in place illustrate a local system for natural resource management that exposes the fallacious argument that individuals will necessarily run a common resource down.⁷⁶

Skewer-making is a basic economic activity in Chonghuk and Vela Sbov that provides a guaranteed immediate income to individual households. It suggests that sustainable social forms of enterprise, from villagers’ perspectives, must first and foremost secure their right to livelihood. Referring back to Chapter One, this invites consideration of the socialisation perspective on social enterprises that some authors (for example Ridley-Duff 2008; Ridley-Duff & Southcombe 2012; Smith & Teasdale 2012) call for more attention to alongside the more predominant ‘social purpose’ point of view. Indeed, the redistribution of surplus to precarious villagers without sufficient safety nets, through enterprise that conserves ongoing access to a resource, would in all likelihood be seen as the *de facto* social purpose of the venture.

⁷⁶ Interestingly these kinds of assumptions also underpin popularised readings of social capital. Putnam (1993) for instance claims that while social capital is a public good, it ultimately boils down to people’s rational choices and he accordingly invokes a standard reading of ‘the tragedy of the commons’ alongside game theory to make his point (163-164).

Cameron and Hendricks (2013) brought little narratives to attention when they found that the critical issue underlying people's participation in a social enterprise was the degree to which it enabled them to relate to other people and their bio-physical environment. Other research similarly finds that people's affinity with particular values is the critical motivating factor to initiate or work for a social enterprise (Amin 2009a; Howorth et al. 2011). I concur with this, but what I found is that the values villagers attached themselves to as participants in an enterprise were 'family values.' This finding was mainly born out in the data generated by exploring a new vegetable supply chain – which did proceed after I left the villages.⁷⁷

Davis (2008a) shows how the understanding of family in Cambodia gets tied up in patron-client relationships, giving rise to a fluid framing of 'family.' A person's *string* (referred to in Chapter One in relation to people's employment prospects) is one instance where family is extended and god-parenting is another (133-134). This is the historic result of precarious rural families getting caught between the traditional economy and advancing capitalist economy, necessitating survival strategies that put them in the service of a less precarious family. On one hand this presents barriers to cooperation between families of equally precarious stature, particularly if it goes against the interests of a patron figure. Such a barrier for instance, prevented bamboo-skewer producers from collectively entering the retail end of their activity by finding their own buyers in the town. Normally barriers like this would be called market failure, which some see as a golden opportunity for social entrepreneurship (Austin et al. 2006). However, it is not a market failure from a village point of view. Instead it is a common sense way to organise economic action under conditions of potential adversity. Following Polanyi (1957), this way of organising can be considered as a form of 'redistribution' that emerges from a customary (often *ad hoc*) way of 'sharing', which also, through the patron figure, 'presupposes...an allocative center in the community' (251).

Herein lies the little narrative of cooperation in a Cambodian village community that raises questions about what collectivity means, and how villagers interpret social enterprise. Bamboo skewer making is not a collective activity. Collectivity beyond the household level is dis-incentivised by dyadic ties, but these ties also incentivise 'loose cooperation' that keeps the skewer making economy in motion when a sufficient

⁷⁷ The canteen was feeding more than seventy children a day by 2015. Nuon supplied the vegetables.

number of 'equal' families depend on the same patron figure. It can be considered as an instance where the community itself has acted as an entrepreneur as far as villagers have 'organised themselves to respond' (Peredo & Chrisman 2006, 315) to an identified market opportunity that preserves livelihood, resources, and peaceful co-existence. This shows that the reasoning of social enterprise might be embodied in forms of cooperation between village level producers that make business possible individually without necessarily leading to collective business entities or collective bargaining at the point of sale.

This framing of the *raison d'être* for social enterprise arguably locates enterprising forms within a diverse economies framework. To understand what *makes enterprise social*, one has to unpack different forms that enterprise can take, along with the different types of transactions that sustain them. Skewer making is not only made sustainable by monetary transactions with the middleman but also through other obligations between the two parties. The patron provides other services at times of crisis: the producers do not go behind his back and seek to 'cut out the middleman.' In addition to all that, the ecosystem services that bamboo users perform in their own and each other's interests. In a similar vein, vegetable gardeners in the shared vegetable allotment in Chonghuk have also managed to secure a water supply through their relations with the authorities, mediated by Sat to a large degree. This water is provided at the public rate rather than the cost of private suppliers. This can be considered as villagers' collective action for business and livelihood, without the need for collective enterprise. What would remain to be seen over time is whether the relationship with the school canteen, through Nuon, would strengthen other types of cooperation between vegetable gardeners.

The data in this chapter shows that economic subjectivities emerging in the first two phases of the action research, that were open to the idea of social enterprise, were not embodied enough for participants to welcome collective forms of social enterprise in Phase 3. In the next chapter, further analysis of data is undertaken to gain better insight into why this was the case. In particular, the situated context in which the group members act on their affective registers needs to be explored more to elicit deep-seated commitments, competing obligations and a historical reading of the tension between active and reluctant subjectivities. To address these questions, the next chapter draws on data to consider members' subjectivities throughout the action research process and also at the end of it when I held exit interviews with each of them. The tensions exhibited in

participants registers and their conflicting commitments and strategies for economic survival, might also go some way towards elucidating processes of social valuation at the village level that can be contrasted with narratives of social value in the wider literature on social enterprise.

Chapter Seven: Subjectivities and interdependences: The Cambodian Village Context

Section One: Subjectivities during and after the action research

During the first two phases of the action research, social enterprise became understood conceptually by hybrid research group members as an economic venture that distributes benefits to a multiplicity of stakeholders. It was also recognised that social enterprises can be part of a collective effort for community development and this idea seemed welcomed on the whole, especially in reflection on the group visit to the 3rd National Social Enterprise Conference of Cambodia. However, when the opportunity arose to initiate a vegetable supply chain to a local school canteen, social enterprise was viewed in a particularistic fashion.

For a broader understanding of the way group members saw social enterprise, in the first half of this chapter I turn to group members' exit interviews and subjectivities at the close of my fieldwork. Overall, new subjectivities which materialised in the first two phases were not embodied enough for most group members to accept the plausibility of cooperatively run social enterprises in their respective villages. Duol, who was a member of a small worker cooperative, was disenchanted with cooperativism. Others held that free-riding would be problematic, or exhibited little faith in the morals and abilities of other adult villagers. This is not to say that there was no imaginable social value in economic enterprise. But embodied in processes of valuation, social value was processed through historical context and tensions between competing obligations. These tensions come to the fore in exit interviews with Sat and Kiev.

In the second half of the thesis, I turn towards local events in the late 1970s, during the Democratic Kampuchea period, or synonymously the 'Khmer Rouge Regime' or the 'Pol Pot times.' This action research project has been premised on strength-based approaches. But events at this time do have an enduring impact on villagers today in different ways that render collective social enterprise a problematic proposition. It also

renders enterprise community development with anything more than short term aims problematic in certain ways. Findings are sobering for the practice of strength-based approaches like Asset Based Community Development and appreciative inquiry. However, in the conclusion of this chapter I look at ways of reframing notions of social economy, solidarity, and social enterprise, and means by which the social value assumed within these concepts can be aligned with villagers' realities. Focusing on 'wellbeing' in particular could provide a way to focus on social value as an embodied process, tentatively addressing the research question posed in Chapter Two: *What are the important processes of social valuation at the grassroots village level?*

1.1: Duol – A reluctant and disenchanting entrepreneurial subject

Duol entered the action research as a restaurateur, in partnership with two other graduates from BSDA's vocational training at SMILE restaurant. Their business called Samaki (translating as *Solidarity*) Restaurant could be considered a cooperative micro-enterprise. When Duol introduced herself to the hybrid research group, she said that she enjoyed working in a team. She could share ideas to develop the business. During discussion about the Portrait of Gifts Duol contributed that the business partners shared their skills to develop the restaurant, counteracting Nuon and Sreynit's scepticism about people freely sharing skills. But in the exit interview, Duol's narrative changed. She said that:

'Actually I want to work on my own. We have different ideas, cross ideas. If I could work alone or with my family, I would choose that... Some days it is good, there is daily advice, some days it is not good... It is too heavy for me. The team makes me upset. Some days we get cross with each other and we have no income. It is too stressful.' (Duol exit interview).

I was taken aback. I had selected Duol as a possible co-researcher thinking that her cooperative experiences, which she appeared to deeply value, would be a useful talking point – and they sometimes were. Duol's change in narrative resulted from ongoing experiences. While Samaki Restaurant was originally located in affordable premises at the edge of Kampong Cham Town, when I arrived to begin fieldwork, it had moved next door to BSDA's SMILE Restaurant on the Riverside (Figure 66). Duol said the old premises were hot with an iron roof and no air conditioning. Customers had little money. Here, in comfort, they could try to attract the tourists. But tourist traffic was low and minimal in the raining season, and the Riverside was competitive. Now their rent

was 460 USD per month. They were in more debt to BSDA as they had not repaid their initial business loan and now BSDA was paying their utilities. Without money for supplies, Samaki staff went next door to take supplies from SMILE when customers came in. The menu became the same as SMILE's and custom dwindled further.



Figure 67: Samaki Restaurant (right) next to BSDA's SMILE Restaurant (left, green tarpaulin)

Duol also said she wanted to return to SMILE if possible: *'I could take a low salary if it is guaranteed, this would solve the problem for me. I would be secure.'* Samaki closed soon after I left Kampong Cham. The whole team went to work for BSDA's Executive Director Vandong Thorn, in a new guesthouse he set up as another *family business*. Much like market sellers who sold to survive, Duol was an entrepreneur who did not want to be one. Neither did her partners. They wanted reliable waged employment and protection from a trusted patron figure.

Far from Duol finding cooperativism more inviting through participation in the action research, countervailing business realities meant that the joys of cooperativism wore increasingly thin. Similar problems, in reality, were envisaged by Kimhour and Sreynit in their exit interviews.⁷⁸ Both said economic cooperation could not work because of free-riding and raised the same example in Veal Sbov Village. Sreynit's family went into a catering venture with another family. Both families invested money but Sreynit's family did all the work while the other family expected to profit equally. Trust broke down, the venture stopped and friendship between the families suffered. Their falling out was

⁷⁸ Kimhour emerged as an interesting socially entrepreneurial individual as the action research progressed. The tensions between subjectivities that Kimhour embodies are discussed in depth in Chapter Eight.

common knowledge in the Village. After Sreynit's account of this, she firmly stated that people cannot successfully do business as a group.

1.2: Sreynit – Dispositions toward inter-family solidarity and active, asset based strategies

Despite Sreynit's unflinching resistance to cooperativism, her subjectivity did change in some ways. During the action research process, she was pessimistic about villagers giving up their time for helping others. In the exit interview, she expressed greater optimism that practices of care and willingness to share skills, documented in the Portrait of Gifts, could help families to start and grow a business. I asked if any particular activities could be useful to business development, she replied: *'yes, more newsletters.'* Distributing newsletters had led her into conversations that brought her closer to other villagers. I pursued the point that in our review of the newsletter, when we discussed the call for villagers to share knowledge of how to make a chicken cage, Sreynit had incredulously asked how people would survive and feed their family if they share things freely. While Sreynit had rejected sharing knowledge then, now she replied that: *'I changed my mind. It can be useful. Maybe only a little bit useful, but sharing is a good idea.'* Sreynit had warmed in principle to the notion of 'social surplus.'

From Sreynit's point of view, although family business was the only business model that she could make real sense of, she felt it was a good idea for one family business to help another one to develop whenever possible. She compared her family's catering to the school canteen, saying that her parents could use local villagers' produce as much as possible instead of imported produce. She was a reflexive economic subject, as far as she felt that family businesses and the economy in which they are situated *can be social*, if families support each other as economic participants.

When I asked Sreynit if outside help is a prerequisite to business opportunities, she also showed an active disposition, replying: *'No we can start ourselves, we do not need them to mill the rice, we can start music bands.'* Her disposition might have stemmed as much (or more) from her family's relatively successful business, as from the research. But in the research process, her disposition was nonetheless affective. She finally exhibited faith in the skills of other villagers and her community's capacity to shape its economic destiny.

1.3: Sreyrov and Venerable Kosal – Mixed economic motivations and a shared pessimism of strength based approaches

Sreyrov was partially embedded in the deficit perspective when I met her. The education of young girls was close to Sreyrov's heart. But her description of girls dropping out *en masse* from education was inconsistent with commune level data on Chonghuk Village. All girls aged between 11 and 15 *were* attending school although more than half were in primary school, signifying missed or repeated years (NCDD 2012). In her exit interview, Sreyrov expressed optimism about BSDA's traditional dancing enterprise. Children from poorer local families received dance training and participated in performances, sometimes for tourists and sometimes at local weddings. Half of the money taken was divided equally among the children – the rest went to the dance instructors and to BSDA. In Sreyrov's view, this might *eventually* build appetite for economic cooperation in the villages. However, cooperation was deferred to a later, unclear future. She remained resolutely sceptical of cooperation among the current adult population, expressing that *'people are not friendly or honest. They are jealous, they are not good neighbours.'* The proposition that the *here and now* is the most empowering time to start bringing 'other worlds' into existence (Gibson-Graham 2008a) had little traction. When I queried her acknowledgement of possibilities presented by the Portrait of Gifts during a previous workshop, in dialogue with Venerable Kosal, she replied:

'...the project taught me more about how people help each other. Based on your research, yes people help each other. Based on my experience though, they do not.'

Sreyrov was also dismissive of villagers' skills saying that: *'Most people are lazy, even if they develop the knowledge they do not apply it.'* In summary, her bleak outlook at the outset of the research still persisted.

Sreyrov was very interested in business personally. When I met her, she had innovative ideas. She felt that by improving transport links and developing direct contacts with companies, she could bring new products to local retailers. Nine months later, she had pursued her ambitions. She worked part-time for a private sector marketing company and part-time for BSDA. She ultimately desired full time work in the private sector, after her Bachelors' Degree in Management. She said that beyond income for the family, business is good for people's confidence and compels them to make networks. Sreyrov's articulation embodied liberal conceptions of bridging social capital. However,

unlike Sreynit, she was pessimistic that a family business can act out of solidarity with another one. She saw little place for a social economy and was intensely sceptical of businesses goodwill, expressing:

‘It is not a good idea for business to benefit the community development because people are not interested, they don’t want to participate’ and that *‘...Local businesses only care about themselves and their family. Maybe it can happen in other villages, but not in my village.’* (Sreypov exit interview).

Sreypov was an *active* economic subject. She had good business ideas and was determined to pursue them. But she was not a *reflexive* economic subject. Her relational sensitivities towards health promotion projects and young women’s education did not extend to doing business. She went as far as saying it was a bad idea to do so. Her lack of faith in others did not signify the embodiment of a half-full glass. Tellingly, she was adamant that BSDA could not initiate any community-based projects at all with assets we identified. She said *‘the donor is needed absolutely before BSDA can start.’* Further probing made no headway, she exclaimed that: *‘the NGO never takes any asset from the village’* and that *‘All I see is that Vandong never uses this [village assets]. We must always have the donor.’* Strength based approaches like ABCD made little sense to Sreynit in the final analysis, either as a basis for community development, social business development or for NGO work.

When I first met Venerable Kosal, he seemed more optimistic than most other interviewees. He spoke about Buddhist festivities (*Pchum Ben* and *Kathena*) that were personally important to villagers but which also had symbolic importance for the community. He said: *‘It is... important to see the people together.’* Buddhist festivities and culture was *enactive*. It gave rise to dialogue, perpetuated problem solving and sensory feedback that diminished distance between villagers and actively improved the world around them (Rado 2014). However, Venerable Kosal was not intuitively drawn to social enterprise. He saw the foremost duty of a business as providing for the family. He was also sceptical that business owners would make contributions to community infrastructure, expressing that it only happens *‘...if the village chief called them to do it.’*

At the end of the research project, Venerable Kosal’s disposition had changed. His conceptual understanding of social enterprise had left him predisposed to starting one. He was saddened by low participation in the bamboo furniture training but still thought

that a furniture business could help the rehabilitation of drug users. He was hopeful that BSDA might back a start-up venture. Working in the research group led him to believe that teamwork can be strengthened: *'I saw ways to make it stronger. After several months, I believed everyone had more ideas than before.'* He thought that profit sharing was both plausible (although he personally, as a monk, could receive nothing) and valuable as a way to build trust and educate people about greedy habits – the primary cause of suffering in Buddhist theology (Kolm 1986). Venerable Kosal's views resonated with the 'socialisation perspective' on social enterprises (Ridley-Duff & Southcombe 2012; Smith & Teasdale 2012) and also with the coordinates of ethical economies which include deliberations over surpluses (Gibson-Graham & Roelvink 2010).

However, for all of his enthusiasm and positive valuation of social enterprise, Venerable Kosal did not consider *community-led* enterprises viable. Venerable Kosal was sceptical of villagers' skills, vision and morals when I met him. In the exit interview, little had changed. He was only slightly less sceptical than Sreyrov, caught between strengths and neediness when he said:

'Villagers are not weak, but they lack creativity, productivity, initiative' and elsewhere that 'they have some knowledge but it is not enough, they do not know what they are really doing. They just do what their family did before.'

He was also pessimistic that villagers could ever exhibit readiness to act:

'they just wait for the NGO... They do not like to initiate or lead, without a leader I am not sure who can do it.' (Venerable Kosal, exit interview).

Venerable Kosal's view of villagers is problematic for social enterprise development. The co-production of well-being in communities through social enterprise requires, alongside good facilitators and leaders, a propensity for self-help that is built on faith in other people (Farmer & Stephen 2012; Munoz et al. 2015). Instilling faith in the community is also central to performative action research that is geared towards asset based community interventions (Cahill 2008; Cameron & Gibson 2005a; Gibson, Cahill, et al. 2010). At the outset of the action research, I had anticipated that bringing NGO workers into the hybrid research group might mobilise such faith in others. But despite the asset mapping, Portrait of Gifts and constant exposure to other villagers' skills and interests, Venerable Kosal and Sreyrov still struggled to see the best in other villagers. They were both seemingly dismissive of the 'indigenous technical knowledge' that

developmental approaches such as ABCD or participatory rural appraisal try to mobilise (Chambers 1997; O’Leary 2007).

What I found in Sreypov’s dismissal of a strength-based posture, reflects the observation elsewhere that donor transfers have stifled NGOs’ initiative in Cambodia (Ear 2012b, 32). Donor transfers, drawing on Mauss, are gifts infused with personal qualities that create social bonds (Shutt 2012). These bonds between an NGO and its donors can take precedence over an NGO’s other relationships and gradually instil a ‘professional’ culture in the NGO. This in turn can lead NGO staff to become dismissive of local people’s knowledge and critical of their behaviours (Frewer 2013; Hughes 2003, 141-146). These observations seem to concisely reflect Venerable Kosal and Sreypov’s subjectivities as NGO professionals.

1.4: Nuon – A tentatively collective economic subject struggling to ‘live-well’

Throughout the action research cycle, Nuon was caught in different ‘affectual moments’ – that is, moments of ‘aesthetic experience’ where one enters ‘a relational area of sensibility, the indeterminate feeling of sensate participation in the material world’ (Toledo Ramírez 2014, 41-42). Nuon engaged in community visioning, sensing ‘pictures’ of a different future and gradually resisted negative affective registers. However, a positive disposition was not readily sustained. In her exit interview, Nuon said that villagers could not initiate local economic development with the assets that they have. She despaired at her ‘*hopeless*’ situation, despite the emergence of a new vegetable supply chain that she was positioned to benefit from. Nuon said that she could only act on opportunities handed down to her, not create or find opportunities herself: ‘...*For example you introduce the canteen and I can continue.*’ On the subject of the school canteen, Nuon changed the course of the interview by asking ‘*inside the canteen, do we need help to cut the vegetable as well as supply?*’ She was saddened when I said the canteen was set up by BSDA to create work for their training graduates. If Nuon had been offered paid work in the canteen, she would have given up her market selling. To reiterate, market-vending micro-entrepreneurs are not often entrepreneurs through choice.

Interestingly, in contrast to most group members Nuon said she *would* like to work in a cooperative. While cooperativism was impractical as a way to sell vegetables, she said in other circumstances ‘*I think it is possible. When we work together we can share ideas, we can find new ways to do things.*’ Nuon drew on her perceived success of Duol’s restaurant (she was

oblivious to its problems). She drew on experience as a hotel worker, where problems with deceitful suppliers were solved by team work. She said the school canteen involves a team and that: *'If one person has a problem, we explain more and solve it together.'* On one hand Nuon was saying that the nature of the business determines if cooperativism is a good idea. On the other, she was still pitching her case for working in the school canteen.

Ben-Ner and Ellman (2013) explain that people who join worker cooperatives, do so with mixed motivations. Heterogeneous 'social preferences' (non-exhaustively) include the desire for autonomy (as opposed to dependency), trust in others, trustworthiness and a desire for equity. These preferences infer a continuum between abstract 'just-selfish' and 'purely altruistic' positions (82-83). When Nuon spoke about problem solving and sharing ideas, she exhibited trust in others. Throughout the project, while fixated on her own interests, Nuon also thought about the benefit for other vegetable gardeners in Chonghuk that could result from market research. Nuon *was* a reflexive economic subject exhibiting relational dispositions. However, dependency also prevailed over autonomy in Nuon's thinking. This was profoundly signified by her sensed need for opportunities to be handed down by others. When I asked if economic opportunities might be actively sought out by approaching other businesses that might buy her produce, pessimism and reluctance came to the fore. Nuon again said that the situation is *'hopeless'* before continuing: *'I can be hopeful but the percentage of hope is a very low percentage.'*

Nuon was ultimately drawn towards a worker-cooperative because she felt it might be more secure than business on her own. Self-driven motives prevailed. It is inconceivable that Nuon envisaged a worker cooperative as anything other than a better survival strategy than market selling. When I first encountered Nuon, she was utterly sceptical about the role of business in community improvement. Through the action research, Nuon had become less sceptical, and open to the idea of social enterprise as a conceptual tool for community development. After the social enterprise conference, she had also exhibited a positive affective register related to social enterprise development and resisted talk of deficits that would place constraints upon this. In the exit interview however, Nuon was as sceptical about businesses taking roles in community improvement as she was at the beginning of the research. She said that: *'They [local businesses] never help anything. What they make they bring home'* and also maintained that the only purpose of a business is to generate *'profit for us to survive.'*

Nuon's disposition signified once again that the villagers' right to livelihood (or *profit to survive*) would be the de facto social purpose of a social enterprise. However, it was clear that Nuon really struggled to see enterprise as *social*, because profit to survive was the *only purpose*. The resource flows from RfKV, or social externalities of the school canteen, did not finally feature in the way that Nuon could conceive of enterprise at all, although the glimmer of another disposition was elicited when Nuon finally said that: *'Maybe they [local businesses] contribute at ceremonies.'*

1.5: Torn – An ambivalent and dependent economic subject

Sreyrov, Venerable Kosal and Nuon all struggled to see the glass as half-full. Torn rejected the metaphor entirely. When I asked if the community might take action to improve the economy, he tersely replied:

'No, we have no money, no technique, no resources... the percentage of the glass is so small, really the glass is only 5% full.'

It is not clear if Torn encountered strong active economic dispositions throughout the action research. In the reflection on the Conference visit, there was evidence for this – Torn felt motivated to develop a new vegetable allotment alongside his long beans, with community development in mind. Presentations by social enterprises in the conference breakout session 'Social Enterprise and Agriculture' made an impression on him. He also without doubt wanted to take part in such a conference again. Torn spoke of the desirability of new village associations at different points in the research cycle. But in his final analysis, new associations were as unlikely as they were before the action research started. Torn's comments and actions at different points suggested that he participated in the action research from a disinterested position.

Torn applied himself to particular tasks. The Portrait of Gifts Questionnaires returned by Torn were filled out comprehensively. A lot of boxes (listing skills, interests and activities) were ticked from page to page and written qualitative answers were provided where requested. Torn had spent time helping neighbours to complete their questionnaires. I was encouraged, but in reality, data collection was a familiar role that had little to do with active engagement in the project. In his exit interview Torn expressed: *'It is my normal job to do something like this for the commune Council... I followed the questionnaire, it is useful for people to get information.'* Torn saw the use that *other people* have for data, but not necessarily it seemed, himself. He also mobilised villagers for the meeting

about bamboo furniture training in Veal Sbov. He kept careful count of people and asked afterwards if I was happy with attendance. I was worried that Torn saw this as the totality of his role. It cannot be said with certainty what this boils down to, but Torn's main role as the Deputy Village Chief, which was calling villagers to meetings on behalf of the Veal Sbov Village Chief, seems pertinent. Torn was used to taking orders.

Just as villagers' in Chonghuk wanted to attend bamboo training as a way to secure stipend payments, Torn had also engaged in this project primarily for stipend income. When I asked Torn if he would get involved with a similar project in the future without stipends he replied: *'I can give a short answer. No money no work'*, laughing afterwards. I asked if lower stipend payments would be acceptable, and Torn replied: *'Much is better'*, laughing again. Torn's dependant subjectivity came out in discussion of his desire for a new agriculture plantation. The same problems surfaced as those raised when I first met him. There was no water in the dry season, private water was too expensive and combined *'together with fertiliser and seed and pesticide it is all too expensive.'* He continued: *'I can only grow long bean for a few months, but if Isaac can bring the well then I will never forget him for my whole life'* – considerable laughter ensued on Torn's part here.

Like most members of the research group, Torn was still finally dismissive of economic cooperation. Firstly, he said *'It is hard to say... it is difficult even after this project.'* When I asked him to clarify the degree of difficulty, he moved to a concrete negative position: *'It is impossible, they will not. For example, the construction manager does not share money with the workers, he just hires the labour.'* I asked Torn if business could benefit the community by distributing benefits beyond the household. Torn felt that the Rice Fields Kids' Village could achieve this, but regarding business inside the village, the most he could say was that: *'... if the family has a better life then the community has a better life.'* Torn shared the view with others that not only is the right to livelihood *social in itself*, but it was also the only foreseeable positive outcome of enterprise. In summary if every family had a good business, then the village survived. It was as good as things can get. This was also the expressed opinion of Kiev and Sat, whose exit interviews elucidate some so far neglected contextual concerns related to economic solidarity.

1.6: Kiev and Sat – Desire for stability, haunted by the past and subject to competing responsibilities

Kiev was a known supporter of the Cambodian People's Party (CPP) which has ruled Cambodia, in one way or another, since the ousting of the Khmer Rouge in 1979. This no doubt assisted her appointment to the Chonghuk Village Committee. The CPP's political mandate has always rested on its leaders' roles in the ousting of the Khmer Rouge (CPP leaders were defected Khmer Rouge cadre, their ousting of the Khmer Rouge in 1979 was supported by Vietnamese forces). While the CPP have coupled this mandate with economic growth and infrastructure in the past decade (Hughes & Un 2011), the Party continues to press on the population of Cambodia today, particularly in the run up to elections, that the only alternative to a CPP Government is civil war (McCargo 2014). The recourse to menace (which is very real – the CPP would never accept the loss of an election⁷⁹) has a disproportionate impact on voters (such as Kiev, Sat, Torn and also Nuon) whose memories go back further than the recent period of stability (Hughes 2015).

Fundamentally, Kiev had a straight-forward desire to live in a peaceful, stable community. She exhibited this in different ways. In the first group discussion, I approached the expectations of authority figures in their dealings with the villagers (probing informal payments, corruption and expectations of loyalty manifest in patron-client relationships). After an uncomfortable silence, Kiev responded by sidestepping my line of inquiry and abruptly stating that:

'We had developments in 2010 when we had good communication with powerful people. We succeed. What we have is the development and improvement.'

Kiev was referring here to the electrification of the villages in 2010. In Kiev's view, the motives of officials were either acceptable in accordance with cultural norms of hierarchy (Chandler 1984; Ledgerwood 2007; Nissen 2008) or quite simply, never to be questioned. As Davis (2008b) notes, Cambodian villagers tend to seek to be close to people with power rather than to challenge them. For Kiev, life in Chonghuk was better than it used to be. She made this clear when I first met her. When I asked Kiev (in her exit interview) if she thought that any kind of collaborative business might be possible at

⁷⁹ Prime Minister Hun Sen revamped these threats more recently, after the so called 'culture of dialogue' between the CPP and opposition Cambodian National Rescue Party broke down (Willemyns 2015).

all, having reached the end of the research, she referred to *now* being *better than the past*, before turning the question onto me:

‘Now it is the modern time, not the old time. They work in the garment factory, but it is not a group. They will not come to work together. It cannot be solved... It is not easy, but... things are much better now because people have the job and have their own skill. Can I ask you a question? ... Why do you keep asking if people want to work together?’

I asked Kiev if she recalled watching the video about social enterprise development in the Philippines, and explained that I wanted to find out if these kinds of businesses are a good idea in Cambodian villages. Kiev replied *‘It is impossible’* and continued:

‘People want to save their time and money. If they work together for one month and there is nothing at the end they cannot afford it. We are close to the market, we can sell. We survive. We buy rice and fish....’

Three issues emerged in Kiev’s response:

1. Villagers are busy with survival now;
2. Villagers prefer to work alone;
3. Villagers are thankful for the stability they have nowadays.

Kiev was firstly reiterating a point made by Torn when I discussed with him the possibility of a bamboo furniture business. Villagers need money *here and now*; they do not have time to develop businesses with a medium or even short-term pay off. A day without earned income is difficult, a month is an insurmountable crisis. When I asked Kiev if she thought that social enterprise and team work might be useful for people without employment, she reiterated that people are *‘too busy’* and that: *‘...nobody has no job. We all have to work to survive.’* Notably, in the total absence of a welfare state, in Cambodia it is working poverty more than unemployment that is the problem faced by most people (NIS & ILO 2010, 23-24).

Above all this in Kiev’s question asked of me was her simple reiteration that villagers do not (in her view) want the burden of cooperation. Inter-personal problems are avoided when villagers fend only for their family. This was verified when Kiev handed over economic opportunities to Nuon, during deliberation on the vegetable supply chain to the school canteen. Kiev was acting in accordance with established norms of conflict avoidance and also showing deference to the expressed wishes of the Village Chief (Sat).

Furthermore, above all else, *now* was ‘*not the old time.*’ Kiev was born in 1963. In Chonghuk she had survived her childhood through the Cambodian traumas of the late 20th century. Things were not perfect now but they were better than the ‘old time’, when people were *forced* to work together by communist regimes. She was thankful that villagers nowadays *survived!* Kiev enjoyed being part of the research and taking part in discussions, but she was also finally perplexed by the trajectory of it all.

Kiev’s responses give the strongest impetus imaginable to reflect critically upon ABCD practicioning and also on the what a community-based *social* enterprise might mean. Mathie and Cunningham (2003, 484) point out that ABCD is not *done to* communities and that its origins lie within community experiments. But the question that must be asked is, what does an ABCD practitioner make of it when the type of development widely celebrated in connection with ABCD is not commensurate with a community’s wishes? Cambodian academic Meas Nee’s reminiscences on participatory development during the 1990s in Cambodia are highly pertinent:

‘How do the villagers understand when outsiders come in and begin to talk about community development? Possibly the outsiders begin to explain as our team did at first, “We want you to cooperate. We want you to work together.” The people feel sick at the sound of these words. They open their eyes wide. Do you want to bring back something like the Pol Pot times?’ (Meas 1995, 51).

The ‘Pol Pot times’ is the common way that Cambodians refer to the Khmer Rouge era in the 1970s. Meas Nee continued in this text, to reflect on Samaki solidarity groups that were imposed on villagers under Vietnamese occupation in the early 1980s, writing: ‘*people were not ready for that word, solidarity.*’ He advised practitioners that ‘*in the beginning this word will simply irritate their ears*’ (51-52). Perhaps not much had changed, almost 20 years later. Kimhour expressed that people were happier when the policy of imposed ‘solidarity collectives’ under the Vietnamese occupation ended. It was unclear if *Samaki* (solidarity) *Restaurant* had been named as such by Duol and her business partners. The name seemed to have come from BSDA managers who developed their vocational training program in partnership with a donor based in Switzerland. The ideas underlying their restaurant were, to a significant extent, imported from abroad.

If there was any doubt at all that the Khmer Rouge era, that ended before half of the group members were even born, affects today’s appetite for economic cooperation, it was dispelled by Sat. He spoke positively of the project overall. He praised the school

canteen intervention highly saying that in this instance, in contrast to bamboo furniture training, something relevant to villagers had been unearthed. But when I asked him if a project like the one that we had undertaken could ever promote cooperation in a social enterprise, his response was:

*‘No, it is impossible. People will try for their family... **Now it is not the Pol Pot regime... it is not that time!** (His voice was raised somewhat). Before they work together in the regime, but now they will not use their capacity together. They would cheat, avoid the work. But in their family they will try their best.’*

When I asked Sat what affect the Pol Pot time had on villagers, he responded that:

‘In the Pol Pot regime they do not have any property, if they don’t do it they all die. Even if they had no skill, they had to do it or they will die. Construction, cutting, dams, irrigation, working at night time. In the field they were happy together before Pol Pot!’ (Sat exit interview, 11th April 2014).

Sat was the only person to talk about the ‘Pol Pot regime’ openly, although Kiev touched on it implicitly. Out of sensitivity to the connection of the word ‘collective’ with the Khmer Rouge time, throughout the action research project I avoided using the term ‘hybrid research *collective*’ that stands in community economies literature (Gibson-Graham & Roelvink 2010). I chose to say co-researchers were instead part of a ‘research *group*.’ In group discussions I completely avoided the Khmer Rouge and its most notorious leader – Pol Pot. The ethical problems with people recounting trauma was something I was ill equipped to deal with. Also in accordance with the principles of strength based approaches, I focused as much as possible on positive dispositions. I was cognoscente of advice to practitioners in Cambodia that dwelling on this point in time renders villagers’ incapacity to act as a self-fulfilling prophecy (Krishnamurthy 1999; Öjendal & Sedara 2006). In all the time that I worked with the research group, this interview with Sat was the only instance when Pol Pot came up. Perhaps it only did so at a point in time when, after almost nine months, I had done enough to earn his trust.

After Sat’s plain-spoken outpouring, the interview stopped for two minutes. What struck me in that intermission, was Sat’s emphasis on *family* as villagers’ sole reason to *try their best*. Family was as prominent in his words as Pol Pot was. Sat did his best for Nuon (his god daughter) when he directed the economic value of the vegetable supply chain to the school canteen towards her. Critically, Sat processed opportunities from a position

of tension between multiple, simultaneously existing subjectivities. He was at once a family-oriented entrepreneur, a farmer, a community mobiliser and organiser, a leader who was accountable to higher authority figures and a survivor of traumatic events that are beyond the imagination of most of human-kind. Through all of this, Sat managed to focus on community benefit as the outcome of entrepreneurship. Even if he did finally appropriate a vegetable selling opportunity for his god daughter's benefit, he could reconcile this with his other obligations with one simple assertion – if Nuon sells more vegetables to the canteen, then so do his neighbouring villagers sell more of the produce that they grow.

Sat's belief in doing the best of the family – that is, in order to survive one must be a 'family business person' (if not a waged worker) – in itself implies various subject positionalities. Bacq and Lumpkin (2014) show that in family businesses people are all at once a business owner, a manager, an employee and a family member. This means different systemic logics are at play when one decides if decisions put 'family first' or 'business first.' The identity of a family business person is therefore shaped by decisions that do not strictly adhere to economic or capitalist rationale. Bacq and Lumpkin compare the multiple-subjectivities in family business with those in social business ventures (SBV's), writing that: *'much the same way as the family is the raison d'être of a family business, community members are the reason why many SBV's exist and were founded'* (273). Family business from this point of view is inherently social because it compels people to adopt the subject positions of different kinds of business stakeholders with equally legitimate claims on benefits that the business generates.

I propose in summary, that Sat was a quintessentially reflective economic subject in Chonghuk Village. He was iteratively engaged in an embodied process of valuation that I outlined in Chapter Two. Between the multiplicity of outcomes that could be envisaged, Sat managed to arrive at one he could be happy with. This process shows how the act of valuation, and therefore what counts as social value, is not just complex and contingent on the context but also an ethically personal affair as well as an inter-subjective one. The latter point upholds the principle that members of communities negotiate their interdependencies with others in circumstances where *the social* is not static, but is instead something that *happens* (Dey 2007, 557). It also shows, from an embodied perspective, how Sat's act of valuation is a process of world making, typified

by structural coupling (Varela et al. 1992) between understanding the world and enacting it at the same time.

Section Two: Life under the Khmer Rouge in the 1970s

It is arguable that a range of factors go together to explain the reluctance of villagers in Veal Sbov and Chonghuk to consider collaborative economic activities. Some may argue that the population of Cambodia has in general surpassed the traumatic stress of the Pol Pot time. Cambodia is now a lower middle income country with ‘development prospects.’ Others who find that Post Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) leaves imprints on DNA and has links to memory problems and immune system deficiency (Uddin et al. 2010) might disagree. To imagine that an inter-generational trauma impact would not affect reciprocity and self-help is excessive optimism in my view.

Kampong Cham Province in particular had a history of communist agitation before and after Cambodian independence from the French, particularly arising from the rubber plantations in earlier 20th Century (Kiernan 1979, 1981). There was a documented presence of the Communist Party of Kampuchea (CPK later the *Khmer Rouge* regime) leadership – including Saloth Sar (notoriously later known as Pol Pot) and Ieng Sary – in the Province in the early 1960s (Chandler 1991, 1999). Prince Sihanouk’s forces were busy with violently repression of communism in the Province by the late 1960s (Kiernan 2004, 249-251). But after Sihanouk was ousted from political power on the 18th of March 1970 by a right wing political faction seeking an alliance with the US, Sihanouk (now in exile in China) started pleading for the peasantry to join the CPK and Pol Pot to rise up against his deposeders (Chandler 1991, 217; Widyono 2008, xiii-xiii; 25; 289). In 1973 Kampong Cham Town was captured by Khmer Rouge soldiers who marched some 20,000 townspeople (or ‘unproductive labour’) out into the countryside where they performed forced rural labour (Tyner 2008, 112-113).

When the Khmer Rouge fighters overran Kampong Cham in the early 1970s, the provincial population had an early taste of things to come after they overran the Cambodian capital Phnom Penh. The CPK leadership proclaimed the first year of Cambodian history (year zero) in the newly named Democratic Kampuchea (DK), and changed the face of the country within a week. Roughly 2 million Phnom Penh residents were forced on a march into the countryside, in order to labour in rural collectives

farming rice, working on rubber plantations or building irrigation works – all in the name of instating a communist agrarian utopia overseen by '*Angkar*' - 'the revolutionary Organization' (Chandler 2008b, 254-256; Kiernan 2008, 172). The purges of academics, monks and political officials began at once. Cholera epidemics quickly ensued (Mertha 2014, 1-8; Quinn 1989, 181-185). Money was ostensibly banned though Khmer Rouge cadre still used it widely at the Thailand borders to secure their own provisions (Twining 1989).

Displaced urbanites were labelled by Khmer Rouge cadre as 'new people' (marking them out as the derided *nouveau riche*). They were set apart from the rural peasantry (particularly in longstanding CPK strongholds) who were labelled 'old people.' New people were assigned to hard labour from dawn to dusk, their survival chances were lower than old people (Stuart-Fox & Ung 1986, 46-48). The separation between new and old people's labour roles has been illustrated by Ung Bunhaeng – an urban professional who was relocated to a village in Prey Veng Province (adjacent to Kampong Cham). After surviving the Khmer Rouge, Ung Bunhaeng later graduated in fine art and collaborated on the telling of his story with remarkable drawings (see Figure 67). The dam construction sites in Kampong Cham that Sat spoke of when he described the 'Pol Pot regime', were also places where Khmer Rouge cadre, many of them children, quickly started killing 'talkative' or 'new people' for the most trivial reasons (Ten 2011, 26).

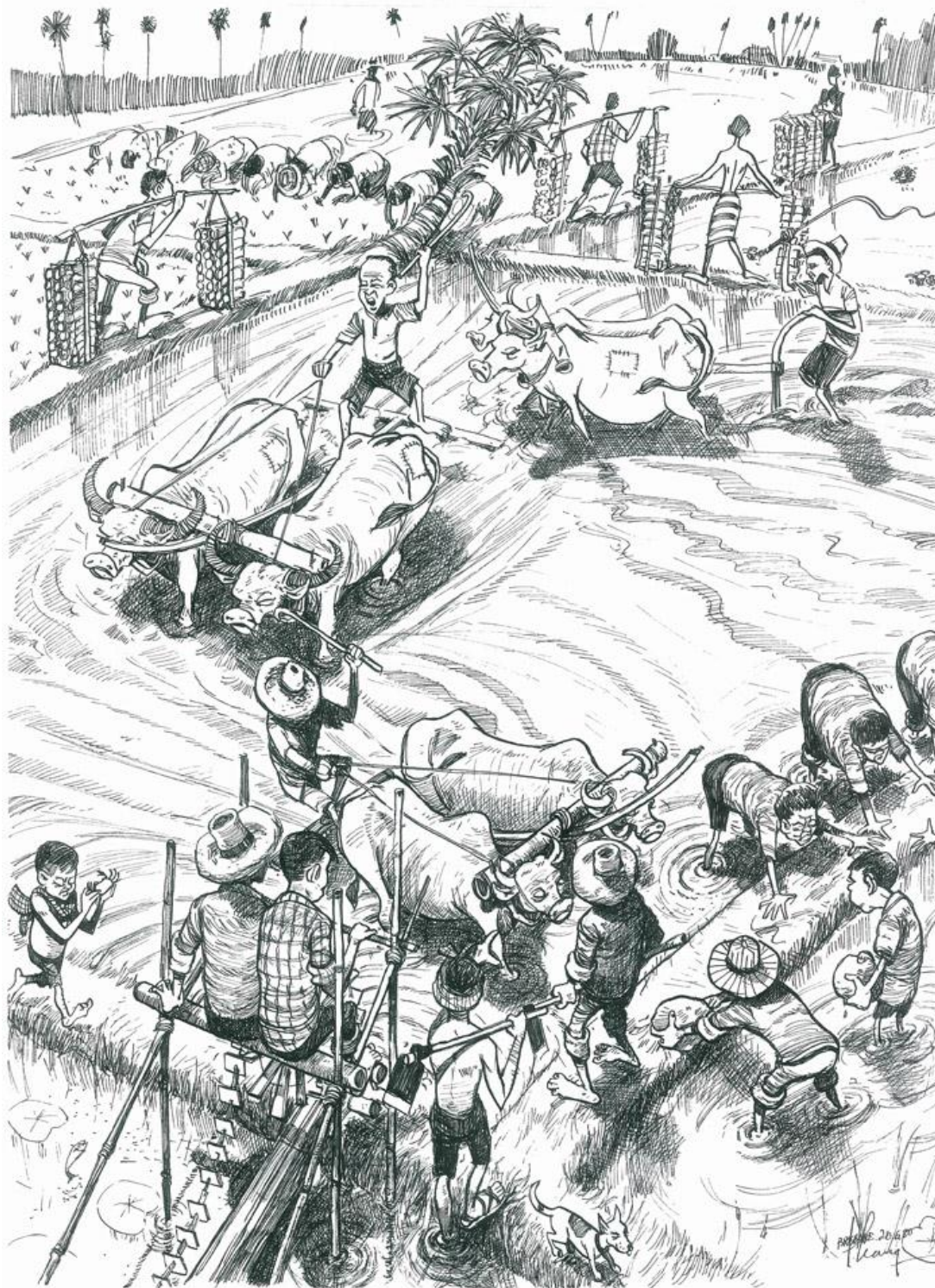


Figure 67: Ung Bunhaeng: 'New' and 'old' people perform allotted tasks in the rice fields.

The 'old people,' seen in the centre of the illustration, are farmers with pre-existing knowledge of driving oxen for ploughing and preparing rice paddy. Some old people watch over the 'new people' who are assigned to carrying rocks and preparing the irrigation trenches (bottom right), or carrying the heavy stacks of rice seedlings from the village to the fields (top of the picture). All the time labourers are watched over and driven to work harder by young Khmer Rouge cadre (bottom left). This illustration is reproduced with the kind permission of Ung Phiny - the late Ung Bunheang's wife.

2.1: The Eastern Zone Purges – 1977-1978

Things grew worse in Kampong Cham from 1977 when paranoia took over the Khmer Rouge leadership. Fearing collusion with the Vietnamese and growing defections in their Eastern Ranks, the Leadership drafted Khmer Rouge cadre from the North and South-West of Cambodia into Kampong Cham. Kiernan (2008, 404-405) estimates that in 1978 alone the Eastern Zone purges led to a quarter of a million deaths. Nuon's father in Chonghuk died in the late 1970s at the hands of the Khmer Rouge. I am not sure of the circumstances. But what follows is a reading from the Co-Prosecutors of the Extraordinary Chambers in the Courts of Cambodia (ECCC): Criminal Case File dated 15th November 2008.⁸⁰

‘The Wat Phnom Pros Security Centre was located on one of two hills just west of Kampong Cham town in Ampil commune, Kampong Siem district. It was one of the most notorious places of extermination under the Democratic Kampuchea. The Wat at the top of Phnom Pros was used as a prison, and victims were killed in the flatlands between the two hills. It is estimated that 10,000 people were executed here. The worst period of killing at this site occurred in 1977 and 1978, after the arrival of the Southwest cadre. Witnesses observed prisoners being transported in trucks to the Security Centre, sometimes as many as 5 trucks at a time’ (Co-Prosecutors of the ECCC 2008, 9).

One encounters *Wat Phnom Pros (Pagoda of the brother mountain)* turning off National Highway 7, five kilometres before reaching Chonghuk and Veal Sbov Villages heading towards Kampong Cham Town. The turn-off goes onto a steep, 1.5 kilometre uphill road. Seeing the fantastical distinctive white Pagoda Buildings that rest behind the ornate arched entrance, becoming ever larger as one travels nearer, is spellbinding. Two dozen macaque monkeys wait to accost visitors behind the Temple. Navigation of the whole Pagoda complex requires sharp descents and steep climbs, down and up cement steps etched into the hilly terrain. The grounds are interspersed with well-tendered

⁸⁰ The ECCC is widely referred to as the ‘Khmer Rouge Tribunal.’ It was established in 2005 after contestation from the CPP whose leaders – including Prime Minister Hun Sen and President of the National Assembly Heng Samrin – are defected Khmer Rouge cadre (Chhang 2007). To date five trials have been sought - Pol Pot died in April 1998. With one leader (Ieng Thearith) unfit to stand and another (her husband Ieng Sary) deceased in 2013 there have been just three prosecutions so far. The Tribunal continues amid CPP interference. Hun Sen has continually ruled out new cases on the grounds that it could reignite conflicts although it is widely believed that the Prime Minister is protecting former Cadre who are in powerful positions nowadays. Heng Samrin has repeatedly refused to make any testimony at the ECCC (Oh 2014, 513-514; Strangio 2014, 235-239).

gardens, statues of fairies (*Neak ta*) and statues that re-enact *Dhammacakkappavattana Sutta* – the first sermon of the Buddha to his disciples after he had gained enlightenment and set the ‘wheel of dharma’ in motion (Sucitto 1993, x-xi; 10-12).⁸¹ It feels like walking through a silent meditative wonderland – a living fairy tale. At the summit of the steepest climb, from the adjacent Wat Phnom Srei (*Pagoda of the Sister Mountain*), you look out across countryside, into Kampong Siem District and far beyond. The other hill referred to in the ECC case file stands north-west, with the flatlands in the middle, it shimmers in the mid-day sunlight. I had not read the ECCC case file when I visited. But after doing so I would never be able to see the photos I took (Figure 68) in the same way again. I simply could not have even begun to comprehend what had happened at *Wat Phnom Pros* although I found it documented by Hinton (2005):

‘Adults and children were killed by a blow to the back of the head; large trees at the site were supposedly stained with the blood of babies who were bashed to death there’ (40):

What I also could not imagine, was the impact that the 1977-1978 purges had on the villages in Ampil Commune. Hinton (2005) again fills in the detail in this specific place. The reign of terror and ever intensifying paranoia turned family members in the locality around *Wat Phnom Pros* against each other. Parents were terrified of their children who had been indoctrinated by Khmer Rouge cadre. Neighbours feared other neighbours who might have turned into informants. Spies crept around the villages at night listening for ‘subversive talk’ (156).

⁸¹ This is one the most recited suttas (sermons) in Theravāda monasteries (Sucitto 1993, x-xi).



Figure 69: *Wat Phom Pros* complex in Ampil Commune and the view into the countryside in Kampong Siem District, as I first saw it in November 2013. Bottom right is the descent from *Wat Srie* and the view from there into the flatlands where more than 10,000 local people were executed between 1977 and 1978.

Section Three: The Khmer Rouge legacy: What does this mean in the context of social enterprise at the grassroots village level in Cambodia?

The Khmer Rouge were ousted from Kampong Cham Province in a matter of days at the end of 1978, after 100,000 Vietnamese soldiers backing some 20,000 defected Khmer Rouge soldiers who came over the Eastern borders (Tully 2005, 193; Tyner et al. 2012, 859).⁸² But it is not as though trauma for Kampong Cham villager simply ended there and that life returned to how it was before the 1970s. Life under the new PRK's communist system in the 1980s was benign compared to the Khmer Rouge but Stalinist nonetheless (Strangio 2014, 25). In Kampong Cham there were mass arrests of suspected 'non-communists' (Gottesman 2004, 77). The Khmer Rouge also maintained influence and inflicted violent insurgency in the locality throughout the 1980s, mostly on the other side of the Mekong River from Chonghuk and Veal Sbov, but sometimes near enough to these villages to have maintained fear among their residents (Peschoux 1992). During the 1980s and 1990s, the vacuum left by the Khmer Rouge was also filled by organised political violence and fear of powerful psychopathic individuals who killed without fear of reprisal (Duffy 1994; Hinton 2005; Human Rights Watch 2002; Kumar 2002).

If the legacy of all this trauma still needs to be put beyond doubt, in Kampong Cham in the early 2000s researchers found the prevalence of diagnostic PTSD stood at 7.3% of Khmer Rouge survivors (Dubois et al. 2004). Subsidiary findings were that 48% exhibited 'intrusion symptoms' and 45.4% exhibited 'avoidance symptoms.'⁸³ Therefore more than 45% of the population exhibited 'partial PTSD' along with 53% of respondents displaying high anxiety, 42.4% being diagnostically depressed and 25.3% reported to be socially impaired (unable to fully engage in social activities). Social impairment was highest as adults got older and results also positively correlated with their experiences of violence (Dubois et al. 2004, 179-182).

Comparative overviews of social enterprise in Southeast Asia (Dacanay 2004, 2009; Santos et al. 2009) give meaningful attention to Bangladesh, the Philippines, Thailand,

⁸² The Khmer Rouge were ousted from Phnom Penh on the 5th January 1979. This date is annually commemorated as the date of the country's liberation by the Cambodian People's Party.

⁸³ Intrusion symptoms are a manifestation of PTSD where people are unable to keep a memory from recurring and struggle to avoid repetitive behaviours. Avoidance symptoms are part of PTSD exhibited when people routinely avoid stimuli that cause unwelcome memories to return (otherwise called 'counterphobic activities') (Solomon & Mikulincer 2007, 316).

Indonesia, Malaysia and Singapore.⁸⁴ The former countries of Indochina – Cambodia, Laos and Vietnam – get mentioned in passing by Santos, Macatangay, Capistrano & Burns (2009) who claim that the *aspirations* of social enterprises along with the ‘*concept of community*’ are ubiquitous in the ‘former French Indochina colonies’ (72). Here it is expressed that across all three countries community members:

‘...often see themselves as a group with bonds based on blood ties, spatial locality and spiritual affinity’;

And also that:

‘These elements allow for the establishment of communities based on kinship, neighbourhood and friendship’ (Santos et al. 2009, 72).

Consequently, these authors state that the emergence of social enterprises in the former French colonies can occur through a culture of self-help along with people’s tendency for obedience and group solidarity. But it reads as though the advent of the Khmer Rouge never happened at all if it is to be assumed that ‘neighbourhood and friendship’ is uniformly ripe for leverage by social enterprises across the former Indochina. It is as though the forcing of a large proportion of the population of Cambodia into rural labour collectives and the subsequent death of at least 20% of the national population in less than 4 years through executions, starvation and diseases (Heuveline 1998; Hinton 1998b, 2005) is inconsequential to associational life in Cambodia today.

Jarvis (2015), in seeking to explain the causes of the Cambodian Khmer Rouge Genocide, questions why a regime like the Khmer Rouge emerged in Cambodia but no such regime did so in Laos and Vietnam. This was despite common experiences of horrific conflict, US bombing campaigns in the late 1960s and early 1970s and the rise of communist regimes (446). If this question is to be asked, then so to surely must be asked what particularistic effects the Khmer Rouge might have had on the self-help and sense of neighbourhood in Cambodia afterwards, that Santos, Macatangay, Capistrano & Burns (2009) refer to all too fleetingly. Numerous texts assert that the devastation of neighbourliness and trust is indeed an enduring legacy of the Khmer Rouge regime and related conflicts (Downie & Kingsbury 2001; Kent 2006; Kurlantzick 2000; Meas 1995;

⁸⁴ The exclusion of Cambodia from regional comparisons is remarkable considering that in 2005 IFC research concluded that Cambodia had the most active social enterprise sector in Indochina and that there was a need to invest in successful social entrepreneurs in Cambodia so that their approaches could be replicated elsewhere in the world (Hutchinson 2007, 153).

Ovesen et al. 1996; Pellini 2005; Zucker 2006a, 2011). Returning to my fieldwork data, alongside the studies of PTSD in Kampong Cham (Dubois et al. 2004), I reconcile these texts with the point that I encountered strong ‘avoidance symptoms.’ The area of avoidance amongst almost all group members (with the exception of Nuon and Kosal) was quite clearly anything *at all* to do with talk of economic collectives.

3.1: Villagers’ realities: Strength based approaches and constraints

Krishnamurthy (1999) is at pains to state that development practitioners should pay little attention to the Khmer Rouge era and conflicts that surrounded it, in relation to villagers’ cooperation in Cambodia today. Firstly she makes the argument that traditional practices like *provas* and life around the Pagoda were quickly revived, so the effects of conflict were not as constraining as one might assume. She recommends that practitioners focus instead on the myriad forms of enduring and revived social capital, and seek out means to mobilise this productively. Consistently with views expressed by exponents of ABCD and appreciative inquiry, that foregrounding problems and making them bigger than they really are and does disservice to people’s resilience (Mathie & Cunningham 2003, 475-477), Krishnamurthy argues that practitioners who focus on the Khmer Rouge legacy can make villagers lack of mutual self-help and trust a ‘self-fulfilling prophecy’ (66). However, I have misgivings with the trajectory of the strength based approach that Krishnamurthy is calling for.

I sense that Krishnamurthy underplays the Khmer Rouge legacy considerably. For a start, PTSD studies in Cambodia point towards the enduring legacy of conflict as a country-wide phenomenon (Dubois et al. 2004; Mollica et al. 2014). Zucker (2006a) also finds enduring distress signified in villagers’ constant references to the bygone pre-revolutionary era. Here Sat’s comments, cited earlier, are worth returning to: he reflected on the bygone time saying that *‘we were happy working together in the fields before’* [the Pol Pot time]. Additionally, Zucker (2006a) finds mistrusting sentiments when villagers say that they do not know fully *‘what is in another’s heart.’* There are in Zucker’s analysis, despite the continuity of ritual after trauma, ‘repercussions that still ripple beneath the social surface’ (534-535). Pertinently, ‘gifts of the heart’ had the strongest resonance with hybrid research group members in their collaborative work to complete the Portrait of Gifts. They wrote in a summary of the Portrait, that *‘the heart is what we focus most upon.’*

This need to ‘know the heart of others’ also became a focal point in the first group discussion. Precipitated by Kiev’s implicit insistence that the motives of authority figures were beyond reproach, Sat and Torn came to express the same point of view when I asked what local authority figures expect from villagers’ in return for helping them. In an exchange that lasted three minutes the word ‘heart’ was used *eight times*. Sat and Torn explicated twice the need for villagers to ‘*know their [powerful people’s] heart*’ and said it is impossible to have a strategy without this knowledge. They said that people communicate ‘*through their heart*’ and that ‘*if we [the villagers] give to the powerful people from our heart, then they will remember us.*’ Sat continued to say that powerful people ‘*return with the gift from their heart*’ before labouring the point that ‘*it is not the bribery or corruption.*’ Nissen (2008) has shown that the identification of corruption in Cambodia is situated within local norms. This is given more consideration in Chapter Eight. The main point to make here is that conditions of mistrust and enduring trauma appear to embed the need to know the heart (*skaal chet*) in villagers’ thinking, when they formulate dyadic relationships with *powerful people* whose decisions affect their livelihood.

The Cambodian term for PTSD is *baksbat* – translating as ‘broken courage’ (McIsaac 2015). Torn survived the Khmer Rouge, the conflicts beforehand and enduring stresses afterwards as the village community found its feet under the Vietnamese occupation. He had lived in Veal Sbov his whole life. He would have been 18 years old when Veal Sbov became the scene of heavy, ongoing fighting between Khmer Rouge fighters and Government forces, according to the accounts of Meth Momm, a woman who later became a teacher of Khmer Rouge history (Bunthorn 2009). Torn would not pass any comment when I asked, in his exit interview, if he felt that past events impacted on villagers’ cooperation today. He firstly said ‘*I don’t know anything about it*’ before cryptically commenting that: ‘*Even if the teapot is made of glass, we still cannot see what lies behind it.*’ I am still unsure what he meant. I did not ask him to clarify his meaning.⁸⁵ I can only guess that the unpredictability of the past still has profound effects upon him personally.

Throughout the research project Torn had a habit of making jokes and laughing afterwards, before others did so. In his address to the Social Enterprise Conference Workshop in Phnom Penh this was contagious. Torn’s laughter lightened the mood

⁸⁵ Sat’s exit interview took place before Torn’s. Sat’s words on the Khmer Rouge period were unprompted in the first instance. I had not scheduled any questions on this. In the interview with Torn I approached the issue but would not have done so if Sat had not raised it beforehand. I asked Torn about ‘*the 1970s*’ as opposed to ‘the Khmer Rouge’ or ‘Pol Pot.’ When Torn declined to comment on this issue I ceased to pursue it.

considerably for Duol and Nuon going next. Glenn (2013, 255-256) points out that in the field of psychology, from Freud to Milgram, work has been directed towards laughter, as the involuntary release of excess of energy under circumstances of nervousness and anxiety. Beyond this, consideration is given to nervous laughter and self-directed laughter, often placed at strategic places, as a means by which people manage social interaction in unfamiliar or sensitive situations (Glenn 2013). Torn's laughter was evidently a way of managing such situations. In the exit interview Torn laughed heavily after saying he would be enduringly grateful, should I ever build a well for him. Torn (probably) did not entertain the idea that I *might* return with the resources to do this. I sense this was Torn's way of saving *face* when speaking from a needy subject position, or perhaps when asking for anything at all from others. Torn also laughed heavily after asking the BSDA Executive Director if he could ride his moto-bike on the road out of the back of the Rice Fields Kids' Village to the highway when it is finished. Beyond the laughter as a way to release nervous energy, Torn's tendency to constantly make jokes suggested that humour was itself a mental coping mechanism. Jacqueline Garrick (2006) writes about the intensive reliance upon humour among trauma survivors. In Garrick's view humour is worthy of close attention as a bodily form of 'anti-depressants' tapped by survivors (171). It is prerequisite to 'hope, well-being, and humanness' (181) and has much explanatory force in coming to understand why some people survive traumatic events over time while others do not.

It was also telling that Torn, like Kiev (but unlike Sat) did not see RFKV as a source of potential business opportunities. His everyday engagement with the world precluded long term strategies, more than 30 years after the Khmer Rouge took away people's hope for anything at all beyond their daily survival (Meas 1995, 23). But this is not to say that Torn hoped for nothing at all from RFKV beyond use of the road. Torn said on numerous occasions, including his address at the Social Enterprise Conference Workshop, that he looked forward to this being a new place where he can meditate in the future. RFKV instilled within his thoughts a healthier, affectual vision of the future where he can attend to his mental health issues in private, as most Cambodians continue to do, in the utter absence of any commitment from the Cambodian Government to mental health services for trauma victims (McLaughlin & Wickeri 2011).⁸⁶

⁸⁶ The Cambodian Government allocate less than 0.02% of the national health budget to mental health services (McLaughlin & Wickeri 2011, 3). Doctors only tend to prescribe drugs for trauma victims. For any therapeutic care villagers recourse to the Pagoda or seek help from a traditional healer (Kru Khmer).

I set out in this thesis to do something different to a lot of development practising in Cambodia, especially within the NGO sector, by using a strength based approach to community-based social enterprise development. Appreciative inquiry was one inspiration. Exponents of this approach to change management suggest that positive emotions and experiences are amplified while negative emotions and experiences might be reframed (Miller 2011, 120; Watkins et al. 2011, 47-48). But it is hard for me to see how reframing villagers' past traumatic experiences of Cambodian villagers, will render them considerably less problematic. It seems pertinent here to mention literature that raises concern with the use of appreciative inquiry when it ignores the 'shadows' and risks generating unrealistic, 'dysfunctional perceptions' (Reason 2000; Rogers and Fraser 2003 in Grant & Humphries 2006, 404).

This underlies a debate emerging from the 'critical turn' in AI. Bushe (2010) brings attention to the tendency of AI scholarship in the past to conflate the '*generative*' nature of practice with a 'positive focus.' This is problematic because the positive (or '*best that is*') paradoxically brings what is negative into focus at some point or other (234-236). Bushe calls for a return to focusing properly on the generative premise of AI - namely the creation of ideas and processes. Figuring out 'what to do with the negative' necessitates critical appreciation of 'shadow side' that AI elicits, which in turn reminds us that the processes that AI generates cannot be disembedded from their context (236). This argument makes clear sense when I reflect upon the manner in which new economic subjectivities and ideas for economic undertakings among hybrid research group members came up against deeper seated concerns.

Having established contextual concerns with the uncritical application of strength based approaches, I do however, retain a constructivist perspective. In Bushe's (2010, 236) view, while contextually embedded, AI still remains as 'an intervention into the social construction of reality.' In the concluding section of this chapter, I illustrate that despite psychological constraints on economic cooperation villagers create and change realities which give rise to community development and renewal. I concur with Krishnamurthy (1999) and others (Hughes & Öjendal 2006; Kent 2003; Pellini & Ayres 2007) that sidelining the resilience, creativity and enduring capacity of Cambodian villagers to negotiate meaning in the process of recovering their communities and livelihoods, is counter-productive, discourteous and analytically flawed.

A small number of NGOs do important mental health work in Cambodia, but their outreach is very limited with the resources at their disposal (21-23).

Section Four: Concluding Discussion: Resilience, recovery and associational practices among Chonghuk Veal Sbov and villagers

Appreciative inquiry and asset based community development are both strengths-based approaches to change that work with the principles of building energy or momentum and embedding the construction of new knowledge (Mathie & Cunningham 2003, 478-479). As Bushe (2010) writes, these are generative practices that create *processes and ideas* that are situated in their own context. In Chapter Two, I proposed that social value, seen pragmatically from a position of valuation (Muniesa 2011) also becomes a *dual process* of practice and ideas, at once encountered subjectively and also inter-subjectively, in the world one shares with others. I also argued that putting the primary emphasis on the dialogical properties of social value means that social value is also a dual process that is, just like processes generated by ABCD and AI, situated in its own specific context. Social value is overdetermined by cultural values that underlie norms of economic interaction, the relative power of transacting parties, and also the ways members of a given community negotiate their interdependence with other members.

During this research process, I saw Sat negotiating competing interests. Family values were a foremost consideration in the value Sat could attach to the opportunity for a vegetable supply chain. At once he occupied the subject position of a family member, participant in the design of an economic venture, and a community leader. This multiplicity of subjectivities renders the notion of social and economic value as separate concerns to be a dubious proposition. Kiev also saw value in the supply chain as an opportunity for vegetable producers. But the cultural values in which Kiev's valuation process is embedded meant that out of respect for family business norms and also out of deference to Sat, she did not intrude on 'Nuon's opportunity.' Kiev's embodied subjectivities also showed that social and economic considerations were in play at the same time and the separation of economic and social value looks dubious again.

While Nuon found it hard to envisage local businesses having social obligations at the end of the action research project, her outlying final thought was that: '*Maybe they contribute at ceremonies.*' I return finally in this chapter to Nuon's comment, to reconcile a dialogical emphasis on the dual process of social valuation with an emphasis on villagers' wellbeing. In Chapter Four, I outlined religious ceremonies including *bon Dalien* and *bon Phka Prak*. These ceremonies mobilise monetary donations, materials, and also volunteering for not-for-profit causes. They also show how associational life in

Chonghuk and Veal Sbov Villages continues to emanate from the Pagoda even if it has been diminished in other respects. When businesses (predominantly family ones) commit to making such donations, this is conceivably one contextualised instance where the some of the surplus that the business makes becomes transferred into ‘social surplus’, which as outlined in Chapter Two, is collective wealth that serves to strengthen communities and develop their resources (Gibson-Graham 2006b; Healy 2015).

Assuming that business owners, like other villagers, might be driven to contribute surpluses at ceremonies by fruitful giving (to gain merit) and also by a sense of honour and place in the community (Jacobsen 2008; Ledgerwood 2008), then wellbeing can be located at the centre of these actions. Kent (2006) shows that among the Khmer in Cambodia, ‘peace of mind’ is embodied in ‘*sok*’ - a Khmer concept lying at the root of numerous words including peace, security, comfort, health, happiness, tranquillity, and wellbeing. *Sok* is derived from the Buddhist goal of achieving the absence of suffering or ‘unsatisfactoriness’ by transcending desire and practicing virtue (351). Arguably, from Venerable Kosal’s point of view, *Sok* could also demarcate the social value of a social enterprise. That is, social enterprise could help people to temper excessive appetites while sustaining the right to livelihood and also give peace of mind to those involved through the understanding that some of the activities help other villagers to secure their livelihood also.

A pertinent phrase in Khmer (in consideration of social value) is *sok pbluw chet*, meaning ‘*the achievement of well-being through the mind/heart.*’ *Sok pbluw chet* unifies the heart and mind (or passions and intellect) in Khmer linguistics. It is pursued through disciplined study of Buddhist teaching and meditations while laypeople also seek this achievement through merit making and the blessings from monks (Kent 2006, 352-353).⁸⁷ I contend that *Sok pbluw chet* is therefore an achievement, or culmination of a process, within which the social valuation of gifts or contribution/production of social surplus is contextually embedded. This applies for instance, when rice farmers in Chonghuk and Veal Sbov contribute some of their harvest towards community infrastructure at *bon Dalien*. During a group discussion held at *Wat Nokor Bachaey*, a senior monk elaborated on the reasons for *bon Dalien*. Beyond gratitude for agricultural productivity in the last year and prayers for productivity in the year ahead, he said that:

⁸⁷ *Chet* is the Khmer word for both *heart* and *mind*.

‘Another reason... is to build merit and goodness which protect our lives... the merit and virtue are kept in our heart and soul and saved for the current life as the same as next life.’⁸⁸

The words ‘heart and soul’ (read synonymously with ‘heart and mind’) came together here and also in two other instances during this particular group discussion. One of the Achar informed me that the spirits are provided with food and water in a square bowl made from banana leaf (*Kon Tong*), and elaborated that:

‘...we cannot see those souls who pick up from that leaf bowl. People think they have no body, but only heart and soul.’

Work towards *sok phluw chet* appears to be personal and intersubjective. Again, I detect the embodiment of a dual process of practice and experience. This applies when villagers work towards *sok phluw chet* by mobilising surplus for not-for-profit purposes. It also applies when economic subjects, such as Sat, wrestle with completing obligations, reconciling duties to family (based on passion or heart) with strategies for community development (premised on the intellect or mind). I consequently contend that work towards *sok phluw chet* could be applicable to a contextually embedded reading of social enterprise. In this reading, social enterprise is constituted by the socialised pursuit of incomes by producers, made viable by cooperative acts and agreements between them. This applies to cooperation between bamboo skewer producers and the way that villagers organise themselves as vegetable suppliers, through Nuon, to the school canteen. In one respect it is common sense economic cooperation. But it can also be extended to belief in merit, for instance when Sreynit felt that some business owners might show solidarity with other villagers by sourcing input goods and services from within the village.

Without doubt some of the strongest acts of solidarity are enacted through religious festivities. *Bon Dalien*, one of the Achar at *Wat Nokor Bachaey* pointed out to me, is also called the ‘Village Festival.’ According to the other Achar present in this discussion, it can be also named as ‘*solidarity festival or happy village relax festival.*’ Along with festivities like *Lmy Pka* which mobilise donations, *bon Dalien* points towards community resilience that Zucker (2006a) describes as – ‘the persistence of ritual over time and through periods of radical social change.’ In summary, despite my misgivings with the assertion that practitioners should set aside past traumas, I have no call to disagree with

⁸⁸ The participating monk was one of two the Vice Presidents of the Pagoda, otherwise referred to as the ‘Left Hand Vice President’ (*keruo sout chveng*).

Krishnamurthy (1999) about the remarkable ways that Cambodian village communities have found their feet again. Numerous researchers make similar points about the revival of associational life around the Pagoda being pivotal to community recovery (Kent 2003, 2006; Pellini & Ayres 2007) and the reinstatement of customary not-for-profit causes (Pellini 2005). Against the background of the 1970s and Pol Pot times especially, I concur with all of them and express in the strongest terms that the revival of associational life in the villages is nothing short of a monumental testament to the resilience of the Cambodian population.

Chapter Eight: Social Entrepreneurship in Village Cambodia

Section One: Introduction

International development agencies like the World Bank, the United Nations Global Compact and the Asian Development Bank are placing great faith in social entrepreneurship as a driving force for inclusive business and sustainable development (Chia 2015; Koch 2010; Power et al. 2012). They also celebrate charismatic, leading individuals who appear to be working miracles for the poor by integrating them into the formal market economy (Koch 2010; World Bank 2012b). In Chapter One, I reviewed literature that portrays these individuals as *authentic social entrepreneurs*, transformational leaders who: instigate systemic change (or social innovation); rally others to their cause; and, mobilise increasing levels of resources (Bornstein 2007; Dees et al. 2001; Leadbeater 1997; Neck et al. 2009). Regardless of the critical literature also considered in Chapter One, the concentrated academic focus upon particular social entrepreneurs in south Asia and the concentration of support for social entrepreneurs in Asia from foundations and fellowship associations including Schwab, Ashoka, and Skoll, signifies that the heroic narrative dominates the discourse in this region of the developing world.

A particular concern that I zoomed in on in Chapter One, is the ethical emphasis in dominant narratives of social entrepreneurship. Social entrepreneurs are portrayed as incorruptible individuals with high virtue and integrity or unquestionable ‘ethical fibre’ who exhibit constant compassion for others and ‘prosocial behaviour’, and who, unlike ordinary commercial entrepreneurs, pursue economic value creation only as the means to creating social value (Bornstein 2007; Drayton 2002; Miller et al. 2012; Praszkie & Nowak 2011; Schöning 2013; Shaw et al. 2002). Social entrepreneurship foundations also continue to evaluate social entrepreneurs according to the highest standards of moral integrity or fibre (Cameron 2012; Nicholls 2010; Ridley-Duff & Bull 2011).

In general I foresee problems with the way that ethics is naturalised. Social entrepreneurship in reality is fraught with dilemmas and trade-offs (Dey & Steyaert 2016; Mueller et al. 2011; Teasdale 2010). By way of critical discussion, Dey and Steyaert (2016), drawing from Michel Foucault's ethics embodied in 'care of the self', are at pains to emphasise that *being ethical* is a constant and struggle for social entrepreneurs, as also is their attending to matters like 'wellbeing' and 'empowerment' within their constituencies and the generation of 'social value.' Taking ethical reasoning as an inherent element of economic subjectivity, this chapter of the thesis addresses a research question stated in Chapter Two:

What kinds of subjectivity would promote, or can be linked to, acceptable forms of grassroots social entrepreneurship in the Cambodian village?

The ethical struggles that Dey and Steyaert (2016) bring to attention regarding social entrepreneurship are in my view compounded by context in Cambodia. As in much of SE Asia, powerful patrons in Cambodia who control resources extend protection to the vulnerable, who they enrol as clients in patronage relationships, which are normally face to face relationships at the local level (Ledgerwood 2007; Un 2006). At first glance these relationships seem to bear no resemblance to the celebrated social entrepreneur whose heroic actions are virtuous and always selfless (or explicitly social), creative (or innovative), and proactive (as opposed to being reactionary). However, the role patron-client relations play in people's wellbeing and also in the creative ways that resources are sometimes mobilised to achieve social objectives, invites closer scrutiny.

Besides patronage (although sometimes connected to it) there are also ambiguities pertaining to corruption. Christine Nissen (2008) brings this to attention through her work that elucidates 'the moral economy of corruption in Cambodia'. This 'narrative and a symbolic system that has roots in local norms' (284) enables Cambodians to be victims of corruption, to denounce corruption, but at the same time to enact legitimate actions that might otherwise be viewed as corrupt. As a strategy for legitimation, this *system* is linked to the moral ordering of society, Buddhist beliefs and patronage (287). An important resource that I sourced from Nissen (2008, 291-292) for one of the group discussions, is a compendium of Khmer noun phrases with the prefix '*Ly*' (money) (Figure 69). This compendium shows how the moral economy of corruption works along a continuum from 'ethical' to 'unethical' (if adopting a western view of ethics as morality), between gifts, contributions, and fees towards extortion and corruption. The

tipping point seems to be ‘tea or beer money’ (*luy toek tae/beer*) although, making matters more ambiguous, it is also conceivable that more than one position (or subjectivity) might be embodied in the enactment of any given transaction.

Type of Payment	Khmer	English meaning
Gifts of kindness	Luy sandan’cet	Unsolicited payment from the heart
	Luy metathoa	Compassion money
Financial contributions	Luy bantheam	Additional payment to the poorly salaried
	Luy vipteak’tean	Contribution to a project
	Luy amnoy / cuy snagkrouh	Donation
Gift after service	Luy sakun / arkun / deng kun / tobkun	Money out of gratefulness for service
Tip for a service	Luy toek tae / beer	Tea money / Beer money
Encouraging the provision of a service	Luy Sok pan	Money to persuade an official to do a job
	Luy camnay phlov kat	Short-cut money / speed up procedures
Arranging the provision of a service	Luy camnay kong kaa tumneak tum noang	Money to establish a relationship
	Luy yok cet ke	Money to please someone
	Luy loek toek cet	Money to encourage an official to do his job
Corruption	Luy puk roaluy	Corrupted / spoiled money
	Luy ngonget	Dark money
Extortion	Luy keapsangkat	Money paid under pressure
	Luy keng pravanh	Exploitation money

Figure 70: Khmer vocabulary – from gifts to extortion sourced from Nissen (2008, 291-292)

This compendium exposes everyday ethical ambiguities when Cambodians seek to make progress in their working lives or survive on meagre incomes, or every time they ask authority figures to discharge their routine duties. The compendium arguably also serves other purposes. In my view it provides a basis for exploring ways economic resources are mobilised *in practice* following the principle that economies come with customary

features (Polanyi 1957) and are constituted by diverse transactions (Gibson-Graham & Roelvink 2011). It also provides a basis for studying entrepreneurship contextually. Studies of informal entrepreneurship in transitional economies, particularly at the 'base of the pyramid,' show that corruption is justified with reference to social norms (Hall et al. 2012; Tonoyan et al. 2010; Webb et al. 2009). I contend that what is also worth considering is whether 'the moral economy of corruption' can be reconciled with the informality of socially entrepreneurial acts in the Cambodian village context.

In this chapter I introduce two entrepreneurial actors, the Village Chief in Veal Sbov and Kimhour, a high school teacher. In separate case studies I examine their subject positions and the networks they are embedded within, as a prelude to discussing ethical issues embodied within socially entrepreneurial activities. The Veal Sbov Village Chief was not invited as a participant in the action research because he was a gatekeeper. He had clear embedded interests. He claimed to speak for others and would have heavily influenced the way that other group members viewed the action research project.

The case study of the Veal Sbov Village Chief was thus formulated with data gathered outside of the main action research activities. Data includes personal biography, a semi-structured interview, his mentioning in various group discussions with other villagers, and personal observations at community events. It also emerged that the actions and narratives of the Veal Sbov Village Chief bear comparison to some of the main facets of literature that discusses the attributes of social entrepreneurs. His entrepreneurial actions have been explicitly aimed at the development of Veal Sbov Village and the betterment of local economic prospects. But other facets of his undertakings exhibit problems with the notion of a purely selfless social entrepreneur. Ultimately I find that ethical reflexivity, embodied in the struggle to be ethical, gets in the way of the Village Chief becoming a participatory agent for social change.

The case study of the Veal Sbov Village Chief stands in contrast to the case study of Kimhour, a high school teacher who joined the action research group. On account of his employment, Kimhour was unable to play a role in most of the third phase of the activities and he was not a stakeholder in the experiments with social enterprise developments. However other developments coming out of his engagement with the action research that came to light in Kimhour's exit interview are highly significant. They merit a substantial exploration of Kimhour's economic subjectivities and the tensions faced by an individual who engages in socially entrepreneurial acts in the

grassroots village context. In Kimhour I find that context and embeddedness in the patron system, without which survival is impossible, vastly overdetermines ethical subjectivity. But I also find that a reflexive struggle to be ethical is conducive to small-scale acts of social entrepreneurship.

Section Two: The Village Chief in Veal Sbov: A grassroots social entrepreneur?

The Village Chief in Veal Sbov was born in 1957. He had been the Village Chief for seven years. His muscular physique suggested he was not averse to manual work. He was well groomed; his thick black side parted hair was treated with a hair product most male villagers did not use routinely. He wore pressed trousers and a short sleeved chequered shirt held in place by a leather belt. His smile was welcoming although I sensed a look of slight suspicion at times throughout our first encounter. This took place on the lower floor of his house, where his daughter had set up a wedding beautician business. A range of dresses were displayed in a glass cabinet standing next to a Samsung flat-screen television.

The Village Chief had lived in the village his whole life. He was a teenager when the Khmer Rouge took over Kampong Cham Province. He recounted that the ceremonial centre was built in 1979, within a year of the Khmer Rouge's ousting. This timing perhaps signifies villagers' attempts to quickly reinstate former ways of life once the Khmer Rouge had left, concurring with the rapid revival of Buddhist practices (Chandler 2008b; Kent 2003). But it also probably shows how quickly Veal Sbov, in close proximity to Kampong Cham Town, was engaged by political propaganda in the newly coined '*People's Republic of Kampuchea*' (PRK). As Kiernan (1982) wrote around the time, while anti-Khmer Rouge theatrical performances were regularly taking place in Phnom Penh:

What is more interesting and significant (...) is the extent to which the 1979-80 revival of Khmer Culture penetrated to the rural districts. The PRK was well on the way to achieving (...) a cultural group for each of the country's 100 odd districts' (Kiernan 1982, 182-183).

In all likelihood the ceremonial centre was erected according to directives from the Ministry for Propaganda, Culture and Information, convened in 1979 under tutelage of Vietnamese advisers (Slocomb 2003, 183). In 2013, the ceremonial centre retained

personal significance to the Village Chief as both he and his father, who had some responsibility for the administration of village affairs in the 1980s, played a role in its construction. The ceremonial centre signified what he had lived through in the past. Nowadays it affirmed orderly life. The Village Chief called it *'the centre of the village, the central meeting place.'* In the past it had been a place for musical performances but in 2013 it was just the place for village meetings.⁸⁹ In other words, the ceremonial centre retained its political significance but its (ostensible) cultural significance had been discarded.



Figure 71: The Veal Sbov Ceremonial Centre was built in 1979

2.1: The Village Chief as a powerful patron

The Veal Sbov Village Chief's position brought him inevitable privileges. But while the position brought Sat (his counterpart in Chonghuk) privileges too, it was evident that the Veal Sbov Village Chief was more skilled at, and/or more predisposed towards, making the most of what this position had to offer. Compared to Sat, his wealth was more readily discerned from that of other villagers. He had a large house with land around it, a 4-wheel drive car and his family members all had their own moto-bikes (Figure 71). He also owned land at the back of Veal Sbov Village with numerous families living there as his tenants. On this basis the Veal Sbov Village Chief could have just been a more successful businessman than Sat. But one truly distinguishing privilege that the Village Chief enjoyed, which had little to do with his business skills, was that the main tube-well in the village replete with a sturdy hand pump, lay next to his house

⁸⁹ Torn (the Deputy Village Chief) gave this account. In the past there would be music sometimes, people would go out selling drinks in the evenings. But that stopped a long time ago. Nowadays at the ceremonial centre *'there are not really any religious ceremonies, the ceremonies always happen at the Pagoda.'*

(Figure 72). The village well was built with disbursements from the District Offices of the Department of Rural Development to the planning subcommittee of the Ampil Commune Council, together with contributions from the PRASAC Microfinance Institution (MFI). Villagers contributed labour. The Village Chief contributed materials for the surrounding wall and railings, which were actually an extension of the wall and railings surrounding his own home.



Figure 72: The Veal Sbov Village Chief's house and vehicles



Figure 73: The Veal Sbov village well and private company water supply (right picture)

Much has been written about 'elite capture' in development projects. Sometimes this involves the diversion of resources by a more powerful actor (or 'patron') in the village to service their particular support base (Matthews 2007). At other times, as in this case, it simply means the appropriation of value for personal use (Clever & Toner 2006; Platteau 2004). This was exemplified by the Village Chief's instillation of a modern water storage unit that serves his house alone. His access to water free of cost, stood in

contrast to most other villagers who paid 1,500 riels per cubic metre for water from towers put up by a private company (Figure 73).

The location of the village well was sensitive. During an exercise to map village resources Torn expressed he could not grow yard long beans in the dry season due to the cost of private water. I asked about the nearest freely available water. He replied that the village well was too far away. I asked how the wells' location was decided. Torn became defensive exclaiming, *'It was fair. Everyone decided it should be here.'* The response was unsurprising considering Torn's position as the Veal Sbov Village Chief's Deputy. On reflection my question was unsubtle and unwise. But his response was nonetheless instructive. Significantly, Kimhour, a critical thinker throughout the action research, was in agreement. In his exit interview Kimhour conceded that *'only about ten families'* closest to the well derived real benefit, but strongly made the point at the same time that the Village Chief kept it open for all villagers to use. Regardless of the way the well's value was appropriated, in Kimhour's mind there was no questioning the Village Chief's integrity.

Elite capture of resources such as water is more likely in villages that have weak institutions (Nkonya 2008, 248). This invites closer consideration of the Veal Sbov Village Development Committee (VDC) which decided the location of the village well. There are 8000 VDCs in Cambodia which international development institutions consider to be modern Community Based Organisations (CBOs) (Ou 2013, 3). Hasselskog (2009) shows Cambodian VDCs operate variably in practice. Sometimes they are democratically elected with a sex quota for female representation and the village chief serves as an advisor. In other cases, villagers are merely brought to meetings to be told about projects and requested for labour. This can boil down to personalities. Participatory VDCs are more likely when village chiefs are relieved to hand some responsibilities over. They are less likely when village chiefs doubt other villagers' capacities (particularly those of women) for planning or the management of funds (205-207).⁹⁰

⁹⁰ Pertinent texts on gendered roles today that arise from the Cambodian past deals with *chbab*, pre-colonial normative poems that advise respect for social hierarchy, along with traditional folk tales and proverbs. Particularly, *'Chbab Srei'* and *'Chbab Prob'* are respectively didactic codes for virtuous women and virtuous men, written in the 19th Century. They set out advice on domestic life and how things should be in a balanced, civilised, less dangerous Khmer society (Chandler 1996, 1998; Jacobsen 2008; Ledgerwood 1990). Cambodians tend to retain the content of *Chbab Srei* more than *Chbab Pros* (Jacobsen 2008). *Chbab Srei* continues to be taught in schools. In Lilja's (2008) view, this underlies the fact that while

The Veal Sbov VDC was run in an authoritarian manner. Only three people were involved in running it – that is, the Village Chief, Torn and a male neighbour living a few houses from the Village Chief. It was Torn's role to simply bring the villagers to meetings at '*the central meeting place*' (the ceremonial centre) on the Village Chief's orders, where decisions would be validated and volunteers would be recruited for work. The Village Chief exhibited little faith in the skills of others. This bestowed upon him particular responsibilities for leveraging resources into the village that could bring about its on-going development. This came to light when I asked the Village Chief what he perceived to be the main contribution to the economic development of Veal Sbov in recent years, his response in full had two sides to it. Firstly, he expressed that:

'The road has helped people to have opportunities. Before it was never like this. With the road they can reach the market faster and spend less. They could not bring things into the village, in the raining season it was hard to get in or get out' (Veal Sbov Village Chief).

A weather resistant road running from the back of Veal Sbov Village onto National Highway 7, coming out close to Kampong Cham Town, had cut journeys into town from an hour in the past to 15 minutes nowadays. The Village Chief repeatedly referred to this road throughout the interview. The road was financed partly through disbursements from authorities to the VDC. It was matched by donations from the villagers (some of this was raised through donations at the Pagoda) and the Village Chief had organised the labour in the village to get the road constructed. This validated the Village Chief's position on account of his connection with both Commune and District Authorities and also his position as the mobiliser of the other villagers.

The Village Chief followed his mention of the road to National Highway 7 with a dismissive statement about the economic fortunes of villagers to date:

The economy is not improved much... There should be a technical college for agriculture, there needs to be some money for this because the people do not have enough knowledge.'

This statement also compounded the Village Chief's position. The need of funding for an agricultural training facility, prior to any possibility of progress, reinforced his personal position as the intermediary between the villagers and authorities. This

proportionally more women in Cambodia earn cash income compared to other Southeast Asian countries, they remain under represented as political subjects. The assumption that women should be shy, 'gentle' in their movements, even unenlightened, means that while they might be seen as 'good workers', they are often not encouraged to pursue advanced education or positions of public authority (67-72).

statement functions interconnectedly with the Village Chief's view of villagers as having deficits in functional knowledge. He exhibited negative affect, or, an embodied 'motivational system' (Tomkins 1962 in Gibbs 2002, 337) driven by a core focus on *needs*. The term 'Village' became defined as a disadvantaged place, intelligible by *lack*, especially pertaining to 'jobs, skills, investment and opportunities' (Cameron & Gibson 2005a, 275). This in turn underpinned the Village Chief's justificational narration of arrangements in the VDC. When I asked him if he felt that villagers might resist a strategy for local economic development if this were to require changes in the way of community organising, the Village Chief's telling response was that:

'People do not have new ways of organising. They follow the traditional way that they know. So there cannot be any resistance to new ways of organising.'

2.2: Reframing the Veal Sbov Village Chief as a grassroots social entrepreneur

When the Village Chief told me how it was his personal mission to make this road a reality, I encountered a new self-narration. His story-line was that of an entrepreneur who does business mainly in order to develop the village. He had begun to buy and sell land a few years earlier as part of his business interests. As the Veal Sbov Village Chief began to tell me about his land transactions, I began to detect the self-narration of a socially entrepreneurial individual at the grassroots village level. By his own account, he was only interested in buying and selling land as a way to build the road. He expressed that there were risks in the transactions, but he appraised them next to the social rather than financial returns. In his own words, he saw the risks this way:

Veal Sbov Village Chief: *'The risk is not acceptable if it is not the direction of my business. I do not buy the land to keep it if I cannot build a road across it because it does not fit the development plan for the village. If there cannot be development in the village then the risk is unacceptable.'*

The Village Chief's appraisal of risks in *social* terms resembles the kind of risk appetite and judgement capacity attributed to social entrepreneurship – risks are appraised by the potential social pay off rather than by the business angle alone (Baierl et al. 2014; Weerawardena & Sullivan Mort 2006). Indeed the potential social gain from his land transactions, namely a road that transforms the fortunes of villagers by improving trade and bringing jobs, may have been high enough to raise the Village Chief's socially

entrepreneurial intention and concurrently reduce his risk aversion in the manner that Baierl, Grichnik & Spörrle (2014) hypothesize.

Between the Village Chief's reiterations of how important the road was, he took time to tell me how his land deals had brought a bottled water factory to the back of the village more than one year earlier. The Village Chief was in discussion with private investors for some time before the new road connecting Veal Sbov to National Highway 7 was completed. The two developments were inter-connected. He had ensured that land titles were registered at the Commune Hall.⁹¹ He spoke of the factory as a social accomplishment that employs more than ten villagers in the dry season. Although there is less work in the wet season, considering the high out-migration from Veal Sbov during the dry-season it is arguable that the employment the water factory creates at this time of the year makes a strong contribution to local economic resilience.



Figure 74: The bottled water factory at the back of Veal Sbov Village

The picture that emerged was one of the village chief as both a talented entrepreneur and competent village development planner. A further story-line that emerged, was that of a paternal figure to some of the most destitute villagers. Since 2010, around 30

⁹¹ Informal witnessing at the commune office is preferred for different reasons. Corruption at district cadastral offices commonly deters formal title registrations and the sums paid to commune officials in order to witness the transactions are relatively smaller (So 2011). For the land purchaser, while it provides little protection from land grabbing by elite actors who are close to the centre of the CPP, informal witnessing can still be preferred due to lack of faith in the legal system and also because cutting out local rent seekers can incur detrimental consequences for doing business in the long run (Hughes 2013).

families had arrived and lived at the back of Veal Sbov. Most recently some of these families had been evicted from land beside the river in the Town Centre to make way for its beautification. The Village Chief mobilised materials and labour from other villagers to help build basic dwellings. None had thatched roofs (made of palm leaf) which are generally associated with impoverished households (MoP 2012, 4). More robust materials like corrugated iron demonstrated that the generosity he could mobilise from other villagers was substantial. In accordance with the literature on social entrepreneurship, the Veal Sbov Village Chief was a charismatic, respected leader who could mobilise others behind a cause that was important to him personally. After I had asked him how these tenants go about establishing a livelihood, he informed me that:

Veal Sbov Village Chief: *‘New arrivals sometimes need to borrow the money to help get things when they arrive, maybe a moto or other things to survive. But they cannot get the microfinance because they have no land. But the ones I rent to can get it because I use my land as the guarantee for them.’*

During my fieldwork I observed that some of the Village Chief’s longer standing tenants had upgraded their housing structure (Figure 75), signifying material improvements in their quality of life that came about as stability was instilled into their livelihood. In one household, composed of a husband, wife and two children, the wife now worked at the MEDTECS garment factory. She took part in the group discussion referred to in Chapter Four. When she told me about her family’s *second* loan from PRASAC microfinance in this discussion, the relationship that I knew about between the Village Chief and PRASAC became much ‘thicker.’ In reality the tenants’ loans were taken out under the Village Chief’s name with his land as collateral.⁹² Ovesen and Trankell (2014) observe elsewhere in Cambodia, that when the Village Chief depends on villagers support for personal legitimacy, there is an incentive to certify their credit worthiness whether the villagers are credit worthy or not. To find families without titles, repaying *two* collateralised loans, suggests that either one of the loans was secured irregularly against the same land title or that the Village Chief had numerous land titles to make use of. Either way, these arrangements exposed pressures on the Village Chief as a patron

⁹² It is generally incumbent on a microfinance company to hold the land title of the borrower before issuing a formal collateralised loan (Phlong 2009, 58-59). It seems likely that the Village Chief had secured more than one loan in his name against the same land parcel. Despite regulations to prevent this, Liv’s (2013) identification of saturated villages with more loans than actual households suggests slack enforcement.

figure. They also exhibited some degree of flexibility among local MFIs, and from the PRASAC MFI especially, that were extending credit to him for his tenants.



Figure 75: Veal Sbov Village Chief's tenant families at the back of the village. The family residing in the top right house had made improvements to their dwelling and instilled some stability in their livelihood over time with waged labour at the MEDTECS garment factory.

In summary the Village Chief had good relations with PRASAC credit officers who extended financial services to his personal 'clients' (when perhaps they should not). Credit officers could meet their loan disbursement targets and the Village Chief gained legitimacy. In these findings, more context was added to PRASAC's financial contribution to the village well that sat next to his house. While the boundaries between personal and community benefit are blurred by the Village Chief's appropriation of the village well, the case study also raises other questions. When the Village Chief put his own land as collateral, he took economic risks to leverage resources for the empirical betterment of others, integrating them into the market economy (although rendering them vulnerable to over-indebtedness at the same time). Would this not also merit comparison to widely accepted definitions of social entrepreneurship? Moreover, he not only took economic risks, but also personal reputational risks in the event of his tenants

defaulting on their payments. Such risks are deemed applicable to social entrepreneurs in particular because their reputation is among their most critical assets (Ernst 2012; Peattie & Morley 2008b; Shaw & Carter 2007).

2.3: The socially entrepreneurial Village Chief – paradoxes and tensions

In the introduction to this chapter I returned to a research question relating to the types of subjectivity that promote, or can be linked to acceptable forms of grassroots social entrepreneurship. Arguably, the Veal Sbov Village Chief exhibits traits that are common in the literature on social entrepreneurs but there are also paradoxes.

The Village Chief took it upon himself to ensure that welfare safety nets were provided to some of the most vulnerable villagers. As well as using his own resources, he leveraged resources from other villagers (including labour, donations and materials) and sometimes leveraged resources for his tenants from outside the village using market mechanisms. His relationship with these tenants was an archetypal dyadic patron-client relation. What went unsaid in the interview was that the Village Chief derived different benefits from these relationships. The newly arrived villagers were paying rents and provided other assistance with rice transplanting and harvesting and tending to his cattle. Male tenants could also be mobilised, alongside other villagers, to work on road construction.

The road to National Highway 7 enhanced economic opportunities and brought new jobs to the village. The Village Chief exhibited entrepreneurial quality as he went about this task through his buying and selling of land with a strategic orientation. But what also went unsaid by the Village Chief, was that the road also increased the value of his land holdings and made his selling of land much easier. The Village Chief told me that a hectare of land in close proximity to Kampong Cham Town was nowadays worth fifty thousand dollars. His total holdings were therefore very valuable indeed and he would have profited beyond the comprehension of many villagers when he sold a quarter of a hectare of land to the proprietors of the bottled water factory.

The Village Chief gained institutional legitimacy from different sources including authority figures and the PRASSAC microfinance institution. This legitimacy helped him leverage resources for village development. It underlines the point that institutional legitimacy is a prize that is of fundamental importance to social entrepreneurs, instilling access to resources and credibility for their actions (Agrawal & Hockerts 2013). During

a group discussion at *Wat Nokor Bachaey* at the harvest festival (*bon Dalien*) the two Achar also expressed that the Village Chief was an important figure in the community. They also praised the work of the VDC that was largely under his control. Torn and Kimhour put the Village Chief's actions beyond reproach, regardless of his appropriation of resources.

It appeared that the Veal Sbov Village Chief was the embodiment of the already existing grassroots social entrepreneur who, most importantly of all, was deemed legitimate by primary stakeholders in his activities – namely other villagers. But one issue of contention is his appetite for social innovation. When the Village Chief commented that villagers would not countenance new ways of organising in the village because they would not know how to, he exhibited his investedness in the status quo. It is generally observed that patron figures in Cambodia are inclined to thwart or subvert changes that can render clients less dependent on the patron services that they provide (Marschke 2012; Matthews 2007; Van Acker 2010). This casts doubt upon whether he can be legitimately called a social entrepreneur or not. In Bacq & Janssen's (2011) view, social entrepreneurs definitively do, among other things, 'find innovative solutions to social problems of his/her community' (388). However, considering the Village Chief's combination of resources to develop the road as a strategic resource and his subsequent facilitation of the water factory arriving at the back of Veal Sbov, one could also argue that he was an innovator of a sort. One might finally argue that the picture of social innovation and conservatism was a mixed. One might also see good grounds for such conservatism, given the consequences of radical social change under the Khmer Rouge that the Village Chief had lived through.

Section Three: A high school teacher – a grassroots social entrepreneur

Kimhour was born in 1978 towards the end of the Khmer Rouge era. He grew up through the Vietnamese occupation in the 1980s. He commented on this as a time when villagers had to cooperate to secure their livelihood. In his early childhood his family was assigned to a *krom samaki* (solidarity group). This was the PRPK regime policy primarily designed to make efficient use of limited means of agricultural production including cattle and ploughs (Amakawa 2008, 6-7; Slocomb 2003, 98-107). *Krom samaki* was abandoned by the mid-1980s. As Meas (1995) writes, villagers had little enthusiasm

for collectivism after the Pol Pot time and Slocomb (2003, 105-106) notes that the peasantry were commonly reverting to pre-revolutionary practices, regardless of the PRPK policies on Samaki solidarity groups.

While families were allocated their own plots of land from the mid-1980s, money remained scarce. Different kinds of *provas* were still needed to efficiently achieve farming tasks, building work or otherwise secure a livelihood. This was more prominent in Kimhour's memory than *krom samaki* and he did not look upon it fondly. In his view, monetised relations since the 1990s had made people smarter and given them more knowledge, even if it had made it harder to mobilise the community. Kimhour explained that while people will still help each other in the rice field when necessary:

Money is more important now, before people did more for the community but now they just focus more on money to support the family.

Kimhour had been a teacher for nine years. He completed a Bachelor's Degree in History at the Western University in Kampong Cham Province three years earlier and then progressed to teaching Cambodian History at an Upper Secondary Level School in Kampong Siem District. For the past year he had also been the Deputy Director of his School. In 2013 he lived where he grew up – in his mother's family home (she still lived there but his father had passed away several years earlier) in Veal Sbov, with his wife (also a school teacher) and one daughter aged eight. His family were not wealthy. Kimhour's clothes were worn. In 2013 an upper secondary school teacher's basic salary was \$119.70 per month while the lower secondary level teacher (Kimhour's wife) received \$83.60 (CITA 2013, 12).⁹³ Despite the meagre income Kimhour's family could raise, their livelihood was relatively resilient compared to other families in Veal Sbov. Kimhour's stout physique and energetic daughter who was taller than most other girls around her age, suggested his family did not struggle like numerous other families struggled.⁹⁴ There were two salaries. They could not grow vegetables but kept chickens and a cow and calf to the left of the house that grew thinner as the dry season

⁹³ Low teacher salaries have been a source of protest ever since the 1990s (Ayres 2000a, 190). World Teacher's Day on the 5th October each year repeatedly draws protests from restive teachers' unions. In 2014 protests over pay in Phnom Penh were met by 50 riot police backed by 250 armed military police (Wright & Aun 2014). Prior to that in April 2014 Prime Minister Hun Sen had, at a ceremony for newly graduated teachers, exclaimed that those protesting should be grateful not to be paid in rice, as was the case in the years just after the Khmer Rouge were ousted (Wilkins & Sek 2014).

⁹⁴ In Kampong Siem District in 2012, 39% of children had stunted growth (2 standard deviations below median height). 16.8% were 3 standard deviations below, or 'severely stunted' (Haslett et al. 2012, 76). 31% were underweight, 7.9% severely (83).

progressed. The wooden 'pile house' had been developed with a loan from AMK microfinance. The space underneath it where his parents once kept livestock, was now partially enclosed by a hygienic brick built kitchen.⁹⁵

Kimhour's face was youthful. His smile was infectious – sometimes helping to put me at ease when as I felt self-conscious as an 'outsider.' He was a constant critical thinker who gave frank opinions, sometimes manifesting through dry humour. Kimhour's frank contributions could also be unsettling, rendering visible my naivety or the absurdity of my propositions. They were at the same time of the upmost value. As well as helping me reflect on my work, they helped to break group silences. Sometimes this was when others in the group perhaps also found me naïve or hard to follow. Sometimes it was when I ventured into areas that members were reluctant to talk about. I turn to one critical instance in this regard, as a prelude to discussion about the strong ethical fibre out of which social entrepreneurs are supposedly made.

⁹⁵ The traditional wooden house on piles that mitigates monsoon flooding emerged in Cambodia in the 12th Century (Che-Ani et al. 2008, 88). Brick enclosures underneath them tend to signify improved village prosperity and also that the village inhabitants have become more settled (Dordain & Kim 2013, 8-9).



Figure 76: Kimhour's family home and livestock raising, contributing to a resilient livelihood

3.1: The Civil Servant as a client

In a group discussion, after I had circulated the compendium of Khmer noun phrases with the prefix ‘*Luy*’ (money) (cited in the introduction to this chapter) that Nissen (2008) uses to explain the ‘moral economy of corruption in Cambodia’, the group took time to digest it. Reading top-down from innocuous phrases to more aversive ones, there was occasional laughter. But finally there was no comment and visible discomfort. Eventually Kimhour suspiciously exclaimed:

‘After I hold this paper, I have a question. I still do not understand what you want to ask for. What do you want? What is your objective?’

Kimhour asked if I think life for a public servant in Cambodia is the same as in Australia. There was knowing muttering among others, Sat, sitting next to Kimhour, looked sternly in my direction. I explained that to my knowledge public sector workers in Cambodia suffered hardship. Taking me by surprise, Kimhour then spoke about personal predicaments for almost five minutes. Noteworthy excerpts follow:

‘When the students get a poor score, parents say it is because of the teacher that forces them to pay for tuition. But everywhere it is the same. I also have to do the same (...) I believe they [teachers] do not preferably want to but even I also sell my goodwill and ideals. Sometimes we feel so embarrassed if we admit it. But why? In Cambodia, it generally happens like this everywhere.’

‘Apparently, in most neighbouring countries, people employed by the government institution can support themselves enough as well as their own family (...) so they can survive with their profession. In contrary, in Cambodia the government employee cannot (...), this is the root to make them look for additional income. This incentive culture is starting from lowest level upward to the highest level and vice versa.’

‘I have never proposed this kind of inappropriate culture, but if it is given I can just accept for the smoothed situation (...) students have awareness of this. As a result, they have collected money to offer to the teacher on their exam day so they can copy the answer from each other (...) I think every day of what the students have said about the word ‘corrupted teacher’, I mean it really makes me feel uncomfortable, upset and sad. Honestly, I don’t want to do so’ (Kimhour).



Figure 77: Kimhour (2nd from the right) talks of his predicaments as a teacher

As Kimhour spoke, Torn muttered and looked downwards, seemingly empathising. The information Kimhour gave me was not ground breaking. It is widely documented that low salaries drive Cambodian teachers to extract money from children by charging fees for classes, handouts, stationery and ‘private tuition’ in extra classes and also by soliciting ‘donations’ in return for higher grades (Benveniste et al. 2008; Brehm et al. 2012; Dawson 2009). Buying the right to cheat in exams or even skip a grade was also well known (Dawson 2009, 62).⁹⁶ What was more significant, was Kimhour’s justification of this conduct with reference to perceived social norms. He questioned *why* he should feel embarrassed about such behaviour, bringing to life the moral economy Nissen (2008) identified. He also justified his actions through reference to hierarchy, when he asserted ‘*This incentive culture is starting from lowest level upward to the highest level and vice versa.*’

At various times Kimhour referred to his relationship with his boss – the School Principal. This relationship meant a lot to him. Kimhour was proud of the ‘honour certificates’ from the School Principal that affirmed his performance and led to promotion. I noticed the certificates on the wall upstairs in his house, behind his television, a month after I first met him. Importantly Kimhour’s relationship with the Principal also allowed him to be part of *the incentive culture*. This relationship typified the compulsion of Cambodian civil servants to embed themselves within a network, via

⁹⁶ This changed in 2014 when the Cambodian Government enforced an applauded crackdown on cheating, to help identify areas where education needs most improvement. However, cheating was still permitted freely at the time of my fieldwork. Moreover the crackdown revealed the scale of cheating when the pass rate for Upper Secondary (University entrance) exams fell from 87% in 2013 to 26% (Ponniyah 2014).

connections to a suitable superior, in order to develop rent seeking opportunities. In Chapter One, I illustrated that this network is commonly referred to by Cambodians as their ‘string,’ translating as *kehsae* (Edwards 2008; Hinton 2005) or *kehsay royevak* (Marston 1997).

According to Marston (1997) the term ‘string’ originated from terms for hierarchy used by Vietnamese guerrilla fighters in the 1946-1954 Indochinese War. It was later adopted by the Vietnamese socialist government (213). The legitimization of the term by government officials while it also retained underground meaning signifies a dual usage, again disclosing the ambiguities upon which the moral economy of corruption is founded. The exploitation of opportunities presented by one’s place in a ‘string’ can be variably framed, ranging from innocuous to exploitative or corrupt behaviour. In the education sector, the *kehsae* moves money from the poorer to wealthier. Teachers collect fees from students. Teachers pay a daily fee to the Principal. The Principal pays facilitation fees at the District Education Office to get officials to release disbursements. Teachers also have to tolerate routine ‘unofficial deductions’ from their payments by people higher in the string (Brehm et al. 2012, 13-14; Dawson 2009, 70-71). In all of the Cambodian civil service ministries, whether forestry, health or education, *kehsae* has formalised patronage and corruption (Edwards 2008; Paley 2015). In Edwards (2008) view this has overtly commercialised ‘acts of kindness’ (*keum*) that traditionally tended to instigate acts of reciprocity on the part of the receiver (233).

3.2: Reframing the Civil Servant as a grassroots social entrepreneur

I never asked Kimhour about payments to the School Principal. What was of greater interest, was the tension between his self-narration as a professional teacher and his income activities. While Kimhour was compelled to engage in practices that he would rather not, in order to sustain his family’s welfare, he expressed that salary was not his main motivation. He placed more value on his professional status. Kimhour was one of only 31 teachers in Kampong Siem District to have obtained a tertiary degree (MoYES 2015, 22). Kimhour exhibited commitment to his work through critical commentary on the curriculum: the same material was taught from one year to the next, students were not really learning to think for themselves. He enjoyed the completion of work plans and administrative reports. He valued the appreciation of other teachers and wanted the appreciation of students and their parents. Through the action research, I contend that

events helped Kimhour towards reconciling his self-narration as teaching professional with the desire for more satisfying forms of income generation.

I start with the discussion group in November 2013, three weeks after the 2013 National Social Enterprise Conference of Cambodia in Phnom Penh. At the outset, Kimhour expressed his pleasure in attending with other group members. In his own words: *'I could see many people participating, to share their ideas and experiences with all of us.'* At a later point, he expressed that presentations by social enterprises at the conference had pressed on his mind the need for more research on local economic opportunities. Due to his teaching work, Kimhour did not participate in experiments with opportunities for social enterprise development in the third phase of the action research. But he broke the mould when he took action on his own accord by setting up a food stall at his school.

Kimhour's actions made sense in light of the views that he expressed in during a workshop after the Conference visit that was held to think together about business opportunities. In this workshop Kimhour was sceptical of the idea of social enterprise as he now understood it. It boiled down to practicalities. For Kimhour personally, busyness in his own life was one factor. Beyond this he was doubtful villagers would be capable of, or interested in working together. Moreover, he felt villagers might not want to invest themselves in an enterprise that would generate profits *eventually*. He expressed that:

'Based on what I can see nowadays, the majority of people tend to focus on their own private business as their first priority... they think to participate in the community association as a team like this, it takes too long to wait for the profit return. But if they work and are paid each day they can bring it home for their family daily expenses' (Kimhour).

Kimhour was telling me in advance, something that I found out categorically through the third phase of the action research – villagers have little appetite for cooperative enterprises. In the absence of waged employment, they run family businesses and they also do not want to invest their time into economic uncertainties. Kimhour's views were embodied in his appraisal of the school food stall: this was feasible as a family business and it provided a daily financial return that could fit around his work. We discussed the food stall business further in April 2014, just after the Khmer New Year. Kimhour explained that it was not a new idea (or 'innovation') because he saw private operators

doing it at other schools. But he also explained that after the Social Enterprise Conference: *'The workshops made me think that we should take this idea for income for our family.'* He also elaborated on the running of the food stall:

'My wife works the food business in the school, she is also a teacher. Each of us is on the roster, we sell the breakfast, food and snacks. So I have to know how to run it, how to sell, and how much rice to use and cover when she is teaching. We got permission from the School Principal, we have to pay a little to the rubbish collection. I wake up at 4 AM each day to prepare the food. It is a personal business but I never let it affect my teaching work' (Kimhour, exit interview, 19th April 2014).

I make no claim to call Kimhour's food stall a *social enterprise*. The private appropriation of the economic opportunity and consumption of its surplus (without doubt the Principal would also have taken a facilitation fee) would render this a most questionable statement. But this food stall business was *social* in one critical respect. It mitigated Kimhour's need for other income streams that he felt less comfortable with. He did not say if he had ceased charging children for classes or handouts since he started up the food stall. But he did say that he was less reliant on these incomes than before. He felt happier now that his family needed this kind of money less. When the opportunity arose, Kimhour embraced a more ethical economic subjectivity that was consistent with his duties as a school teacher.

While Kimhour's subjectivity might be a foundation for social entrepreneurship, one could say it does not go far enough. To give more substance to Kimhour as a community-focused entrepreneur, I finally turn to two of his other endeavours that came to light in his exit interview. Kimhour said that while he saw little chance of collective business, he thought it possible that villagers might help each other to develop economic opportunities, if there were clear objectives and somebody took the lead in getting organised. He made his point with the following example. Despite their close proximity to Kampong Cham Town, Veal Sbov and Chonghuk villagers had only had electricity for three years. It was Kimhour who took the lead in making this a reality. He had approached the Ampil Commune and then the Kampong Siem District Authorities about electricity in 2008, but failed to get a response. He took it on himself to collect the villagers' names and thumb prints to petition the authorities. Outside of work he visited houses, often finding that people were not home. Many villagers that he did find at home did not trust him or want to put their name to anything. Villagers also had so many questions or needed to be persuaded, so every thumb print took time. Following

up with people became increasingly time consuming. He formed a support group to collect thumb prints and speed things up. He called meetings at the ceremonial centre. When villagers remained sceptical, he persuaded an engineer from the state owned electricity company (Electricite Du Cambodge) to give a presentation in Veal Sbov. With enough demand and completion of endless paperwork, electricity was finally extended to Veal Sbov in 2010 and also to Chonghuk in the process. Villagers pay the same rate as people living in Kampong Cham Town. In Kimhour's narration, it was his own particular abilities that made the difference. The Village Chief, despite his connections, could not accomplish such a task. Kimhour explained that:

'It was my willingness. It was messy until I was involved. I am the person who is good at the documents so I did it. The Village Chief position is based on the profile, not the ability.'

Kimhour's self-narration in telling of these events is of a well organised, tireless and resourceful individual, willing to work at personal cost to achieve a social objective. Or in other words the embodiment of the creative and proactive individual who refuses to take no for an answer and will stop at nothing until a mission is achieved, that are routinely encountered in the case studies of social entrepreneurs in Asia and elsewhere in the world.

In the exit interview, Kimhour also told me about a school bicycle security system that he set up. Like the school food stall, he had implemented this during the action research process. This was a security system where children buy a numbered ticket for 200 riels from a school teacher who attaches a corresponding ticket to the bicycle. The teacher is responsible for ensuring that each child who leaves with the bicycle after classes has the corresponding numbered ticket. In contrast to his food stall, Kimhour did view this as a *kind of* social enterprise, explaining that:

'I also initiated the ticket for bicycle security in the school. But the benefit is social. Every month a teacher is the winning bidder, so the teacher gets the money. The school gets a little money from the teacher and the children do not lose their bicycle' (Kimhour, exit interview, 19th April 2014).

Kimhour's take on this venture is interesting because he strongly deviates from academics, NGOs and development agencies who consider 'bicycle parking' to be one component of the total package of fees that are unacceptably imposed on Cambodian school children's families (Benveniste et al. 2008; NEP 2013). Kimhour's thinking thus shows what might be seen as a *social* enterprise from a grassroots perspective in

Cambodian villages might not be viewed as such by other standards. This really just returns me to the definitional concerns in social enterprise literature. Organisations that call themselves social enterprises, or which some academics consider to exhibit prerequisite features of a social enterprise, commonly fail definition tests set by other academics, policy makers or agencies that accredit social enterprises (Lyon & Sepulveda 2009; Ridley-Duff & Bull 2011, 127-128). This is largely because of the room for disagreement that is generated whenever people try to come to terms with ‘hybrid organisations’ that mix business with the ‘third sector.’ But as Lyon and Sepulveda (2009) write, when it comes to operationalising definitions, the dilemmas are often political rather than technical in nature (92). In my view this compounds the importance of holding space open for communities to define social enterprise and entrepreneurship on their own terms.

Kimhour understood the premise of social enterprise from the action research. He assigned the conceptual grasp he had developed from the visit to the National Social Enterprise Conference, to the operations of the school bicycle security system. He saw the economic effects as social because the benefit did not accrue to him alone. Rather than seeking a monopoly on the bicycle security, the right to run it was subject to monthly a bid by teachers. The opportunity was not monopolised, it was shared and renewed each month. Beneficiaries in his view were the winning bidder, the school and the school children. It was an opportunity that made sense as a socialised form of economic venture rooted in the everydayness of village life.

People on the outside might disqualify this venture as a social enterprise firstly on the basis that it does not adhere to the general consensus on social enterprise being a form, with a constitution and so on. But here I raise the difference between trading entities in western contexts and those in contexts elsewhere, where economic enterprise is overwhelmingly informal. They might secondly rule it out as social enterprise because it amounts to exploitative behaviour. However the moral economy of corruption that Nissen (2008) underlines is once again a pertinent resource. From Kimhour’s perspective the payment for bicycle security was a contribution to help the low salaried teacher (*luy bantheam*) – consistent with a UNDP (2014a, 2) report that shows parents commonly give extra money to teachers out of sympathy – and it was also a contribution to the school (*luy vipteak’tean*). If one refers back to the continuum of noun phrases for different kinds of payment in the introduction to this chapter (Figure 69),

these payments are not far from being viewed as *gifts of kindness* such as ‘compassion money’ (*luy metathoa*). It is in summary debatable if the behaviour is definitively ethical or unethical, or whether the enterprise could be viewed as social or otherwise on the grounds of the payment being asked for.

3.3: The socially entrepreneurial teacher – paradoxes and tensions

Kimhour was a well-known and liked community actor in Veal Sbov and Chonghuk. His initiative and determination had helped to bring electricity to the villages. He had mobilised villagers in ways which made the process of lobbying for the extension of electricity more efficient. In other words, he was a determined individual with a social mission who creatively surmounted obstacles to the achievement of a social goal he cared about, exhibiting some of the traits pinned onto widely cited definitions of social entrepreneurs (Dees et al. 2001; Sullivan Mort et al. 2003). Kimhour’s mobilising of the villagers had boosted his personal self-confidence and he saw himself as the person best suited to this task. The process had required him to develop the charismatic side of his persona which can be aligned with literature that talks up the ‘charismatic leadership’ of social entrepreneurs (Agrawal & Hockerts 2013; Bhutiani et al. 2012; Bornstein 2007).

It is hard to think that Kimhour could readily disembed himself from social norms and structures of hierarchy and patronage which regulate people’s perceptions of ethical behaviour. The norms are manifest in aspects of people’s day to day survival. They are also shaped by government policy choices.⁹⁷ However, Kimhour exhibited a sense of the ethical subject that he wanted to be when he spoke of his core (non-financial) motivations for being a teacher. He pursued an economic opportunity that was more commensurate with his motivations when he initiated a food stall venture at his school to secure the income of his family. The food stall helped him start to forge a new economic identity and sociality as he envisaged ways of being less reliant on informal teaching fees. Kimhour was aware of a more aesthetically ethical ‘relation to self’ (O’Leary 2002, 133) and welcomed it, even if he could not completely discard the customary economic practices in which he was embedded. A further point of note, is that Kimhour’s concern with education and the critical thinking of students (exemplified

⁹⁷ It is also argued that meagre salaries in public institutions, including education (Dawson 2009) forest management and water utilities (Un & Hughes 2011, 206-208), are one strategic means by which political/bureaucratic elites maintain their dominance, or as (Turner (2013)) observes, reify Cambodia as a ‘neo-patrimonial state in which patron–client ties stretch from the apex of government in the capital to distant villages in one vast and complex pyramidal form’ (279).

in his critical commentary on school curricula), exhibits a concern for the freedom of his students. Kimhour's appetite for critical thinking puts in place the understanding that care of the self is premised on increasing spaces of freedom for both the subject and for other people (Dey & Steyaert 2016). This insight deals with the charge of solipsism levied against Foucault's 'care of the self' and can be considered as a point where Foucault's ethics and relational feminist ethics overlap (Heyes 2007, 115-116).

Section Four: Concluding discussion – critically and contextually considering subjectivity, leadership, and the ethics of social entrepreneurship

At the outset of this chapter I returned to a question that emerged in Chapter Two – namely:

What kinds of subjectivity would promote, or can be linked to, acceptable forms of grassroots social entrepreneurship in the Cambodian village?

Drawing from the two case studies presented, concerns that stand out in consideration of this question are community leadership and ethics. The subjectivities of Kimhour and the Village Chief were overdetermined by the institutional norms of patronage within which they were both embedded. For Kimhour this involved dependency on people higher in the civil service string for employment opportunities and the security of his family. He did not have obligations to any clients to speak of at the time. The Village Chief had downwards obligations to his clients/tenants, and also upwards commitments to patrons at the Commune and District political level - senior local representatives of the Cambodian People's Party who appointed him and facilitated his land transactions. The Village Chief's other patrons included representatives of PRASAC microfinance who serviced his welfare obligations to clients/tenants so that they could also meet their loan disbursement targets.

The subjectivities revealed are important because these are grassroots actors who have engaged, in different ways, in socially entrepreneurial acts. Their actions testify to individuals taking the lead in the initiation of socially entrepreneurial undertakings and seeing things through to the point of outcome. It is reasonable enough to think then, that social enterprise development is likely to hinge heavily upon entrepreneurial individuals. Kimhour expressed that collective social enterprise was not viable because

of the inevitability of free riding. He continued to say that if a social enterprise – in concrete form – were to be initiated, there would have to be a specific person in charge. In his own words:

‘A person must be assigned to be the responsible officer. Then we know who does less work and who does more work. Then we call a meeting for guidance, reinforcement, warning. Many meetings and discussions are required to get internal discipline’

Kimhour went on to say that this presented yet another constraint on the operation of a formal, concrete organisational form of social enterprise in practice:

‘The older people would complain about that... it might feel like the Pol Pot time with too much discipline, too many meetings’ (Kimhour exit interview).

Kimhour made it clear that social enterprise development absolutely needs individuals who embody the subjectivity of *a leader*. This need might be reified by psychological constraints on participation and members not wanting to *attend meetings all the time*. Drawing from the way Kimhour narrated his role in the electrification of the villages, it also seemed in that in his view the leading person would need his specific competencies. In Chapter Seven, Venerable Kosal also claimed that a social enterprise within the villages would require a strong leader although he was not sure if there were any suitable candidates. In consideration of the Veal Sbov Village Chief, one might also sense that social enterprise development at the grassroots would require a villager with his entrepreneurial flair, contacts, and standing in the community to leverage resources. However, both case studies, Kimhour and the Veal Sbov Village Chief, also suggest that if acts of social entrepreneurship boil down to leadership, then the manner of this leadership will hinge on the ethical subjectivities that individuals embody, alongside the particular talents that they have.

Drawing from Foucault’s overture to ‘practice based ethics’ Dey and Steyaert (2016) express that the ethics of social entrepreneurship is *‘immanent in the ongoing struggle to become ethical subjects’* (628). This is pertinent to Kimhour who exhibited an ongoing ethical struggle. As a teacher he was embedded within norms that were not only manifest in hierarchical relations but are also shaped by Government policy. Kimhour was acutely aware that he reproduced these norms by participating in the incentive culture, but justified this with recourse to the moral economy of corruption elicited by Nissen (2008). However, Kimhour also exhibited the desire to resist these norms if it

was possible and took up an opportunity to free himself from undesirable behaviour by setting up the food stall at his school.

Kimhour's actions are commensurate to a significant extent with 'care of the self', the ethical position adopted by Foucault (1984a, 350; 1997, 261) when he described an ethical way of life is '*a work of art*' that is immanent in resistance to conformity and mastery over personal appetites (1997, 286-287). O'Leary (2002) clarifies that this 'work of art' is the constant 'work-in-progress' to develop '*techniques of the self*', rather than the actual product (*oeuvre*) or *thing of beauty* (128-133). This 'work in progress' bears similarity to Buddhist ethics, whereby striving to develop the *right* aptitudes through mindfulness and discrimination constitutes work towards 'mature moral agency' or the capacity to be 'good' (Hansen 2003, 813; Shen & Midgley 2007, 172-173).⁹⁸ While Kimhour believed that there is a need for someone capable to take the lead in a socially entrepreneurial undertaking, he was still reflexive in the act of doing this himself. In the process of lobbying authorities to extend electricity to the village, he delegated responsibilities to supporters. He again exhibited a relational subjectivity when he saw value in mobilising other voices within the community rather than claiming to be speaking for the community on his own.

If social entrepreneurship is measured by results or achievements (or 'social impact'), then the Veal Sbov Village Chief looks like *the* standout social entrepreneur at the grassroots level in the villages where I undertook my fieldwork. But despite all of the Village Chief's credentials, there were constraints upon his agency. Under the enduring influence of past traumatic circumstances, combined with villagers' embeddedness in social norms of hierarchy, the free exercise of agency for any villager is a tough proposition. Despite his privileges and material wealth, the Village Chief was no different. Without doubt, the Village Chief would have appreciated the relative stability of village life as much as any other villager who had survived the Pol Pot time. This also

⁹⁸ As Varela (1999) puts it, both ethical positions (Foucauldian and Buddhist) tell us that we 'cannot overlook the need for some form of sustained, disciplined practice' (74-75). *Being* ethical is summarily an *embodied process* from the Buddhist and Foucauldian point of view, both of which are considered to be variants of 'virtue ethics', or habitual practices forged from the ongoing, reflexive development of personal character (Hancock 2008, 1361-1362; Keown 2005, 20-24).

put the Village Chief at ease with his own patron-client obligations, such as drumming up villagers' expressed support for the Cambodian People's Party.⁹⁹

Political loyalties and a fear of social change were critical variables in the Village Chief's investedness in the status quo. But it seemed his investedness, perhaps to an even greater degree, stemmed from two other interactive factors. Firstly, in order to render legitimate the traditional privileges that a patron can enjoy, the Village Chief made sure that inflows of significant resources from outside the village had to go through him. Secondly, his lack of faith in others and patriarchal sentiments compounded his conviction that it was his duty to lead the Village Development Committee. If the Village Chief was more reflexive, in the mode of 'care for the self', perhaps the Village Development Committee would have been more participatory. As it was, his un-reflexive self-narration justified his authoritarian style of leadership. This made his appropriation of resources like the village well, instilled by PRASSAC microfinance with labour contributed by the other villagers, more inevitable. Perhaps the ethical problem was not so much the Village Chief's appropriation/capture of the village well, but instead his routine reproduction of social norms. He was at ease with his appointed role and did not exhibit a strong sense of ethical dilemma over any course of action. To return to the way that O'Leary (2002) elaborates on Foucault, the Village Chief's ethics, embodied in his self-narration, were not a work-in-progress. Rather, they were embodied as the finished article, the *actually achieved thing of beauty*.

Both case studies in this chapter illustrate that the ethical subjectivities of social entrepreneurship at the grassroots level cannot be assumed, but instead that ethics should, following Foucault (1984b) be denaturalised or *problematized* in ways that keeps options open (389). Patronage or people's need to be positioned in a 'string' overdetermine the very meaning of social entrepreneurship at the grassroots community level in Cambodia. It is only through norms embedded in the patron-client system that concepts fundamental to social entrepreneurship, such as 'networking', 'leverage' and 'institutional legitimacy' appear to make any sense at all. This underlines, in the context of a hierarchical community led by individuals, inevitable tensions in the ethics of grassroots social entrepreneurship and the need to be open minded about what is definitively ethical or not.

⁹⁹ Since the 1990s across rural Cambodia, it has been the appointed Village Chief's duty to make families aware of the CPP's power and what the Party provides, and also to lead villagers to the polls at elections (Hughes 2003, 2009b, 2015; Sedara & Öjendal 2009).

Returning to the research question that I set out to deal with in this chapter, it would seem plausible to argue *that a reflexive, self-critical ethical subjectivity*, commensurate with the general principles of virtue ethics, is likely to promote, or be connected to, acceptable forms of grassroots social entrepreneurship in the Cambodian village. Or would it? Perhaps the question really depends upon who it is that determines what is *acceptable*. From the point of view of other villagers, not least tenants of the Veal Sbov Village Chief, perhaps the un-reflexive subjectivity of the well-connected grassroots entrepreneur who leverages resources for their betterment is a perfectly acceptable subjectivity that promotes a perfectly acceptable form of social entrepreneurship.

This chapter, based on empirical observation, is not intended to be an endorsement of patronage. There is also justifiable criticism of the culturalist narrative that the overemphasis of patronage and domination in Cambodia risks promoting (Hughes & Öjendal 2006; Springer 2010). It is certainly not the intention to impart a parochial posture, whereby an abuse is somehow okay if the abused party comes to believe it is deserved (Hutchings 2000, 117). I do contend however, drawing from substantive anthropology, that the assertion that patron-client relationships are purely exploitative, ‘exercised by the powerful to control the powerless’ as Putnam (2004, 669) writes, is questionable. It has been well recognised in the past in Southeast Asia that clients are not entirely without agency in determining the point at which clientships cease to be collaborative and instead become exploitative (Landé 1977, xxiv; Scott 1972a, 10; 1977, 170-171). Peredo and McLean (2006) departed from much of the preceding literature on social entrepreneurship when they expressed that it need not be purely altruistic. They saw ‘points along a continuum of social goals’ typified at one end by the actions of entrepreneurs whose goals are entirely and exclusively social and at the other end by entrepreneurs with social goals that are subordinate to personal gain (63-64). In summary, I see points along this continuum as being highly pertinent to the relationship between patron-client ties and social entrepreneurship in practice at the grassroots village level.

Conclusion

Section one: Introduction

This thesis explored social enterprise as a bottom-up approach to community development in Cambodia. It was driven on the one hand by recognition that the technical vision of social enterprises as ‘scalable solutions’ or ‘replicable models’ has limited relevance to community development. On the other hand, it was driven by recognition that while Cambodia has one of the largest concentrations of NGOs in the world and that many of them are turning towards social enterprise for financial sustainability, there is also a disconnection between these NGOs and the realities and priorities of grassroots communities. In light of these concerns, the motivation of this thesis was to investigate the way that villagers at the grassroots level interpret social enterprise and to uncover which discourses of social enterprise are most compatible with sustainable community improvements.

The research questions were:

- *What diverse forms of social enterprise will yield sustainable effects at the grassroots level in Cambodia (and also other developing countries)?*
- *What are the important processes of social valuation at the grassroots village level? How do these processes develop intersubjectively and how do they contrast with ideas about social value in the social enterprise literature?*
- *What kinds of subjectivity would promote, or can be linked to, acceptable forms of grassroots social entrepreneurship in the Cambodian village?*

To address these questions, I initiated action research in two adjacent peri-urban villages called Chonghuk and Veal Sbov at the edge of Kampong Cham Town in Kampong Cham Province, in eastern Cambodia.

Chapter One, Evolution of a Research Question, outlined the way that international development institutions, social entrepreneurship foundations, ‘impact investment’ funds, and also increasingly NGOs are focusing on social enterprise in Southeast Asia and also in Cambodia specifically. Preliminary research questions were driven by critical

appraisal of literature on social entrepreneurship, empirical observation of the way that social enterprise development has taken shape in Cambodia, and reconsideration of what can be considered as the 'grassroots' level.

Chapter Two, Social Enterprise as a Building Block for Community Development, reviewed social enterprise definitions and theoretical positions. Concepts underpinning the social solidarity economy (particularly those developed by the EMES scholarship) were found useful, but there were concerns with cross-cultural transference and a narrow reading of the 'economic.' I proposed that seeing 'social value' as a dual process rather than a 'singular thing' requires an embodied and more dialogical approach. I argued that opportunities for action research arise from the performativity of social enterprise and this helped me to refine the research questions.

Chapter Three, Methodology, outlined my three-phase action research methodology and clarified the embodied and discursive orientations I pursued. The importance of seeking out 'little narratives' through the process of 'multi-voicing' was foregrounded before I ran through principles underpinning Asset Based Community Development and appreciative inquiry as tools for participatory development practitioners. I introduced ten members of a hybrid action research group that brought together different skills and interests, and ran through the exercises that we undertook together over the space of ten months.

In Chapter Four, Chonghuk and Veal Sbov Villages: Economic Geographies in Context, diverse forms of income generation were identified. The difficulties faced by informal vendors were notable although even garment workers, with the highest and most reliable incomes, struggled from month to month. Despite the rapid monetising of relations (mainly due to waged employment and microfinance), diversity in the local economy in the broadest sense was documented in a 'diverse economies inventory.' Some practices of non-monetised exchange (including *provas*) continue to have economic value. The gift economy is a critical part of religious life that mobilises social surplus for non-profit causes. In the absence of a welfare state, there are practices of care within the family and neighbourly support which help to meet basic social needs.

Chapter Five, Action Research and Subjectivities, gave an account of activities designed to induce encounters with new subjectivities and amplify latent subjectivities that are conducive to community development and social enterprise. Affect was documented at

different points to show progressive changes in economic registers. The action research process was far from linear and the deprivation-deficit logic could not be dislodged completely. However, group members did develop conceptual understandings of social enterprise and returned from the 3rd National Social Enterprise Conference of Cambodia exhibiting the desire to initiate economic enterprises that would help to develop their community.

Chapter Six, Community Economic Practices and Development Possibilities, gave an account of two experiments with opportunities for social enterprise development. Participating villagers' rejection of a training opportunity to develop bamboo furniture making skills exposed precarious economic realities, justifiable dependencies, and villagers' need for immediate economic returns on their labour. Most critically, the process revealed a pre-existing community economy forged amongst bamboo skewer makers. The development of a local school canteen presented an opportunity to develop a vegetable supply chain that was better suited to villagers' existing activities. Ultimately, selling vegetables to the canteen was only deemed suitable for one villager alone, although it potentially enabled other vegetable gardeners to sell more of their produce than they did before the canteen opened.

Chapter Seven, Subjectivities and Interdependences: The Cambodian Village Context, explored group members' subjectivities at the end of the action research project mainly through exit interviews, but backed up the analysis with observations and data from initial interviews and transcripts of group discussions during the action research cycles. The economic subject positions that emerged suggested ambivalence among group members both young and old, although there was *some* expressed desire for more economic solidarity. Past traumas during the Khmer Rouge era emerged in Sat's account explicitly and Kiev's account implicitly. Local events in the Khmer Rouge period were discussed, along with the implications for mental health and finally villagers' wellbeing which I suggest is one lens through which social value might be approached as a process of valuation.

Chapter Eight, Social Entrepreneurship in Village Cambodia, broke away from the research group to zoom in on two individuals who have engaged in entrepreneurial activities and creative community mobilising. On one hand, the Veal Sbov Village Chief looks more to outsiders like a social entrepreneur. He engaged in market-based activities and community mobilising for community development and to guarantee the welfare of

villagers. He enjoys institutional support and the support of his constituencies in the village. On the other hand, Kimhour, a high school teacher, creatively set about bringing electricity to the villagers and exhibited the determination and charismatic leadership often associated with social entrepreneurs. Inspired by the action research, he also exercised entrepreneurship in a way that afforded a more ethical economic subjectivity. This gave insight into the types of subjectivity that can be linked to acceptable social entrepreneurship at the grassroots level.

Section Two: Main Findings

In Chapter Four, I found that satisfaction with culturally embedded informal care provision, in the total absence of a welfare state, together with villagers' financial circumstances and enduring trust issues, rendered the co-production of social care services via social enterprise irrelevant. This partially concurs with recent participatory research in North European rural communities, which also found the development social care enterprises to be impeded when people are satisfied with existing informal care arrangements (Munoz et al. 2015). This finding indicates that social enterprise models that get attention elsewhere, such as social care cooperatives which garner interest from EMES scholars, might not connect very well with village communities in a developing country.

Similar concerns with imported social enterprise models emerge out of the bamboo furniture experiment. Villagers could not foresee that the training was worth giving up their time for without stipend payments. Sat, Torn, Kimhour and also Kimhour's brother (a construction manager who participated in the first day of the training) all made it clear that villagers could not go a single day without an income. As much as they were impressed by the photos of furniture made by Bamboo Node Tiles, all of the young male construction workers said the same thing in a discussion group held about a month after the furniture training took place. Kiev also made a similar point when she simply said that *'people are very busy.'* This is not to say work integration social enterprises (WISEs) are of no value in Cambodia. On the contrary, many NGOs in Cambodia use WISE for vocational training – including BSDA which runs a training restaurant (Lyne et al. 2015). However, at the grassroots level villagers' concerns are different. Responses

signified that rather than unemployment, it is the problems faced by the 'working poor' that are of concern. This renders 'work integration' a questionable focus of attention.

When we are talking about social enterprise as a building block for grassroots community development in the developing world, in my view it makes more sense to talk about ethically negotiated, contextually embedded diverse economies, emanating particularly from community economies scholarship and the work of J.K. Gibson-Graham (2006b; 2008a) and colleagues (Gibson-Graham et al. 2013; Gibson-Graham & Roelvink 2011, 2013) than it does to talk about 'social enterprise models.' Microfinance for instance is the ultimate 'replicable model' which meets social needs by giving villagers the liquidity to set up a micro-business or by helping them to smooth consumption at difficult times. It is enunciated far and wide as a model for community empowerment that increases choices, reduces transaction costs and puts thrifty women in control of household finance. But findings in this thesis are that indebtedness also renders villagers' participation in community affairs more difficult and plays a prominent part in narrowing economic interaction to mostly monetised 'market exchange.' This is a strong constraint on social enterprise development at the grassroots level, considering that social enterprises are viewed as mixed resource organisations that rely on mixed forms of reciprocity to mobilise labour and resources.

If the focus moves to diverse economies, two things can happen. Firstly, resilient whole economies built on complementary diverse transactions, labouring arrangements and enterprising forms, can be seen as, in their own right, socially enterprising entities. As Hu, Bhatt & Qureshi (2013) write, this approach offers hope for constituted *transformatory* social economies. The building of such resilient social economies is also one use to which approaches such as Asset Based Community Development can be put. From this perspective the vegetable supply chain takes form as a social venture. But this is not so much because the opportunity to sell more vegetables is distributed among different growers (although this is obviously important). Rather, the social function of the vegetable supply chain is to instil greater resilience into local economies. This was possible in Chonghuk Village because the vegetable supply chain could be inserted into villagers' existing livelihood portfolios without their need to trade this off against other kinds of income generation.

A second thing that can happen is that much more room is made available for little narratives to be unearthed and amplified, which is vital for keeping the possibilities of

social enterprise open ended rather than closed. It was abundantly clear that the ‘not-for-profit’ enterprise fails to resonate with everyday economic realities. Through attention to little narratives I argue that the ‘socialisation’ perspective, which reads the negotiated distribution of surplus dividends as a pedagogical exercise, seems a better fit. But this is not to say that such pedagogy has to be located within worker cooperatives, which are held by some researchers to be the best vehicle for economic democracy (Ridley-Duff & Southcombe 2012). Rather, the little narratives of villagers brought the situated nature of cooperation and economic deliberation into focus, through the bamboo skewer making activity in particular.

It was hard for me to imagine bamboo skewer making as a social form of enterprise or as enterprise with a ‘social purpose’ on first impression. But on closer inspection it is both of these things. Bamboo skewer making is inclusive and the economic benefits are socialised, as far as it is maintained as an open access safety net for all villagers. The open-access principal is upheld by normative entitlements to borrow bamboo and villagers’ incentives to collectively care for this important natural resource. Just as bamboo skewer making rendered situated forms of economic cooperation visible, so also did the final settlement of the vegetable supply chain to the local school canteen. Sat, Torn and Nuon all expressed that this was a good idea because BSDA were willing to incorporate vegetables that village gardeners already cultivated. Sales would be reliable as long as BSDA gave sufficient notification of the produce that the canteen needed. This was emblematic of the recognised need for coordination and deliberation about the rights of vegetable gardeners to sell more of their produce, even if it was only Nuon who would be acting as go-between.

The little narratives uncovered summarily revealed that the villagers’ have the incentive for cooperation that secures the conducive conditions for one another’s right to livelihood. But business itself (or ‘production and sale’) remains firmly in the family. Cooperation on such limited terms is compounded by multiple layers of interconnected issues: the history of family values as a mode of governing society; past traumas and the forced collectivism of the Khmer Rouge; the post-communist revitalisation of family values as a basis for moral education and means by which society is rendered ‘safe’ and ‘stable’; and finally past and present day religious beliefs that promote caring for the family and spirits of the ancestors as part of merit making.

In consideration of subjectivities that promote or can be linked to social entrepreneurship at the grassroots village level, I have found that four main concerns stand out. These are family values; community citizenship; leadership and finally the need for critical attention to ethical subjectivities.

In Chapter Six I showed how the opportunity to supply vegetables to a newly established school canteen was finally appropriated. Under Sat's guidance, the vending side would be operated as a family business by his god daughter. But in Chapter Seven I described how Sat reflexively processed opportunities to meet obligations to family and to other villagers who grew vegetables at the same time. Sat was not alone in this type of reasoning. In Chapter Eight I described how Kimhour set up a food stall at the school where he teaches. Family commitments were foremost in Kimhour's actions, while this venture also enabled him to take more pride in teaching and to disembed himself from routine exploitative practices.

Sat and Kimhour were both proactive in pursuing economic opportunities which they appraised with social considerations at least partially in mind. Arguably their recourse to family business could be considered as risk management because it avoided disharmony among villagers. Such 'proactiveness' and 'risk management' is embedded in standard constructions of social entrepreneurship in the management literature (Sullivan Mort et al. 2003; Weerawardena & Sullivan Mort 2006). Pertinent analysis from Bacq and Lumpkin (2014) also shows that family business gives social entrepreneurship scholars insight into how people manage multiple business subjectivities. Sat and Kimhour were reflexive in their embodiment of the subjectivity of a family member, business entrepreneur and community citizen all at the same time. During their participation in the action research they adopted multiple and simultaneous subjectivities that were also in a state of flux. Sat, for instance, saw social enterprise not just as a way for villagers to support their family but also as a way for them to escape from microfinance. Kimhour, meanwhile, saw social enterprise as a way to get the village better organised and enacted this by organising the system for school bicycle security.

Throughout the fieldwork leadership emerged as a focus of attention. But it is important to consider that in Cambodian society *leadership* is contextual. Hierarchy and systems of patronage render leadership embodied in specific individuals with spiritual merit, often collected in past lives, whose *duty is to lead* (Ledgerwood 2007). If one does away with the idea that social entrepreneurs must always have exclusively social goals, the Veal

Sbov Village Chief looks like *the* standout social entrepreneur at the grassroots level who has done wonders for local development. He also embodied the subjectivity of a visionary leader. He saw it as his duty to plan development, mobilise villagers and leverage resources. Although Kimhour questioned the Veal Sbov Village Chief's credentials, he also said that should a social enterprise ever be initiated, there would to be a need *strong leader*. Venerable Kosal shared this view. In Kimhour's opinion a leader would be needed to instil discipline amongst those who would shirk responsibilities. *Strong leadership* thus equated with '*firm leadership*.' When this is combined with the belief in *meritorious leadership*, there is reason to wonder how dialogical social entrepreneurship in Cambodia might ever really be.

From the point of view of EMES scholarship, social entrepreneurship is a process driven by the collective work of community citizens and a range of supportive actors rather than by the one heroic individual (Defourny & Nyssens 2013b; Spear 2006, 2011). As much as I find this point of view intuitively desirable as a route towards democratic community development pathways, it transpires to be spurious in Cambodian villages. In Veal Sbov for instance, it was clear that the Veal Sbov Village Development Committee was not dialogical at all and that this led to elite capture. By Torn and Kimhour's accounts, however, villagers there were happy with these arrangements because they could just get on with earning money for their families. The appetite for ongoing, committed solidarity at the village level in Cambodia is also brought into question by other researchers' observations of participatory development projects in the country. It is noted for instance that villagers' participation is driven by 'face' (*mukh moat*) which often means that attending meetings is considered to be the same thing as taking part (Knowles 2009, 71), while the views of men who are highest in the hierarchy amongst those present at meetings tend to become the expressed views of the whole group (Ogawa 2004).

What I do propose however, is that a diverse economies perspective might help to re-situate the ideals of EMES scholarship in an altogether different context from whence they originated. This could be accomplished by a pragmatic focus on specific instances of collective entrepreneurship and innovation, rather than looking for it bound up within one particular enterprising vehicle. The bamboo skewer economy for instance had been configured over time through some degree of collective effort. It resolved the right to livelihood and instilled reliability into the buyer-supplier chain that connects to

barbecue and micro street-food businesses in or near to the Town. Consideration of resilience along these lines of diverse economies, would also allow more appreciation of festivities such as *bon Dalien* (the harvest festival) and *bon Phka Prak* (a flower-money-tree ceremony) as acts of solidarity in the name of not-for-profit causes. While villagers' donations at festivities point to occasional rather than continual commitments in a constituted enterprise, perhaps the contributions might help to raise start-up money for new community-based economic ventures in future. If not, these festivities can nonetheless be incorporated into a broad conception of a socially entrepreneurial diverse local economy built on combinations of resources or assets (which is what entrepreneurship really boils down to) via the collective effort of different community actors.

In Chapters Six and Eight, patron client relationships emerged as a factor in consideration of how economies work in practice and also how social entrepreneurship is likely to be enacted and deemed legitimate by stakeholders. It is generally observed that patron figures in Cambodia are invested in the status quo, which casts doubt upon the Village Chief's credentials as a 'social innovator.' However, in reality he was involved in certain innovative behaviours. Arguably the picture is a mixed one, even if his innovativeness does not meet the higher benchmark of 'relentlessness' or 'continuous engagement.' The point that needs to be fully comprehended is that a degree of conservatism and resistance to change is understandable on the Village Chief's part.

The Village Chief's investedness in *traditional ways* of village organising underscores the point made by Scott (1985) that throughout Southeast Asia, there is a tendency for villagers to draw selectively on bygone times after one innovation after another has 'worked against their material interests' (178-179). This was exactly what Sat did in Chapter Six when he reflected on people being '*happy in the fields*' in the pre-Khmer Rouge era. Chandler (1998) additionally illustrates that throughout Cambodian history, in the aftermath of chaotic times, order has been restored by the reinstatement of rituals and customs drawn from ancestors. Chandler's observations sit alongside those of the Cambodian academic Meas Nee (1995), who wrote of the need to 'restore village life.' Meas Nee was fundamentally warning development practitioners that the latest 'participatory development' concepts were being insensitively imposed after the Pol Pot times and that they often fostered resentment. Social enterprise development in practice in Cambodia has much to learn from this.

Just as Pryke et al. (2003) advise social researchers that ‘*newness does not necessarily equate with best*’ (6) when we set out to develop a research strategy, neither is there any reason to think newness means best when one grapples with solutions to social problems. Amounting to a neophilic discourse – one obsessed with things always being new (Oxford Reference 2014)¹⁰⁰, social enterprise and entrepreneurship is instrumentally driven by the relentless task of *modernising*. It underpins another way that social entrepreneurship is performed (this time through the narrative of ‘utility’) as a developmental tool, employing ‘state-of-the-art management concepts’ (Dey & Steyaert 2010, 88-89). Other researchers also question whether innovation is always part of the story that social entrepreneurs themselves use (Cameron & Hendricks 2013; Parkinson & Howorth 2008). I contend that in Cambodia there are very good reasons to ask whether innovation should be the main focus of attention or whether restoration and repair should be more prominent. I was given food for thought by one study of a mental health program implemented by the NGO ‘Transcultural Psychosocial Organisation’ (TPO). In this instance, women participants in group therapy sessions held within their village rejected the planned movement onto income generating activities. They were relieved at the opportunity to finally discuss emotional problems and saw income activities as an unwelcome distraction (van de Put & Eisenbruch 2004).

The Veal Sbov Village Chief’s investedness in *tradition* is also pertinent to the question of ethical subjectivities that can be linked to social entrepreneurship. From Robert Putnam’s (2004) utilitarian ethical perspective, acts that breed or maintain patron-client relationships (or ‘bonding social capital’) are *unethical* because these relationships are not responsive. Acts that foster ‘bridging social capital’ are ethical in comparison, because they give people a wider range of relationships and options (669). However, from a substantive perspective, patronage in Cambodia is not unresponsive at all. On the contrary it is adaptable (Hughes & Un 2011, 9). This partially explains why access to microfinance, which goes hand in hand with social capital in development discourse (Rankin 2002), becomes co-opted into the Village Chief’s repertoire of patron services both in this thesis and in research elsewhere in Cambodia (Matthews 2007; Ovesen & Trankell 2014). The resilience of patronage in Cambodian society underlies the point that while it does not provide the range of social interaction that bridging social capital

¹⁰⁰ Oxford Reference (2014) defines ‘neophilic’ more specifically as ‘A fondness for, or obsession with, novelty and change (exhibited by neophiles or neophiliacs).’

does, as Ledgerwood (2007, 1-4) profoundly notes, it is still writ large, in reality and despite social change, the foundation upon which Khmer's build survival strategies

The situations of grassroots actors that are documented in this thesis invite critical appraisal of the assumed ethics of social entrepreneurship. Assumptions about integrity and virtuousness which pervade social entrepreneurship discourse rest on 'deontological ethics' which prioritise the agreement on 'right and wrong' (Ridley-Duff & Bull 2011, 91-92). The problem with this ethical approach is twofold. Firstly, evaluation by these standards (for instance by social entrepreneurship foundations or social enterprises looking for the 'right employees') can stereotype behaviour, creating exclusionary norms (92). Secondly, drawing on Varela (1999) focusing on '*what it is right to do*' (as deontological ethics does when 'defining the content of obligation') often pushes aside the ethics manifest in '*what it is good to be*' (3). I follow Varela's point with the claim that the assumed ethics of social entrepreneurs enables 'obligations' to be defined, particularly by foundations and development agencies, but it does not directly address social entrepreneurs' wellbeing or the wellbeing of their constituencies. The problems with the deontological approach further illustrate the general point that ethics are *embodied* as opposed to being only arguments or ideas.¹⁰¹

Wellbeing lies at the centre of ethical subjectivities. It also lies at the centre of any credible meaning that might be given to 'social value' at the grassroots level. In Chapter Two, I drew from the work of Muniesa (2011) who gives a pragmatic view of valuation as a verb. This closes distance between subjective/objective binary conceptions by illustrating how, in one's consideration of what value *is* one is also provoking that reality. This renders value less concerned with correctly used appropriate metrics and more attentive to its performative aspects. With respect to social value, this view of valuation renders the social not as something that can be stood still for the purpose of measurement but instead, owing to Dey's (2007) analysis, as something that *happens* and moreover is sometimes hard to keep in forward motion. I testify to this through attempts to make productive use of appreciative inquiry and momentum at times when subjectivities were ambivalently moving back and forth between 'yes and no' or active and reluctant positions.

¹⁰¹ For Varela (1999), 'talk alone' does not suffice for ethical mindfulness (74-75). Similarly, Foucault (1984c) writes of *being* the embodiment of ethics and claims that a 'poetic attitude' cannot be brought about by ideas alone, rather it is practised by the subject 'in his philosophy-as-life, in his ethos' (374).

Fundamentally I have found that social valuation, as a process, is intelligible through the means by which villagers in Chonghuk and Veal Sbov seek ‘peace of mind.’ The actual achievement of peace of mind or wellbeing (*sok pbluw chet*) unifies the heart and mind, or rational thought and personal desire. It is conducive to the villagers’ making of economic decisions that allow them a sense of belonging in their community. It is a process that requires discipline on the part of monks, but lay people can also seek to achieve wellbeing by receiving blessings and giving gifts to accumulate merit. By supporting one another in the act of securing their livelihood, arguably villagers would be encountering new ways to achieve wellbeing by acting in accordance with dharma, fulfilling the duty to be righteous and generous and gaining personal satisfaction.

With the emphasis on villagers’ sense of inclusion and satisfaction from their interactions, there once again appears to be a place for dyadic (face-to-face) relationships. Patronage might be an ‘lop-sided friendship’ but the sense of affinity involved when loyalties develop (Carney 1989, 43-44) implies some form of emotional investment that transcends mere socio-economic relationships of dependency. There were in Veal Sbov clear affinities between the Village Chief and some of his tenants. The Village Chief was spoken of highly in two group discussions. I saw his generosity first hand at a wedding I attended. Historically in Southeast Asian villages the legitimacy of patrons has depended on their ability to ensure that clients had work, regardless of whether their labour was really needed or not. This was one among other means by which wealthier villagers were compelled to redistribute some of their wealth (Scott 1972a, 15). The Village Chief in Veal Sbov met such obligations to his tenants.

In Chapter One, I cited an extensive study by Mair, Battilana & Cardenas (2012) of ‘socially entrepreneurial organisations’ that are supported by the Schwab and Ashoka Foundations for social entrepreneurship. This study finds that the unifying self-justificational narrative of these organisations is one of ‘efficiency and productivity.’ Without refuting the robustness of this analysis, I do not find that the efficiency narrative resonates with valuation of social enterprise at the grassroots level in Cambodia. On the contrary, I find expectations of inclusion and sensitivity to tradition that are incommensurate with ‘industrial efficiency.’ In patron-client relations in particular, wasteful expenditure, far from being redundant expenditure, is expenditure that renews relationships. This is a principal that cuts both ways because clients also have to give a disproportionate amount of their surplus in return for a sense of

protection. This was apparent when my suggestion, that bamboo skewer makers might cut out the middleman and seek a better price by selling directly to barbecue businesses and street-food sellers in the Town, gained a hostile response.

It dawned on me that I had not learned much from my visit to northern Cambodia two years earlier, where I observed a UN funded program that tried to organise oleoresin producers into coherent associations (a consultant likened such associations to social enterprises). Producers attended trainings for stipends. But regardless of what they were taught about the resin value chain, they were never going to change their selling arrangements if it meant cutting out the middleman who, in this instance, was their Village Chief (Lyne et al. 2013, 10). While this failed to stop me making flawed assumptions in Veal Sbov and Chonghuk, seeing an identical scenario emerge twice over gave substance to the view that a sustainable grassroots business does not equate with efficiency. By extension, a situated resilient or sustainable social economy, embedded in the culture of reciprocity as it stands, and conducive to wellbeing, might be construed as an *ontologically wasteful* site of surplus creation and distribution. In summary, by prioritising inclusiveness over efficiency, as illustrated in Figure 78, culturally sensitive bottom-upwards approaches might have the capacity to move social enterprise development from the nexus between social enterprise and ‘development’ towards the intersection of wellbeing and community development.

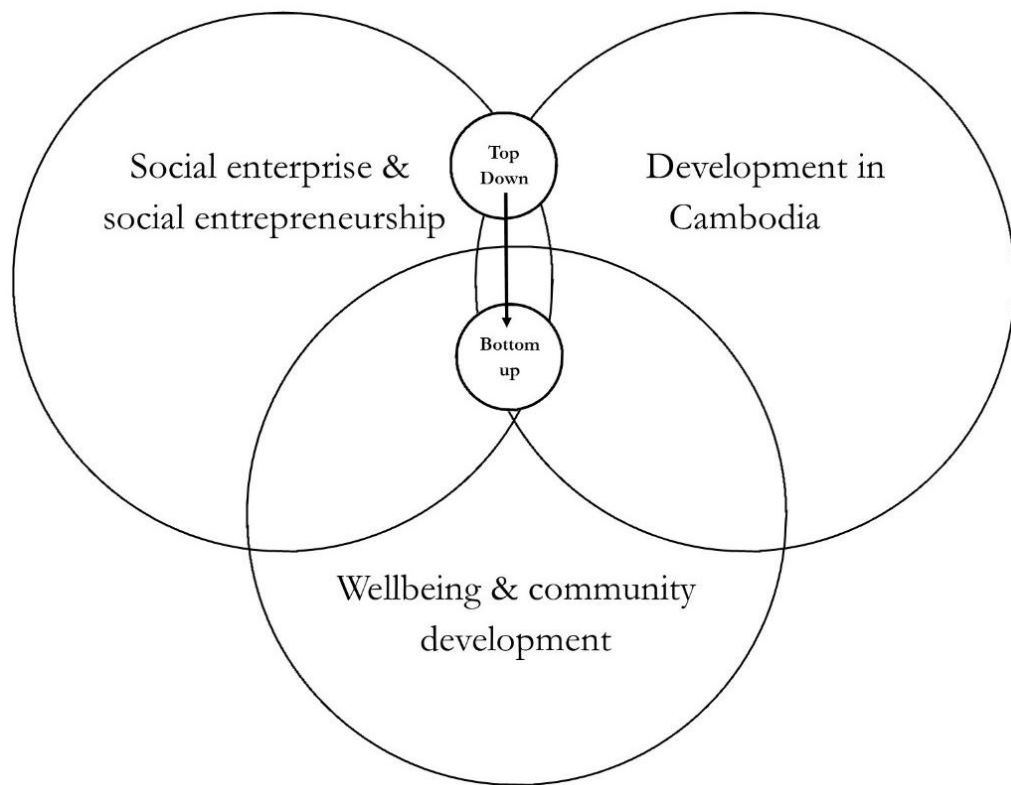


Figure 78: Moving from a top-down to bottom-up approach to social enterprise development

Section Three: Recommendations and avenues for future work

Social enterprise is evaluated in positive terms (Hervieux et al. 2010) with strong justification. But the unique contribution that social enterprise development can make to democratic community development pathways tends to get lost in top-down approaches. The dialogical properties of social value are ubiquitously replaced with monetised proxies for consumption and cost saving by impact investors or international development agencies. In developing countries, the poor have no say in an agenda set elsewhere which amounts to deeper penetration of market exchange, more CSR, and stronger foundations for BoP business. As Castresana (2013) notes, the notion that social enterprise could help to redefine the normative properties of ‘development’ is nullified by present arrangements.

I do not say that nothing positive at all comes out of initiatives like the World Bank’s ‘Development Marketplace.’ But I do make the case that international development institutions should also lend support to the further development of strength-based social enterprise development approaches, in collaboration between academics, community development specialists, and communities themselves. Alongside impact

investing, this approach can instil diversity and resilience into local economies. The approach is painstaking, hard to keep in motion, it might not ‘revolutionise the fishing industry’ and there will be necessary inefficiencies. But, as testified by ABCD practice in the Philippines (Cahill 2008; Gibson, Cahill, et al. 2010), the approach gets close to community members’ economic realities and helps them to encounter, welcome, and embed new economic subjectivities which can lead to hitherto unknowable results.

In grassroots village communities, strength-based practices can help villagers to integrate new activities into ethically negotiated livelihood portfolios. This is the essence of the strength-based approach – helping communities build on what they already do well. These activities can be good for villagers’ personal wellbeing and also good for the wellbeing of others around them. This amounts to thinking *in situ*, about how one goes about supporting socially entrepreneurial actors such as Sat and Kimhour and also potentially Sreynit who felt that village level businesses might act in solidarity with one another. What it also requires of practitioners, is to find ways of holding participatory spaces open for people to arrive at their own course of action. It also requires practitioners to get out of the way and let the backstage negotiations do their work in bringing out the little narratives that signpost what will or will not work for villagers.

I propose in essence that a diverse economies approach which attends to little narratives, is a way to take aspects of the EMES ‘ideal types’ of social enterprise which are explicitly geared to bottom-upwards community development, and re-situate them in a context where specific ‘models’ make less sense and where collectivity is intermittent. Ultimately, the Cambodian people have proven themselves to be more resilient than one can possibly imagine in the course of rebuilding their lives and communities against recent traumas. Religious life around the Pagoda was quick to re-embed itself in villages and it continues to be a cornerstone of associational life. Village communities have co-produced certain local economic practices that mutually guarantee a basic right to livelihood. A diverse economies approach which is appreciative of strengths, while being sensitive to difference, is suited to harnessing such creativity and resilience. In the process of ‘learning to be affected’ the approach is also suited to the vital work of economic restoration and repair.

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Appendices

Appendix 1:

Research Schedule: Group Discussions and Workshops

Focus Group Discussions (with co-research participants)		
Date	Title	
27 th August 2013	Documenting local economic development and establishing subject positions	Group Discussion 1
10 th September 2013	Thinking about social enterprise (combined with BSDA field visit)	Group Discussion 2
8 th October	Knowledge acquired and validation of data in a village newsletter	Group Discussion 3
18 th October 2013 (afternoon)	Views on social enterprise and agricultural cooperatives	Group Discussion 4
10 th November	Follow up group discussion on participation at the 3 rd National Social Enterprise Conference	Group Discussion 5
8 th April 2014	Assessing the action research project	Group Discussion 6
Workshops (with co-research participants)		
Date	Title	
19 th August 2013	Participant recruitment	Workshop 1
3 rd September	Needs and asset mapping	Workshop 2
19 th September 2013	Becoming researchers: learning about difference and the principals of action research	Workshop 3
1 st October 2013	Creating newsletter content	Workshop 4
18 th October 2013 (morning)	Discussing Portraits of Gifts and forthcoming presentation at the National Social Enterprise Conference of Cambodia	Workshop 5
25 th October 2013	National Social Enterprise Conference Workshop: ABCD in Cambodian Villages	Workshop 6
15 th December 2013	Exploring business ideas	Workshop 7
19 th -22 nd February 2013	Bamboo furniture training	Workshop 8
Focus Group Discussions (other areas of interest)		
Date	Title	
12 th October 2013	Market Vendors	
20 th October 2013	Garment Factory Workers	
28 th February 2014	Harvest Festival at <i>Wat Nokor Bachaey</i>	
23 rd March 2014	Construction Workers	

Appendix 2

Semi-structure interview schedule. Interviews should take no more than two hours.

A. Questions about local economic development

1. *Are there good economic opportunities in Ampil Commune? How can people take benefit from these opportunities?*
2. *Do you have a story about anything that happened which improved the economic opportunities in Ampil Commune?*
3. *What do you think the word 'economy' means? What are the main economic activities in Ampil Commune?*

B. Questions about community and business

1. *What do you understand by the word 'business'?*
2. *What are some of the positive and results that business has in Kampong Cham? Do you think there are any negative results?*
3. *What do NGO's do in the community? Do you think that business can also do some of the things NGO's do?*

Would you like to see business try to do some of things NGO's can do?

C. Questions about economic resources and bricolage

1. *Are there any ways that people get things they need without paying for them in Ampil Commune?*
2. *How regularly do you think people get things that they need without paying for them?*
3. *Can you think of a time in the Ampil Commune where people have earned money together? Can you describe the relationships that these people have?*
4. *Can you think of a time when people in the Ampil Commune have helped each other to get something, or create something worth money? Can you describe these relationships between people?*

5. *How important are the festivities in Ampil Commune? Are there important economic benefits from festivities as well as social benefits?*

D. Questions about innovation

1. *Do you think it is better to do something new as a business or is it a better idea to copy something that another business is doing successfully?*
2. *Have you ever tried to do anything new to earn money? Or have you ever tried to change the way that you do something to earn money? Can you explain why you did it? Was it successful? How did this make you feel?*
3. *Have you ever tried to do something new to get or create something that you need? Or have you ever tried to change the way that you can get or create something that you need? Can you explain why you did it? Was it successful? How did this make you feel?*
4. *Has any group of people in the Ampil Commune ever tried to do something new, or in a new way, to earn money or to get or create something that is worth money? Can you describe this?*
5. *Do you think there are times when people have not accepted that something could be done in a new way?*

E. Questions about risk

1. *Do you think there are risks in doing business?*
2. *Do you think a business should take risks in order to survive or grow? If not, then why not? If yes, then please provide examples.*
3. *Do you think there are any circumstances when it is not acceptable to take risks?*

Appendix 3: Sample exit interview schedule*

Question	Probes	
1) Please think about the experience of being involved in this research project.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How did you feel at the beginning of the project? • How did you feel in the middle of the project after we had our workshops and went to Phnom Penh? • How do you feel about the project at the end of it? • Was it a useful project for you? Why? • Was there anything that you thought was not useful? Why? 	
2) If any business started because of a project like this, do you think it would be possible for people to work together in a group?	If yes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Can you imagine an example of people working together? • What problems would you imagine if people to start a business together? • Can you imagine anyway these problems would be solved?
	If no	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Why not? • Do you think it is a good idea for people to start a business together in a group? <p>If yes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Why? ○ What problems would you imagine if people to start a business together? ○ Can you imagine anyway these problems would be solved? <p>If no:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Why do you think it is not a good idea?

* This is the exit interview schedule for Sat, the Chonghuk Village Chief who joined the action research group. Each member of the research group had two customised questions on their schedule that were either additional questions or amended ones. Customised questions were drawn up following analysis of transcripts from their first semi-structured interviews that took place before the action research started. This was a way to revisit particular points of interest in the first interview and explore changes in subjectivity at the end of the action research.

3) What are the most important uses of a business in your view?	If only survival and feeding the family	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Can business bring other benefits to the whole community? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> If yes: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ What kind of benefits to the community? ○ Would it be a good idea to start a business because of these kind of benefits? If yes: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Would you be willing to become involved in a business to help the whole community? ▪ What would be the main problems for your involvement? ▪ Do you think these problems can be solved? If no: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Why not?
	If community benefits are mentioned	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Would you be willing to become involved in a business to help the whole community? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> If yes: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ What would be the main problems for your involvement? ○ Do you think these problems can be solved? If no: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ What would prevent you from becoming involved in a business to help the community?
4) Can there be opportunities for new business apart from farming, animal raising, beauty, moto repair or construction?	If yes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What kind of product do you think is possible? • What could you use in the community to start this business?
	If no	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Do you think it is enough for there to be construction, garment worker, beauty, moto-repair, farming, animal raising, civil service or military jobs? Or do you think there should be more kinds of opportunities?

<p>5) What do you understand if people say the glass is half full? Do you think this is true in the village?</p>	<p>If yes</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Why do you think so? • Can you think of ideas how to use different resources in new ways for economic development? • Do you think it is possible to start to develop the economy in the village by using the resources that you have already without help from NGOs or Authorities at the beginning? • If yes: • What kind of action can be taken without help from NGOs or Authorities at the beginning? • If no: • Why would you need the NGOs or Authorities before you can start?
	<p>If no</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Why do you think the glass is not half-full? • Can you think of any resources that we identified in our research team? • Did you find these exercises useful? Why/why not?
<p>If do not understand 'glass half full' - Alternative to 4: Are there different resources in the villages that can be used to create new businesses?</p>	<p>If yes</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What resources are there? • How can they be used? • Is it possible to start to develop the economy in the village by using the resources that you have already, without help from NGOs or Authorities at the beginning? If yes: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ What kind of action can be taken without help from NGOs or Authorities at the beginning? If no: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Why would you need the NGOs or Authorities before you can start?
	<p>If no</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Can you think of any resources that we identified in our research team? • Did you find these exercises useful? Why/why not?

<p>Extra question for Sat What do you think the word 'economy' means now?</p>	<p>If only get money for family</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Do you think the economy only means to get money, or does it mean all the resource that helps people to have a better life? • Do you think this project has helped the group members to think about how different resources might improve lives in the villages? <p>If yes Can you give examples?</p> <p>If not What about the rice fields village and BSDA? Can you comment on that? Can this be useful for the whole villages? What would BSDA need to do to make sure it is useful for everybody?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Do you think the project helps us to think more about what the word 'economy' means? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Why/why not?
	<p>If economy means everything that helps people to have a better life</p>	<p>Do you think this project has helped the group members to think about how different resources might improve lives in the villages?</p> <p>If yes Can you give examples?</p> <p>If not What about the rice fields village and BSDA? Can you comment on that? Can this be useful for the whole villages? What would BSDA need to do to make sure it is useful for everybody?</p>

6) Could people in the village be willing to share personal resources like machinery, vehicle or land to start a business together with other people?	If yes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What could resources be used for • What problems can you imagine? • Would there be any problems for you personally sharing resources? • Can you think how these problems might be solved?
	If no	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Would you also be unwilling to share resources to start a business? • Why do you think people would be unwilling to share their resources?
7) Is it possible to find new ways to do business even when you do not have much money?* *Question modified for Nhieb Sat	If yes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Can you give examples? • Has the project helped you to think about changing your ways to do business without having to spend much money? <p>If yes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Can you give examples? <p>If no:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Can you suggest what more I could have done to help people think about new ways of business by using the resource they have already in the villages
	If no	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Has the project helped you to think about changing your ways to do business without having to spend much money? <p>If yes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Can you give examples? ○ Was the project useful to help you think about new kinds of business? Why/why not? <p>If no:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Can you suggest what more I could have done to help people think about new ways of business by using the resource they have already in the villages

8) What local institutions can help with economic development?	If yes including different types of organisations?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What are they? • How can they help? • Do you think people can approach these organisations to try and find ways to work together? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ If yes: How? ○ If no: Why not? • Would you be willing to be part of group to approach to these organizations to try and find ways to work together? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> If yes: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Would there be any problems? ○ Would these problems stop you or do you think there could be a solution? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ If solution: Can you give an example? If no: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> What would prevent you from being part of a group to approach these organisations?
	If only NGO's and/or authorities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Can you think of organisations apart from NGOs <ul style="list-style-type: none"> If yes: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ What are they? Use the same probes as above If no: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Do you think it is a good idea for the villagers to depend on the NGO for free resources? Why/why not?
	If no institutions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Can you think of any institutions that we have talked about in the research project? Can you say why they would not be willing to help people to improve the economic development?

<p>9) Do you think other local business in the area could help to improve the business in the village? For example: could there be any opportunities for selling products?</p>	If yes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What businesses are they • Can people in the village approach them to try and develop good relationships • Do you think community events can be a good way to talk to local business people? • Do you think you would be willing to help organise events to talk to local business people? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ If yes: Could you help to organise an event using the resources that you have already in the community? Can you give example? If not, why not? ○ If no: What would prevent you from helping to organise an event like this?
	If no	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Why do you think it is not possible to work with the local businesses?
<p>10) Are festivities useful occasions for developing relationships that can improve the economy?</p>	If yes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Which festivities are useful? • Can you think of any activities at festivities that could bring people together to think about economic development? • Can you think of any activities at festivities that could bring people together to brainstorm about new ways to use resources?
	If no	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What are the main uses for festivities in the community?

11) Have you enjoyed becoming a researcher in your community during this project?	If yes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What you enjoy most? • Do you think the skills are useful? • Do you think research is useful for the community? How? Why not? • Willing to do in future? • People willing to do without payment? • Would you be willing to take part in projects like this in future even if no payment?
	If no	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Do you think that you were a researcher in the project? <p>If yes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Why did you not enjoy being a researcher? <p>If no:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Why don't you think you were a researcher? ○ What should I have done to encourage you to be a researcher?

12) Do you think everybody in the village has the capability to become a researcher?	If yes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Can you give examples of ways that people are researchers already, without our project? • What kind of skills does the researcher need?
	If no	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Do you think anybody at all in the village has the capability? • If yes: who? why? and why do you think some people do not have the capability? • If no: why not?

Appendix 4

Portrait of Gifts: Chonghuk and Veal Sbov Villages

Gifts of the head:

- 60% of respondents help to educate children.
- Nearly 40% have used a computer.
- More than 50% help to organise or communicate public meetings and ceremonies.
- More than 25% have skills that they would like to share with other villagers.



Gifts of the hand:

- More than 20% can drive vehicles other than motorcycle (car, minibus or truck).
- More than 30% have construction skills and 20% have furniture skills.
- Nearly 50% of respondents are experienced in helping with catering.
- More than 30% are interested in sewing, drawing or sculpture; nearly 40% are interested in dancing, singing or comedy performing; more than 10% are interested in photography and making videos.



Gifts of the heart:

- More than 40% of respondents have cared for sick children. Early 20% have cared for sick children outside of their family.
- Nearly 40% sometimes help others with shopping or transport.
- 50% that can drive a car, minibus or truck help others with shopping or transport.
- More than 20% have helped with housing construction for destitute villagers.
- Villagers care about: friendship; sharing happiness; successful religious ceremonies; having a peaceful community; helping to maintain the roads so people can earn money; human resources in the village; helping disabled or elderly villagers.



Appendix 5

Portrait of Gifts Questionnaire: Adapted from Cameron & Gibson (2001, 137-146)

In our villages everybody has special knowledge or things they are interested in. We call this knowledge and these interests ‘gifts’ because they are a blessing for people and the community. We want to find out about all knowledge and interests which can help to develop new ideas for improving the local villages. We would be very grateful if you can help us.

Child Care and Parenting Skills	Work	Home	Other place
Caring for Children			
Children under 1 year			
Children under 5 years			
Children under 13 years			
Caring for disabled children			
Caring for other people’s children at night time			
Caring for sick children			
Other kinds of caring for children, please say what this is:			

Caring for other people	Work	Home	Other place
Shopping for other people or helping them with transport			
Listening to other people’s problem			
Help people with medical problems			
Give food or clothes or money to the poor			
Help the poor to build their house			
Care for old people			
Care for sick people			
Care for people with mental problem			
Other kind of care for people, please say what it is			

Education and Youth Activities	Work	Home	Other place
Organising activities for children and young people			
Involved with sport for young people			
Reading or telling stories			
Listening to children reading stories			
Helping in the classroom			
Supporting the school with fundraising or donations			
Sharing skills with young people. Please say what type of skills.			

Religious ceremonies	Work	Home	Other place
Provide food or helping with the catering.			
Help with cleaning and washing dishes after the ceremonies			
Help with decoration and setting up the furniture			
Help to set up tent for ceremonies			
Communicating information about the ceremonies			
Provide clothes for the relatives to wear at ceremonies			
Provide gifts for the monk			
Any other roles in ceremonies. Please say what your roles are.			

Organising and communicating events	Work	Home	Other place
Organising special events. Please write what type of events.			
Communicating with people about a special event			
Organising meetings in the community. Please say what kinds of meetings.			

Transportation	Work	Home	Other place
Ride moto			
Drive tuk-tuk			
Drive car			
Drive bus			
Drive truck			
Drive tractor			
Ride horse			
Drive other kind of vehicle, please say what it is			

Agricultural skill	Work	Home	Other
Grow vegetables			
Create ways to water vegetables			
Use machine to water vegetables			
Preparing soil			
Grow herbs			
Raise pigs			
Raise chickens			
Raise Cows			
Farm rice			
Use ko-yon machine			
Do gardening			
Care for trees			
Other kind of agricultural work, please say what it is			

Repair electric and mechanic	Work	Home	Other place
Repair electric items like television, radio, refrigerator			
Repair moto bike			
Repair ko-yon machine			
Repair car			
Repair mobile phone			
Any other kind of repair, please say what it is			

Computer skills	Work	Home	Other
Using a computer.			
Microsoft word.			
Entering information or data. Excel.			
Internet skills			
Other computer skills			

Performing skill	Work	Home	Other place
Dancing			
Acting			
Singing			
Musician. Please say which instruments			
Teaching music			
Comedy			
Video and photography			
Other performing skill: Please say what it is			

Administration and Office	Work	Home	Other place
Writing letters			
Typing			
Making budget			
Completing forms			
Accounting			
Answer telephone for work			
Other skill. Please say what it is.			

Food and hospitality	Work	Home	Other
Baking			
Butcher			
Making rice noodle or rice paper			
Making deserts			
Plan menu for more than 10 people			
Cutting food for more than 10 people			
Cooking food for more than 10 people			

Making the tables for more than 10 people			
Washing dishes for more than 10 people			
Operate machinery for catering			
Preparing ceremony			
Decoration for ceremony			
Other catering skill, please say what it is			

Crafts and carpentry	Home	Work	Other place
Drawing or painting			
Sculpture			
Sewing			
Weaving			
Make blanket			
Making basket			
Use leather			
Making table and chair			
Making other furniture			
Make other thing. Please say what it is.			

Construction	Home	Work	Other place
Bricklaying			
Cement mixing			
Using wood for construction			
Use excavator			
Use electric drill			
Use construction tools. Please write which tools.			
Connect water			
Connect electric			
Putting tiles on the floor and walls			
Painting the building			
Other construction skill. Please write what it is.			

Cleaning and work in the house	Home	Work	Other place
Cleaning house			
Cleaning windows			
Keeping the garden tidy			
Painting the house			
Washing and clean cars			
Keeping water supply			
Cutting wood			
Other work in the house. Please say what it is.			

Literacy	Home	Work	Other place
Writing letters.			
Writing a story			
Speak other language. Please say which.			
Understand other language. Please say which.			
Write other language. Please say which.			
Provide translation			

Beauty	Home	Work	Other place
Hairdressing for women			
Barber for men			
Make up			
Ceremony costume			
Other beauty skill. Please say what it is.			

Do you have any other skills that have not been on the list?

Do you have any skills that you would like to share?

Are there any skills you would like to learn?

Have you ever been a volunteer in a community organisation or community association?
Please give details.

Do you have any ideas for community projects? Please give details.

Appendix 6:

Chonghuk and Veal Sbov Village Community Newsletter – September 2013

The Veal Sbov and Chung Hok Newsletter— Improving our community and our economy



September 2013

Inside this issue:

A New Project for people in the Chung Hok and Veal Sbov villages

We are working on a project in our village to think about new ways of improving the local economic development in the villages.

Our project is finding new ways to think about the local economy, and to help people identify many different valuable assets in the community that help us to support our livelihood.

We have also been learning about the idea of social business. We have seen examples where business create benefit to the community as well as benefit to people individually.



A researcher from Sydney in Australia has been working in

our villages for some time since July. He is working with Buddhism for Social Development action to help the with the strategy for social business and the community development



The project has only been for a few months, and we only have a few workshops, but already we feel interested to continue. We are communicating with each other more all the time, sharing our food.

We are all very busy in our life but we make time for this important new project. We become more confident when we discover the useful things we have and worry less about the things that we do not have to develop our community.



We can see that our glasses are always half full, we do not need to think too much that they are half empty

A new project for people in the Chom Hok and Veal Sbov	1
A Visit to the Rice Fields Kids Village	2
The assets in our villages	3
Becoming community researchers	3
Welcome to Wat Nokor Bachey	4
Please help with our project	5

Special points of interest:

- Help to understand our local economy
- Research the things that improve our choice and opportunities
- Create new shared knowledge for the benefit of the community

A Visit to the Rice Fields Kids Village

On the 4th of September we visited the Rice Fields Kids Village which is close to Chom Hok and Veal Sbov. We were guided by Mr. Thorn Vandong who is the Director of Buddhism for Social Development Action.

RFKV is a new facility that can have a lot of benefit for different people in the local community. It is helping the children with vocational training there is a weaving center and a sewing center. There is a center to help the young people train to work for high standard in the restaurant business.

In the future there will be a meditation center to bring the tourist, there will be a local library, a restaurant there, a farm for chemical free vegetables and also a swimming pool.

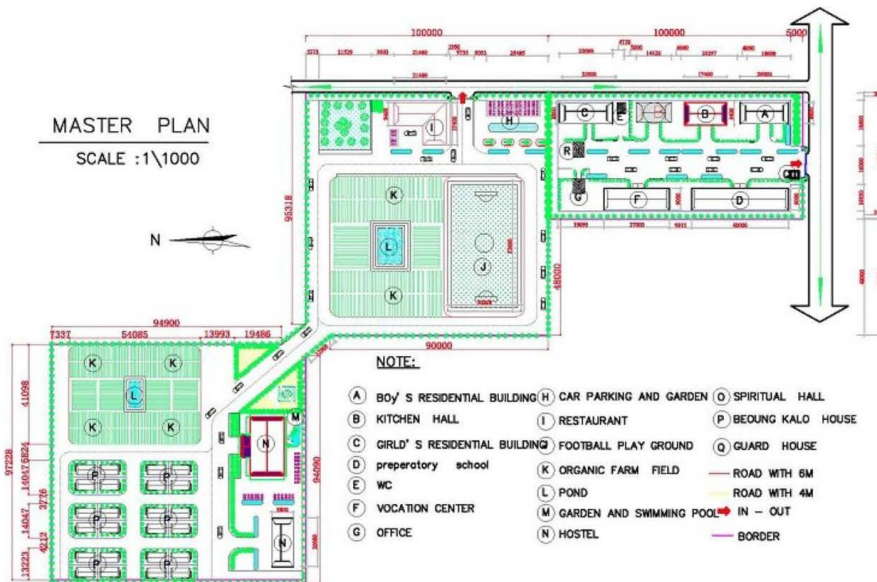
Before we came to study together as community, we could not imagine that there is a nice place like this, we nearly lost weaving but there is weaving here. The achievement of Mr. Thorn, is very appreciated. It is a proud achievement that he told to our study tour group.

Before this is the rice field and forest, but now it will become a center for the district. It has everything like water, electricity, the car and moto can reach here. We feel more confident about the

economic future now we have visited this place. We can see opportunity in the future for different business that connects to the Rice Fields Kids Village.

After the visit we can imagine a picture of a better economy for people here if we work together. We can imagine new business for vegetables, and raising the chicken and duck. We can imagine new ways to sell things and maybe new things we can make in the villages. It is

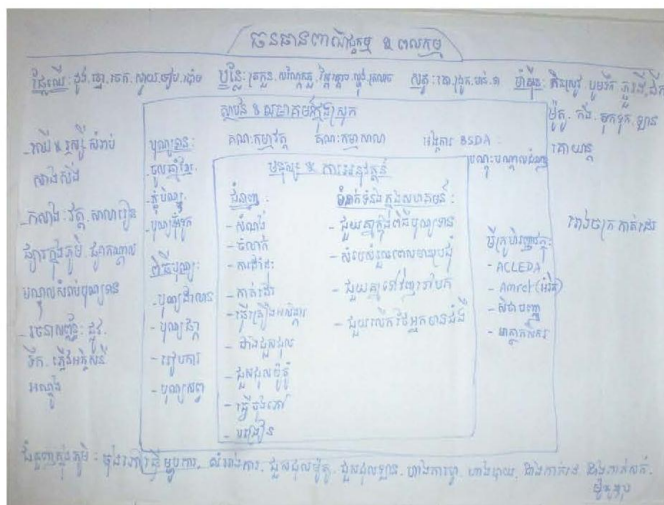
an opportunity for the young people but also the older people can come to meditate here when it is finished.



The assets in our villages

At the first workshop for our new project in the village we focused on things that we have that that can be used for economic development in the villages. We are naming all of these things as 'assets' ('troab') for our community. We thought about our natural resources including fruit, vegetables and livestock.

We thought about physical resources including machinery, buildings, infrastructure and businesses. We know some buildings can be used for different things. We thought about the life of institutions in our villages. We know that our festivities and our school associations and the pagoda association are assets that could help to improve the economic opportunities. We would like more associations in the future.



We also thought about the people in our village, about the skills people have and about the things that people do to help each other. Some of these assets are the tradition in our community, the things people do to help each other save our money for other things we need to buy. Maybe we can save more money to invest in a business.

Becoming researchers in our community

We are working on our project with a researcher who has travelled from a University in Australia. But it is not only the person at the University who can do research. The researcher can be anybody in the village. It can be the farmer, the seller in the village, the civil servant, the NGO worker, the students at the local Universities and even the school children.

Most importantly we have learned that doing research is necessary to improve the community. In our project we are a research team. We are researching how to change the community by thinking about local economic development. We have to research about how the assets in the community might be used in a new way. We have to also learn about market research.

Already in our research we find out new things about each other that we did not know before. By having dis-



ussion we create the shared knowledge that means we might have more choice to do things.

We have learned that: one of our research team has successfully opened a restaurant with her friends in the center; another person has done study tours on the river and he would like to do this more; another person likes to make sticky rice; somebody can sell our pro-

duce in the market but wants to find a new way for reliable business; one person is skilled at budgets and another person can do work plans; two people in our group are involved in health promotion for young people and people without education.

We take these messages away from our workshop up to now:

- We all have special knowledge
- We can all be researchers who learn from each other
- When we learn from each other we have shared knowledge
- We can use this new knowledge to think about a strategy to change the community and ideas for the economic development.

Welcome from the Monks to Wat Nokor Bachey

The temple at Wat Nokor was constructed in the middle of the 11th Century. The temple is the religious center in Kampong Cham history, it is important for us to keep this history and that is why the Pagoda is located here.

The Monks here spend two weeks preparing for Pchum Ben. We must call all Monks to meeting, organize ourselves and clean every part of the Pagoda. We must meet with the Acar early enough to give time for their communication with the lay people about the agenda for Pchum Ben.



For the villages Pchum Ben is important because it preserves our culture and tradition. It is also a time when people discuss things and share advice on problems with work, farming or community relations. Because Pchum Ben is a time when people talk to each other this also means it is a very good time to do research.

It is in our interest to learn more about how people share things at Pchum Ben like materials for their children, food, clothing and money. It is also interesting to know about how Pchum Ben helps the economy. Local people can sell more of their produce. Local sellers can also sell papaya salad, mango, pineapple, sandwiches, salty eggs, ice cream and sugar cane



Advertising for help with our community project

Agriculture Discussion Group

In our project we are learning that we are all researchers in the community. When we have discussion groups we can find out that other people have skill that we did not know about before. We also find out that they are interested in different things. When we have this information we become more aware of all our different opportunities.

We would like to have more discussion groups about agriculture to find out about peoples skills in the village. If you want to join then please contact Mr. Hong Kimhour in Veal Sbov or Ms. Noun Vet in Chom Hok.

Tool Library

We have discussed about the idea of a tool library in the villages. This can

be a place where people can borrow some tools they need to grow their vegetables or tools for work on their house.

We would like to talk to people about this idea, to see what tools people can share or what tools people can donate. If people have broken tools we can try to repair them for donation to the tool library.

Recover our lost knowledge

In our discussion group we have identified that here is a lot of bamboo in the villages. We also talked about the chicken cage that is made from bamboo. We buy it in the market.

There was a man in the village who knew how to make it before but now he died. We cannot think of anybody

who has the knowledge to make this cage.

Making the chicken cage is important knowledge to benefit peoples livelihood. We would like somebody who has the knowledge to make the chicken cage to teach us to make it again.



Chicken Cage

Appendix 7

Chonghuk and Veal Sbov Village Community Newsletter – September 2013 in Khmer

ព័ត៌មានអំពីភូមិវាលស្បូវ និង ភូមិជង្កុក—ការអភិវឌ្ឍន៍ និង សេដ្ឋកិច្ចក្នុងសហគមន៍របស់ពួកយើង



ខែកញ្ញា ឆ្នាំ២០១៣

គំរោងថ្មីមួយសំរាប់ប្រជាពលរដ្ឋនៅភូមិវាលស្បូវ និងភូមិជង្កុក

នៅក្នុងការងារគំរោងមាន៖

យើងកំពុងធ្វើការគំរោងមួយនៅក្នុងភូមិ របស់យើង ដើម្បីគិតអំពីវិធីថ្មីរបៀបថ្មី នៃការធ្វើឲ្យមានភាពប្រសើរឡើងក្នុង ការអភិវឌ្ឍន៍សេដ្ឋកិច្ចមូលដ្ឋាននៅក្នុងភូមិ។

គំរោងរបស់យើងកំពុងស្វែងរកនូវវិធីថ្មី ដើម្បីគិតអំពីសេដ្ឋកិច្ចមូលដ្ឋាន និងជួយ ប្រជាពលរដ្ឋ ឲ្យដឹងអំពីអ្វីៗដែលមានតំ លៃខុសគ្នាជាច្រើននៅក្នុងសហគមន៍ ដែលជួយពួកយើងក្នុងការផ្គត់ផ្គង់ ជីវភាពរស់នៅរបស់ពួកយើង។

ចំណូលសំរាប់មនុស្សច្រើនក៏ដូចជា អ្នកស្រាវជ្រាវមួយមកពីសាកលវិទ្យាល័យ យង់ស្ទើន ស៊ីធីនី ប្រទេសអូស្ត្រាលី បាននិងកំពុងតែធ្វើការ នៅក្នុងភូមិរបស់ ពួកយើងចាប់តាំងពីខែ កក្កដា។ គាត់ កំពុងតែធ្វើការជាមួយអង្គការសកម្មភាព ប្រទេសសាសនា ដើម្បីអភិវឌ្ឍន៍សង្គម ដើម្បីជួយទៅលើគំរោងនៃការយុទ្ធ សាស្ត្រសំរាប់ជំនួយសង្គម និងការ អភិវឌ្ឍន៍សហគមន៍។

សារៈសំខាន់នេះយើងមាន ទំនុកចិត្តច្រើនជាងមុន នៅពេល យើងដឹងនូវវត្តមាននៃ ប្រយោជន៍ជាច្រើន យើងបាន កាត់បន្ថយការព្រួយបារម្ភអំពីវត្ត ទាំងឡាយដែលយើងមិនមាន។ យើងកំពុងតែចាប់ផ្តើម ស្រាវជ្រាវ យើងនឹងរៀនសូត្រអំពីការ រាប់សេដ្ឋកិច្ចរបស់ពួកយើងពេល អនាគត។

- 1 គំរោងថ្មីសំរាប់ប្រជាជននៅភូមិ
- 2 ទស្សនកិច្ចនៅភូមិកុមារាលស្បូវ
- 3 ទ្រព្យសម្បត្តិក្នុងភូមិ
- 3 ក្លាយជាអ្នកស្រាវជ្រាវសហគមន៍
- 4 ស្វាគមន៍មកដល់វត្តនគរជាដើម
- 4 សូមជួយការងារគំរោងយើង



គំរោងនេះមានរយៈពេលត្រឹមតែពីរខែ ប៉ុណ្ណោះ ហើយយើងមានសិក្ខាសាលា ត្រឹមតែពីរបីប៉ុណ្ណោះ ប៉ុន្តែយើងមានការ ចាប់អារម្មណ៍ដើម្បីធ្វើការបន្តទៀត ពួក យើងកំពុងធ្វើការទំនាក់ទំនងគ្នាបាន



យើងក៏បានរៀននិងដឹងអំពីគំនិត ទាក់ទងនិងជំនួយក្នុងសង្គម។យើង បានឃើញជាតម្រូវការចំនួនដែលមុនបរ ទាំងនេះ បង្កើតនូវប្រាក់ចំណូលដល់ សហគមន៍ ក៏ដូចជាបង្កើតនូវប្រាក់

ច្រើន និងតែមកលើកនូវមូលហេតុ។ ពួកយើងវេលាខ្លាំងណាស់ ប៉ុន្តែយើង ធ្វើតែពេលវេលា សំរាប់គំរោងថ្មីដ៏មាន



ចំណុចពិសេសដែលគួរឆោយ ចាប់អារម្មណ៍៖

- ជួយឆោយលំអិតសេដ្ឋកិច្ច ក្នុងស្រុក។
- ស្រាវជ្រាវពីការងារដែលកែ លំអ ជំរើស និងឱកាស។
- បង្កើតចំណេះដឹងថ្មីដើម្បីមើក វិលកសំរាប់ផលប្រយោជន៍ សហគមន៍។

យើងអាចមើលឃើញថា កែវគ្គីមានទឹកត្រឹមពាក់កណ្តាល យើងអាចផ្តោតការម្សិលម៉ៅលើទឹក ដែលមានរួចស្រេច សូមកុំផ្តោតការម្សិលម៉ៅលើទឹក ទាន់មាន។

ទស្សនកិច្ចនៅភូមិកុមារវាលស្រែ

នៅថ្ងៃទី៤ខែកញ្ញា យើងបានទស្សនកិច្ចនៅភូមិកុមារវាលស្រែដែលមានទីតាំង ជិតភូមិជង្គុក និងភូមិវាលស្រូវ។ លោក ចន វណ្ណង ជាអ្នកនាំផ្លូវ ដែលគាត់ជា នាយកប្រតិបត្តិអង្គការសេកម្មភាពព្រះពុទ្ធសាសនា ដើម្បីអភិវឌ្ឍន៍សង្គម។

ភូមិកុមារវាលស្រែគឺជាកន្លែងថ្មីមួយ ដែលអាចទទួលបានប្រយោជន៍យ៉ាងច្រើន សំរាប់ប្រជាពលរដ្ឋនៅក្នុងសហគមន៍។ វាកំពុងតែជួយប្រជាពលរដ្ឋ ជាមួយនឹង ការបណ្តុះបណ្តាលវិជ្ជាជីវៈ មានកន្លែងត្រៀម និងមានកន្លែងកាត់ដេរ។ មានកន្លែង សំរាប់ជួយបង្ហាត់បង្រៀនក្មេងៗដើម្បីធ្វើការជាអ្នករកស៊ីចឹកភោជនីយដ្ឋាន ប្រកបដោយស្តង់ដារខ្ពស់។



នៅពេលអនាគត នឹងមានកន្លែងតាំងសមាជិ ដើម្បី នាំគ្រឿងទស្សនា ហើយនឹងមានបណ្ណាល័យ មាន ភោជនីយដ្ឋាន មានសួនបន្លែស្វាយ ហើយក៏មាន អាងហែលទឹកផងដែរ។

មុនពេលយើងមកសិក្សាជុំគ្នា ជាសហគមន៍ យើង មិនដែលនឹកស្មានថា កន្លែងនេះឲ្យដូច្នោះសោះ យើងស្ទើរតែចាត់បង់ នូវជំនាញត្រៀមចាត់ទៅ ហើយ ប៉ុន្តែនៅកន្លែងនេះមានត្រៀម។ ស្នាដៃរបស់ លោកចន វណ្ណងគឺជិតជាឈ្លានពានណាស់។ វាជា មោទនភាពមួយដែលគាត់បានប្រាប់ពួកយើងពេល ទស្សនកិច្ចសិក្សាជាគ្រូមរបស់ពួកយើង។ ខ្ញុំ សប្បាយចិត្តខ្លាំងណាស់។

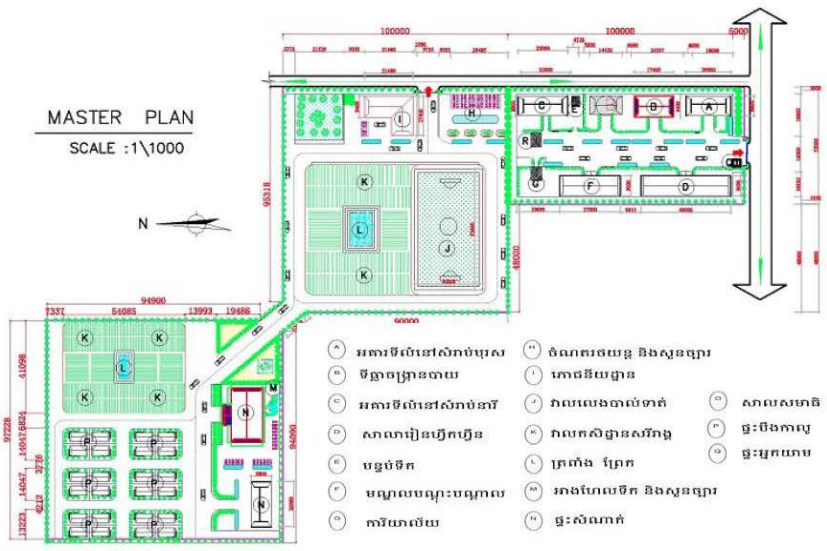
ពីមុនទឹកកន្លែងនេះគឺជាវាលស្រែ និងព្រៃ ប៉ុន្តែឥឡូវ

វាបានក្លាយទៅជាទីកន្លែងមួយសំរាប់ស្រុក។ វាមាន អ្វីៗសព្វបែបយ៉ាងដូចជា ទឹក ភ្លើង ខ្សាន និងម៉ូតូ ដែលអាចមកដល់ទីនេះ។ ខ្ញុំមានជំនឿយ៉ាងខ្លាំងអំពី សេដ្ឋកិច្ចនៅពេលអនាគត ដែលឥឡូវយើងបានមក ទស្សនកិច្ចនៅទីនេះ។ យើងអាចឃើញឱកាសសេដ្ឋ កិច្ចនៅពេលអនាគត សំរាប់មុខរបរផ្សេងៗដែល ផ្សារភ្ជាប់ជាមួយភូមិកុមារវាលស្រែ។



បន្ទាប់ពីទស្សនកិច្ច យើងអាចស្រមៃស្រមៃសេដ្ឋ កិច្ចនិងមានភាពប្រសើរឡើងសំរាប់ប្រជាពលរដ្ឋ នៅទីនេះ ប្រសិនបើយើងធ្វើការជុំគ្នា។ យើងអាច ស្រមៃស្រមៃស្រមៃនូវមុខរបរថ្មីសំរាប់ការជាប់នៃ និង ចិញ្ចឹមមាន់ ចិញ្ចឹមទា។ យើងអាចស្រមៃស្រមៃស្រមៃ វិធីថ្មី ដើម្បីលក់របស់ទាំងនេះ និងប្រហែលជាអ្វីៗ

ដែលថ្មីដែលយើងអាចបង្កើតនៅក្នុងភូមិ។ នេះគឺជា ឱកាសមួយសំរាប់ក្មេងៗ ប៉ុន្តែចាស់ៗក៏អាចមក ដើម្បីធ្វើសមាជិកនៅទីនេះ នៅពេលទឹកកន្លែងនេះត្រូវ បានអភិវឌ្ឍន៍រួច។



មតិស្វាគមន៍ពីព្រះសង្ឃមកដល់វត្តនគរបាជ័យ

ប្រាសាទនៅវត្តនគរ ត្រូវបានសាងសង់នៅពាក់កណ្តាលសតវត្សរ៍ទី១១ ជាកន្លែងដែលប្រមូលផ្តុំនៅសាសនានៅក្នុងប្រវត្តិសាស្ត្រខេត្តកំពង់ចាម។ ព្រោះតែប្រាង្គប្រាសាទមានទីតាំងនៅទីនេះ ដូច្នេះហើយវាមានសារៈសំខាន់ណាស់សំរាប់យើងទាំងអស់គ្នាត្រូវថែរក្សានូវប្រវត្តិសាស្ត្រនេះ។

ព្រះសង្ឃនៅទីនោះបានចំណាយពេល២សប្តាហ៍ដើម្បីរៀបចំពិធីបុណ្យភ្ជុំបិណ្ឌ។ ព្រះអង្គបាននិមន្តព្រះសង្ឃជាច្រើនអង្គផ្សេងទៀតដើម្បីជួបប្រជុំ រៀបចំទុកដាក់ និងសំអាតទីធ្លាវត្តអារាម។ ព្រះអង្គបានជួបជាមួយលោកតាអាចារ្យទាំងអស់មុន ដើម្បីរៀបចំពេលវេលាគ្រប់គ្រាន់សំរាប់ជួបជាមួយឧបាសក ឧបាសិកាពិភិក្ខុវិទីដាក់បិណ្ឌ។



នៅតាមភូមិ បុណ្យភ្ជុំបិណ្ឌគឺជាពិធីបុណ្យដ៏សំខាន់ ព្រោះជាការ ការពារថែរក្សានូវសម្បត្តិវប្បធម៌និងប្រពៃណី ហើយក៏ជាពេលវេលាសំខាន់សំរាប់ប្រជាជនពិភាក្សាពីរឿងរ៉ាវផ្សេងៗ និងចែករំលែកបទពិសោធន៍គ្នាក្នុងការដោះស្រាយបញ្ហាក្នុងការងារ ទំនាក់ទំនងក្នុងសហគមន៍ ឬការធ្វើស្រែចំការផងដែរ។ ដោយសារតែបុណ្យភ្ជុំបិណ្ឌជាពេលវេលាដែលប្រជាជនជួបជុំគ្នា ដូចនេះហើយវាជាពេលវេលាដ៏ប្រសើរសំរាប់ការធ្វើការស្រាវជ្រាវ។



យើងក៏ចាប់អារម្មណ៍ក្នុងការសិក្សារបន្ថែមទៀតពីការចែករំលែករឿងរ៉ាវផ្សេងៗរបស់ប្រជាជននាបុណ្យភ្ជុំបិណ្ឌនេះផងដែរ ដូចជាសំភារៈ ម្ហូបអាហារ សំលៀកបំពាក់ និងទឹកសំរាប់កូនៗរបស់ពួកគេ។ ម្យ៉ាងវិញទៀត យើងក៏ចង់ស្រាវជ្រាវអោយឃើញថា ពិធីបុណ្យភ្ជុំបិណ្ឌបានជួយដល់សេដ្ឋកិច្ច តាមរយៈការលក់ដូរផលិតផល របស់ប្រជាជន ដូចជាបុកល្អុង ជ្រក់ស្វាយ ម្កាស់ នំបីដូចាតេ ពងទាប្រៃ ការម ទឹកអំពៅជាដើមនៅតាមវត្តអារាម។

សូមជួយផ្សព្វផ្សាយ ដើម្បីជួយសង្គ្រោះគំរោងសហគមន៍របស់យើង

ក្រុមពិភាក្សាអំពីកសិកម្ម
នៅក្នុងគំរោងរបស់ពួកយើង យើងដឹងថាពួកយើងទាំងអស់គ្នាគឺជាអ្នកស្រាវជ្រាវនៅក្នុងសហគមន៍។ នៅពេលយើងបានពិភាក្សាជាក្រុម យើងដឹងថាអ្នកដទៃមានជំនាញដែលយើងមិនធ្លាប់ដឹងពីមុនមក។ យើងក៏បានស្វែងយល់ថាពួកគេមានការចាប់អារម្មណ៍រឿងផ្សេងៗគ្នា។ នៅពេលយើងបានទទួលព័ត៌មានទាំងនេះ យើងដឹងបន្ថែមទៀតអំពីឱកាសផ្សេងៗទៀតរបស់ពួកយើង។ យើងចង់ឲ្យមានការពិភាក្សាជាក្រុមបន្ថែមទៀតអំពីកសិកម្ម ដើម្បីស្វែងរកមនុស្សដែលមានជំនាញក្នុងភូមិ។ ប្រសិនបើអ្នកចង់ចូលរួមបន្ទាប់មក សូមទាក់ទង លោកហេង គឹមហួរ នៅភូមិវាលស្បូវ ឬ អ្នកស្រី នួន វេត នៅភូមិពង្សក។

បណ្ណាល័យឧបករណ៍
យើងបានពិភាក្សាអំពីគំនិតនៃការបង្កើតឲ្យមានបណ្ណាល័យឧបករណ៍នៅក្នុងភូមិ។ ទីកន្លែងនេះអាចជាកន្លែងសំរាប់ប្រជាពលរដ្ឋអាចខ្ចី ឧបករណ៍ដែលពួក

គេត្រូវការដើម្បីជាបន្ថែមរបស់ពួកគេ ឬឧបករណ៍សំរាប់ធ្វើការនៅផ្ទះរបស់ពួកគេ។ យើងចង់ឮពីការជាមួយប្រជាពលរដ្ឋអំពីគំនិតនេះ ដើម្បីដឹងនូវឧបករណ៍អ្វីខ្លះដែលប្រជាពលរដ្ឋអាចចែករំលែកឬឧបករណ៍អ្វីខ្លះដែលប្រជាពលរដ្ឋអាចជួយឧបត្ថម្ភ។ ប្រសិនបើប្រជាពលរដ្ឋខ្លះឧបករណ៍យើងអាចព្យាយាមជួសជុលឧបករណ៍ទាំងនោះ សំរាប់ជាការជួយឧបត្ថម្ភដល់បណ្ណាល័យឧបករណ៍។

ចង់ចេះឡើងវិញអំពីការបាត់បង់នៅចំណេះដឹងរបស់ពួកយើង

ក្នុងការពិភាក្សារបស់ពួកយើងនៅក្នុងក្រុមយើងបានដឹងថា ទីនេះមានប្រស្តីជាច្រើននៅក្នុងភូមិ។ យើងក៏បានឮពីកត្តាដែលបណ្តាលមកពីក្រុមមានដែលបានធ្វើឱ្យប្រស្តី។ យើងទិញវាពីឡា។ មានបុរសម្នាក់នៅក្នុងភូមិដែលចេះធ្វើឧបករណ៍ក្រុងមាននេះពីមុន ប៉ុន្តែឥឡូវគាត់បានស្លាប់ទៅហើយ។

យើងមិនអាចរកនិកឃើញនរណាផ្សេងដែលចេះធ្វើឧបករណ៍ក្រុងមាននេះទេ។ ការធ្វើនៅឧបករណ៍ក្រុងមាននេះគឺជាចំណេះដឹងដ៏មានសារៈសំខាន់ណាស់សំរាប់អត្តប្រយោជន៍ក្នុងការចិញ្ចឹមជីវិតប្រចាំថ្ងៃ។ យើងចង់ឲ្យនរណាម្នាក់ដែលចេះធ្វើឧបករណ៍ក្រុងមាននេះមកបង្រៀនពួកយើង ដើម្បីឲ្យពួកយើងចេះធ្វើសាជាថ្មី។



អង្កកក្រុងមាន