



universität  
wien

# DISSERTATION

Titel der Dissertation

**Enactive Development**

**Contributions of Buddhist Philosophy to Development Theory  
and Practice**

Verfasser

**Mag. Istvan Rado**

angestrebter akademischer Grad

**Doktor der Philosophie (Dr. phil.)**

Wien, 2014

Studienkennzahl lt. Studienblatt:

A 092 300

Dissertationsgebiet lt. Studienblatt:

Politikwissenschaft

Betreuerin / Betreuer:

Univ.-Prof. Dr. Ulrich Brand



## **Preface**

This dissertation has undergone many developments, and its emphasis and contents have changed over the years. Originally it was supposed to be a work about Sufficiency Economy as a national development strategy. My plan was to examine both the theoretical solidity of Sufficiency Economy and its applicability in practice. Through exposure to different theoretical frameworks, and due to experiences during my research in Thailand, as well as discussions with colleagues, my interest gradually shifted away from evaluating Sufficiency Economy on the national level towards possible applications of Buddhist philosophy on the community level. I have found, for instance, that Sufficiency Economy has seen its most successful and innovative applications when appropriated by alternative rural communities. Moreover, community projects, the people involved, and communal decision-making processes are often relatively accessible for interested outsiders, whereas macro-political processes lend themselves to a great deal of speculation. Nevertheless, the latter gain most of the public attention, whereas even the most successful communal projects seem to unfold “below the radar” of public awareness. One example of such a lack of coverage is the global Economy of Communion project. In personal communications I have noted that people in different parts of the world are familiar with this movement and therefore unsurprised when it is mentioned. Others are at times amazed when hearing about it for the first time.

Apart from this change in orientation away from a macro-social approach towards community development I had also turned towards Buddhist Economics, because it grounds development work in exploratory techniques of the human mind. As such, this approach seemed more elaborate in explaining the origins of its normative orientations compared to Sufficiency Economy. These were thus the main changes I had undergone prior to my return to Austria in 2012. Back at my university, I exposed my work to the scrutiny of fellow PhD students in dissertation seminars. By asking the right questions and highlighting certain theoretical weaknesses in my work these groups, including my advisor, made me explore theories of science in order to provide my work with solid ontological and epistemological underpinnings.

In doing so, I have become aware of fruitful dialogues between Buddhism, cognitive science, and social science. This interdisciplinary approach, applied consistently throughout this dissertation, helped me to extrapolate the data and findings in a most productive way. This work has thus incorporated the evolving linkages between cognitive science and social science from relatively early on.

I would like to encourage other social scientists to be attentive to these developments as well, since their theories often include assumptions about human nature and free will, about people's reasons for acting, or about the possibility of identifying social mechanisms through detached reasoning. Moreover, the interdisciplinary links between social science and cognitive science are already the subject of "popular scientific" magazines, such as the German-language "Spektrum der Wissenschaft," available at newspaper stores, directed at the general public, and written in a language accessible for laypersons. The fact that scientific discoveries reach the wider public with a time-lag of many years, whereas many social scientists still seem unaware of these developments, is quite unfortunate. I would be more than glad if this dissertation provides a small contribution to stimulate a similar interdisciplinary approach among colleagues at the University of Vienna. After all, I am indirectly indebted to them for having chosen this approach myself.

In particular I am thankful to Armin Puller for having commented on an earlier draft outlining critical realism; to the political-scientist-turned-entrepreneur Jürgen Reder, who has shared my enthusiasm for my research in inspiring conversations during the past two years; to Nakamol Bongkojkerd, who has greatly helped me with the research design for my field visit in Sakon Nakhon province; to Chutarat Prapararat for valuable comments on the research data; last but not least to my advisor, Ulrich Brand, who has patiently provided input, whenever it was needed. I also would like to thank the institutions, which have offered financial support, such as the University of Innsbruck, which has provided the only scholarship for my research in Thailand; the University of Linz and Thammasat University, in particular Nakharin Mektrairat, for involving me in collaborative projects; as well as my mother, who has supported

me during the past two years and enabled me to devote most of my time to the completion of this work.

## Table of Contents

|                                                                                  |    |
|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----|
| INTRODUCTION .....                                                               | 1  |
| 1. Performative Ontologies: Discourse Analytical Approaches and Enactivism ..... | 10 |
| 1.1. On Discursive Formations in the Work of Foucault .....                      | 14 |
| 1.2. Discursive Formations in Laclau and Mouffe .....                            | 18 |
| 1.3. Fairclough's Critical Discourse Analysis.....                               | 22 |
| 1.3.1. Essential Features of Critical Realism .....                              | 25 |
| 1.3.2. Critique of CDA and Critical Realism.....                                 | 29 |
| 1.4. Harré's Critique and Alternative Conception .....                           | 30 |
| 1.4.1. Positioning Theory .....                                                  | 32 |
| 1.4.2. Neuroscientific Explanations .....                                        | 36 |
| 1.5. Enactivism .....                                                            | 42 |
| 1.5.1. Enactivism as the Analysis of Living Systems .....                        | 45 |
| 1.5.2. Enactivism as Embodied Cognition .....                                    | 50 |
| 1.6. A Radical Constructivism: Enactivism and Discourse Analysis .....           | 55 |
| 1.6.1. Analysis of Concrete Interactions and the Ambiguity of Meanings.....      | 58 |
| 1.6.2. Connection between Interaction and Phenomenology.....                     | 62 |
| 1.6.3. Differences.....                                                          | 65 |
| 1.6.4. Harré's Contribution from an Enactivist Perspective .....                 | 70 |
| 1.7. Summary: Multimodal Constituents of Meaning .....                           | 76 |
| 2. EMBODIED CONSTITUENTS OF MEANING .....                                        | 80 |
| 2.1. Embodied Cognition: Providing a Scientific Basis for Social Phenomena ..... | 81 |

|                                                                                                                                                    |     |
|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----|
| 2.1.1. Embodied Sense-Making, Its Relations to Conscious Representations, and the Phenomenal Self in Embodied Cognition .....                      | 83  |
| 2.1.2. Implications for the Social Sciences and Development.....                                                                                   | 91  |
| 2.2. Exploring and Intervening on Embodied Sense-Making: Scientific Examination of First-Person Experience and Micro-Political Interventions ..... | 100 |
| 2.2.1. Basic Buddhist Concepts.....                                                                                                                | 103 |
| 2.2.2. Making Use of Buddhist Techniques in Neuroscientific Studies and Therapies .....                                                            | 111 |
| 2.3. Summary .....                                                                                                                                 | 124 |
| 3. DEVELOPMENT ALTERNATIVES: POSTDEVELOPMENT, COMMUNITY CULTURE, AND BUDDHIST ECONOMICS.....                                                       | 127 |
| 3.1. Postdevelopment .....                                                                                                                         | 129 |
| 3.2. The Community Culture School in Thailand .....                                                                                                | 139 |
| 3.3. Buddhist Economics .....                                                                                                                      | 147 |
| 3.4. Summary: Development Alternatives and the Enactive Approach.....                                                                              | 155 |
| 4. TOWARDS AN ENACTIVE DEVELOPMENT STRATEGY.....                                                                                                   | 161 |
| 4.1. Community Economic Projects and Micro-Political Interventions .....                                                                           | 163 |
| 4.1.1. Applications of Postdevelopment in Practice .....                                                                                           | 163 |
| 4.1.2. An Analysis of Gibson-Graham's Micro-Political Interventions Using the Enactive Framework.....                                              | 177 |
| 4.1.3. The Efficacy of Micro-Practices: The Economy of Communion.....                                                                              | 187 |
| 4.2. Potentials of the Enactive Approach: The Inpaeng Network.....                                                                                 | 190 |
| 4.2.1. The Inpaeng Network and Contemporary Livelihood Strategies in Northeastern Thailand .....                                                   | 192 |
| 4.2.2. An Analysis of the Activities of the Inpaeng Network Using the Ethical Coordinates by Gibson-Graham.....                                    | 199 |

|                                                                                                                                                             |     |
|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----|
| 4.3. Summary .....                                                                                                                                          | 204 |
| 5. THE APPLICATION OF THE ENACTIVE FRAMEWORK TO EXTERNAL RELATIONS:<br>THE UTILIZATION OF THE SUFFICIENCY ECONOMY DISCOURSE BY THE INPAENG<br>NETWORK ..... | 208 |
| 5.1. Community Culture Strategy Prior to Thailand's Adoption of the Sufficiency Economy<br>Approach.....                                                    | 210 |
| 5.1.1. The National Development Approach.....                                                                                                               | 211 |
| 5.1.2 Strategy of NGOs: Opposing the State.....                                                                                                             | 215 |
| 5.2. Thailand's New Development Paradigm: Sufficiency Economy .....                                                                                         | 219 |
| 5.2.1. An Outline of the National Development Strategy.....                                                                                                 | 221 |
| 5.2.2 Implementation Issues .....                                                                                                                           | 231 |
| 5.2.3. Towards an Enactive Analytical Perspective on State-Community Interactions.....                                                                      | 234 |
| 5.3. A New Strategy for NGOs: Collaborations with State Institutions.....                                                                                   | 236 |
| 5.4. Summary .....                                                                                                                                          | 245 |
| 6. CONCLUSION: AN OUTLINE OF ENACTIVE DEVELOPMENT .....                                                                                                     | 248 |
| REFERENCES .....                                                                                                                                            | 256 |
| APPENDIX.....                                                                                                                                               | 283 |
| List of Expert Interviews Cited .....                                                                                                                       | 283 |
| Abstract (deutsch) .....                                                                                                                                    | 285 |
| Abstract (English) .....                                                                                                                                    | 286 |
| Academic CV.....                                                                                                                                            | 288 |

## List of Figures and Tables

|                                                                                                                              |     |
|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----|
| Fig. 1: Mutually Determining Triad .....                                                                                     | 35  |
| Fig. 2: Three-Layered Connectionist Model .....                                                                              | 41  |
| Fig. 3: Coupling between Organism and Environment through Actions (A) and Sense-Inputs (S) .....                             | 47  |
| Fig. 4: The Twelve Elements of Dependent Origination .....                                                                   | 104 |
| Fig. 5: The Working of the Whole Production Process through the System of Consumption .....                                  | 154 |
| Fig. 6: Representations Among the Target Group in the Latrobe Valley Prior to Gibson-Graham's Development Intervention ..... | 179 |
| Fig. 7: Action-Perception Loop Process Depicting Gibson-Graham's Development Intervention .....                              | 182 |
| Fig. 8: Land Use in Ban Bua, Sakon Nakhon .....                                                                              | 195 |
| Fig. 9: Representation of the State Discourse on National Development in the NESDB Plans 5 - 7 .....                         | 214 |
| Fig. 10: Elements of Sufficiency Economy .....                                                                               | 225 |
| Fig. 11: Representation of the State Discourse on National Development in the NESDB Plans 8 up to the Present .....          | 237 |
| Table 1: The Diverse Economy .....                                                                                           | 166 |



## Introduction

Doing research in different cultural contexts, in which social practices are guided by different values, motivations, and understandings provide very rich opportunities for the researcher to arrive at new findings. In this regard business literature broadly distinguishes between two types of innovation (Norman & Verganti 2012; Peschl & Fundneider 2008): incremental and radical innovation. Applied to social science research the former denotes a process, in which we apply existing theoretical frameworks and background premises to a novel object of investigation. If this process is successful, innovation consists in our established theories being refined through adjustment and adaptation to local particularities; the explanatory power of our theories are enhanced as they become more inclusive of processes, which formerly had not been considered. Whereas innovation of this type takes place gradually in a step-by-step manner, radical innovation involves a deep change in outlook with the heightened risks and opportunities such a “change of frame” entails: There is a high probability of failure and even if we are able to put the new outlook to productive use, it is still very likely to meet limited acceptance by others.

Among the novel concepts I encountered during my research in Thailand I was particularly fascinated by Buddhist philosophy, because many of its elements seemed alien and counter-intuitive: the denial of a self or soul, the seemingly nihilistic emphasis on suffering, the lack of clear ideals and norms etc. I sensed that by engaging with this non-Western philosophy, I could gain a novel perspective, not only on philosophical matters, but also on development issues. Being attracted by the new and unfamiliar I was at the same time convinced that this involvement with Buddhism would prove personally enriching and highly productive for my research. Moreover, the risks this change in approach involves is somewhat reduced by the fact that the combination of science with Buddhism is not as radically new as it would have been thirty years ago; much pioneering work has already been done by others in a variety of academic disciplines. E.F. Schumacher has famously coined the term “Buddhist Economics” as early as 1973. New findings in cognitive science

have fostered engagement with Buddhism for search of a philosophical grounding of the emerging paradigm of “embodied cognition” (see Varela et al. 1991). Psychologists and neuroscientists have sought inspiration in Buddhist meditation techniques in order to translate these into workable therapeutic methods for patients suffering from depression, stress, OCD etc.<sup>1</sup> Comparable techniques have been applied in community development projects as documented in Gibson-Graham (2006a).

The number of academic contributions emerging from this ongoing dialogue between science and Buddhism today covers a wide range of theoretical and practical questions, starting from issues of natural and social ontology, epistemology, over human learning to issues of development. Although these areas are being covered by different disciplines, they are each complementary in contributing to a scientific formulation of Buddhist philosophy and practice. In my dissertation I am exploring theories on all these levels of scientific inquiry in order to present an encompassing framework, which helps to specify corresponding development approaches in theory and practice. My main research interest is this interface between Buddhist-inspired theories and development practices, guided by the following questions: How does the philosophy contribute theoretically to comparable development approaches (comparable with regard to similar ontological commitments, which consequently lead to the rejection of normative statements)? How does Buddhism translate into a strategic development outlook and into development practice? In doing so I am not explicitly referring to a Buddhist school in particular; most of the basic teachings presented throughout the chapters are accepted in both major branches, namely Theravada Buddhism and Mahayana Buddhism.<sup>2</sup> Whenever, I refer to teachings specific to a certain branch, it will be pointed out.

---

<sup>1</sup> See Schwartz & Begley (2002), Kabat-Zinn (2011), and Segal (2011).

<sup>2</sup> Generally, the Mahayana tradition includes considerations, which extend beyond the individual person to include its relations with the outside world (see Tideman 2011: 135; Williams 2009: 5/6; Varela et al. 1991: 221/22): For instance, it is stressed that selflessness is not only characteristic of human beings, but of reality as a whole; whereas in the Theravada tradition the emphasis lies on

In the first two chapters I will outline the philosophical basis and epistemological tools for this work. Here, I will draw to a great extent on the “enactivist” ontological framework, which is the outcome of a dialogue between embodied cognitive science and Buddhism. In chapter 1 I will expand enactivism (or enaction; see Stewart et al. 2010) beyond embodied practices to include discursive phenomena, with the aim to utilize this framework in social and development contexts. Thus, in order to distinguish the original theory in cognitive science from my extended version of it, I will refer to the former as “enactivist” theory, whereas I will use “enactive” whenever reference is made to the extended version. In chapters 3 to 5 I will apply this theoretical framework to constructivist development approaches, namely postdevelopment and Buddhist Economics. I will illustrate the contributions of the enactive framework to these conceptions, corresponding community development practices, and relations with outside actors involved in such development processes.

According to enactivism all living systems “enact” their worlds according to the requirements and cognitive designs of their bodily structures. The body correspondingly plays a crucial role in the cognitive activities of human beings as well: We act on the world according to our cognitive endowments, receive feedback from the environment, which again becomes translated through our perceptual capacities as the results of our actions. These “action-perception-loops,” involving the brain, body, and the environment, are the sites of sense-making and meaning (Stewart 2010: 3). Meaning therefore never resides in a given environment, or within the mind of a living system, but is constantly created through interactions. The enactivist theory not only provides a radically constructivist view of reality based on the study of living systems, but also offers an analytical framework for the study of the development of embodied practices (coordination of gestures, vocal expressions etc.). I will show in later chapters that interventions on such “micro-practices” (Fuchs & De Jaegher 2009: 481; also Moghaddam & Harré 1996: 239) and pre-discursive dispositions are part of Buddhist-inspired community

---

individual enlightenment, Mahayana stresses interconnectedness with other beings, and also points out the benefits of one’s own enlightenment for other sentient beings.

development initiatives, but so are discursive interventions. However, in its current form enactivism offers an insufficient understanding of cultural and discursive phenomena.

Most discourse theories (e.g. Foucault, Laclau & Mouffe, Critical Discourse Analysis) are not easily compatible with an approach, in which meaning is negotiated only in actual conversations. Discursive psychology is an exception in this regard and Rom Harré's version of it – termed “positioning theory” – appears especially compatible with enactivism: Not only does Harré agree that meaning only resides in actual practices, but in contrast to proponents of enactivism he is moreover able to explain cultural and discursive processes by drawing on neuroscientific models. Thus, he is able to show how the learning of discursive concepts follows similar patterns as the learning of bodily motor concepts and of emotional attitudes.<sup>3</sup> In this Harré provides an early formulation of what is today known as the “symbol grounding problem” (see for example Vogt 2002) in cognitive science; this concerns the question of how words acquire their meaning. The combination of enactivism with Harré's theory thus helps to illustrate the continuity from biological sense-making activities to discursive practices. It moreover offers additional tools in analyzing discursive practices in terms of their strategic uses, allocations of power, and attributed meanings; proponents of positioning theory emphasize that the same speech-act can take on different meanings for those involved in a conversation while not necessarily impeding successful communication (see Bartlett 2008).

Since positioning theory enables the analysis of discursive phenomena, including discursive formations and long-term narratives, it provides an encompassing framework for different sense-making mechanisms when combined with enactivism. I therefore prefer this discourse analytical approach over other viable theories; among these is practice theory, which I will briefly discuss at the beginning of the first chapter, but also a recent attempt at combining the enactivist approach with Giddens' structuration theory (Steiner & Stewart 2009). According to proponents of

---

<sup>3</sup> See Varela et al. (1991), Sheya & Smith (2010: 129), and Harré & Gillett (1994: 66-72).

practice theory (see Schatzki 2001; Reckwitz 2002) Giddens, together with Bourdieu, is an early advocate of this strand of social inquiry; he is moreover referred to as a social theorist of the body (see Shilling 2003). However, the way Steiner and Stewart incorporate Giddens' theory implies that social norms and meanings are independent of interactions, which means that the social sphere operates according to rules distinct from sense-making processes as described in enactivism (see Steiner & Stewart 2009: 545 and 548). In contrast, positioning theory adds further specifications to the enactivist understanding of sense-making without necessitating a dualism between individual cognition and social cognition, or between psychology and sociology.

In chapter 2 I am drawing on embodied cognitive science in order to explore the role of the body in human interactions: specifically sensorimotor processes and physiochemical mechanisms in interactions with the environment. These processes structure our thinking and practices on a bodily level, e.g. by coupling life situations with corresponding bodily emotions (see Damasio 1994), by construing distinctions between a self and an outside environment (see Wegner 2002), and by constantly upgrading an inner model of the self (see Metzinger 2009). Such processes have been identified and interpreted based on observations through brain-scanning technology and through psychological experiments and studies. Since they concern processes of human experience they can also be accessed through disciplined technologies of the self, such as Buddhist meditation practices. This again makes it possible to explore questions such as "How does this state of consciousness affect my perceptions and actions?" or even "What are good states of consciousness versus bad ones?" Certain meditation practices foster dispositions of compassion and loving kindness, because they are seen to inform attitudes of openness towards other individuals, ideas, and new practices.

Buddhist technologies target psychosomatic dispositions on a pre-discursive level. The objective is therefore not to change ideologies, but deeper-layered dispositions of how we approach life-situations. These basic tendencies inform everyday practices, and hence they are the object of mindful intervention. Meditation masters

usually pursue years of training in order to acquire insights about non-self and positively valued dispositions. However, modifications of these techniques exist for therapeutic purposes, which are aimed at making these insights accessible to non-meditators as well. These modifications of Buddhist mindfulness techniques can also be used to identify ways of application in development initiatives. Especially the four steps method developed by the psychiatrist Jeffrey Schwartz to treat OCD patients exhibits similarities with the community development approach devised by J.K. Gibson-Graham (2006a).

In chapter 3 I am applying the findings from the previous chapters to the field of development theory, in particular to postdevelopment theory and Buddhist Economics. These approaches are based on constructivist worldviews consistent with the ontological framework outlined in the first chapter. In light of the findings in the first two chapters the following shortcomings could be identified regarding these development approaches: The field of analysis in postdevelopment theory is limited to discursive constructions of reality. These are culturally determined and therefore offer few guidelines for development work that could be generally applied across communities. By including unconscious mechanisms as described in cognitive scientific works or as experienced through Buddhist mindfulness techniques, guiding elements could be constructed based on a common subdiscursive human ontology. In Buddhist Economics on the other hand, development strategies and objectives are derived from Buddhist teachings. However, few authors mention ways of how to make these insights available to a wider public apart from meditation practitioners. Ideas of how to modify Buddhist practices as is the case in therapeutic approaches are hardly entertained.

In chapter 4 I am exploring applications of postdevelopment theory and of Buddhist Economics<sup>4</sup> in practice; case studies show that a postdevelopment perspective brings into visibility values and practices ignored in structuralist perspectives (see Curry 2003). Sally Matthews (2009) moreover shows how development workers

---

<sup>4</sup> As an example for the application of the Buddhist Economics framework to community development projects I will refer to the work of Wanna Prayukvong (especially 2005).

can contribute to a postdevelopment praxis, e.g. by establishing contact between alternative communities, by providing information from the perspective of an international NGO, as well as through recognition and revaluation of existing communal resources. Gibson-Graham provide more active guidance in their development initiatives and consequently speak of a “post-poststructuralist practice” (2006a: 131). Their documented action research projects in Australia, the US, as well as the Philippines are consistent with what I would term an “enactive development approach”: Members of communities are guided to question established identities, as well as conceptions about skills and economic activities. Here, Gibson-Graham not only make use of discursive tools to make visible hitherto ignored development potentials. They also aim at overcoming established emotional patterns so that community members develop dispositions of openness towards new ideas and activities. Analyzing their project I will make use of enactive conceptions developed in the fields of embodied cognition and positioning theory.

In the last part of the chapter I will illustrate the potentials of the Community Economies project by drawing on findings from field research I have undertaken about the “Inpaeng Network,” a farmers’ knowledge network in northeastern Thailand. Today, the network is present in 5 northeastern provinces, encompasses around 30,000 members, and operates 58 cooperatives. Members organize meetings on a regular basis, in which new knowledge about farming methods, processing techniques, as well as about regional markets are shared and disseminated. The group moreover cooperates with a number of governmental and non-governmental institutions in order to spread and upgrade their activities throughout the region.

The lessons from cooperative projects between Inpaeng and state institutions will be the focus of the fifth chapter. The adoption of the “Sufficiency Economy” development strategy by state institutions in Thailand following the Asian Financial Crisis in 1997 has created discursive shifts in favor of traditional skills, subsistence farming strategies, and the management of commons (especially forests and land) by rural communities. The Sufficiency Economy discourse has thus led to a

reevaluation of Inpaeng projects within institutions of the public sector, and has moreover facilitated the spread of the Inpaeng lifestyle in the region with public assistance. Inpaeng has benefitted from state support through the acquisition of know-how (especially processing techniques), as well as monetary and non-monetary resources. The network in turn provides resource persons for a state body attached to the Agricultural Ministry in order to train farmers in organic agriculture. This mutual “cooptation” between state and alternative community initiatives is reminiscent of Arturo Escobar’s assessment of the transformation processes in Latin American countries (see Escobar 2010): Here too, states and grassroots movements pursue different, but compatible agendas. Compared to the previous chapter, I will primarily make use of the discursive concepts within the enactive framework in order to analyze these strategic relations between alternative communities and state actors. Thus, by drawing on positioning theory I will show how the cooperation between Inpaeng and state institutions, is based on different understandings of the Sufficiency Economy concept.

Ideological conceptions can thus give rise to a variety of possible interpretations and practices. It is this ambiguity of meaning, which again highlights the potential overemphasis of discursive practices in matters of social change. At the same time it shifts attention to the significance of underlying, pre-discursive dispositions. I therefore argue that the emancipatory potential of Inpaeng’s utilization of the Sufficiency Economy discourse depends on the continuity of dispositions, which inform attitudes of interdependence, such as “responsibility towards the community, the free sharing of know-how and information, and the protection of local biodiversity” (Rado 2013: 195).

Conclusions will be presented in the sixth chapter: Enactivism offers an ontological framework, which can be used for the analysis of social phenomena. Regarding development theory it provides ontological and epistemological insights, which help to further refine postdevelopment and Buddhist Economics approaches: In the first

case it helps to overcome a relativist stance<sup>5</sup> implicit in postdevelopment, which hinders the formulation of general guiding principles in development work. In the second case it helps to identify a lack of flexibility in Buddhist Economics conceptions. In both cases these shortcomings are due to an insufficient understanding of cognitive processes. The enactivist theory moreover helps to add specifications to development initiatives as documented by Gibson-Graham: As has been shown, the notion of interdependence can be extended to include external relations, including cooperative activities with state bodies. These can result in productive interactions in that they advance alternative community projects. Consolidated identifications (“we” on the one hand and a “neoliberal” state on the other; see Glassman 2008), makes it difficult to recognize such possibilities. Finally, the utilization of Buddhist practices allows for a variety of possible development trajectories, similarly to postdevelopment. At the same time enactive development overcomes a weakness in postdevelopment theory, which is the inability to relate these diverse practices.

---

<sup>5</sup> This aspect poses difficulties for development workers: How is it possible to intervene, when there is a lack of any guiding principles or norms to justify such interventions?

## **1. Performative Ontologies: Discourse Analytical Approaches and Enactivism**

This chapter will provide an outline of enactivist ontology as introduced by Varela, Thompson, and Rosch in their book “The Embodied Mind” in 1991. Enactivism puts forward the idea that living systems perform their respective realities in constant interaction with their environments (Varela et al. 1991: 150; Thompson 2007: 13). These environments in turn largely consist of other living systems or artifacts modified by living systems. Hence, this approach denies the existence of a world independent of the perceptions and actions of living beings. Whereas in all Buddhist traditions the phenomenal self is seen as co-dependently arising in each moment through contact with an outside world (see second chapter), the Mahayana tradition extends this line of thought to include all of reality: Not only the perceiver of an object is constituted in the moment of sense contact with the object, but the object and the act of perceiving co-dependently arise in the event. Thus, neither subject nor object are foundational entities, but are inherently empty mental constructions. Nevertheless, the way we construct objects – meaning the designations and schemas we apply in perceiving - enables us to act successfully and to effect reliable results. Although what we perceive are mental constructions they cohere to lawful features in our experience and provide us with naïve realist knowledge about the world (Varela et al. 1991: 221-28; Williams 2009: 69). Our interactions and interpretations of the world are successful, because our bodies have adaptively evolved with other living systems, being exposed to the same physical laws and conditions, such as earth’s gravity. Embodiment is therefore a crucial feature in order to explain sense-making processes in enactivism; this concerns not only basic functions, such as making out shapes through vision, but also the attribution of meaning in social processes.

I will attempt to identify social constructivist methodologies compatible with enactivism in order to apply this approach productively in the analysis of social phenomena. Few social constructivist theories posit the body as co-constitutive of

social processes; authors, such as Judith Butler (1990; 1993), Bryan Turner (2008), as well as the Austrian political scientists Brigitte Bargetz (2013) and Gundula Ludwig (2013) primarily conceive of the human body as an object of discursive inscriptions and interventions, “but we learn much less from them about what the body is and why it is able to assume such social importance” (Shilling 2012: 14; see also Connolly 2002: xiii). The sociologist Chris Shilling - whose book “The Body and Social Theory” (1993, 2003, and 2012) provides valuable insights into the status quo of sociological theories of embodiment in subsequent revised editions<sup>6</sup> - explores different approaches about the interface between the body and society with the aim to overcome what he perceives as the inability to reconcile two distinct perspectives on the body: On the one hand it is viewed as a biological entity and on the other hand as a site of social representations. Shilling himself and most authors he invokes seem to underestimate the role of the body in sense-making processes; thus, the body is mostly seen as expressing or reacting to social conventions, or to constrain and structure our sense-making activities (see Shilling 2003: 90 and 102). This is based on a “decoupling” of nature and culture, based on the notion that both strata operate according to fundamentally different logics.

This point is clearly illustrated in Bargetz’ work, whose research includes the politics of affect and emotions (Bargetz 2013; Bargetz & Sauer 2010). For instance, she describes the integration of subjects into societal power relations as achieved partly through the mobilization of emotions. She moreover makes a distinction between pre-discursive affect and conscious emotions, paralleling a similar distinction in cognitive science (see section 5.2 in this chapter). Whereas in cognitive science the unconscious origins of conscious feeling are described as bodily, material physiochemical processes, Bargetz seems reluctant to establish a link with biology, since such somatic pre-verbal processes are seen to be independent of societal mechanisms (see Bargetz 2013: 206/7 and 216). The enactivist approach, on the other hand, is predicated on the idea that bodily mechanisms actively evaluate situations and our environment and give rise to adaptive behavior. They are thus

---

<sup>6</sup> In the latest edition of the book the author includes neuroscientific contributions to the topic as provided by the neuroscientist Antonio Damasio and the sociologist David Franks (2010).

part of our interpretations also of social practices and motivate meaningful actions. Construction of meaning, and thus constructivism, is not limited to social relations, but is constitutive of life in general; in the natural realm many adaptive behaviors are stable over evolutionary periods, but many of these have to be learned in relation to an environment and thus involve intelligence. Viewing embodied cognitive mechanisms, in addition to conscious thought and feeling, as mechanisms through which we interpret the world moreover shows that we share some of our interpretations with all humans due to our unity as a species. Conscious cultural expressions through speech acts and social practices therefore denote an additional level in sense-making.

Theories of social practices<sup>7</sup> ascribe the body a central role in the production and conveyance of meaning; in fact to the sociologist Andreas Reckwitz this appears as the main feature that sets practice theory apart from other approaches to social processes (see Reckwitz 2002: 251). Here, society is constituted through routinized practices put into effect through consistent bodily and mental patterns. These practices are the site of meaning. It is therefore neither to be located in the heads of agents, nor in outside normative structures. Social agents are the bearers of practices, which they perform either in relation to other agents or objects. Because the mind in this conception ceases to be the site of the social, mind and body converge in the execution of skilled social performances. Although practice theory thus aims at overcoming a mind/body dualism, it is difficult to do so if the bodily correlates of meaningful behavior – neuronal and physiochemical processes – are ignored. Some theorists in the field have engaged with cognitive neuroscience pointing out consistencies between assumptions in practice theory and neuroscientific findings.<sup>8</sup>

The recognition that non-verbal embodied practices – such as facial expressions, gestures, intonation - are crucial to mutual understanding in face-to-face interactions has fostered applications of the enactivist approach on this level of

---

<sup>7</sup> Schatzki (2001); Reckwitz (2002); Pritzlaff & Nullmeier (2011).

<sup>8</sup> See Turner (2001), Lizardo (2007 and 2012), and Reddy (2009).

analysis.<sup>9</sup> However, the productive overlap between cognitive science and social theory has so far been limited to “body acts”; whereas practice theory includes the analysis of linguistic practices as well, proponents of enactivism have so far failed to explain these symbolic practices in terms of embodied cognition. In this chapter I will explore attempts in establishing such a link between cognitive and discursive processes, and I believe that this combination can be very fruitful for the analysis of social processes for multiple reasons: First, more refined analytical distinctions could be made regarding the commonalities and differences between embodied forms of cognition (sensorimotor processes and emotional categorizations) and conscious activities; second, enactivism provides a constructivist ontology in the realm of the natural sciences, and identifying common mechanisms at work in corporeal and discursive sense-making processes could offer natural scientific support for social constructivism; third, if these common mechanisms on both levels of analysis exist, insights from the field of embodied cognition could point towards requirements on theories of discourse: These include, for example, the recognition that meaning is dynamically created in repeated interactions and, consequently, that meaning and identities are subject to shifts in the course of interactions.

In order to illustrate the fertility of the application of insights from enactivism to discourse analysis, I will first critically examine current discourse analytical approaches<sup>10</sup> from an enactivist perspective: These include Foucauldian discourse analysis, Laclau and Mouffe’s theory of discourse, Fairclough’s Critical Discourse Analysis, and Harré’s variant of discursive psychology, namely positioning theory. Although Harré’s approach is based on premises, which partially contradict enactivism, I nevertheless argue that a modified version of positioning theory is

---

<sup>9</sup> See De Jaegher & Di Paolo (2007), Fuchs & De Jaegher (2009), and Di Paolo et al. (2010).

<sup>10</sup> Hardly any social scientist at the University of Vienna seems to make use of discursive psychology. However, many political scientists base their ontological and epistemological assumptions on one of the remaining approaches, or on a combination thereof: Foucauldian concepts are highly influential especially among feminist theorists (see Lorey 2009; Sauer 2012; Ludwig 2013); Bargetz and Sauer (2010) and Sauer (2013) are influenced by Laclau and Mouffe’s understanding of politics as the terrain of antagonistic interests through identification of subjects with certain discourses; the lecturers Hans Pühretmayer (2005; 2010) and Armin Puller are proponents of critical realism. The latter makes use of Fairclough’s Critical Discourse Analysis in his doctoral thesis.

compatible with the enactivist framework. In subsections 1.5.1 and 1.5.2 I will provide an outline of enactivism, respectively as an approach for the study of living systems and as a strand of embodied cognition. Finally I will attempt to combine Harré's theory and enactivism by pointing out consistencies and the contributions of positioning theory to enactivism; but also by arguing against Harré's idea that meanings are conscious in every case and for an approach, which takes psychosomatic cognitive mechanisms seriously.

A basic feature shared by both approaches, and thus one that forms a basic ontological assumption throughout subsequent chapters, is that they transcend distinctions between an inner mind and an external environment. Proponents of both theories thus reject what is known as a "Cartesian metaphysics": this is, in short, a position, which views the human mind as distinct from the body both in terms of the space it inhabits, as well as in terms of substance (see Harré 2002: 65-68). Enactivism is more consistent in this regard, since Harré makes a distinction between a discursive mind and the brain as a tool (Harré 2012a; Harré & Moghaddam 2012: 16). Through an adaptation of positioning theory to be compatible with enactivism I will argue for an approach, which overcomes these "subtle residues of Cartesian dualism" (Metzinger 2003: 166).

### **1.1. On Discursive Formations in the Work of Foucault**

Foucauldian discourse analysis provides an understanding of society and social processes, which includes a set of identifiable premises shared by subsequent discourse analytical approaches treated in this chapter (Jørgensen & Phillips 2002: 5/6): Accordingly, different forms of knowledge are viewed as culturally and historically contingent representations and categorizations, which are subject to change through time and space. None of these representations of reality can claim conformity to an objectively given truth. Discourse moreover determines the ways we relate to the world, giving rise to corresponding social practices and institutions. Different discourse analytical approaches differ in terms of how they posit the

stability and scope of discourse, or whether the term designates pre-given formations or manifestation in concrete practices; finally, different forms of discourse analysis encompass different social practices within the term.

According to Dreyfus and Rabinow, Foucault's engagement with discourse is for the most part limited to "serious speech acts" (Dreyfus & Rabinow 1983: 46-48): These are held to contain knowledge and truth in a given society, as is the case with scientific knowledge in modern society. In order for a serious speech act to be recognized as such, it must be embedded in a set of rules, which constitutes and delimits a discursive space within which statements appear as meaningful. Foucault terms such sets of rules "discursive formations," which determine the objects of knowledge, the modes of how knowledge is produced and applied, the subjects and institutions of knowledge production, as well as accepted concepts and themes. Discursive formations thus assign authority to certain institutions and positions to make truth claims, such as to hospitals and doctors as the sites and authorities of clinical knowledge (Foucault 1972: 52/53; Butler 1993: 171). These authorities must follow recognized procedures in their production and application of knowledge and these procedures in turn reflect ideas that can be accepted within their field.

Foucault points out that the relations between designations and objects are entirely determined by the rules of a given discursive formation.<sup>11</sup> Apart from these rule-governed relations objects of knowledge do not feature any internal consistency, which could serve as a static reference point through time and space for an ever-refined body of knowledge. In his book "The Order of Things" (1970) Foucault provides examples to illustrate this point, e.g. by showing how the concept of "economic value" has undergone consecutive "mutations" (1970: 206) in European systems of thought from the 16<sup>th</sup> century onwards. These changes in the understanding of objects, concepts, and themes do thus not follow any a priori rule, but come about through ruptures in epistemic attitudes, occurring to a large extent without the awareness of actors. Foucault is therefore not interested in investigating

---

<sup>11</sup> According to a commentator discursive formations are "roughly equivalent" to scientific disciplines (O'Farrell 2005: 134).

meanings inherent in the objects of designation, nor does he examine the validity of truth claims; his analysis, which he terms “archaeology,” is limited to how meaning has been produced in different discursive formations over time (Dreyfus & Rabinow 1983: 50/51).

Foucault later includes the concept of power-knowledge in his archaeological project (Foucault 1997: 17/18): i.e. the analysis of how power practices determine and are themselves determined by a field of knowledge. Posed in this dual relationship, power does not appear as something that constrains knowledge, but provides the means through which knowledge is produced. Conversely, power can only be exercised according to discursively established rules. Because of this interpenetration of power and knowledge, Foucault emphasizes the productive role of power relations in generating authorities, objects, and modalities of knowledge. In this regard he points out the development of today’s scientific disciplines and methods as tools in the “refinement of power relations” in modern society (Foucault 1995: 224; see also O’Farrell 2005: 87). To a large extent the enhancement of control over people has been established by a growing scientific and political interest in the human body as an object of knowledge. Power-knowledge applied to the body has accordingly fostered political interventions on two levels, namely on the efficient use and reproductive capabilities of the individual body, and on a population as a whole in order to influence life expectancy, population growth, levels of health etc. (Foucault 1990: 139 and 1995: 136-39). By highlighting the body as an object of political and social interventions, Foucault has become a major influence for subsequent theorists about the interface between the body and society such as Judith Butler (see 1990 and 1993) and Bryan Turner (2008; esp. 3/4).

With regard to the connections between sciences and social control, Foucault does not concern himself with natural sciences, such as “theoretical physics or organic chemistry,” but those disciplines, which are “profoundly enmeshed in social structures,” such as psychology and sociology (Foucault 1984:51/52): These examine the behavior and performance of individuals and populations, aggregate

data, provide statistical analysis, and establish norms. These techniques have enabled political control over people to be more efficient and widespread. Hence, the ideological character of these sciences, since they have no ontological foundation, but rather shift their interpretations of reality according to the rules of power-invested discursive formations.<sup>12</sup>

Power-knowledge gives rise to institutional and material manifestations, such as laws and buildings: Bentham's "panopticon" is a famous architectural example for a project that aims at inducing "a state of conscious and permanent visibility that assures the automatic functioning of power" (Foucault 1995: 201). Despite this example, which could well serve to illustrate how material structures solidify and determine social practices, Foucault does not believe that laws and material objects are unambiguously causally efficacious. In an interview he provides the following example for his view (Foucault 1984: 246):

"The architecture of Godin was clearly intended for the freedom of people. Here was something that manifested the power of ordinary workers to participate in the exercise of their trade. It was a rather important sign and instrument of autonomy for a group of workers. Yet no one could enter or leave the place without being seen by everyone - an aspect of the architecture that could be totally oppressive. But it could only be oppressive if people were prepared to use their own presence in order to watch over others."

The modification of discourse and practices thus appears to be a sufficient condition to bring about social change. However, Foucault understands discourse as an omnipresent and irresistible force, strengthened through mutually reinforcing institutional, economic, juridico-political, and scientific structures (Foucault 1995: 218-24). With his emphasis on the disciplinary power of knowledge, the ability of social actors and groups to resist and modify dominant discourses are ignored. Later theorists in the field of discourse analysis emphasize that discursive formations are unstable insofar as their implicit rules must be constantly re-enacted in concrete interactions in order to retain their status as power/knowledge (see

---

<sup>12</sup> This is the case regardless of the attempts in many of these sciences to provide themselves "with a scientific style, form and justification", e.g. through the recourse to mathematics (see Foucault 1970: 351).

Chouliaraki & Fairclough 1999: 38). Such concrete interactions thus provide possibilities to challenge a certain discourse, given the availability of other sources of alternative knowledge and practices. Sheila Jasanoff, for instance, points out that diverse socio-cultural settings interact with and modify modern scientific knowledge as it becomes inserted and embedded in the former (see Jasanoff 2010: 240). The point that in modern society different discourses co-exist and compete in ascribing meaning, e.g. by investing designations with different objects, is taken up by subsequent discourse analytical approaches presented in this chapter.<sup>13</sup> The resulting tensions between different discourses enable individuals and social movements to choose alternative practices and to challenge hegemonic worldviews and relations of power they give rise to.

## **1.2. Discursive Formations in Laclau and Mouffe**

Laclau and Mouffe for instance emphasize the dynamic nature of discursive formations (Laclau & Mouffe 1985: 112/13). Practices of designation organize a discursive structure of meaningful elements. These meanings are established through a consistent positioning of each element vis-à-vis other constituent components that make up the formation; elements thus acquire a certain meaning through their mutual specification within the discursive formation and thus become “moments” within the formation. Certain moments of discourse occupy a privileged position in this regard: Functioning as “nodal points” they are central signifiers from which other moments derive their specific meanings. If God, for instance, is taken as a nodal point in the Catholic belief system, then terms such as Mother Mary and Holy Spirit – i.e. mother of God, and part of the trinity that make up God - acquire their meanings through reference to the central sign. It is this process of the establishment of a structured totality, according to Laclau and Mouffe, which tends towards a fixity and closure of discourse from competing significations.

---

<sup>13</sup> See Jørgensen & Phillips (2002:13), Fairclough (2012: 456), and Laclau & Mouffe (1985: 153/54).

Closure is never fully achieved, however, and here lies a fundamental difference to the Foucauldian conception of discourse<sup>14</sup>: In modern society dominant discourses are being challenged by alternative discourses, including practices (Laclau & Mouffe 1985: 138). These imply different relations between significations and thus challenge the fixation of meanings. These significations also include “subject positions” within discourses. As we engage in interactions, we assume a certain identity in accordance with the expectations involved in the specific situation. When we see a doctor, for instance, we occupy the position of a patient in line with the prevalent clinical discourse. In the course of life we occupy different subject positions according to different discourses: We are citizens of a nation state and simultaneously members of an international working class, for instance. In situations, which produce a tension between two subject positions a choice may have to be made by suppressing one of these attributions in favor of the other (see Jørgensen & Phillips 2002: 46).

Drawing on available discourses in order to challenge other existing practices thus enables us to make political choices. It is in this manner that Laclau and Mouffe formulate their proposed emancipatory project of “radical democracy” (Laclau & Mouffe 1985: 149-78): It involves the discursive exposure of inequalities as oppressive relations, and thus as illegitimate. In order to expose relations of domination, social actors cannot draw on the discursive formation, which establishes such relations of subordination, e.g. between men and women, or between different ethnic groups, since that discourse is in part constituted by these relations. This reinterpretation of social inequalities as unjust can emerge only through the articulation of an external discourse, i.e. the democratic discourse. Feminists, ethnic movements, new social movements etc., have in their political struggles sought to extend the democratic principle, including the concepts of liberty

---

<sup>14</sup> Laclau and Mouffe note that they moreover reject Foucault’s “distinction between discursive and non-discursive practices,” the latter consisting of political institutions, historical processes, economic practices etc. (Laclau & Mouffe 1985: 107; also Çağlar 2009: 65). Foucault clearly highlights this distinction in his earlier works, notably in “The Archaeology of Knowledge” (first published in 1969). In his later work he shifts from the analysis of speech acts to studying practices and technologies of power. Although the earlier distinction between discourse (as mostly linguistic practice) and non-discursive practices is not revoked, his theory in his later writings comes very close to that of Laclau and Mouffe (Torring 1999: 91).

and equality, to include a wider range of groups and social domains. The notion of radical democracy thus involves the extension of democracy to become a general organizing principle of all social relations, including economic relations. This struggle may take a variety of forms of expression; for Laclau and Mouffe discourse is not limited to linguistic articulation but encompasses all forms of human practices (Torfing 1999: 94).

The struggle for equal rights thus presupposes particular contexts of power relations between a subordinated group – e.g. the proletariat, women, ethnic minorities etc. – and a dominant group. This relation of domination consequently brings about identification with particular subject positions. Those assuming the identity of the subordinated group thus find themselves in the paradoxical situation, according to Laclau, that whereas this positioning makes oppression visible and thus provides the ground for democratic struggle, the objective of this struggle must be the suspension of this particular identity (see Laclau 1996: 27). Laclau sees no other viable option, since other resolutions that involve maintaining group identity are, according to him, riddled with contradictions: Since, for instance, the self-portrayal of a group as “working class” presupposes an antagonistic relation towards capitalists, a perpetuation of the proletarian identity following social transformations would continue the social arrangements of the previous discourse, although power relations may be reversed. Another possibility consists of a struggle for a reform of social relations in order to grant subordinated groups the right for self-determination. In this case the anti-systemic character of the movement is maintained, although through conforming to the rules of contestation of a system, which one opposes as unjust. This course of action thus leaves the overall political system intact and can only have “paralyzing political effects” (Laclau 1996: 33). Laclau therefore advocates a system, which is characterized not by distinction from previously dominant groups, but by difference to the past system of social arrangements.

Radical democracy thus implies that contemporary social movements call upon this universal principle in order to assert their identities. As this principle is extended to

cover a widening scope of practices, democracy at the same time becomes progressively emptied of any particular content. This universalism therefore cannot be employed as a basis for any particularity. In his understanding of identification as tied to a particular context, and hence as ultimately precarious, Laclau follows the theory of the subject as put forward in Lacanian psychoanalysis (Jørgensen & Phillips 2002: 42): It is marked by a constant unconscious striving towards a feeling of wholeness “by identifying with *something* outside itself.” The process of identification is never complete, because for identification to be possible, it requires the presence of external discursive forces, which deny it.

What becomes especially visible in Laclau and Mouffe’s explications about democratic struggles is their view of discourses as competing entities: Elements of discourse are in themselves ambiguous and lend themselves to a variety of conceptualizations. Within particular discursive formations however, the meanings of these elements are pinned down as relatively fixed. Changes in meaning foremost occur when articulations draw on competing discursive formations. The fluidity of discourse according to this theory is therefore less due to an internal reorganization of a particular formation, but because different discourses overlap on certain elements, and thus contest their meaning (see also Laclau 2006: 108). The notion of competition then extends to actors and social movements as bearers of alternative discourses. This struggle takes place on the level of society at large: In the case of the project of radical democracy for instance, social movements either aim for societal transformation in a way that different forms of oppression are eliminated, or they risk isolation or cooptation by the system. Since in this view the aim of political actors is to replace a set of hegemonic ideas for another, Laclau and Mouffe consequently regard politics as “*inextricably linked to social antagonism*” (Torfing 1999: 121, italics in the original; Mouffe 1999: 754).

As I am going to show the relations among ideologies are not necessarily such that they mutually exclude each other in practice; rather, continued interactions among groups upholding them may lead to internal shifts within both discourses, which in the end are not necessarily equivalent to either of the original narratives. As two

such parties engage in a conversation, for instance, the dynamic of the process does not allow them to know possible outcomes *ex ante* (Fuchs & De Jaegher 2009: 471): Conversations involve shifting identities and ways of articulation, strategic applications of discursive styles, differences of how meaning is ascribed to one and the same speech-act etc. These features, which pertain not to given discursive formations, but to concrete interactions, imply possible results beyond either/or choices, because of the meaning-generating force of interactions (see Harré 1997: 182). Since Laclau and Mouffe underrate the transformative force of interactions, they fail to account for dynamics, which shape unforeseen outcomes, which prove more ambivalent than what could be straightforwardly seen as transformation or cooptation.<sup>15</sup> The emphasis on pre-given discursive formations moreover gives rise to a view, according to which they correspond to, or determine, non-linguistic practices. Practices, however take place in concrete environments, which co-determine the meaning of an action, particularly when these environments – as is the case in interactions - consist of other social agents.

### **1.3. Fairclough's Critical Discourse Analysis**

In their emancipatory agenda Laclau and Mouffe propose an approach, which accepts the equal validity of all particular identities. Since in their theory there is nothing external to discourse, emancipation cannot be articulated in a way that generalizes any of these particularities. Discourse mediates all of our understanding and interactions and hence we are never in direct contact with a reality “out there.” This also includes the subject positions we occupy: Our thoughts and practices are

---

<sup>15</sup> Gülay Çağlar (2010), for instance, has analyzed how the UNDP and the World Bank have included ideas brought forward by feminist advocacy groups in their respective development discourses. Reasons for their receptiveness towards feminist agendas, namely “gender budgeting,” consist in prior discursive shifts (e.g. a shift towards a “Post-Washington Consensus” and the rise of the concept of “good governance”), as well as in a growing influence of feminist economists within these institutions. At the same time Çağlar points out that the way the UNDP and the World Bank understand gender budgeting is distinct from the feminist concept. The integration of the idea of gender budgeting in the development discourses of these institutions thus leads to conceptual modifications, further resulting in different policy strategies.

meaningful to us through the positions we take up in a discourse. Since all human experiences depend on “discursive conditions of possibility” (Laclau & Mouffe 1985: 115) there is no essence common to all humans, which would transcend the limits of discourse, such as a universal human nature.<sup>16</sup> Norman Fairclough, who has developed a critical discourse analytical approach, contradicts the view that all meaning is discursively established. To him social structures produce real effects, namely the reproduction of underlying power relations in a given society. By identifying these effects, it is possible to posit concrete emancipatory agendas.

Fairclough therefore makes a distinction between “ideologies” and “critical theoretical practices” (Chouliaraki & Fairclough 1999: 26-28): The former are discursive practices, which mask, naturalize, and thus stabilize existing power relations. Critical theories, such as critical discourse analysis (CDA), on the other hand aim at revealing structures of domination and the set of practices they give rise to. Consequently, CDA implies the possibility of removing discursively established constraints on practices and is thus able to point to alternatives. As such this form of analysis entails an emancipatory knowledge interest. Fairclough’s conception of power is thus not synonymous with Foucault’s understanding. He agrees that power is a productive feature of discourse: It correlates with knowledge accepted in society and those who hold power must derive their legitimacy through these features of discourse. With his emphasis on power as domination Fairclough moreover ties power to certain interests, namely state and capitalist class interests (see Fairclough 1995: 92). The power of these actors is based in economic realities, which are structural and thus extra-discursive. These structural inequalities moreover pose obstacles for disadvantaged groups to articulate new discourses. In this view Laclau and Mouffe overestimate the possibilities for resistance, because they fail to distinguish between discourse and social structures.

Despite these structural obstacles discursive transformations are nevertheless possible in concrete interactions, since the mechanisms of social structures depend

---

<sup>16</sup> The Lacanian subject with its desire for “wholeness” nevertheless presupposes a pre-discursive universal attitude among human beings (see Reckwitz 2006: 309).

on their continued reenactment in discursive practices. Discourse thus stands in a dialectical relationship with other social mechanisms and together with these constitutes social practices. The reproduction or modification of dominant narratives takes place through the discursive aspect of social practices. Similar to Laclau and Mouffe's conception such changes occur through competing significations via different discourses. In CDA terms this combinatory practice is termed "interdiscursivity": a simultaneous articulation of different discourses in concrete interactions (Jørgensen & Phillips 2002: 73). This articulation in turn gives rise to new mechanisms with "real" impacts on social structures. Whether these impacts will lead to changes in social structural realities, is to be investigated through critical discourse analysis. In Fairclough's theory, as well as in related approaches to CDA (see Weiss & Wodak 2003: 7), social life thus exhibits both discursive and non-discursive features. In contrast to Foucault, as well as Laclau and Mouffe, critical discourse analysts cannot rely on discourse analysis alone; since social life also consists of non-discursive aspects they require social theories in addition. Here, Fairclough draws on critical realism as developed by the philosopher Roy Bhaskar (see Chouliaraki & Fairclough 1999: 25/26).

Since scientists, in contrast to other people, make use of critical social theories in order to gain knowledge about the real nature of social processes, they have, according to Fairclough, a privileged access to the truth. Other subject positions involve "reflexive self-constructions" about the practices they are linked to, which are more or less ideologically invested. The social researcher is therefore assigned a special responsibility: It is from his privileged position that he can point out social injustices, uncover ideologies and the obstacles to emancipation. Consequently, the scientist is able to reveal possibilities of how to remove obstacles to social equality and justice. Using Bhaskar's term, Fairclough calls this scientific practice "explanatory critique" (Chouliaraki & Fairclough 1999: 32/33; Bhaskar & Collier 1998: 385-89).

Unlike the other discourse theories introduced in this chapter, CDA entails realist ontological statements. The ontological assumptions underlying critical realism are

of particular interest, since they are derived through references to the natural sciences. I will undertake a similar approach in section 1.5 in this chapter, meaning that I will draw on natural scientific findings for the ontological assumptions underlying the present work. My conclusions diverge from those reached in critical realism, however. I will thus outline Bhaskar's theory in what follows, in order to contrast these two approaches. An outline of critical realism will moreover help to provide a deeper understanding of Harré's extensive work: He is not only one of the founders of positioning theory, but also an alternative theorist within critical realism opposed to Bhaskar's social ontology.

### **1.3.1. Essential Features of Critical Realism**

The idea for Bhaskar's epistemological approach is gleaned from experimental processes in the natural sciences that enable researchers to arrive at universally valid findings (Bhaskar 1998a: 10-14). First, experimental procedures reveal that scientific truths cannot be obtained empirically through everyday experience, but through controlled modifications of the environment, namely in laboratories. This way, scientists create a closed system in order to isolate the working of a certain mechanism, which is believed to have certain effects. If the experiment is successful and verifies this assumption, then we have acquired knowledge of a general feature in the natural world. This way we can determine, for example, that the ability of certain metals to conduct electricity is due to free ions within them. Whenever we witness that a metallic structure produces electric fields, we know that the generative mechanisms responsible are ions, and not other features that the metal in question may possess. This mechanism thus provides copper, for instance, with the "causal power" to conduct electricity, whenever circumstances allow for the realization of this inherent tendency, as through voltage (see Sayer 1992: 104-107; also Collier 1994: 62).

Whether structures unfold inherent tendencies thus depends on enabling contexts: Water, for instance, will boil when exposed to a temperature beyond 100 °C. This

ability must therefore be triggered by an external source, such as a stove, to be realized. In cases, in which an enabling condition is given, water can still fail to boil at the above temperature when counteracting mechanisms are involved, e.g. when one adds salt. Actual events are thus determined by multiple underlying mechanisms, which may reinforce, weaken, or offset each other. These events may become empirical reality, depending on whether we are aware of them or not due to our sensual endowments: e.g. they are thus visible, when we witness changes in the color spectrum perceivable by the human eye. Reality thus can be identified as consisting of three domains (Bhaskar 1998b: 41): Lawlike mechanisms constitute the most basic domain. The interplay of different mechanisms gives rise to changes in the natural world. These events constitute the domain of the actual. If we experience these events with at least one of our senses, then it is an empirical event; this is the third domain of reality.

What further enhances the complexity of reality in the critical realist view is that the mechanisms, which determine an event, can in most cases be explained by different laws: Whereas most mechanisms can be explained through the laws of physics, some can also be explained by chemical and, a smaller number, by biological processes in addition. In each case however the process in question can be explained only in terms of the distinct mechanisms that a certain discipline investigates; this means that psychological explanations are not reducible to chemical laws, for instance. According to Bhaskar mechanisms thus belong to different “strata,” which are ordered according to their causal dependence on each other (Bhaskar 1998c: 66); biological processes could not operate without chemical processes, whereas chemical reactions do not presuppose the existence of biological laws. The mechanisms of the higher order stratum of biology is thus rooted in, or emergent from, the lower order stratum of chemistry.

Critical realism also includes the social sciences in this hierarchical stratification model. Accordingly, the social world exhibits relatively enduring ontological features in the form of mechanisms and causal powers. Social structures can be identified on different levels of abstraction, including global capitalism, the national labor

market, or the management structure of individual firms. Abstraction in this context means identifying the necessary relationships between different social positions within a structure (see Sayer 1992: 91-93). This structural view of society then includes the idea that these relationships by themselves exert causal powers with observable effects. The task of the researcher therefore is to identify the generative mechanisms responsible within the social structure. On this level of analysis it is hardly possible however to establish closed systems as under laboratory conditions, since even if all other variables are kept constant, human beings themselves constitute complex open systems (Archer 1998: 190).

The researcher must therefore make “transcendental arguments” about the conditions of social reality that make an observable phenomenon possible. Generative mechanisms in the social realm are therefore to be identified in the mind of the researcher by way of “retroduction.” The process of retroduction refers to the identification of generative mechanisms of social structures. From these it is possible, according to critical realists, to trace the structural features of social entities, which give rise to these mechanisms. Danermark et al. for instance invoke the example of the phenomenon of “gender segregation in the labor market.” Underlying mechanisms could be the “gendered division of labor” or “gendered socialization” emanating from family structure and the structure of working life (Danermark et al. 2002: 111/12).

Critical realism is insofar compatible with CDA as the philosophy does not put forward a purely structural social ontology, but also includes theoretical explanations of how social change takes place. This transformative potential is identified within individual or collective agency: Practices do not only reproduce social structures, but also exhibit the potential for change. Members of society do not simply occupy static “positions” - the structural determinants of actions – but engage in practices, which serve personal purposes distinct from structural requirements (see Collier 1994: 148). These motives can be subject to change potentially leading up to social change.

This performativity of discourse and actions follows from the critical realist view of reality: People themselves possess causal powers and tendencies, among which are their reasons for acting. Bhaskar understands reasons as “beliefs, rooted in the practical interests of life” (Bhaskar 1998a: 106); thus, beliefs are our theories, which we take to correspond to a desired state of existence. Just as tendencies in the natural world need to be triggered by an event in order to be exercised, reasons will translate into actions when activated by corresponding circumstances. Thus, in critical realist terms “reasons can be causes” (see also Fairclough et al. 2002). This does not tell us anything about the actual behavior however, since our reasons produce events together with other mechanisms, some of which are extra-discursive.

For critical realists the causal efficaciousness of reasons is a precondition for emancipation to be possible. Emancipation is here understood as a “transformation [...] from an unwanted and unneeded to a wanted and needed source of determination” (Bhaskar 1998d: 410): This implies that not only social structures are real, but also a human essence<sup>17</sup> with universal needs and wants. Consequently, there is a necessary correspondence between social injustices and human frustrations. Since our everyday beliefs are ideologically invested, so can be our ideas about the source of personal frustrations. Through the process of explanatory critique – e.g. in the form of Freudian psychoanalysis (Collier 1998) - we can come to understand the social mechanisms that preclude our wellbeing. Personal emancipation cannot be equated with human emancipation however, since the social practices underlying social and mental ills remain intact. Therefore, there needs to be a collective effort to bring about social change. In contrast to Laclau and Mouffe, emancipatory action can therefore be articulated as a strategy with concrete normative objectives.

---

<sup>17</sup> A universal human nature is established based on our “biological unity as a species” (Bhaskar 1998d: 439; also Lawson 1999). This essence is historically mediated however: correspondingly, the particular emancipatory demands are tied to specific historical contexts.

### 1.3.2. Critique of CDA and Critical Realism

Fairclough's CDA makes important contributions to critical realism by providing a more refined understanding of the causal efficaciousness of reasons and motivations for action. He offers discourse analytical tools in order to specify how discursive events translate into social transformations through processes of interdiscursivity. In contrast to Laclau and Mouffe, Fairclough is concerned about specific instances of language use in order to analyze how structural power relations are reproduced or overcome in communication events; mainly written texts, but also images. Such discursive practices – which together with structural determinants constitute social practices – are thus to be analyzed through linguistic and semiotic tools of examination (Fairclough 2012: 457).

As Jørgensen and Phillips note, CDA thus shares with discursive psychology a focus on “situated language use in specific interactional contexts” (Jørgensen & Phillips 2002: 158). The approach can thus be used to account for dynamic, and at times contradictory processes in the formulation of texts, e.g. as an author draws on different genres and discursive styles in the same document (see Fairclough 1995: 140-48). In contrast to positioning theory and discursive psychology in general, CDA emphasizes that conversation events must be put in relation to the wider societal context, including inherent power relations, in order for a researcher to come to appropriate conclusions regarding the meaning of texts. In CDA it is mostly critical scientists, who possess the appropriate theoretical and methodological means to distinguish between structures and discourse, and between what is real from ideology. Underlying this claim are realist ontological commitments, which most constructivist theories introduced in this chapter do not share. Proponents of critical realism argue that social structures resemble the properties of natural structures as investigated through physics and chemistry. The theories introduced in the following sections will challenge this view: explicitly by Rom Harré, and implicitly in the presentation of the constructivist ontology in enactivism.

To conclude this section, I wish to point out differences between the ontological commitments in CDA and enactivism, as well as the consequences arising from these commitments. These will be elucidated further in subsequent sections: Critical realism invokes experimental procedures in the natural sciences in order to posit structural realities. Accordingly, social structures are assumed to exhibit causal powers with unambiguous tendencies. The effects of these tendencies can be altered through discursive interventions, but this does not change the meaning inherent in structural realities prior to interactions. This view requires that entities involved in an interaction preserve a certain degree of internal stability; otherwise the ability to pin down their definite causal powers is seriously undermined. Enactivism on the other hand conceives of natural reality in radically constructivist terms: There is no unambiguous meaning prior to interactions, because these introduce dynamic shifts affecting the properties of living systems involved and consequently their interpretations of their environment. Therefore, this approach rejects a dualism between agent and environment. Importantly, by analyzing the ways in which living systems make sense of their context, enactivism moreover makes careful distinctions between different cognitive levels (see subsection 1.5.2). These analytical distinctions are lacking in the discourse theoretical approaches introduced in this chapter. Since these variants of discourse analysis ignore embodied mechanisms and practices, they include no tools to assess how emotional categorizations and micro-practices stabilize macro-level practices and institutions (see section 1.6).

#### **1.4. Harré's Critique and Alternative Conception**

The philosopher Rom Harré is not only a major proponent of positioning theory (the last discourse theory to be introduced in this chapter), but together with Charles

Varela<sup>18</sup> moreover a dissenter within critical realism. Harré and Varela share the idea that human beings exhibit causal powers. They emphasize however that since causal powers emanate from interactions and practices of actual people, they can in no instance be ascribed to “transcendental” or abstract entities such as social structures (Harré in Harré & Bhaskar 2005: 31; Varela, C. 2005: 67). To them social structures are heuristic or “taxonomic” models, used to denote a number of patterned practices such as institutions, or members of a group such as capitalists (see Harré 2009: 137/38).

This view also has consequences for their conception of the critical realist notion of the stratification of reality: Whereas most critical realists regard society and human psychology as co-emergent from neurophysiology and biology, Harré and Varela view “personhood” as the apex of the stratification model (see Collier 1994: 132-34; Varela C. & Harré 1996: 317). Personhood entails conversation (thus, people’s discursive faculties) and human neurobiology, and the former is rooted in, but not reducible to, the latter. The discursive and biological constitutions function according to distinct laws: symbolic in the former case, and causal in the latter. Mental mechanisms do not exhibit causal regularities as is the case in physics, for instance: Psychological temporality is not fixed as is the case in physical space-time. Memories can alter meanings, and expectations for the future can influence the meaning of past events (see Langenhove & Harré 1999: 15). The causal powers of social beings are thus of a different quality than those emanating from physical properties: They are neither predictable, nor subject to strict regularities, because social norms and the intentions of agents likewise determine actual behavior.

People learn social practices and their meanings through discursive mediation. These meanings thus provide a culturally limited set of possible reasons that individuals can attach to their actions. Once having mastered these discursive

---

<sup>18</sup> Charles R. Varela, a former professor of psychology, must be distinguished from Francisco Varela, a Chilean biologist, philosopher, and neuroscientist. The latter will also be cited in this and the following chapters.

skills, people are able to select among these socially sanctioned ways of responding to different social stimuli. Whether they do so, depends on their consent to apply these discursively mediated techniques. Discursive contexts thus figure simultaneously as constraints and as empowering: The interpretations we are exposed to limit the possible choices we can make in a given context, but at the same time they endow us with discursive resources, which we can consciously apply to bring about desired effects in social interactions (Harré & Gillett 1994: 114-23). Harré explores these social mechanisms both through his discursive psychological theory, as well as through reference to the neuroscientific study of brain processes. Each strand of inquiry is presented in the following two sections.

#### **1.4.1. Positioning Theory**

Harré denies that social reality exhibits any structural ontological aspects: The social world is to him established through discourse alone and social research thus requires solely discourse analytical tools. In his variant of social constructivism he even goes further than theorists such as Foucault and Laclau and Mouffe, who postulate discursive formations that precede the activities of individual human agents. A central idea in positioning theory is that discourse is to be represented as discursive phenomena, thus actual conversations. It is in such concrete interactions, in which mental and social processes should be studied; in fact no clear distinction is made between psychological and social processes (Harré & Langenhove 1999: 10):

We do not think that society can be split up into three ontologically distinct levels (each with its own discipline: psychology, social psychology and sociology). Rather, we think of the social world as consisting of one basic realm, that of conversations and analogous patterns of interaction, in which psychological and sociological phenomena are generated, including such complex interpersonal relations and belief systems as social class.

An important reason for studying meaning exclusively in its concrete manifestations is to avoid reification of social processes. If, in contrast, we analyze properties and processes of social phenomena as if they were dissociable from concrete human agents, their properties can easily become indistinguishable from those of objects in the natural world. Most discourse theories are thus liable to this danger, whereas Bhaskar's philosophy is, according to Harré, committed to a misguided research program by subscribing to an analogy between material and social realities (see Harré 2009). Another important reason for the focus on interactions is that they reveal the context-dependence of the meaning of speech-acts: A single discursive practice can mean different things to different people, and can take on different meanings in the course of a conversation. The same holds for identities of social actors, balances of power etc., all of which are subject to possible shifts in the course of discursive practices. Thus, in contrast to other forms of discourse analysis, positioning theory puts forward distinct analytical concepts in order to capture these processes, namely positions, speech acts, and storylines (see Louis 2008: 22-28):

**Positions:** Within any social interaction people can occupy a predefined set of rights and duties according to shared discourses or "storylines." Positions thus denote the variety of socially sanctioned action repertoires for the occupant. In contrast to the concept of "role," which assumes a relative stability of the rights and duties assigned, the use of the term "position" reflects the notion that these norms can be contested and reassigned during interaction episodes (see also Davies & Harré 1999: 32; Moghaddam et al. 2008: 9). Occupants of positions can be individuals, members of a certain group, or – in the case of inter-group interactions – also collective actors up to nation states.

**Speech acts:** Positioning theory distinguishes between speech actions and speech acts. The former denotes intentional activity, whereas an "act" refers to the social meaning of that activity. As is the case in the discourse theory of Laclau and Mouffe actions include both linguistic and non-linguistic means of expression.

**Storylines** are “narrative conventions according to which social episodes unfold.”

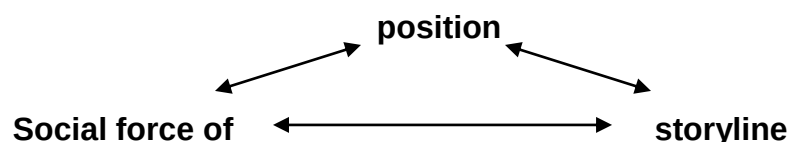
Those involved in an interaction draw on shared storylines in order to understand the meaning of actions as well as the distribution of rights and duties during a social encounter. Social interactions often involve more than one storyline as different actors may understand a social episode in various ways. These different narratives may give rise to different significations of a conversational action. People are moreover constituted through multiple discourses, each enabling them to make sense of a variety of contexts.

Positioned as a patient in an interaction with a doctor, for instance, the patient's speech acts will be interpreted by recourse to shared cultural norms and conventions. As the patient describes his symptoms, for example, the doctor is positioned as an authority with the ability to draw the right conclusions about a possible illness and a corresponding treatment. The patient's speech act is thus understood as appealing to the doctor's superior knowledge. If the same speech act of the same person is directed at his wife, the speech act takes on different meanings; in this case it could be understood as a complaint about pain. Speech acts can moreover serve to bring about changes in positioning: When a husband complains to his wife about work, he is positioned as a victim, whereas she may comfort and counsel him. When in the next moment he tells her to iron his shirt, an attempt of shifting the positions is made in accordance with patriarchal storylines.

The fact that subject positions can constantly shift in relation to each other in the course of a single conversation indicates our rich repertoire of discursive resources (Harré et al. 2009: 10): When shifts in positioning occur according to changing storylines we quickly recognize the new narrative brought into play. We also understand the shifting rights and duties, which the narrative redistributes among the positions. There are nevertheless instances, when subjects fail to immediately ascribe meaning to a speech act, or when speech acts remain unclear. People moreover do not only bring shared cultural repertoires into an interaction, but also their unique life stories (Davies & Harré 1999: 41). Within a conversation the same speech act can thus be understood differently by subjects involved without

necessarily impeding a seemingly successful interaction. Thus, although an analytical grid consisting of the elements “position/speech act/storyline” (see figure 1) can be used to explain most social phenomena according to positioning theorists, meanings always remain indeterminate in the last instance.

**Figure 1: Mutually Determining Triad**



Source: Langenhove & Harré (1999:18)

The view that the creation of meaning is only established through conversation includes particular conceptions regarding both macro-level practices (institutional and societal phenomena) and intra-subjective phenomena. Whereas Fairclough (1995: 101/2) states that conversation events must be interpreted within their wider discursive contexts, positioning theory realizes this by describing macro-social discourse as immanent in concrete practices: Conversations recreate and redescribe institutions and conventions. Macro-social practices are narratives that provide speech acts with specific meanings. Storylines not only constrain the range of positions and meanings we ascribe in social interactions, but also in private actions performed in isolation, as well as on the intra-personal level, such as thoughts and feelings.

According to positioning theory, we cannot, for instance, think anything in a way that is not given to us through conversations. Neither can we consciously experience emotions that are outside the repertoire of our cultural environment. Feelings thus require narratives in order to appear as meaningful not only to others, but to ourselves as well. Emotional states, such as envy, joy, and anger, are to Harré conversation-like judgments about events. Visible or felt somatic changes, such as blushing or shedding tears, which accompany emotions, will remain “diffuse and indeterminate” (Harré & Gillett 1994: 150) even to ourselves, if we lack

the discursive means to explain them. Unnamed experiences and feelings remain unconscious and vague at best, but not in the Freudian sense of hidden meaningful contents.

In contrast to critical realism, positioning theory – and discursive psychology in general (see Jørgensen & Phillips 2002: 96) – denies the existence of unconscious meanings. Utterances or practices are thus never seen as expressions of an underlying psychological meaning, but are determined through dynamic processes as depicted in the position/speech-act/storyline triad. Likewise, expressions of attitudes and personality never refer to an enduring essence behind the conversation, but to a dynamic self, which is constituted by discourse. This social self is thus constantly being negotiated in conversation. Positioning theory distinguishes between this self as a social construction, and a unitary phenomenological self, which persists behind the shifting articulations. The latter - termed “self1” - “has no content because it is a structural or organizational feature of one's mentality” (Harré & Langenhove 1999: 7): It organizes our experiences into a continuous “point of view” and from this perspective provides a “sense of personal agency.” Its content – “self2” - is that which is constructed in interactions. As such our actions must be recognized and responded to by others. This illustrates that the contents of our self require the cooperation of others in the process of its construction, which again shapes our sense of selfhood.

#### **1.4.2. Neuroscientific Explanations**

In positioning theory the contents of our consciousness, including self-consciousness, develop in the ongoing process of social interactions. The underlying narratives moreover set the limits for these contents; thus, human freedom can only unfold within the possibilities inherent in these conversations. We can, however, expand these limits through a combination of discourses as illustrated in constructivist theories following Foucault. Within Harré's theory discursive innovation takes place through the same process. Because of his

analytical focus on intra-personal and inter-personal processes, he offers additional specifications from the perspective of the individual subject: The mind is a meeting point of a variety of discourses, often with contradictory contents, which we must balance in order to create coherent models of reality. New discursive contents in the course of life provide additional experiential possibilities, enabling people to develop new ways to relate to the world and to attach different meanings to one and the same object. This further enhances our capacity for the skillful intentional use of discursive grammars and contents (see Harré et al. 2009: 13-16).

Harré nevertheless identifies constraints to the process of discursive construction, which limit the possible combinations of different narratives (Harré & Gillett 1994: 24/25): First, interpretations of a situation must be understood as adaptive strategies to that situation. The ongoing successful application of these strategies does not indicate their conformity to an absolute truth, but their viability within environmental constraints. These constraints thus limit the possible choice of strategies, but rarely in a sense that there is one optimal practice. Our conceptualizations involved in a given situation must moreover offer a relatively coherent picture about reality. Concepts and conflicting discourses may illustrate different aspects of a given object, but they must also be mutually adapted to allow for a conclusive orientation within our environment. An additional feature, which sets Harré's theory apart from the approaches previously discussed, is the attempt to illustrate the processes in the "discursive mind" in a formal model. Based on theories in cognitive science Harré explores the question of what the workings of the brain can tell us about discursive processes, the individual learning of different social concepts, and the way these learning mechanisms enable skilled performance in different social settings. Within the field of cognitive science he identifies two conflicting models of how the brain is conceived to work: a representational model termed "cognitivism" or "computationalism" and an alternative conception, which depicts cognitive processes as reorganizations of inner states of the mind, labeled "connectionism."

The so-called “first revolution” in the discipline (cognitivism or computationalism) has suggested a correspondence between stimuli and inner semantic values in the brain (see Harré & Gillett 1994: 64-66; Varela F. et al. 1991: 40/41). This model suggests that cognitive processes are triggered by a certain input from the environment entering the mind via our sense organs. This input will evoke a predetermined pattern of processing in that area of the brain, which corresponds to the data; thus certain parts of the brain are supposed to respond to visual images, whereas others are responsible for auditory stimuli etc. This process will then result in a certain output: mental or corporeal behavior. Accordingly, the ability to translate visual images into meaningful contents (the output) is thus achieved by information (the input) meeting the retina, and from there traveling along the optic nerve of the eyes to the visual cortex; the latter is thus the brain’s “hardware,” where to locate the program to translate this sort of stimulus into meaning. The reference for this understanding of cognitive processes is in fact the way computers work: A person provides some data (through typing or inserting a USB stick) and the responsible program will translate the data into meaningful content (see Shapiro 2011: 26).

The gradual rejection of this model in its strict form has been motivated by its incompatibility with actual neuronal processes. Cognitive scientists have pointed out that the subsections of the brain are mutually connected, as are the cells making up these subsystems. Returning to the example of visual perception, Francisco Varela et al. argue that a number of areas in the brain are involved in visual processing apart from the visual cortex. Thus, when responding to a visual stimulus only about 20% of the neuronal responses emanate from the eye’s retina, whereas the remaining 80% come from other regions of the brain (Varela, F. et al. 1991: 94/95). Outside stimuli thus trigger processes, in which the brain is for the most part “concerned with itself”; the outcome is not a symbolic translation of the stimulus, but the reorganization of an inner state.

There are thus no clear and definite divisions among different sections of the brain. Different cerebral regions are moreover able to compensate for the functions of other areas if these are damaged (see Schwartz & Begley 2002: 99-101). The

cognitivist model also fails to explain how the brain can flexibly adjust to changing environments: Unlike a computer program it is able to interpret novel information and contexts. It is moreover capable of responding to a multitude of parallel stimuli simultaneously, which again is difficult to explain via the rather mechanistic cognitivist model. Finally, the cognitivist view is at odds with the way people acquire discursive practices, according to Harré: The computational model puts forward a Cartesian view by positing that meaning exists ready-made in the outer world and thus predetermines a specific reaction within the human mind (Harré & Gillett 1994: 8-11).<sup>19</sup> Harré shows how “immaterial” discursive practices preclude this view: People can interpret situations in many different ways, and one and the same stimulus can lead to a variety of different behaviors. In addition, people are able to “fill in the gaps,” if a stimulus only partially reflects meaningful information to the brain, e.g. as we intuitively interpret a situation based on comparisons with other life situations.

“Connectionism” has thus emerged as an alternative to computational models: This newer approach not only resembles actual brain architecture, but it can moreover be applied to overcome the above shortcomings. Connectionist models are multilayered systems consisting of autonomous but reciprocally connected cells or nodes. Figure 2, for instance, illustrates a three-layered system with input nodes at the bottom, which simultaneously receive stimuli from the environment. These input nodes form multiple connections with nodes on an intermediate level, where the data is processed and transmitted further to the output nodes. The overall behavior of the system is determined by the specific operation of each unit, as well as the strength of each connection between the nodes (Varela et al. 1991: 99; Harré 2002: 202). The stronger the connections among a network of nodes, the more likely is this pattern to cause a certain behavior. The reason why particular sequences of connections are stronger compared to other possible sequences is to be found in the system’s history of activity: It learns that certain behaviors lead to the fulfillment of a given cognitive task, and this leads to the strengthening of the underlying nodal

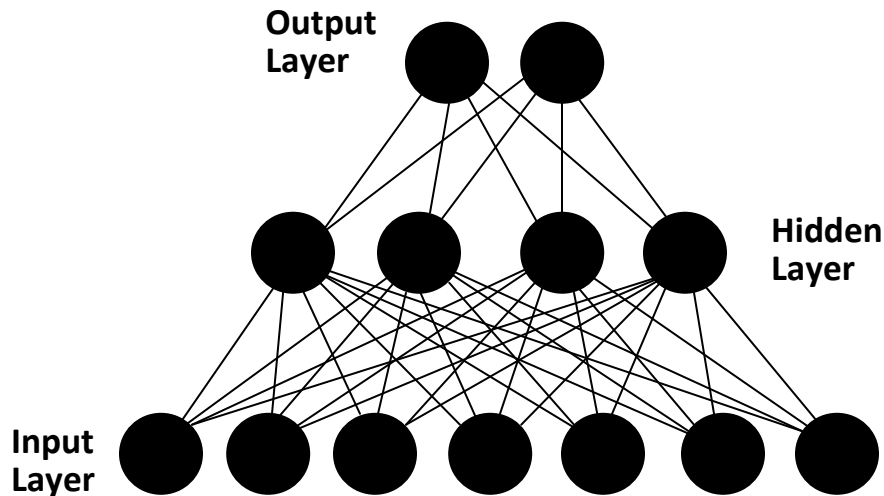
---

<sup>19</sup> In this respect Bhaskar’s philosophy is compatible with cognitivism. Although the authors referred to in this chapter reject this paradigm, it still has its adherents (see Shapiro 2011 and Fodor 2008).

pattern. The higher the number of connections, the greater is the ability of the global system to complex behavior.

Learning takes place through strengthening connection patterns in different environments. Through experience the system learns to associate environmental cues with the performance of an action; this means that with time different partial stimuli involved in the history of carrying out an action will suffice to establish a connection to the latter. This is how adaptability to new environments is achieved. Referring to a neuronal network, such as the human brain, Harré points out that cues can consist of sensory sensations such as smells, e.g. of a pig farm, in order to bring about corresponding visual and sensorimotor associations, such as remembering “standing on the boundary fence of the neighboring farm and scratching the back of a large pink pig” (Harré 2002: 248). The function of linguistic cues consists in making present the empirical instances associated with these words and concepts: The expression “handle” is both a noun and a verb, and semantically derived from the word “hand.” The term is thus associated with objects of a certain shape, as well as certain motor activities. Once having learned these different instances of the use of the word “handle,” we will be able to detect any such instance in different situations; at the same time we will be able to retrieve the additional associations learned with the term (Harré & Gillett 1994: 72).

**Figure 2: Three-Layered Connectionist Model**



Source: Shapiro (2011:44)

Connectionist mechanisms can thus be illustrated in terms of the human brain: At the time of birth the human brain contains about hundred billion neurons, each of which forms connections to thousands of other brain cells (Schwartz & Begley 2002: 111). These connections are established through electric charges transmitting information from one neuron to the other. These electric charges may or may not excite the recipient neuron to “fire” – thus to transmit its own charge. The likelihood of this to happen depends on the synaptic strength between the two units. Synaptic connections become stronger when the same chain of neurons is stimulated repeatedly through experience: This is the way we make memories, master a language, or learn to apply a sequence of movements in response to environmental stimuli. Carrying out the same movements over and over as we take a shower, for instance, reinforces the formation of corresponding neuronal circuits. This is the reason why the whole sequence of movements is initiated from the moment we turn on the water without us having to pay close attention at any point. The connectionist constitution of the brain likewise allows for adaptability: Even a different environment – in which we have to scoop the water from a pool, for instance – will not make us reorganize the showering process from scratch.

A limited set of general motor commands is part of our genetic constitution (see Metzinger 2003: 366), but most neuronal connections are formed through experience in the course of our interactions in the above manner. Harré points out that the mastering of discursive skills resembles the learning process as illustrated in connectionism: It is through the repeated exposure to words and concepts that we learn to distinguish their exact use. Increasingly we also develop proficiency in applying these words and concepts to multiple situations. This process is possible because discursive activities unfold repeatedly according to socially enforced rules, ensuring recurrent experiences and the discernment of common aspects among these experiences (Harré & Gillett 1994: 76; Tomasello 1999: 109). Here, the connectionist model has a dual purpose: First, it is explanatory in that it illustrates the processes through which discursive rules – or a “discursive grammar” - are established, and second it serves as an analytical framework of the visible processes in the brain underlying these rules. Our subdiscursive constitution therefore enables discourse, but the two levels should not be conflated according to Harré. The mind develops through interactions, not through neuronal processes. It follows that “brains are no more parts of persons than are hands. [...] Brains too have a role to play in the human instrumentarium—they can be used to think with, to store memories, to make decisions, to calculate and so on.” (Harré 2012a: 389)

## **1.5. Enactivism**

In contrast to competing descriptions of discourse as presented above, Harré refers to neurobiological processes in order to illustrate the way humans acquire discursive skills in the course of their socialization. The brain thus has a special role to play in Harré’s understanding of reality (see also Harré in Bhaskar 2002: 116/17): As indicated above, material reality consists of causal mechanisms in the realm of physics, and social reality is constituted through symbolic processes among persons. The material processes in the human brain however – electrochemical synaptic reactions and the constitution of neural networks - are determined by

social processes: Accordingly, “the mind moves matter,” and our brains adapt themselves according to the concepts we learn and the practices we acquire in a given society. Harré is not explicitly concerned with biological processes<sup>20</sup>; through his illustration of the neural architecture as an adaptive connectionist network he nevertheless provides a natural scientific framework, which challenges the notion of causal mechanisms in the human realm. If the workings of the brain tell us anything about the mind, then they illustrate that meanings are not pregiven, but adaptively constructed even on a material neurobiological level. A stated biological or genetic constitution common to all humans, on the other hand, is unlikely to account for something as concrete as the translation of social ills into psychological harms, as Bhaskar suggests. The possible range of innate predispositions based on a shared genetic constitution is extremely limited (Schwartz & Begley 2002: 111/12):

“Although it would be perfectly reasonable to posit that genes determine the brain’s connections [...], that is a mathematical impossibility. [...] [H]umans have something like 35,000 different genes. About half of them seem to be active in the brain, where they are responsible for such tasks as synthesizing a neurotransmitter or a receptor. The brain, remember, has billions of nerve cells that make, altogether, trillions of connections. If each gene carried an instruction for a particular connection, we’d run out of instructions long before our brain reached the sophistication of [...] a banana slug’s.”

According to findings in epigenetics character traits or behavior are not unilaterally determined by either our genes or the environment, but develop through dynamic interaction processes between genes, “nervous system reactivity,” and environment (Caspi & Moffitt 2006). None of these elements figures as an entirely stable factor in the process: It has been shown that socialization in early childhood can influence the activity of genes (McGowan et al. 2009). Thus, complex processes involving the above factors co-determine a variety of possible responses even to “the most overwhelming of traumas” (Caspi & Moffitt 2006: 584; see also Kim-Cohen et al. 2006). These findings raise doubts about Fairclough’s version of CDA which, based on Bhaskar’s philosophy, includes the idea of structural determinants of social and

---

<sup>20</sup> In fact, only in his more recent work (see Harré 2002 and 2010) does Harré make a distinction between the way biological organisms work and causal mechanisms in physics.

psychological phenomena. Bhaskar's understanding of social reality is based on observable mechanisms in "the natural sciences" - actually physics and chemistry<sup>21</sup> - in which experimental methods reveal regularities, which allow for future predictions. Although social phenomena are too complex to allow for predictions, he nevertheless assumes lawful mechanisms to be characteristic of all strata of reality.

However, such lawful behavior of mechanisms is already rare in the natural science of biology, except for processes that operate below "cell-cell interaction and molecular networks levels" (Dhar & Giuliani 2010: 12). In these cases the laws at work again result from physical and chemical processes. Thus, even biological processes elude the kind of analysis, which aims to discover regularities and universal mechanisms. Nevertheless, I would argue that drawing on the natural sciences can provide valuable insights about the functioning of psychological and social processes. This is certainly the case for the enactivist approach. Here, reference is not made to the realm of inanimate matter, but to the analysis of living systems. Instead of illustrations of experimental methods in physics and chemistry, the proponents of enactivism make use of biological and cognitive scientific examples in order to substantiate their arguments. Enactivism moreover provides a broader and consistent framework, which also accommodates Harré's observations of the neuronal correlates of discursive meaning.

Enactivism also makes use of connectionist modeling in order to understand how human beings make sense of their environment (Varela et al. 1991: 151-57; Shapiro 2011: 29). In this approach sense-making activities involve the brain, the body, and environment. Enactivism thus shares the post-Cartesian metaphysics as characteristic of Harré's work, in that sense-making activities are not identified as processes taking place solely in the human mind, but as interactions including all three elements. In contrast to positioning theory interactions are not limited to human conversations. Not only humans produce meanings, but living systems in general act within environmental contexts in meaningful ways. Proponents of

---

<sup>21</sup> This justification for its social ontology has been criticized by a number of authors. See for example Peter (2003), Barker (2003), and Kemp (2005: 175).

enactivism likewise illustrate corresponding processes by referring to the way living beings interact and to underlying cognitive processes.

### **1.5.1. Enactivism as the Analysis of Living Systems**

Enactivism is based on an understanding of living systems as autopoietic entities. The biologists Humberto Maturana and Francisco Varela explain autopoiesis as the distinctive mechanism, which defines living systems in contrast to inanimate forms of organization. In contrast to a car or computer, a biological system reproduces itself and is thus producer and product at the same time: It is “a system of production of its own components, and does this in an endless turnover of components under conditions of continuous perturbations and compensation of perturbations” (Maturana & Varela 1980: 79). This definition includes all forms of life, ranging from single-cell organisms to the most complex multicellular organisms, including human beings. Their central feature as living systems is, according to Maturana and Varela, not the static components that they consist of – cells or organs – but the “particular network of processes (relations) of production of components.” Although matter constitutes an organism in space and is necessary for biological processes to materialize, it is constantly transformed and replaced in these processes.

Autopoietic processes presuppose an environment, which to an organism is an immediate source of its internal perturbations. These may consist of external contingencies, such as changes in temperature, or may result from the activities of the organism itself, such as ingestion. Organisms are constantly exposed to these and other stimuli and these equally constantly translate into internal structural dynamics. The purpose of these internal changes consists in the permanent restoration of an internal balance. Living beings are not only passively exposed to their environment, but also act within it. They evaluate those aspects of the outside world, which allow for the continuation of their autopoietic processes. Sense-making, perception, and actions are therefore foremost tied to survival: This

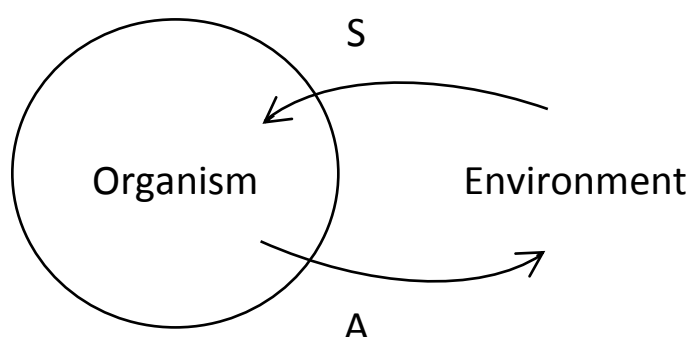
concerns the sensory constitution of living entities, which provide sensory input in order to distinguish meaningful features and which at the same time provide information to act upon. The motor constitution of animals is likewise designed to act within an environment provided by these inputs. For proponents of enactivism “sensory and motor processes, perception and action, are fundamentally inseparable” (Varela et al. 1991: 173).

Organisms thus perceive properties of their environment in terms of “affordances” (Shapiro 2011: 100): the range of possible interactions given features of the environment and their bodily constitution. Motile bacteria, for instance, are attracted by sugar due to “the way their metabolism chemically realizes their autonomous organization” (Thompson & Stapleton 2009: 25). For these beings sugar has significance as food. Sugar exhibits this affordance in relation to these and other organisms, whereas zebras are meaningful as a food source only to certain carnivores. Thus, according to the concept of affordances a certain object may be meaningful to a certain species, but not for another. Other objects, such as a burrow or a tree branch, may be meaningful to two distinct species, but in different ways according to their evolutionary adaptations. How affordances are perceived and the ways in which environmental stimuli are processed ultimately depend on the organism’s cell network, or the kind of body it has. As a consequence, environmental stimuli cannot be taken as specifying the changes within an organism, but must be regarded as triggering the reorganization of an internal state. Likewise, there is no objectively given meaning of a sensory input, since this meaning not only depends on the nature of the information, but also on the structure of the recipient.

Although the world appears differently to different organisms, they are nevertheless able to interact with it successfully. Many such interactions between organisms and their environments take place repeatedly leading to regular reorganizations within both. This way a living system and its environment, including other living organisms, can adapt to each other over the course of evolution. Maturana and Varela have called this process “structural coupling” (Maturana & Varela 1987: 75): the mutual

structural adaptation of two or more systems based on recurrent interactions. Structural coupling is thus a process of constant feedback loops, in which one living entity constitutes the environment for another. In sum, a certain sensory input provides a range of possible actions, whereas these actions alter the environment. The environment, in turn, provides new sensory inputs which are co-constituted by these actions (see figure 3). The core ontological assumption of enactivism is consequently that all living beings “enact a world” (Di Paolo et al. 2010: 39; see also Varela et al. 1991: 173). Moreover, different autopoietic systems enact different worlds, which may be fundamentally diverse in appearance. They are nevertheless mutually compatible and hence enable successful orientation for each organism.

**Figure 3: Coupling between Organism and Environment through Actions (A) and Sense-Inputs (S)**



Source: Stewart (2010: 3)

Evolutionary biology provides a multitude of examples for enaction, as well as for structural and behavioral coupling. This approach moreover helps to overcome a dualist perspective, which presupposes an objective reality, which provides norms and standards independently of our actions and interpretations. This has been the case with the cognitivist framework outlined above, according to which an external environment “communicates” given meanings, which our brains must decipher. This is paralleled by an understanding of evolutionary processes as triggered exclusively through environmental selection pressures: Consequently, natural selection is commonly understood as the optimization of genetic traits towards a “best fit” to

environmental conditions. This understanding ignores the multiple ways, in which organisms transform their own environments. Today this behavior is known as “ecosystem engineering” (Odling-Smee et al. 2003: 44) and it encompasses modifications of very local environments, such as ant nests, up to changes on a global level through organisms.

Termites, for instance, build nests, which regulate internal temperature and gas exchange. They effectively create their own microclimate with conditions consistently different from outside environmental conditions (Korb & Linsenmair 2000). Rainforests affect their own weather through absorption and transpiration of water; they moreover play an important role in regulating global climatic conditions by absorbing carbon dioxide from the atmosphere. Photosynthesizing bacteria are thought to have transformed atmospheric gases into breathable air since two billion years ago; these organisms have thus made lasting contributions to the composition of the atmosphere, making the evolution of most contemporary life forms possible in the first place (Odling-Smee et al. 2003: 54). Other examples of ecosystem engineering are the flooding of valleys by beavers or the transformation of the soil by worms and leaf-cutter ants. These organisms thus transform their world through their actions. The resulting modifications and artifacts in turn foster certain evolutionary selection mechanisms within these living systems “setting up a constant feedback process between organism and environment” (Franks 2010: 23).

These selection mechanisms concern structural adaptations (structural coupling), as well as behavioral adaptations (behavioral coupling): Many burrowing animals have developed anatomical features geared to underground life, such as reduced eyesight, or bodily mutations that facilitate digging. In many cases of structural coupling it is difficult to determine, whether the acquired bodily traits or the organisms’ activities have emerged first. This is also the case for mutual adaptations of interacting organisms, as one organism constitutes the environment of another: One cannot assume a priori, whether the ultraviolet reflectance of flowers appeared first or the ultraviolet sensitive vision of bees (Varela et al. 1991: 201). Bees moreover provide an example for behavioral coupling in response to

their own artifacts: In order to prevent their nest from cooling down they produce heat by vibrating their flight muscles. In contrast to a view that posits that evolutionary adaptations are one-sidedly caused by external “selection pressures,” the above examples illustrate that evolution should rather be understood as a continuous mutual specification of organisms and environment, or a co-evolution of both. Natural selection cannot be seen as a clear first cause of bodily adaptations, or vice versa.

The activities of organisms provide one set of illustrations for evolutionary mechanisms beyond natural selection. Observations regarding genotype changes in organisms moreover reveal that many of these occur at random, without any selective pressure; a phenomenon known as “genetic drift.” Mutations, which introduce new genetic information, likewise cannot account for a one-to-one correspondence to a certain environmental requirement, according to Varela et al. (1991: 188). Most genes code for proteins, which fulfill a variety of purposes in the body. Thus the mutation of one gene potentially triggers multiple changes of different traits, many of which might have nothing to do with an initial selection pressure. Thus, not only do organisms partake in the construction of their environment, but the resulting feedback effects rarely can be determined a priori. In fact, some organisms have hardly exhibited any adaptation to environmental changes over the course of millennia. Natural selection, the authors conclude, only singles out what cannot survive, but else gives rise to a multiplicity of “viable trajectories” (Varela et al. 1991: 197; Thompson 2007: 207).<sup>22</sup> The examples thus illustrate ontological features of the animate world, which are quite different from those encountered in physics and chemistry: Instead of lawlike mechanisms emanating from causal powers, such as gravitation, living organisms exhibit a variety of possible responses to environmental stimuli depending on their (embodied) interpretations thereof.

---

<sup>22</sup> Metzinger notes with regard to the evolutionary process: “Not everything is an adaptation, and even adaptations are not optimally designed, because natural selection can act only on what is already there. Other routes and solutions were and remain possible” (Metzinger 2009: 55).

### **1.5.2. Enactivism as Embodied Cognition**

Enactivism puts forward a radically constructivist perspective in the field of biology, which transcends the boundary between agent and environment. Realities are construed through perceptually guided activities of autopoietic systems. This understanding of biological processes is moreover the basis for the enactivist theory of cognition and sense-making as “embodied” (see Colombetti 2010: 149). Knowledge is accumulated and refined through sensorimotor activity within an environment. On this level a life-form is able to maintain its existence without an internal representation of an outside reality; it requires no consciousness understood as “the appearance of a world” (Metzinger 2009: 15), which mediates external stimuli and behavior. Embodied cognition – the pre-reflective evaluation of situations based on the body we have – does not only apply to “simple” life-forms, but also continues to play a decisive role for the behavior of the most complex beings, including humans.

Proponents of enactivism refer to this kind of pre-conceptual understanding as “Knowing How” in contrast to “Knowing That” (Engel 2010: 229/30; Varela 1999): In the former case an object is constituted by patterns of interaction, whereas “Knowing That” constitutes an object in terms of an internal image or description. The first kind of knowledge is present to us immediately and pre-reflectively. When it is manifest in behavior, it occurs spontaneously to a degree that we hardly perceive ourselves as willful agents of the action; rather it appears as though a situation “calls forth the actions from us” (Varela 1999: 5). The second kind of knowledge on the other hand is of recent evolutionary origin, much slower to emerge, and also far less common even in the everyday life of human beings: It consists of a deliberate “making present” of a situation; conscious thought and reasoning. During this process of knowing and acting we have a strong sense of authorship and agency. Specifically, one can thus make analytical distinctions between three different cognitive levels: sensorimotor coupling, emotional regulation, and consciousness (see Thompson & Varela 2001). For humans these

sense-making capacities are each involved simultaneously in the construction of meaning, providing a conclusive orientation in the world.

Embodiment, understood as sensorimotor coupling, means that living beings cognize in terms of affordances: Accordingly, if a primate sees a fruit of a certain size it does not need a concept of what it sees to understand it, such as “orange” or “coconut.” Instead, it views objects in terms of possible interactions, such as “this is a fruit I can grab with one hand and eat,” or “this is a fruit I can grab with both hands” (see Gallese 2005: 108/9). Humans likewise do not need to consciously bring to mind the concept of a chair in order to understand that “this is something I can sit on.” This way of understanding is thus not present verbally, but represented through visuo-motor neuronal circuits within the brain. Although these neurons represent goal-directed actions, they become activated upon sight, and thus independently of whether we execute a corresponding action or not. As mentioned above regarding the neuronal correlates of behavior, the brain stores sets of motor commands, which we acquire in the course of our lives. Whenever we see a chair or any other familiar object, the brain activates a corresponding sequence of goal directed movements.

“Knowing How” not only precedes “Knowing That” in evolutionary terms, but is also indispensable for abstract conceptualizations to emerge. Early in their development infants learn to realize that some of their uncontrolled bodily movements evoke responses within their environment as they come into contact with nearby objects. Repeated contact gradually “selects” for certain movements “carving out patterns that are then repeated with increasing frequency” (Sheya & Smith 2010: 129), such as reaching and grasping for nearby objects. Infants learn to understand basic spatial concepts such as “in and inside,” and “near and far” through such repeated motor activities. These early explorations impact our higher cognitive faculties: Without having mastered early motor concepts of space, we would be unable to form corresponding verbal concepts or structure our thinking process the way we do (Varela et al. 1991: 177/78): This means, for instance, that we would not understand speech acts, which make metaphorical use of spatial concepts, such as

“getting into a relationship” or “going through a divorce.” The philosopher Maxine Sheets-Johnstone thus states that language should be regarded as a “post-kinetic” way of thinking (Sheets-Johnstone 2010: 166/67; see also Metzinger 2003: 378).

From the first few weeks after birth up to adulthood sensorimotor coupling continues to play a crucial part in human cognition. Through experience and learning it develops into highly refined pre-reflective action repertoires and adaptive responses: The coordination of hand and foot movements while driving a car in a changing landscape, the passive evaluation of gestures and facial expressions during a conversation, or even playing the piano are examples of highly advanced forms of embodied perception and action. Due to its speed compared to conscious sense-making, it is moreover indispensable in successfully mastering many situations, such as avoiding accidents while driving, or to excel in competitive games and team sports, as well as in acts of creativity (see Franks 2010: 69). Hence also the effectiveness of the coordinated hunting behavior of predators, in which each is able to immediately understand and balance the other’s maneuvers, and to counteract each movement of the prey. None of these activities are automated behaviors as though following a well-rehearsed script. They unfold in novel contexts and demand close attention, therefore demonstrating “a ready and sharp kinetic intelligence” (Sheets-Johnstone 2010: 176).

Sensorimotor coupling is an elementary and widespread form of cognition, which we share with most multicellular organisms. However, it is not the only aspect of embodied cognition, understood as the pre-reflective evaluation of situations based on the body we have: Emotions are the somatic appraisals of an internal state manifest in biochemical processes involving the brain, internal organs, and viscera. As mentioned earlier, autopoietic processes constantly adapt to the perturbations caused by internal and external triggers. Thus, emotions are the internal evaluative mechanisms of the effects of these perturbations on the autopoietic process. These unconscious “regulatory and emotional states” form the basis for conscious feelings (Thompson & Varela 2001: 424). Originally, emotions and feelings have been directly linked to survival by informing corresponding values and motivations for

action. This correspondence between survival and emotions is less direct and subject to more multifaceted mediations in the case of complex organisms, such as primates and mammals in general. Here, emotions and feelings still fulfill the role of classificatory responses to environmental conditions, but not exclusively in terms of their effects on survival. In everyday life they express socially mediated or individual appraisals of objects and situations. These valuations are manifest in biochemical mechanisms within the body, sometimes accompanied by conscious feelings.

In evolutionary terms, emotional regulation has appeared much later than sensorimotor coupling, but well before representational consciousness (Metzinger 2003: 178). As such, it represents an intermediate form between the two: In the sense that we are not necessarily aware of an emotional bias underlying our thoughts and actions, they constitute “Knowing How.” Thus, whenever we fancy ourselves to be completely rational agents, emotional processes unfold unconsciously (Damasio 2003: 55); they never cease to be involved in sense-making. Also in terms of speed, emotional processing of a situation takes more time than sensorimotor coupling, but less than fully conscious evaluations. Consciousness, finally, is that which “is available for deliberately directed attention” (Metzinger 2009: 44). Thus, Metzinger defines consciousness as essentially the “space of attentional agency”: We can be fully aware of whatever is within this space, whereas stimuli outside of it may be available for forms of cognition on the level of Knowing How. On a neurobiological level consciousness is manifest in the coordinated firing of a distributed network of neuronal circuits. As such, it is a global and dynamic pattern, which integrates the neuronal correlates of sense impressions (visual shapes, colors, sounds etc.) into a unified phenomenal reality. This network is constantly updated and modified in periodic rhythms, in which the latest perceived stimuli become integrated based on previous stimuli. The rhythmic activity takes place in intervals of about 0.1 seconds. The information we consciously perceive within this gap is experienced as simultaneous events; this timeframe thus corresponds to what we refer to as “Now” (Varela et al. 1991: 73/74).

Whereas earlier forms of cognition provide us with pre-reflective clues for action, consciousness is needed in situations, which are indeterminate with regard to these embodied forms. Thus, our full awareness is needed – the space of attentional agency must be made present - in order to determine an appropriate action. Sensorimotor cognition, by contrast, does not require the full availability of this space; the appearance of a small set of features – a sudden movement, an unexpected shape or noise – suffices to initiate an action below the 0.1 second threshold of conscious awareness (see Franks 2010: 113/14).<sup>23</sup> Conscious experience derives the richness of its contents through the interplay of different neuronal networks and their internal communications: Vision already involves different cerebral regions, such as the visual cortex to extract features of the image, the prefrontal lobes to identify the image, motor areas to distinguish affordances etc. The brain thus ensures perceptual coherence by integrating visual stimuli and previous experience (Varela et al. 1991: 160; Harré 2012b: 93). These and other functions are correlated into the construction of a phenomenal reality. Within this process we (our senses, brain, and individual intentions), make a selective use of external stimuli; only a tiny fraction of an external reality is being used as building blocks in the construction process.

Because our phenomenal reality is the result of the brain's dynamic internal construction processes, Metzinger calls it a "reality tunnel" (2009: 8). This tunnel does not represent a reality "out there," but constantly recreates a viable interpretation of it; viable in that it provides reliable naïve realist knowledge for successful behavior on *this* planet with *this* kind of body. To summarize, enactivism arrives by two different, but related routes at the conclusion that living beings construct their realities: First, it has been shown how living systems enact their world through structural and behavioral coupling; second, enactivism distinguishes cognitive mechanisms, each contributing to the enaction of corresponding

---

<sup>23</sup> Hence, "paying attention" while driving a car is not synonymous with directing our conscious attention at objects on the way. Conscious awareness refers to paying attention to certain singular features and details, such as the face of a pedestrian walking on the sidewalk. In this case focused attention interferes with our ability for sensorimotor coupling, which demands awareness, which is not focused on any particular detail (see Menary 2006: 4).

embodied and phenomenal realities. The first perspective is that of an objective observer, whereas the second concerns first-person experience.

## **1.6. A Radical Constructivism: Enactivism and Discourse Analysis**

Enactivism puts forward a multifaceted understanding of cognition in a way that is unparalleled in the discourse analytical approaches outlined earlier. Foucault, Laclau and Mouffe, as well as proponents of critical realism refer to unconscious structures underlying knowledge production<sup>24</sup> or attribute hidden meanings, which underlie human motivations. Instead of this rough separation between unconsciousness and consciousness, enactivism provides a biologically grounded and non-essentialist description of at least three levels of cognition: sensorimotor processes, emotional appraisal, and consciousness.<sup>25</sup> Among these three levels the latter appears as the least embodied form, since it refers to a representation of reality that emerges from neuronal processes without discernible bodily support. However, embodied cognition cannot easily be separated from consciousness in real life, since it co-determines conscious processes of thinking and decision-making. It follows that Knowing How also plays a role in discursive events.

It has been mentioned above that sensorimotor coupling is indispensable for understanding many metaphoric concepts. Different instances in language use also transcend the divide between Knowing How and Knowing That: The degree to which our conscious awareness is needed in performing speech acts differs highly as to whether we talk about familiar ideas or express new thoughts (see Franks 2010: 69; and Gibson-Graham 2006a: 136/37). Action-repertoires are a basis for mutual understanding as we can make ourselves intelligible to other humans across cultural and linguistic barriers based on our shared bodily features: Grasping, pointing, handing over etc. are intersubjectively meaningful acts, because of

---

<sup>24</sup> Foucault's notion of "episteme," for instance, refers to the unconscious "conditions of possibility of all knowledge" (Foucault cited in O'Farrell 2005: 134).

<sup>25</sup> Di Paolo et al. (2010: 49/50) show that these three basic levels could be further subdivided into six "value-generating mechanisms."

common sensorimotor experiences. Through primary and secondary socialization these bodily sense-making capacities develop into culturally mediated communicative skills, which facilitate interpersonal understanding: They accompany spoken dialogues through “rhythmic co-variation of gestures, facial or vocal expression etc” (Fuchs & De Jaegher 2009: 470).<sup>26</sup>

Proponents of enactivism also understand social interaction in terms of a dynamic coupling between a subject and his/her environment. In a dialogue, for instance, each person constitutes part of the environment of the other; each takes part in the sense-making process of his/her counterpart through evolving action-perception loops. Both dialogue partners mutually coordinate their movements to their bodily and tonal expressions. These ongoing – and for the most part unconscious – attempts at synchronization are aimed at enhancing a shared understanding of the spoken contents. Nevertheless, it is doubtful whether a completely shared understanding can ever be assumed even in the case of seemingly successful interactions (Stewart 2010: 15; Davies & Harré 1999: 39/40). After all, the culturally mediated meanings of speech contents and words are ultimately constituted by individual experiences of these mediations. The recognition of misunderstandings during the course of a conversation - and with it the temporary breakdown of bodily synchronization - is therefore a crucial element in the process, since it provides the opportunity for communicational “repair” (Fuchs & De Jaegher 2009: 479; Pritzlaff & Nullmeier 2011: 145) in order to enhance mutual sense-making. Repeated experiences of miscommunication and subsequent successful repair enhance people’s communicative skills, including unconscious sensorimotor and emotional coupling capacities, for future contexts.

On the neuronal level this learning process is reproduced in the strengthening of corresponding synaptic connections and circuits. The process reinforces our

---

<sup>26</sup> That the lack of these embodied features (intonation, emphasis etc.) accompanying speech acts impedes mutual intelligibility may become apparent during email correspondences, especially with people we do not know well. The psychologist Michael Tomasello moreover argues that infants acquire pre-linguistic communicative skills before they learn language; based on an understanding of the meaning of gestures, facial expressions, embodied norms etc. by the age of 18 months they are able to precisely discern what adults refer to as they introduce new words (see Tomasello 2008: 158).

capacities for adaptive behavior in different interaction contexts: We are better able to detect and to respond to cues, “social affordances” (McArthur & Baron cited in Harré & Gillett 1994: 77), and resemblances to past situations. Emotional states provide some of the clues that make one situation appear similar to a past social encounter. Bodily emotions are tied through experience to certain sets of life situations: Meeting a close friend triggers different emotional responses within the body than encountering a stranger. Responses in the latter case will again differ depending on whether a stranger is of the same or of the opposite sex, whether he/she reminds us of someone else etc. Emotional states help us to evaluate and act in different social contexts: Even in novel situations we may detect a few familiar features, which evoke a bodily emotional response with an inherent tendency for action. Our social and conversational capacities are therefore materially represented through both kinds of Knowing How: through the formation of neuronal circuits underlying action-potentials, and somatic patterns which solidify into emotional dispositions for a given situation (see Fuchs & De Jaegher 2009).

In contrast to unconscious cognitive processes, conscious representations and reasoning occupy a subordinate role even in social interactions: We carry out our thinking processes through images and verbalizations, which necessarily compromise our ability to simultaneously focus our attention on the actual conversation. Here, conscious evaluation is usually involved when unconscious processes fail to provide unambiguous meanings and action repertoires. Imagining putting ourselves in the place of the other, for instance, takes effort and slows down the flow of a conversation. When speaking about an unfamiliar subject our speech is less fluent as we need to internally verbalize meanings to express new thoughts. Even as we engage in reflective behavior, internally verbalizing new thoughts, our reasoning and decision-making processes are not separate from embodied processes. Emotional states usually bias the efficiency and contents of our thinking process: Negative body states (such as those giving rise to feelings of sadness) slow down our thinking processes and reasoning capacities, whereas we are more imaginative in positive states (Damasio 1994: 146/7). According to the psychologist Daniel Wegner depressed people are likely to believe that they cause negative

events, whereas they are less likely to attribute their own agency to positive events (Wegner 2002: 80).

Embodied cognition is thus a core feature of the enactivist approach also when analyzing social interactions. This contradicts the belief that unconscious meanings do not exist, which again is a central aspect in discursive psychology. Still, I argue that among the discourse analytical approaches introduced earlier, enactivism is conceptually closest to the one framework, which denies a meaningful unconscious: Harré's positioning theory. The disagreement about how the theories conceptualize the mind has a number of further theoretical implications, which I will outline below. Although the conceptions about the working of the human mind are different, I will nevertheless argue that these differences are far from unbridgeable. Before illustrating this point, I will first outline the many aspects that are consistent across both approaches.

#### **1.6.1. Analysis of Concrete Interactions and the Ambiguity of Meanings**

Theorists from both theoretical backgrounds direct their analyses at concrete interactions instead of assumed pre-existing discourses or representations. Underlying this practice is the idea that meaning is dependent on the interpretative or cognizing capacities and patterns of social agents. Poststructuralists and critical discourse analysts may acknowledge that this is the case (see Laclau & Mouffe 1985: 108/146; Chouliaraki & Fairclough 1999: 14/14); however they are unable to adequately operationalize this notion as they isolate discursive constructs from the interaction processes that put them into effect. Discursive formations, or social practices, then become reified entities including the attribution of meanings. This approach then gives rise to the analytical shortcomings concerning the understanding of interactional dynamics as outlined earlier. In order to understand why actors are able to appropriate discourses in different ways, for instance, one needs to include them into the analysis: This also involves their existing storylines, appreciation of life stories, or histories of coupling. As Harré points out, different

individuals learn words or concepts through repeated exposure throughout unique life stories. When recalling words in conscious deliberations we do not only represent symbols for given objects; verbalizations are used to establish a relation between the present and past experiences in order to determine consequent action. These experiences vary among individuals, consisting of associated perceptual properties and affordances, cultural and emotional investments etc. (Bottineau 2010: 281).

The term “biodiversity,” for instance, will evoke different associations and action repertoires for an urban academic than for a rural dweller engaged in organic farming. Associations for the first may consist of quantitative data regarding the gradual loss of animal and plant species, the names of certain species under threat, latest scientific prognoses regarding the consequences of environmental degradation for ecosystems and mankind, latest satellite images of a region under study etc. The alternative farmer on the other hand may recall the disappearance of certain kinds of fish in a nearby river, the extended periods of time for gathering vegetables and herbs in an overexploited forest, the diminishing variety of foods on the dinner table etc. In both cases different experiences and storylines are involved, giving rise to different methods for measuring biodiversity loss, which again results in completely different data sets according to the distinct approaches and priorities involved (see Blake and Rattaphon 2006a). The meaning of speech acts therefore must be made comprehensible through these storylines; enactivists would here again point out the embodied nature of sense-making, in which the meaning of a social stimulus becomes explicable through the histories of coupling of the actors involved.<sup>27</sup>

The analysis of the coupling mechanisms of biological systems implies the idea that repeated interactions between two organisms result in mutual structural and/or

---

<sup>27</sup> The use of the concepts of autopoiesis and structural coupling for the analysis of social processes is not new. Niklas Luhmann has famously incorporated Maturana's concepts in his systems theory. In contrast to its application as proposed here, Luhmann regards the processes of autopoiesis of social systems as independent from human actions, although social systems presuppose their instantiation through human agents. The reason for this, according to Humberto Maturana, is that Luhmann believed it to be impossible to make universal statements about human beings. Maturana rejects this view, as well as Luhmann's application of his theory. (Maturana & Poerksen 2004: 107/8)

behavioral attunement. This requires that these ways of sense-making are mutually compatible, but not necessarily similar. Enactivism is explicitly based on an ontology, which precludes any pre-given objective reality. If successful interaction presupposed shared meanings in every case, then these would exist independently of the actions of living systems. Enactivists describe social interactions in the terms applied to the sense-making process of living systems in general; therefore it is possible for different individuals or groups to engage in successful conversations or other coordinated practices without sharing a common understanding about them. Whereas positioning theory is highly skeptical about shared understandings of discursive events, enactivism makes it appear questionable whether complete mutual comprehension is necessary at all. After all, we may still be able to put desired projects into effect in concrete practices, even if the people or institutions we coordinate with follow different storylines.

An example may illustrate this point: Engaging unemployed youths in community projects, such as community gardens or cooperatives, may attract financial support from the government. The project initiators may be motivated by anti- or post-capitalist ideas, whereas government institutions could view such projects in terms of a nationwide campaign to turn the unemployed into active entrepreneurs.<sup>28</sup> Whether a possible mutual cooptation of discourses compromises the original objectives of the initiators depends on the nature of actual communal practices. These do not necessarily need to be stated in clear principles and ideals (Knowing That); rather – as I will show in chapters 2 and 4 - these objectives could be inscribed in pre-reflective practices and dispositions (Knowing How).

Studies undertaken in the positioning theoretical framework indeed show how conversations between individuals, or between groups and organizations, unfold based on two or more different storylines. These inform different interpretations of the dialogue, which only in some cases give rise to misunderstandings (see Davies

---

<sup>28</sup> This is not a far-fetched example. Esra Erdem, for instance, criticizes that an image campaign by the city of Berlin depicts “concrete postcapitalist models such as the peer-production networks, cooperatives, and collectives that are already going strong in Berlin” as “incubators for capitalist entrepreneurship” (Erdem 2014: 64).

& Harré 1999: 45-9); in others, actors may understand that a certain utterance or gesture has additional significance for them apart from the meaning intended by the speaker. In this case the actor is aware of two different storylines: his/her own, as well as the interpretations of others involved. In this case he/she is able to take up positions strategically by knowing how to appeal to both narratives and to skillfully make use of the appropriate style according to the audience. Tom Bartlett (2008) illustrates an instance of such a strategic application of storylines during a meeting between a community-based development organization and a team of social scientists in Guyana.

The rationale of the meeting was to explore ways for the sustainable use of tropical rain forests by indigenous communities in Guyana. In terms of resources and official legitimacy the scientists were clearly in a more powerful position: Funded by the national government they were not only responsible for gathering and disseminating “expert knowledge” about sustainability issues, but also for mediating between official government policy and the traditional values of indigenous communities. Bartlett shows how the speech acts of a community leader directed towards both audiences reflect the recognition of this power imbalance. The leader voices his concern for the recognition of traditional knowledge by appealing to the narratives and priorities of both the government and the scientists: by advocating the upgrading of traditional skills in order to provide business opportunities in the face of “economic stagnation” of the country, as well as by highlighting that community members were able to refute conclusions about environmental degradation, which the scientists had derived earlier based on satellite images etc. (Bartlett 2008: 180/81). The ambiguity of social practices thus provides opportunities for the strategic application of discursive skills. These develop through repeated exposure to different discursive contexts. Through this learning process adaptation to corresponding social contexts becomes increasingly intuitive and efficient (187).

### **1.6.2. Connection between Interaction and Phenomenology**

Proponents of both enactivism and positioning theory see a direct link between how agents interact and how they perceive the world. Their behavior thus reveals the workings of their minds and inner life. This is derived from the post-Cartesian metaphysics, which both theories share, according to which there is no clear boundary between an inner self and an outside world. Consequently, the way we enact a world indicates the appearance of that world to us, as well as the features of our personhood. Poststructuralism does make a similar point in acknowledging that we are historically constituted through discourse; enactivism and positioning theory moreover emphasize that this is a continuous process, as our identities are coupled and shift with each interaction. The analysis of conversations and social practices can reveal the fluidity of identity and personhood. Our interpretations constantly adapt to changing contexts, which again shows that meaning is only realized in the interactions between agent and environment.

Since meaning is not predefined inside the heads of living beings, it can be examined by studying their behaviors and actions; one can learn about the cognitive capacities and perceptions of other living beings by looking at the ways they enact their realities through meaningful actions. Phenomenologically we still inhabit different worlds, but we can determine the means by which they make sense of their surroundings and what aspects of reality these capacities render meaningful and perceptible. We can thus appreciate the significance of echolocation in the sense-making activities of bats, although we will probably never know what it feels like to be a bat (see Nagel 1974). This limitation does not hold however, as we analyze sense-making activities of humans. Biologically we share the same features of embodiment, which shape the “fundamental character of our knowing about the world” (Larkin et al 2011: 326). There are thus biologically constituted phenomenological constants among humans, which constrain the range of cultural and subjective difference and which form the basic conditions for our being able to establish a high degree of mutual understanding. Enactivist analyses of human interaction seem to highlight these bodily constituents of interaction, such as

sensorimotor coordination underlying spoken dialogue (see Fuchs & De Jaegher 2009; Di Paolo et al. 2010). In doing so they largely neglect, however, the cultural contexts and subjective storylines in which interactions unfold. This level of analysis is taken up by discursive psychology.

Harré shows how people learn the use of social concepts through repeated exposure in social contexts. This process resembles the patterns through which we acquire kinetic concepts in our sensorimotor interaction within environments. In both cases the processes moreover enable us to detect clues in the environment in order to apply these interactional resources in novel situations. The rules we follow in doing so are thus “immanent in concrete human productions” (Davies & Harré 1999: 33) and not – as computational models would imply – independently given in our minds. Positioning theory therefore does not posit discursive phenomena as “manifestations of what goes on ‘inside’ the mind,” (Harré & Langenhove 1999: 4) but conversely as the instances through which psychological phenomena are produced. Private actions – including thoughts and feelings – equally unfold within the range of possibilities and constraints delimited through our history of interactions. Thus, as is the case in enactivism, the notion that meaning is established in interaction involves the associated view that actions reflect subjective phenomenology.

The examination of conversations and social practices not only shows how we learn and apply discursive resources, but also reveals different “selves” that one and the same person may bring to bear in different situations, faced with different audiences. The community leader talking both to a group of scientists and members of his own group, as referred to above, does not necessarily use narratives in a purely strategic way in order to assert existing communal lifestyles against the first group. Rather, as illustrated by the case of the Inpaeng Network in chapter 5, the leader might indeed believe that a combination of scientific knowledge with traditional knowledge could serve to upgrade communal skills. This could also provide economic opportunities, although not primarily for the “economically stagnant” nation, but foremost for the local community. Faced with the scientists, he

thus incorporates these distinct ideas in his speech that illustrate a course of action that reflects and benefits the priorities of all parties involved, including those of the absent state. The leader would probably make use of a different storyline when faced exclusively with members of his community, and the tone and style of the speech action would almost certainly be far less formal (see Bartlett 2008: 181/82 and 185/86).

Talking to an expert audience the speaker thus positions himself as a leader representing a community, and although lacking formal expertise, is able to participate in the conversation involving technical and formal language. This kind of positioning would be inappropriate in discussions with his own people, in which he does figure as a respected elder, but without the formal authority, which he conveys in the first setting. Such examples illustrate how specific position/speech-act/storyline triads shape the dynamic selves of actors involved: Being “the constituent ground of personhood” interactions bring to the fore different, and possibly contradictory, aspects of one’s personality (Larkin et al 2011: 324; Davies & Harré 1999: 35). The above example highlights an important difference between this understanding of a dynamic self and Laclau and Mouffe’s idea of identification with subject positions. In the first case it is conceivable to strategically reassert group identity *by* taking up subject positions ascribed by others. This strategy entails that group priorities are recast as being in the interest of a potentially more powerful party by drawing on a storyline/discourse that it recognizes. Discursive formations thus figure as ambiguous in terms of action, because they merely represent or classify actions as acts: In this view storylines become tools in establishing relationships in order to legitimize existing practices (see also Mosse 2004). Laclau and Mouffe, on the other hand, assume that discourses create a clear correspondence between practices and subject positions. From this perspective it follows that the assertion of a certain identity coincides with a corresponding subject position vis-à-vis others; hence their emphasis on antagonism in politics.

Despite the stated similarities in enactivism and positioning theory regarding the acquisition of interactional skills, and the context-dependence of meaning and personal identity, both approaches consistently do so based on different assumptions. Enactivism emphasizes the embodied and pre-reflective aspects of our interactions; correspondingly the proponents of the theory interpret the context-dependence of our actions as adaptive behavior. Positioning theory on the other hand regards actors as conscious agents, who “choose” appropriate practices in accordance with different situations.<sup>29</sup> In the following section I will explore to what extent these premises differ and which choices will have to be made in order to unite the embodied cognitive approach with Harré’s discursive framework.

### **1.6.3. Differences**

Enactivism and positioning theory seem almost diametrically opposed in their respective evaluation of the role of the unconscious in human activities: In the first case our actions appear as mostly guided by pre-reflective cognitive mechanisms, whereas for proponents of the latter theory unconscious processes play a subordinate role for our sense-making activities. In order to explore this point I will first illustrate what respective proponents actually mean by the term “unconscious.” Based on this clarification I will then go on to investigate to what extent the largely unconscious forms of cognition as described in enactivism – sensorimotor and emotional classification – contradict Harré’s notion of consciously acting and choosing individuals. I hope to provide a careful examination to show that the term “unconscious” does not imply a definite meaning in the literature and that the distinction between unconsciousness and consciousness is likewise a matter of dispute among different authors. The analysis will enable me to highlight additional

---

<sup>29</sup> Louis raises doubts about this emphasis on conscious choice within positioning theory and asks: “[R]ather than choosing strategically to express particular positions, is not the “choice” often environmentally driven?” She then goes on to state that “the unconscious activation of identities in response to environmental cues [...] is well supported in the literature” (Louis 2008: 24).

commonalities between enactivism and positioning theory, as well as to specify important differences.

Theorists of cognitive science frequently point out the distinctions, which set the newer “cognitive unconscious” apart from earlier ideas of a so-called “dynamic” unconscious (Shanon 2010: 387; Augusto 2010): The latter term is often equated with the Freudian conception, but also includes related psychoanalytical conceptions such as those of Jung, Lacan etc. Accordingly, our unconscious is the realm of hidden drives or irrational forces which, striving for their satisfaction, aim at influencing our actions. Our actual behavior, according to this conception, results from the continuous effort to reconcile these unconscious drives with existing social mores and conventions. The unconscious as conceptualized through findings in cognitive science and neuroscience, on the other hand, refers to the structures and processes underlying cognition: the firing of neurons, the processing of information in different cerebral regions, but also the mechanisms that elicit sensorimotor activity etc. In contrast to a dynamic unconscious most of these processes cannot be brought to our awareness (also Varela et al. 1991: 49). The three main approaches within cognitive science – computationalism, connectionism, and embodied cognition – share this processual understanding of the unconscious.

The approaches differ in how cognitive processes are understood to work: The computational approach assumes that cognition requires mental rules, which represent certain aspects of an objectively given world. Proponents of connectionism and of embodied cognition reject this view; to them cognition consists in the emergence of global states in the structure of the brain, the mind, or an autopoietic system (see Varela et al. 1991: 99). Across the approaches consciousness is not a necessary condition for achieving cognitive tasks and it is moreover viewed as an exceptional way of sense-making. Harré likewise rejects the Freudian, as well as the computational conceptions of the unconscious as deterministic (see Harré & Gillett 1994: 11/12). He shares with connectionism and embodied cognition the view that unconscious mechanisms are at work as we learn social grammars through repeated exposure. He even illustrates this process

referring to connectionist models. In contrast to enactivism however, Harré denies that these processes are in themselves meaningful. Rather, these are the means through which we carry out meaningful actions.

Whereas in enactivism sense-making activities are characteristic of all living systems, positioning theory attributes meaning only to those instances in which human beings act as conscious, intentional agents (see Harré 2010: 37/38). Meaningful interactions therefore only consist of discourse and conversation-like social practices. All other aspects of cognition figure as tools for intentional tasks: neuronal functions, social concepts and storylines, sensorimotor coordination between interaction partners etc. are the means through which responsible agents pursue intentional activities.<sup>30</sup> Thus, positioning theory presupposes persons, whose motives for acting are transparent to them. To proponents of enactivism this point of view must appear as unjustly reducing human life to rather exceptional and disputed properties.<sup>31</sup> Real-life humans hardly ever exhibit conscious activity in a “pure” form; reasoning and decision-making processes of human agents are usually biased by unconscious emotions, for instance. Lesions in certain areas of the prefrontal cortex are known to impair this emotional influence; thus, in this case one might be said to be capable of superior rationality and conscious choice. The neuroscientist Antonio Damasio shows that this condition frequently goes along with socially inappropriate behaviors and moreover impedes the ability to make decisions (see Damasio 1994; especially 34-54).

Harré makes no secret of what motivates him to emphasize conscious activity, stating that he wants “to resurrect the full Aristotelian conception of a human being as a rational, social animal” (Harré & Gillett 1994: 80). Hence, embodied forms of knowing must be kept strictly apart from conscious knowing since even a partial determination of human behavior by biological and neuronal factors would weaken this conception. What is problematic about this approach is that it not only misrepresents human sense-making and psychological processes, but that it also

---

<sup>30</sup> For a critique of this task-tool metaphor see Gaete & Cornejo (2012).

<sup>31</sup> This subject will be covered at length in the second chapter.

limits the choices for psychological and social interventions (see chapters 2 to 4). Apart from practical benefits, I want to argue that the inclusion of both forms of Knowing How enrich Harré's discursive framework in more ways than it would weaken his theory. Below I will make this point by discussing each sensorimotor coupling and emotional regulation.

### ***Sensorimotor Coupling between Organism and Environment***

One way to establish meaningful behavior in enactivism is through perception-action loops, in which organisms develop adaptive behavior through motor activity within an environment. Harré acknowledges such behavior as cognitive (see Harré & Gillett 1994: 52); but here it figures as a resource for meaningful activities, instead of being by itself meaningful. An appreciation of this cognitive behavior as pertaining to most biological organisms could provide an explanatory model for the acquisition of discursive grammars in the same way as connectionist models already do: As is the case for connectionist networks the structures and behaviors of autopoietic systems evolve through repeated exposure to environmental stimuli. This learning process enables living systems to successfully adapt to their ecological niches. At the same time sensorimotor coupling does not presuppose an absolute reality, but only requires a viable interpretation thereof. The theory thus provides a biological grounding for non-structuralist discourse theories; in particular theories, which are based on the study of interactions rather than of pre-given discourses.

The analogy can be carried further: As we are acting and reacting in the world other beings in our environment adapt to us in a variety of possible ways, according to their own cognitive capacities and phenomenologies. This point has been illustrated through examples in evolutionary biology. Cultural phenomena, such as discourses and narratives, are far more flexible than biological structures. As we introduce new social practices based on novel narratives, our social environment will gradually react and change: Agents we interact with will thus be likely to adjust their respective storylines. Autopoiesis and structural/behavioral coupling are thus

biological mechanisms, which in many ways correspond to discursive processes. The epistemological practice of advocates of positioning theory could here draw on a naturalistic foundation in a similar manner as Bhaskar's philosophy does, by way of analogy. In an enactivist framework, which does not posit consciousness as separate and independent of other forms of cognition, reference to the natural sciences is not one of mere analogy: Just as other living beings we are autopoietic organisms with a biological body, which is crucial for the form of our sense-making activities. It is therefore not necessary to make assumptions about analogous mechanisms within the study of living systems and human and social sciences. Coupling mechanisms extend into human interactions.

The cultural acquisition of patterned sensorimotor and emotional behavior, which enables mutual coordination in social interactions, thus follows similar mechanisms as the learning of spatio-temporal concepts in early childhood. Such "micro-practices," understood as "prereflective knowledge of how to deal with others" (Fuchs & De Jaegher 2009: 481) include such skills as eliciting attention, coordinating emotional resonance etc. Similarly Harré views micro-practices as "the groundswell of practices [...that] influence the whole of the discourse": acquired ways of how to greet others, how to sit at a table, how to organize family life etc. Although he denies that these practices are meaningful by themselves, he recognizes their constitutive role of enduring societal arrangements. Interestingly, he therefore ascribes emancipatory potentials to the small-scale transformation of micro-practices, more than to revolutionary changes of societal macrostructures (Harré in Bhaskar 2002: 118; Harré in Harré & Bhaskar 2005: 27).

### ***Emotional Regulation of Body States***

Emotions are changes in somatic states caused by bodily or environmental stimuli. They are unconscious evaluative mechanisms of the effects of these stimuli. Damasio distinguishes these from feelings, which are conscious representations of these somatic states (Bechara & Damasio 2005: 339; Damasio 1994: 145). These somatic processes unfold constantly and accompany the stream of mental images

in our minds. Different thoughts thus evoke neutral, pleasant or unpleasant feelings; likewise changes in brain chemistry can influence our thoughts about different contents. This indicates that we can be mistaken about the perceptions and intentions motivating us to act, and that at least some of our explanations for our actions may be a posteriori interpretations of unconscious causes.

More than intuitive prereflective sensorimotor actions, the notion of such constant emotional bias discounts Harré's idea that only discursive constraints limit our freedom to choose appropriate actions in different situations. The very idea that many dispositions for perception and action exert their influence pre-reflectively precludes their intentional use as resources among which we could choose freely. Many, if not most, processes of emotional coupling are learned through social interactions (see Metzinger 2009: 163/64). Once established, such emotional patterns cannot be simply modified by wanting to choose to feel differently. Harré suggests that exposure to competing discursive constructions enables individuals to invest a certain event with alternative meanings, thus providing them with more freedom (Harré & Gillett 1994: 126-28). Indeed, we may be able to grasp these different interpretations intellectually and this knowledge may change our behavior. Since the underlying mechanisms of emotional coupling are ignored, such behavioral changes are more likely to occur in situations with a very low emotional investment, such as following the advice of a friend in trying a new detergent. Other contexts, such as the way we deal with parents and siblings, with unemployment, with disputes and criticism etc. will call forth entrenched behavior based on given emotional significations. In order to change these, other types of intervention would be required in addition to discursive reformulations.

#### **1.6.4. Harré's Contribution from an Enactivist Perspective**

Despite the strengths of the enactivist approach - including the elucidation of the role of embodied cognitive mechanisms in the activities of humans, and the connections between sensorimotor coupling and representational capacities -

proponents of this paradigm have yet been unable to show how embodied cognition can explain such high-level cognitive performances (Di Paolo et al. 2010: 73). Harré's illustration of discursive learning processes based on connectionist models probably comes very close to achieving just that: As is the case for sensorimotor knowledge, we acquire the skillful use of social concepts through repeated exposure. Social concepts become present in our minds through clues, some of which are action-repertoires and others symbolic. These clues are nevertheless linked in our minds: The word "cat" makes available possible forms of interaction, such as stroking, whereas such interactions are part of the associations encompassed within the term "cat." Some theorists of enactivism have noted that symbols serve the purpose to assemble instances of past experience with what is signified. They have, to my knowledge, up until today failed to explain the mastering of these symbols in terms of coupling mechanisms between a connectionist system and its environment, although Varela et al. (1991) have used the same mechanisms to explain unconscious learning behavior. Furthermore, other authors have attempted to solve the symbol grounding problem within the paradigm of embodied cognition; the view here, that the meaning of symbols arises from the "experience of an agent [...] based on its history of interactions" (Vogt 2002: 5) resonates with Harré's view about the acquisition of discursive concepts, and it is also supported by the work of the psychologist Michael Tomasello (1999; 2008).

Positioning theory grounds the acquisition of discursive concepts in embodied cognitive processes: not only in terms of the learning and use of social practices, but also through a non-essentialist view of the unconscious. Moreover, as will be shown in the next chapter, it also shares with embodied cognition a view of selfhood as a continuous construction process. Due to the similarities in (social) ontology and approach, positioning theory provides a discourse analytical approach which is – apart from a necessary reinterpretation of the relevance of pre-reflective forms of cognition for this purpose - compatible with the enactivist theory. The discourse analytical tools put forward in positioning theory provide the following additional instruments in order to examine human interactions:

- **Sensitivity to the ambiguity of symbolic representations:** The use of the position/speech-act/storyline triad reflects sensitivity to the interpretations of all actors involved in a conversation. The task of the researcher is therefore to try to identify these potentially competing assignments of meaning in concrete interactions taking place. In contrast, other forms of discourse analysis outlined are concerned with pre-given discursive formations. This practice implicitly shifts the authority to expound the meaning of texts from social agents to the researcher. Especially Fairclough's critical discourse analysis explicitly assigns critical scientists a privileged access to the truth. Proponents of positioning theory regard competing readings of a social practice as equally valid. They moreover point out that when applied to the analysis of conflicts, bringing into visibility the distinct interpretations of the parties involved is a precondition for conflict resolution (Moghaddam et al. 2008: 18). This feature of the approach moreover lends itself to strategic use, by formulating speech acts in a way that resonates with distinct priorities of counterparts in an interaction.
- **Application to all discursive levels:** As Bartlett shows, the application of the position/speech-act/storyline triad is not limited to small-scale everyday interactions, but can also be applied to ideologies and grand narratives. As he points out, these "different levels employ the same basic mechanisms and vary only in the timescales over which they operate" (Bartlett 2008: 170). Ideologies, as well, position different social actors in relation to each other, invoke storylines on a greater scale, and address society at large. This means that discursive formations can themselves be analyzed with positioning theoretical tools, as will be done in chapter 5. Here, one needs to keep in mind however, that these discourses become (strategic) resources in their instantiation through interactions. These instances thus require an analysis of the meaning a discourse/storyline acquires in its situated use. Bearing in mind this qualification, the storylines (discursive formations) through which small-scale conversations unfold can themselves be sub-classified into elements of the positioning triangle.

- **Sensitivity to power relations:** Positioning theory, through the element of “position” within the triangle, is moreover sensitive to differences in power. Through the strategic use of speech-acts one can appeal to priorities of those positioned as powerful.
- In some ways **the position/speech-act/storyline triad can be seen as an interpretive extension of the model of action-perception-loops.** The rationale for this extension is to depict cultural and discursive phenomena. In contrast to observing instances of structural coupling in an animal interaction, human interactions grant us a higher level of intelligibility due to a common bodily constitution and shared cultural resources; here, performances are understood as “acts”; we are not merely observers of actions and environmental feedback, but are able to share much of actors’ understandings and intentions, including shifts in the distribution of power. A more detailed understanding of embodied sense-making mechanisms moreover allows us to not only include discursive interpretations in the storylines of agents, but also bodily dispositions: micro-practices, including emotional categorizations of narratives.

Finally, a combination of positioning theory with enactivism offers specifications about the nature of social change. The discourse theories outlined earlier have in common a critical perspective on social power relations and include ideas or motivations to effect societal transformations (see Jørgensen & Phillips 2002: 2). An emancipatory objective has been identified in the projects of Laclau and Mouffe, as well as Fairclough, but is also an aim for Foucault in his archaeological and genealogical inquiry (Foucault 2007: 113-15). As I will show below, Harré is no exception, although he has formulated his ideas about an emancipatory practice foremost as an alternative project to Bhaskar’s views (see Harré & Bhaskar 2005; Harré 2009). These theorists, including Fairclough, regard emancipatory practice as one of discursive shifts, including changes of social practices.

Dominant discourses give rise to material objects and structures such as certain kinds of technologies and buildings. Still, as Foucault notes in respect to laws and architectural artifacts, none of these concrete cultural manifestations fully determine their implementation and uses (Foucault 1984: 245/46); it follows that a capitalist firm can be the locus of exploitation or a means to create additional sources for a culture of sharing (see chapter 4). A worker-owned cooperative can be a democratic entity, or one that serves a privileged few (see Nelson 2011: 29). Cars, as well, can be either status-symbols in the celebration of a materialistic, individualist lifestyle, or a shared commodity within an environmentally conscious community. The view that social practices exhibit causal effects, which are identifiable beforehand, is based on a Cartesian metaphysics as underlying critical realism and computationalism. Harré's discursive view of social reality, as well as the enactivist view of reality in general, aims to overcome this dualistic conception. Especially advocates of enactivism emphasize the transformational effects of perception-guided action. By conversely essentializing the impact of social practices and technologies, as Fairclough and critical realists do, these practices become locked up within a single interpretation, foreclosing possible alternative modes of adaptation.

The enactive non-dualist view will hardly be compelling to most critical realists, since to them a denial of unambiguous causal forces undermines "transformative projects of emancipation" (Lawson 1999: 44). One then cannot presuppose adverse effects of social mechanisms, which translate into an inevitable experience of "lack" and a consequent desire for a better society in the unconscious mind. When confronted with alternative constructivist explanations of social phenomena, some proponents of the philosophy revert to alleged ethical imperatives: One *should not* deny the reality of the sufferings that people endure, as they are "heavily burdened by the oppressive presence" of given structures constraining their freedom (Bhaskar in Harré & Bhaskar 2005: 29/30).<sup>32</sup> Constructivist theorists dealt with in this chapter will probably not deny that social relations constrict the freedom of

---

<sup>32</sup> See also Fairclough (1995: 19) and Sims-Schouten et al. (2007: 103/4).

subordinated groups. Whereas CDA, following critical realism, emphasizes the existence of real structures of far-reaching subjection, theorists such as Foucault or Harré (see below), or practitioners, such as Gibson-Graham, call attention to capacities of individuals or groups to change narratives and translate new storylines into practice. Gibson-Graham (2008) stress the performative effects of changing worldviews and point out the ethical failure of many of their academic colleagues to bring alternative economic practices into visibility. These alternative stories highlight current possibilities to empower individuals and communities, whereas a structuralist view limits the scope for “rediscovering and reenacting” (Gibson-Graham 2011: 2).

A combination of Harré’s work with enactivism provides an additional aspect to poststructuralist critiques of society, which is the sensitivity to the role of embodied micro-practices. These are pre-reflective behaviors in everyday interactions, which sustain the ongoing higher-level re-enactment of societal arrangements. Social transformations which target macro-level arrangements and institutions, but ignore underlying micro-practices, are likely to fail according to Harré. The latter are “dispositions to action” (Moghaddam & Harré 1996: 235) with immanent norms, or, put in enactivist terms, emotional categorizations and sensorimotor mechanisms. These elude the grasp of discursively established norms and principles (Knowing That), and thus they constitute elements of continuity throughout periods of social transformation: Emotional categorizations, such as certain expectations towards groups of people, or subtle movements, such as slight gestures of reverence reenacted towards new decision-makers, are rarely verbalized. However, subtle practices such as these have historically supported the restoration of a previous system under different signs (see Harré in Bhaskar 2002: 117/18; Harré in Harré & Bhaskar 2005: 27). More than macro-level social changes, micro-practices are difficult to alter in a top-down manner; although it is possible to impose new “actions” (ways of greeting, of performing work, titles etc.) they are nevertheless likely to perform the same “acts” as previously.

The cognitive registers, denoted as Knowing How, thus demand different kinds of intervention apart from discursive changes. Since they are manifest in habits, intentions, and emotions, micro-practices require small-scale interventions. Foucault expresses a similar notion in what he calls “the care of the self” (1986) in his later work: a cultivation and perfection of the “soul” through introspection and practical exercises. This approach includes “subjectivity as a site of struggle and resistance” (Ball & Olmedo 2013: 85) in contrast to approaches, in which thoughts, habits, and everyday behavior are seen solely as a private affair, which have nothing to do with the just struggle for institutional changes. Thus, such personal traits as cynicism and antagonism could be ascribed to the legitimate frustrations about the unabated global power of an exploitative economic system. Theories, which ignore subdiscursive constituents of meaning, are therefore susceptible to ignoring important aspects of how we think and relate to the world, and which are moreover likely to remain stable as classificatory mechanisms also in different contexts (see Gibson-Graham 2006a: 232 f22).

The work with subjectivities and pre-reflective behavior requires micro-political tools in addition to discourse analytical tools: These must be based on an understanding of the embodied mechanisms, which influence thoughts and actions. Consequently this knowledge could inform ways and techniques that can be used to modify unconscious attitudes, emotions, and behaviors. Advocates of embodied cognition have provided extensive insights about the subdiscursive constitution of meanings. Varela and his co-authors have moreover shown how it is possible to consciously cultivate alternative ways of Knowing How through reference to Buddhist meditative techniques. Having outlined enactivist theory, this chapter has provided the ontological basis for these explorations to be presented in the next chapter.

## **1.7. Summary: Multimodal Constituents of Meaning**

In this chapter I have attempted to combine enactivism with a discourse analytical approach, believing that such a unitary framework including forms of cognition that

are explicitly embodied on the one hand, and “higher” cognitive processes on the other, could be fruitful for the analysis of social processes. After having critically examined well-known discourse analytical approaches from an enactivist perspective, I have argued for a combination of enactivism with a modified version of Rom Harré’s variant of discursive psychology; most of all, because based on a simple connectionist model he is able to illustrate how we acquire and use linguistic skills (see Harré & Gillett 1994: 66-73):

1. Accordingly, the process of learning language use resembles the way we learn “social emotions” (Damasio 2003: 45), or how we distinguish affordances for sensorimotor interaction: through repeated exposure and, subsequently, through successful use. The recurrent use of discursive concepts and grammars (by us and others) increasingly refines and delimits the range of their socially sanctioned applications (this coupling process is captured by the action-perception-loop model in the enactivist framework, involving an autopoietic system and its environment).
2. Following different encounters with a certain concept during a lifetime, our brain stores its unifying features, as well as related concepts, which are then likely to be activated together: symbolic associations, as well as sensorimotor and emotional categorizations. This means that different cognitive levels are involved simultaneously in the construction of meaning, providing a conclusive orientation in the world, and even enabling us to make creative associations. Since associations co-occurring with a concept are learned in the course of individual life-stories, the exact meaning of a discursive concept probably varies for different people (see also Heath et al. 2013).

The combination of enactivism with Harré’s theory thus helps to illustrate continuities from biological sense-making activities, over bodily practices, to discursive practices. Harré’s contribution moreover offers tools in analyzing discursive phenomena in terms of their strategic uses, allocations of power, and attributed meanings. Whereas competing approaches to discourse analysis easily

overlook the range of meaning-generating mechanisms, positioning theory moreover considers that speech-acts can be used to accomplish a variety of tasks: They can be made to reinforce accepted interpretations of social practices, but they can also be used strategically in order to legitimize alternative practices in light of a dominant discourse. From a CDA perspective for example, the latter instance would probably be seen to strengthen societal power relations. This view arises, because social structures are believed to exert causal forces independently of people, whereas according to enactivist ontology even natural mechanisms have no meaning by themselves, but require interpreting by living systems. Thus, since meaning remains ambiguous in the last instance, it does not indicate consequent acts or practices without knowledge of the respective actors and their histories.

Finally, most forms of discourse analysis pay little attention to micro-practices, which consist of gestures, movements, emotional attributions etc. These structure social life in subtle ways, lend themselves to competing ideologies, and in each of these guises can lead to the re-establishment of macro-social power relations.<sup>33</sup> It is therefore difficult to capture micro-practices ideologically, because they are more about *how* we do things than about *what* we do. In contrast to normative statements on societal change – in critical realism, but also in Laclau and Mouffe's theory – recourse to embodiment can only provide clues for psychological and social change in terms of Knowing How; this is so, because the body is here not conceived of in terms of universal needs and wants, but in terms of common mechanisms among members of a species. I will illustrate corresponding techniques, which operate on

---

<sup>33</sup> With their corresponding foci on practices, embodied cognition and positioning theory allow for classifications of different types of practices: Whereas micropractices refer to pre-reflective dispositions to action manifest in embodied Knowing How, social practices denote ways of accomplishing certain tasks (e.g. seeing a doctor for cure or marrying to reproduce; see Collier 1994: 148) accepted in a certain society or group. The latter corresponds with social practices as understood in Laclau and Mouffe; in positioning theory terms such practices are inscribed in shared storylines among agents entering a conversation. Thus, in many cases social practices correspond to acts, but it has been shown that micro-practices likewise enable participants in a conversation to perform acts. This feature warrants an inclusion of micro-practices in shared storylines, but not necessarily in discursive formations. Further, practices (without additional qualifications) refer to actions undertaken in concrete interactions prior to ascriptions of meaning. I therefore find an analytical working distinction between micropractices, practices, and social practices useful for the following chapters. I will use each term as specified here and postpone explicitly raising the issue of analytical distinctions in chapter six.

embodied cognitive mechanisms to effect psychological and social change, in subsequent chapters.

## **2. Embodied Constituents of Meaning**

The first chapter has provided an outline of enactivist theory for providing ontological assumptions underlying the analysis of social processes. Embodied cognitive mechanisms moreover offer conceptual links between biological processes and social processes: Accordingly, we acquire symbolic concepts in similar ways as we learn to distinguish affordances and apply emotional attributions. Our sense-making capacities rely on each of these analytically distinguishable cognitive mechanisms, which together offer humans a multimodal grasp of reality. In the present chapter I will undertake a shift away from the consideration of discursive processes towards embodied constituents of phenomenal reality. Apart from being involved in the classification of objects and situations we encounter, these embodied mechanisms moreover provide fundamental structuring schemas that persist below and alongside everyday distinctions. Our conscious interpretations and social interactions thus take place on the basis of these preliminary schemas. I will show that taking these unconscious construction processes into account has ramifications for the way humans view themselves and social processes. Engagement with embodied cognition not only provides new insights for social scientists, but also offers clues of how these findings can be utilized in the context of development initiatives.

The chapter is structured as follows: Based partly on experimental findings the first section will provide illustrations of embodied cognitive mechanisms and consequently, of how these shape the way we engage in social interactions. Although unconscious, humans are able to discern the effects of emotional and sensorimotor mechanisms through scientific inquiry. Moreover, techniques of the self can be applied in order to not only discern these effects, but also to consciously influence these otherwise automatic responses. These possibilities will be highlighted in the second section, largely by employing insights from Buddhist philosophy and corresponding techniques. Thus, whereas in the first chapter I have referred to Buddhism as inspiring enactivist ontology, in the present chapter the

philosophy is applied in putting insights from cognitive science and first-person meditative inquiry to practical use.

## **2.1. Embodied Cognition: Providing a Scientific Basis for Social Phenomena**

Embodied cognition denotes the most recent paradigm shift, the “third cognitive revolution” (Williams 2004:1/2), within the field of cognitive science following computationalism and connectionism. The scope of this shift needs to be qualified in different ways however: first, in terms of the extent this paradigm replaces earlier views about cognition; second, in terms of its acceptance among theorists of cognitive science; and third, in terms of coherence in the way this term is understood by its proponents. Embodied cognition does not imply a complete rejection of the earlier models of cognition. Instead, elements of computational and connectionist models have been retained and extended within this framework: Most proponents do not deny a role for symbolic representations, but argue that it must be seen in relation and in addition to embodied cognitive mechanisms. Moreover, representative consciousness in this view does not result from the translation of external information by specialized brain regions, but through dynamic organization spanning different brain regions. Connectionist models are thus accepted as illustrating brain processes, but are seen to be involved in the creation of meaning together with the body and the environment. In terms of acceptance among scientists, there are many theorists within the field of cognitive science still identifying with one of the earlier approaches (see Froese 2011). Finally, different advocates of embodied cognition may refer to different aspects or meanings of the term.<sup>34</sup> For instance, whereas in enactivism no given reality exists apart from the performative actions of differently embodied beings, some proponents of embodied cognition do not indicate such ontological commitments. These include Antonio Damasio and Thomas Metzinger (see Metzinger & Gallese 2003: 557), for instance.

---

<sup>34</sup> Metzinger notes that embodiment “has long become a trendy buzzword [...] now used by many different authors in many different ways” (Metzinger 2006: 2; similarly Adams 2010: 619).

Thus, all advocates of enactivism referred to in the first chapter are also proponents of embodied cognition, but not vice versa.

The above qualifications are well illustrated in the critical examination of embodied cognition by the philosopher Lawrence Shapiro (2011). He distinguishes three broad and overlapping research programs within the field: The first is identified as “conceptualization,” or “world building,” referring to the ontological views put forward by enactivists in the first chapter. The second program – the “replacement hypothesis” - rejects the view that cognition can be captured by the representations of isolated brains, but posits instead that meaning emerges through the interplay of brains, bodies, and the environment. As the terms suggests, Shapiro believes that this understanding of cognition is meant to replace earlier computational accounts, since it is argued that embodied mechanisms do not necessarily require the translation of stimuli into representations. The “constitution hypothesis” finally, states that constituents of cognitive processes, or the mind, “extend beyond the brain” (Shapiro 2011: 158). The author mentions the book “The Embodied Mind” by Varela et al. as an early work that includes all these programs. He argues however that with the exception of enactivist ontology none of these ideas convincingly dispense with the computational view, but instead offer extensions or additions to the theory (see 153 and 209; see also Adams 2010: 627). The “conceptualization hypothesis” is to Shapiro at odds with cognitivism, but has, according to him, “failed to garner much of a following” even within the field of embodied cognition.

Enactivist ontology, which to Shapiro is the only truly revolutionary aspect of embodied cognition, has been introduced in the previous chapter. In the current chapter I will focus on the operative aspects of embodiment with regard to how it affects consciousness, how it contributes to our sense of self, and how it is thought to enable intersubjective understanding. These explorations will illustrate that structural coupling and emotional regulation are constitutive of the most basic elements of our constructions of reality, including the separation between self and environment, as well as the subjective feeling of agency. I will then turn to the

implications of these findings for the social sciences in general, and for the field of development studies in particular.

### **2.1.1. Embodied Sense-Making, Its Relations to Conscious Representations, and the Phenomenal Self in Embodied Cognition**

In the previous chapter cognitive behavior has been explained by action-perception loop processes. This illustration shows that cognition is not synonymous with perception, because of intricate connections between action and perception: Sensorimotor behavior feeds back on perception, and the latter guides embodied activities. These activities thus form a basis for the way we construct reality even on the level of speech: Motor concepts, for instance, inform some of our metaphorical concepts and shape the way we engage in abstract thinking. Repeated sensorimotor interactions moreover solidify emotional schemas that we learn to apply in order to make current experiences intelligible in terms of previous experience. These emotional categorizations in turn accompany conscious deliberation processes. Cognitive processes on these levels thus become mutually attuned through repeated exposure and somatic reactivity, and through this coordination offer a conclusive grasp of reality. In addition to embodied construction processes, we have developed linguistic constructs, which have emerged alongside and in relation to embodied mechanisms.

The neuroscientist Antonio Damasio explains that our nervous system and body are in constant interaction through complex feedback and feedforward loops. This communication is established through two different means: One is via signals sent through peripheral nerves connecting bioregulatory brain areas and different parts of the body. The other route is via chemicals released in the bloodstream. Body and brain are both transmitters and recipients of this information flow, permanently adapting to each other's information, as well as to incoming stimuli from the environment (see Bechara & Damasio 2005: 339). Our body state is thus in constant change, comparable to "a waterbed when someone walks on it in varied

directions: some areas are depressed, while others rise; ripples form; the entire bed is modified as a whole, but the changes are within a range specified by the physical limits of the unit” (Damasio 1994: 135). Damasio calls the “collection of changes in body state” emotions, and distinguishes these from feelings: The former term refers to unconscious internal changes, whereas feelings denote the conscious representation of those body states in our minds (Damasio 1994: 139 and 145). Feelings therefore never represent emotions in a consistent fashion, but are our conscious interpretations of the former: The bioregulatory parts of the brain transmit signals to the prefrontal cortex, which is the seat of higher cognitive functions such as reasoning and decision-making. These signals carry biological preferences, as well as learned assessments of stimuli, which bias our thinking processes in any given situation. Internal body states can thus alter thinking processes and behaviors through changing levels of hormones and neurotransmitters, for instance.

Accordingly, Larkin et al. (2011) point out how chronic pain can fundamentally change people’s relationship towards themselves and the way they deal with others. Damasio and Metzinger provide examples of how certain cortical stimulations, which do not involve any physical pain, can evoke behaviors, or radically change a person’s state of mind. In these cases the test persons experience the resulting states and actions as emanating from their own intentions or dispositions. Damasio cites a study, in which a patient with no prior history of psychiatric disorder suffered from acute depression during the time of cortical stimulation and gave a detailed account of how fed up with life she was (Damasio 2003: 67/68; Metzinger 2009: 122). Following Damasio the sociologist David D. Franks believes this behavior to result from somatic processes that set the agenda for conscious thought and feelings. In this case, cortical stimulation causes chemical imbalances that are integrated in the activity of higher cognitive functions, further giving rise to consciously experienced feelings and thoughts. Franks admits that seriously depressed patients find it hard to believe that chemical processes could be at the heart of their “overwhelming conviction of gloom” (Franks 2010: 196) instead of being the result of personal or environmental causes.

In cases in which depression is caused by a chemical imbalance as in the example above, the resulting negative outlook on life seems to come out of nowhere, although patients may cite reasons for how they feel. Nevertheless, such examples also provide insights for the biasing function of social emotions, learned through repeated experience. Here too, conscious experience is accompanied by the release of neurotransmitters and hormones. Some resulting body states - such as blushing or paling, changes in posture or of facial expressions - do not only affect our consciousness, but are also visible to others (Damasio 1994: 139). As such, emotions qualify as micro-practices: socially relevant classificatory responses to events. Moghaddam and Harré have pointed out how such dispositions can persist below discursive shifts, thus transferring the perception of a social practice to another. Institutional changes thus do not automatically alter emotions. These are nevertheless “real” not only in a sense that they involve material biochemical processes, but also in terms of social efficacy: Since we feel their effects without being aware of an underlying interpretative process the resulting quality of sense-impressions appears as pre-reflectively “given.” Conscious acts are then performed out of a corresponding attitude. Despite social transformations certain environmental clues and resemblances can thus contribute via emotional schemas to the stability of authority and gender relations (Moghaddam & Harré 1996: 234 and 239).

Repeated interactions determine the specific meaning of environmental features and of subjective responses they give rise to. This process thus constitutes what Harré refers to as “self2”: the dynamic attitudes and articulations of a self. Experiments and case studies within the field of cognitive psychology moreover reveal that body-environment-interactions are also constitutive of phenomenal selfhood and the feeling of agency. Insights about these mechanisms can be gained through manipulations of bodily self-perception for instance, such as through the “rubber hand illusion”: In this experiment the arm of a test person is being stroked, while a plastic arm – adjusted on the same side as the real arm – is simultaneously being stroked. The real arm receiving the stimulus is outside the test person’s visual field, whereas the rubber hand is placed in front of her/him. The

brain thus receives contradictory sensory inputs from the skin of the arm and the eyes. After a few minutes of simultaneous stroking the brain will integrate these inputs in favor of the visual sensation: The test person then experiences the rubber hand as his/her own (Metzinger 2009: 3/4). As the rubber-hand illusion indicates, the phenomenal sense of body ownership can be manipulated through contradictory stimuli to different senses.

Illusory tactile sensations in the place of missing limbs, such as “phantom pain,” are a well known phenomenon: After people lose an arm, for instance, they still experience feelings and pain at its place until the brain integrates its loss into its representation of the body. In some cases the brain interprets the lack of stimulus reactions from that part of the body differently, e.g. by creating the phenomenal impression that the limb in question is paralyzed. Metzinger mentions an experiment in which a test person with such a “frozen” phantom arm was given the optical illusion that he still had both arms by the use of a mirror: What he saw in the place of his missing limb was actually a reflection of his arm on the opposite side (Metzinger 2009: 109-11; see also Wegner 2002: 42). This translated into an overall illusion, in which the test person actually experienced the feeling of having regained control over the phantom arm. For the period of the experiment the brain thus integrated the visual perception into its internal body schema.

The above studies suggest that tactile and proprioceptive sensations do not correspond to actual bodily feedback co-occurring with certain activities. Rather, these sensations seem to derive in part from anticipatory impulses within the brain. This neuronal activity thus mediates between perceptual experience and somatic activity (Thompson 2007: 256); it integrates experiential know-how about sensorimotor action and bodily feedback into our current phenomenal experience, providing the feeling of simultaneity between movement and sensory stimulus. “What you feel in the rubber-hand illusion,” concludes Metzinger “is exactly the same as what you feel when you attend to [...] the feeling of pressure and resistance when you lean back in your chair” (Metzinger 2009: 114). According to him, our brain creates an internal representation of our bodily, psychological, and

historical self. This “phenomenal self-model” (PSM) is situated within the center of what Metzinger has called our “reality tunnel.” As is the case for the latter, the speed and reliability with which our brain constantly upgrades this model is such that we are unable to perceive our self as a construction process. This PSM encompasses those elements of neuronal activity which are available for conscious attention. Thus, the brain creates not only an image of an “outside” reality, but also of a delimited self within it. Metzinger uses the metaphor of a “total flight simulator” to illustrate this achievement: “a self-modeling airplane that, rather than being flown by a pilot, generates a complex internal image of itself within its own internal flight simulator” (Metzinger 2009: 108).

Whereas the above studies indicate that this self-model can be lead to represent our bodily self in different ways through sensory manipulation, activities that involve tool use illustrate that the self-model can be extended to temporarily include outside objects. As we use a stick or drive a car, our PSM integrates these objects in a way that we are able to experience stimulations beyond our actual bodies (Fuchs & De Jaegher 2009: 472/73). In contrast to passive sensory experience as in the rubber hand illusion, the incorporation of objects is established over time accompanying the development of skillful tool use. Examples of how living beings extend their bodies by incorporating outside objects can also be found in the animal kingdom, such as in the case of insects breathing under water by trapping air bubbles. “The mediation [of regulated environmental coupling] in cases like this is so intimately connected with vital functions that the living system itself might be called extended.” (Di Paolo cited in Thompson & Stapleton 2009: 28)

Various forms of sensorimotor coupling are thus constitutive of specific experiences of selfhood. Our phenomenal experience of selfhood is stronger the more consciousness is involved in our activities; thus, when we not only feel that we own our body, but that we can put it to intentional use and perform goal-directed actions. Further, as we carry out these actions, we can be aware of our agency at any point in time. In the case of mental agency we can likewise be aware of our decisions to focus our attention on an object or an idea instead of another, such as during

philosophical contemplation. Explorations into the nature of intentions and conscious will have been undertaken in the field of cognitive science at least since Benjamin Libet and his colleagues' discovery of neuronal activity preceding the subjectively felt intention to act (Libet et al. 1983). The neuroscientists devised an experimental setup in which test persons were asked to move their right hand at any point during a certain timeframe. They were moreover instructed to gaze at the center of a screen, which resembled a clock. The participants then had to report at what clock position they felt the intention to move their hand. Libet and his team found that neuronal activity, which they called "readiness potential," occurred hundreds of milliseconds prior to the subjects' felt will to act; thus "substantially *before* the reported appearance of conscious intention" (Libet et al. 1983: 635).

Libet's experiment ties in with the findings provided in the previous chapter that certain cognitive processes precede consciousness, e.g. in cases when we suddenly hit the brake while driving a car. His findings however suggest that neurobiological processes also precede conscious decision-making; at the time we are aware of a decision to act, the brain has already geared up for action. Accordingly, our will to act is not the cause for an action, but one link in a chain of mostly unconscious processes leading up to a performance; some argue that the experience of volition is not even a necessary link in the process, but an "add-on" or epiphenomenon (Wegner 2002: 47; Baumeister 2008: 76). The psychologist Daniel Wegner investigated the conditions required for the phenomenal feeling of consciously intended action. His research involved experiments, in which people were given a clue (such as the word "swan") and subsequently engaged in an activity (moving a cursor over a screen). If the activity ended resulting in an event associable with the word (cursor stops near the image of a swan) people tended to ascribe the result to their own intention, especially if the word preceded the stop of the cursor by less than 30 seconds. This was also the case, when the cursor was

unilaterally moved by a confederate during the experiment (see Wegner 2002: 74-78).<sup>35</sup>

The experience of agency thus requires awareness of a selection process (even if undertaken by an external source, as in Wegner's experiment), awareness of the sequence of movements to achieve a corresponding state, as well as sensual feedback while carrying out the task (see also Metzinger 2003: 407). If this set of constitutive factors is incomplete, it can nevertheless cause the subjective feeling of having caused an action. In cases of fast sensorimotor reactions or emotional evaluations, in which we are not aware of consciously made decisions, we nevertheless attribute them to ourselves. The sense of ownership also of pre-reflective behavior occurs so naturally that we usually provide quick and convincing responses when asked about the reasons for such actions or preferences (see Franks 2010: 3). The sense of personal responsibility can also occur as we establish a causal connection between an intended goal state and a corresponding outcome, even without an intermittent sequence of goal-directed movements: Such a feeling of "mental causation" appears for instance when someone falls ill after we had wished that person to become sick (see Pronin et al. 2006). Both cases have in common that they originate in events – the first, a sub-personal cognitive process, and the second, an infectious or autoimmune disease – outside our (conscious) control. The degree to which people regard phenomena as within or outside their control differs from person to person according to cultural backgrounds and personal attitudes: Some people for instance ascribe the failure to get a job to themselves, whereas others see external circumstances at work.

Metzinger has integrated the above findings in his elaboration of the phenomenal self-model. Here, identification with a certain state or behavior takes place as sub-personal cognitive processes become conscious: These are feelings representing somatic emotions, as well as intentions representing neuronal readiness potentials. Both cases involve largely unconscious processing chains, only a small fraction of

---

<sup>35</sup> Wegner mentions that when test persons moved the cursor without interference by a confederate, the voluntary cursor stops hardly corresponded to the words heard beforehand (Wegner 2002: 77).

which becomes available for introspection (Metzinger 2009: 127; see also Myers 2008: 36). That which is consciously available becomes our perspective and behavior through integration in the PSM. As noted above, the self-model is itself a representation, which means that there is no actual “self” making decisions. Rather, the cognitive process is a self-organizing mechanism aimed at the restoration of internal stability by contrasting internally available alternatives – action potentials, and affordances – in reaction to environmental stimuli. This process thus resembles autopoietic processes, which are aimed at restoring homeostasis by compensating for perturbations (Damasio 2003: 35; see Maturana & Varela 1980: 66). Even most conscious deliberation processes, in which we bring a wider array of verbalized alternatives to our awareness, are thus confined within pre-established patterns of perceiving and thinking; as long as these underlying cognitive schemas are not themselves made the object of conscious exploration, acts of reflection merely explore and refine a given “structure of the knowledge space” (Peschl & Fundneider 2012: 45; see also Peschl & Fundneider 2008).<sup>36</sup>

The internal representation of a self is thus an emergent property, constructed through the interplay of distributed neuronal networks (Varela 1999: 52-55). The bodily self-other distinction develops early on in life, whereas the subjectively felt boundary between personal agency and events can vary among different people. In the 1990s Italian neuroscientists have moreover discovered a neuronal system, which likewise transcends the distinction between self and other: These “mirror neurons,” first demonstrated in the premotor cortex of macaque monkeys, have since been associated with the capacity for empathy and intersubjective understanding also among humans. In contrast to other visuo-motor neuronal networks, which make us perceive objects in terms of affordances, mirror neurons become activated both as we perform a certain goal-directed action and as we observe someone else perform a similar act (Gallese 2005: 110; Rizzolatti &

---

<sup>36</sup> The political scientist William Connolly makes a similar point: “Philosophers’ tend to give too much self-sufficiency to consciousness and to limit thinking too much to the discovery of knowledge. They therefore tend to confine themselves to that part of thinking in which logic plays its most active role. But consciousness is itself pre-organized and moved to some extent by modes of thinking below its reach.” (Connolly 2002: 64/65)

Craighero 2004). Here, the attribution of meaning is thus independent of the person engaging in an activity. This understanding, and thus the discernment of actions as acts, is moreover established automatically and prereflectively. We are thus able to ascribe intentions to other people and share their emotions, regardless of whether we are conscious of this understanding, or whether it is manifest below our awareness in neuronal activity.

The capacity for empathy is a learned process, grounded in primary socialization as we perceive and imitate others' behavior, and moreover understand it as a goal-directed action. It is therefore grounded in "embodied simulation" (Gallese 2010: 77), which indicates that the physiological similarity between observer and observed constitutes the basic requirement for intra-species understanding. Many sensorimotor actions are therefore intelligible across cultures, whereas certain gestures and emotional displays will require a shared cultural background. Accordingly, the "perception-action model of empathy" (see Preston & Hofelich 2011) includes findings that neuronal-level activation indicating "emotion sharing" requires that an observer can draw on similar experiences within his or her own life story in order to resonate with the observed person's state.

### **2.1.2. Implications for the Social Sciences and Development**

The previous section has provided illustrations for the idea that our multimodal grasp of reality is the result of concurrent construction processes on different cognitive levels. In the examples given, lower-level somatic processes endow conscious activities with a precast, but nevertheless dynamic, structure: The conscious representation of the body is based on continued feedback loops between sensory organs and the brain, and this representation can be altered by new data, including extension through tool use. These lower cognitive faculties are not only responsive to feedback from the natural environment, but also to social settings. Damasio, for instance, does not believe that the emotions carried by chemical responses in the brain are invariably innate. Although such basic "primary

emotions” mark our initial responses in encountering new situations<sup>37</sup>, our experiences in the course of our life determine our emotional state in addition. Through repeated interactions our brain learns to make refined connections between life-situations and emotions. This means that discursive representations are not the only “cultural vehicles which express the values that make life meaningful and coherent” (Turner 2008: 252), but learned “secondary emotions” likewise carry socially mediated preferences and represent “social conventions and ethical rules” (Damasio 1994: 134 and 179).

Regarding the issues of free will and agency it has been suggested that our actions originate in bodily motor commands, whereas “consciousness pops in and out of the picture and doesn’t really seem to do anything” (Wegner 2002: 59). Wegner therefore describes free will as an “add-on” to the process, and as a feeling rather than a cause. This feeling has important social functions, however: It ascribes authorship to actions and allows us to predict people’s behavior. More than the ascription of actions to others, we value the feeling of authorship over our own acts. By being emotionally invested in our actions we are motivated to make claims based on our share in a successful venture, or are willing to take responsibility for our wrongdoings. Without the subjective feeling of having caused one’s actions people could not be held responsible for immoral acts and crimes, and it would be far more difficult to enforce moral and legal codes. Since free will is merely a feeling however, there is consequently no clear boundary between personal agency on the one hand, and external events and forces on the other. It is not surprising therefore, that this boundary is set differently in different cultures (see Wegner 2002: 95 and 243).

The activation of neuronal correlates of empathy is likewise contingent on whether observed behavior and facial expressions can be interpreted based on personal experiences (see also Fuchs & De Jaegher 2009: 468). Even if this is the case,

---

<sup>37</sup> The amygdala, for instance, is responsible for identifying threatening stimuli within milliseconds, triggering motor commands and emotions below the threshold of conscious awareness. Threatening images entering our eyes are thus processed on to this part of the brain first, before the visual cortex and other cortical areas create a clear and coherent image for conscious identification (see Franks 2010: 113/14).

empathy is not necessarily experienced as a conscious feeling. If it is consciously available – thus integrated into our phenomenal self-model – the intentions and goals of other people around us simultaneously become available for introspective conceptualizations. We can predict the behavior of our counterpart, consider our possible responses, and then predict his or her reactions to these responses etc. On this level our attained neurobiological capacity for empathy co-determines, and is mixed up with, social and cultural contexts. This concurrence of neurobiological features, human cognitive abilities, socially mediated expectations, and personal history makes discourse a complex and dynamic process in which agents attempt to correlate their expectations, encounter unforeseen reactions and misunderstandings, and learn to avoid miscommunications through experiences of successful repair. Here again, the interaction produces meanings, which cannot be located in either agent; both coproduce it and are transformed by it in a process, which neither can fully foresee.

Mirror neurons thus aide interpersonal understanding and have possibly enabled mankind to develop language (see Kohler et al. 2002). The reason for this capacity is that they partly code for species-specific behavior: certain goal-directed movements and visible emotional expressions (such as blushing and paling), which humans share across cultures. The body therefore provides common ground for mutual understanding and for “ontological assumptions” (Metzinger & Gallese 2003: 557)<sup>38</sup>: Somatic emotions hardly differ among humans since the same biochemical processes are involved. They moreover exhibit similar effects on attitudes and states of consciousness, but through their mediation by cultural norms and language give rise to a variety of specific interpretations. Bryan Turner, a proponent of the sociology of the body, is aware of the potential significance of the body for

---

<sup>38</sup> Independently of the discussion about mirror neurons, there exist indications that our shared biological constitution generates universal understandings in certain respects. Experiments among individuals from different cultural and ethnic backgrounds have revealed that certain features of color perception are universal to humans (as is the case in picking a “best example” of a color category), whereas others are culturally determined (e.g. perceived proximity between colors; Varela et al. 1991: 168). Franks cites an experiment in which subjects were given the task to match shapes with fictional words. The same sets of matches were made by the subjects across different language backgrounds according to perceived proximities between drawn shapes and the sounds of the words (Franks 2010: 54).

offering a common ground for universal statements. “The frailty of the human body” provides for him “at least one possibility for starting an account of a foundation for human rights discourse” (Turner 2008: 249). Since he does not deal with the body as a biological organism with cognitive endowments, it is difficult for him to consider a more precise elaboration of further similarities and shared features among humans. Other social scientists have already started to productively engage with neuroscientific and cognitive scientific findings.

Apart from proponents of practice theory such as Lizardo and Reddy, these include the political scientist William Connolly (2002), as well as the sociologist David D. Franks (2010; 2013). Connolly points out the insufficiency of reducing “body politics to studies of how the body is *represented* in cultural politics,” because this approach ignores unconscious cognitive mechanisms, which are “*immanent* in subsisting below the direct reach of consciousness, *effective* in influencing conduct on its own and also affecting conscious judgment, *material* in being embodied in neurological processes, and *cultural* in being given part of its shape by previous inscriptions of experience” (Connolly 2002: xiii and 85 [emphasis in the original]). Including these cognitive mechanisms in social science research can serve to enhance the researcher’s sensitivity towards techniques of subliminal persuasion systematically employed for commercial and political purposes (see also Franks 2010: 64 and 74). Connolly moreover points to the possibility of purposely applying “micropolitical” techniques in order to affect conscious deliberation processes in a way that new thoughts become possible; this notion ties in with considerations made in the previous chapter about the importance of self-cultivation and “care of the self” for social change. Connolly’s motivation for advancing these thoughts is different, although related to the issue of social transformation. He suggests employing experimental and disciplinary methods in enhancing our capacity to devise new ideas and concepts, e.g. by examining the effects of different emotional states on conscious thought (see Connolly 2002: 13 and 75).

Many social scientists, who are complementing the study of social practices with findings from cognitive science, see a need to defend this perspective against

anticipated charges of biological reductionism (see Franks 2010: 10/11; Reddy 2009: 9).<sup>39</sup> Connolly addresses the misperceptions underlying such suspicions against (neuro-)biological explanations of human behavior. He suggests that many social scientists share strictly deterministic and “dull readings of nature and biology.” His succinct assessment of this view and its consequences deserves to be cited (Connolly 2002: 61/62 [emphasis in the original]):

“To ‘mix’ culture with nature, in this model, is to overwhelm the former with the reductive determinism of the latter. And perhaps *disembodied* theories of cultural intersubjectivity [...] eschew reference to ‘first nature’ because they too tacitly accept a flat, determinist model of it. That is why they often lift language, thinking, identity, choice, and ethics out of it. They implicitly elevate these capacities above biology to preserve freedom and dignity, as they are allowed to conceive them. But to accomplish that task they depreciate the variable degrees of agency and linguistic capacity in nonhuman animals and, at the same time, underplay the layered, biocultural character of human perception, thinking, culture, identity, and ethics. The implications for ecology are not pretty.”

In contrast to a static perception of biological determinants criticized by Connolly this and the previous chapters have provided a dynamic account of biological mechanisms; the brain’s capacity to form new connections, and modifications of genetic functions through experience illustrate this point on very basic levels. In fact, “neuroplasticity” is a feature, which the human brain retains throughout life (Schwartz & Begley 2002: 130). Embodied mechanisms determine the way social actors make sense of reality, as do their storylines they bring into conversations. As is the case for discursive constructs, subdiscursive cognitive mechanisms are the more influential the more their constraining effects are ignored. Once this point is accepted, one can proceed beyond analysis and address further questions: first, of how to make insights from cognitive science applicable. A central question in the context of the present work is to examine how cognitive science can contribute to the design of development projects. Second, since this approach calls into question current conceptions of human dignity and ethics, as Connolly suggests, one can

---

<sup>39</sup> Also Turner (2008: 42) perceives a need to distinguish the sociology of the body from reductionist approaches.

examine embodied cognition for a possible new grounding for ethical considerations. Especially the first issue will be explored from the following section onwards; however, both questions can already be explored based on what has been said so far.

If our choices and actions are determined by unconscious emotions and the discourses we are exposed to due to our socialization, then Harré's suggestion that we make a wider scope of practices consciously available is an important first step; it broadens the discursive space and thus our awareness of possible alternatives. As scientific findings on emotional mechanisms and on the nature of agency imply, however, such awareness of alternative practices may not translate into actual implementation. Rather, we may fall back to habitual responses to social stimuli: Actions that are associated with foreseeable results will have a more positive emotional "coloring" than engaging in new, and thus more risky, endeavors. We may consciously believe the rational arguments that certain changes in attitude and behavior will have more beneficial effects than our current ways. This might not convince our amygdala however, which signals its evaluation of a certain situation to the neocortex and thus influences our behavior without our awareness.

A way of working with the effects of unconscious emotions could thus consist in voluntary but guided exposure to new experiences. Wegner's allusion to therapies in which people aim to overcome phobias shows how difficult it is to acquire a new approach to a situation that we have perceived as frightening throughout our life history. The author describes a therapeutic approach developed by Albert Bandura that encourages the patient to gradually gain control over the phobia instead of giving in to the consistent urge to run away (Wegner 2002: 331/2):

"People who fear spiders, for instance, might be encouraged at the outset to watch someone else draw a picture of a spider. This seems innocuous enough and may be tolerated. But then the therapy escalates, and phobics are asked, perhaps, to draw their own picture of the beast, to watch someone touching a photo of one, to touch the photo themselves, to watch a person touch a real spider, and so on. The phobia sufferer is encouraged to relax along the way and in this process gets a sense of being able to will

each of a series of actions all the way up to the target act. Finally, the person may be able at least to enter a room with a spider and may even assemble the nerve to contact a spider in the way most people do, by flattening it with a rolled-up newspaper. The incremental approach of such systematic desensitization works its magic by building up an experience of conscious will for acts that progressively approximate the act the person has not been able to do.”

The example of phobias may seem extreme, because of the near complete loss of conscious control in such an instance. Although the emotional state of the phobic is overwhelming to a degree that it precludes the feeling of conscious deliberation, unconscious emotions are generally at work in each of us, exhibiting a bias against actions, which we have never experienced ourselves doing before. In these less extreme cases the gradual and guided exposure to new ways of thinking and acting may thus differ in terms of process and emotional intensity. The point is that such a process, whatever the concrete design, provides new behaviors with an emotional tone in line with an actual experience made, instead of unconscious preconceptions. A practice will become dominant, when experiences associated with it are recognized as superior by our neurobiological system. This system, constantly aiming for a homeostatic state, classifies events as “good” or “bad” through the release of hormones and neurotransmitters. Originally, these signals are meant to trigger behaviors that promote survival or “a better than neutral life state, what we [...] identify as wellness and *wellbeing*” (Damasio 2003: 35 [emphasis in the original]). Thus, our bioregulatory system examines new objects and situations for features that correspond with aspects of experiences already made. Emotional classification takes place before conscious awareness and enables us to make fast choices without much deliberation – attributable to what we call “intuition.” This also means, however, that we tend towards generalizations, especially when we follow our intuitions without taking time for conscious reflection (see Franks 2010: 81/82). When confronted with opposing strategies to enhance our “quality of life” for instance, these bioregulatory mechanisms may carry warning signals about the new and unfamiliar. By engaging in the new practice, emotions will be coupled to the experience itself; and so are the consciously experienced

feelings resulting from the practice, indicating a decline or improvement in wellbeing.

An interesting consequence from findings that the subjectively felt sense of selfhood and agency are delimited through cultural arrangements, discourse<sup>40</sup>, and ultimately experience, is that these phenomena are potentially open to negotiation. The experience of conscious will, according to Wegner, comes about through the perception of events as caused by ourselves. The more we assign authorship to events, and the more we believe to be in control, the higher is our confidence in the efficacy of our actions. This perception of general control provides us with a heightened feeling of wellbeing, whereas “little perceived control, in turn, is like pessimism in that it leads to a general underestimation of what can be done” (Wegner 2002: 330). Accepting that both the self and agency are mental phenomena without verifiable substance, such pessimism seems warranted. The feeling of control, however beneficial for our wellbeing, is then ultimately a double illusion. Daniel Dennett (2008), an American philosopher and neuroscientist, argues that we should traverse the traditional understanding of free will and self, in which the former arises from an assumed “inner agent.” His argument suggests that feelings of pessimism and nihilism in light of this illusion are the result of the incompatibility between our traditional, philosophical knowledge and findings in contemporary cognitive science (see also Varela et al. 1991: 142/43).

Dennett accordingly suggests leaving the “Cartesian mistake” behind, which assumes that our self must be understood as “the inner puppeteer who pulls the body’s strings” (Dennett 2008: 254). His alternative consists in integrating into our conception of self, and of moral responsibility, all those forces, which we can assume to be involved in our choices and actions: our biology, family and friends, our socialization etc. We should thus extend our notion of “self” by acknowledging the relations and interactions with others which, taken together, give rise to our actions and thoughts. This is contrary to our cultural belief in autonomy, which is

---

<sup>40</sup> Bubna-Litic notes the convergence between cognitive science and post-structuralist thought about the distinction between self and other; quoting Derrida he states that this distinction is “undecidable” (Bubna-Litic 2013).

entrenched in our mode of being to the extent, as Bubna-Litic notes, “that few people know that anything else is possible” (Bubna-Litic 2013: 90; see also Franks 2010: 4/5). When we acknowledge that relationships with others constitute our self – in fact “that the other is what makes self possible” (Gibson-Graham 2006a: 20) – and as we translate this feeling into practices of reciprocity, we undergo a transformation, according to Bubna-Litic. Our need for self-affirmation gives way to a deeply felt connection with others. Here, the latter is seen as a superior state of mind in terms of quality of life and improved wellbeing.

In summary, insights into the mechanisms of different cognitive layers provide an extended scope for development interventions, including emotional dispositions and phenomenal selfhood. Emotions thus play a crucial part in the way we acquire knowledge about the world. This finding warrants a more encompassing understanding of knowledge; together with the perception of objects in terms of affordances, this way of knowing constitutes what could be called “embodied knowledge.” To add new knowledge to this existing repertoire would mean to add new ways of seeing and perceiving through new experiences. This could include the conscious cultivation of attitudes in order to foster different approaches and new ways of thinking. This cultivation presupposes a certain understanding of learning: Here it is not about abstract concepts, but about what one disposition feels like compared to another in encountering familiar or unfamiliar situations. Since it is difficult to overcome entrenched emotive patterns without support by an enabling environment (see chapters 2.2.2 and 4.1.2), acknowledging the network of relationships that form selfhood – thus extending the feeling of self to include these relationships – could help to recapture agency to effect willed changes on the level of dispositions. This approach thus considers that meaningful actions are co-constituted by an environment, in which they take place. This is a central idea both in enactivism and positioning theory. The realization of new emotional dispositions, and thus the continuation of practices they give rise to, also depends on supportive environmental feedback.

Acknowledging the effects of somatic emotive patterns on consciousness, Metzinger proposes grounding ethical considerations on the mental states these mechanisms give rise to. An “ethics of consciousness” (Metzinger 2009: 3) is thus concerned with questions of good and bad mental states. Decisions about corresponding distinctions could be guided by the following considerations regarding a particular state of consciousness: “It should minimize suffering, in humans and all other beings capable of suffering; it should ideally possess an epistemic potential (that is, it should have a component of insight and expanding knowledge); and it should have behavioral consequences that increase the probability of the occurrence of future valuable types of experience.” (Metzinger 2009: 233) Metzinger moreover reminds us that despite scientific findings on the nature of free will and personal agency, we as humans are endowed with the cognitive capabilities to understand corresponding underlying mechanisms, even as they operate beyond our awareness. In reflecting the consequences of this unique evolutionary attainment the German philosopher becomes poetic: “The world evolved world-modelers. Parts began to mirror the whole. Billions of conscious brains are like billions of eyes, with which the universe can look at itself as being *present*.” (216) As will be shown in the following section, we are not only capable of self-knowledge, but also of consciously applying this knowledge for self-transformation.

## **2.2. Exploring and Intervening on Embodied Sense-making: Scientific Examination of First-Person Experience and Micro-Political Interventions**

Cognitive science – as all science – investigates its object from a third-person perspective. Experimental methods and studies conducted from this perspective have brought to light general mechanisms at work in human cognition. Since these are at work in each human being, they are the basis for a universal human ontology. Unlike other fields of study, this object of cognitive science is also

subjectively available through direct experience. If there is a possibility to include these experiences - reported from a first-person perspective - in scientific investigation, then the ensuing findings would rely on an additional source of reference.

Dennett has suggested that we reflectively engage with cognitive psychological and neuroscientific theories, acknowledge that our self is constituted by relationships, and consequently ground practices of moral responsibility within this recognition. Varela and his co-authors, however, aim to establish a direct link between cognitive science and human experience. This direct connection appeals to immediate experience, which is pre-reflective and common to all humans, just as the above scientific findings apply to all humans across cultures due to their bodily similarities. The authors note that the gulf between the image we have of ourselves on the one hand, and the way the cognitive sciences depict us on the other, is growing with each new discovery. They believe that at the same time we lack adequate traditions of thought that could help us reconcile this growing gap. Western philosophy since the Ancient Greeks, they argue, lacks a reflective method which would do justice to the embodied nature of the mind. In our entire philosophical history we have relied on abstract, theoretical reasoning expressed in discourse. This epistemic method resembles and reinforces an assumed distinction between mind and body and fails to account for the structure of lived conscious experience (see Varela et al. 1991: 20).

In particular, Varela et al. pointed to Edmund Husserl's phenomenology, which is a philosophical school that is concerned with the study of subjective experience and consciousness. At the time of writing "The Embodied Mind," Varela and Thompson believed that phenomenology had failed its own task to provide an account of "immediate" experience and held that the Husserlian approach examines experience merely in an "after-the-fact fashion" through discursive interpretation. Due to this – as Evan Thompson later admits (Thompson 2007: 413/14)<sup>41</sup> –

---

<sup>41</sup> The fact that Varela has adopted Husserlian terminology in his later works (1996; Depraz et al. 2003) indicates that he himself had reevaluated Husserl's work.

misconception, Varela et al. could not make out any epistemological method in Western societies to account for the subjective implications of cognitive scientific findings. They therefore advocate a dialogue between science and Eastern philosophical traditions, especially Buddhism.<sup>42</sup> They argue that the Buddhist practice of mindfulness meditation, as well as the teachings resulting from meditative experiences, “can provide an examination of human experience in both its reflective and its immediate, lived aspects” (21; see also Varela 1996):

“Mindfulness means that the mind is present in embodied everyday experience; mindfulness techniques are designed to lead the mind back from its theories and preoccupations, back from the abstract attitude, to the situation of one’s experience itself. Furthermore, and equally of interest in the modern context, the descriptions and commentaries on mind that grew out of this tradition never became divorced from living pragmatics: they were intended to inform an individual as to how to handle his mind in personal and interpersonal situations, and they both informed and became embodied in the structure of communities.” (Varela et al. 1991: 22)

The Thai monk and Buddhist philosopher Payutto offers a similar point, in this case not from the perspective of a scientist commenting on a spiritual tradition, but from the opposite perspective: Modern science, which limits the study of the mind to a third-person perspective by use of instruments is to him like an attempt “to study a stone from the ‘plops’ it makes in the water, or from the ripples that arise on the water’s surface” (Payutto 1993: 126). The human mind, he states, requires that it is observed through inward-directed practices. Studying mental processes by using the mind as the instrument of observation means that the instrument corresponds to the nature of the data, since the mind can directly experience and verify emotions and the arising of a phenomenal self. Buddhist spiritual practices of observation, experiment, and verification thus differ from those employed in modern science, since Buddhism acknowledges insight through inner experiences. Varela thus argues for an integration of subjective experience of embodiment and neuroscientific findings. This cross-fertilization between first-person experience and

---

<sup>42</sup> Metzinger is himself aware that some of his ideas correspond to Buddhist philosophy, but he prefers to uphold a distinction between his theories and Buddhism. Elsewhere he puts forward the view that the latter regards life as “not worth living” (2003: 566; 2009: 199).

third-person observation would allow scientists to make findings in their study of consciousness on both epistemic levels. Varela calls this integration of experience and science “neurophenomenology” (Varela 1996). In the next section I will outline basic Buddhist concepts. It will become clear that central teachings resonate with findings in embodied cognition as presented in this and the previous chapter. Following this brief outline I will show how Buddhist mindfulness techniques can be utilized for neuroscientific studies and therapeutic interventions.

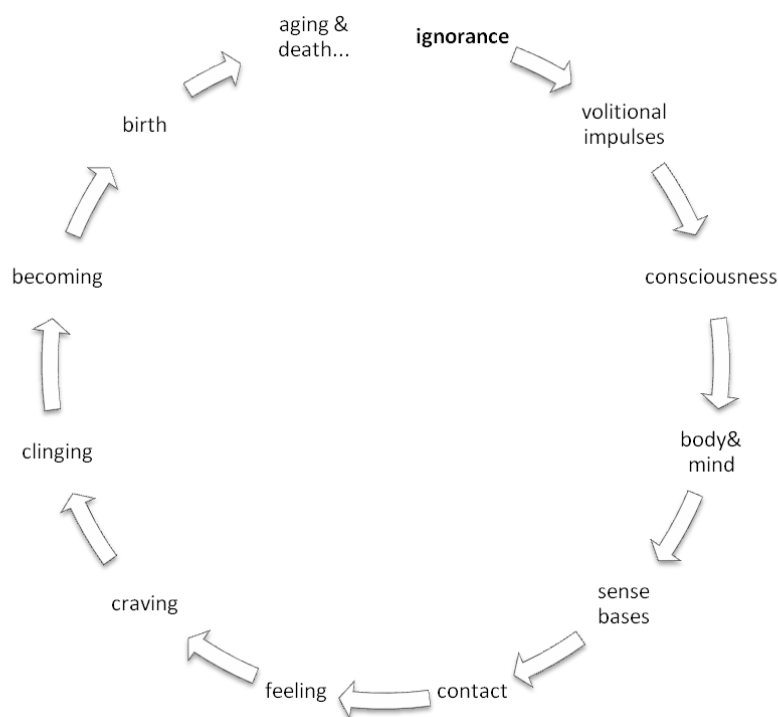
### **2.2.1. Basic Buddhist Concepts**

Buddhist mindfulness practices are intended to bring unconscious internal mechanisms, or – perhaps more precisely - their effects, into awareness. This awareness includes the recognition that our mental and bodily states constantly change without these changes being elicited by a self. Buddhist spiritual practices thus aim to enable the practitioner to acquire a distanced perspective towards his/her own experiences and feelings. Consequently this leads over to eliminating a person’s emotional categorization of incoming stimuli, and thus to inhibiting thoughts and practices conditioned by them. Detachment from this conditioning and from our identification with its processes is understood as liberating. This liberation, or nibbana, is the objective of these practices (Thera 1962: 8; see Bubna-Litic 2013: 62). Certain meditative techniques moreover foster the active development of attitudes and behaviors, which are seen as beneficial to oneself and one’s environment. Thus, in sum, these practices and meditative techniques are meant to enable us to gain phenomenological knowledge about the structure and contents of consciousness, and to take greater control of our lives. As I will show, knowledge here is gained primarily through first-person experience.

Most Buddhist teachings are not made in the form of prescriptions and norms of conduct, which - when applied - will lead to the experience of wellbeing or

liberation. The primary aim is to enable individuals to overcome “ignorance”<sup>43</sup> about the nature of their self. Our sense of self is grounded in acquired dispositions: intentions, habitual patterns, and character traits. These give rise to repetitive actions aimed at satisfying this imagined self (see Varela et al. 1991: 111). This continuous cycle is seen as the cause of suffering and conflict. It is therefore crucial to understand the structure of experience as it arises in constant interaction between self and environment. The structure of experience consists of twelve components in the Buddhist tradition. Taken together they form the karmic law of “dependent origination” or “dependent co-arising”: All components involved arise in a single moment of experience, and condition the arising of future cycles of dependent origination (see figure 4).<sup>44</sup>

**Figure 4: The Twelve Elements of Dependent Origination**



Source: Payutto (1994b: 27)

<sup>43</sup> The meaning of this translation of the original Pali term – avijja – will be explained below.

<sup>44</sup> For a detailed treatise of the concept see Buddhadasa (1992), or Payutto (1994b).

Thus, as long as ignorance – the initial element in the cycle – is not overcome, the process is bound to constantly repeat itself. The meaning of the twelve components and their mutual relationships in the cycle can be described as follows (Payutto 1994b; Varela et al. 1991: 111-15):

**Ignorance** about the nature of self goes along with identification and clinging to ideas and objects to satisfy the notion of a self. Identification conditions how we act, think, and speak. Ignorance thus gives rise to

**Volitional impulses:** These are our background intentions that form our habitual patterns and beliefs. These patterns determine the way our cognitive processes work, our approach to different situations, and how we react to outside stimuli. These volitional responses thus determine our consciousness.

**Consciousness:** Based on our background intentions, we perceive objects in our environment a certain way. Certain features will receive more attention than others, while some may be faded out completely. Consciousness gives rise to

**Body and mind:** Varela et al. (1991: 113) call this component the “psychophysical complex.” Body and mind are conditioned by the previous links as to how they respond when different states of consciousness arise. Bodily changes for instance involve facial expressions, tense muscles, high blood pressure etc.

**Sense bases:** these act as the doors for incoming stimuli (eye, ear, nose, tongue, body, and mind). As we witness bad behavior (through eye and ear), for example, we may intuitively take it as related to us. Some people then respond with anger in line with their background intentions. Days later, as the incident pops up in their memory (mind), they may again respond with anger, perhaps even experience stronger feelings than during the actual incidence (see also Buddhadasa 1992: 36-38). The sense bases function according to the bodily and mental states conditioning them.

**Contact:** The preceding five links denote existing dispositions, since our intentions, mental formations, bodily reactions, and senses have been conditioned through past experiences. “Contact” is the point at which sense-bases and external sense objects meet. These objects will have meanings according to our dispositions and intentions.

**Feeling:** According to our mental and bodily dispositions, each experience will be accompanied by a certain “feeling tone”<sup>45</sup> (Varela et al. 1991: 113). Correspondingly a certain experience will be considered pleasant, neutral, or unpleasant. Depending on the emotional reaction, craving will arise.

**Craving** is a deeper disposition arising with feeling: wanting what is pleasant or neutral, and wanting to get rid of that, which is unpleasant or discomforting. Payutto (1994b: 34) and Varela et al. (1991: 114) indicate a new stage in the process of dependent origination at this point; similarly, in a few ancient Buddhist texts the elements of dependent co-arising are depicted up to this point, but then “it switches over to the [...] cessation of craving, attachment, becoming, birth” (Buddhadasa 1992: 51). Payutto explains the new quality of “craving” by stating that the former elements - consciousness, body and mind, sense bases, contact and feeling – are “present results,” whereas the following components of craving, clinging, and becoming are “present causes.” The “present results” correspond to what is experienced as an enduring self<sup>46</sup> according to Buddhist teachings (see Apichai 2004: 24). Therefore, at the point of craving we have the option to be mindful of the process as it is occurring. Varela et al. note:

“Craving is an extremely important juncture in this chain of causality. Up to this point, the links have rolled off automatically on the basis of past conditioning. At this point, however, the aware person can do something about the situation: he can interrupt the chain or he

---

<sup>45</sup> Following Damasio’s distinction between emotion and feeling, the former would correspond to the element “Body and Mind,” whereas the latter denotes conscious feeling.

<sup>46</sup> Here, the self is made up by the “five aggregates,” which are corporeality, feeling, perception, mental formation or volitional activities, and consciousness. In their book, Varela et al. illustrate in their explanation of the five aggregates that whereas they all contribute to a sense of self and identification, we are nevertheless unable to locate the self in any of them (see Varela et al. 1991: 63-72).

can let it go on the next link (grasping). The handling of craving is what determines the possibilities for perpetuation or change.”

**Clinging (or grasping):** At this point craving transforms into ideas about sense-objects, as well as into ways of practice, and attitudes.

**Becoming:** Ideas and attitudes translate into conditioned behavior in future situations.

**Birth** denotes the formation of a new (ore renewed) self and the integration of the aforementioned elements into our mode of being.

**Old age and death:** Finally, the process leads to suffering. Identification with a self and with states of existence is accompanied with the awareness about deprivation and decay. If we give up on the idea of ownership of will and agency, and accept that the feelings and actions arising in our interactions with the world are actually events, then there is no “self” to grow old and die (see Bubna-Litic 2013: 73/74; Buddhadasa 1992: 25/26).

The illustration of the links involved show that the notion of “embodiment” is inherent in this Buddhist account of lived experience: It involves not only mental phenomena, but also sensorimotor processes (“contact” and “sense objects”) and emotional patterns in the creation of meaning. Thus, consonant with the learning of cognitive concepts as shown in chapter one, our emotive patterns and sensorimotor habits are automated processes conditioned through repeated exposure to recurring situations and pieces of information. These patterns and habits become consolidated as they enable us to discern common elements in diverse situations. The more familiar our cognitive structures become with these perceived consistencies and the more reliably we establish meaningful links between the present and the past, the more coordinated are our reactive responses to them. Buddhist philosophers speak of ignorance as we take these automated adaptive processes as expressions of an enduring self. “Craving” thus refers to the conscious process in which we engage in thoughts and feelings caused by these somatic changes. This leads to the stabilization of cycles of repetitive behavior

through mutually reinforcing mechanisms on all cognitive levels. Thus, bodily emotions not only influence conscious processes, but our conditioned thoughts and feelings likewise work back on psychosomatic patterns (see Teasdale & Chaskalson 2011a: 92). If we let our deliberations be guided by these somatic configurations, then the conscious processes contribute to solidifying a mode of being as illustrated by the process of dependent origination.

This mechanism is intertwined with our sense of self, which is an evolutionary attainment reinforced through our phenomenal sense of agency. As such it is a successful coping strategy: Emotional appraisals are originally meant to provide valuations of objects and events as to whether they contribute to or jeopardize survival. By bringing these somatic states into consciousness humans are able to use their highly developed cognitive skills to respond in accordance with this evaluation and to recall it in future situations. The process described through dependent origination is thus universal to all humans. However, most of our everyday emotional states do not immediately concern our physical wellbeing, but other immaterial aspects of the self: our perceived self-worth, our abilities and status compared to others in society etc. This strategy revolves around an illusory selfhood: We have no control over the process of dependent origination up to the stage of “craving.” States of mind conditioned by craving and grasping thus create suffering, since our identification with these configurations and the desires they condition will eventually involve negative feelings of dissatisfaction, conflict, and loss. Suffering in the Buddhist sense therefore does not refer to physical pain, but to the tendency to be entangled in conditioned thoughts and affects.

Mindfulness practices therefore point towards an alternative strategy aimed at interrupting the cycle by changing the way we relate to our experiences: Instead of viewing them as aspects of a lasting self, we are advised to see them as temporary events arising and subsiding through the interplay of mental, bodily, and environmental factors (see Kornfield 2000: 55). Accordingly, impermanence (anicca), suffering/unsatisfactoriness/conflict (dukkha), and non-self (anatta) are the three marks of existence in Buddhist philosophy (Thera 1962: 39/40). Instead of

engaging in thoughts and feelings under the influence of established patterns, we are encouraged to direct awareness to these adaptive configurations themselves. In a process of trial-and-error over many years the Buddha has developed the so-called “threefold training,” which is a practice in accordance with the teaching of dependent origination (Buddhadasa 2001: 101). Its three components are moral conduct, meditation, and pañña (insight).<sup>47</sup>

Insight meditation is the central component in order to create awareness about the body, feelings, and the mind. Since none of these can be supervised and controlled directly, meditation typically focuses on the breath<sup>48</sup> as the field of study. In the first stage in insight meditation, the aim is to develop one’s awareness to a degree that it can constantly focus on the breath while inhaling and exhaling. Different kinds of breath are studied and the different bodily reactions, which they evoke. Once this is achieved, “breathing with mindfulness” moves on to the study of the feelings which control our mind and actions. On the third stage meditation moves on to the study of the mind by analyzing the thoughts, which arise from it. Here, the meditation practitioner no longer focuses on the breath, but employs another meditation technique; his attention enters into a state of general observation without explicit focus. A “panoramic perspective” is gained, in which “mental contents [...] arise and subside” (Varela et al. 1991: 26).

The second aspect in the threefold training, moral conduct, reflects the commitment to gain insight; it “purifies the mind” in order to facilitate awareness needed in the meditation process (Apichai 2004: 26/27; Varela 1999: 71/72). According to Bubna-Litic, doctrinal ethical practices are not only designed to help in the acquisition of insight, but also to cultivate practices that correspond to these insights. The author suggests that spiritual experiences do not automatically translate into changed practices, since practitioners of meditation are themselves prone to pre-reflective

---

<sup>47</sup> The threefold training is in most sources further subdivided into the Noble Eightfold Path: moral conduct includes the three elements right speech, right action, and right livelihood; meditation includes the three elements right effort, right mindfulness, and right concentration; pañña includes right view and right intention (Apichai 2004: 26).

<sup>48</sup> There are a number of meditative techniques. The one summed up here is the technique, which according to Buddhadasa Bhikkhu was used and recommended by the Buddha (Buddhadasa 2001: 17).

behavioral patterns in everyday situations (Bubna-Litic 2013; Teasdale & Chaskalson 2011b: 116/17). Similarly, the American meditation master Jack Kornfield (2000) describes enlightenment as a life-long process with minor and major insights along the way. Following such experiences practitioners are therefore still challenged to integrate these into their daily lives. Pañña, the third component, denotes insight, as well as the ability to gain insight into the selfless nature of experience. Meditation, moral conduct, and insight reinforce each other in the process: e.g. prolonged training in meditation is accompanied by growing insight, which leads to a better understanding of the benefits of moral conduct.

The practice reveals that attitudes, feelings, and thoughts have been conditioned events, evoked through constant interaction with the outside world. After being able to control these elements, one can actively maintain those attitudes, which are consistent with the Buddhist view or reality, and discard those, which lead to suffering. Traits, which are actively being cultivated following the insight into the interconnectedness of one's mind with the environment, are "loving kindness" and compassion. These character traits are seen as the attitudinal and emotional equivalents of Buddhist practices and insights (see Hofmann et al. 2011: 1127/28; Maex 2011: 170/71): They support such qualities as patience, intellectual openness, and curiosity that are needed for the practice of insight meditation. Based on the notion of interconnectedness the qualities of compassion and loving kindness foster selfless and altruistic (in opposition to ego-centered) behavior. Certain forms of meditation are thus designed to extend the sense of interest and care, which we feel towards persons close to us, towards all living beings (see Varela et al. 1991: 248). Thus, mental dispositions are brought under the active regulation and control of the practitioner, instead of being conditioned by other events. Prolonged engagement in the threefold training thus fosters an understanding of the selflessness underlying the conditioned arising of thoughts and emotions. Instead we are made aware of our connectedness with others, and of the effects of our actions towards them.

The development of insight goes along with greater control and “more open possibilities in awareness” (Varela et al. 1991: 115). Higher forms of wellbeing can then develop in accordance with these insights and can become part of the individual’s experience and mental disposition. This process moreover includes the development of ethical behavior: Insight must be translated into changed behavior, since otherwise actions would be in conflict with the level of insight attained. Because of this connection between insight and practice, Buddhism does not force its strictest moral code onto people that lack insight into the nature of their selves: The levels of wisdom and actions were in conflict as well, since a person would act according to an ethical code, which is not validated by her/his experience. Buddhism thus refuses the notion of an absolute truth in a sense that it is universally valid for all people. Certain forms of wellbeing are considered as superior to others in Buddhism; whether they are “true” in a certain context depends on whether they can be applied. The Buddha himself is said to have given different teachings to different people according to their readiness (see Buddhadasa 1992: 5).

### **2.2.2. Making Use of Buddhist Techniques in Neuroscientific Studies and Therapies**

What distinguishes Buddhist philosophy from religious belief systems is that only the initial commitment to engage in the threefold training actually requires faith. Buddhists hold that once *pañña* arises as a consequence of the training, the direct experience of insight will replace the need to “believe” (Payutto 1993: 75; Apichai 2004: 26/27). Thus, experience is meant quite literally in this regard, as the insights through meditation reveal mechanisms through which the self is constructed. Since this knowledge is acquired through pre-discursive direct experience, insight in a Buddhist sense is of a different quality than knowledge gained through the use of reason, which denotes logical traceability instead of experience. A holistic view of

human nature according to Buddhism requires spiritual insight, of which rationality is a part (Evans & Arenson 1994: xi-xiii).

In the previous sub-section I have described Buddhist teachings and techniques in a way that leaves out all the supernatural elements that the philosophy has acquired through millennia of popular religious practice. To worshippers of a Buddhist religion, karmic laws are believed to operate over more than one lifespan. Accordingly, the teaching of dependent origination is commonly interpreted as spanning three lifetimes; a view, which Buddhadasa Bhikkhu firmly renounces in his book about the subject. Here he makes the point that the Buddha himself has never spoken about rebirth after death (Buddhadasa 1992: 19 and 56). The idea that a soul persists over many lives moreover contradicts the teaching about non-identity. Lastly, dependent origination cannot be put into practice, if it concerns many lives. As I will show in this section, Buddhist teachings are meant “to be of practical benefit” (Payutto 1993: 65), applicable in the here and now, verifiable through personal experience. The requirement of experience and of the translation of insight into practice moreover distinguishes Buddhism from other philosophies, which as Apichai notes, “may have more depth and greater width in the thought but it may not be practical” (Apichai 2004: 10). Being neither a religion, nor a philosophy Apichai later states that Buddhism is a “mind-based science” (Apichai 2007: 6), since it can be experienced and evaluated.

The Buddhist notion of directing awareness towards pre-reflective experience, as is intended in insight meditation, suggests the possibility of scientifically validating first-person experiences according to Varela. At the same time he acknowledges the obstacles to an intersubjective validation of experiences and of states of mind, such as confusing interpretations about an experience with a description thereof, as well as difficulties in finding the proper words when attempting to communicate the experience (Depraz et al. 2003: 90-93). A description of a pre-discursive experience is nevertheless possible as Varela and his co-authors point out: Skilled professionals, such as psychotherapists, are able to discern whether a patient is “reliving” an experience or giving forth interpretations. These professionals gather

indications by observing body language, changes in intonation, and use of words. As they recognize recurrent structures in the subjective accounts brought forward by their patients, they can guide a person's attention to aspects that they know are part of a certain kind of experience. Accordingly, the cultivation of awareness enables different persons to explore the ways in which their own experiences are shared and reflected by others.

In order to avoid distortive effects through interpreting and commenting, the experiencing person himself must develop skills of awareness according to Varela; thus it is not only the professional recipient of information, who must possess expertise in evaluating experiences, but also the person giving the account must approach experiences in a disciplined manner (Varela 1996: 330). Following the terminology developed by Husserl, Varela describes disciplined awareness through the process of "bracketing," or "epoche": it consists in attending to a state of consciousness while suspending all our knowledge that co-arises with it. In a next step, suspension proceeds to a "tuning out" of the outside world; awareness turns from an outward perception towards attending to an inner state (as done in the first phase of insight meditation by focusing on the breath, for instance). Finally, the nature of attention changes from this active inward-orientation towards a passive "letting-arrive" (as done in the second phase of insight meditation; Depraz et al. 2003: 31). The suspension of conscious thought and feeling continues throughout the practice giving rise to what others have termed "pure consciousness" (Shear & Jevning 1999). The practice of awareness thus consists in the cultivation of a state of readiness to make conscious formerly unconscious mechanisms. These mechanisms are the pre-discursive "invariants" of experience: They denote the "how" of experience rather than "what" is felt. As such they form universal human traits, which then can be rendered communicable; given one does not slip back from description to interpretation.

Neurophenomenology is the approach that combines such first-person data with data obtainable through neuroimaging techniques. Similar practices have been mentioned above in section 2.1., in the accounts given by patients who underwent

cortical stimulation. In contrast to these instances, in which a certain mental state is induced through externally controlled manipulations, neurophenomenology is concerned with pre-reflective and controlled states of awareness and emotion. Given data through neuroimaging techniques and from a number of skilled test persons, it is thus possible to verify the role of certain neuronal networks in different states of consciousness. First-person data on these mechanisms will only be reliable, if the person giving an account is able to intentionally generate stable mental states and to provide accurate verbal accounts describing these states (see also Lutz et al. 2008a: 167). Persons skilled in structured meditation techniques, such as insight meditation, are therefore seen as reliable sources for the neurophenomenological approach.

Such studies involving experienced meditation practitioners have been repeatedly conducted by Antoine Lutz and his colleagues (see 2008a and 2008b). The researchers examined the practitioners' subjective states of consciousness and gathered data on corresponding neuronal changes using electroencephalography and fMRI approaches. These methods were applied to the stages in insight meditation as mentioned above: the first involving attentional focus on a single object, and the second type, "open monitoring" meditation, in which awareness is maintained without focus. The thereby acquired data suggests increased ability to sustain focus and attention through hours of practice. Test persons practicing the second type of meditation seem to acquire the skill to regulate affective responses to stimuli, which shows in decreased activation in respective brain regions<sup>49</sup>. The researchers were moreover able to verify the effects of verbalizations on psychosomatic states of the meditation practitioners. A certain technique in Zen Buddhism, for instance, involves repeating the question "What is this?" over and over in the practitioner's mind in order to foster a global enquiring attitude (Kornfield 2000: 54; Batchelor 2011: 157). Verbalization can also be used to classify an affective state as it becomes conscious: "This strategy of labeling aspects of experience (e.g., 'this is distressing') [...] might thus call upon emotion regulation

---

<sup>49</sup> These regions are the amygdala and ventral prefrontal cortex.

processes [...] and disrupt or inhibit automatic affective responses” (Lutz et al. 2008a: 165; see also Thera 1962: 46).

Insight meditation, apart from its objectives to focus awareness and to enable a monitoring state, has the additional effect of cultivating compassion, especially self-compassion (Hofmann et al. 2011: 1129; see also Varela 1999: 66/67). This may not be surprising given that the meditation process induces a state of mind, in which the practitioner ceases to identify with the feelings thus observed, including guilt or shame. If these feelings are no longer perceived as resulting from our own weaknesses and mistakes, we may approach them with the level of forgiveness and tolerance that we experience when witnessing these feelings in others. Buddhist practices of loving kindness meditation (LKM) and compassion meditation (CM) are moreover meant to enhance these very capacities. Here, the practitioner evokes a mental image of a person towards which she/he feels love and warmth. She/he then “brackets” this feeling, directing it towards persons that usually do not induce such positive feelings: “neutral persons,” such as the mailman, or even enemies. LKM and CM thus aim to stabilize this mental state, including feelings and unconscious emotions, in order to enhance the psychosomatic dispositions that inform virtuous attitudes and behavior (see Varela 1999: 26/27). The “voluntary regulation of one’s emotional responses via the generation of compassion” (Lutz et al. 2008b: 4) has likewise been the subject of neurophenomenological investigations. Such studies do not only serve to validate the desired effects of Buddhist techniques, but also to add further evidence for the identification of neuronal correlates of certain emotion states<sup>50</sup>.

The above studies reveal the degree of control that meditation practitioners are able to obtain through years of training. Buddhist meditation practices include ways of influencing neurobiological determinants of our attitudes, intentions and thinking processes. As shown previously, these workings cannot be made conscious and therefore elude direct phenomenological interventions. Meditative techniques make

---

<sup>50</sup> In this case the insular cortex and cingulate cortex have been identified as brain regions involved in empathy (Lutz et al. 2008b: 1). Interestingly, the authors understand the capacity for empathy as “emotion sharing,” based on the perception-action model of empathy (see Preston & Hofelich 2011).

it possible to target unconscious emotions indirectly by guiding awareness towards perceivable body states (such as the heartbeat and breath) and through working back on psychosomatic dispositions by making their effects consciously present, sometimes through verbal labeling exercises. Thus, LKM cultivates a disposition, which is regarded as the most favorable condition to foster and apply insights. The feeling of loving kindness – which is usually coupled to specific life situations through unconscious categorization – is voluntarily extended to advance a general disposition towards most life situations.

The implicit understanding of human consciousness as embodied suggests that a similar level of control is not possible, if we wish to decouple our abilities of rational deliberation and analysis from underlying bodily mechanisms. The ideal of rational thinking devoid of emotion does not reflect actual thinking processes. As Damasio shows, emotional biases are in fact necessary for thinking and decision-making. Without such unconscious preferences our deliberation processes would be rendered highly time consuming and inefficient (see Damasio 1994: 193/94). In order to gain conscious control, and thus a deepened responsibility for our choices, emotions must therefore be factored in, instead of being cancelled out. As the meditation techniques outlined suggest, this approach calls for a more disciplined and prolonged training than the Kantian idea of taking responsibility and control through detached reasoning.

Whereas the studies by Lutz and his colleagues are aimed at neuroscientific insights into the workings of the mind, the key motivation in the fields of medicine and psychology to engage with Buddhist mindfulness techniques is to utilize these for therapeutic interventions. Practitioners of mindfulness-based stress reduction (MBSR) and mindfulness-based cognitive therapy (MBCT) have therefore attempted to decontextualize Buddhist techniques from their original philosophical framework and adapt them to the treatment of patients suffering from chronic pain or depression. The American physician Jon Kabat-Zinn, for instance, has devised MBSR in a way to make “the essence of the Buddha’s teachings [...] accessible to mainstream Americans,” who are not interested in the philosophy or in Buddhist

meditation retreats, but seek relief from chronic pain (Kabat-Zinn 2011a: 282; Williams & Kabat-Zinn 2011: 12). He notes that patients' typical response to their illness is the desire to get rid of and be distracted from it, whereas his mindfulness approach pursues the opposite path of paying close attention to the pain in a curious and non-judgmental manner. Although counterintuitive at first glance, it is the first approach which fosters a deep sense of identification with the pain, increasingly determining the patient's mode of being. Recurring thoughts such as "I hate this. This is killing me. How long is it going to last?" (Kabat-Zinn 2011b: 40) etc. actually aggravate suffering by adding an additional cognitive and feeling aspect to the original physical pain. Kabat-Zinn's eight-week group therapy combines different mindfulness techniques with group discussions, in which participants exchange individual experiences in everyday life and talk about perceived changes following meditation practice. Participants are taught to be aware of the sensations in their aching bodies as well as to affects and thoughts arising in their minds. The mindfulness practices require that thoughts and feelings be observed as events separate from bodily sensation. This means that as thoughts about the pain arise, participants direct their awareness at the thoughts themselves without judging their content. The repeated practice leads to a decoupling of the conscious dimension (the "alarm reaction") from the pain (the "primary sensation"; Kabat-Zinn 1982: 35). This practice does not affect somatic pain, but reduces stressful thoughts conditioned by them, so that the chronic illness loses its grip over the patients' minds.

MBCT is an approach designed to prevent depressive relapses by integrating methods used in MBSR with cognitive therapy as developed by the psychoanalyst Aaron T. Beck (Fennell & Segal 2011). Cognitive therapy assumes that depression is caused by feelings of not being good enough and not complying with standards, which have been internalized early on in life. Repeated experience of failure influences a person's self-perception, increases negative thinking, and determines behavioral patterns. As these mutually reinforcing cognitive dimensions persist over a period of at least two weeks, one speaks of clinical depression (Segal 2011: 103). Once a person has experienced depression, the likelihood of a relapse is very high.

The more often one has experienced such episodes, the more susceptible one becomes to future episodes: Sad thoughts are then more likely to trigger depressive thinking, correlated by an enhanced reactivity of corresponding neuronal circuits. The objective and design of MBCT interventions are very similar to Kabat-Zinn's approach: Participants within a group are encouraged to examine their beliefs from a detached perspective. In addition to meditative techniques therapy involves writing down the sequence of negative thoughts as they arise, as well as the situation in which they have occurred. The written record is then used as a set of hypotheses to be tested both through reflection as well as experimentation with alternative modes of behavior.

The successful combination of cognitive therapy and mindfulness practices suggests points of congruence between Western psychoanalytical approaches and the Eastern Buddhist tradition: Lacanian psychoanalysis, briefly touched upon in the first chapter, also posits identification as ultimately precarious and hence aims to expose its various guises as "fantasies." In fact, J.K. Gibson-Graham invoke both Lacan's approach and Buddhist philosophy as sources for the elaboration of their transformative project (Gibson-Graham 2006a: 129), which will be outlined in the fourth chapter. In cognitive therapy, Segal and Fennell note, the causes for mental distress are posited in terms very close to the Buddhist conception of suffering. "Perhaps these commonalities," they argue, "reflect the fact that both are based on close observation of the same human minds" (Fennell & Segal 2011: 137).<sup>51</sup>

Nevertheless, there are also differences, which have made it necessary to adapt cognitive therapy to the Buddhist framework. Thus, whereas in cognitive therapy the patient formulates specific treatment objectives together with the therapist, Buddhist mindfulness practices are not tied to any specific outcome. In fact, they are designed to let go of all attachment to any particular desire, otherwise one would trade an old identity for a new one. Even in MBSR and MBCT the objective is

---

<sup>51</sup> Speaking about the unconscious as it is understood in psychoanalysis and neurobiology, the American dream researcher Allan Hobson states that "Sigmund Freud was fifty-percent right and a hundred-percent wrong!" (Hobson in Metzinger 2009: 159). He believes that psychoanalysis studies "real" objects, but does so from a theoretical approach, which he believes to be outdated.

not to “fix” oneself or one’s illness; chronic pain patients continue experiencing physical suffering. Similarly, depression patients remain prone to a relapse, even though its likelihood following successful treatment can be greatly reduced (Segal 2011: 109/10; Williams & Kuyken 2012: 360). According to Buddhist philosophy suffering is part of everyone’s life; this includes meditation masters as well. Meditation practice is therefore designed to reduce dukkha by changing our relationship towards it, so that instead of it controlling our minds, we meet it unbiased by preconceptions, but with compassion and acceptance. Kornfield calls this attitude to be nurtured a “beginner’s mind” (Kornfield 2000: 126) through which one welcomes all mental states, both positive and negative, as they arise.

The American psychiatrist Jeffrey M. Schwartz has been inspired by mindfulness techniques for devising his “Four Step method” to treat patients suffering from obsessive-compulsive disorder (OCD; Schwartz & Begley 2002: 14). He has done so independently of the above authors and his application differs in many respects from MBSR and MBCT. For instance, he does not include meditation sessions in his therapy. Instead, his method is meant to interrupt the patients’ identification with the OCD urge through conscious reinterpretation of the feelings and thoughts constantly caused by the disorder. This revaluation is aided by showing the patients their brain scans, which make visible the activation of the areas triggering obsessive behavior. Through studies involving neuroimaging technology Schwartz and his colleagues had found that three areas of the brain, which span an area from just above the eyes to a part in front of the ears, are overactive in episodes of OCD. These involve the orbital frontal cortex, which becomes active when we believe that something is wrong and has to be corrected by a change in behavior; the striatum, which plays an important role in the development of habits; and the anterior cingulate gyrus involved in the regulation of somatic emotions. Schwartz’s idea is that a malfunction in the striatum causes overstimulation of the prefrontal cortex constantly triggering an alarm reaction in that part of the brain. Hence this neuronal network has been termed “OCD circuit” (Schwartz & Begley 2002: 71).

The first step in Schwartz's Four Step method, called "Relabel" is meant to encourage patients to gain conscious distance from the content of their urges and instead view them as intrusive feelings. Thus, instead of permitting automatic commentaries accompanying the symptoms, such as "I feel this is contaminated" or "I have to check if the door is locked," patients are told to simply acknowledge that "I am having an OCD symptom." The second step, "Reattribute," is meant to reinforce this technique by use of visual evidence, i.e. slides showing the neuroanatomy of the symptoms. This aspect helps the patients to identify the source of their feelings with a concrete mechanism in their brain, which – as Schwartz emphasizes – is not actually "them" (81). Relabeling and Reattributing therefore contribute to the patients not identifying or engaging with the cognitive events arising with this brain activity. "Refocus," the third step, targets the behavioral component of OCD experiences. Patients are told to resist giving in to compulsive behavior, such as washing their hands or checking or counting objects, and instead engage in alternative activities, such as gardening, taking a walk, playing a game etc. for at least fifteen minutes. The rationale of this part of the treatment is to create habits of adaptive behavior, which will over time strengthen alternative connections in the brain against the OCD circuit. This in turn enhances the ease with which patients learn to resist old behavioral patterns resulting from their symptoms. Through experience with the adaptive strategy as exemplified in the previous steps, emotional valuation (the fourth step) of the OCD urge and of resisting compulsive behavior changes over time. Although the symptoms continue to persist, patients at this stage find it easier to overcome them without having to expend as much effort on the aforementioned steps (88).

Whereas the above approaches utilize mindfulness techniques, there are also treatment interventions including LKM and CM, likewise adapted to week-long group therapies. However, Hofmann et al. note that up until today there are very few studies about treatment methods of this latter kind (2011: 1130). In sum, there are valuable practical insights to be gained from these treatment methods regarding how Buddhist practices can be used to induce attitudinal and behavioral shifts, as well as about the neurobiological and cognitive mechanisms underlying these

changes. These therapeutic applications provide clues about possible adaptive strategies in other social contexts as well. The lessons they offer can be summarized as follows:

- **Modification of Buddhist techniques:** All three approaches involve modifications of Buddhist techniques for practical therapeutic purposes. An important adjustment introduced by these psychological interventions is that they last only weeks up to a few months, whereas conventional meditation training is a matter of years. Apart from this, the departure from traditional meditation practices is least significant in Kabat-Zinn's MBSR program, although he too modifies existing Buddhist practices and complements them with additional Eastern practices, such as yoga exercises (see Kabat-Zinn 2011b: 38/39 and 1982: 36). MBCT constructively combines mindfulness practices and cognitive therapeutic methods, such as making written records of automatic thinking processes and experimentation with alternative behavior. Schwartz's Four Step method offers a comparatively distinct approach, since he shows how identification with automatic mental states can be interrupted without recourse to meditation.
- **Non-Identification:** Mindfulness-based therapeutic interventions direct focused awareness towards a certain aspect of the self: a medical condition, which permanently or repeatedly overwhelms thoughts and feelings. As such, most of these applications involve the first step in insight meditation to foster awareness of the contingency of mental phenomena. Schwartz's therapy makes use of a labeling exercise ("This is an OCD episode") in order for patients to view their symptoms simply as events, not grounded in any real need or problem needing to be fixed. This deliberate reconceptualization does not alter the visceral emotions giving rise to intense feelings of urgency (Schwartz & Begley 2002: 81). "Reattribute" therefore is meant to reinforce the Relabeling exercise. It invokes the sense of vision, by providing an image of brain mechanisms which can be recalled during an OCD episode.

What these techniques have in common is that they actively discourage engagement with possible sources of illness or with the contents of one's thoughts. In MBCT, for instance, it is the cognitive therapeutic elements, which provide a psychoanalytical theory about the origins of depression rooted in childhood experiences. Within the Buddhist philosophical framework it makes no difference whether depression is caused by social factors or chemical imbalances in the brain. Questions are not asked, whether certain forms of chronic pain, depression, or OCD may be expressions of unfulfilled needs and desires. Buddhist philosophy pays no heed to the truth of theoretical concepts, but is concerned with the way we approach inner phenomena on all cognitive levels. Therefore, it prioritizes the cultivation of underlying attitudes.

- **Potentials and limits of discursive interventions:** Certain labeling exercises can be used to aid the cultivation of emotional dispositions. In everyday life all levels of cognition are interconnected in the classification of events and an emphatic exclamation of "What is this?" usually follows a viscerally felt sensation of surprise. Discursive tools can therefore be used to work back on psychosomatic mechanisms. As far as discursive explanations and verbal interventions are concerned, they are in themselves regarded as insufficient in inducing genuine transformation (Teasdale & Chaskalson 2011a: 95). Practitioners of MBCT and of the Four Step method acknowledge this and therefore include behavioral changes in the treatment process in order to deepen comprehension through experience. Altering patients' belief systems is therefore only a start; beliefs must be validated by the embodied aspects of cognition. Changed behavior, if more beneficial to wellbeing, will be coupled with positive emotional dispositions, resulting in the strengthening of alternative neuronal connections, and sensorimotor adaptations. Since these cognitive levels are included in the Buddhist Three-Fold Training, it generates the ability for quick and "apt response in changing situations" (Thera 1962: 90) out of attitudes of compassion and openness.

Rather than forming theoretical constructs about personal imperfections and social problems, mindfulness practice instills a certain way of being in confronting these issues. Part of this disposition is engaging with the outside world with a beginner's mind.

- **Enabling Environments:** Most mindfulness-based interventions are carried out in a group context (Dimidjian & Linehan 2003: 168). Group therapies provide a unique facilitating context for change. Here, the participants share stories and experiences and mutually encourage progress. A professional therapist moreover embodies the qualities promoted in the process, such as acceptance and compassion. This almost inevitably places the therapist in a position of power, which nevertheless is used as a constructive element in the process, since the expert's role is to transfer those very qualities on to the patients until she/he is no longer needed. Schwartz also draws on this tacit power relationship when he explains to his patients the brain mechanisms creating episodes of OCD. Being positioned as an expert, his explanation carries heightened credibility. Therefore, his theory is more likely to evoke responses, including emotional sensations, conducive to change than if explained by a person without his formal qualifications. However, Schwartz seems to ignore these factors and attributes the capacity to induce changes in the brain to the patients' own "mental force" (Schwartz & Begley 2002: 291/92). Underlying this assumption is the idea that cognition is a process taking place solely in the brain. Accordingly, when patients decide to alter their behavior and neuronal connections change as a consequence, then some part of the mind outside the brain appears to be at work; like an invisible force with the capacity to change matter.<sup>52</sup> This conclusion is less

---

<sup>52</sup> Schwartz's conclusion thus resembles a view about the relationship between mind and brain as put forward by Harré. Based on Schwartz's work, the neurosociologist Franks notes that "the results produced by Schwartz [...] support the conclusion that consciousness and mindful volition is an emergent from the brain and cannot be explained by the brain's material substance. [...] The materialistic position would insist that the brain is changing itself and that there is no need to posit a separate, nonmaterial entity called mind to explain these changes. Mental force, according to Schwartz, needs the brain to express itself, but mind is nonetheless a qualitatively different

compelling in the framework of embodied cognition, in which the brain, the body, and the environment interact in the creation of meaning.

### **2.3. Summary**

Embodied cognitive mechanisms provide precast schemas for conscious processes. Although alterable, these structures are relatively enduring especially with regard to habitual delimitations of a self from an environment, or of personal agency from external events. Taken together, sensorimotor and emotional categorizations are automated responses to environmental stimuli, which are subject to change through new experiential input usually occurring “by chance”; thus not resulting from intended reorientations. However, changes on these visceral levels can be brought about deliberately by devising environmental settings or outside interventions, which facilitate the emergence of new experiences, and consequently of new dispositions: Such techniques to purposely influence consciousness may consist in cortical stimulation through electric currents, in consuming “psychoactive substances,” in engaging in meditative techniques, or in “going on a long, slow run in the woods” (Connolly 2002: 88; Metzinger 2009: 217/18). Buddhist mindfulness practices provide disciplined techniques to subject our automated responses to willed interventions. These techniques target not only intellectual understanding, but extend to embodied forms of knowing: By viewing those elements, which are available for conscious introspection as conditioned by underlying unconscious construction processes, these techniques sensitize for sub-personal mechanisms. They indicate that at the point their effects become conscious – indicated by “craving” in the process of dependent origination – we are able to put an end to further conditioned behavior. “Moral conduct” then, indicates the cessation of automated behavior by implementation in new practices. This approach has been adopted and modified in mindfulness-based therapies. These

---

emergent that can act independently from, and actively upon, the cells from which it arose (Franks 2010: 199).

applications provide valuable insights about those elements, which can be utilized in development practice as well.

These techniques target sub-personal mechanisms, which precede conscious and cultural interpretations. As such they bring to light common mechanisms inscribed in the human body. They are thus not tied to specific contents, e.g. in the form of discursive interpretations, but reveal structures of sense-making processes common to members of the human species. These structures are manifest in body states and neurobiological processes with identifiable effects on thinking and feeling. Metzinger's ethical considerations are based on an understanding of resulting states of consciousness. Certain meditation practices are meant to cultivate those states, which foster orientations consistent with the Buddhist view of reality: Loving-kindness, compassion, sympathetic joy, and equanimity - called the "Four Divine Abodes" (Pryor 1991: 18) – are seen as attitudes consistent with the recognition of non-self and interconnectedness. CM and LKM techniques are thus meant to broaden one's awareness towards others, as well as towards new possibilities. This non-judgmental disposition is thus manifest in prereflective behaviors – Knowing How – "responsive to the needs of the particular situation" (Varela 1999: 71). As such, it provides few explicitly stated norms or static principles – Knowing That – to inform behavior or to orient towards known ideals.

As will be shown in chapter 4, this objective of dispositional changes can become a guiding principle across development initiatives as well. Elements from mindfulness-based group therapies can equally be transposed to be applied in community settings. The nature of the task – evocation of new dispositions and behaviors through enabling environments – puts constraints on the applicability of these techniques in relation to scale (see Harré in Harré & Bhaskar 2005: 27). Chapter 4 will thus provide examples exclusively of community-level initiatives, which are nevertheless not necessarily limited to local contexts, but may with time extend to regional or even global networks. Before turning to development practice, chapter 3 will examine development theories underlying some of these practices. These theories will be examined in terms of how they include views put forward so

far. In particular I will look at how these constructs are compatible with enactivist ontology, and how they allow for sensitivity for embodied cognitive processes.

### **3. Development Alternatives: Postdevelopment, Community Culture, and Buddhist Economics**

The enactivist approach puts forward a non-foundational understanding of reality and grounds this understanding in the study of living organisms. This constructivist framework thus extends beyond language and social reality to include natural reality. The first chapter has provided examples for the performativity of action-perception loops; the ways organisms perceive reality, act in it, and receive feedback from their environment. Different organisms thus enact different realities, but they do so in accordance with the feedback they receive from mutual interaction. The second chapter has dealt with how human sense-making is explicable in enactivist terms, e.g. by showing that even our sense of self is constituted through bodily interactions. Our body moreover plays an important role in the coordination of social interactions, including also our emotional appraisal of social stimuli. Although most of these cognitive processes take place without our awareness, there are ways to subject them to willed changes. Buddhist meditation techniques and adaptations thereof provide means to that end, targeting adaptations of emotional dispositions and micro-practices. Applying enactivism in development practice thus includes that we make use of these subdiscursive cognitive dynamics.

Grounding development practice in the enactivist framework moreover precludes a structural view of social and economic reality. This means acknowledging various conceptions of economy and corresponding practices beyond a “capitalocentric” (Gibson-Graham 2006b: 6) view, and recognizing the enactive potentials of alternative conceptions. Therefore, theories that presuppose the universal validity of a certain development model or of teleological historical processes, as is the case for modernization theory and dependency theory (Mürle 1997: 12/13), are difficult to reconcile with the enactivist ontology. Most development approaches since the 1990s have retained many of the assumptions underlying these two main strands of development theory, but sought to include elements formerly ignored in these

conceptions.<sup>53</sup> These additions and modifications were meant to better understand and to better manage “development.” This has been done by e.g. including formerly neglected actors on the local (participatory development), national<sup>54</sup>, and global levels<sup>55</sup>. At the same time there have been modifications of the development concept beyond a purely economic understanding in order to include environmental and social elements as well: e.g. sustainable development and “Green GDP,” or the “Human Development Index” by the UNDP and Amartya Sen’s “capability approach” (Sen 1999). Generally it can be noted that these approaches are pursuing the same development objectives as the preceding theories, but attempt to solve development problems more effectively and sustainably through adaptations (see also Ziai 2006a: 194/95 and 213). This chapter will therefore provide an outline of theoretical approaches, which leave these certainties behind, namely postdevelopment theory, the Thai Community Culture School, and Buddhist Economics. Case studies featured in chapter 4 are moreover each inspired by one of these frameworks.

Postdevelopment theory, for instance, emphasizes the contingent quality of conventional development thinking including all underlying assumptions. Some authors, especially Arturo Escobar (1995), make use of Foucauldian discourse analysis in order to challenge the universal validity of capitalocentric conceptions of development (Ziai 2004:1048/49). The theoretical framework of postdevelopment, its points of critique of development discourse and practice, as well as its normative elements will be the subject of the following section (3.1.). It should be noted that I will focus on the early outlines of postdevelopment theory as presented in the 1990s, in now classic works such as the “Development Dictionary” (1992), “The

---

<sup>53</sup> This is not to ignore authors and publications, which in their ideas still represent the two main strands of development theory: The publications by Terry Boswell and Christopher K. Chase-Dunn (2000, 2006) are clearly situated within World System Analysis, whereas Jeffrey Sachs in his work “The End of Poverty: Economic Possibilities for our Time” (2005) presents a contemporary version of a big push strategy, similar to Rosenstein-Rodan (1943) and Rostow (1960) in the past.

<sup>54</sup> This is the case for heterodox strategies for national competitiveness as promoted by Dani Rodrik (2004) and Charles Sabel (2005), as well as „systemic competitiveness“ (see for example Eßer et al. 2001) in the German discussion.

<sup>55</sup> See Ziai’s critique of Global Governance conceptions in Ziai (2006b; esp. 84).

Post-Development Reader” (1997) and others. Contributors to these volumes mainly focus on criticizing mainstream development conceptions, whereas the early 2000s saw the emergence of studies, which discuss the application of postdevelopment theory in practice (McGregor 2007: 158). Illustrations of postdevelopment in practice will be discussed in the following chapter. Nevertheless, normative and practical considerations already appear in earlier postdevelopment works. By the example of the Community Culture School in Thailand I will then illustrate that these normative elements largely respond to the development of traditional communities in the context of expanding capitalism (3.2.).

So far, I will have described alternative development theories, which criticize the hegemonic claim of modernist development discourse and which aim at qualifying this claim by highlighting competing conceptions. Both sections will follow a similar structure: first, by providing a critique of the historical processes leading to the hegemony of modernist development discourse; second by discussing the effects of the development discourse and practice on traditional communities; and finally by showing that traditional practices and values continue to be present in the livelihood strategies of rural communities up until today. Whereas postdevelopment and the Community Culture School aim at democratizing the discourse on development, Buddhist Economics (3.3.) offers another non-essentialist approach by examining assumptions underlying modernist development for their effects on wellbeing. In the final section (3.4.), I will discuss these development approaches from an enactivist perspective as outlined in the preceding chapters.

### **3.1. Postdevelopment**

Postdevelopment ideas have been most prominently outlined in Arturo Escobar’s “Encountering Development. The Making and Unmaking of the Third World” (1995), Wolfgang Sachs’ (ed) “The Development Dictionary” (1992), and in Rahnema and Bawtree’s (eds) “The Post-Development Reader” (1997). In the introduction to the

book edited by Sachs the author states that after 40 years of “the age of development” he is writing its obituary (Sachs 1992: 1): “The idea of development stands like a ruin in the intellectual landscape. [...] it did not work.” Sachs expresses a notion shared by many development theorists during the 1990s due to the perceived shortcomings of modernization and dependency theories: Neither have the countries of the Global South caught up with the fully industrialized nations as envisaged by modernization theory, nor could the “success stories” – especially of the four Asian tigers Hong Kong, Singapore, South Korea, and Taiwan – be explained within the framework of dependency theory (Mürle 1997: 11).

Certain statements of postdevelopment authors resemble the normative-descriptive ideas brought forward by dependency theory or World Systems Analysis (see Wallerstein 2004: 29): Wolfgang Sachs and C. Douglas Lummis for instance view the world economy as a hierarchical system, where the fully developed nations “will always move faster than the rest, for they are geared towards a continuous degradation of what they have to put forth: the most advanced technology” (Sachs 1992: 3; also Lummis 1992: 46). Another point of agreement is the refusal of so-called “development alternatives” along the lines of actually existing socialism: The model pursued by the Soviet Union and by other socialist states was a catching-up strategy of modernization. Industrialization by plan was conceived as a more effective and rational means of development than development characterized by particular interests in market economies. Although competing with the capitalist West, the Soviet Union borrowed fordist technology and elements of corporate organization from its Western rivals in order to transcribe these into political-economic steering on the national level. This development alternative has thus operated within the categories of modernity and accordingly, communist countries have been part of the capitalist system (Wallerstein 1983: 107/8; Kößler 2004: 6/7).

Despite these overlaps there are a number of crucial differences between postdevelopment and World Systems Analysis. Most proponents of the latter argue for a global transformation of political and economic structures to solve the

problems of inequality and environmental destruction (Boswell & Chase-Dunn 2000: 235/36). Solidary intellectuals are ascribed the role to design emancipatory strategies, which guide and mobilize global movements joining together to achieve that transformation. To show that a worldwide alliance of people from different social strata is possible, World Systems theorists point to the example of the piecemeal worldwide abolition of slavery following the French Revolution (Boswell & Chase-Dunn, 2000: 243; Kößler & Melber 2002: 19-24). Aware of the manifold communal alternatives currently being practiced and advocated by NGOs and postdevelopment theorists, Terry Boswell and Christopher Chase-Dunn concede that they “expect that the current resistance to global capitalism will, in large part, take the form of local self-reliance.” But since they deny any transformative potential of such local alternatives the authors go on to argue that “the building of self-reliant communities needs also to organize with a coordinated movement [...] that will seek to reform, or create de novo, world institutions that will promote social justice and environmental sustainability.” (Boswell & Chase-Dunn 2006: 324)

Postdevelopment theorists dismiss any global governance conception, including alternative visions of global governance regimes, as potentially oppressive to a variety of possible imaginaries of ways of life. From their perspective authors such as Kößler et al. or Boswell & Chase-Dunn seem unaware that their ideas of emancipation – including harmonization of living standards and a more just distribution of economic growth – are based on preconceptions about economy and progress, which may for some be debatable. Underlying these ideas are norms of technological rationality, division of labor, and wage labor, which are expected to be accepted as unquestioned attainments of modern science and progress; to these authors it is an established fact that the development of industrial production enables individual self-determination to a far higher degree than alternative forms of production, such as communal subsistence agriculture (see Kößler & Schiel 1996: 48; Boswell & Chase-Dunn 2000: 6, 238/39). It is precisely such putative certainties, which postdevelopment authors and proponents of Buddhist Economics seek to challenge.

Postdevelopment theorists aim at a radical departure from prevalent development ideas and therefore reject conceptions of so-called “alternative development,” as well. Sustainable development, for instance, is understood as a concept to ensure the continuity of the industrial system by eco-friendly means. Although the capitalist system causes environmental destruction, postdevelopment authors argue, proponents of sustainable development do not question its underlying assumptions about growth and consumption. Instead, they seek to better manage economic activity, based on scientific methods and modern technology. By perpetuating these elements of the dominant mode of knowing, sustainable development fails to examine modern knowledge about its role in environmental destruction (see Ullrich 1992: 282). Advocates of postdevelopment doubt that ecological sustainability and economic growth could be complementary objectives: Raising global living standards to those in the industrialized world would outstrip the natural capacities of the planet. And yet, they argue, capitalist production and scientific knowledge continue to pervade most development initiatives, even those, which purport to include target groups in the decision-making process.

Postdevelopment theorists moreover criticize the participatory development approach for favoring expert knowledge held by development workers over indigenous knowledge. Since this approach, according to them, only claims to be inclusive of alternative views, postdevelopment authors view participatory development projects as a means “to provide development with a new source of legitimation” (Rahnema, 1997a: 122; see McKinnon 2007: 776/77). A similar argument is put forward with regard to “improved” well-being indices as e.g. the human development index (HDI) instead of GDP per capita;<sup>56</sup> they are regarded as mere variations of the same universalist concept. Advocates of postdevelopment

---

<sup>56</sup> Serge Latouche argues for example that the concept of GNP per capita does not capture the realities of life in certain African communities, where livelihoods are secured to a large extent through non-market means. People’s well-being in these societies depends more on solidarity than on monetary terms (Latouche 1993: 47). “GNP per capita” is therefore inadequate in comparing living conditions in different parts of the world, where market relations determine the well-being of people to different degrees.

therefore distance themselves from all these alternative conceptions, demanding instead “alternatives to development” (Escobar 1995: 215).

Visible is thus the aim to democratize the discursive space, to delegitimize hierarchies between different kinds of knowledge, and to refuse interpretations, which claim universal validity. This project includes disclosing the specificity and cultural contingency of mainstream development discourse. Escobar, who explicitly makes use of Foucauldian methodology, views this practice as part of an “anthropology of modernity” (Escobar 1995: 11): thus laying open the cultural and historical conditions of the phenomenon. Escobar as well as other postdevelopment authors trace the historical origins of the development discourse in the bipolar world order following World War II, in which the United States and the Soviet Union sought to secure political and economic influence in other regions of the world (see also Sachs 1992: 2). Development aid, according to postdevelopment authors, has therefore been a political tool. Some therefore interpret the Marshall Plan as a means to create markets for American products in Western Europe, at the same time securing political dominance in the region. In this interpretation of aid as a disguise for self-help, these authors regard the plan as “the prototype of all future development help” (Gronemeyer, 1992: 63). The European economic recovery following the introduction of the Marshall Plan encouraged subsequent US administrations to pursue development programs on a wider scale in so-called Third World regions. It was during this time that the concept of underdevelopment took shape, as well as the interpretation of its causes and remedies by the West.

Escobar provides an outline of the implicit rules of the development discourse by identifying the formation of the objects of development, its elements, and “enunciative modalities” (see Foucault 1972: 50-53), which determine the manner in which expert knowledge is expressed. The development discourse thus assumes certain objects of development intervention such as “poverty, insufficient technology and capital, rapid population growth” (Escobar 1995: 41) etc. Accordingly the Third World lacked capital and technology, and has been poor and overpopulated,

compared to the standards set by the industrialized nations. The latter thus constituted the models of fully developed nations, according to which the state of development in other nations could be measured. The notion of underdevelopment therefore suggests a classification of non-Western cultures along past time periods from a Western perspective (Shanin 1997: 67/68). This perception had already justified the involvement of European powers in other parts of the world through colonization. The very same notion, according to postdevelopment theorists, has been underlying development efforts since the 1940s. For Western powers to understand other cultures it has been necessary to classify them according to Western categories. Other peoples therefore appeared as “savages” lacking “the fruits of the Enlightenment,” and therefore had to be civilized according to the European conception of “one mankind” (Escobar 1995: 78/9; Sachs 1992a: 104).

In addition to the objects or topics of development, the discourse also includes the means to achieve economic improvements through central elements, namely “the process of capital formation, and the various factors associated with: technology, population and resources, monetary and fiscal policies, industrialization and agricultural development, commerce and trade” (Escobar 1995: 40). Escobar explains that the emphasis on industrialization results from the value system expressed within the development discourse. In modernization theory peasants engaged in subsistence farming have been viewed as traditional and unproductive, since they do not generate surplus. Most development efforts at the time were targeted at “enterprising men [...] willing to mobilize savings and to take risks in pursuit of profit or modernization” (Rostow 2000: 107). Early modernization theorists, such as Rostow, identified these entrepreneurs with the new urban elites in developing societies. Endowed with capital they would invest part of it in the emerging industrial sectors of their homeland. They would move their national economies up the value chain and provide the “unemployed” rural masses with monetary income (Escobar, 1995: 74-79) through the “trickle-down effect.”

The development discourse thus privileges certain groups of people according to their perceived role in economic development: Accordingly, entrepreneurs and industrialists constitute the driving force of economic development, since they accumulate capital, create value measureable in monetary terms, develop their technological base, and offer employment. Lending institutions, such as the World Bank and the IMF, governments, and development economists moreover offer loans and expertise to facilitate and launch the development process. These actors and institutions acquire legitimacy by using standards (poverty lines, minimum incomes etc.) and labels (landless farmers, slum dwellers) recognized within the rules of the discursive formation, regardless of whether people in the so-called underdeveloped nations perceive themselves as poor or unemployed. “In sum,” Escobar concludes, “the system of relations establishes a discursive practice that sets the rules of the game: who can speak, from what points of view, with what authority, and according to what criteria of expertise; it sets the rules that must be followed for this or that problem, theory, or object to emerge and be named, analyzed, and eventually transformed into a policy or plan” (Escobar 1995: 41; see also Foucault 1972: 44-46 and 50-52).

Although the development discourse is shaped by the interests of international agents and national governments on different stages of planning and implementation<sup>57</sup>, it is the discursive formation as a whole, which exerts power. Power is thus not located within agents or institutions as their motivations can only be made legitimate within the existing discursive formation. If power is dissociated from the powerful in this way, it becomes an organizing principle, legitimate through its apparent validity. Foucault has termed this mechanism “biopower” (Brigg 2002: 423; Foucault 1990: 140/41), a way of acting through disciplining of the mind. It not only serves powerful interests, but becomes entrenched in the minds of people around the world. Postdevelopment theory denies the universal validity of all the

---

<sup>57</sup> This includes business opportunities for multinational corporations through development aid, project priorities defined by the World Bank, or the inclusion of remote areas into the control of central governments, e.g. through infrastructure projects (Escobar, 1995: 166/7; Ferguson 1997: 231).

above concepts as they imply the devaluation of alternative visions of life: Western “monoculture of the mind” (Shiva 1993) accordingly serves as the only legitimate form of knowledge.

This dominant form of knowledge, instilled through multiple channels such as the schooling system, or the media, shapes people’s perception, aspirations, and perceived needs. These needs are put in relation to the market economy; Instead of food, shelter, and clothing – thus needs, which can equally be satisfied through subsistence production - it is an income beyond a predetermined poverty line that is required to satisfy basic needs. The basic assumption in modern economics of man’s indefinite needs again presupposes the universal validity of a market economy versus subsistence economies, where – according to postdevelopment theorists - values as frugality and simplicity are stressed (Rahnema 1997a: 122/23). Modernization, however, is not in every case a subtle process, in which people around the world internalize its values and norms. Postdevelopment theorists also make reference to instances, in which the discursive formation legitimizes the use of force against subsistence-oriented communities by labeling them as “unproductive,” whereas large-scale agro-industries and government projects are seen to be more efficient in generating revenue or output. When the interests of subsistence-oriented small-scale farmers, who have little political bargaining power, collide with those of governments or industrialists, the former in many cases end up divested of their land and capacity for self-reliance. Being unable to exercise their subsistence skills and thus having to seek employment as unskilled labor mainly in urban areas, economic development – the authors conclude – in these cases actually creates poverty (see Shiva 1992; Bunyard 1997).

Postdevelopment theory links this violence manifest in the destruction of traditional life spaces to environmental destruction. They stress that the economic activities of traditional communities are intertwined with ecological preservation, because their livelihoods depend on the continued reproduction of environmental resources. Lacking the means to buy or sell goods on the market, they have to make sure that

their consumption needs do not compromise ecological regeneration (Escobar 1995: 96; Sachs 1992b). Capitalist production, on the other hand, is unsustainable, as well as the consumption patterns it promotes partly by constantly creating new “needs” (Latouche 1997: 140). By contrasting the frugality of traditional communities with an exploitative and unsustainable capitalist economic system, postdevelopment theory indicates a constructive project in addition to its critique of mainstream development conceptions: These consist of local economies, in which communities adapt their economic activities and consumption patterns to the capacities of the local ecosystem, mainly by utilizing traditional knowledge.

This does not mean a nostalgic idealization of pre-modern communities. At least some postdevelopment theorists acknowledge that traditional communities have neither been spaces free of power, nor without violence (Rahnema 1997a: 114). They also admit that traditional ways of life have ceased to exist in a pure form. However, they argue that traditional elements have nevertheless survived through interactions with modernity in modified forms. Being today neither traditional, nor modern culture, but a practice of a hybridization of both, they enable communities to formulate alternative visions in a dynamic relationship with modernity.<sup>58</sup> Still distinct from the dominant culture, such interpretations are ways to relate differently to the world. Translated into alternative practices they inform constructive strategies of resistance against domination exerted through discourse.

The conscious return to traditional ways, be it in the case of indigenas in Mexico, communities in Senegal, or various movements in India, is both an expression of resistance and of liberalization from the forces of the global market economy (Rahnema 1997a: 127; Esteva & Perez 2001: 120). Local cultures provide communities with alternative visions about needs and ways to satisfy them. Exposure to both modernist conceptions and traditional worldviews provide opportunities of choice through interdiscursivity: This means recognition of options

---

<sup>58</sup> See Escobar (1995: 218-21) and Gibson-Graham (2006a:191). Hybrid development objectives have been pursued in the action research projects of Gibson-Graham (2005a: 17; and next chapter).

whether to satisfy needs through income-generating ventures or through subsistence activities, or whether to acquire farm inputs through purchase or from local resources etc. Alternative communities are thus able to withdraw from the market both as producers and consumers. Rahnema proposes that such decisions are made in small communities, in which people “know and trust one other” under the guidance of wise leaders “who commanded everyone’s respect and deference” (Rahnema 1997b: 388 and 394). Thus, advocates of postdevelopment argue that problems such as environmental sustainability and poverty call for various place-based strategies in accordance with the uniqueness of local forms of knowledge and environmental resources. Since means and ends of development are up to each community, postdevelopment rejects universalist claims.<sup>59</sup>

There is widespread agreement among early critics of postdevelopment that the reliance on discourse analysis or an uncritical treatment of communal cultures fosters a relativist approach: Either the theory offers no development alternative, or implicitly legitimizes violent practices within communities.<sup>60</sup> Moreover, since postdevelopment envisages that each community decides about development objectives and the means to pursue them, the theory denies any productive role for external development assistance. Critics moreover question, whether Third World peasants share the motivations as assumed in the normative aspects of postdevelopment theory, e.g. a partial return to traditional ways or sustainable farming. Ziai directs his critique against these normative elements, which can be found “[in] almost all post-development texts” (Ziai 2004: 1054). He identifies the “emancipatory potential” of postdevelopment theory with the “constructivist and anti-essentialist” conceptions, which in this section have been most visible in Escobar’s work. Ziai identifies within the texts, which seek to disclose the contingency of development discourse, a “project of radical democracy” in line with the conception

---

<sup>59</sup> In fact Esteva and Prakash go so far to reject the Universal Declaration of Human Rights as a Western concept “dissolving the very foundations of cultures which are organized around the notions of communal obligations, commitment and service.” In many parts of the Global South, they go on arguing, “communal rights have clear priority over *personal* or *individual* rights” (Esteva & Prakash 1997: 282; italics in the original).

<sup>60</sup> See Kiely (1999: 42), Schuurman (2000: 14/15), and Nederveen Pieterse (2000: 182).

developed by Laclau and Mouffe. This project aims at decentralizing power and encourages self-determination, encompassing not only political and economic processes but also in respect to knowledge generation.

The normative and normative-descriptive<sup>61</sup> statements, which assume certain consistent contents of traditional knowledge and development objectives, are according to Ziai fraught with dangers. He subsumes these under the term “reactionary populism”: Rahnema’s vision, for instance, that communal development should be entrusted to respected leaders could imply “violent means - beating up women wearing make-up, for example” (Ziai 2004: 1055). As I will discuss community initiatives in Northeastern Thailand in the next chapter, I will show that Ziai’s interpretation does not exhaust the possibilities inherent in Rahnema’s ideas: Alternative farmers in many cases do possess local knowledge about farming techniques, medicinal herbs, or about the use value of certain plant species, which other people in the community often lack. Such traditional knowledge is typically tied to local climatic and ecological conditions; especially in agricultural areas such knowledge and skills constitute the main discursive alternatives to dominant ways of knowing. For farmers interested in development alternatives, such “guru farmers” (Chanida & Bamford 2009: 149) therefore figure as the first role-models and leaders. Some initiatives, such as the Inpaeng Network, have been inspired by the Thai “Community Culture School,” which resembles a postdevelopment critique of development adapted to the Thai context. The following section will provide an outline of this theory; it will moreover show that many normative statements in postdevelopment may correspond to perceptions and experiences of scholars and activists in the Global South.

### **3.2. The Community Culture School in Thailand**

The “community culture school of thought,” elsewhere simply termed “localism” (Hewison 2000; Connors 2001), has emerged since the 1970s in Thailand

---

<sup>61</sup> Ziai mentions, for instance, that some theorists ascribe certain characteristics to terms, such as “traditional culture,” or attempt to define “development” (Ziai 2004: 1054)

independently of postdevelopment theory. Both approaches respond to the perceived marginalization of traditional communities in the course of modernist national development. This section begins with a critique of Thailand's economic development model as voiced by proponents of the Community Culture School. They criticize the uneven spread of wealth within the country, and in particular the exclusion of rural communities from the benefits of development (Connors 2001: 6/7). A second analogy between the community culture school and postdevelopment is the central role of culture as a means of communal empowerment (Ziai 2004: 1057; Pasuk 2005: 163). Proponents of the community culture school trace the underlying meanings and norms, which have informed traditional communal practices, in order to adapt them to current socio-economic circumstances. They argue that these practices and the conscious revival of their underlying ideas constitute local strengths, such as self-reliance and the ability to resist outside exploitation. This illustration of how Thai traditional culture informs local strategies, which correspond to the normative objectives in postdevelopment theory is the main aim of this section. It also provides the theoretical background for the case study on the Inpaeng Network in chapters 4 and 5.

Agriculture has often been termed the backbone of the Thai economy (Rigg & Sakunee 2001: 953; see also NEDB 1964:10): Two thirds of the population qualifies as rural-based with small-scale farms of 2 to 6 hectares dominating the sector (UNDP 2010: 69). Historically, the most important farming activity has consisted of growing rice, which at the same time is the main staple food for Thai people. In Thailand's Northeastern region for example, rice farming still makes up over 60% of land use. Thailand's agricultural sector is thus an important contributor to food security, especially in times of economic crises.

Despite its important role in the Thai economy, the agricultural sector is facing a number of problems (National Statistical Office, 2011): Data from 2009 reveals an average monthly net return from farming of 2,028 Baht (about 66 USD) per household. Low agricultural prices, limited access to land (especially in Thailand's

Northern region), and increasing rural debt are for many years threatening the viability of small-scale farming. Rural household members increasingly have to seek income sources outside of agriculture due to such problems as declining access to land and natural resources, as well as low prices for agricultural products. Today, a large share of household incomes in rural areas is made up of remittances of family members working in Bangkok and other cities: In 2001 around a quarter of all 15 to 49-year-olds of the Northeast lived outside the region (UNDP 2010: 70). Almost a tenth of the total monetary income of rural households consisted of remittances in 2007; in the Northeast, the poorest province, the share was 18%. The contempt for the farming occupation among the young generation contributes further to the aging of the farming population; according to a survey in 2008 the average age of Thai rice farmers was 55 years.

Preceding these relatively recent changes has been a long-term economic transformation process since the 19<sup>th</sup> century, which has been slowly eroding the cohesion and economic position of rural communities, according to the Thai economist Chatthip Nartsupha (see Chatthip 1999: 76-77). Before the capitalist period, Chatthip notes, state power had kept the internal socio-economic structures of rural society largely intact. The king and his administrators confined economic relations with rural communities to extracting taxes (mainly in kind, since cash was rare in the predominantly subsistence-based village economies at the time) and corvee labor.<sup>62</sup> Neither did international trade affect the peasants' economic and cultural independence: firstly, since the state monopolized foreign trade and secondly, because exports were made up mostly of those forest goods, which the state had acquired from peasants through taxes (see also Chatthip 1986: 161). In the course of the 19<sup>th</sup> century a number of interrelated factors led to the decline of the relative autonomy of village economies, namely the expansion of foreign trade and of the cash economy, and the rise of Chinese entrepreneurship.

---

<sup>62</sup> Since the latter involved the extraction of the working males from the village economy for up to six months in a year, it could be highly disruptive however, up the point that those left behind faced the threat of starvation (Chatthip 1999: 32).

According to Chatthip Chinese traders and tax collectors introduced commercialization into Thai peasant society. Large-scale Chinese immigration had been encouraged by the rulers of Bangkok since the end of the 18<sup>th</sup> century in order to manage the kingdom's growing economy. Neither bound to the village, nor socially or politically connected to any stratum of the Thai population, these immigrants added a new entrepreneurial class to Thai society. The state gradually withdrew both from trading and tax farming and delegated both activities to Chinese middlemen (Pasuk & Baker 1995: 94). From the 1830s onwards taxes payable in cash increasingly replaced taxes in kind. At the same time, rice and sugar replaced forest products as the main trading goods. Commercial agriculture thus began to replace subsistence farming, first in the central region around Bangkok and gradually in other parts of the country. Chinese traders further integrated rural communities into the money economy by purchasing rice from them and by providing loans to farmers with generally high interest rates.

Rural debt soon started to emerge as the single biggest problem at the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century: partly, because the yields from traditional agriculture were always close to the subsistence margin (see also Scott 1976: 22) and thus did not always provide for a surplus large enough to cover loans, and partly because farmers often used loans for consumption purposes such as food, clothes, or expensive ceremonies instead of surplus generation (Chatthip 1999: 53). Land used as collateral for loans thus frequently changed hands from farmers to Chinese moneylenders, who together with Thai nobles became a new landowning class. Here, Chatthip describes early origins of the topical issues of debt and landlessness, which are at the heart of contemporary struggles between small-scale farmers on the one hand, and capitalists and the state on the other (see Missingham 2003; Miyake 2003). Chatthip's historical account ends around the time of the abolishment of absolute monarchy in Thailand in 1932 and thus well before the development era following World War 2.

Although Thailand had sided with Japan during World War 2, the country quickly became an American ally following the war. Especially with the rise of communism in Southeast Asia during the late 1940s the US developed a strong strategic interest in Thailand as an “anti-communist bastion” (Fineman quoted in Baker & Pasuk 2005: 146). American military and economic aid grew steadily in the period from the 1950s until the early 1970s. Ideologically, Thai governments – which in those decades consisted almost exclusively of authoritarian military regimes – not only adopted a strong anti-communist rhetoric, but also conceptions of national development through growth in the private sector. With the help of the World Bank US advisors oversaw the establishment of the National Economic Development Board in Thailand; its main task consisted in setting down a macro-economic vision in consecutive five-year plans. The first plans (especially for the periods 1961-66 and 1967-1971) focused on the development of basic economic structures by dismantling state enterprises, by promoting private industries, and through infrastructure projects. The report also addressed “basic economic problems” such as rapid population growth, low productivity both in agriculture and industry, low levels of savings etc. (NEDB 1964: 2/3).

Although small-scale farmers continued to dominate the agricultural sector throughout the period, cultivation underwent a number of changes in line with increasing commercialization: The development of high-yielding rice varieties, which replaced traditional seeds, the use of chemical fertilizer, pesticides, and hand tractors all significantly improved agricultural productivity. Although the agricultural sector grew during the 1960s, the emphasis of economic planning and investment rested on industrialization. Accordingly, the share of agriculture in Thailand’s GDP declined from 50.1% in 1951 to 28.3% in 1970, whereas the share of industry rose from 18.3% to 31.6% in the same period (Keyes 1989: 78). Governments facilitated this change in Thailand’s economic structure by extracting surplus from rural areas and transferring the benefits to urban areas: Food prices, especially of rice, were kept artificially low, which depressed profits for farmers, but at the same time decreased the cost of living for urban labor (Pasuk & Baker 1995: 36; Sangsith

1998b: 70). At the same time imports of consumption goods and farm inputs were taxed. Higher costs associated with agriculture made production more profitable for large-scale farmers than for those with small landholdings.

Nevertheless, due to favorable world market conditions many small-scale farmers survived. Members of rural households moreover complemented their earnings through off-farm work, mainly as unskilled laborers in Bangkok. In the mid-1970s the world market boom in agricultural products came to an end (Baker & Pasuk 2005: 213), making farmers diversify their economic activities through non-agricultural means further. Around the same time landlessness became a growing problem, partly as the result of sustained population growth, but also because of increased competition for land from government projects and private businesses. To proponents of the Community Culture School these long-term effects of world market integration and government planning have thus resulted in the continued disintegration of communities, destruction of environmental resources, especially through deforestation, and health problems due to the use of chemical fertilizer and pesticides (Chatthip 1991: 132; Surachet 1986: 145). The loss of forest cover in rural areas due to the expansion of commercial agriculture has moreover impeded the ability of communities to satisfy their consumption demands through hunting and gathering. Together with land scarcity, use of modern farm inputs, and low crop prices this issue contributes to the importance of earning money in order to purchase food.

Activists and theorists of the Community Culture School, but also independent scholars such as Charles Keyes, have noted that many villagers have internalized the government discourse on development since the 1950s (Bamrung 1986: 90; Keyes 2013: 174 and 177). Through increased back-and-forth migration between village and cities, as well as through the media, villagers have been exposed to urban consumerism and often sought to emulate modern lifestyles in their home villages. Whereas villagers encountered by these authors embraced development, communities elsewhere faced disruption of their livelihoods through government

infrastructure projects. The Australian academic Bruce Missingham in his book about the emergence of the “Assembly of the Poor” (a national farmer’s movement; see chapter 5), describes the struggle of fishing communities for state compensation following the construction of a dam on the Mun river in Northeastern Thailand. State planners had highlighted the importance of the project in generating hydroelectric energy in order to satisfy Thailand’s growing energy demand (Missingham 2003: 71). After completion more than 1,800 households have been displaced due to rising water levels, whereas others in the area, who depended on the riparian ecology for fishing and gathering, lost their main livelihood source. Local activists and urban NGO members opposing the dam project later joined together with groups waging similar struggles against large-scale development projects throughout Thailand to form the “Assembly of the Poor” in 1995.

Chatthip and other proponents of the Community Culture School have thus criticized that development has excluded rural producers both as beneficiaries and as active agents in the development process. They have charged the government and domestic capitalists for having failed to upgrade traditional agricultural techniques in line with the development needs as perceived by rural communities. They have thus proposed to strengthen small-scale agriculture both through productivity and efficiency increases, and also by preserving what they believe to be strengths of community culture, namely a sense of equality, non-exploitative relations with the natural environment, and a high degree of economic self-reliance (Chatthip 1991: 132; Nidhi 2000: 81). The authors argue that land in pre-modern times belonged to the community and was periodically redistributed among households in order to maintain equality (Chatthip 1999: 10). Internal cohesion was moreover stressed by communal belief systems about ancestor spirits, who guarded the community or inhabited trees, rice fields, mountains etc. Villagers therefore not only had to maintain communal peace, but also non-exploitative relations with their natural surroundings (Vichit 1986: 26). The introduction of Buddhism, according to Chatthip, has not significantly altered these beliefs; remnants of these spiritual systems, including shamanistic rituals, can still be

observed in parts of Thailand, especially in the Northeastern region. Here, subsistence agriculture moreover continues to play a major role in ensuring food security, as will be shown in the following chapter.

Scholars and development workers associated with the Community Culture School argue that despite transformations since the 19<sup>th</sup> century, village culture has not disappeared but adapted to new values and technologies (Vichit 1986: 31). The impacts through modernization and development are moreover varied in each region: they are more pronounced in Thailand's central area, but traditional practices are still strong especially in the Northeast. Advocates moreover note that these traditional social arrangements can help guide communal development if they are flexibly adjusted to contemporary conditions. Since these arrangements are rooted in traditional practices, community members become aware of the value of their culture and skills, enabling them to play an active role in development practice. Seri Phongphit notes that this realization instills a newfound self-confidence in villagers as "[t]hey realize that they are the one [sic] who can and must take their own fate in their own hands" (Seri 1986: 18; also Seri 2001). Corresponding development strategies therefore start with external development workers and/or alternative farmers disseminating information about existing resources through their practice. NGO workers, for instance, may spend prolonged periods of time in a village studying local ways of life and resources prior to the start of a project. As the example in chapter 4.2 will show, development workers may then approach alternative farmers, who are already engaged in organic agriculture, for instance, in order to discuss possible further activities.

Such existing development activities thus show how Rahnema's idea that respected leaders should play a crucial role in fostering alternative development can be understood. The contribution of development workers thus mainly consists in providing an impetus to link up farmers engaged in such scattered activities and to encourage exchange of knowledge among them. This way, they establish a small group of farmers engaged in sustainable agriculture, forest protection, the setting-

up of savings groups etc. Their prolonged activities may convince others to apply similar techniques or participate in their projects (see Surachet 1986: 141; also Parnwell 2005: 12). The Inpaeng Network in Northeastern Thailand, for instance, has gradually developed in terms of membership and economic activities through linking up with like-minded farmers, by fostering the exchange of know-how among them, and increasingly by entering into economic relations with the wider village community and outside markets.

### **3.3. Buddhist Economics**

In contrast to postdevelopment and the Community Culture School, which aim at questioning a hegemonic discourse and making visible alternative interpretations of development, Buddhist Economics theorists criticize capitalist development and economic science by contrasting their implicit norms with Buddhist normative orientations. These latter orientations are not tied to any specific cultural practice, but are supposed to guide ethical behavior and decision-making on a case-by-case basis. Economic considerations and theoretical statements made by proponents of Buddhist Economics are thus supposed to be derived from insights from the cultivation of *pañña*; thus, from an attitude, which involves the recognition of interconnectedness and of the constitution of the self through relationships. Buddhist Economics therefore does not refer to an economic system, but to a strategy, “which can be applied in any economic setting” (Zsolnai 2009: 89; see also Apichai 2004: 9).

The term “Buddhist Economics” has been first used by the British Economist E.F. Schumacher in an essay with the same title, which he later included in his book “Small is beautiful. Economics as if People Mattered” (1973). He contrasts the objective of maximum consumption in mainstream economics with the objective of a “maximum of well-being with the minimum of consumption” (Schumacher 1973: 54). Buddhist Economics to him thus centers on people instead of growth, and economic activity is based on simplicity and non-violence not only toward other

people, but toward nature as well. Therefore, he concludes that communal “production from local resources for local needs is the most rational way of economic life” (55). Community-level development strategies inspired by Buddhist Economics thus take similar forms as those inspired by postdevelopment and the community culture school (see next chapter); this is not only due to an emphasis on local assets and resources, but also because favoring a normative orientation does not translate into universal norms.

The concept of Buddhist Economics has later been taken up by a number of authors, such as the economist Frederic L. Pryor (1991), who seeks to outline Buddhist Economics by tracing respective teachings in Buddhist canonical texts. “The Buddhist theory,” the author states, “sees the economy prospering through the collective impact of the virtuous actions of individuals” (Pryor 1991: 18). The author thus likewise concludes that the main development objective consists in dispositional changes, namely the personal quality of kindness and compassion towards others. Accordingly, the ability to acquire wealth can be directed towards beneficial ends, if based on good intentions. Whereas Pryor derives elements of Buddhist Economics from religious scriptures, others, such as Simon Zadek (1993) and Glen Alexandrin (1993) emphasize that Buddhist philosophy is practice-oriented and can be applied in various contexts. Zadek, for instance, illustrates this point by examining the community development strategy of the Sarvodaya movement in Sri Lanka. Alexandrin likewise notes that Buddhist practice is always determined by given social contexts, and aims at inducing personal change, so that humans develop their efforts towards benefitting society.

In Thailand the book “Buddhist Economics. A Middle Way for the Market Place” (first published in 1988) by the monk Ven. P.A. Payutto provided an impetus for local scholars to engage with the concept (see Pasuk 2005: 164/65); among these the economist Apichai Puntasen has further elaborated on Payutto’s ideas. In his book “Buddhist Economics: Evolution, Theories and Its Application to Various Economic Subjects” (first published in 2001 in Thai) - which is probably the most

systematic exploration of the conception to date - he traces the history of Western economic and philosophical thought since Aristotle from an Eastern Buddhist perspective. He assesses underlying assumptions in Western (economic) thought, e.g. about the nature of scientific truth, human nature, human happiness etc. These assumptions are then contrasted with Buddhist epistemology and teachings that emanate from spiritual insights. The resulting critique offers alternative development objectives, as well as methods to implement and measure their success. Other international scholars, who have contributed to Buddhist Economics theory, are Laszlo Zsolnai (2009), Peter Daniels (2005), and Juliana Essen (2009); these are in part influenced by Apichai and Payutto's work or Thai Theravada Buddhism in general.

In line with the depiction of Buddhist Economics as a strategy, it considers both personal and societal differences. These are seen to impede any universal feasibility of universal rules. According to Payutto the Buddha gave separate teachings about issues of governance depending on different political systems existing in India during his time. Buddhist Economics is therefore not oriented towards an ideal future state. "Since the perfect society will always be a 'hoped-for' society, the Buddha gave teachings that could be put to effect in the present time" (Payutto 1994a: 80). This also applies to moral codes, which are to be adapted according to different cultural contexts. They are thus valid only as long as "the causes and conditions of their goodness do not change" (Buddhadasa 1992: 7). In sum, truth is relative, except for the three marks of existence *anatta*, *anicca*, and *dukkha*, as well as the mechanisms described through the teaching of dependent origination. According to Buddhadasa the historical Buddha taught these universal teachings, which he terms "ultimate truth" only to those, who were ready to accept and understand the selflessness of things, and of their own souls. To others he taught "relative truth," such as moral codes applicable in the particular context; Buddhadasa notes that most people were recipients of the latter. This estimation resonates with Essen's observation of religious practices of Buddhist laypersons in Thailand; she notes for instance that most "tend to rank morality and mental

development low because they perceive these practices as beyond their capabilities” (Essen 2009: 35). Making merit for a better next life by giving alms to monks, contributing money or labor to the construction of temples, becoming a monk for a period of time etc., comprises most religious lay practices.

Regarding the capitalist economic system, Buddhist teachings are opposed to profit maximization for the satisfaction of wants, since such an orientation feeds suffering as explained by the process of dependent origination. Rather, economic activities are to be oriented towards reduction of suffering and towards well-being, which is mainly understood as a spiritual task.<sup>63</sup> Consumption should be limited to the minimum needed to attain wellbeing. Nevertheless, Buddhism advocates sufficiency in material provisions - described as the four necessities needed for wellbeing, namely food, clothing, shelter, and medicine – in order to satisfy basic material needs. If the satisfaction of these requirements is not guaranteed, then people lack the basic condition for the development of insight, and consequently of “right livelihood.” Right livelihood, which is an element of “moral conduct” in the threefold training, points beyond the wellbeing of the individual towards the effects of his/her actions on the community and the environment. Taking into account the consumption needs of others therefore likewise encourages a motivation to limit one’s own needs. Accordingly, Apichai extends the economic concept of “efficiency” to consumption: “consumption efficiency” is defined by the amount of material provisions needed to be able to develop pañña (Apichai 2004: 75).

As mentioned in the previous chapter, the meditative practice gives rise to insight, which enables the individual to consciously discard harmful qualities, such as greed and anger, which result from clinging. On a social or societal level attitudes based on attachment are prone to violence. Social ills are thus seen as emanating from the same basic mechanism, which feeds suffering on an individual level, described in the process of dependent origination (see Payutto 1994b: 71-74). Therefore, virtuous attitudes, such as loving kindness, have to be nurtured; these will give rise

---

<sup>63</sup> See Payutto (1994a: 36), Daniels (2005: 249), and Zsolnai (2011: 183).

to actions, which preclude violence, since they are based on an awareness of the interconnectedness of people, and of people and the environment.<sup>64</sup> The Buddhist understanding of ethical behavior thus corresponds to Aristotelian virtue ethics, since actions are deemed ethical if they are rooted in underlying dispositions. Buddhism promotes the attitude of loving kindness in every case, irrespective of time and place. Combined with the notion of interconnectedness, which denies clear boundaries between a self and others, this attitude should accordingly inform actions towards all living beings. A hierarchy of ethical codes – e.g. according to what extent loving-kindness and compassion are extended towards a wider community of people and living beings - is thus inherent in the works of many Buddhist scholars: Ethical and religious systems are seen to reflect degrees of mental and spiritual development, or “right understanding” in a given society. High forms of religion - such as Christianity – are seen as evolved value systems crucial in providing ethical principles to societies (see also Bade 1909); these include the rejection of greed, and the promotion of compassion.<sup>65</sup> Buddhist authors regard a widespread refusal of religious values with concern, since it may interrupt the spiritual development within a society.

In Buddhism the sphere of economics thus cannot be dissociated from cultural contexts, since underlying attitudes – personal and culturally mediated – determine whether economic activity is beneficial for wellbeing or destructive (Schumacher 1973: 30/31). Thus, the idea that individual thoughts and actions proceed under the influence of unconscious emotional mechanisms, is here extended to values underlying science, including economics. As pertains to people, science is thus never value-free: After having discarded spiritual answers about the purpose of humans, according to Schumacher, economics has been based on a materialistic understanding of human nature, sanctioning self-interested behavior and greed. Economics thus contributes to a social construction of reality, which naturalizes these attributes, normalizes corresponding actions, and reinforces a certain

---

<sup>64</sup> See Brodbeck (2004: 17), Daniels (2010a: 958), and Tideman (2011: 142).

<sup>65</sup> See Payutto (1993: 47/48), Sulak (2005: 51), Apichai (2004: 118).

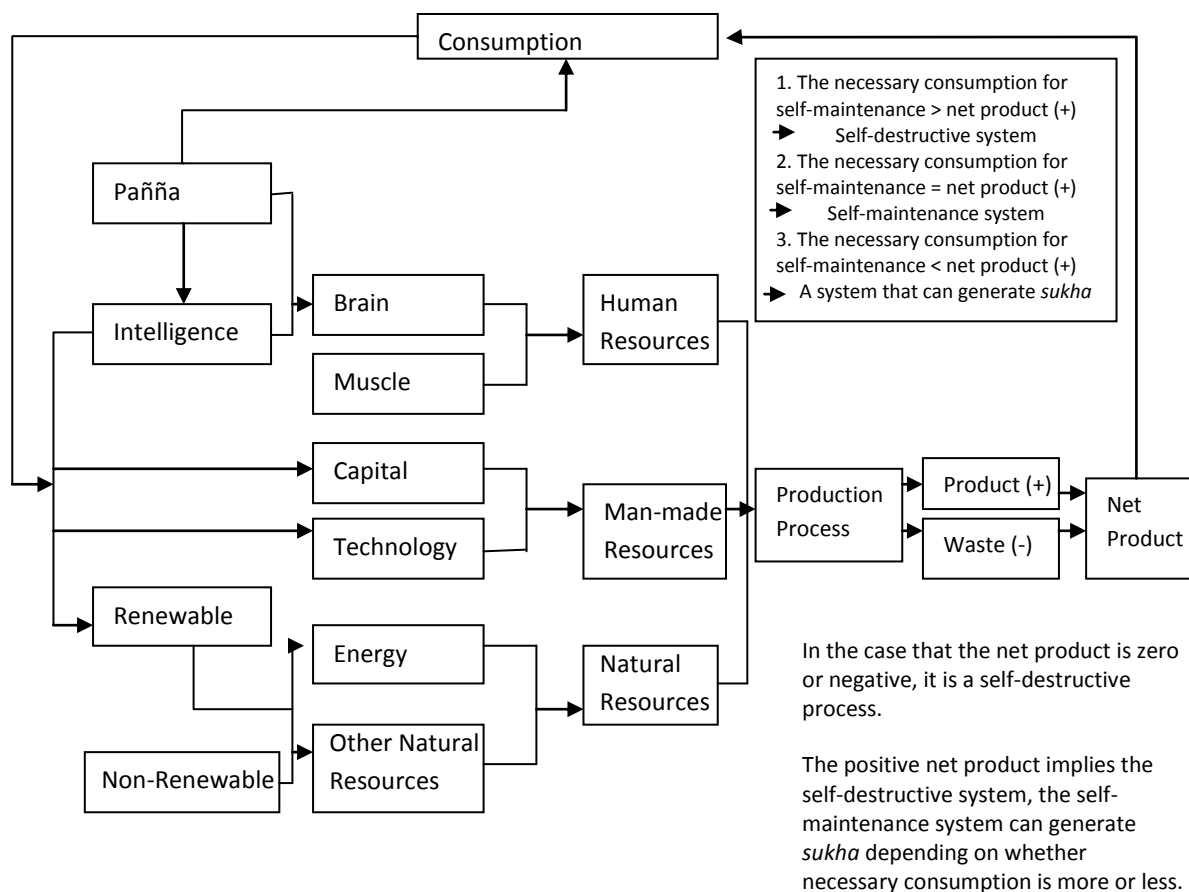
economic system and institutional design. Global problems of extreme wealth inequality and of environmental degradation are seen as “structural violence” (Sulak 2005: 81; Magnuson 2011) originating from such harmful mental attitudes. In line with dependent origination, environmental sustainability is therefore not primarily seen as a matter of cleaner and more resource-efficient technology, but of a change in underlying attitudes. Thus, according to Apichai only *pañña*, the ability to understand reality, can assuredly give rise to technologies, which are beneficial for society and the environment (Apichai 1999: 5).

Dependent origination moreover involves the requirement of a holistic account of any field of study; hence, the detailed breaking down of mental constituents and processes that are involved in dependent origination on the individual level. Here, problems are viewed as the result of a set of interrelated causes. Transposed to the analysis of social and economic problems, these causes do not obey the divisions separating one scientific discipline from another. Splitting up knowledge into specialized fields makes it increasingly difficult to create a holistic account (Apichai 2001: 80). Scientific knowledge is accordingly prone to misconceptions since it implies the loss of facts related to a certain field or problem. Already Schumacher pointed out that the pursuit of limitless growth would be questioned in economics, if findings from the “environmental sciences” were taken into account (see Schumacher 1973: 27). In addition to this lack of interdisciplinarity Apichai criticizes the methods used in neoclassical economics in representing complex phenomena, namely mathematical equations and functions. Not only do mathematical representations simplify and thus distort multifaceted processes, but they moreover put forward a biased and capitalocentric view of economy. He illustrates this point by discussing the Cobb-Douglas and CES production functions, which according to him are the most widely used scientific representations of production processes (Apichai 2004: 77). With capital and labor as the factors of production, Apichai notes that land, resources, energy and other inputs aside from labor are subsumed under the category “capital.” These production functions are thus only applicable to capitalistic modes of production, in which each item is quantifiable in terms of

monetary value. This gives rise to an interpretation in which commodity production in a non-capitalist fashion is outside the economic sphere.

A related shortcoming, according to Apichai, stems from the aggregation of all available resources and energy under the term “capital.” Here, mainstream production functions fail to make a distinction between those energy sources that are renewable and those that are finite: The limitations of renewable, biotic resources are set by maturity, and biological rhythms and seasons, whereas non-renewable resources will be exhausted at one point in time. Once non-renewable resources are exhausted, the reliance on windmills, crops, sunlight etc. for energy will due to their natural cycles not allow for exponential growth as at present (Steppacher 2008: 341). Both production functions ignore these characteristics, assuming unlimited growth and thus sanctioning overexploitation of both kinds of resources. Finally, production processes usually do not only result in the intended products, but also in waste. The Cobb-Douglas production function does not accommodate this second outcome, since “[f]unctions, by definition have a single dependant variable” (Apichai 2004: 80). The aim for “mathematical precision” compromises the ability to reflect the “true nature” of production processes. From a Buddhist standpoint such distorted illustrations will most likely result in unintended and undesirable outcomes. Thus, production must be represented as truthfully as possible and guided by pañña instead of the pursuit of capital accumulation. Apichai therefore suggests a graphical illustration of production processes as shown in figure 5:

**Figure 5: The Working of the Whole Production Process through the System of Consumption**



Source: Apichai (2004: 98)

As can be seen in the illustration, pañña determines the use of all resources in the production process by directing intelligence towards the objective of non-violence and sustainability, in short “*sukha*,” the Pali term for wellbeing. Harmful waste for instance is to be avoided: In the illustration it is used together with the finished product in order to compute a “net product.”<sup>66</sup> Consumption must be considered as well, since it may not exceed a level at which the production process can generate a positive net product. It is moreover an important determinant of efficient

<sup>66</sup> Apichai admits that this computation of a net product is a simplification, since “[i]n reality, waste cannot be subtracted from product” in this manner (Apichai 2004: 95). Waste and loss of biodiversity are today included in concepts of “green growth.” Daniels (2005) mentions this and other developments in parts of current economic discourse, which provide “common ground” between Buddhism and economics.

production in the sense that the use of resources entering production must be kept at a minimum. Consumption itself must be resource-efficient, not just for individual wellbeing, but also for the production process and consequently for the wellbeing of others in the community and the environment. The product is therefore meant to satisfy needs instead of wants. Pañña determines the difference between the two objectives of consumption. In terms of a holistic representation, the illustration also contains a detailed breakdown of kinds of resources entering the production process.

### **3.4. Summary: Development Alternatives and the Enactive Approach**

This chapter has provided an outline of postdevelopment theory, the Community Culture School, as well as Buddhist Economics. These theories are at least in part consistent with enactivist philosophy, especially with regard to their social ontological commitments. They moreover provide theoretical foundations for development practices described in the next chapter. However, whereas enactivism puts forward a thorough exploration of embodiment and embodied cognition, the development theories outlined here lack a serious consideration of different cognitive levels and somatic mechanisms. This is not only the case for postdevelopment, but also for Buddhist Economics, as I will point out in this critical summary.

Postdevelopment highlights the contingency of modernist conceptions characteristic of many contemporary development theories and strategies, including alternative approaches, such as world systems analysis, sustainable development (see also Brand & Görg 2005), as well as many strands of participatory development (see Essen 2013). Theorists make use of discourse analytical tools, or highlight traditional communal practices, which are opposed to mainstream understandings of development objectives and strategies. The latter approach has also been pursued by theorists of the Community Culture School in Thailand. They thus advocate a development strategy, which recognizes traditional skills, practices, and

values, which underlie livelihood activities of rural communities in parts of Thailand. This strategy moreover includes alternative farmers as resource persons in identifying local opportunities for the activation of traditional knowledge in order to economically empower the wider community. This conception of alternative development practice thus qualifies Ziai's opinion that normative statements made by some postdevelopment authors reflect a romanticizing stance on traditional subsistence economies on the one hand, and foster "enlightened authoritarianism" (Ziai 2004: 1055) on the other. An outline of the development praxis of the Inpaeng Network in the next chapter will moreover show that applications of the Community Culture School are based on gradual integration in local communities rather than on coercion.

A major shortcoming in postdevelopment theory consists in the limited possibilities deriving from a perspective, which is restricted to discursive constructions of reality: By demonstrating the contingency of cultural representations of reality, as well as by contrasting different cultural constructions, postdevelopment does not point to any unifying feature of human sense-making. As shown in the previous chapters, shared mechanisms exist among humans due to their common constitution as embodied beings. The human body is not only a site of cultural attributions, but interpretations of reality are already inscribed in its distinct and limited capacities to respond to aspects of reality. This is the case for the range of sensorimotor responses to affordances, as well as for the scope and nature of physiochemical reactions to environmental stimuli. Accordingly, different emotional body states each affect the way we perceive and approach life situations. Buddhist meditation techniques are meant to enhance states of consciousness, which inform virtuous actions, meaning those oriented towards one's wellbeing, as well as that of others. Neurophenomenological studies moreover highlight the possibility to induce willed attitudinal changes down to the neurobiological level.

This consideration of embodied mechanisms is not opposed to postdevelopment thinking, as far as the recognition of cultural diversity is concerned, since the

cultivation of certain dispositions is not oriented towards concrete development tasks or ideals. Buddhist techniques are however based on notions of interdependence. Although a normative orientation, it is brought forward through mindfulness techniques in meditation or through modified experiential methods as in mindfulness-based psychotherapy. These approaches thus aim at generating understanding and attitudes on cognitive levels, which partly extend beyond the scope of discursive phenomena, and thus beyond a domain, in which postdevelopment theory is engaged. From an embodied cognitive perspective, the postdevelopment approach is based on a decoupling of conscious interpretations from emotional and sensorimotor categorizations, although these cognitive levels are interwoven in probably every act of sense-making.

Enactivism recognizes the relationships between different cognitive levels and constructions of reality. An enactive development approach would therefore target patterns of emotional reactivity in order to mitigate their biasing effects. Here, a neutral and inquiring disposition is not accompanied by a lack of emotion states, but by states of compassion and loving kindness. Advocates of Buddhist Economics invoke such attitudes in order to provide a corresponding perspective on social and economic issues. By viewing these issues and problems as caused by ignorance about the nature of suffering and by advocating solutions based on the recognition of interconnectedness these theorists make use of teachings, which originally had been developed to inform enlightened individual behavior.<sup>67</sup> With this shift of focus away from personal change towards societal transformation, some authors introduce a distinction between both levels: In addition to viewing suffering as stemming from individuals guided by ignorance, they invoke structural causes of suffering inherent in social processes themselves (see Apichai 1999: 6/7; Tideman 2011: 135/36). Suffering then is not only caused by motivations informing people's behavior, but also structural mechanisms, which inform these motivations and thereby stabilize a certain socio-economic order.

---

<sup>67</sup> As Tideman notes this is also the case for Bhutan's development indicator "Gross National Happiness." Its components correspond to the elements of the Noble Eightfold Path (Tideman 2011: 147/48).

Solutions to societal problems - although guided by and oriented towards the enaction of Buddhist ethics - are then sometimes sought in structural changes in addition to attitudinal changes: Some authors advocate a bottom-up strategy in the form of community economies or “intrinsically democratic” community businesses (Magnuson 2011: 99-101; see also Sulak 2009: 78/79). Buddhist philosophy is opposed to violence, and consequently to violent transformations; such local economic alternatives are thus seen as precursors to a gradual transformation of the wider economy. Other authors, such as Apichai Puntasen and Peter Daniels, make policy recommendations demanding institutional adjustments for a more sustainable economic system (see Apichai 2001: 554-70; Daniels 2010b). In contrast to Daniels, Apichai specifically directs his requirements towards Thai state institutions, since they officially adhere to the “Sufficiency Economy” development strategy since 2002 (see chapter 5). To him “sufficiency economy is part and parcel of Buddhist economics” (National Research Council of Thailand 2003: 49). This view effectively posits institutions of a nation state as actors of societal transformation in accordance with Buddhist philosophy. Despite the differences in strategy these views assign the capitalist economic system an essential nature, which should be replaced or managed through compensatory policies.

The feminist economist Julie Nelson notes the explanatory gap this view entails between individual and social reality on the one hand, and economic reality on the other. She refers to the essentializing and rules-based conception of the economy as an “unnecessary Western cultural baggage” originating from a “physics-envy” within mainstream economics (Nelson 2011: 24 and 26). This aim to identify structural laws within the economic system that resemble the laws of classical physics ignores the particular and varied manifestations of actual firms, including the nature of personal and organizational relations involved in their activities. Nelson reminds of the intended attitude of investigation Buddhist philosophy aims to foster: “an openness to what is, letting go of old concepts and beliefs, seeing things a new way, being surprised.” (30) With this attitude each interaction among corporate stakeholders provides opportunities for ethical behavior, as does each

decision about recruiting, price policy, product quality etc. Systemic features do not exert an unambiguous tendency to encourage exploitative or equitable relations, but together with actual agents co-constitute concrete activity. This also is the case with alternative economic ventures, such as community initiatives or local organic agricultural projects; these are means to foster right livelihood, but not ends of development. An attachment to particular concepts not only ignores Buddhist notions of non-identity and impermanence, but moreover distracts us from opportunities to act in the present moment.

The approach taken by advocates of Buddhist Economics, i.e. providing a Buddhist perspective on societal problems, is not only prone to an analytical dualism, but has also contributed to a neglect of the issue of how to cultivate insight and an inquiring disposition. In most Buddhist Economics works this issue appears as taken for granted, with occasional reference to meditative states or to books about the subject (see Apichai 2004; also Ash 2011: 122). Since the cultivation of mindfulness underlies the analytical statements and suggestions of proponents of the theory, it could be expected that different ways to foster corresponding insights are part of Buddhist Economics development strategies. As the examples of mindfulness-based group therapies show, the modification of Buddhist techniques would be especially feasible in communal initiatives, since these involve a limited number of people. Despite the recent recognition by some authors of the consistencies between Buddhist philosophy and neuroscientific findings,<sup>68</sup> as well as of clinical applications of mindfulness techniques, this impetus has so far hardly stimulated a motivation to operationalize these discoveries for the elaboration of communal initiatives. This lack of progress regarding the further development of techniques to cultivate mindfulness points to a certain dogmatic stance on existing meditative techniques. However, if Buddhist Economics strategies would include successful ways to nurture a sense of interbeing and non-identification within a community setting - as is the case in mindfulness-based group therapies - the need for

---

<sup>68</sup> See Ash (2011), Tideman (2011), and Bubna-Litic (2013).

normative statements about development practice would be greatly reduced. This would mean a shift away from Knowing That in favor of Knowing How.

Such a shift of focus back to underlying attitudes is not only consistent with Buddhist philosophy, but is also substantiated by the role of micro-practices in matters of social change: As argued in the previous chapters, it is foremost changes which include embodied cognitive patterns that induce sustainable transformations. These are difficult to prescribe in a top-down fashion, e.g. through national or international institutions. However, as mindfulness-based therapies have illustrated in the previous chapter, strategies targeting micro-practices can be successfully applied in settings involving small groups of people. Buddhist Economics may in the future give rise to approaches, which include micro-political experimentation. Currently, Gibson-Graham's community economies strategy seems most consistent with corresponding aims. This approach is most closely associated with postdevelopment thinking, but also makes use of Buddhist and psychoanalytical insights. The project design, its effects on project participants, as well as its development potentials are the subject of the next chapter.

## 4. Towards an Enactive Development Strategy

In this chapter I will explore possible applications of the enactive framework in practice. In particular I will analyze development strategies informed by postdevelopment theory, the Community Culture School of thought, and also Buddhist Economics by use of the theoretical basis laid out in the first two chapters. Bringing together Gibson-Graham's community economies approach with the enactivist framework appears especially productive in refining enactive development in practice. In their action research projects Gibson-Graham make use of discourse theory as developed by Laclau and Mouffe to deconstruct or "dislocate the unity and hegemony of neoliberal global capitalist economic discourse through a proliferative queering of the economic landscape and construction of a new language of economic diversity" (Gibson-Graham 2006a: 56 and 2006b: xli). In contrast to other postdevelopment authors and practitioners, they not only apply discursive tools in their development work, but also aim at validating a new economic language through experiential interventions: By referring to William Connolly, for instance, they also target a pre-representational "visceral register" (Connolly quoted in Gibson-Graham 2006a: 24) of being, including "affective responses, gut reactions, and embodied actions." I will thus attempt a re-reading of a community economies project undertaken by Katherine Gibson and her colleagues in terms of the enactive framework, drawing on the analytical tools as developed in the first chapter, and on mindfulness-based therapeutic approaches as treated in the second chapter. In order to further clarify the relationship between discursive practices and micro-practices (meaning subdiscursive constituents of meaning) I will then briefly outline the Economy of Communion project. The economic project has been initiated by Chiara Lubich, the leading figure within the Focolare movement, which is a community of goods established by Lubich and her companions during World War 2.

Whereas Gibson-Graham mainly describe projects in their early stages, I wish to illustrate the long-term potential of the community economies approach for social

change by drawing on the example of the Inpaeng Network in Northeastern Thailand. Together with secondary data about the network, I will refer to data and on-site findings collected over a two week period in January 2012, including fifty random household interviews in the village of Ban Bua, eleven expert interviews with Inpaeng leaders from four provinces, and participatory observation during two network meetings and a village ceremony. The village of Ban Bua – in which most of the field research took place - is officially subdivided into four administrative units, each containing different numbers of households. Prior to conducting semi-structured interviews with household heads I therefore subdivided the sample of fifty according to the percentage share of each unit's households in a total of 770 households. Together with an interpreter we conducted the interviews for five days starting in the morning and finishing in the early evening. Standardized interview questions concerned foremost quantitative data, such as age-structure of households, livelihood activities, farm size, acreage per crop etc.

The origins of the Inpaeng Network date back to the mid-1980s, when a small group of farmers in the village of Ban Bua (located about 600 kilometres northeast of Bangkok, in the province of Sakon Nakhon) joined together in order to identify local assets and skills to pursue a development path, which sustains local communities, instead of eroding them. The network's strategies are inspired by the Community Culture School (see Sutee 2013: 193/94). In the first part of the section discussing the network I will show that the economic strategies pursued by Inpaeng members should be seen in relation to the socio-economic context of small-scale farmers in the region. Inpaeng not only draws on existing economic and cultural activities of local villagers, but also seeks to realize further development strategies inherent in these existing practices. In order to ensure the continuation of the network's activities by future generations of farmers, Inpaeng is moreover trying to strike a balance between network objectives – sustainable agricultural activities that strengthen communities and preserve environmental resources - and aspirations of modern farmers. These economic activities will be examined in more detail in subsection 4.2.2, using analytical tools developed by Gibson-Graham. In the final

section I will draw conclusions, trying to delineate an enactive development approach.

#### **4.1. Community Economic Projects and Micro-Political Interventions**

Whereas the 1990s have seen a proliferation of theoretical postdevelopment works, these have largely focused on criticizing the core assumptions and failed strategies put forward by earlier development approaches. Only some authors have pointed out a number of elements that could be part of “alternatives to development,” but these have been posited as theoretical “signposts” rather than applied in alternative projects (Escobar 1995: 215; Rahnema 1997b). As shown in the third chapter the lack of empirical alternatives had invited publications critical of postdevelopment, doubtful about its practical relevance. In part inspired by this critique, authors, such as George N. Curry (2003), Sally Matthews (2007), and J.K. Gibson-Graham (2005a) have since the early 2000s developed the theory further with regard to its practical applicability. Whereas Curry illustrates existing alternative economic practices of small-holder farmers in Papua New Guinea, Matthews focuses on the role of development professionals in postdevelopment practice. J.K. Gibson-Graham include both aspects in their work. In contrast to the former authors however, they have not only been involved as researchers in alternative projects, but have in some cases facilitated the emergence of alternative initiatives from the very beginning. Through their experiences they have developed a certain procedure and broad guidelines in order to explore economic possibilities to foster a postdevelopment practice.

##### **4.1.1. Applications of Postdevelopment in Practice**

Based on Karl Polanyi’s work, Curry (2003) aims to show that economies, including capitalist economies, cannot function solely through an assumed inherent logic, but are always constituted by particular social arrangements both in Western and Non-Western societies. “[S]ocially and culturally embedded place-based” capitalism thus

gives rise to diverse “alternative modernities” (Curry 2003: 406, 408). In his case study of small-holder farmers growing oil palms for multinational corporations, Curry shows that the farmers do so by reinforcing communal ties by raising and pooling the money needed for social obligations, such as paying the bride price for a male relative, paying for funerals etc. The author’s quantitative data even indicates that spikes in productivity coincide with the timing of these gifts (414/15). The maintenance of communal identity is therefore what determines the mode of inclusion of these farmers in the market economy. The production of cash crops is here integrated into a framework of a traditional gift economy.

A large variety of alternative and non-capitalist economic arrangements is also documented in the action research project undertaken by J.K. Gibson-Graham in the Jagna Municipality on the island of Bohol in the Philippines: The community under study earned some cash by selling rice and bananas, and by exporting contract labor overseas. Beyond these market-economic activities local households were engaged in a number of traditional economic practices, including forms of gifting, of unpaid labor, and practices involving the whole community, such as fundraising activities for funerals or celebrations (Gibson-Graham 2005a). The authors illustrate that conventional development projects frequently ignore these practices and their inherent potential for alternative development by referring to a state-sponsored development plan designed for the community before Gibson-Graham’s action research initiative. Accordingly, the initial exercise of “neutral’ information gathering” (Gibson-Graham 2005a: 10) had already been biased toward depicting local deficiencies: The indicators chosen – such as number of malnourished children, access to potable water etc. - highlighted what was lacking in the community, instead of local strengths: lack of skills, of entrepreneurship, of capital etc. Based on this assessment the development team followed preconceived development strategies - production of cash crops, employment through foreign investment, export of contract labor etc. – in which existing traditional mentalities figured as obstacles to development (see also Latouche 1993: 27).

Structuralist approaches define economic activity in relation to capitalism, thus “limiting possibilities for alternative conceptions of economy” (Curry 2003: 407; Gibson-Graham 2006a: 56). This is the case for modernization and dependency theories, but also strategies that imply a capitalocentric understanding of economy, since they downplay and ignore the role of non-capitalist practices and meanings. Ignoring place-based economic practices, and thus local values held by the “target group,” has in many cases led to failures of NGO initiatives; this experience has prompted a number of NGOs to change their approach in order to improve development work (see McKinnon 2007). Both Katharine McKinnon and Sally Matthews (2007) describe corresponding shifts as responding to local conceptions of development and at the same time making these alternative practices visible. Such development initiatives provide important insights about how external professionals can contribute to alternative communal development in a postdevelopment framework. One such organization is the NGO Enda Graf Sahel in Senegal. After a decade of work in a suburb of Dakar, the country’s capital, the staff concluded that many of their initiatives had been rejected by the local community. The NGO thus changed its approach from identifying the needs and problems of the community based on allegedly superior “expert” knowledge to assisting community members in meeting what these perceived to be their real needs (Matthews 2007: 133).

Matthews describes how the staff therefore stopped initiating projects by themselves and came to support community activities already taking place, accompanying existing “popular dynamics” (Matthews 2008: 1044). This reorientation within the NGO was matched by changes in organizational structure into a loose network of relatively autonomous branches throughout the country. These changes facilitate the integration of staff into communities in order to more effectively respond to local demands. The different roles that Enda Graf Sahel has come to play are nevertheless characterized by its privileged access to technology and information: Network staff make use of communication technologies by establishing contact between independent community organizations throughout the

country. By developing such links, the community projects benefit through mutual support and the sharing of knowledge and experiences. NGO members moreover know how to access donor funds to support community initiatives. They provide information about the embeddedness of local problems within a greater regional or international context, and they encourage locals to appreciate their traditions and ways of life as a source of self-confidence (see Matthews 2007: 137/38). Breaking up the “discursive violence” of modernist development discourse thus serves the dual purpose of legitimizing local cultural practices and of enabling community members to recognize the economic quality of many of their activities, which do not figure as economic in a language that stresses capital accumulation and rational self-interest. Gibson-Graham therefore suggest to set the preconditions for a place-based postdevelopment initiative by collecting data that holistically reflects the concrete design of the “diverse economy” (see table 1) at a certain place.

**Table 1: The Diverse Economy**

| ENTERPRISE                                                                                                      | LABOR                                                                                       | PROPERTY                                                                                                                                                                        | TRANSACTIONS                                                                                                                | FINANCE                                                                                                                    |
|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| CAPITALIST                                                                                                      | WAGE                                                                                        | PRIVATE                                                                                                                                                                         | MARKET                                                                                                                      | MAINSTREAM MARKET                                                                                                          |
| <b>ALTERNATIVE CAPITALIST</b><br>State owned<br>Environmentally responsible<br>Non-profit                       | <b>ALTERNATIVE PAID</b><br>Self-employed<br>Reciprocal labor<br>In-kind<br>Work for welfare | <b>ALTERNATIVE PRIVATE</b><br>Publicly accessible<br>privately owned property<br>State-managed assets<br>Customary (clan) land<br>Community land trusts<br>Indigenous knowledge | <b>ALTERNATIVE MARKET</b><br>Fair trade<br>Alternative currencies<br>Underground market<br>Barter                           | <b>ALTERNATIVE MARKET</b><br>Cooperative Banks<br>Credit unions<br>Community-based financial institutions<br>Micro-finance |
| <b>NON-CAPITALIST</b><br>Worker cooperatives<br>Sole proprietorships<br>Community enterprise<br>Feudal<br>Slave | <b>UNPAID</b><br>Housework<br>Volunteer<br>Self-provisioning<br>Slave labor                 | <b>OPEN ACCESS</b><br>Atmosphere<br>International Waters<br>Open source IP                                                                                                      | <b>NON-MARKET</b><br>Household sharing<br>Gift giving<br>Gleaning<br>Hunting, fishing, gathering<br>Theft, piracy, poaching | <b>NON-MARKET</b><br>Sweat equity<br>Family lending<br>Donations<br>Interest-free loans                                    |

Source: Gibson-Graham (2011: 13)

Making visible the specific design of the diverse economy of a community reveals possibilities inherent in local cultures and ways of life. Gibson-Graham advocate a path-dependent step-by-step process that builds on the evaluation of local practices. Whereas positing the Western experience of industrialization as a universal development trajectory usually invites solutions from outside the community, the authors promote an approach, which is free from any precast solutions, and which proceeds by “building on what is there and producing the steps of the process as it goes” (Gibson-Graham, 2005a: 19; N’Dione et al. 1997: 373/74). It is up to the respective community to negotiate development possibilities based on the inventory of existing economic potentials. To Gibson-Graham it is important to remain as open as possible to development potentialities throughout the process; thus, they state that there is no pre-specified common substance shared by diverse community economies, and they refuse to define them by positing them as necessarily local or self-reliant. They moreover refuse to posit common characteristics *within* communities – be it a shared culture, history, or ideal. They therefore stress interdependence instead of sameness, which means that members recognize their differences as a way to start envisioning ways to improve communal wellbeing. Instead of offering elements of a shared ideal, Gibson-Graham suggest four ethical coordinates, or conceptual tools, around which such communal negotiation may take place (Gibson-Graham 2006a: 88-97):

- **Necessity:** Awareness of this element enables a “socially embedded ethical decision” about the boundary between labor necessary to fulfill needs and surplus labor. Recognizing mutual interdependence, the “ethical” definition of individual needs always takes into account the needs of others and the effects of personal consumption on the requirements of others. In their later works the authors include the requirements of the natural environment into these considerations: i.e. that agricultural activity should “take into account the water that is necessary for river systems to sustain themselves. When the food needs of humans conflict with the needs of rivers, the ability to sustain agriculture is undermined.” (Roelvink & Gibson-Graham 2009: 152).

- **Surplus:** Ethical decisions can be made about the use of surplus, the modes of its appropriation – e.g. through capitalist business, worker cooperative, community enterprise etc. - and the ends towards which it is distributed. Again, a truthful estimation of surplus must account for its effects on environmental sustainability by awareness of toxic waste and depletion of environmental resources.
  
- **Consumption:** “By highlighting the sociality of all economic relations, the community economy approach seeks to recognize the interdependence of a broad variety of economic and so-called ‘noneconomic’ activities.” Gibson-Graham mention the example of rural people contributing savings to a community “fiesta,” which according to mainstream economic conceptions is an unproductive activity. To community members such celebrations confirm local beliefs and social cohesion, and thus replenish a cultural commons. Whether deploying profits and savings to such activities that directly contribute to “social wellbeing” or to reinvestment in surplus-generating activities is another possible ethical choice. Different case studies across alternative capitalist and non-capitalist enterprises illustrate that some communities allocate profits to reinvestment purposes, salaries, and social welfare activities according to a predefined formula (see Gibson-Graham 2006a: 182; see also section 4.2.2 in this chapter).
  
- **Commons** provide “direct input into social and physical well-being” and are constitutive of the existence of a community: They constitute the inheritance or shared product of its members (Helfrich & Heinrich-Böll-Stiftung 2009: 24). Commons can be global (e.g. atmosphere), material (e.g. forests or community-oriented enterprises), or immaterial goods (e.g. shared traditions). Use rights extend to a group of people, which in each case can be a community, citizens of a state (e.g. healthcare system), or all humanity. The sustainable management of a commons by a community is crucial to that community’s survival, since overexploitation of common resources

denotes competition rather than cooperation and the recognition of mutual interdependence. In today's diverse alternative movements, some of which are represented at the World Social Forum, "the commons is already being recognized as an ethical coordinate of an alternative politics" (see also Brand 2009: 237/38). Authors writing about the issue stress that commons are not simply about a form of legal property rights, but that values and traditions are involved that constitute the identification of members of a community managing a commons (Bollier 2009: 28).

Gibson-Graham frequently use the term "ethical" as an adjective for the choices and practices that create a community economy. Ethical choices are already made on the discursive level, since the scholarly work of representing "reality" is a "performative action": By describing the functioning and dynamics of neoliberal capitalism scholars contribute to capitalism being "strengthened, its dominance performed, as an effect of its representations" (Gibson-Graham 2008: 615). Putting forward such structural views thus has the "performative effect" of discouraging anti-capitalist initiatives in the present, and of postponing liberating actions and emancipation. As the above examples of alternative modernities show, non-capitalist economic activities exist and are prevalent around the world, although hidden due to a lack of attention both from academics and the media. Making them visible or invisible through discourse – confirming the universality of capitalism, or highlighting cracks and openings – is therefore something that academics (though often inadvertently) choose to do. Being aware of this responsibility gives a new meaning to academic ethics. Not only narratives, but also practices "bring principles into action" (Gibson-Graham 2008: 620): Acting in a way that takes into account the interdependence of our wellbeing with that of others consequently means making an ethical choice.

In the case of the community in Jagna Gibson-Graham document the local economy by trying to capture all economic practices taking place by making use of an earlier version of table 1: In doing so they avoid value judgments by also

including illegal and exploitative practices, such as theft and slave labor (Gibson-Graham 2005a: 12). Based on this illustration of livelihood strategies the authors involved the community in discussions about which practices should be strengthened vis-à-vis others. They found that traditional collaborative practices sustained community, whereas remittances from family members working abroad were used to enhance the standard of living, such as education for the young and housing improvements. The development challenges, according to the authors, were to strengthen the “traditional practices and relationships of gifting, sharing, borrowing, volunteering, and reciprocated individual and collective work” (Gibson-Graham 2005a: 16). These practices “enacted” community by supporting subsistence and wellbeing through mutual care. At the same time there were few surplus-generating activities taking place, which had been the reason for locals to seek employment abroad. Building community enterprises was seen<sup>69</sup> as a promising way to enhance local surplus in order to further strengthen communal practices and to enhance standards of living. Inspired by a system of worker-owned cooperatives in the Basque region of Spain it was found that remittances from community members working abroad as contract laborers could be pooled in saving funds. With the help of two NGOs, one specialized in forming savings groups, the other in providing the entrepreneurial skills - these funds were then used to start community-based businesses producing local agricultural goods. Instead of serving consumption and the improvement of single households, the surplus from overseas contract labor provides the means for income generation at the community level: employment for local people and the marketing and sale of local products.

The works of Gibson-Graham illustrate potentials for alternative development pathways by challenging dominant discourses and the meanings these put forward. In the above examples such challenges can be derived from alternative discourses inscribed in traditional practices and values. In the works of Curry and Gibson-

---

<sup>69</sup> The publication does not indicate exactly who identified these challenges and development pathways: the authors constantly refer to “we” and “us,” which keeps the question open to which extent this “we” includes community members. In either case the authors actively contributed ideas and information, which has drawn criticism from authors responding to this publication (see next subsection).

Graham about communities in Southeast Asia the orientations of community members reflect a mix between traditional and modern aspirations; this means that capitalist development discourse may transform, devalue, and erode traditional orientations, but has so far not erased them in many places in the Global South. In cases, in which such alternative practices are not readily visible, dominant ideas can foreclose alternative livelihood visions altogether. Such lack of alternatives can have a paralyzing effect on transformative action. More than in the examples in Papua New Guinea and the Philippines, it is the case studies that Gibson-Graham have undertaken in Australia and the United States – thus, in so-called “developed nations” – in which the significance of “constructing a language of economic diversity” (Gibson-Graham 2006a) is most explicit.

One project, in which the authors intervened to create an awareness of economic alternatives, took place in the Latrobe Valley, a former power generating region with a monopoly supplying electricity throughout the state of Victoria (Australia). The state-owned complex had offered employment, modern housing, education facilities etc. for the people inhabiting the valley for about sixty years. Following the privatization of the power complex, large-scale layoffs and rising unemployment in the course of the 1990s, the working-class identity, once invested with a sense of pride about being part of the “powerhouse of Victoria,” turned into a precarious form of self-identification. This was reflected in the ways outside institutions, including the media, started to perceive the region, now depicting the Latrobe Valley as “the valley of despair” (Cameron & Gibson 2005a). Thus, the discourse, which had once positioned local inhabitants as privileged state-employed workers, continued to be the source of identification without any available alternative storyline, which could have offered a positively valued positioning following the decline of the state sector. The approach Gibson-Graham developed in this setting, and which they consequently applied in the Jagna community, includes three common elements: “a politics of language, a politics of the subject and a politics of collective action” (Gibson-Graham 2005b: 120). The way each element has informed the

development processes in the Latrobe Valley, as well as in the US (Pioneer Valley in Massachusetts), will be described in what follows.

### ***Language Politics***

This aspect denotes the discursive displacement of capitalist enterprise as the sole site of economic activity. In this the authors make use of poststructuralist tools, foremost drawing on the work of Laclau and Mouffe (Gibson-Graham 2006a: 54-57 and 78, and 2006b: 12). Accordingly, the dominant discursive formation puts all possible forms of economic activity and behavior in relation to capitalism as the defining element for different economic aspects; thus, whether different forms of exchange are deemed “economic” depends on whether they correspond to market exchange, whereas different motivations underlying economic activity are pitted against the “norm” of rational self-interest. Gibson-Graham thus aim at dislodging capitalism from its position as a central signifier and suggest to institute “community economy” as a new nodal point in economic discourse, which is meant to be far more inclusive of alternative aspects. The initial stage of the project thus consists in “reframing and renarrativizing” (Gibson-Graham 2006a: 148) exercises, which take different shapes according to the economic identifications of the local community.

Gibson-Graham’s project in Australia and the US started out by recruiting community researchers among the locals.<sup>70</sup> These researchers were unemployed, young to middle-aged volunteers, who shared the storylines prevalent among people in both places. These recruits were the first to be exposed to the idea of the diverse economy; for instance, Gibson-Graham arranged excursions with them to visit community-based enterprises already operating within the respective region

---

<sup>70</sup> Since the objective of postdevelopment practice is to identify development trajectories that respond to the development needs of the local community, this is an important way of making locals *own* the process. David Blake and Rattaphon Pitakthepsombut have in their study of dam-impacted community researchers in Northeastern Thailand termed this research method “Tai Baan Research” (Blake & Rattaphon 2006a). This method makes it possible to utilize local knowledge, which is otherwise ignored in scientific studies. Official statistics moreover often ignore data making up the diverse economy, especially non-market and non-capitalist activities. Giving a holistic account thus “would involve enrolling people to collect indicative data about the economic activities they care about” (Gibson-Graham 2011: 13).

(see also Cameron & Gibson 2005b: 279). This discovery of real-life examples, as well as conversations with people engaged in alternative businesses, gave rise to feelings of surprise and of possibility among the recruited researchers. Another way to elicit feelings of surprise and openness is illustrated by Gibson-Graham's approach in the "Pioneer Valley" in Massachusetts. Here, the researchers were tasked to interview locals about their daily activities. These activities were then situated within a four-cell matrix with the vertical rows categorized "market" and "nonmarket," and the horizontal columns each termed "paid" and "unpaid." It turned out that the researchers classified less than 10% of the activities as capitalist (market/paid). Here again, a discursive tool was used in order to bring an economy of care into visibility.

Following the recruitment of community researchers for the project, focus group discussions were organized, including the community researchers, city council representatives, and business representatives (Graham et al. 2002: 4). These events served to explore existing representations of the socio-economic context in each region. Here, Gibson-Graham attempted to shift conversations from the identification of what each place lacked in terms of the capitalist discourse, towards the various assets – or "gifts" – of the valley and the people: In the Latrobe Valley this exercise resulted in a "Portrait of Gifts," which depicted abilities ranging from "creative writing skills" to craft and computer skills. Included were moreover forms of knowledge, which people intended to acquire or share. This inventory of skills was distributed among the people in the Latrobe Valley in the form of brochures and transmitted through the media. Based on this list of gifts, the research team organized a community conference, where together with locals they discussed ways to engage in a community economy (Gibson-Graham 2006a: 148/49): Almost fifty ideas were mentioned involving an economy of sharing (e.g. of garden tools), gifting and neighborly assistance (e.g. fixing bikes, mowing lawns), communal events (e.g. "communal cooking kitchen") etc.

Having acquired training and knowledge through the above initiatives the community researchers were sent “into the field” to engage in conversations with people in their region. The objective was to identify economic activities, which, though undervalued in the mainstream narrative of the economy, provided possible elements of a community economy. Especially in the Latrobe Valley the researchers were confronted with deep-seated attitudes of frustration and victimization during their interviews; former electricity workers in particular held on to their working-class identities, which informed both attitudes of anger and feelings of nostalgia. Gibson-Graham realized that in order to present community economy as a real possibility, they first needed to destabilize such entrenched “identity of unemployed worker of an immoral capitalist order” (Gibson-Graham 2006a: 140; 129). In this they drew inspiration from Lacanian psychoanalysis. The objective was thus not to replace a working class identity with another form of identification. Rather, the project aim was to transform underlying emotions of antagonism (towards the state, capitalism, etc.) towards an attitude of “being-in-common.” The authors summarize the attitudinal objectives as “loving, compassionate, happy in the happiness of others, responding with equanimity to life’s constant changes, however uningratiating” (130); thus, in terms of the Buddhist teaching of the Four Divine Abodes. Gibson-Graham note that the challenge consisted not in instilling these dispositions from outside, but to extend them from existing associations with family and friends towards a wider circle of people.

Gibson-Graham’s emancipative strategy is thus inspired by insights from psychoanalysis and Buddhist philosophy. The normative orientation in their project is derived from the latter source: that is acknowledging “non-self,” the “shared identity” of individuals, society, and nature (Gibson-Graham 2011: 3; Wanna 2005: 1174). Similar to the Thai academic Wanna Prayukvong, who has conducted a study on community projects using a Buddhist Economics framework, Gibson-Graham believe that the long-term survival of such initiatives depends on the recognition of mutual interdependence, since community economies in every case

imply the joint sustainable management of commons<sup>71</sup>, be it in the form of shared knowledge, natural resources, or economic surplus. With reference to fostering dispositions of other-directedness as a necessary precondition for community economies, Gibson-Graham acknowledge the limitations of utilizing solely poststructuralist methods. Although their discursive intervention had been “a powerful tool” in enabling community members to perceive themselves differently, they recognize that these insights and feelings were fleeting moments, which could not be sustained in everyday life by new narratives alone. “Rather than working mainly with language and discourse and counting on that to release and redirect affect, we found that [...] we needed to directly address embodied, habitual, and emotional practices of being.” (Gibson-Graham 2006a: 152).

The authors have thus devised “micro-political” interventions in addition to their language politics, and they consequently speak of a “post-post-structuralist practice” (Gibson-Graham 2006a: 131). Whereas Wanna draws on Buddhist concepts, which provide her with analytical tools to normatively assess whether the community initiatives in her study conform to “reality” (Wanna 2005: 1173), postdevelopment theory lacks normative notions for development work. In Buddhist Economics terms Gibson-Graham act as “good friends,” who help community members develop “right understanding” (see Wanna 2005: 1176), since their subject politics fosters emotional dispositions, which motivate other-directed actions. Since postdevelopment values neither certain development ideals, nor specific underlying attitudes as “better” than others, Gibson-Graham’s involvement departs from postdevelopment initiatives as described by Matthews, for instance.

### ***Subject Politics***

This aspect involves breaking up entrenched patterns of thinking and feeling that curtail the self-confidence of the subject, and that limit the individual’s perception of what is possible. As the interviews with people in the Latrobe Valley showed, many

---

<sup>71</sup> See Gibson-Graham (2006a: 95) and Essen (2013: 158). In identifying the commons as a central aspect of community the authors in both cases refer to Stephen Gudeman’s work.

former electricity workers were reluctant to give up their ideas, which – though painful – were familiar, whereas the idea of a community economy meant opening up to new ways of thinking and feeling, which bore the risk of disappointment. This was not a matter of understanding or lack of imagination; most respondents during the interviews grasped the ideas brought forward by the community researchers, but were fearful about exposing themselves to a new situation. As Gibson-Graham note, such responses are of a psychosomatic nature, involving “amygdalic reactions” to situations that are perceived as new and threatening. In order to engage with these processes, discursive tools of resignification were complemented by the cultivation of “positive affect” as new experiences were made (Gibson-Graham 2006a: 152/53). Gibson-Graham organized various events, which exposed community members to new situations, especially to experiences of togetherness: People thus came together in informal cooking events, where they cooked meals and consumed them together. Although everyone knew about the objective of creating a community economy, these were unstructured events, where various people from different backgrounds became acquainted with each other. Speakers from community organizations were invited and bus trips to alternative businesses were undertaken. These activities likewise encouraged a feeling of community among the participants, including capacities of attentiveness, and a “generous spirit” (156) towards former strangers.

### ***Collective Action***

The interplay of discursive shifts (language politics) and micro-political interventions (subject politics) cultivates dispositions and motivations for collective action. In the Latrobe Valley for instance, four development projects emerged from the intervention, the first of which was a cooperative community garden (see Gibson-Graham 2006a: 162). Wanna’s study of three community projects in Southern Thailand (2005) shows that there are similarities as to how development is understood both in a Buddhist Economics perspective, as well as in Gibson-Graham’s community economies project: In both cases underlying dispositions of interconnectedness and non-identification are emphasized. However, Wanna’s

work does not overcome the shortcomings of Buddhist Economics as outlined in the previous chapter, although attitudes of being-in-common appear central to her assessment of the success of development projects. Gibson-Graham's detailed study, on the other hand, indicates how corresponding insights can be actively developed in a community development setting. They moreover touch on subdiscursive cognitive mechanisms, mainly by referring to Connolly's work (see Gibson-Graham 2006a). I will therefore assess their community initiatives from an enactive perspective based on the methodological tools developed in the first chapter.

#### **4.1.2. An Analysis of Gibson-Graham's Micro-Political Interventions Using the Enactive Framework**

Since the 1920s and throughout the 1970s the economy of the Latrobe Valley was marked by steady economic expansion driven solely by a growing electricity generation sector. Throughout this period the State Electricity Commission of Victoria (SEC) offered secure jobs, comparatively high incomes, as well as modern housing and community services. To the people in the valley the SEC provided a sense of status compared to workers in the private sector, as well as a sense of belonging and identity in being included in a regional project of supplying the state with power; of being the "powerhouse of Victoria." Workers in the region felt bound to the enterprise by a "social contract," in which the SEC provided "paternalistic state care" for its employees and their children in return for their loyalty. When a conservative government gradually disbanded the SEC and privatized its operations, about four fifth of the former SEC employees lost their jobs in the process, and only a minority has become subsequently employed by successor companies (Cameron & Gibson 2005a: 315; Fairbrother & Macdonald 2000: 320).

These events have led to a reversal in the self-perception of the former workers, as well as in the way people in other regions viewed the Latrobe Valley. It has become apparent to the workers that their feelings of pride and self-worth had been almost

entirely dependent on care by the SEC; Gibson-Graham note that the provisions delivered by the state had effectively “infantilized” the labor force (Gibson-Graham 2006a: 38; Rainnie et al. 2004: 33/34). Now they found themselves excluded from the economic process and unable to provide for their families. Instead, they have become recipients of social benefits. The former sense of pride gave way to feeling powerless and hopeless. Former workers directed much of their frustrations towards themselves, feeling self-hatred and shame for their own inability to change their situation. Much of their anger has been directed at other social actors, namely the SEC, conservative state governments, and the “Economy.” The positioning triangle in figure 6 is meant to capture this interpretation. Specifically, the ex-workers’ sense of injustice is directed at the polity on all levels from the state level down to the local council. Thus, these institutions and actors for many stand in for the SEC (Gibson-Graham 2006a: 153), which had broken the social contract. On a more abstract level the Economy was identified as another antagonistic force: Whereas centralized state planning had ensured the provision of high living standards, capitalist notions of rationality and efficiency have led to mass lay-offs, replacing human capital with state-of-the-art technology. Finally, university staff and researchers have undertaken numerous studies following these economic changes in order to analyze and document its impact. These soon became perceived as viewing the locals as “lab rats” in order to write reports with no impact (Cameron & Gibson 2005b: 277).

**Figure 6: Representations Among the Target Group in the Latrobe Valley Prior to Gibson-Graham's Development Intervention**

**Positions:**

*The powerless "Us"*

"reserve army of labor" with the right to indignation in an "immoral capitalist order" (Cameron & Gibson 2005: 318; Gibson-Graham 2006a: 140)

*"Them"*

- State actors (state government in Victoria, local city council), who have broken the "social contract"
- Private enterprises refusing to offer employment, which is sanctioned by the economic system
- Academics who could use their expertise to help, but instead conduct research on the valley for their own careers

**Acts:**

Privatization of the SEC since the mid 1990s, withdrawal of state control, mass lay-offs

**Storyline:**

Exploitative power relations in a world capitalist system

From the "powerhouse of Victoria" to the "Valley of Despair"

Cameron and Gibson note that a familiar alternative development intervention would have consisted in locating the local issues in a global structural context: “This would have meant introducing the neo-liberal political agenda (which has led to privatising state-owned assets such as the SEC) and development of global capitalism (which means there are capitalist corporations eager to snap-up these assets in any location across the globe)” (2005a: 324). This would have introduced awareness that numerous people around the world are suffering from the same hegemonic power relations, that the local problems are situated expressions of world-wide structural inequalities. This strategy thus aims at deepening an existing precarious identity and sense of righteous anger in order to direct these feelings towards collective action against neoliberal globalization. Gibson-Graham do not follow this strategy, partly because it limits the scope of possibilities for endogenous development solutions. A related consideration, which motivates discarding “strong theories” about relations of dominance, is that they entail predefined attributes of subject positions and fix their relations with other elements of the social formation (Gibson-Graham 2005b: 122 and 2006a: 4-6). Laclau already warns against the obstacles, which strong identification poses for social transformation; specifically, he cautions that holding on to class-based divisions after successful social change would lead to the perpetuation of the same antagonisms, although under reversed circumstances. Moghaddam and Harré make a similar point when they state that revolutions have historically brought about practices and institutions, which “mirror” those of the previous order. Deliberate efforts of social transformation, the authors conclude, have failed because they have ignored the “psychological limitations to political change” (Moghaddam & Harré 1996). They therefore believe that “private revolutions,” those aimed at micro-practices, are crucial for the success of social transformations.

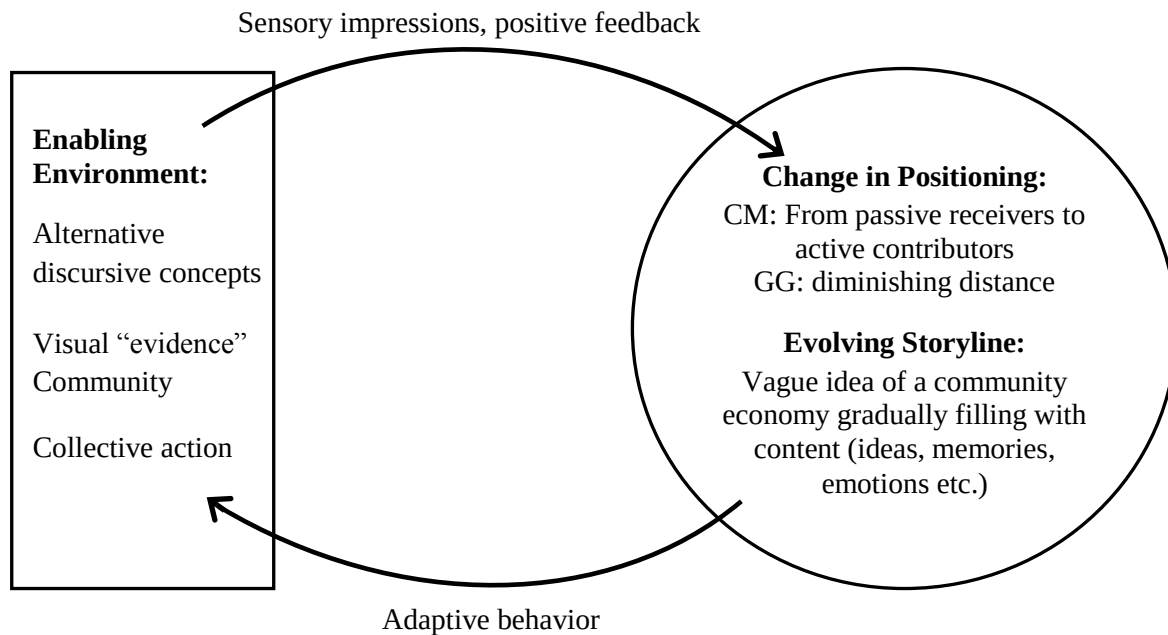
Gibson-Graham’s approach recognizes the need for subjective transformations as a pre-requisite also for changes on larger social scales (Cameron & Gibson 2005a: 320). In their action research projects participants engage with entrenched representations and subject positions, but this acknowledgment is seen as a

necessary precondition for traversing these interpretations. The objective here is to leave behind the predefined categories of an existing discourse and to open up possibilities for new ways of being. This involves not pursuing the problems as posed and articulated within the common discourse of “unemployed worker in a neoliberal economic system.” The intention underlying the process is comparable to Buddhist mindfulness practices: Labeling exercises are meant to bring automatic representations and feelings into consciousness in order to divest them of their conditioning effects. If not attended to in this way, they give rise to habitual patterns of thinking and feeling determining the cognitive categories for subsequent lines of thoughts and actions; this points to the somewhat paradoxical situation that while we aim at overcoming a certain state of affairs, our strategies remain confined within the framework of a problematic condition. By being aware of patterns of thinking and at the same time not following their logic, radically new strategies become possible.

What is moreover interesting is that Gibson-Graham acknowledge the possibilities and limitations inherent in discursive interventions to achieve such shifts (Gibson-Graham 2006a: 152): They mention instances, in which discussants in a focus group articulate new thoughts and they describe how these foster new feelings of surprise and curiosity among the participants; or cases, in which the community researchers break up familiar narratives of victimization and lack, as they introduce questions about existing skills and capabilities outside the mainstream storyline. These instances, in which respondents from the Latrobe Valley have come to realize new perspectives, thus evoked novel reactions also on an embodied level. The authors note that in order to maintain the impact of this realization on the process of becoming new subjects, they had to devise “micropolitical” interventions in addition to discursive initiatives in order to target different cognitive levels – including “visceral and affective registers” (Cameron & Gibson 2005a: 320). Their initiatives can be summarized in figure 7, in which a positioning analysis is integrated into the enactivist action-perception-loop model. Such an illustration can only serve to provide an overall outline of the dynamism of the process; the

individual elements and the part they play in the process of forming novel adaptive strategies are listed below.<sup>72</sup>

**Figure 7: Action-Perception Loop Process Depicting Gibson-Graham's Development Intervention**



Community members (CM) develop a new understanding towards their situation in the action-perception loop process. This also includes their relative positioning compared to the community researchers, including Gibson-Graham (GG).

The community development processes in the Latrobe Valley, as well as in the Pioneer Valley in Massachusetts, involve operations on environmental factors as opposed to pursuing a known ideal state. The authors note that the storylines circulating among the inhabitants of the Latrobe Valley, as well as in the media and

<sup>72</sup> Although positioning theory emphasizes the fluidity of attitudes, selves, and meanings, studies involving positioning theoretical analysis usually include illustrations of the positioning triangle, when positions, speech-acts, and storylines remain constant during an interaction (see Bartlett 2008; Harré et al. 2009). This static depiction does not lend itself to the description of processes, in which these elements are subject to change, and in these cases the conceptual framework is often used without graphical illustration (see Davies & Harré 1999; Redman 2008).

the academia reinforced a representation of the area as abandoned, hopeless, and lacking outside help in the form of corporate investment. This discourse not only masks the existence of local resources, which could potentially be mobilized, but also existing forms of the care economy, especially among female household heads (Gibson-Graham 2006a: 150). Language politics, subject politics, and politics of collective action are each designed to break up the dominant representation by revealing objects, themes, and articulations, which evoke novel responses from the community members. Each of these three domains stimulates new thoughts, feelings and emotions, as well as behaviors. These interventions differ in terms of emphasis as to how they target these cognitive levels:

**Alternative discursive concepts:** The researchers introduce a wider scope of activities covered by the term “economy” by introducing the notions of the diverse economy and by highlighting their existence in current practices. In their interviews community researchers direct the focus from what respondents lack to what skills they possess by asking corresponding questions. In addition to making new concepts consciously available, this recognition moreover evokes surprise and attitudes of curiosity.

**Visual evidence:** Jeffrey Schwartz, describing his Four Step treatment method for OCD patients, notes that relabeling exercises must be reinforced through “retribution”: He achieves this through visual illustrations, which provide a sense of concrete “proof.” This notion is reinforced by the fact that an “expert,” i.e. someone with formal authority in the field, is using these images and challenges a more familiar representation. Visual illustrations, such as the diverse economy table, the “portrait of gifts,” the four-cell matrix used by community researchers in the Pioneer Valley etc., induce a deeper affective response than verbal conceptualizations by themselves. Gibson-Graham are aware of the power effects coming from their quasi-positioning as “therapists”; making reference to psychotherapy interventions they mention a “desire” of the community members projected at the qualities they seem to embody (Gibson-Graham 2006a: 133/34;

Fennell & Segal 2011: 130). As is the case in MBCT the aim is to use this power differential as a catalyst for community members to acquire an active stance in their development as subjects.

Conscious and careful positioning is probably a crucial aspect of development work at this stage and it can be decisive about the success or failure of the project. This also concerned the community researchers, who avoided positioning themselves as university staff, since this would have triggered associations with familiar narratives, following the pattern of “us,” the victims of the Economy, and “them,” who represent the indifferent researcher. Instead, the community researchers referred to those aspects of themselves, which resembled the self-identification of the respondents from the valley, such as “single mother” or “unemployed worker” (Gibson-Graham 2006a: 153). The significance of ways of positioning and of power imbalances diminishes in the process, as community members actively engage in the development process, especially as they leave behind the initial discourse in the course of communal activities.

**Community:** Whereas authors describing mindfulness-based therapies have acknowledged that a “group or community context has been an integral part” (Dimidjian & Linehan 2003: 169) both in mindfulness-based therapy as well as in spiritual traditions, this aspect plays a central role in the politics of the subject. It has been the communal events, such as excursions and workshops, in which community members engaged most actively with the project. In fact, from the accounts given about these events, it appears that the experience of being-in-common was the most important aspect during the events. For instance, the connections fostered during bus rides seemed to have left a deeper impression on participants than the actual destination of their travel or the project objectives (see Cameron & Gibson 2005a: 326/27; Gibson-Graham 2006a: 157). Opening up and listening to former strangers, and at the same time discarding preconceptions and breaking up habits of suspicion, seemed to have provided the most profound impetus for subjective change. The experience of accepting others and being

accepted fostered novel dispositions of other-directedness and kindness. The cultivation of these ethical qualities in an embodied sense is seen as possibly the most important result of the project (Graham & Cornwell 2009: 48).

Ethical dispositions, as pursued in LKM and CM, and theoretically expounded by Varela (1999), are here fostered through the experience of community. Exposure to the experience evokes new forms of interaction, in which familiar attitudes give way to new forms of emotional categorization. Out of this Knowing How the idea of community economy becomes positively charged in the course of these experiences. Out of this “excess of affect” yet “unamenable to argument or representation” (Connolly 2002: 74) community members were thus looking for conceptual and economic expressions of this way of being. This resulted in collective action, the next step in the project.

**Collective Action:** The material expressions of this new economic subjectivity range from cooperative ventures, including community gardens, to business models that combine commercial activities with social objectives.<sup>73</sup> Some activities have failed; in the case of the Latrobe Valley this includes the community garden project, which had been the “biggest and most ambitious project” (Cameron & Gibson 2005a: 328). On the other hand, small, spontaneous, or initially unorganized activities can unexpectedly become major projects (Graham & Cornwell 2009: 57). It would be interesting to find out, what part the academic researchers played at this late stage of the project. What is evident from the variety of activities they describe is that the creation of community economies is an ongoing exploratory process, in which the participants remain open to experimentations with different forms of economy.

Although Gibson-Graham (2006a: 132) and Cameron and Gibson (2005b) describe the interventions on language, the subject, and collective action in terms of a linear

---

<sup>73</sup> See Gibson-Graham (2005a), Cameron and Gibson (2005b: 282), and Graham and Cornwell (2009). Karen Werner describes two further projects, including that of a time bank (Werner forthcoming).

sequence, each of these elements works back and forth on the other aspects: Visual evidence reinforces shifting representations and identifications, and novel dispositions towards former strangers encourage expression through new activities and representations. A new economic language not only designates emerging economic practices, but works back on affective categorizations. This dynamic movement in which community members are engaged fosters a growing sense of empowerment through positive feedback. This changes the relationship the participants develop with their social and economic context. On this basis they “enact [...] economic realities” (Gibson-Graham 2008: 619). In his Four Step treatment method, Schwartz calls the corresponding final stage of the therapy “Revalue” (Schwartz & Begley 2002: 87/88). Here, patients have developed a new connection with their OCD symptoms, as they have ceased to be subjected to a single adaptive strategy. At this point patients are empowered to choose and to pursue alternative courses of action. Using neuroimaging technology Schwartz has been able to illustrate the neuronal correlates of the perceived ability to choose whether to “walk to the garden to prune roses” or to “rush to the sink to wash” (Schwartz & Begley 2002: 93). Thus, brain activity indicates the activation of the OCD circuit alongside a newly established pathway, now termed “therapy circuit.”

Schwartz’s study shows that old habits continue to persist as a set of available responses to future situations, both on a phenomenological level, as well as on an embodied level. The notion that somatic changes including neuroplasticity are part of successful behavioral change<sup>74</sup> helps to better appreciate Gibson-Graham’s development interventions, which target all cognitive registers described in the first chapter, including consciousness, somatic emotions, and – through behavioral adaptations – sensorimotor mechanisms. However, in contrast to Schwartz, Gibson-Graham ascribe a crucial role to an enabling environment and positive feedback in the process, noting that the “individual needs nourishment and

---

<sup>74</sup> In the case of the community economies project this means that the intensity of neuronal activation in certain parts of the brain is likely to change over the long term as people respond more readily with feelings of empathy and loving kindness in a greater number of situations. For the parts of the brain likely to be affected in this context see Hofmann et al. (2011: 1130).

encouragement from without to sustain acts of self-cultivation” (Gibson-Graham 2006a: 162). Considering the physiochemical mechanisms underlying thoughts and feelings it becomes clearer what they mean when they describe community members as “reluctant subjects”<sup>75</sup> at the beginning of the development process. People do not choose the cultural context they are born into, including the representations sanctioned by this context. The discursive regularities in a certain cultural environment have constraining effects on their freedom (Harré & Gillett 1994: 122); the way the unemployed workers in the Latrobe Valley reacted to their situation was validated by how they were represented and their story narrated by most agents and institutions. What Gibson-Graham have done is to affirm and expose project participants “in nonthreatening ways to the alternatives presented by different constructions” (Harré & Gillett 1994: 127). “Alternative meanings,” Harré and Gillett continue explaining, “have to arise and be validated in some way.” The adaptive strategy introduced in the course of the project was experienced as “real” in the sense that it was associated with actual experiential qualities, including feelings, actions, memories etc.

#### **4.1.3. The Efficacy of Micro-Practices: The Economy of Communion**

The ways in which Revalue, understood as the conscious, emotional, and behavioral resignification of situations, affects social practices can be illustrated by the activities of members of the Economy of Communion project. In terms of Gibson-Graham’s diverse economies table, the businesses operated by members of the Economy of Communion (EoC) can all be classified as “capitalist” or “alternative capitalist,” as they are private for-profit organizations, with hierarchical management structures, and operating according to the rules of market economies (see Silva et al. 2013; Gold 2004). In this the catholic-inspired movement follows

---

<sup>75</sup> See Gibson-Graham (2005a and 2006a: 23). The expression has given rise to less favorable interpretations as well. Curry’s response to Gibson-Graham’s paper on their action research in the Philippines suggests that the perceived reluctance among the target group may actually express a form of “passive resistance” (Curry 2005). For instance, he identifies the authors’ language politics of resignification as a form of discursive violence e.g. by endorsing certain communal practices and thus masking their exploitative character, and rejecting others (see also Aguilar 2005: 27).

church doctrine, in particular the encyclical *Centesimus Annus* (1991), in which Pope John Paul II has endorsed the capitalist system, but cautions that it should serve human development and freedom (Ganzon 2013: 108). In 2011 the project covered 840 companies around the world, which are engaged in diverse fields such as manufacturing, commerce, and the service sector. Most of these companies are small and medium sized, and only few of them employ more than hundred people. Also judging from the company websites of some these member businesses, hardly anything would suggest differences compared to conventional capitalist enterprises.<sup>76</sup>

The differences between the EoC and mainstream businesses are thus not of a structural nature, or even of an ideological kind, but consist in micro-practices, which derive from the cultural and psychological context, in which these companies are embedded. Entrepreneurs, shareholders, and many employees who are part of the EoC, are also members of the Focolare Movement, which was founded during World War 2 by a group of catholic women in the Italian city of Trent. They established a sharing community in order to provide basic necessities such as food, clothes, and medicine for those, who had become impoverished and homeless due to the destructions of war. The movement soon spread to other Italian cities, then to other countries of Europe, and is today present in every continent, drawing members not only from Christian confessions, but also people of other faiths.<sup>77</sup>

The name, which the group gave itself, is symbolic of the feeling of proximity that resulted from this practice of sharing (Bruni & Uelmen 2006: 647): Focolare is the Italian word for “fireplace.” Out of this practice of giving and sharing, which nurtures a corresponding attitude and culture, members of the movement have later sought to define how they understand “giving”: The Brazilian Sociologist Vera Araujo, for instance, explains that it is based on a perception that both the donor and the

---

<sup>76</sup> See for example the website of the German dairy producer “Privatmolkerei Naarmann GmbH” (<http://www.naarmann.de/de/pages/index>), or of the rural bank “Bangko Kabayan Inc.” in the Philippines (<http://www.bangkokabayan.com>).

<sup>77</sup> See also the movement website [www.focolare.org/en/movimento-dei-focolari/storia](http://www.focolare.org/en/movimento-dei-focolari/storia)

recipient are equals in the act of sharing. The poverty of the recipient is seen as a gift that offers to the donor the opportunity to give her-/himself to the community, and to become part of it.<sup>78</sup> Araujo distinguishes this disposition from an attitude of generosity, which cements a hierarchical relationship between donor and recipient, and thus lacks a comparable communal spirit. The Economy of Communion project was launched in the Brazilian city of Sao Paolo in 1991, because the community of goods among the local members had proved insufficient in eradicating poverty. Hence, the pursuit of profit was from the start a means to tap additional sources for the culture of sharing (Gold 2004: 637). The Economy of Communion can therefore be regarded as an economic expression of a communal culture, which has preceded it.

Although Chiara Lubich has set up a tentative guideline about the use of profits – one third for reinvestment, an additional third for the Focolare community and its programs, and the remaining third for direct aid for the poor (Bruni & Uelmen 2006: 673; Gold 2010: 90) – the special nature of the EoC alternative is inscribed in everyday practices and relationships, only some of which are formally stated in codes of conduct within each company. EoC businesses in the education sector, for instance, adapt admission fees according to the financial capacities of the pupils' parents; businesses often hire workers, who otherwise would find it difficult to secure a job; they are committed to keeping underperforming employees etc.<sup>79</sup> Many companies have moreover instituted councils and meetings for increased participation and communication between all corporate levels (Silva 2013: 281). The culture underlying these practices also extends to external relations: Companies abstain from illegal practices, such as paying bribes, even if it is common conduct within the local business environment (Ganzon 2013: 110/11). In her case study on the German dairy producer Naarman, Pühringer mentions that the company convinced one of its suppliers to serve a competitor experiencing economic difficulties (Pühringer 1999: 115).

---

<sup>78</sup> Vera Araujo at the occasion of the First European Social Forum in November 2002 in Florence, Italy.

<sup>79</sup> See Gold (2004: 639; 2010: 138), Silva (2013: 281), and Bruni & Uelmen (2006: 652).

The examples of how EoC businesses put an alternative culture into practice are thus manifold. Whereas it can be argued that some of the above activities simply reflect a heightened sense of social justice, others are highly unusual, such as sharing knowledge with fierce competitors (see Gold 2010: 145). Gold moreover shows how such practices transform the relationship between EoC businesses and conventional companies, effecting attitudinal changes within the latter. Such instances illustrate how the introduction of novel practices by an agent lead to adaptations in prevalent storylines<sup>80</sup> and thus have further repercussions on the social environment. The core of these alternatives is not verbally stated principles, but “ethical know-how” (Varela 1999), meaning embodied dispositions. These determine the concrete practice in response to each situation. The fact that these dispositions can persist and unfold corresponding activities in a competitive capitalist environment moreover illustrates the ambivalence of micro-practices with respect to ideologies and macro-social structures, as stated in section 7 in the first chapter.

## **4.2. Potentials of the Enactive Approach: The Inpaeng Network**

Projects, as those described by Gibson-Graham, usually start out as local and small. Especially in their early stages these initiatives may raise doubts, even within those engaged in them, about the proportion of organizing work compared to the number of people they are helping (see Werner forthcoming; Erdem 2014: 73). However, it seems that contemporary successful community projects, which foster alternative ways of being, thinking, and feeling, in most cases originate in very small-scale interventions, and only after many years grow into sizable economic alternatives.

---

<sup>80</sup> As mentioned in subsection 6.4 of the first chapter, the combination of positioning theory with enactivism implies a wider conception of the term “storyline”: Here, it also includes micro-practices including emotional dispositions.

This was the case with the Mondragón cooperative system, which Gibson-Graham repeatedly refer to as a major inspiration in their projects.<sup>81</sup> Although the philosophical founder of the cooperative complex, Father Arizmendi, had arrived in 1941 to the municipality in the Basque region, the economic venture was only established in 1956 (Gibson-Graham 2006a: 125). In the period prior to the cooperative project, he mainly focused on setting up social, medical, and educational institutions, and on launching study circles on social and religious issues. Another example, which grew out of “social Catholicism” is the Focolare Movement and its EoC project, which evolved from an initiative by a few catholic women into a global movement. Whereas the Focolare movement spread rapidly following the establishment of the first group, the Inpaeng Network, a farmers’ network in Northeastern Thailand, consisted of a small group of farmers in the village of Ban Bua in Kudbak district, Sakon Nakhon province. They undertook excursions to alternative agriculturalists and they exchanged labor, seed varieties, and the know-how learned during excursions (see Rado 2013). For years the group engaged in these small-scale activities and grew only moderately in terms of membership.<sup>82</sup> Only after a decade it spread to other districts and started to involve cooperative enterprises (see Rattana et al. 2005: 63-66).

Today the Inpaeng Network comprises 30,000 members (see Sutee 2010: 23) in five provinces of the remote Northeast. Most of these have been drawn to the network by word of mouth, as is the case for the Focolare Movement (Gold 2010: 42), as well as through contacts established via government initiatives. Inpaeng has developed into a non-hierarchical network of member communities. Thus, in each community, members make their own decisions regarding economic activities and the distribution of surplus. These members are nevertheless united by common objectives, such as forest preservation and concern for the wider community. Inpaeng is therefore principally a knowledge network, in which experiences and

---

<sup>81</sup> See Gibson-Graham (2005a: 17/18; 2006a: 101-126; 2011: 6-8).

<sup>82</sup> One of the early members told me that he left the group during these early years, partly because he felt that the relationships among the initially thirteen members was conflict-laden, and partly because he did not deem the project to be serious; thus he expected it to be a temporary endeavor (household interview, 20 January 2012).

know-how are shared among members. Today Inpaeng is involved in a wide range of activities, including reforestation efforts, integrated farming, utilization of renewable energy, carbon sequestration, and operation of 58 community enterprises (see Rado 2013 and Samek et al. 2011).

#### **4.2.1. The Inpaeng Network and Contemporary Livelihood Strategies in Northeastern Thailand**

An initial impetus for the formation of the alternative farmers' group in Ban Bua was provided by the ethnographic research of Thawatchai Khunwong, who has come to live with the villagers since 1986. At that time he was a bachelor student and member of a Thai NGO. During the first year of his stay Thawatchai not only studied the cultural life of the local ethnic group, but also sought to identify potential sources of economic strength, such as traditional products and skills, and environmental resources characteristic of the region (Pho Lek, personal interview on 17 January 2012). He then presented his findings to likeminded influential village elders, such as Pho Lek and Pho Serm, and NGO leaders. Inspired by the findings of Thawatchai's study, this group then aimed at creating awareness among the villagers about their skills and the value of the local biodiversity, including herbs and fruits (such as Makmao, Makkho, Makaew) unique to the region. Farmers in those days mainly cultivated government-sponsored cassava and cleared large areas of forests in order to expand cash crop cultivation. Since most households thus produced the same commercial crops, the supply soon outstripped demand by local middlemen, which drove down sales prices. This meant diminishing monetary returns for the farmers, which contributed to rising debt levels (see Rattana et al. 2005: 12). In contrast to most villagers, the small group of NGO staff and alternative farmers recognized early on that local livelihoods could be improved upon by focusing on the economic utilization of indigenous resources, instead of cultivating mainstream products for the needs of national and international agro-industries.

Most activities of Inpaeng up until today reflect an ongoing striving for know-how about local capacities for economic development: Some activities highlight the possibility to replace monetary expenditures by subsistence production, whereas later activities also extend into commercial ventures. The network moreover aims at stimulating rapid circulation of new insights by sharing information among members and non-members through offering training and by holding regular meetings. The early group thus collected seeds and data about the variety of edible animals and plants in the region. From their excursions they learned about the use of tree species for herbal medicine, as well as about their functions in integrated farm systems. From a farmer in a nearby district, for instance, they learned about the utilization of rattan trees, which can be used as a food source, as well as for braiding material (Pho Serm, personal interview on 27 January 2012; Rado 2013: 184/85). If cultivated as a forest, rattan trees provide a habitat for those plants, animals, and mushrooms, which are typical subsistence goods of communities in the area. In 1988 the group bought up some farm land in Ban Bua and established a learning center for training and for exchanging knowledge (Sutee 2010: 23). As new members from other parts of the district joined the group, it acquired its current name “Inpaeng” in 1991, meaning “God Indra’s creation.” The center in Ban Bua thus became the first network center.

Some members moreover acquired specialized skills, which enabled Inpaeng to pursue commercial activities since the 1990s: One member, Kamphun, earned a diploma in traditional medicine in Khonkaen province. Following her return she applied this knowledge in her garden and trained others about the medicinal use of different herb species. Other group members acquired processing skills from a local branch of Rajamangala University. Today, the Inpaeng Center in Ban Bua hosts a herb factory, managed by Kamphun, as well as a small plant, which produces juice and wine from Makmao berries. According to Pho Lek the villagers had no prior knowledge about these possibilities; the official development discourse, which had been promoted by the government and its National Economic and Social Development Plans, had always implied that development could only be achieved

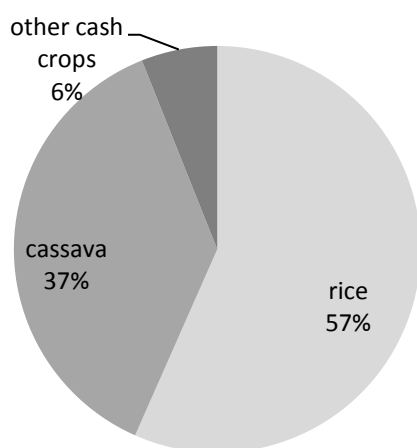
through external expertise and assistance. This includes the various government-sponsored cash crops, such as cassava and more recently rubber. The fact that only external visitors bought products from the herbal factory during the first few years of its operation (Kamphun, personal interview on 25 January 2012) moreover reflects the initial disdain among villagers for traditional medicine compared to modern medicine.

Through its activities Inpaeng aims at fostering a change in attitude among local farmers. By illustrating that unique local resources can be sold profitably in outside markets, and by showing that traditional knowledge can be utilized productively in combination with modern processing techniques, members of the network hope to encourage local farmers to be self-confident about their own capabilities and skills. Network leaders do not pursue this objective by teaching people “like using a blackboard” (Pho Lek, personal interview on 17 January 2012), but by setting examples through actual practice and successful application. Through revaluation of local resources, farmers are encouraged to distinguish between external know-how, which improves their lives on the one hand, and expertise, which merely reproduces and discounts locally available resources. The network moreover provides training about integrated farming techniques, as well as about how to produce organic fertilizer, or household items such as shampoo and dish liquid, by use of available resources. A particular concern, shared by many Inpaeng leaders during interviews, is whether their way of life, which reflects care for the village community and for local biodiversity, will be carried on by following generations. These leaders note that for younger farmers earning money is of higher priority than replacing their expenditures through subsistence skills, even if these could significantly reduce their need for income.

Especially in such remote provinces as Sakon Nakhon, Nakhon Phanom, and Mukdahan, the activities promoted by Inpaeng are not completely opposed to prevailing modes of life; in fact, many network activities are rather meant to build on an already existing foundation of economic self-reliance. As the household

interviews were conducted in January 2012 it became clear that virtually every household in the village satisfies part of its consumption needs by hunting and gathering in nearby forests and fields. Especially during the rainy season people catch fish and frogs in the fields, and collect mushrooms in the forest. Red ants, ants' eggs and phak waan (a leaf-like vegetable) are typically gathered during the dry season from January to April. Other wild animals, such as birds and rats can be hunted all year round. The use of the forest as a source of "healthy and wild" food is also documented elsewhere in the province (Blake & Ratthaphon 2006b: 86). Since the 1990s most farming households in Ban Bua have moreover made a shift away from the cultivation of cash crops and have tried to satisfy their annual rice demand from their own produce. This change due to negative experiences from overreliance on cash crops has also occurred in other parts of the wider Northeastern region (see Keyes 2013: 176). Today, the average farmer in Ban Bua uses more than half of his/her field for the cultivation of rice, whereas the rest is used for cash crops, especially cassava (see Figure 8). These are planted for the monetary income needed to satisfy household needs beyond food.

**Figure 8: Land Use in Ban Bua, Sakon Nakhon**



In Ban Bua one therefore cannot draw a clear line between Inpaeng members and non-members in terms of livelihood activities; whereas only about 14% of

respondents during random household interviews declared themselves network members, some of them exhibited livelihood patterns, which hardly differ from those of the average villager. On the other hand, some non-members may entertain economic relations with Inpaeng, or exhibit views or follow subsistence strategies, which resemble the network philosophy (see Rado 2013: 186/87). Accordingly, even Thawatchai himself finds it misleading to divide the local community into network members and non-members (personal interview on 17 January 2012). Rather, a central aim of the network is to strengthen attitudes of self-reliance based on integrated farming activities by use of local resources and know-how. This strategy puts farmers in a position of strength and economic independence, from which they can enter into market relations.

Inpaeng activities need to be seen not only in relation to their wider socio-economic background, but also to the regional cultural context: Northeastern villages organize festive events to strengthen communal cohesion on a regular basis. Thus, each year a number of ceremonies takes place, both Buddhist and some in accordance with traditional spirit beliefs. Buddhist holidays are celebrated near a temple, whereas non-Buddhist ceremonies – for example when the community worships the spirit of the village - take place in a small community forest. At least one member of each household is expected to join in these activities, which involve cleaning the temple, setting up decorations, cooking food and the like. Repeated failure to live up to this expectation raises suspicion among the other villagers, since it indicates that one thinks him-/herself to be different from others in the community.<sup>83</sup> Not only do these events reaffirm the cohesion among the villagers, but they also have a certain redistributive effect: Village institutions and the wealthier families sponsor provisions, including food such as pork, which especially poor villagers would otherwise rarely afford.

---

<sup>83</sup> My interpreter told me this at one point, after noticing that I had repeatedly asked respondents during household interviews whether they take part in village ceremonies. She herself is from Mahasarakham province and thus communicated with the villagers in the regional dialect.

Since regular communal events are part of life in many parts of rural Thailand, Inpaeng Network members can draw on these experiences of community and re-enact them during network meetings. Today, such meetings may draw participants from member communities in all five provinces, as was the case during a memorial in memory of deceased Inpaeng leaders, which took place on 21/22 January 2012 at the network center in Ban Bua. The center's meeting hall was used as a stage for an audience of about 120 people, including 20 "young generation farmers." These were easily identifiable, because they were seated closest to the stage, indicating their elevated status within the network.<sup>84</sup> The first day of the memorial opened with a traditional Northeastern dance, followed by speeches by network members and staff members of an agricultural government institution<sup>85</sup>, who had arrived from Bangkok. In the evening of the first day, people gathered in small groups chatting with each other until late into the night. The memorial was concluded the next day with a merit-making ceremony in the temple outside the village. The Inpaeng Center in Ban Bua hosts a large number of meetings throughout the year, including administrative meetings, network conferences, and project meetings, in each case drawing members who are involved in each activity. Network meetings not only foster a sense of community among Inpaeng members, but moreover provide opportunities for sharing knowledge and experiences among individual farmers and communities.

Whereas regular ceremonies reaffirm a sense of community among villagers, the establishment of welfare funds illustrates the self-organizing capacities among members of a village, as well as their ability to turn social relations into social security. About 75% of respondents during household interviews indicated to be members of a village-level welfare fund, overseen by a local committee. The fund is meant as a compensatory mechanism in case of death of a household member. In this case, a committee member collects a predefined amount of money, such as 10

---

<sup>84</sup> During a village ceremony I had already observed the custom to place children – the future generation of the village – together, separately from other community members.

<sup>85</sup> This event, as well as collaborations between Inpaeng and government institutions will be treated in more detail in chapter 5.

Baht, from all member households; the overall sum is then given to the family of the deceased. A similar scheme exists on the sub-district level, in which little more than half of the respondents indicated to be members. Inpaeng moreover operates savings groups in order to manage financial risks among villagers. Those participating in the project deposit 10 Baht each month and receive interest on their deposits (Rado 2013: 191/92). The interest rate varies each year depending on inflow from debtors. Part of the group savings are moreover used for social expenditures, such as hospitalizations.

Inpaeng activities are not only rooted in existing activities and capacities in the rural Northeast, but are moreover embedded in the wider community. The Inpaeng savings scheme, for instance, is open to network members and non-members alike. The network's cooperatives also operate in a way that is meant to benefit the local community at large: Their products either reflect local skills and resources (such as fermented fish in case of riparian communities), or main expenditures of local villagers. Whereas in the first case cooperatives are set up for income generation, cooperatives of the latter kind produce goods for the local community at low prices. The Makmao factory in Ban Bua, for instance, acquires the berries for processing from any villager, who wants to sell them. Although the purchase price is lower than the average market price, the operators of the cooperative buy all Makmao berries offered by farmers, thus providing a stable market for their surplus (Pao, personal interview on 17 January 2012). The Inpaeng community in the province of Udonthani provides a case for the second type of cooperatives. These members have been producing organic fertilizer, after having found that households in their sub-district spend more than 10% of overall expenditures on fertilizer. The cooperative not only offers an organic alternative to rival products, but moreover sells it for a quarter of the market price (Chamnan, personal interview on 22 January 2012), effectively lowering the expenses of their buyers. The reason why the Inpaeng product is much cheaper is that the people operating the fertilizer cooperative forego income and only receive interest payments on their shares in the venture.

#### 4.2.2. An Analysis of the Activities of the Inpaeng Network Using the Ethical Coordinates by Gibson-Graham

In this sub-section I will attempt to highlight the manner, in which the Inpaeng Network enacts a diverse economy by applying the ethical coordinates as suggested by Gibson-Graham (2006a). Inpaeng's loose and decentralized network structure is conducive to local modifications of network activities, and to place-based experimentation with new ventures, and thus contributes to a large diversity of economic activities (see also Matthews 2007: 138). I will attempt to capture some of these varied applications, before pointing out current challenges as faced by the network:

- **Necessity:** One of the earliest activities among Inpaeng member communities has consisted of reforestation efforts. Network leaders often emphasized the links between communal wellbeing and intact forests during the interviews in 2012. As mentioned above, almost all households secure part of their consumption needs through products from the forest. Deforestation or overexploitation for commercial purposes not only harms local ecosystems, but also exacerbates the economic situation of local households, since people either have to spend extended periods of time on hunting and gathering, or have to buy food. Therefore Inpaeng promotes an attitude of self-reliance in contrast to a motivation to generate maximum income. The first attitude takes into account the interdependence between people and the forest; in this case people gather what they need to sustain themselves (Sutee 2013: 210). A similar attitude is underlying some of the network's cooperative ventures: In contrast to the Makmao processing facilities, the fertilizer factory in Udonthani only generates income in the form of interest payments on shares. By limiting their claim on revenues, operators generate added surplus, which can be used for community purposes.

- **Surplus:** In the community enterprise in Udonthani part of the surplus is generated through low input costs. This surplus translates into lower sales prices and is therefore indirectly distributed among local consumers. Inpaeng generally divides the use of profits from cooperative businesses into four parts, similar to Eoc: The surplus is used for reinvestment, for payments to the local network committee, for interest payments on shares, and the rest for community welfare activities. Each cooperative is applying its own formula for the calculation of the exact amount for each purpose (Rado 2013: 190). A main reason why input costs in the cooperative in Udonthani are very low is that Inpaeng members are predominantly engaged in subsistence farming. The cooperative business is usually seen as complementary to self-reliance on the household level.<sup>86</sup> Since Inpaeng members produce their own food on their own land, they require very little monetary income.

The network thus encourages farmers to produce for their own needs first and to only sell the surplus. The agricultural inputs for cooperatives, as well as the goods sold on markets, are therefore household-level surplus products. Northeastern farmers typically own small landholdings, and the median farm size in Ban Bua is about 1.28 hectares according to the fieldwork data (Rado 2013: 182); Inpaeng therefore offers training courses about the effective utilization of farmland, taking into account size, soil conditions, and climate. Since agriculture in this region is largely rainfed, some network experts moreover teach farmers about how to install water pumps, as well as windmills for irrigation.

- **Consumption:** Villagers and village institutions contribute time and resources to the organization of community ceremonies. This could be observed during a ceremony to worship the village spirit in Ban Bua, which took place on 26 January 2012 in a small forest. People made offerings

---

<sup>86</sup> This is according to Chamnan from Udonthani, as well as according to Thawatchai, who is currently the network president (interviews conducted on 22 January and on 17 January 2012 respectively).

consisting of rice, eggs, and coins, which were placed in a small “spirit house” inside the forest. The local primary school, the Inpaeng committee, as well as the local middleman sponsored stalls erected inside the forest offering ice cream, herbal juice, Vietnamese noodle soup etc. An Inpaeng member moreover distributed boiled pork. As noted above, this “social consumption” (Gibson-Graham 2006a: 93) of surplus serves the reenactment of community among the villagers; this practice is transposed to a knowledge-based community in the context of the Inpaeng Network.

- **Commons:** Communal customs, farming skills, as well as traditional skills, including medicinal know-how and weaving, are part of a cultural commons, which Inpaeng draws on in most of its activities. A natural commons, which Inpaeng is trying to preserve and to extend, is the forest. It is a source not only of food, but also of medicinal herbs; Pho Lek thus refers to it as the “capital” of the village community (personal interview on 17 January 2012). Reforestation efforts near the Phuphan mountain range near Ban Bua have nevertheless met with little success in the past, which is why some members have recreated small forests on their fields under the maxim “Extend the Phuphan forest into your garden” (Rattana et al. 2005: 23). Especially Inpaeng members with large landholdings use part of their land for reforestation purposes, and some moreover collect seeds for seed banks in their gardens.

Inpaeng readily and freely shares knowledge, and frequent meetings therefore accelerate learning effects from each other’s example. For instance, network members in Phuphan district, which borders Kudbak district, have acquired Makmao processing techniques from the community in Ban Bua. Today, the factory in Phuphan operates on a relatively large scale, employing a permanent staff of thirty laborers, and growing Makmao on large self-owned plantations. The factory at the network center in Ban Bua, on the other hand, offers employment to twelve seasonal workers and

acquires Makmao through purchase from farmers. The relationship between the operators of the two factories is one of mutual support; when one of the factories produces an oversupply, the other business may take over sales, since they target different consumers. Whereas the Phuphan factory is a commercial venture catering to markets in other regions, including Bangkok, the manager of the Ban Bua factory states that the local processing facility works more like a “learning center,” selling to locals and visitors (Pao, personal interview on 17 January 2012). The reason why the network members in Phuphan are more market-oriented than their peers in Kudbak is probably due to local topographic conditions: The mountainous area is better suited for the cultivation of Makmao trees than for rice.

Since the Phuphan community cultivates a large share of its products for sale – apart from Makmao this also includes rattan, for instance - finding profitable markets is to them of higher priority than for many other Inpaeng communities. A few years before my research visit in 2012, members in Phuphan have started to supply a regional wholesale market in Kalasin province with organic raw products. As they have found this activity very rewarding, they informed the network members in Kudbak district about the market, who now sell their products there themselves on a weekly basis (Pho Serm, personal interview on 27 January 2012). The pooling of information, or the nurturing of a “knowledge commons,” thus helps to strengthen and diversify the activities of each community and in turn benefits the network at large.

The identification of sales markets is currently high on the agenda for Inpaeng. Although this activity is compatible with the philosophy of self-reliance as long as only household-level surplus is sold, the current emphasis on sales markets is mainly a response to the aspirations of younger generation farmers. Network leaders are concerned about the continuation of Inpaeng in the future. They therefore seek ways to adapt their activities to motivations of the young to make

money.<sup>87</sup> Some network members therefore explore different markets, including a wholesale market in Bangkok, about which products can be sold there and at what price. By gathering this information, the network aims to show that the prices for local vegetables and fruits, which are specific to the region, are many times higher in distant markets compared to local prices. This is not the case for mainstream products, such as pumpkin, mango, pomelo etc., which can be grown almost anywhere in the kingdom. Providing this information is therefore another way to point out the value of local biodiversity - including forest vegetables - to the wider community.

Inpaeng's loose network structure not only fosters a wide range of communal economic activities, but also accommodates divergent views about certain network activities. This allows for alternative applications of network projects by member communities, if these disagree with certain practices for ethical reasons. During an interview a network leader from Mukdahan province stated that he does not agree with the share system, which is instituted in most Inpaeng cooperatives, since it encourages people to be silent shareholders without making any further contribution (Sawan, personal interview on 21 January 2012); according to him, such a system moreover leads to a conflict of interests. This statement resonates with critical statements made by a few villagers about Inpaeng during household interviews; some suspected that a small circle of people unduly benefits from activities that involve money. This includes financial support from government institutions, the share system, as well as the savings fund. Thus, despite objectives and practices aimed at supporting regional communities and sustaining the natural environment, Inpaeng too is liable to such weaknesses as nepotism and "group individualism" (Gibson-Graham 2006a: 121). Since member communities are relatively autonomous from each other, this shortcoming probably does not apply everywhere to the same extent. The leader from Mukdahan, for instance, seems

---

<sup>87</sup> This is according to Nao, a leader from Phuphan district (interview on 27 January 2012), as well as Chamnan, a leader from Udonthani province (interview on 22 January 2012).

intent on preventing just that by refraining from the generation of exchange value<sup>88</sup> in favor of the production of use value. This point indicates that ethical decisions also need to be made to confront internal shortcomings, in addition to decisions that reflect relations between Inpaeng objectives and regional economic activities and aspirations.

### 4.3. Summary

In this chapter I have outlined attempts by authors to apply insights from postdevelopment theory to alternative development practices. Despite different approaches in pursuing this challenge, Curry, Matthews, and Gibson-Graham share certain assumptions about the role of external agents in development work: Each of them recognizes non-capitalist values and practices encountered in different communities. Since their accounts lack value judgments about these practices in relation to capitalist activity, they promote legitimacy for diverse economic practices. This way of describing communal activities thus supports “cultural empowerment” (Kelly, 2005: 40) of the people pursuing them.<sup>89</sup> In addition to the recognition of local alternatives, Matthews and Gibson-Graham describe the role of development workers as providing expert knowledge in support of communal activities as opposed to knowledge, which discounts them. Matthews, for instance, notes that community members are often caught up in everyday struggles and immediate concerns; NGOs can therefore contribute by locating such concerns in a wider context of global power relations as manifest in international trade regimes, for instance (Matthews 2005: 11). Gibson-Graham on the other hand have chosen a different way of utilizing their knowledge: Instead of explaining, they aim at

---

<sup>88</sup> Since each cooperative has instituted an upper limit on investments per shareholder – e.g. in one case the limit is 5,000 Baht, in another 10,000 Baht – earnings from the share system itself are very modest (see Rado 2013: 191). Thus, in order to profit extensively from network ventures, one would probably need to tap a combination of different sources of income associated with cooperative activities.

<sup>89</sup> Sally Matthews offers the example of an NGO project for official recognition of the “noon” language in Senegal, spoken by 35,000 people in different communities. Whereas the speakers of noon used to be embarrassed of the language, official recognition as one of Senegal’s national languages and the introduction of literacy training in noon has changed the self-perception of its speakers (Matthews 2005: 9/10).

identifying new adaptive strategies to wider socio-economic contexts, thus putting their knowledge to practical ends in fostering “the emergence of economic subjects” (Gibson-Graham 2005b: 124).

In contrast to other practical applications of postdevelopment theory, the community economies approach also targets subdiscursive constituents of meaning, makes use of the role of experiences in generating knowledge, and acknowledges the constitution of identity through relationships. This approach correspondingly includes micro-political interventions. This aspect of the politics of the subject provides points of contact with the enactivist approach. Enactivism, for instance, puts Gibson-Graham’s idea that “ontology becomes the effect rather than the ground of knowledge” (Gibson-Graham 2008: 620) into a wider context, which transcends the domain of social practices: Accordingly, it is a general feature of living systems that they enact different worlds (as the effect of knowledge) according to their autopoietic, and consequently cognitive, designs (the site of knowledge and Knowing How). Human sense-making activities include the same embodied mechanisms, which can be observed among living organisms in general. With its focus on embodied cognition, enactivism offers analytical distinctions between different cognitive functions, and contributes to a refined understanding about their interrelationships. These mechanisms are taken into account in Buddhist practices, which foster attitudes of loving kindness. As different emotional states exert certain effects on the way we consciously perceive the world, this disposition is consciously cultivated as it is seen as generating openness towards other people and new practices. It is moreover consistent with a view that regards the self as constituted through interactions and relationships.

The modifications of mindfulness techniques in therapeutic interventions moreover provide insights about how agents can intervene in order to promote new relations to objects of identification (stress, depression, OCD, or “unemployed worker”). Buddhist practices are thus not meant to identify root causes of precarious identifications, but to achieve a revaluation of this state, including the capacity to

respond in unconditioned ways to environmental stimuli. An important effect of such interventions is that people are enabled to perceive new opportunities for action in situations, which they had perceived as being outside their control. More than representational constructs, changed dispositions are seen as drivers of social change. As Moghaddam and Harré, as well as the example of the Focolare movement show, there is no direct correspondence between micro-practices, understood as Knowing How, and social practices: Thus, people may take up new roles in different societal settings, but nevertheless act on pre-established and pre-verbal categorizations. Conversely, as the example of the EoC shows, corporate actors may engage in pre-defined social practices, but may take up these roles in ways different from their peers: When interviewing candidates for a job, for instance, EoC members probably take into account someone's chances for alternative employment, whereas human resource personnel elsewhere would not regard such considerations as part of their work.

Such “inflection of capitalist development to serve non-capitalist ends” (Curry 2005: 127) is possible, because meaning is established in concrete interactions between agents and their environments. This is not to deny the role of environmental factors in interactions: As noted in the discussion of the Inpaeng Network, for instance, there are attempts at limiting inequality among members<sup>90</sup>, as well as “conflict of interests,” which have arisen in some places due to a growing role of the production of exchange value as compared to the generation of use value. The latter practice is thus less conducive to this “social affordance.” Whether this affordance is realized in contrast to a utilization of surplus for a wider community also depends on how agents construe distinctions between “us” and “them”; hence the emphasis on the recognition of mutual interdependence among community members both in Gibson-Graham's development initiatives and Wanna's work.

---

<sup>90</sup> Such attempts at maintain equality among community members are also characteristic of other development projects associated with the Community Culture School. Nidhi, for instance, provides an example of how villagers in the Southern province of Songkhla have modified the principle of equality - which had determined communal land allocation in the past – to the establishment of a savings scheme. Here, too, the group had imposed a limit on deposits in order to prevent large disparities between dividend payments (Nidhi 2000: 80).

The enactive framework denies that there are unambiguous effects emanating from material structures and macro-social practices, and posits that these are to be seen in relation with concrete agents. This view, however, also precludes the possibility to formulate a single development process for different communities. In each case, the modification of environmental stimuli must be seen in relation to the cultural orientations of the local community (see also Peschl & Fundneider 2013: esp. 207). Whereas during the development initiative in the Latrobe Valley, for instance, the feeling of being-in-common constituted a novel experience for project participants, villagers in Northeastern Thailand are very familiar with this notion due to frequent communal events throughout the year. Additional cultural factors – such as avoiding making someone “lose face,” as well as heightened sensitivity to respective speech acts – also could have an impact on capacities to foster comparable feelings of proximity as among the community members in Australia. Nevertheless, the introduction of new economic practices, which are rooted and embedded in local socio-economic contexts, is also characteristic of the way Inpaeng engages with the wider community.

The idea that not only new practices, but also their impact on existing storylines has to be included in the analysis makes development work a complex and contingent undertaking, making it difficult to identify common strategies in cultivating dispositions of openness. However, this understanding also involves additional possibilities for development work: An important strength of what I term an “enactive development approach” is the possibility of the strategic use of storylines, which are held by outside agents, such as government institutions and corporate actors. This is again due to the view that discursive practices are ambiguous in terms of meaning. Since, according to positioning theory, representational constructs can mean different things to different people, this ambivalence of meaning can be utilized to further alternative projects. This is exemplified in the appropriation of the “Sufficiency Economy” development strategy by Inpaeng member communities. This aspect will be treated in the following chapter.

## **5. The Application of the Enactive Framework to External Relations: The Utilization of the Sufficiency Economy Discourse by the Inpaeng Network**

In the previous chapters I have illustrated that Buddhist mindfulness practices and therapeutic interventions, as well as the community economies approach, foster the development of dispositions of openness, and of a readiness to engage with other people in different contexts in a non-judgmental manner. These interventions cultivate underlying emotional attitudes of loving kindness and compassion as these are seen to motivate perceptions and actions least constrained by precast categorizations and generalizations. Thus, as different states of consciousness bias our deliberation processes through the ways they seek out affordances in given contexts, attitudes of openness and being-in-common give rise to ethical behavior, which is at the same time highly responsive to possibilities in different contexts. The concrete design of corresponding development projects thus depends on the possibilities based on these attitudes in concrete social and economic contexts. The roles of professionals, NGOs and development workers in such projects have been described in chapters 2-4. The subject of the current chapter is the utilization of a wider socio-political context for such development projects.

Here, I will explore the application of the theoretical and strategic framework presented so far to relations with outside stakeholders, especially state institutions. State institutions in Thailand, above all the central development planning agency NESDB, have formulated national development strategies in response to perceived macro-social and –economic developments. These interpretations have entailed shifts in the course of the past decades both in terms of how development objectives have been understood, as well as regarding the positioning of different “classes” in the development process. These changes in outlook have had repercussions on Thailand’s official development approach. In this chapter I will contrast two periods of development planning: The first is seen to correspond with the time frame beginning with the drafting of the 5<sup>th</sup> National Economic and Social

Development plan<sup>91</sup> until the end of the 7<sup>th</sup> plan: thus, from 1981 to 1995. In this period the Thai government emphasized rural development in order to mitigate the structural imbalances in the course of past development efforts, which had predominantly benefitted the urban sector. Development plans in this era depict communities in rural areas as backward, unable to participate on their own in the country's development, and therefore in need of outside assistance.

In the second period (from 1996 to the present) the government adheres to similar development objectives, although with a new emphasis on people-centered development. The NESDB plans moreover entail a change in the way different actors are positioned, increasingly acknowledging the indigenous economic potentials in rural communities. This new development approach oriented towards the innate capacities of rural agricultural producers is especially pronounced in Thailand's Sufficiency Economy strategy since the late 1990s. Each planning period will be outlined in subsequent sections 5.1 and 5.2. The official development discourse has fostered distinct grassroots and NGO strategies; since in the first period, rural communities were hardly acknowledged as development actors in their own right, rural-based organizations have followed a strategy, which reflects an antagonistic stance towards the state and its institutions. The second period has offered opportunities to draw state support into alternative community contexts. Thus, the shifts in the state narrative have enabled Community Culture activists and movements to pursue a more integrative strategy, in which they seek productive relationships with state actors and organizations. I will illustrate this process by describing cooperative ventures between Inpaeng and state actors in section 5.3: A central aim of this chapter is to show how communities are able to make a strategic use of the Sufficiency Economy storyline by assigning it meaning through their practices in interactions with government institutions. In these interactions the public sector provides knowledge and technologies, which Inpaeng communities appropriate for their existing practices. In section 5.4 I will sum up the chapter and conclude that possibilities for social change are inherent in this ongoing dialogue

---

<sup>91</sup> The word "social" was added since the second National Economic and Social Development Plan 1967-71.

between alternative communal organizations and state actors.

### **5.1. Community Culture Strategy Prior to Thailand's Adoption of the Sufficiency Economy Approach**

This section will provide an outline of the development policies of the central government in the planning period from 1981 to 1995. Socio-economic developments during this era saw a gradual worsening of the economic situation of agricultural producers in relative terms. The principles guiding government involvement in social and economic issues provide the background for the strategy of academic advocacy groups and developmental NGOs for the cause of disadvantaged small-scale farmers. These groups consisted of Community Culture School theorists, such as Chatthip and Nidhi (see chapter 3), as well as NGOs, which to a large extent shared similar objectives as these authors. NGOs were mostly made up of members of the Thai middle class, concerned about the worsening socio-economic situation of many farmers (Prudhisana & Maneerat 1997: 196; Pasuk & Baker 1995: 389). In this, these activists constituted a minority within the Thai middle-class as will become clear in subsection 5.1.2.

Another clarification to be made for the subsequent discussion concerns farmers as political actors. Peasant grassroots organizations, such as the Assembly of the Poor (see subsection 2 below) and Inpaeng, are not representative of the “peasantry” as a whole; the majority of farmers are commercially oriented, especially those in the central region, but also most farmers in the Northern and Northeastern regions (Baker 2000: 13). According to the Australian anthropologist Andrew Walker it is this “middle-income peasantry” that constitutes a large segment of the redshirt movement, which is a major social movement in the contemporary political scene (Walker 2012: 5/6). As shown in the previous chapter, Inpaeng members advocate their community economic activities towards other villagers in the region, who share characteristics with both groups.

### **5.1.1. The National Development Approach**

As noted in chapter 3.2 the initial phase of development planning in Thailand rested on industrialization: The government aided the building-up of domestic industry by keeping food prices low, which allowed for low wages for an already abundant unskilled labor force. The government moreover pursued an import substitution strategy, protecting domestic infant industry from foreign competition by instituting high tariffs on finished goods. Other forms of public assistance for industrial development consisted in various investment promotion schemes, in public investments in vocational education, and in public infrastructure projects. Policies along these lines continued until the end of the 1970s. During this time span these measures proved successful in terms of high GDP growth rates and led to a significant reduction of absolute poverty (Pasuk & Baker 1995: 144; Medhi 1985: 328). However, agriculture and related agro-processing industries continued to constitute the largest share of Thailand's exports; as the world market boom in primary products came to an end in the mid 1970s, agricultural expansion slowed down, leading to rising levels of unemployment and a decrease in government revenue from export taxes. Large-scale infrastructure projects, public subsidies to counter the effects of the oil price shocks during the 1970s, as well as the withdrawal of US aid during the period further contributed to rising government debt.

Thailand's worsening fiscal position and the slowdown in overall economic growth led policy planners of the NESDB to review the top-down strategy of extensive government involvement, which had characterized previous national development efforts. The institution moreover realized that this strategy had contributed to socio-economic and environmental problems: Although the share of agriculture steadily declined in terms of GDP, this sector continued to employ the large majority of the population. In the early 1980s agriculture still employed 70 percent of all income earners. Nevertheless, few government interventions had supported agricultural production. Those measures, which did have an effect on productivity, mainly infrastructure projects including irrigation facilities, were concentrated in the

country's central region (Medhi 1985: 336; NESDB 1981: 45). Due to this neglect of the agricultural sector, the production of cash crops had steadily increased through the extension of land under cultivation instead of the modernization of cultivation methods. New farmland for extended cash crop production was often acquired through encroachment on protected forest land, or on land unsuitable for agricultural production, leading to a steady loss of forest cover and to soil erosion.

At the time of writing of the 5<sup>th</sup> National Economic and Social Development plan (1982-1986) it had moreover become evident that the lack of investments in agriculture had led to social and regional disparities. As water reservoirs for irrigation were mostly concentrated in the central region, for instance, agricultural production in rainfed areas, especially in the Northeastern region, took place only during the rainy season. Combined with declining market prices for primary commodities, lack of information about price setting mechanisms and sales markets, lack of modern know-how, decreasing soil fertility, and decrease of forest goods for subsistence, Northeastern farming households had to rely more and more on non-agricultural income sources. Since industrial production was concentrated in and around Bangkok, most unskilled labor from Northeastern Thailand became employed on a seasonal basis in sectors such as construction, manufacturing, and service sectors in and around the capital (Pasuk & Baker 1995: 43; 198/99). The number of in-migrants steadily increased following the 1970s, and many stayed for extended or indefinite periods.

Government policies in the past have thus contributed not only to productivity imbalances between the industrial and agricultural sectors, but also to an uneven distribution of wealth between the central region and other parts of the country. Since the 5<sup>th</sup> NESDB plan state planners have thus adopted "a 'new line' of thinking" (NESDB 1981: 2) to respond to these imbalances. Instead of focusing on overall economic growth, subsequent plans emphasized the need for structural adjustments, e.g. by dispersing industrial activity to other regions of the country in order to increase rural employment and to ameliorate the growing population pressure on the capital. One measure thus consisted in setting up "regional urban

centres,” which would serve as bases for economic activities in each region, accommodate rural in-migration, and also facilitate decentralized implementation of economic development targets (NESDB 1981: 13; 107 and 1986: 290). The plans moreover stated a commitment to upgrade agricultural production especially in “backward rural areas,” which had been neglected in previous development interventions. Intended measures included the expansion of credit through state-owned and commercial banks, the granting of legal land titles for economic security, and measures to improve farmers’ know-how and bargaining power vis-à-vis middlemen and processing firms.

In order to ensure the effective implementation of these measures, and to avoid overly straining government budgets, the plans foresaw enhanced cooperation with the private sector, as well as an allocation of responsibilities between the public and private sectors in meeting development targets. Distribution of land titles is the responsibility of respective state institutions, whereas the production of chemical fertilizer, the development of high-yielding seed varieties, and the establishment of agro-processing facilities is now seen as the domain of private producers (NESDB 1981: 56/57). The expansion of infrastructure and allocation of credit should involve both public and private institutions. The plans moreover foresee public-private cooperation in strengthening the economic position of agricultural workers in terms of information on markets, know-how, and technological input. In this regard the plans increasingly stress the importance of science and technology in order to make agricultural production more efficient and less exploitative of environmental resources (NESDB 1986: 350 and 1991: 35).

In sum, the state and the private sector are depicted as active and leading agents of development with complementary and at times overlapping responsibilities. The private sector is here mainly identified with private businesses; their role becomes more prominent in the 6<sup>th</sup> plan, in which the state is represented as “a planner, supporter and facilitator of private sector participation” (NESDB 1986: 48). Agricultural producers, especially those “who have not benefitted from past development efforts” and who are to be found in “backward rural areas,” are here

given a passive role, as they are “helplessly living in absolute poverty” (NESDB 1981: 5 and 8). Therefore, the state and private producers are responsible for supporting them with capital and know-how until they are themselves able to actively participate in the economy. These representations are captured in the positioning triangle in figure 9.

**Figure 9: Representation of the State Discourse on National Development in the NESDB Plans 5 - 7**

**Positions:**

Farmers are helpless, lacking income and economic opportunities

State and private sector need to help them

**Acts:**

NESDB plans calling for more balanced growth through economic decentralization, heightened efficiency, and upgrading of skills

**Storyline:**

Maintaining steady growth through economic stability and rural development

The seventh development plan (1992-1996), which was written at a time of high growth rates since 1985, maintains the overall direction of the above plans. At the same time, the NESDB acknowledged that the main economic and social disparities and imbalances targeted since the fifth plan had worsened ever since (see NESDB 1991: 2 and 41). In fact, the economic boom of the late 1980s contributed to the further widening of income gaps between economic sectors and

regions, since the nature of growth reflected the underlying structural shortcomings: Productivity gains were mainly made in the manufacturing and service sectors, whereas agriculture continued to lag behind, although it still constituted the main source of income for two thirds of the population (Pasuk & Baker 1995: 152). Foreign direct investment in the form of production plants was likewise concentrated in and around Bangkok due to better infrastructure facilities compared to other parts of the country. This meant a steadily rising inflow of seasonal labor especially from the Northeast.

Additional factors related to the productivity imbalances between economic sectors and geographic regions exacerbated the situation of agricultural producers. High economic growth coupled with the closing of the land frontier, for instance, contributed to rising land prices and speculation; many farmers, who lost their land due to debts or eviction became illegal settlers in protected forest areas (Prudhisana & Maneerat 1997: 201/2). High growth rates in the urban and industrial areas also led to heightened demand for energy, which prompted the construction of dams, displacing communities; such dam projects became major issues for grassroots mobilization, such as by the Assembly of the Poor (see below). Moreover, economic redistribution efforts as stated in NESDB plans until the mid 1990s were distorted by vested interests: Government infrastructure projects outsourced to private businesses, for instance, were subject to rent-seeking among government representatives and private investors; the same holds for various tax and investment incentives, as well as land allocation schemes (See Somboon 2012 [1997]).

### **5.1.2 Strategy of NGOs: Opposing the State**

The official development discourse until the mid 1990s portrayed farming households in “backward” rural areas as poor, helpless, and in need for outside help. Government institutions and private businesses were therefore called upon to make investments in the agricultural upgrading of these areas. The objective was to

include respective communities in the national development project. As shown in chapter 3.2, proponents of the Community Culture School offered a very different description of rural livelihood activities, highlighting traditional strengths in fostering social cohesion and in satisfying economic needs through sustainable and non-exploitative use of natural resources. In their view, state interventions had had disruptive effects on rural livelihoods rather than beneficial results. Instead of a gradual inclusion of rural economies into the national economy, in which agriculture and industry could have developed through productive linkages, urban industrial growth in Thailand had been based on the extraction of surplus from agricultural production (see Seri 1986: 14; see also Pasuk & Baker 1999: 124). In the development era since the 1960s this process has been evident in government regulations on food prices, as well as the extraction of human resources from other parts of the country.

Chatthip Nartsupha, for instance, advocates modernization of rural economies, which is geared towards the needs of agricultural communities, and which preserves communal strengths such as economic self-reliance and sustainable use of natural resources (Chatthip 1991: 132/33). Thus, Chatthip, as well as other proponents of the Community Culture School, envision a national development strategy, which is contrary to the development vision as laid down in NESDB plans: Instead of orienting agricultural producers to the requirements of world market integration, they advocate national economic development, which is determined by the economic strategies and needs of self-reliant communities. Thus, whereas some proponents of Thai localism argue for communal development initiatives along the lines of postdevelopment theory, others wish to see such local strategies complemented with a more far-reaching macro-economic reorientation, in which the industrial sector is mainly ascribed supportive functions, such as delivering agriculture-related technologies and processing agricultural products (Chatthip 1991: 121).

For this project to be politically possible, proponents of the strategy have argued for an alliance among agrarian communities and the Thai middle class against the

state apparatus. Although this idea was shared by some Community Culture theorists, their ideas as to what could motivate members of the middle class to partake in such a struggle varied: Chatthip himself believed that the middle class would profit by gaining political support and legitimacy (Chatthip 1991: 138). Others, such as the human rights activist Saneh Chamarik and the historian Nidhi Eosriwong, identify other possible motives for middle class solidarity (see Kasian 1996: 39 and 61; see also Shigetomi 2013: 17/18): The former appeals to middle class urbanites as conscious, self-interested consumers, who should organize in consumer groups and connect with organic farmers, thereby creating alternative markets for ecologically friendly and healthy products. Nidhi on the other hand calls on the middle class's sense of justice. For the most part he blames the media for having ignored the issue of rural problems and for having failed to bring these issues to public attention. Thus, the authors share anti-state sentiments, and none considers administrative institutions as potential allies, since they are seen as agents of global capital and of state exploitation (Kasian 1996: 34; Chatthip 1991: 124).

This strategy of opposing the central government and at the same time seeking the favorable attention of the urban middle class through media coverage was spectacularly illustrated in the marathon protest staged by the Assembly of the Poor in early 1997. The organization consists of villagers' networks namely from the North and Northeast, and NGOs and activists. During the campaign more than 20,000 rural protesters occupied the area in front of the Government House in Bangkok for 99 days (Baker 2000: 20). They refused to produce their demands within established state structures and formal channels, and embedded the negotiation process within their own organizational logic (Schaffar 2011: 139-41): For instance, they insisted on conducting negotiations directly with cabinet members about their demands and problems. During these negotiations the network representatives made it clear that they wanted to be treated as equals by the government ministers and insisted on tangible outcomes following the discussions (see Missingham 2003: 130-31). In order to further strengthen its bargaining power and increase the pressure on the government, the Assembly

attached great importance on raising its image in the wider public. Part of its demands resonated with environmental issues, which coincides with middle class concerns. Many actions taken were directly aimed at a wider audience including the media. Associated NGO workers used their personal connections within the print media to gain coverage of the protests. Demonstrators staged street spectacles to symbolically display their cause, such as in the form of a boxing match between one boxer representing the Assembly and the other a government minister. Another strategy was to maintain the ongoing protest in a non-violent manner in order to figure positively in the public opinion. This way, all acts of violence and casualties could at the same time be attributed to state aggression or inaction.<sup>92</sup> As the demonstrations came to an end in May 1997, the network had successfully induced the government to enact compensatory payments, as well as laws against the expulsion of farmers from designated forest areas.

Apart from the successes, the protest also revealed the limitations of the grassroots strategy: As the 1997 Financial Crisis led to a change in government, the newly-installed cabinet under the leadership of the Democrat Party six months after the end of the protest gradually withdrew from all agreements reached. When the Assembly of the Poor retook the streets in early 1998 media and middle class support proved fragile as well (see Baker 2000: 24/25). Already during the 99-day protest city residents had complained about disruptions of every-day life due to the protest encampments. This time the media response to the renewed protests turned out to be less favorable, calling the demonstrators disruptive and challenging their motives. Nidhi's view that a well-informed middle class will support rural struggles out of a sense of justice seems unfounded, taking into account these developments. A decisive factor for this lack of support could be explained by ideological differences between the protesters on the one hand, and the Thai middle-class on the other: The Assembly of the Poor represents a rural vision of small-scale independent farmers, to a large extent relying on traditional ways of life

---

<sup>92</sup> Some protesters were hospitalized due to prolonged exposure to heat and pollution. There were also cases, in which protesters committed suicide as they failed to see their problems solved (see Baker 2000: 21/22).

and subsistence agriculture. As Chris Baker puts it, this vision contradicts the modernist outlook of the Democrat Party and the urban clientele it represents. To them the empowerment of the rural sector appears as a trade-off, in which they have nothing to gain, but to lose, both politically and financially (see also Pasuk & Baker 2008a: 78). The Thai polity moreover had no interest in seeing the political strategy of the Assembly of the Poor succeed. Its approach eschewed established procedural avenues and administrative channels. It thereby openly questioned the legitimacy of existing laws and political authority.

## **5.2. Thailand's New Development Paradigm: Sufficiency Economy**

Although development NGOs, Community Culture theorists, as well as the rural grassroots organizations they supported, followed a confrontational strategy in dealing with the state, government institutions have increasingly adopted an inclusive stance towards NGOs. This shift already took place following the 5<sup>th</sup> NESDB plan, in which policy planners foresaw a departure from earlier top-down approaches in development initiatives and sought consultations with communitarian NGOs in matters of rural development (Prudhisan & Maneerat 1997: 201). NGO activists were moreover able to exert influence on the drafting of the 7<sup>th</sup> plan; although the policy strategies proposed in the document do not differ significantly from the previous two plans, it now included elements such as a role of communities in forest conservation, as well as a “potential role of local wisdom in every process of development” (NESDB 1991: 138 and 140). The 8<sup>th</sup> NESDB plan (1997- 2001) introduced a shift both in terms of policy orientation, as well as in terms of strategic approach. The plan, for instance, adopts the idea of “people-centred development,” contrasting it with the “growth orientation” underlying previous plans (NESDB 1996: iv). The director general of the organization, Sumet Tantivejkul, moreover invited a number of renowned Community Culture theorists, including Saneh Chamarik, as well as grassroots activists to participate in the drafting process of the plan.

At the time Sumet had established ties both with NGO activists, as well as with state and royal institutions: From 1981 onwards he has headed the king's rural development initiatives, first as secretary general of the Office of Royal Development projects and since 1988 as secretary general of the king's Chaipattana Foundation (Shigetomi 2013: 24/25; Sumet, personal interview on 29 November 2007). Both entities promote integrated farming and agricultural techniques for self-reliance. Whereas the former institution is attached to the prime minister's office, the Chaipattana Foundation is officially a private institution, and thus does not receive government funding, nor do its requests for government assistance – usually consisting in the provision of manpower - pass through lengthy bureaucratic processes. The foundation is in charge of the king's rural development projects, mainly related to irrigation and agricultural initiatives, which today number over 3,000 initiatives scattered throughout the whole country (UNDP 2007: 27).

In many ways the 8<sup>th</sup> plan paved the way for a more detailed elaboration of Thailand's new development paradigm, "Sufficiency Economy," which has been adopted following the Asian Financial Crisis in 1997. Thus, the 8<sup>th</sup> plan includes policy recommendations, which also figure in the 9<sup>th</sup> plan, drafted after the paradigm shift (NESDB 1996): Accordingly, it foresees that communities take the lead in developing local capabilities for self-reliance; government institutions act as facilitators supporting communal initiatives by offering financial support and information; educational institutions are encouraged to assist community enterprises through transfer of skills and technology; the plan moreover envisions "community learning networks," in which different grassroots groups learn from each others' example, making use of "local wisdom and the work of local scholars." The plan moreover assigns NGOs a prominent role in contributing to these processes.<sup>93</sup> The development plan recognizes the importance of cultural values "so as to generate development that is founded on self-sufficiency and indigenous wisdom" (NESDB 1996: 51). Such elements have since moreover been inscribed in subsequent state documents and laws, including the 1997 constitution, which

---

<sup>93</sup> The term NGO, hardly mentioned in previous plans, appears 46 times in the 156-page document.

recognized local self-government and communal management of natural resources (Mutebi 2004: 42; Shigetomi 2013: 7/8).

These shifts in orientation do not mean that economic growth and international competitiveness have become secondary objectives to Thai policy planners; the above measures are meant to achieve balanced growth with an average rate of 8 percent per year. Moreover, “it is vital for Thailand to develop a strong, stable economy which is able to compete in changing world markets” (NESDB 1996: 73). These aspects also continue to persist in the way state institutions have adopted the Sufficiency Economy paradigm, which had initially been proposed by the king of Thailand. The following section will provide an outline of the official interpretation of this philosophy. Then, I will turn to examining the implementation of corresponding government schemes through state actors. It will be shown that despite intentions of shifting the role of the public sector from being the prime actor of development towards being a “facilitator,” government officials have not significantly changed their top-down approach in actual grassroots implementation processes. This will lend support to Harré and Moghaddam’s idea of the stabilizing effect of micro-practices regardless of discursive shifts.

### **5.2.1. An Outline of the National Development Strategy**

Shortly before the Asian Financial Crisis 1997, Thailand’s economy had been growing at a rate of 9.5 percent per year over the span of a decade, faster than anywhere else in the world. High growth rates had been a feature of the Thai economy since the era of the first economic development plan (Pasuk & Baker 2008b: 8) and it seemed realistic, even within public institutions, that Thailand would join the developed world over the coming decades (see NESDB 1996: ii). Such expectations fostered economic investments, both from domestic and foreign sources, which by far exceeded actual demand, leading to inflated GDP figures over the course of many years. As this became evident through failing returns on investments first in the property sector, many businesses struggled to repay their

loans. The Bank of Thailand attempted to keep debt taken up in USD in check by keeping a fixed exchange rate, but in June 1997 the task exceeded its reserves. Soon thereafter, the value of the Baht plummeted and a large number of Thai businesses were unable to repay the loans they had taken up in foreign currency. As a result, it is estimated that about a quarter of domestic firms have been acquired by overseas firms (Natenapha 2008: 53). For ordinary people the subsequent crisis resulted in unemployment or lower wages. As the crisis became more severe and led to further layoffs through 1998 and early 1999, around two million rural-based casual laborers temporarily returned to the family farm and thus became absorbed by the agricultural sector (UNDP 2010: 11). Other rural laborers, who were either landless or had insufficient size of land to support themselves, fell below the poverty line.

In this context the king of Thailand held his usual birthday speech on 4 December 1997, outlining his idea of a sufficiency economy. Later publications touching on this theme often begin with the same line taken from the royal address: "To be a tiger is not important. The important thing for us is to have a sufficiency economy, which means to have enough to survive."<sup>94</sup> In his speech king Bhumibol criticized greed and excessive risk-taking, which he saw as having caused the crisis, and spoke about the merits of slow growth, living within one's means, and of relying on domestic resources. He moreover made reference to his "New Theory," which is an integrated farming method to achieve self-reliance on the individual household level. Following his frequent exchanges with farmers<sup>95</sup> and his own experimentation in the field, the king has promoted this technique since 1994 (NRCT 2003: 8; Handley 2006: 389); it was meant to enable an average rural family, consisting of 4-5 persons with a landholding of 2.4 hectares to be self-reliant in food production. According to the model, the landholding should be divided into four plots in the proportion of 30:30:30:10. The first part should be allotted to rice cultivation, the second to other kinds of food crops and fruit trees, the third part should consist of a

---

<sup>94</sup> Royal speech cited in Warr (2007: 1); see also Pasuk (2005: 161) and UNDP (2007: 20).

<sup>95</sup> According to Sumet, as well as the journalist Paul Handley, the king receives letters from distressed farmers on a daily basis, each of which is reviewed by the king's staff (Sumet, personal interview on 29 November 2007; Handley 2006: 290/91).

pond for raising fish, and the remaining 10% is meant for housing and animal husbandry (see UNDP 2007: 28).<sup>96</sup>

The management of an individual farm is only the first stage in the three-stage model of the New Theory. After individual farmers have achieved self-reliance in food production, they should seek ways to pool their surplus on the community level. The UNDP Report on Thailand in 2007 mentions various ways, in which such communal cooperation can be achieved: “cooperative forms of production, community savings groups, community health centres and community forms of a social safety net” (UNDP 2007: 28). On the third stage finally, community members are able to produce various products for use from local resources. Based on this economically stable foundation, villagers are able to expand economic relations beyond the local setting, by tapping national and international markets, and by collectively bargaining with distributors. The king thus envisioned a similar step-by-step approach for the whole country, in which economic actors would abstain from excessive risks and instead would slowly accumulate wealth through living within their means. The royal vision of development soon became popular among Thai people, including villagers, and became recounted by the media and civil society, and taken up by government institutions (Pasuk 2005: 162; Parnwell 2005: 3 and 11). Thus, Sufficiency Economy found its way into state discourse and policies. Various public institutions including the Ministry of Interior adopted Sufficiency Economy as the guiding principle of communal development efforts, whereas national think-tanks, such as the NESDB and the Thai National Research Institute, attempted to elaborate a national development strategy based on the royal speeches.

As the king’s speech indicated, the Sufficiency Economy philosophy was not only meant to guide the development of communities, but of the nation at large. At the same time, his statements about the philosophy were rather vague, except for New

---

<sup>96</sup> There are farmers who have adopted this agricultural method and find it feasible, given that one seeks self-reliance rather than high monetary returns (Piyawan et al. 2008: 14/15). One Inpaeng member I have encountered in a northern district of Sakon Nakhon province, has likewise adopted the method. In both cases the farm sizes are smaller than 2.4 hectares.

Theory agriculture. Therefore, public institutions set out to identify its key elements and to put these into a general conceptual framework that would be applicable to all private and public stakeholders in national development. In 1999 the NESDB took up this task and offered a definition of Sufficiency Economy, which received the king's approval in November of the same year (Priyanut 2004: 128):

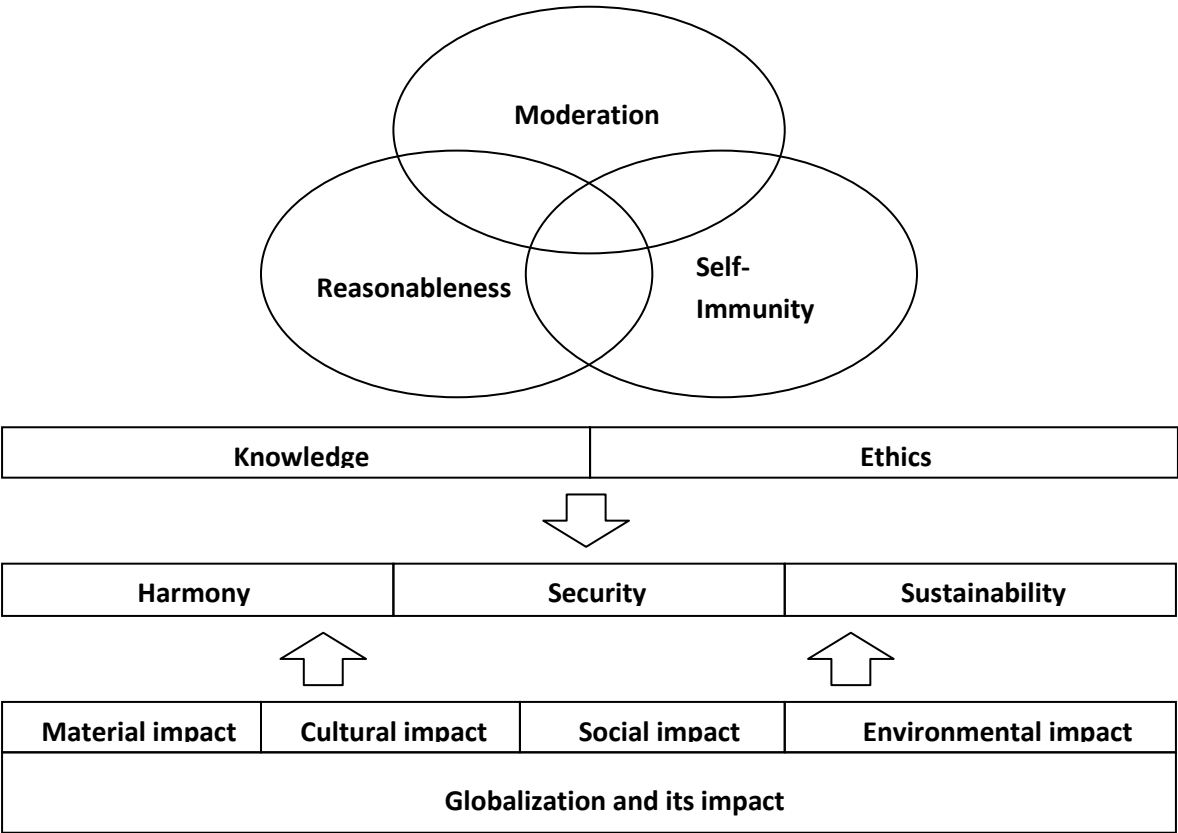
"Sufficiency Economy' is a philosophy that stresses the middle path as an overriding principle for appropriate conduct by the populace at all levels. This applies to conduct starting from the level of the families, communities, as well as the level of nation in development and administration so as to modernize in line with the forces of globalization. "Sufficiency" means moderation, reasonableness, and the need of self-immunity mechanism for sufficient protection from impact arising from internal and external changes. To achieve this, an application of knowledge with due consideration and prudence is essential. In particular great care is needed in the utilization of theories and methodologies for planning and implementation in every step. At the same time, it is essential to strengthen the moral fibre of the nation, so that everyone, particularly political and public officials, academic, businessmen at all levels, adheres first and foremost to the principle of honesty and integrity. In addition, a way of life based on patience, perseverance, diligence, wisdom and prudence is indispensable to create balance and be able to cope appropriately with critical challenges arising from extensive and rapid socioeconomic, environmental, and cultural changes in the world."

Under the leadership of Priyanut Piboolsravut<sup>97</sup> from the NESDB, a working group consisting of members of the NESDB and the Crown Property Bureau was set up in 2001 to further clarify the Sufficiency Economy Philosophy. Among the outputs of the working group was a graphical illustration of the philosophy's key elements and their relationships (see figure 10).

---

<sup>97</sup> Priyanut had completed her dissertation on the subject of Buddhist Economics a few years earlier. Referring to the objectives of the 8<sup>th</sup> National Economic and Social Development Plan she suggested a set of agendas, which would set the conditions for Thailand to embark towards a Buddhist economy: decentralization, the reform of Thailand's legal and educational systems in order to accommodate communal economic strategies, community self-reliance, and qualitative indexes to replace GNP as the measure of development (see Priyanut 1997: 225-228).

**Figure 10: Elements of Sufficiency Economy**



Source: UNDP Human Development Report 2007

The NESDB thus identified the core elements and attitudes required for an economic conduct resembling the step-by-step approach of the New Theory: These included “moderation” in contrast to risk-taking and debt, “reasonableness” in contrast to short-term pursuit of individual gain, and “self-immunity,” understood as the ability to withstand external shocks by creating a secure economic base of relative self-reliance. The guiding principles of the philosophy laid down in this manner are meant to direct the actions of each individual, community, enterprise, and public institution. Economic activities that are planned and carried out in accordance with these core elements would contribute to “a more resilient, balanced, and sustainable development,” as well as to the ability “to meet the challenges arising from globalization and other changes” (Priyanut 2004: 127).

These three values are represented as interlocking elements, since they are perceived as mutually reinforcing. The illustration moreover suggests that the three core elements must be based on the underlying conditions of knowledge and ethics.<sup>98</sup>

The NESDB's efforts to conceptualize Sufficiency Economy as a national development strategy were paralleled by government grassroots initiatives for communal self-reliance in rural areas. One such initiative was the "Thailand-United Nations Collaborative Action Plan" (Thai-UNCAP), involving the NESDB and institutions of the United Nations. These institutions implemented pilot projects in five provinces across Thailand between 1997 and 2001 with the aim to provide employment in rural areas and to encourage communal business activities (see Cummins 2001: 8/9; Sansern 2001: 18/19). The NESDB adjusted this scheme in 2001 to the overall objectives of the 9<sup>th</sup> development plan, in which these community development initiatives would concretize the NESDB's strategy on local communal levels (NESDB 2001: 110).

A similar initiative, which was meant to put the New Theory into nationwide practice, was launched by the Ministry of Interior in 1998. Villages and communities, the Ministry confirmed in its strategic vision, are the backbone of Thai society (Ministry of Interior 1998a: 34). Their economic development provides a firm foundation for the nation's development, making the economy more resilient against crises, and thus benefitting society as a whole in the long run. A corresponding strategy was devised in the course of six meetings at various university venues throughout the country taking place from November 1997 to February 1998 (Ministry of Interior 1998b: 13-15). The participants in the drafting process included provincial officials, members of community organizations, and renowned academics and practitioners.<sup>99</sup> Together they identified five strategies to be implemented, resembling the three-stage royal development model: The first consisted in

---

<sup>98</sup> See UNDP (2007: 30), Priyanut (2004: 129), and NESDB (2001: ii).

<sup>99</sup> The economists Anek Laothamas and Sangsidh Piryarangsan took part for example, as well as the social activist Prawet Wasi, and the secretary of the Chai Pattana Foundation Sumet Tantivejkul. Two presentations by Sangsidh have been published in the proceedings titled "Self-Reliant Community Economy: Concepts and Strategies" (Ministry of Interior: 1998b).

achieving self-reliance on the level of family farms; the second foresees a pooling of grassroots activities in different occupational groups, each reflecting certain economic goals, such as community savings schemes, agricultural product processing, and the setting up of community enterprises. The third strategy concerns relationships among different communities and advocates the exchange of experiences and the formation of learning networks. Moreover, markets for the products of community enterprises should be established (fourth strategy) and district-level platforms for the exchange of ideas among communities instituted (fifth strategy).

The Ministry of Interior intended to pursue these measures through the provincial governors, each appointed by the ministry, as well as through district officers, who are subordinate to these governors (see Mutebi 2004: 38). The ministerial publications on the strategy stress that communities are the principle actors in the development schemes outlined, and that the public administration bodies only play supporting roles, offering technical, organizational, and financial assistance for the above measures. The emphasis lies on improving existing skills and economic strengths of small-scale farmers to provide communities with the capabilities for self-determined development. With government support agricultural producers would be enabled to venture into a growing range of economic activities and products for a growing market. Farmers would thus slowly develop a strong economic position vis-à-vis other actors in the national economy based on a foundation of relative self-reliance (Sangsidh 1998a: 62).

The Ninth National Economic and Social Development Plan (2002-2006) finally, officially codified Sufficiency Economy as Thailand's development paradigm and elaborated existing conceptions and strategies in an overall framework for national development. As in the previous plan, it adhered to a people-centered approach, in which "the well-being of the people" is regarded as "the final measure of success" (NESDB 2001: 4). Well-being in this context encompasses greater political and economic participation of a greater number in Thai society. Much emphasis is put on rural communities and their inclusion into the mainstream economy. Thus, the

plan envisages the establishment of community business development networks. The approach resembles the strategies outlined by the Ministry of Interior three years earlier, e.g. strengthening community economic performance from production to marketing, instituting community funds and credit schemes, and upgrading entrepreneurial skills. Linkages between rural production and processing industries should moreover be established through the creation of “clusters” (NESDB 2001: 54): the pooling of resources among community enterprises, SMEs and conglomerates, public institutions, NGOs, and educational institutions. This would increase technology and information transfers, and the upgrading of skills. Within this partnership rural producers contribute local manufacturing skills, and thus products with a unique identity. Modern technology should be adapted to accommodate traditional and local wisdom.

The NESDB’s role is seen as providing an overall strategic outline for national development. This plan should then be matched with more concrete operational plans in each province, in each sub-district, down to each village designing its own community development plan. The existing Thai-UNCAP projects provided the blueprint for the village-level schemes. In sum, although the NESDB plan is less than ambitious in terms of the growth rates it envisions - between 4 and 5% in order to provide full employment – it advocates a modernization strategy, resting on the notion of a knowledge-based economy, with the objective of enhanced international competitiveness. In contrast to the pre-crisis period, the new model is meant to make better use of Thailand’s human resources, encompassing the localized potentials of the rural population. This would lead to a more equitable income distribution, higher technological sophistication, and thus result in less dependence on foreign capital and markets: a “sustainable quality growth” (NESDB 2001: vi).

Far from having “no real economic substance” (Walker 2012: 222) the state discourse on Sufficiency Economy in many respects resembles balanced development approaches in modernization theory as first outlined by W. Arthur Lewis in the mid 1950s (2000 [1954]). Lewis believed that in many developing countries industrial wage levels are determined by income levels in the rural sector.

If in these countries a large segment of the population is rural-based, and the agricultural sector offers low returns and few income opportunities, then the urban sector is able to draw an unlimited supply of low-cost unskilled labor from the rural sector;<sup>100</sup> industrial wages then only need to exceed subsistence level, e.g. by compensating for the higher cost of living in cities (Lewis 2000: 124). Without government intervention, the capitalist class will have no incentive for technological advancement, as it is able to compete in world markets based on low input costs. With little interest to invest in expensive technology and education, and without compensatory measures by an interventionist government, the overall income level of a country will stagnate at some point. Lewis therefore called for government investments in upgrading subsistence agriculture towards higher productivity alongside industry. Only with agriculture providing higher incomes, according to him, will wages in the industrial and service sectors be pushed upwards as well (Lewis 2000: 140; Figueroa 2004: 747).<sup>101</sup> Apart from Thailand's economic history in the past decades, recent publications about Thailand being "caught in a middle-income trap" (Warr 2011: 4)<sup>102</sup> lend support to Lewis' analysis.

The German political scientist Wolfgang Hein (1994, 2013) moreover points out that development strategies aimed at rapid industrialization, such as import substitution, have led to the delinking of urban growth areas from rural agricultural economies; although resulting in high growth rates in the short term, such strategies have usually contributed to widening income gaps between cities and rural peripheries. Similar to Lewis and other proponents of a balanced development strategy (see also Headey et al. 2010), he advocates the upgrading of small-scale agricultural production; Hein's "autocentric agro-industrial development" model, includes that the national economy as a whole should be oriented towards investment decisions geared to the requirements of small-scale farmers, who constitute the majority of the populations in many developing countries (Hein 1994: 11 and 2013: 243). In this

---

<sup>100</sup> Interestingly, this idea occurred to Lewis during a stroll in Bangkok in 1952 (Szeftel 2006: 146).

<sup>101</sup> David Henley offers a similar explanation of how rises in agricultural productivity contribute to industrial growth: In his example the savings of prosperous small-scale farmers in Indonesia during the 1980s and 1990s subsidized bank loans for investments in the manufacturing sector (Henley 2012: 541).

<sup>102</sup> See also Pasuk (2011) and Somchai (2012).

model, agricultural production is embedded in the national economy by forward- and backward linkages with a related industrial sector; rural producers, for instance, could manufacture products, which reflect existing local strengths, including organic fertilizer and pesticides (Hein 1994: 179), whereas industrial producers could manufacture inputs such as agricultural tools; other industrial activities would be centered around the processing of agricultural products. Strong linkages among related industries, e.g. in the form of “clusters,” moreover facilitate technological spill-over effects leading to an accelerated rate of innovation.

Hein’s autocentric agro-industrial development is, like the official Thai discourse on Sufficiency Economy, a modernization strategy, emphasizing international competitiveness and export-promotion (see Hein 2001: 224). With the emphasis on upgrading small-scale agricultural production, his aim is to integrate all social strata in the process. Both production and consumption are oriented towards the needs and skills of the majority low-income segments of society. The strategy opens up new rural employment opportunities with the aim to distribute wealth and purchasing power more evenly. The economic objectives of growth, industrialization, and international competitiveness are here integrated with social objectives; an approach, which the NESDB in Thailand has summarized as ‘holistic people-centered development’ (NESDB 2001: 33).

Although comparable to Hein’s version of autocentric development, the Thai Sufficiency Economy concept includes further specifications. There are for instance strong links between a sufficiency orientation and social and environmental sustainability (see Hein 2013: 255). The core elements of the philosophy encourage living within one’s means, adopting a long-term outlook in planning, and considering the effects of economic decisions on the well-being of other stakeholders, including the natural environment. Another difference to Hein’s strategy consists in considerations about the empowerment of small-scale agricultural producers inherent in the New Theory. Strengthening the political and economic position of this part of society is a crucial factor in theories of balanced development as well (Lewis 2000: 123; Senghaas 1997: 337); however, the New Theory proposes to

ground the empowerment of small-scale farmers in self-reliance and food security on the level of the family farm first, prior to their inclusion in the wider economy. In a second step, communal initiatives likewise involve making use of local assets and strengths, i.e. the rediscovery of traditional knowledge and skills. This foundation of self-reliance is here regarded as a prerequisite to raising the bargaining power of each member community when dealing with business partners in the wider economy (see Sangsidh 1998a: 61).

### 5.2.2 Implementation Issues

Whereas state documents conceptualizing the Sufficiency Economy development strategy are based on a careful evaluation of Thailand's socio-economic situation<sup>103</sup> - which resonates with analyses put forward by advocates of balanced development strategies - the implementation of the strategy by state actors has in many cases fallen short of the targets as specified in the 9<sup>th</sup> NESDB plan and in the strategic paper by the Ministry of Interior. Being adopted and carried out by state administrative actors, these strategies have become assimilated in their storylines, including underlying attitudes and dispositions for action. The political scientist Bidhya Bowornwathana warns that the "governmental culture of the Thai polity has not departed that much from the traditional culture of absolute monarchy rule"

---

<sup>103</sup> Authors, such as Andrew Walker (2010) and Jonathan Rigg (see Rigg & Sakunee 2001), would strongly contest this view. According to them the king's New Theory, or similar approaches, misrepresents actual livelihood strategies in Thailand's villages and underplays structural constraints, such as land scarcity. Both Walker and Rigg have drawn their conclusions from research conducted in local village settings in Northern Thailand, where landlessness is most severe (see LRNT 2009: 21). Because of this spatially and temporally limited perspective, both authors fail to account for the wider socio-economic context of local livelihoods. An example illustrating this shortcoming is Walker's belief that land scarcity is primarily due to natural resource constraints, which makes it impossible for most farmers to satisfy household consumption through on-farm work (see Walker 2010: 247/48; Walker & Farrelly 2008: 388). Available data on land use reveals that the perceived scarcity of land in Thailand is mainly due to a skewed pattern of land distribution, underutilization of farmland due to speculative purposes, and the official classification system, in which some agricultural landholdings figure as protected forest areas (see Leonard & Kingkorn 2005; and LRNT 2009). Land scarcity, as is widely acknowledged in development literature (Lewis 2000: 123; Senghaas 1997: 337; Hein 2001: 235; for Thailand see Suranand 2011; see also UNDP 2007: 71) is in many countries including Thailand a political issue, rather than one of "natural" constraints.

(Bidhya 2007: 290). In line with assessments given by other authors (see Ryratana 1998: 17; Painter 2006: 29), Bidhya states that members of the Thai bureaucracy strongly identify with organizational hierarchy and status. These orientations are prioritized over the actual organizational functions of government officials and determine their interactions with outsiders. The latter are treated according to perceived social and economic positions. With regard to rural communities, members of the Thai bureaucracy “tend to devalue local cultures and priorities” (Missingham 1997: 161). Governance reforms aimed at improving the accountability and transparency of public administrative procedures have in the past failed to alter such cultural attitudes; instead they are superficially adopted in a way that perpetuates existing power imbalances.

This is also the case with instructions for local officials to act as facilitators of endogenous development rather than as providers of ready-made solutions. In the case of the community development strategy outlined by the Ministry of Interior, for instance, the implementation guidelines distributed to the provincial authorities already suggested a rigid adherence to the king’s New Theory (see Ministry of Interior 1998b: esp. 10), leaving little room for flexibility in integrated farming methods. On-ground observations of the actual practice indicate that the original intentions became distorted in a top-down implementation scheme (see Pasuk & Baker 2000: 78). A case study by Pruek Thaotawil (2008) about the drafting and realization of a community development plan in Ubon Ratchathani province offers a more detailed account about the implementation practice by Thai administrative staff. Pruek’s account starts with the very first consultative meeting involving government officials and village members. At the beginning of the meeting, community members had to fill out a detailed registration form, including name, address, and telephone number. This was followed by a sequence of “power rituals” (Pruek 2008: 75), including ceremonies and speeches, which served to cement the inequality between the public officials and villagers.

The resulting plan included specifications about vegetables to be grown for home consumption, the cultivation of “white mushrooms” for sale in local markets, and a

community savings scheme. For implementation the village was divided into groups consisting of seven to ten households each. In each group one household member was assigned to oversee the progress. All three schemes proved to be unsustainable for the most part. Some of the new vegetables introduced for example did not thrive in the local environment. Many household members were also engaged in off-farm work and did not have sufficient time available for farming. In the case of white mushroom cultivation, lack of information about market access posed an additional problem. The savings group was co-opted by a small circle of group members (Pruek 2008: 80-82). Lastly, most of the community members did not feel in control of the development project, but rather felt constantly under surveillance both from the local authorities and those fellow villagers assigned to evaluate their progress.

It is conceivable that many government officials as those involved in the above development initiative had “good intentions,” believing that they merely put into practice the official development strategy as envisaged by the NESDB. In a way that is what they did: In the above example, the officials did “assist” the development of rural communities, although in a manner that discouraged active participation by the target group. They moreover acknowledged that villagers possessed economic capabilities, but to the authorities these could only unfold if they explicitly pointed these out to the villagers, even including what vegetables to grow. In the understanding of these officials, they had to provide solutions, since they had the resources and know-how needed, whereas local farmers were positioned as mere receivers of help. This was the way the government institution made sense of the Sufficiency Economy discourse in terms of its own storyline. Assumedly, it included attitudes of generosity towards the villagers in Pruek’s study; thus, a disposition, which according to Vera Araujo cements inequality between a donor and a recipient (see chapter 4.1.3) by seeking out corresponding affordances, even in the Sufficiency Economy discourse. Official documents outlining the strategy and its implementation therefore did not alter micro-practices prevalent in the Thai bureaucracy, but instead served as a narrative providing these dispositions to act with a new source of legitimacy.

### **5.2.3. Towards an Enactive Analytical Perspective on State-Community Interactions**

The first subsection has provided an outline of the Sufficiency Economy storyline, first by showing that it has evolved through changing government planning approaches in response to macroeconomic conditions in the recent history of Thailand. It has moreover been shown that academics, NGOs, and grassroots organizations with aspirations associated with the Community Culture School have been able to exert a growing influence on the planning process. Lastly, I have illustrated that both the analysis of Thailand's socio-economic situation, as well as the lessons drawn from this assessment, largely correspond to a strand in modernization theory, the origins of which have been formulated forty years prior to the Sufficiency Economy approach. Thailand's current development paradigm for the first time officially positions small-scale farmers and rural communities as active agents in national development: The 9<sup>th</sup> NESDB plan not only recognizes their traditional skills, knowledge, and practices as valuable economic assets, but also views their empowerment as a requirement for balanced and sustainable development on the macro-economic level.

In approaches, which presuppose a clear causal correspondence between texts and practices (see Fairclough 1995: 134; Jørgensen & Phillips 2002: 73), one would analyze the combination of discourses making up the official Sufficiency Economy narrative. One could then explain the co-opting "effect" of the inherent modernist discourse on alternative worldviews inscribed in traditional practices, and then explain implementation practices by government officials on this basis. Else, one could examine the practice of implementation of the official narrative in terms of its embeddedness in "social practices, identities, norms, conventions, discourses, instruments and institutions" (Jasanoff 2004: 3) of the Thai bureaucracy. From an enactive perspective both approaches lack a serious consideration of prediscursive attitudes, conflating different cognitive processes into visible or symbolic

representations.<sup>104</sup> This view entails an overemphasis of discursive interventions, ignoring mechanisms of lived embodied experience through interactions. Both approaches thus essentialize narratives, “extract” them from actual social agents, and then seek to determine their effects on behavior, not unlike in the analysis of properties of matter and of chemical compounds. Thus, in the enactive view structuralist approaches and most discourse analytical approaches resemble each other in terms of the basic analytical method.

In the preceding chapters I have argued that discursive constructs acquire meaning as they are integrated in overall action-perception processes involving people with a breathing and responsive body. Embodied modes of knowing contribute to and specify the intelligibility of concepts and objects<sup>105</sup>; without them discursive concepts remain inconclusive as to their effects on behavior. In correspondence with positioning theory, social actors must therefore be included in the analysis of the way they make use of certain storylines. In itself, a discursive construct such as the Sufficiency Economy narrative, has no unambiguous meaning, apart from offering themes, concepts, and elements, which provide actors with a range of affordances. Thus, the fact that most state institutions on the local administrative levels did not make use of opportunities to empower rural communities does not mean that the Sufficiency Economy discourse lacks additional potentials for alternative practices as compared to Thailand’s earlier development approaches. Alternative community organizations, such as the Inpaeng Network, have been able to draw on this discourse to further their activities. Moreover, in their experience a number of public institutions have offered assistance to their initiatives as is

---

<sup>104</sup> Such an approach is often inadequate, for instance, when analyzing the practices of social movements, which propose alternatives based on a “way of being” or Knowing How, as in Buddhist-inspired approaches or the Economy of Communion (for the latter see Gold 2010: 145). For instance, when analyzing texts - such as company websites, mission statements, strategy papers etc. - produced by owners and managers of EoC businesses, a researcher using CDA methods would probably come to the conclusion that these texts are dominated by “enterprise discourse.” The lack of Catholic social doctrine in these documents would make these businesses hardly distinguishable from any other for-profit corporate entity, apart from the use of part of the surplus for social purposes. Everyday ethical practices and decisions, which consistently differ from those in non-EoC businesses, largely take place below the threshold of perception in such an analysis.

<sup>105</sup> In a neutral state, for instance, a knife may be perceived as a kitchen utensil, whereas in a state of rage the same object may be primarily associated with a weapon (Payutto 1994b: 50).

envisaged in official development documents since the 8<sup>th</sup> NESDB plan. These aspects will be the subject of the next section.

### **5.3. A New Strategy for NGOs: Collaborations with State Institutions**

Different social contexts afford a range of meaningful behaviors, as do ideologies and different ways of organizing economic activity. In chapter 1.6.1 I have mentioned the strategic use of macroeconomic discourse by the village elder in Guyana as described by Bartlett (2008). The village elder in his example makes a distinctive use of state economic discourse, which reflects the interests of his community. Different discourses vary in the way they lend themselves to Knowing How and ways of perceiving, and thus accommodate the interests of certain groups to different extents: The Sufficiency Economy discourse, for instance, has provided official legitimacy to community initiatives in the context of the Community Culture School, whereas prior to the 8<sup>th</sup> NESDB plan these alternative ways of life had been ignored and rural actors had been denied any capacity to contribute to their own development without outside help. These changed representations are captured in the positioning triangle in figure 11.

**Figure 11: Representation of the State Discourse on National Development in the NESDB Plans 8 up to the Present**

|                                                                                                                                                                   |                                                                                         |
|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <b>Positions:</b>                                                                                                                                                 |                                                                                         |
| Farmers possess skills and knowledge endowing them with unique development potentials                                                                             |                                                                                         |
| Duty of state institutions, NGOs and private sector to assist and facilitate their development                                                                    |                                                                                         |
| <b>Acts:</b>                                                                                                                                                      | <b>Storyline:</b>                                                                       |
| Royal interventions for Sufficiency orientation in pursuing national objectives of balanced and inclusive growth through decentralization and upgrading of skills | People-centered development; focus on people and human resources to develop the economy |

These interpretive shifts allow for a range of strategic applications, which are constrained not only by the possibilities inherent in a storyline, but foremost by the structure of the knowledge space, which social actors apply in making storylines intelligible. This structure includes assumptions about the roles and interests of certain social actors, often explicitly reproduced as fixed elements in a given worldview. Such “strong theory” thus serves to recount an already established story in each new encounter with a social event or storyline (Gibson-Graham 2006a: 4). Thus for some, the notion of sufficiency neatly fits into a global neoliberal project, which advances the retreat of the state from responsibilities such as welfare spending and redistribution measures (see Glassman 2008). To others, Sufficiency Economy has been divested of its potentially “postneoliberal” character through reinterpretation by powerful interest groups, making the philosophy compatible with

mainstream economics (Chanida & Bamford 2009: 145/46). In each interpretation Sufficiency Economy is depicted as yet another tool of “elite domination” over Thailand’s rural people (Pruek 2008).

In contrast to these applications of knowledge in interpreting state development discourse and in explaining its shortcomings in practice, Buddhist techniques and the community economies approach foster a letting-go of concepts and beliefs, including ascriptions of established subject positions and interests. First, such theories are perceived as constraining development possibilities and innovation. Secondly, the same discursive concept or storyline can be perceived differently by different actors as stated in positioning theory; these actors make such concepts intelligible through recourse to personal stories and experiences, which again are co-constituted through verbalized ascriptions, emotional stances, and affordances. Theoretical schemas, which include antagonistic social relations and pre-given interests of social actors, are thus often reinforced through emotional attachments and stories, which invoke a sense of indignation and resentment. Conversely, the theoretical framework applied here, warrants an open approach to each concrete interaction with outside actors.

Consequently, Gibson-Graham have sought to include different actors as potentially supportive agents in their projects, including members of local administrative bodies (see Gibson-Graham 2005a: 9; Cameron & Gibson 2005a: 329). Similarly, Inpaeng members and member communities have in the past repeatedly sought external support for some of their activities and projects. In some cases Inpaeng has established personal links with members of the government and the business sector with the help of Seri Phongphit from the Village Foundation. This way they have acquired government funds for road construction in the village of Ban Bua (Thawatthai, personal interview on 26 January 2012). On another occasion Seri introduced Thawatthai to a representative of a Thai conglomerate, which ran a program in support of university students pursuing a career in their home province after graduation. Since Inpaeng offers training to young generation farmers with the intention that they pursue farming as their primary occupation in the future, the

conglomerate provided funding for these activities due to similar objectives. Two network members I have talked to moreover pursue political careers on the district level as an additional means of advocating their development strategy.

Since the 8<sup>th</sup> NESDB plan, and especially since Thailand has adopted Sufficiency Economy as the national development strategy, communitarian grassroots groups have found it easier to garner state support for their projects (see Chanida & Bamford 2009: 152/53) and even to engage in collaborative ventures with public organizations. Preceding this change in outlook, government agencies had mainly promoted the cultivation of certain cash crops. Praphat, an Inpaeng member from Sakon Nakhon province, states that public institutions are now obliged to assist rural initiatives through skill development (personal interview on 28 January 2012). Most of these governmental bodies focus on certain activities in line with their formal authority and competencies: Thus, the Ministry of Agriculture and Cooperatives has established agricultural centers in every sub-district, which provide assistance and training to farmers. The Ministry of Interior is operating community development schemes providing product processing skills, whereas the Ministry of Health is involved in community projects with an emphasis on the use of herbal medicine. When asked about their assessment of various forms of public assistance, some network leaders sneeringly talk about officials using some of these initiatives for image campaigns and publicity purposes by taking photos and setting up signs stating their institution's assistance in the implementation. There are also cases, in which public institutions had provided no prior assistance at all, but claimed credit once community projects had been successfully established (Pho Serm, personal interview on 27 January 2012).

Among the institutions engaged in collaborative ventures with Inpaeng, network members frequently refer to two organizations with which they have entertained longstanding and productive relationships: These are provincial branches of the public Rajamangala University of Technology, as well as the Agricultural Land Reform Office (ALRO), which is attached to the Ministry of Agriculture and Cooperatives. The activities of the Rajamangala University of Technology appear to

closely resemble the role of “advanced academic institutes” as envisioned since the 8<sup>th</sup> NESDB plan (NESDB 1996: 95): The plan has called for such institutions to be present “in all regions” and “to be centres for the collection and study of indigenous knowledge and local technological needs, and for the development of appropriate technology.” As mentioned in chapter 4.1.1 the organization has provided the know-how for Inpaeng members in Ban Bua to operate the Makmao processing plant. Apart from this, the factory building has also been financed by the university. This support is ongoing up until today, as the institution continues research and experimentation about additional ways to process Makmao: Inpaeng members in Phuphan district have acquired know-how about the manufacture of tea out of Makmao leaves, as well as about the production of sugar free Makmao juice from the research institution. During the time of my field research the local branch of the university was testing the processing of Makmao into jam (Ganya, personal interview on 18 January 2012). The university has since 2005 also contributed know-how for an herbal factory, which is likewise situated in Phuphan district. Here, the operators process indigenous herbs into an organic food additive, which can be used to replace MSG. The Kalasin branch of the university has supported network members in the province by teaching them how to obtain natural dye from certain tree species.

The Agricultural Land Reform Office has been established in 1975 with the aim to redistribute privately owned land to landless farmers. The office has since the beginning lacked the political authority and finances to pursue this program on a large scale due to opposition from powerful interest groups, such as landlords, politicians, and senior military officers (see Suehiro 1981: 338/39; Fan & Chan-Kang 2005: 137). Today ALRO allocates both private and public land to farmers; in most cases this concerns land in remote areas, often in formerly protected forest tracts. Therefore these areas often lack adequate infrastructure, the development of which is another responsibility of the organization. Nevertheless, according to Praphat, ALRO is always able to provide land of a minimum size of 0.32 hectares to people who are serious about taking up farming as their primary occupation and are willing to adhere to the conditions set up by the office (personal interview on 28

January 2012). Finally, the institution also assists farmers by supporting on-farm and off-farm occupations and helps them in acquiring low-interest loans. Although it has only a small budget to its disposal, ALRO staff takes pride in having a wide range of responsibilities, which include most functions associated with the development of small-scale farmers (Artittaya, personal interview on 21 January 2012). Staff members moreover act as intermediaries between farmers and other official bodies: For example, if they find that land, which is officially classified as protected forest area, lacks forest cover, they may inform the Forest department and suggest making the tract available for landless farmers.

According to the staff member, the Inpaeng Network is considered a very important partner, both because of the size of the network including the number of expert farmers involved, and because of shared objectives: First, ALRO promotes an integrated and independent form of agriculture in line with the Sufficiency Economy philosophy. Second, as for Inpaeng, it is important to the organization that a growing number of young people in rural areas engage in such agricultural activities. In collaborative projects the government officials and network members assume complementary roles: ALRO provides limited funding and tools, whereas network members assist as resource persons with their experience and know-how. ALRO thus invites them to assist community projects in different parts of the Northeastern region or, conversely, declares the farm of an Inpaeng expert a “learning center.” In the latter case the public institution refers young farmers to the resource persons for training. Since 2007 ALRO has established 50 learning centers in 69 provinces as venues for farmers to share their experiences and disseminate knowledge about organic and sustainable farming methods. According to the ALRO officer, the public institution has acquired knowledge from Inpaeng in the form of a “curriculum,” which the staff tries to implement in other parts of the country as well.

Such collaborations with ALRO, as well as with other public institutions, thus expand the influence of the network to the wider Northeastern region, as well as to other parts of the country. Some projects set up by public institutions have

moreover drawn new member communities into the network: A grassroots organization in Mukdahan province, for instance, has joined Inpaeng after having collaborated in a biodiversity project supported by ALRO (Rado 2013: 185). Some recent member communities have moreover joined Inpaeng in the course of a government project on community resource management, in which network members were involved as advisors. Cooperation with government institutions thus provides opportunities to link up with likeminded communities elsewhere. These new members enlarge the knowledge network and thus expand the Inpaeng project of self-determined and sustainable development.

In addition to these cooperative relations between the two organizations, frequent interactions have also nurtured personal relationships among members of both groups. ALRO's secretary-general, Wirachai Nakwibulwong, visits Ban Bua at least once every year, as was the case during the memorial in memory of deceased Inpaeng leaders on 21/22 January 2012. The sequence of events during the memorial has been described briefly in chapter 4.2.1. During the breaks in the course of the program, members of both groups ate and sat together; in the evening of the first day following the program different groups of people were dispersed over the network center, involved in informal chats. These groups likewise seem to have formed "naturally," consisting of members of both organizations.<sup>106</sup> What was instructive in terms of how both groups understand the nature of their collaboration, as well as the roles of both organizations, were the speech given by the ALRO leader and a presentation by Thawatchai representing Inpaeng.

In his speech Wirachai referred to Inpaeng as a role model in terms of a Sufficiency Economy development approach. After he concluded his speech, which he gave on stage to a wider audience, a group of interested people took place on the stage

---

<sup>106</sup> One elderly ALRO member, responsible for forest affairs, guided me through the network center during the first day, where some Inpaeng members offered self-made juices, snacks, and scarves. At a stand, where a woman was preparing traditional cookies, he explained to me that such ceremonial activities provide villagers with the opportunity to utilize such skills. Incidents, such as these, indicate an attitude among ALRO staff towards villagers, which differs significantly from attitudes in other government organizations as described by other authors (see Missingham 1997).

forming a circle around Thawatchai and Praphat, who gave power-point presentations. Thus, the setting became less formal and now resembled a group meeting of ALRO staff and Inpaeng members. In his presentation titled “Work Plan and Activities of Inpaeng in the year 2012: presented to Dr. Wirachai Nakwibulwong” Thawatchai described the current status of network activities, citing both achievements and problems. He noted, for instance, that among the 450 young generation farmers, which the network had trained, only fifty have taken up integrated farming as a way of life. Based on his assessments, Thawatchai presented a work plan for each activity for the rest of the year. Here, too, he pointed out the significance of the task to teach the next generation, since these young farmers embody “the hope and pride” of the network. He conceded that the young find few economic opportunities in their home region and therefore migrate to Bangkok. Inpaeng activities meant to alleviate this problem consist in identifying new products and markets (see chapter 4), and in applying appropriate technology for irrigation, such as windmills and solar technology.

Thawatchai also mentioned areas of potential support by ALRO, such as experts and material inputs for the installation of wind turbines and water pumps for irrigation. Interestingly, the network leader also mentioned macro-economic challenges faced by Thailand due to the coming into effect of the ASEAN Free Trade agreement in 2015. Here, he noted that Vietnam and Cambodia are producers of jasmine rice, same as Thailand, and produce rice of a comparable quality but more cheaply. Malaysia, on the other hand, generates palm oil of higher quality than producers in Thailand. As the free trade agreement is coming into effect these products will enter the Thai market and local farmers might lose out in the competition. The probable reason why the network leader made reference to the overall economy was to highlight the advantages of the Inpaeng approach to the development of farmers; as mentioned in chapter 4, the network advocates self-reliance in foodstuff and encourages farmers to only sell surplus products. Since many of these are local vegetables and fruits indigenous to certain regions, Inpaeng members are able to evade competition from most sellers, who offer mainstream goods.

Responding to Thawatchai's explanations Wirachai rated the number of young generation farmers following Inpaeng's example as a success. He moreover cautioned that Inpaeng communities needed to understand their possibilities in venturing into product-processing for sale: These should be value-added products with a unique identity, and which moreover reflect knowledge that farmers already possess. The ALRO leader suggested diabetic rice as an additional possibility. He moreover assured the network members present of ALROs continuing support. This event is thus illustrative of the complementarities of interests between the organizations: Inpaeng farmers are concerned that the young members of their communities devalue local knowledge and end up as unskilled laborers dependent on external job opportunities. State organizations on the other hand are committed to the spread of economic activity outside Thailand's central region. Both groups moreover share a belief that "local wisdom" can be translated into commercial activities. This is here understood as a bottom-up strategy to include rural producers in the national economy, creating opportunities for income generation in provincial areas. This in turn helps to alleviate structural inequalities, which national policy-makers have addressed since the fifth development plan. This understanding is inscribed in NESDB plans, which ALRO as a public institution adheres to.

Although members of Inpaeng acknowledge this link between community initiatives and overall economic development, it does not reflect their immediate concerns. Network members prioritize local knowledge and the maintenance of biodiversity, the preservation of which they regard as inextricably linked to their way of life. In interviews Inpaeng leaders have moreover stated that they had upheld a development approach resembling Sufficiency Economy long before state agencies included such initiatives into an overall economic strategy. However, they had referred to their approach as "pho yuu, pho kin,"<sup>107</sup> which can be translated as "self-reliance."

---

<sup>107</sup> According to Nao and Praphat (personal interviews on 18 and 28 January 2012).

## 5.4. Summary

Whereas section 5.2.2 has provided examples of implementation failures of Sufficiency Economy projects, section 3 has offered insights into successful collaborative ventures involving Inpaeng and state bodies. A main difference between both sets of examples is that the first have been initiated by government institutions, whereas in the second case villagers had already established alternative community economies by themselves; state institutions came to assist existing projects, which they could identify as being in line with the new state economic discourse. Thus, until today the main impetus for Inpaeng activities originates from the villagers' own initiatives and priorities. This observation ties in with the conclusion by Moghaddam and Harré that social alternatives derive from small-scale innovations and cannot easily be imposed in a top-down manner. The difficulties in achieving political reforms and transformation through state administrative organizations are also documented in other settings (see for example Shivji 2013).

Communities, such as Inpaeng, are here understood as the main actors of social change, since they put socio-economic decisions into practice on an everyday basis. They are moreover able to establish ongoing working relationships with those state institutions, which view them as partners rather than as clients. During the visit of ALRO staff in Ban Bua, I have noted their open and appreciative stance towards the local farmers. This respect for the skills and capacities of Inpaeng members has been reinforced through frequent personal exchanges and successful collaborations in the past. Nevertheless, ALRO is attached to a ministry of the central state; its members, who are predominantly middle-class Bangkokians, are thus accountable to a state administrative body, and adhering to the national strategy as put forward by the NESDB. Inpaeng members, on the other hand, feel responsible towards their communities, motivated to maintain what they regard as indispensable for their continued existence. These differences entail complementary areas of expertise. Since each organization is open to the know-

how of the other, their objectives turn out to be mutually supportive. Here, the Sufficiency Economy storyline provides a common ground for successful interactions.

Interestingly, Arturo Escobar, writing about current transformation processes in Latin America, offers an assessment, which closely resembles the main aim of this chapter. He notes that the processes in these countries are driven by “two potentially complementary but also competing and contradictory projects” (Escobar 2010: 11): The governments in Bolivia, Ecuador, and Venezuela, according to him, remain committed to modified forms of mainstream development discourse, including a continued adherence to growth and modernization, despite references to indigenous alternative conceptions. Social movements, on the other hand, pose actual alternatives through lived practices, such as community economies. This communal project moreover “utilizes the knowledge and technological advances of liberal society but subordinates them to the communal logic” (Escobar 2010: 35). It is thus through these interactions and dialogues with their wider societies that indigenous social movements have the capacity to transform society in radically innovative ways. Two points in Escobar’s assessment are worth emphasizing for the purpose of this work: First, he identifies communities as the main actors of social change; at least they appear as the only agents able to articulate “real” alternatives. Second, Escobar views these alternatives as being instantiated through diverse practices and interactions in different contexts – both traditional and modern - informed by a “communal logic.”

In the current work I have argued for an attitudinal stance as the unifying feature in different alternative movements. The attitude referred to is one of an “extended self,” which encompasses the wider community and the natural environment by acknowledging mutual interdependence. This disposition is the driving force of innovative and emancipatory practices, which arise through interactions between Inpaeng communities and their socio-economic contexts. This state of consciousness underlies the ways they interpret their environment and which informs their actions in the course of interactions; this process of the generation of

meaning has been described through action-perception-loops in the first chapter. These actions have repercussions on the wider social context; in each practice and conversation we thus have an opportunity to “enact” a reality. Attitudes and states of consciousness are difficult to capture through ideological means or stated ideals; this is in part due to the ambiguity of discursive meaning when correlated with underlying dispositions and intentions. Capturing the everyday practices arising from a “culture of sharing” without reference to the dispositions motivating them, for instance, will result in a list of surface phenomena, which can be extended whenever this attitude informs behavior in new contexts. Similarly, the classification of actions as discursive practices alone cannot adequately describe the meaning of actions, if prediscursive dispositions are ignored.

## **6. Conclusion: An Outline of Enactive Development**

This final part will provide a summary of previous chapters with an aim to construct the outlines of enactive development. This summary will be concise, in part because I will rely on the explanatory power of technical terms, which have been introduced and elaborated earlier. I hope that this way of proceeding will help to further elucidate the coherence of the enactive approach through the chapters. Chapters 1 – 3 have provided the theoretical basis for this approach, starting from ontological assumptions, via a description of the epistemic capacities of the body, through to a comparison with and delimitation from comparable development theoretical approaches. The strategic outlook emanating from this theoretical basis has been formulated from chapter 2 onwards. In chapters 4 and 5 finally, I have tried to illustrate the applicability of enactive development in practice. After drawing the conclusions for enactive development I will return to the epistemic features of the enactive approach, which illustrate complementarities between contemporary cognitive science and approaches in the social sciences.

In the first chapter I have attempted to show that concrete interactions – in contrast to peoples' minds or the outside world - are the site of meaning. People acquire experiences in repeated interactions and these experiences are the interpretative resources they bring into current and future communications. The external world people interact with provides sets of affordances for the application of prior experiences; these affordances (see chapter 1.5.1) are rarely limited to a single meaningful interaction and therefore allow for the enactment of different realities. This ontological view entails that development work likewise proceeds in the course of interactions, in which new possibilities are acknowledged and realized, and added to peoples' experiential repertoire.

Communities are the site of intervention for development work following the way meaning is construed in interaction processes. Actual meaning-generating processes encompass embodied mechanisms in addition to speech acts among "discursive minds" (see Harré & Gillett 1994). Through a combination of enactivism

and discursive psychology we can distinguish different kinds of practices: Micro-practices denote embodied dispositions and states of consciousness, which motivate actions, which are then carried out in a socially mediated form; this mediation provides patterns for behavior and helps the attribution of meaning by those acting, reacting, and observing. To the extent that this mediation is conveyed in a discursive form we can speak of “social practices.” Social practices are part of the personal storylines of actors, as are emotional and sensorimotor categorizations. In the enactive approach all these sense-making mechanisms are part of storylines, which different actors bring into conversations, and which usually “overlap” to a degree that makes mutual intelligibility possible. Different cognitive levels co-determine the way we construct reality, and also interpersonal understanding is not limited to shared discourses: For people it may be possible to understand a wider range of meaning of actions beyond their intended social function. Thus, in a society, which enforces formalized conventions of equality among its members (social practices), people may verbally address each other as equals, whereas differences in intonation and gestures (micro-practices) solidify status differentials in everyday life. Such generally pre-reflective meaning can thus be understood by the person addressed in addition to the socially intended meaning.

Micro-practices / Knowing How are the prime objects of enactive intervention. In contrast to representational knowledge, which lends itself to normative statements (Knowing That; see chapter 1.5.2), Knowing How denotes the ability to apply subdiscursive orientations in changing (social) contexts. Such embodied dispositions underlie the continuity of macro-social arrangements; changes in these dispositions are therefore seen as effecting genuine social change. As shown in the second chapter embodied constituents of meaning encompass a range of emotional states and are moreover the source of our feeling of selfhood and of agency. These dispositions are the capacities of the body in assigning meaning; further, these dispositions exhibit different effects on long-term wellbeing. Because these mechanisms are embodied, they are unifying features of a species and therefore denote continuities pertaining to its members. It follows that by effecting

willful changes through the cultivation of certain dispositions over others, the effects on wellbeing can be known beforehand through experiential regularities among different practitioners of such cultivation techniques.

Buddhist philosophy has developed out of experiences with exploring states of consciousness. The regularities identified have been described through the process of dependent origination, which originates in ego-clinging and habitual behaviors oriented towards satisfying this ego. Accordingly, dependent origination (or dependent co-arising; see chapter 2.2.1) is a sense-making feature, which pertains to most humans due to their cognitive endowments. Through action-perception loops we consciously experience ourselves as separate agents acting on an external world. According to Buddhism this phenomenal experience fosters suffering as it determines many of our motivations and thoughts. By cultivating insight, including corresponding emotional stances, about the interconnectedness of mental events and “external” phenomena, it is possible to enhance personal wellbeing and that of others. An enactive development strategy therefore involves the transposition of Buddhist techniques to communities by drawing from findings in cognitive science and therapeutic interventions. The modification of mindfulness techniques and the objective of fostering non-identification are therefore important elements in this approach. A way to achieve this is the setting-up of “enabling environments” in which people are able to experience being-in-common. These environments encourage new behaviors, manifest in alternative action-perception loop processes.

With the focus on micro-practices, and thus the elaboration of micro-political interventions, enactive development differs significantly from comparable development approaches, namely postdevelopment and Buddhist Economics (chapter 3). Neither theory sufficiently addresses embodied sense-making processes. Whereas open to a variety of development trajectories, which can be captured discursively, enactive development establishes a common element among these possibilities through reference to the body: Development objectives thus do not consist of normative “best practices,” but in the nurturing of other-directedness,

compassion, and openness; in short, dispositions, which in Buddhist philosophy are subsumed under the term “Four Divine Abodes.” This “ethical know-how” (Varela 1999) is applied in different development contexts as it selects for specific modes of interaction. Buddhist Economics features the opposite strategy: Instead of formulating ways of making the cultivation of non-self accessible to participants in development work, theorists describe approaches to social practices informed by such dispositions. By taking ethical orientations as given, Buddhist Economics theorists apply them to social and economic practices, aiming at establishing normative statements. In short, enactive development nurtures a dispositional reactivity in individuals to certain affordances provided by a situation, whereas Buddhist Economics makes the choice of corresponding affordances explicit.

The move towards normative statements is especially pronounced in Buddhist Economics works, which put forwards social structural commitments, such as explicitly favoring cooperative modes of production over capitalist modes. As Julie Nelson (2011) has pointed out, this practice marks a departure from Buddhist philosophy, which aims to foster dispositions (Knowing How) instead of norms and ideals (Knowing That). As chapter 4 illustrates, the approach in Buddhist Economics is moreover likely to limit development possibilities, which could otherwise arise, if development work is focused on micro-political interventions that are meant to foster openness. Here, I have illustrated development initiatives, which due to their emphasis on a “way of being,” emotional stances, and attitudes are consistent with an enactive development practice.

Among the initiatives mentioned, Gibson-Graham’s intervention in the Latrobe Valley in Australia (2006a) has been analyzed in detail, since the process of development work offers important insights about possible micro-political applications. The process moreover resembles the modifications of Buddhist techniques in therapeutic interventions, in which these techniques are made applicable to group contexts involving people who do not meditate. Thus, in a first step, community members are encouraged to recount their storylines about their socio-economic situation, bringing to awareness feelings of frustration and

antagonism towards actors, which are held accountable for problems of unemployment and lack of economic opportunities. Once these stories are exhausted, the researchers highlight local potentials and assets which are not considered in these accounts; in some cases they take the participants' own accounts as a starting point to highlight a "discursive nonclosure" and the contours of a "counterdiscourse" (Gibson-Graham 2006a: 136) in these familiar stories. The objective here is thus not to explore the participants' knowledge space in order to arrive at political strategies deriving from it, but to the contrary to acquire a conscious distance in order to consider wider interpretive possibilities.

This non-identification is further reinforced through visual clues – such as diagrams and figures – which serve as "evidence" for the factuality of a more hopeful counterdiscourse. Interestingly, Gibson-Graham acknowledge shifts in emotional states, which accompany this interpretative change. Their "politics of the subject" thus includes reorientations on different cognitive levels, including embodied sense-making processes. Specifically, they use the effect of surprise among project participants as a starting point for subjective transformation processes, involving changing discursive representations of reality, new emotional stances, and the perception of additional possibilities for interaction. The researchers achieve this by exposing project participants to communal events, such as cooking events, and excursions to alternative businesses and workshops. Although these activities provide content for the initially vague idea of a "community economy" among the participants, it does not appear to be the decisive factor for them to engage in collective development endeavors. Rather, their motivation stems from experiences of proximity with former strangers and the feeling of community. In sum, the project consists of establishing an enabling environment for the generation of new meaning. Its setup differs from familiar contexts, in a way that it challenges entrenched modes of understanding, perceiving, and interacting. It calls forth different sets of adaptive behaviors, thus providing new experiences, evoking new dispositions, which again select for certain behaviors. Dispositions of openness and other-directedness are thus cultivated in the course of this action-perception loop process.

The emotional state cultivated in the process provides a direction for conscious thinking and ensuing development initiatives. Gibson-Graham's approach is not specific about the design of community economies. As shown in the remainder of the fourth chapter, economic activities may encompass subsistence strategies, cooperative organizations, or alternative capitalist firms. There is thus no clear one-to-one correspondence between states of consciousness and social practices; the insufficiency of social practices and discursive representations in predicting unambiguous effects<sup>108</sup> – as illustrated by the example of Economy of Communion – thus translates into varied possibilities for economic experimentation. The view that meaning arises in concrete interactions instead of given structural realities or discursive formations – or in terms of positioning theory, that these formations become meaningful through the storylines of actors – moreover makes the enactive approach more inclusive of outside actors. This has been shown in chapter 5 by the example of collaborations involving the Inpaeng Network and state institutions.

The fifth chapter has pointed towards the social relevance of alternative communal initiatives, which follows from the interdependence of the meaningful behavior of actors and their environments. According to enactivism, organisms transform their environment through their performative actions; this means that also storylines exhibit effects on other stakeholders as they are affected by corresponding actions to which they respond. This point has also been mentioned in previous chapters. It is for instance unlikely that competitors and customers of Economy of Communion businesses entertain relations with the latter, which do not differ from relations with “mainstream” firms (see Ganzon 2013); once they experience that the Focolare's notion of brother- and sisterhood extends to them as well, they are confronted with a new storyline and different choices for behavior. EoC businesses destabilize established patterns, which govern capitalist economic practices, thus highlighting the ambiguity of these practices, as well as the additional choices they potentially entail. Similarly, Inpaeng communities do not engage with state actors in a way that

---

<sup>108</sup> Similarly, practice theorists note that discursive representations cannot adequately account for human activity, because “the capacity of formulations to guide what people do rests on abilities to use and understand them” (Schatzki 2001: 18).

would be reducible to contents of the Sufficiency Economy discourse. These collaborations have proven successful with certain organizations and individuals, whose understanding of the strategy is compatible with priorities held by Inpaeng.

Through continued interactions with public institutions and other members of society, Inpaeng is able to influence these actors' storylines and extend the scope of its practices. As illustrated in the previous chapter, state support has enabled the network to engage in product processing activities, as well as to link up with communities pursuing similar objectives elsewhere. Government institutions likewise draw on the expertise of Inpaeng members in spreading knowledge about integrated farming techniques and about the conservation of natural resources. The realization of these opportunities would be unlikely, if community members had applied an essentialist reading of the Sufficiency Economy strategy as either modernist, neoliberal, or as an expression of "elite misrepresentation of rural livelihoods" (Walker 2010). As shown in section 5.2.2 there are instances of implementation practices of Sufficiency Economy community projects, which warrant this interpretation as well. Consequently, agents in interactions need to be considered, more than underlying discourses.

In sum, the enactive approach has been described both as a theory of science and as a guide for community development. In this it consistently follows Buddhist philosophy, in which ontological and epistemological views are inseparable from practices and experiences in the spiritual development of its practitioners. Enactive development owes many of its innovative features to its ontological commitments, according to which meaning arises through interactions involving the mind, the body, and an outside environment. This view not only corresponds with Buddhism, but is here directly inspired by enactivism and positioning theory. It is moreover shared in practice theory as well.

Since the second cognitive revolution, in which the workings of the mind have been illustrated through connectionist models (chapter 1.4.2), the above approaches in the social sciences and cognitive science are increasingly finding common ground in how they conceive of sense-making and meaningful actions. According to

Markus Peschl, a professor of cognitive science at Vienna University, the view that cognition extends beyond the brain to include the body and the (social) environment is currently becoming dominant in the field (personal conversation on 1 April 2014). Cognitive science is thus making inroads into the social sciences and vice versa. It has been shown in the first two chapters that theorists in each discipline are progressively engaging with the other science. This combination will probably prove more fruitful for the social sciences than an orientation towards the sciences of matter, such as physics. This includes structural/materialist and, in my view, most discourse analytical approaches alike, which are currently perceived as opposing poles in the way society is understood (see Jørgensen & Phillips 2002: 17/18). However, both externalize meaning from actual agents, seeking to derive regularities from static structural entities. This way of reifying social practices may have been a device motivated by the idea that human beings and the human mind are elusive entities for social scientific formulations. With the advances made in the cognitive sciences, which can also be expected for the future, this approach may no longer be necessary.

## References

- Adams, Fred (2010): "Embodied Cognition." *Phenomenology and the Cognitive Sciences* 9(4), 619-628.
- Aguilar, Filomeno V. Jr. (2005): "Excess Possibilities? Ethics, Populism and Community Economy. A Commentary on J.K. Gibson-Graham's 'Surplus Possibilities: Postdevelopment and Community Economies'." *Singapore Journal of Tropical Geography* 26(1), 27-31
- Alexandrin, Glen (1993): "Elements of Buddhist Economics." *International Journal of Social Economics* 20(2), 3-11
- Apichai Puntasen (1999): *Buddhatham gab setasart [Buddha Dhamma and Economics]*. Presentation at Thammasat University, 10 January
- Apichai Puntasen (2001): *Buddhasetasart: wiwatanakan tritti lae ganprayuk gab setasart sakha dtang-dtang [Buddhist Economics: Evolution, Theories, and Its Application to Various Economic Subjects]*. Bangkok, Amarin Press
- Apichai Puntasen (2004): *Buddhist Economics: Evolution, Theories and Its Application to Various Economic Subjects*. Bangkok, Amarin Press
- Apichai Puntasen (2007): "Why Buddhist Economics is Needed as a New Paradigm for a Better Understanding of Happiness (Wellness)." Presentation at the *International Conference on Happiness and Public Policy Sub-Theme I: Happiness in Global Perspectives: Why We Need a New Paradigm*. 18/19 July, Bangkok
- Archer, Margaret (1998): "Introduction: Realism in the Social Sciences." In Archer, Margaret; Roy Bhaskar; Andrew Collier; Tony Lawson & Alan Norrie (eds): *Critical Realism. Essential Readings*. Routledge, 189-205
- Ash, Colin (2011): "Do Our Economic Choices Make Us Happy?" In Zsolnai, Laszlo (ed): *Ethical Principles and Economic Transformation. A Buddhist Approach*. Springer, 111-131
- Augusto, Luís M. (2010): "Unconscious Knowledge: A Survey." *Advances in Cognitive Psychology* 6, 116-141
- Bade, William Frederic (1909): "The Growth of Ethical Ideals in Old Testament Times." *The Biblical World* 33(3), 182-190
- Baer, John; James C. Kaufman & Roy F. Baumeister (eds, 2008): *Are We Free? Psychology and Free Will*. Oxford University Press
- Baker, Chris (2000): "Thailand's Assembly of the Poor: Background, Drama, Reaction." *Southeast Asia Research* 8(1), 5-29

- Baker, Chris & Pasuk Phongpaichit (1999): "Afterword: Chatthip and the Thai Village." In Chatthip Nartsupha: *The Thai Village Economy in the Past*. [translated by Chris Baker & Pasuk Phongpaichit] Silkworm Books, 114-131
- Baker, Chris & Pasuk Phongpaichit (2005): *A History of Thailand*. Cambridge University Press
- Ball, Stephen J., & Antonio Olmedo (2013): "Care of the Self, Resistance and Subjectivity under Neoliberal Governmentalities." *Critical Studies in Education* 54(1), 85-96
- Bamrung Bunpanya (1986): "Two Ways of Thinking." In Seri Phongphit (ed): *Back to the Roots. Village and Self-Reliance in a Thai Context*. Rural Development Documentation Centre, Bangkok, 89-97
- Bargetz, Brigitte (2013): "Markt der Gefühle, Macht der Gefühle. Konturen eines emotionstheoretischen Machtverständnisses." *Österreichische Zeitschrift für Soziologie* 38(2), 203-220
- Bargetz, Brigitte & Birgit Sauer (2010): "Politik, Emotionen und die Transformation des Politischen. Eine feministisch-machtkritische Perspektive." *Österreichische Zeitschrift für Politikwissenschaft* 39(2), 141-155
- Barker, Drucilla (2003): "Emancipatory for Whom? A Comment on Critical Realism." *Feminist Economics*, 9(1), 103-108
- Bartlett, Tom (2008): "Wheels within Wheels, or Triangles within Triangles: Time and Context in Positioning Theory." In Moghaddam et al. (eds): *Global Conflict Resolution Through Positioning Analysis*. Springer New York, 169-187
- Batchelor, Martine (2011): "Meditation and Mindfulness." *Contemporary Buddhism* 12(1), 157-164
- Baumeister, Roy F. (2008): "Free Will, Consciousness, and Cultural Animals." In Baer, John; James C. Kaufman & Roy F. Baumeister (eds): *Are We Free? Psychology and Free Will*. Oxford University Press, 65-85
- Bechara, Antoine & Antonio R. Damasio (2005): "The Somatic Marker Hypothesis: A Neural Theory of Economic Decision." *Games and Economic Behavior* 52(2), 336-372
- Bhaskar, Roy (1998a): *The Possibility of Naturalism. A Philosophical Critique of the Contemporary Human Sciences*. Routledge
- Bhaskar, Roy (1998b): "Philosophy and Scientific Realism." In Archer, Margaret; Roy Bhaskar; Andrew Collier; Tony Lawson & Alan Norrie (eds): *Critical Realism. Essential Readings*. Routledge, 16-47

Bhaskar, Roy (1998c): "The Logic of Scientific Discovery." In Archer, Margaret; Roy Bhaskar; Andrew Collier; Tony Lawson & Alan Norrie (eds): *Critical Realism. Essential Readings*. Routledge, 48-103

Bhaskar, Roy (1998d): "Facts and Values: Theory and Practice / Reason and the Dialectic of Human Emancipation / Depth, Rationality and Change." In Archer, Margaret; Roy Bhaskar; Andrew Collier; Tony Lawson & Alan Norrie (eds): *Critical Realism. Essential Readings*. Routledge, 409-443

Bhaskar, Roy (2002): *From Science to Emancipation. Alienation and the Actuality of Enlightenment*. Sage Publications

Bhaskar, Roy & Andrew Collier (1998): "Introduction: Explanatory Critiques." In Archer, Margaret; Roy Bhaskar; Andrew Collier; Tony Lawson & Alan Norrie (eds): *Critical Realism. Essential Readings*. Routledge, 385-394

Bidhya Bowornwathana (2007): "Governance Reform Outcomes through Cultural Lens: Thailand." *Cultural Aspects in Public Management Reform. Research in Public Policy Analysis and Management* 16, 275-298

Blake, David & Rattaphon Pitakthepsombut (2006a): *Tai Baan Research - from Community Awareness to Adaptive Wetland Management in the Lower Mekong Basin*. Mekong Wetlands Biodiversity Conservation and Sustainable Use Programme, Bangkok

Blake, David & Rattaphon Pitakthepsombut (2006b): *Situation Analysis: Lower Songkhram River Basin, Thailand*. Mekong Wetlands Biodiversity Conservation and Sustainable Use Programme, Bangkok

Bollier, David (2009): "Gemeingüter – eine vernachlässigte Quelle des Wohlstands." Helfrich, Silke & Heinrich-Böll-Stiftung (eds, 2009): *Wem gehört die Welt? Zur Wiederentdeckung der Gemeingüter*. Oekom, 28-38

Boswell, Terry & Christopher K. Chase-Dunn (2000): *The Spiral of Capitalism and Socialism. Toward Global Democracy*. Boulder, London

Boswell, Terry & Christopher Chase-Dunn (2006): "Transnational Social Movements and Democratic Socialist Parties in the Semiperiphery. On to Global Democracy." In Chase-Dunn, Christopher K. & Salvatore J. Babones (eds): *Global Social Change. Historical and Comparative Perspectives*. The John Hopkins University Press, 317-335

Bottineau, Didier (2010): "Language and Enaction." In Stewart, John Robert; Olivier Gapenne & Ezequiel A. Di Paolo (eds) *Enaction: Towards a New Paradigm for Cognitive Science*. MIT Press, 267-306

Brand, Ulrich (2009): "Das Zusammenwirken von Bewegungen. Commons als kritisch-emanzipatorische Weltsicht und strategische Perspektive." In Helfrich, Silke & Heinrich-Böll-Stiftung (eds): *Wem gehört die Welt? Zur Wiederentdeckung der Gemeingüter*. Oekom, 237-244

- Brand, Ulrich & Christoph Görg (2005): "Nachhaltige Globalisierung?' Sustainable Development als Kitt des neoliberalen Scherbenhaufens." In Brand, Ulrich: *Gegen-Hegemonie. Perspektiven globalisierungskritischer Strategien*. VSA-Verlag, 62-79
- Brigg, Morgan (2002): "Post-Development, Foucault, and the Colonisation Metaphor." *Third World Quarterly* 23(3), 421–436
- Brodbeck, Karl-Heinz (2004): "Buddhistische Ökonomie." *Engagierter Buddhismus, Gelbe Reihe* 7, 13-17.
- Bruni, Luigino & Amelia J. Uelmen (2006): "Religious Values and Corporate Decision Making: The Economy of Communion Project." *Fordham Journal of Corporate & Financial Law* 11, 645-680
- Bubna-Litic, David (2013): "The Dialogical Space between Buddhism and Economics." In Rado, Istvan; Seri Phongphit & Nathaniel Long (eds): *Exploring Sufficiency Economy. Ethics, Practices, Challenges*. King Prajadhipok's Institute, 58-105
- Buddhadasa Bhikkhu (1992): *Patticcasamuppada. Practical Dependent Origination*. Vuddhidhamma Fund
- Buddhadasa Bhikkhu (2001): *Mindfulness with Breathing. A Manual for Serious Beginners*. Silkworm Books
- Bunyard, Peter (1997): "Tehri: A Catastrophic Dam in the Himalayas." In Rahnema, Majid & Victoria Bawtree (eds): *The Post-Development Reader*. Zed Books, 256-262
- Butler, Judith (1990): *Gender Trouble. Feminism and the Subversion of Identity*. Routledge
- Butler, Judith (1993): *Bodies that Matter. On the Discursive Limits of "Sex."* Routledge
- Çağlar, Gülay (2009): *Engendering der Makroökonomie und Handelspolitik: Potenziale transnationaler Wissensnetzwerke*. Springer
- Çağlar, Gülay (2010): "Transnationale Wissensnetzwerke und Geschlechterpolitik im Feld der internationalen Wirtschafts-und Handelspolitik." In Bauhart, Christine & Gülay Çağlar (eds): *Gender and Economics. Feministische Kritik der Politischen Ökonomie*. VS Verlag für Sozialwissenschaften, 278-303
- Cameron, Jenny & Katherine Gibson (2005a): "Participatory Action Research in a Poststructuralist Vein." *Geoforum* 36(3), 315-331
- Cameron, Jenny & Katherine Gibson (2005b): "Alternative Pathways to Community and Economic Development: The Latrobe Valley Community Partnering Project." *Geographical Research* 43(3), 274-285
- Caspi, Avshalom & Terrie E. Moffitt (2006): "Gene–Environment Interactions in Psychiatry: Joining Forces with Neuroscience." *Nature Reviews* 7, 583-590

Chanida Chanyapate & Alec Bamford (2009): "On Recent Projects and Experiences of the Sufficiency Economy: A Critique." *Development Dialogue* 51, 143-155

Chatthip Nartsupha (1986): "The Village Economy in Pre-Capitalist Thailand." In Seri Phongphit (ed): *Back to the Roots. Village and Self-Reliance in a Thai Context*. Rural Development Documentation Centre, Bangkok, 155-165

Chatthip Nartsupha (1991): "The Community Culture School of Thought." In: Manas Chitkasem & Andrew Turton (eds.): *Thai Constructions of Knowledge*. London

Chatthip Nartsupha (1999): *The Thai Village Economy in the Past*. [translated by Chris Baker & Pasuk Phongpaichit] Silkworm Books

Chouliaraki, Lilie & Norman Fairclough (1999): *Discourse in Late Modernity. Rethinking Critical Discourse Analysis*. Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press

Collier, Andrew (1994): *Critical Realism. An Introduction to Roy Bhaskar's Philosophy*. Verso

Collier, Andrew (1998): "Explanation and Emancipation." In Archer, Margaret; Roy Bhaskar; Andrew Collier; Tony Lawson & Alan Norrie (eds): *Critical Realism. Essential Readings*. Routledge, 444-472

Colombetti, Giovanna (2010): "Enaction, Sense-Making, and Emotion." In Stewart, John Robert; Olivier Gapenne & Ezequiel A. Di Paolo (eds): *Enaction: Towards a New Paradigm for Cognitive Science*. MIT Press, 145-164

Connolly, William E. (2002): *Neuropolitics. Thinking, Culture, Speed*. University of Minnesota Press

Connors, Michael Kelly (2001): "Ideological Aspects of Democratisation: Mainstreaming Localism." *Southeast Asia Research Center Working Paper Series*, 12

Corbridge, Stuart (ed, 2000): *Development. Critical Concepts in the Social Sciences*. Routledge

Cummins, Peter (2001): "Thailand's Joint Venture for the Poor." *Choices. The Human Development Magazine*, United Nations Development Programme, New York, 8-9

Curry, George N. (2003): "Moving Beyond Postdevelopment: Facilitating Indigenous Alternatives for 'Development'." *Economic Geography* 79(4), 405-423

Curry, George N. (2005): "Reluctant Subjects or Passive Resistance? A Commentary on J.K. Gibson-Graham's 'Surplus Possibilities: Postdevelopment and Community Economies'." *Singapore Journal of Tropical Geography*, 26(2), 127-131

Damasio, Antonio (1994): *Descartes' Error. Emotion, Reason, and the Human Brain*. Avon Books

Damasio, Antonio (2003): *Looking for Spinoza. Joy, Sorrow, and the Feeling Brain*. Random House

Danermark, Berth; Mats Ekström; Liselotte Jakobsen & Jan Ch. Karlsson (2002): *Explaining Society. Critical Realism in the Social Sciences*. Routledge

Daniels, Peter L. (2005): "Economic Systems and the Buddhist World View: The 21st Century Nexus." *The Journal of Socio-Economics* 34(2), 245-268

Daniels, Peter L. (2010a): "Climate Change, Economics and Buddhism — Part I: An Integrated Environmental Analysis Framework." *Ecological Economics* 69(5), 952-961

Daniels, Peter L. (2010b): "Climate Change, Economics and Buddhism — Part II: New Views and Practices for Sustainable World Economies." *Ecological Economics* 69(5), 962-972

Davies, B. & Rom Harré (1999): "Positioning and Personhood." In Harré, Rom & Luk van Langenhove (eds): *Positioning Theory. Moral Contexts of Intentional Action*. Blackwell Publishers, 32-52

De Jaegher, Hanne & Ezequiel Di Paolo (2007): "Participatory Sense-Making." *Phenomenology and the Cognitive Sciences* 6(4), 485-507

Dennett, Daniel C. (2008): "Some Observations on the Psychology of Thinking about Free Will." In Baer, John; James C. Kaufman & Roy F. Baumeister (eds): *Are We Free? Psychology and Free Will*. Oxford University Press, 248-259

Depraz, Natalie; Francisco Varela & Pierre Vermersch (eds, 2003): *On Becoming Aware. A Pragmatics of Experiencing*. John Benjamins Publishing Company

Dhar, Pawan K. & Alessandro Giuliani (2010): "Laws of Biology: Why so Few?" *Systems and Synthetic Biology* 4, 7-13

Di Paolo, Ezequiel A.; Marieke Rohde, and Hanneke De Jaegher (2010): "Horizons for the Enactive Mind: Values, Social Interaction, and Play." In Stewart, John Robert; Olivier Gapenne & Ezequiel A. Di Paolo (eds): *Enaction: Towards a New Paradigm for Cognitive Science*. MIT Press, 33-87

Dimidjian, Sona & Marsha M. Linehan (2003): "Defining an Agenda for Future Research on the Clinical Application of Mindfulness Practice." *Clinical Psychology: Science and Practice* 10(2), 166-171

Dreyfus, Hubert L. & Paul Rabinow (1983): *Michel Foucault. Beyond Structuralism and Hermeneutics*. The University of Chicago Press

Engel, Andreas K. (2010): "Directive Minds: How Dynamics Shapes Cognition." In Stewart, John Robert; Olivier Gapenne & Ezequiel A. Di Paolo (eds): *Enaction: Towards a New Paradigm for Cognitive Science*. MIT Press, 219-243

Erdem, Esra (2014): "Reading Foucault with Gibson-Graham: The Political Economy of 'Other Spaces' in Berlin." *Rethinking Marxism* 26(1), 61-75

Escobar, Arturo (1995): *Encountering Development: The Making and Unmaking of the Third World*. Princeton University Press

Escobar, Arturo (2010): "Latin America at a Crossroads." *Cultural Studies*, 24(1), 1-65

Essen, Juliana (2009): "Buddhist Economics." In Peil, Jan & Irene van Staveren (eds.): *Handbook of Economics and Ethics*. Edward Elgar Publishing, 31-38

Essen, Juliana (2013): "Strengthening Sufficiency: Empowering Community Development via Sustainable Livelihoods, Interdependent Selves, and Community Economies." In Rado, Istvan; Seri Phongphit & Nathaniel Long (eds): *Exploring Sufficiency Economy. Ethics, Practices, Challenges*. King Prajadhipok's Institute, 148-164

Eßer, Klaus; Wolfgang Hillebrand; Dirk Messner & Jörg Meyer-Stamer (2001): "Systemische Wettbewerbsfähigkeit und Entwicklung." In Reinold E. Thiel (ed): *Neue Ansätze zur Entwicklungstheorie*. Deutsche Stiftung für Internationale Entwicklung, Bonn, 147-163

Esteva, Gustavo & Carlos Perez (2001): "The Meaning and Scope of the Struggle for Autonomy." *Latin American Perspectives* Issue 117, 28(2), 120-148

Esteva, Gustavo & Madhu Suri Prakash (1997): "From Global Thinking to Local Thinking." In Rahnama, Majid & Victoria Bawtree (eds): *The Post-Development Reader*. Zed Books, 277-289

Evans, Bruce & Jourdan Arenson (1994): "Introduction. The Spiritual Approach to Economics." In Payutto, Ven. P.A. (1994a): *Buddhist Economics, a Middle Way for the Market Place*. [2nd edition; translated into English by Dhammavijaya und Bruce Evans]. Buddhadhamma Foundation, Bangkok, xi-xiii

Fairbrother, Peter; Macdonald Duncan (2000): "Multinational Versus State Ownership: Labour-Management Relations in the Electricity Industry." *The Journal of Industrial Relations* 42(2), 314-333

Fairclough, Norman (1995): *Critical Discourse Analysis. The Critical Study of Language*. Longman

Fairclough, Norman (2012): "Critical Discourse Analysis." *International Advances in Engineering and Technology* 7, 452-487

Fairclough, Norman; Bob Jessop & Andrew Sayer (2002): "Critical Realism and Semiosis." *Alethia* 5(1), 2-10

Fan, Shenggen & Connie Chan-Kang (2005): "Is Small Beautiful? Farm Size, Productivity, and Poverty in Asian Agriculture." *Agricultural Economics* 32(s1), 135-146

- Fennell, Melanie & Zindel Segal (2011): "Mindfulness-Based Cognitive Therapy: Culture Clash or Creative Fusion?" *Contemporary Buddhism* 12(1), 125-142
- Ferguson, James (1997): "Development and Bureaucratic Power in Lesotho." In Rahnema, Majid & Victoria Bawtree (eds): *The Post-Development Reader*. Zed Books, 223-233
- Figueroa, Mark (2004): "W. Arthur Lewis versus the Lewis Model: Agricultural or Industrial Development?" *The Manchester School* 72(6), 736-50
- Fodor, Jerry A. (2008): *LOT 2: The Language of Thought Revisited*. Oxford University Press
- Foucault, Michel (1970): *The Order of Things. An Archaeology of the Human Sciences*. Tavistock Publications
- Foucault, Michel (1972): *The Archaeology of Knowledge and the Discourse on Language* [Trans: A. Sheridan]. Pantheon, New York
- Foucault, Michel (1984): *The Foucault Reader* [edited by Paul Rabinow]. Pantheon Books
- Foucault, Michel (1986): *The History of Sexuality. Vol. III: The Care of the Self*. Pantheon Books
- Foucault, Michel (1990): *The History of Sexuality. Volume I: An Introduction*. Vintage Books
- Foucault, Michel (1995): *Discipline and Punish. The Birth of the Prison*. [translated from French by Alan Sheridan; 2<sup>nd</sup> edition] Vintage Books, New York
- Foucault, Michel (1997): *Ethics: Subjectivity and Truth* (Vol.1). The New Press
- Foucault, Michel (2007): *The Politics of Truth* [edited by Sylvère Lotringer]. Semiotext(e)
- Franks, David D. (2010): *Neurosociology. The Nexus between Neuroscience and Social Psychology*. Springer
- Froese, Tom (2011): "From Adaptive Behavior to Human Cognition." *Adaptive Behavior*, 1-13
- Fuchs, Thomas & Hanne De Jaegher (2009): "Enactive Intersubjectivity: Participatory Sense-Making and Mutual Incorporation." *Phenomenology and the Cognitive Sciences* 8(4), 465-486
- Gaete, Alfredo & Carlos Cornejo (2012): "Psychology is about Persons: On Brinkmann's Expansion of Harré's Hybrid Psychology." *Integrative Psychological and Behavioral Science* 46(1), 70-77
- Gallese, Vittorio (2005): "'Being Like Me': Self-Other Identity, Mirror Neurons, and Empathy." In Hurley, Susan & Nick Chater (eds): *Perspectives on Imitation: From*

*Neuroscience to Social Science. Volume 1: Mechanisms of Imitation and Imitation in Animals.* MIT Press, 101-118

Gallese, Vittorio (2010): "5.1 Embodied Simulation and its Role in Intersubjectivity." In Fuchs, Thomas; Heribert C. Sattel & Peter Henningsen (eds): *The Embodied Self. Dimensions, Coherence and Disorders.* Schattauer, Stuttgart, 77-92

Ganzon, Teresa (2013): "Bangko Kabayan: An Experience of an Economy of Communion Enterprise." In Rado, Istvan; Seri Phongphit & Nathaniel Long (eds): *Exploring Sufficiency Economy. Ethics, Practices, Challenges.* King Prajadhipok's Institute, 106-118

Gibson-Graham, J.K. (2005a): "Surplus Possibilities: Postdevelopment and Community Economies." *Singapore Journal of Tropical Geography* 26(1), 4-26

Gibson-Graham, J.K. (2005b): "Traversing the Fantasy of Sufficiency. A Response to Aguilar, Kelly, Laurie and Lawson." *Singapore Journal of Tropical Geography* 26(2), 119-126

Gibson-Graham, J.K. (2006a): *A Postcapitalist Politics.* Minneapolis / London

Gibson-Graham, J.K. (2006b): *The End of Capitalism (As We Knew It). A Feminist Critique of Political Economy (with a New Introduction).* University of Minnesota Press

Gibson-Graham, J. K. (2008): "Diverse Economies: Performative Practices for 'Other Worlds'." *Progress in Human Geography* 32(5), 613-632

Gibson-Graham, J.K. (2011): "A Feminist Project of Belonging in the Anthropocene." *Gender, Place & Culture* 18(1), 1-21

Glassman, Jim (2008): "The 'Sufficiency Economy' as Neo-Liberalism: Notes from Thailand." Paper presented at the 10<sup>th</sup> International Conference on Thai Studies, 9 January, Bangkok

Gold, Lorna (2004): "The 'Economy of Communion': A Case Study of Business and Civil Society in Partnership for Change." *Development in Practice* 14(5), 633-644

Gold, Lorna (2010): *New Financial Horizons: The Emergence of an Economy of Communion.* New City Press

Graham, Julie & Janelle Cornwell (2009): "Building Community Economies in Massachusetts: An Emerging Model of Economic Development?" In Amin, Ash (ed): *The Social Economy: International Perspectives on Economic Solidarity.* Zed Books, 37-65

Graham, Julie; Stephen Healy & Kenneth Byrne (2002): "Constructing the Community Economy: Civic Professionalism and the Politics of Sustainable Regions." [www.communityeconomies.org](http://www.communityeconomies.org) (last accessed 4 August 2014)

Gronemeyer, Marianne (1992): "Helping." In Sachs, Wolfgang (ed): *The Development Dictionary. A Guide to Knowledge as Power.* Zed Books, 53-69

Handley, Paul M. (2006): *The King Never Smiles: A Biography of Thailand's Bhumibol Adulyadej*. Yale University Press

Harré, Rom (1997): "Forward to Aristotle: the Case for a Hybrid Ontology." *Journal for the Theory of Social Behavior* 27(2/3), 173-191

Harré, Rom (2002): *Cognitive Science. A Philosophical Introduction*. Sage Publications

Harré, Rom (2009): "Saving Critical Realism." *Journal for the Theory of Social Behavior* 39(2), 129-143

Harré, Rom (2010): "Hybrid Psychology. The Marriage of Discourse Analysis with Neuroscience." *Athenea Digital* 18, 33-47

Harré, Rom (2012a): "The Brain can be Thought of as a Tool." *Integrative Psychological and Behavioral Science* 46(3), 387-394

Harré, Rom (2012b): "Perception." In Harré, Rom & Fathali Moghaddam (eds, 2012): *Psychology for the Third Millennium. Integrating Cultural and Neuroscience Perspectives*. Sage Publications, 76-96

Harré, Rom & Fathali Moghaddam (eds, 2012): *Psychology for the Third Millennium. Integrating Cultural and Neuroscience Perspectives*. Sage Publications

Harré, Rom & Fathali Moghaddam (2012): "Psychoneurology: The Program." In Harré, Rom & Fathali Moghaddam (eds, 2012): *Psychology for the Third Millennium. Integrating Cultural and Neuroscience Perspectives*. Sage Publications, 2-21

Harré, Rom; Fathali M. Moghaddam; Tracey Pilkerton Cairnie; Daniel Rothbart & Steven R. Sabat (2009): "Recent Advances in Positioning Theory." *Theory & Psychology* 19(1), 5-31

Harré, Rom & Grant Gillett (1994): *The Discursive Mind*. Sage Publications

Harré, Rom & Luk van Langenhove (eds, 1999): *Positioning Theory. Moral Contexts of Intentional Action*. Blackwell Publishers

Harré, Rom & Luk Van Langenhove (1999): "The Dynamics of Social Episodes." In Harré, Rom & Luk van Langenhove (eds): *Positioning Theory. Moral Contexts of Intentional Action*. Blackwell Publishers, 1-13

Harré, Rom & Roy Bhaskar (2005): "How to Change Reality: Story vs. Structure – A Debate between Rom Harré and Roy Bhaskar." In López, José & Garry Potter (eds): *After Postmodernism. An Introduction to Critical Realism*. The Athlone Press, 22-39

Headey, Derek; Dirk Bezemer & Peter B. Hazell (2010): "Agricultural Employment Trends in Asia and Africa: Too Fast or Too Slow?" *The World Bank Research Observer* 25(1), 57-89

Heath, Scott; David Ball; Ruth Schulz & Janet Wiles (2013): "Communication between Lingodroids with different Cognitive Capabilities." Proceedings of the 2013 IEEE International Conference on *Robotics and Automation*, 6-10 May, Karlsruhe

Hein, Wolfgang (1994): *Autozentrierte agroindustrielle Entwicklung. Eine Strategie zur Überwindung der gegenwärtigen Entwicklungskrise?* Hamburg

Hein, Wolfgang (2001): "'Autozentrierte Entwicklung' – Überlegungen zur Neufundierung eines immer noch wichtigen Konzeptes." In Reinold E. Thiel (ed): *Neue Ansätze zur Entwicklungstheorie*. Deutsche Stiftung für Internationale Entwicklung, Bonn, 218-238

Hein, Wolfgang (2013): "Autocentric Development and Sufficiency Economy." In Rado, Istvan; Seri Phongphit & Nathaniel Long (eds): *Exploring Sufficiency Economy. Ethics, Practices, Challenges*. King Prajadhipok's Institute, 235-262

Helfrich, Silke & Heinrich-Böll-Stiftung (eds, 2009): *Wem gehört die Welt? Zur Wiederentdeckung der Gemeingüter*. Oekom

Henley, David (2012): "The Agrarian Roots of Industrial Growth: Rural Development in South-East Asia and sub-Saharan Africa." *Development Policy Review* 30(1), 525-547

Hewison, Kevin (ed, 1997): *Political Change in Thailand. Democracy and Participation*. Routledge

Hewison, Kevin (2000): "Resisting Globalization: A Study of Localism in Thailand." *The Pacific Review* 13(2), 279-296

Hofmann, Stefan G.; Paul Grossmann & Devon E. Hinton (2011): "Loving-Kindness and Compassion Meditation: Potential for Psychological Interventions." *Clinical Psychology Review* 31(7), 1126-1132

Jasanoff, Sheila (2004): "The Idiom of Co-Production." In Jasanoff, Sheila (ed): *States of Knowledge. The Co-Production of Science and Social Order*. Routledge, 1-12

Jasanoff, Sheila (2010): "A New Climate for Society." *Theory, Culture & Society* 27(2-3), 233-253.

Jørgensen, Marianne W. & Louise J. Phillips (2002): *Discourse Analysis as Theory and Method*. Sage Publications

Kabat-Zinn, Jon (1982): "An Outpatient Program in Behavioral Medicine for Chronic Pain Patients Based on the Practice of Mindfulness Meditation: Theoretical Considerations and Preliminary Results." *General Hospital Psychiatry* 4(1), 33-47

Kabat-Zinn, Jon (2011a): "Some Reflections on the Origins of MBSR, Skillful Means, and the Trouble with Maps." *Contemporary Buddhism* 12(1), 281-306

Kabat-Zinn, Jon (2011b): "Some Clinical Applications of Mindfulness Meditation in Medicine and Psychiatry: The Case of Mindfulness-Based Stress Reduction (MBSR)." In Kabat-Zinn

& Davidson (eds): *The Mind's Own Physician. A Scientific Dialogue with the Dalai Lama on the Healing Power of Meditation*. New Harbinger Publications, 35-47

Kasian Tejapira (1996): "Globalizers vs Communitarians: Post May 1992 Debates among Thai Public Intellectuals." Paper presented to the *Annual Meeting of the U.S. Association for Asian Studies* in Honolulu, 11-14 April

Kelly, Philip (2005): "Scale, Power and the Limits to Possibilities. A Commentary on J.K. Gibson-Graham's 'Surplus Possibilities: Postdevelopment and Community Economies'." *Singapore Journal of Tropical Geography* 26(1), 39-43

Kemp, Stephen (2005): "Critical Realism and the Limits of Philosophy." *European Journal of Social Theory* 8(2), 171–191

Keyes, Charles F. (1989): *Thailand. Buddhist Kingdom as Modern Nation-State*. Westview Press

Keyes, Charles F. (2013): "The Village Economy: Capitalist AND Sufficiency-Based – A Northeastern Thai Case." In Rado, Istvan; Seri Phongphit & Nathaniel Long (eds): *Exploring Sufficiency Economy. Ethics, Practices, Challenges*. King Prajadhipok's Institute, 165-187

Kiely, Ray (1999): "The Last Refuge of the Noble Savage? A Critical Assessment of Post-Development Theory." *The European Journal of Development Research* 11(1), 30–55

Kim-Cohen, Julia; Avshalom Caspi; A. Taylor; B. Williams; R. Newcombe; I.W. Craig & T.E. Moffitt (2006): "'MAOA, Maltreatment, and Gene–Environment Interaction Predicting Children's Mental Health: New Evidence and a Meta-Analysis.'" *Molecular Psychiatry* 11(10), 903-913

Kohler, Evelyne; Christian Keysers; M. Alessandra Umiltà, Leonardo Fogassi; Vittorio Gallese & Giacomo Rizzolatti (2002): "Hearing Sounds, Understanding Actions: Action Representation in Mirror Neurons." *Science* 297(5582), 846-848

Korb, Judith & Karl Eduard Linsenmair (2000): "Ventilation of Termite Mounds. New Results Require a New Model." *Behavioral Ecology* 11(5), 486-494

Kornfield, Jack (2000): *After the Ecstasy, the Laundry. How the Heart Grows Wise on the Spiritual Path*. Bantam Books

Kößler, Reinhart (2004): "Transformation oder Modernisierung? Zur Konzeptionalisierung gesellschaftlicher Umbrüche, nicht nur in Osteuropa." *Arbeitsbericht* 22, Otto-von-Guericke-Universität Magdeburg

Kößler, Reinhart & Henning Melber (2002): *Globale Solidarität? Eine Streitschrift*. Brandes & Apsel

Kößler, Reinhart & Tilman Schiel (1996): *Auf dem Weg zu einer kritischen Theorie der Modernisierung*. Frankfurt/Main: IKO

Laclau, Ernesto (1996): *Emancipation(s)*. Verso

Laclau, Ernesto (2006): "Ideology and Post-Marxism." *Journal of Political Ideologies* 11(2), 103-114

Laclau, Ernesto & Chantal Mouffe (1985): *Hegemony and Socialist Strategy. Towards a Radical Democratic Politics*. Verso

Land Reform Network of Thailand (LRNT, 2009): *Kho saner naewthang lae maatrakaan kaankrajai kaanthue khrong thii din nai sangkhom thai. Nam saner dto khanakamkaan amnuaykaan phuea kaekhai panha khong khruetakhai bpatirup thii din haeng pratheet thai*. [Proposal of Ways and Measures to Distribute Land Titles in Thai Society. Presented to the Board of Committee for Solving the Problem of Network for Land Reform of Thailand] Government House, Bangkok

Langenhove, Luk Van & Rom Harré (1999): "Introducing Positioning Theory." In Harré, Rom & Luk van Langenhove (eds): *Positioning Theory. Moral Contexts of Intentional Action*. Blackwell Publishers, 14-31

Larkin, Michael; Virginia Eatough & Mike Osborne (2011): "Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis and Embodied, Active, Situated Cognition." *Theory & Psychology* 21(3), 318-337

Latouche, Serge (1993): *In the Wake of the Affluent Society. An Exploration of Post-Development*. Zed Books

Latouche, Serge (1997): "Paradoxical Growth." In Rahnema, Majid & Victoria Bawtree (eds): *The Post-Development Reader*. Zed Books, 135-142

Lawson, Tony (1999): "Feminism, Realism, and Universalism." *Feminist Economics* 5(2), 25-59

Leonard, Rebeca & Kingkorn Narintarakul Na Ayutthaya (2005): "Thailand's Land Titling Program: Securing Land for the Poor?" In Cuasay, Peter & Chayan Vaddhanaphuti (eds): *Commonplaces and Comparisons. Remaking Eco-Political Spaces in Southeast Asia*. Chiang Mai University, 79-102

Lewis, William Arthur (2000): "Economic Development with Unlimited Supplies of Labour [originally published in 1954]." In Corbridge, Stuart (ed): *Development. Critical Concepts in the Social Sciences*. Routledge, 116-154

Libet, Benjamin; Curtis A. Gleason; Elwood W. Wright & Dennis K. Pearl (1983): "Time of Conscious Intention to Act in Relation to Onset of Cerebral Activity (Readiness-Potential). The Unconscious Initiation of a Freely Voluntary Act." *Brain* 106(3), 623-642

- Lizardo, Omar (2007): "'Mirror Neurons,' Collective Objects and the Problem of Transmission: Reconsidering Stephen Turner's Critique of Practice Theory." *Journal for the Theory of Social Behaviour* 37(3), 319-350
- Lizardo, Omar (2012): "Embodied Culture as Procedure: Rethinking the Link Between Personal and Objective Culture." *Collegium* 12, 70-86
- Lorey, Isabell (2009): "Governmentality and Self-Precarization: On the Normalization of Cultural Producers." In Raunig, Gerald & Gene Ray (eds): *Art and Contemporary Critical Practice. Reinventing Institutional Critique*. MayFly Books, 187-202
- Louis, Winnifred R. (2008): "Intergroup Positioning and Power." In Moghaddam, Fathali M.; Rom Harré & Naomi Lee (eds): *Global Conflict Resolution through Positioning Analysis*. Springer, 21-40
- Ludwig, Gundula (2013): "Subjekte und 'ihre' Körper. Politiktheoretische Überlegungen." In Graf, Julia; Kristin Ideler & Sabine Klinger (eds): *Geschlecht zwischen Struktur und Subjekt. Theorie, Praxis, Perspektiven*. Verlag Barbara Budrich, 79-92
- Lummis, C. Douglas (1992): "Equality." In Sachs, Wolfgang (ed): *The Development Dictionary. A Guide to Knowledge as Power*. Zed Books, 38-52
- Lutz, Antoine; Heleen A. Slagter; John N. Dunne & Richard J. Davidson (2008a): "Attention Regulation and Monitoring in Meditation." *Trends in Cognitive Sciences* 12(4), 163-169
- Lutz, Antoine; Julie Brefczynski-Lewis; Tom Johnstone & Richard J. Davidson (2008b): "Regulation of the Neural Circuitry of Emotion by Compassion Meditation: Effects of Meditative Expertise." *PloS One* 3(3)
- Maex, Edel (2011): "The Buddhist Roots of Mindfulness Training: A Practitioner's View." *Contemporary Buddhism* 12(1), 165-175
- Magnuson, Joel C. (2011): "Pathways to a Mindful Economy." In Zsolnai, Laszlo (ed): *Ethical Principles and Economic Transformation. A Buddhist Approach*. Springer, 79-107
- Matthews, Sally (2005): "Post-Development Politics and Practice." Paper presented at the 11th CODESRIA General Assembly in Maputo, Mozambique [cited with the author's permission]
- Matthews, Sally (2007): "What then, should we do? Insights and Experiences of a Senegalese NGO." In Ziai, Aram (ed): *Exploring Post-Development. Theory and Practice, Problems and Perspectives*. Routledge, New York, 129-144
- Matthews, Sally (2008): "The Role of the Privileged in Responding to Poverty: Perspectives Emerging from the Postdevelopment Debate." *Third World Quarterly*, 29(6), 1035-1049
- Maturana, Humberto & Bernhard Poerksen (2004): *From Being to Doing. The Origins of the Biology of Cognition*. Carl Auer Verlag, Heidelberg

Maturana, Humberto & Francisco J. Varela (1980): *Autopoiesis and Cognition. The Realization of the Living*. D. Reidel Publishing

Maturana, Humberto & Francisco J. Varela (1987): *The Tree of Knowledge. The Biological Roots of Human Understanding*. Shambhala Publications

McGowan, Patrick O.; Aya Sasaki; Ana C. D'Alessio; Sergiy Dymov; Benoit Labonté; Moshe Szyf; Gustavo Turecki & Michael J. Meaney (2009): "Epigenetic Regulation of the Glucocorticoid Receptor in Human Brain Associates with Childhood Abuse." *Nature Neuroscience* 12(3), 342-348

McGregor, Andrew (2007): "Development, Foreign Aid and Post-Development in Timor-Leste." *Third World Quarterly* 28(1), 155-170

McKinnon, Katharine (2007): "Postdevelopment, Professionalism, and the Politics of Participation." *Annals of the Association of American Geographers* 97(4), 772-785

Medhi Krongkaew (1985): "Agricultural Development, Rural Poverty, and Income Distribution in Thailand." *The Developing Economies* 23(4), 325-346

Menary, Richard (ed, 2006): *Radical Enactivism. Intentionality, Phenomenology and Narrative*. John Benjamins Publishing

Metzinger, Thomas (2003): *Being No One. The Self-Model Theory of Subjectivity*. MIT Press

Metzinger, Thomas (2006): "Reply to Gallagher: Different Conceptions of Embodiment." *Psyche* 12(4), 1-7

Metzinger, Thomas (2009): *The Ego Tunnel. The Science of the Mind and the Myth of the Self*. Basic Books

Metzinger, Thomas & Vittorio Gallese (2003): "The Emergence of a Shared Action Ontology: Building Blocks for a Theory." *Consciousness and Cognition* 12(4), 549-571

Ministry of Interior (1998a): *The Self-Sufficient Community Economy: Thoughts and Strategies*. Ministry of Interior, Bangkok

Ministry of Interior (1998b): *Khu mue. Naewthang kanjadtham phaen yuttasat kanpatthana sethakit chumchon phueng dtong nai radab jangwat 2542-2544* [Manual. Approach to Implement the Strategy of Self-Reliant Community Economies on the Provincial Level 1999-2001], Bangkok

Missingham, Bruce D. (1997): "Local Bureaucrats, Power and Participation: A Study of Two Village Schools in the Northeast." In Hewison, Kevin (ed): *Political Change in Thailand. Democracy and Participation*. Routledge, 149-162

Missingham, Bruce D. (2003): *The Assembly of the Poor in Thailand. From Local Struggles to National Protest Movement*. Silkworm Books

- Miyake, Yuki (2003): *Contesting Rights over Land: A Case Study of Landless Farmers' Social Movement in Lamphun Province*. Chiang Mai University, Thailand
- Moghaddam, Fathali M. & Rom Harré (1996): "Psychological Limitations to Political Revolutions: An Application of Social Reducton Theory." In E. Hasselberg et al. (eds): *Der Dialogbegriff am Ende des 20. Jahrhunderts*. Hegel Institute (Berlin), 230-240
- Moghaddam, Fathali M.; Rom Harré & Naomi Lee (eds, 2008): *Global Conflict Resolution through Positioning Analysis*. Springer
- Mosse, David (2004): "Is Good Policy Unimplementable? Reflections on the Ethnography of Aid Policy and Practice." *Development and Change* 35(4), 639-671
- Mouffe, Chantal (1999): "Deliberative Democracy or Agonistic Pluralism?" *Social Research* 66(3), 745-758
- Mürle, Holger (1997): "Entwicklungstheorie nach dem Scheitern der 'großen Theorie'." *INEF-Report* No. 22, Institut für Entwicklung und Frieden der Gerhard-Mercator-Universität - GH Duisburg
- Mutebi, Alex M. (2004): "Recentralising While Decentralising: Centre-Local Relations and 'CEO' Governors in Thailand." *The Asia Pacific Journal of Public Administration* 26(1), 33-53
- Myers, David G. (2008): "Determined and Free." In Baer, John; James C. Kaufman & Roy F. Baumeister (eds): *Are We Free? Psychology and Free Will*. Oxford University Press, 32-43
- Nagel, Thomas (1974): "What is it like to be a Bat?" *The Philosophical Review* 83, 435-450
- Natenapha Wailerdsak (2008): "Companies in Crisis." In Pasuk Phongpaichit & Chris Baker (eds): *Thai Capital after the 1997 Crisis*. Silkworm Books, 17-57
- National Economic and Social Development Board (NESDB, 1981): *The Fifth National Economic and Social Development Plan (1981-1986)*. Office of the Prime Minister, Bangkok, Thailand
- National Economic and Social Development Board (1986): *The Sixth National Economic and Social Development Plan (1987-1991)*. Office of the Prime Minister, Bangkok, Thailand
- National Economic and Social Development Board (1991): *The Seventh National Economic and Social Development Plan (1992-1996)*. Office of the Prime Minister, Bangkok, Thailand
- National Economic and Social Development Board (1996): *The Eighth National Economic and Social Development Plan (1997-2001)*. Office of the Prime Minister, Bangkok, Thailand
- National Economic and Social Development Board (2001): *The Ninth National Economic and Social Development Plan (2002-2006)*. Office of the Prime Minister, Bangkok, Thailand

National Economic Development Board (NEDB, 1964): *The First National Economic Development Plan (1961-1966)*. Office of the Prime Minister, Bangkok, Thailand

National Research Council of Thailand (NRCT, 2003): *The King's Sufficiency Economy and the Analyses of Meanings by Economists*. The Office of the National Research Council, Bangkok

National Statistical Office (2011): *Statistical Yearbook Thailand 2011*. Ministry of Information and Communication Technology, Bangkok, Thailand

N'Dione, Emmanuel Seni; Philippe de Leener; Jean-Pierre Perier; Mamadou Ndiaye & Pierre Jacolin (1997): "Reinventing the Present: The Chodak Experience in Senegal." Rahnema, Majid & Victoria Bawtree (eds): *The Post-Development Reader*. Zed Books, 364-376

Nederveen Pieterse, Jan (2000): "After Post-Development." *Third World Quarterly* 21(2), 175–191

Nelson, Julie A. (2011): "The Relational Economy." In Zsolnai, Laszlo (ed): *Ethical Principles and Economic Transformation. A Buddhist Approach*. Springer, 21-33

Nidhi Eosriwong (2000): "Midti thang wadtanatham nai yuk sethakit po piang. Khwammai lae khwamsamkhan" [Cultural Dimensions of Sufficiency Economy. Meaning and Significance]. *Silapra-Wattanadhamma Magazine* 4, 78-86

Norman, Donald E. & Robert Verganti (2012): "Incremental and Radical Innovation: Design Research versus Technology and Meaning Change." *Design Issues* 30(1), 78-96

Odling-Smee, John F.; Kevin N. Laland & Marcus W. Feldman (2003): *Niche Construction. The Neglected Process in Evolution*. Princeton University Press

O'Farrell, Clare (2005): *Michel Foucault*. Sage Publications

Painter, Martin (2006): "Thaksinisation or Managerialism? Reforming the Thai Bureaucracy." *Journal of Contemporary Asia* 36(1), 26-47

Parnwell, Michael J.G. (2005): "The Power to Change: Rebuilding Sustainable Livelihoods in North-East Thailand." *The Journal of Transdisciplinary Environmental Studies* 4(2), 1-21

Pasuk Phonpaichit (2005): "Developing Social Alternatives. Walking Backwards Into a Khlong." In Warr, Peter (ed): *Thailand Beyond the Crisis*. Routledge, 161-183

Pasuk Phongpaichit (2011): "Confronting Inequality through Fiscal Reform." *East Asia Forum Quarterly* 3(4), 11/12

Pasuk Phongpaichit & Chris Baker (1995): *Thailand. Economy and Politics*. Oxford University Press, Kuala Lumpur

Pasuk Phongpaichit & Chris Baker (2000): *Thailand's Crisis*. Institute of Southeast Asian Studies

Pasuk Phongpaichit & Chris Baker (2008a): "Thaksin's Populism." *Journal of Contemporary Asia* 38(1), 62-83

Pasuk Phongpaichit & Chris Baker (eds, 2008b): *Thai Capital after the 1997 Crisis*. Silkworm Books, Chiang Mai

Payutto, Ven. P.A. (1993): *Toward Sustainable Science. A Buddhist Look at Trends in Scientific Development* (Trans. B.G. Evans). Buddhadhamma Foundation, Bangkok

Payutto, Ven. P.A. (1994a): *Buddhist Economics, a Middle Way for the Market Place*. [2nd edition; translated into English by Dhammavijaya und Bruce Evans]. Buddhadhamma Foundation, Bangkok

Payutto, Ven. P.A. (1994b): *Dependent Origination. The Buddhist Law of Conditionality* (trans. by Bruce Evans). Buddhadhamma Foundation, Bangkok

Peschl, Markus F. & Thomas Fundneider (2008): "Emergent Innovation and Sustainable Knowledge Co-Creation. A Socio-Epistemological Approach to 'Innovation from Within'." *The Open Knowledge Society. A Computer Science and Information Systems Manifesto*. Springer Berlin Heidelberg, 101-108.

Peschl, Markus F. & Thomas Fundneider (2012): "Spaces Enabling Game-Changing and Sustaining Innovations: Why Space Matters for Knowledge Creation and Innovation." *Journal of Organisational Transformation and Social Change* 9(1), 41-61

Peschl, Markus F. & Thomas Fundneider (2013): "Creativity and Innovation in a Mid-Sized Urban Learning Infrastructure. Designing Spaces for Thriving Innovation Communities." *Proceedings of the 18th International Conference on Urban Planning and Regional Development in the Information Society*, Rome, 205-211

Peter, Fabienne (2003): "Critical Realism, Feminist Epistemology, and the Emancipatory Potential of Science: A Comment on Lawson and Harding." *Feminist Economics* 9(1), 93-101

Piyawan Suksri; Yue Moriizumi; Hiroki Hondo & Yoko Wake (2008): "Sustainable Agriculture in Thailand – An Evaluation on the Sustainability in Ethanol Production." *Digital Asia Discussion Paper Series*. Keio University, Tokyo

Preston, Stephanie D. & Alicia J. Hofelich (2011): "The Many Faces of Empathy: Parsing Empathic Phenomena Through a Proximate, Dynamic-Systems View of Representing the Other in the Self." *Emotion Review* 20(10), 1-10

Pritzlaff, Tanja & Frank Nullmeier (2011): "Capturing Practice." *Evidence & Policy* 7(2), 137-154

Priyanut Piboolsravut (1997): *An Outline of Buddhist Economic Theory and System* [Unpublished doctoral dissertation], Department of Economics, Simon Fraser University

Priyanut Piboolsravut (2004): "Sufficiency Economy." *ASEAN Economic Bulletin* 21(1), 127-134

Pronin, Emily; Daniel M. Wegner; Kimberly McCarthy & Sylvia Rodriguez (2006): "Everyday Magical Powers: The Role of Apparent Mental Causation in the Overestimation of Personal Influence." *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology* 91(2), 218-231

Prudhisan Jumbala & Maneerat Mitprasat (1997): "Non-Governmental Development Organisations: Empowerment and Environment." In Hewison, Kevin (ed): *Political Change in Thailand. Democracy and Participation*. Routledge, 195-216

Pruek Thaotawil (2008): "Bpadtibatgan phophiang nai muban: Gankhuabkhum chonbot kong chonchan nam". [The Implementation of Sufficiency in the Village: Elite Control of Communities] *Fah Diaowgan* 6(2), 70-86

Pryor, Frederic L. (1991): "A Buddhist Economic System—in Practice." *American Journal of Economics and Sociology* 50(1), 17-32

Pühretmayer, Hans (2005): "Über das Politische des Wissenschaftlichen. Interventionen des Critical Realism in verschiedene Ökonomietheorien." *Kurswechsel* 4, 28-44

Pühretmayer, Hans (2010): "Zur Kombinierbarkeit von Critical Realism und Poststrukturalismus: Eine Reformulierung der Struktur-Handlungs-Frage." *Österreichische Zeitschrift für Politikwissenschaft* 39(1), 9-26

Pühringer, Gertrude (1999): *Unternehmenskultur bei Betrieben der "Wirtschaft in Gemeinschaft – in Freiheit"* Diploma Thesis, Johannes Kepler University, Linz

Rado, Istvan (2013): "Sustainable Community Development in Northeastern Thailand. The Inpaeng Network." In Brennan, Linda; Lukas Parker; Torgeir Aleti Watne; John Fien; Duong Trong Hue & Mai Anh Doan (eds): *Growing Sustainable Communities: A Development Guide for Southeast Asia*. Tilde University Press, 177-194

Rado, Istvan; Seri Phongphit & Nathaniel Long (eds, 2013): *Exploring Sufficiency Economy. Ethics, Practices, Challenges*. King Prajadhipok's Institute

Rahnema, Majid (1997a): "Development and the People's Immune System: The Story of Another Variety of AIDS." In Rahnema, Majid & Victoria Bawtree (eds): *The Post-Development Reader*. Zed Books, 111-131

Rahnema, Majid (1997b): "Towards Post-Development: Searching for Signposts, a New Language and New Paradigms." In Rahnema, Majid & Victoria Bawtree (eds): *The Post-Development Reader*. Zed Books, 377-403

Rahnema, Majid & Victoria Bawtree (eds, 1997): *The Post-Development Reader*. Zed Books

Rainnie, Al; Tina D'Urbano; Rowena Barrett; Renee Paulet & Mardelene Grobbelaar (2004): "Industrial Relations in the Latrobe Valley: Myths and Realities." *Labour & Industry* 15(2), 25-46

Rattana Tosakul; Janthana Benjasaph, Parinyaporn Phromduang, Supha Wittaporn, Surachai Juemmi & Suwipha Phaireephinat (2005): *Duen thi la kao kin khao thi la kham: phumpanyaa nai kanjadhan khwamru khong chaoban* [Walk One Step at a Time, Eat One Bite at a Time: Wisdom in Knowledge Management of Villagers]. Khon Kaen, Thailand

Reckwitz, Andreas (2002): "Toward a Theory of Social Practices. A Development in Culturalist Theorizing." *European Journal of Social Theory* 5(2), 243–263

Reckwitz, Andreas (2006): "Ernesto Laclau: Diskurse, Hegemonien, Antagonismen." In Moebius, Stephan & Dirk Quadflieg (eds): *Kultur. Theorien der Gegenwart*. Vs Verlag für Sozialwissenschaften, 300-310

Reddy, William M. (2009): "Saying Something New: Practice Theory and Cognitive Neuroscience." *Arcadia-International Journal for Literary Studies* 44(1), 8-23

Redman, Christine (2008): "The Research Planning Meeting." In Moghaddam, Fathali M.; Rom Harré & Naomi Lee (eds): *Global Conflict Resolution through Positioning Analysis*. Springer, 95-111

Rigg, Jonathan & Sakunee Nattapoolwat (2001): "Embracing the Global in Thailand: Activism and Pragmatism in an Era of Deagrarianization." *World Development* 29, 945-960

Rizzolatti, Giacomo & Laila Craighero (2004): "The Mirror-Neuron Systems." *Annual Review of Neuroscience* 27, 169–92

Rodrik, Dani (2004): *Industrial Policy for the Twenty-First Century*. Paper prepared for UNIDO

Roelvink, Gerda & J.K. Gibson-Graham (2009): "A Postcapitalist Politics of Dwelling: Ecological Humanities and Community Economies in Conversation." *Australian Humanities Review* 46, 145-158

Rosenstein-Rodan, Paul N. (1943): "Problems of Industrialisation of Eastern and South-Eastern Europe." *The Economic Journal* 53, 202-211

Rostow, W. W. (1960): *The Stages of Economic Growth. A Non-Communist Manifesto*. Cambridge University Press

Rostow, W.W. (2000): "The Five Stages-of-Growth – A Summary." In Corbridge, Stuart (ed): *Development. Critical Concepts in the Social Sciences*. Routledge, 105-115

Ryratana Suwanraks (1998): "Summary of Discussion and Recommendations. The 1998 TDRI-Year-End Conference: From Crisis to Sustainable Development." *TDRI Quarterly Review* 14(1), 10-20

Sabel, Charles (2005): "Bootstrapping Development: Rethinking the Role of Public Intervention in Promoting Growth." *Columbia University Law School*

Sachs, Jeffrey D. (2005): *The End of Poverty. Economic Possibilities for Our Time*. Penguin Press, New York

Sachs, Wolfgang (ed, 1992): *The Development Dictionary. A Guide to Knowledge as Power*. Zed Books

Sachs, Wolfgang (1992a): "One World." In Sachs, Wolfgang (ed): *The Development Dictionary. A Guide to Knowledge as Power*. Zed Books, 102-115

Sachs, Wolfgang (1992b): "Environment." In Sachs, Wolfgang (ed): *The Development Dictionary. A Guide to Knowledge as Power*. Zed Books, 26-38

Samek, Jay H.; David L. Skole; Usa Klinhom; Chetphong Butthep; Charlie Navanugraha; Pornchai Uttaruk & Teerawong Laosuwan (2011): "Inpang Carbon Bank in Northeast Thailand: A Community Effort in Carbon Trading from Agroforestry Projects." In Kumar, B. Mohan & P.K.Ramachandran Nair (eds): *Carbon Sequestration Potential of Agroforestry Systems: Opportunities and Challenges*, Springer, 263-280

Sangsidh Piriyaarangsarn (1998a): "Sethakit chumchon phueng dtong eng: pratchya thana lae anakhot" [The Self-Reliant Community Economy: Philosophy, Status, and Future] In Ministry of Interior: *The Self-Sufficient Community Economy: Thoughts and Strategies*. Ministry of Interior, Bangkok, 49-64

Sangsidh Piriyaarangsarn (1998b): "Sethakit chumchon phueng dtong eng chabab mahatthai: prathet yakjon prachachon mangkhong" [The Self-Reliant Community Economy – Ministry of Interior Document: Poor Country, Rich Population] In Ministry of Interior: *The Self-sufficient Community Economy: Thoughts and Strategies*. Ministry of Interior, Bangkok, 65-76

Sansern Wongchaum (2001): *Sethakit Popiang: Phuentshaan suu kanpattana thii yangyuen* [Sufficiency Economy: Basis for Sustainable Development]. NESDB, Bangkok

Sauer, Birgit (2012): "'Die hypnotische Macht der Herrschaft' – Feministische Perspektiven." In Imbusch, Peter (ed): *Macht und Herrschaft. Sozialwissenschaftliche Theorien und Konzeptionen*. Springer, 379-398

Sauer, Birgit (2013): "'Bringing Emotions Back In.' Gefühle als Regierungstechnik: Geschlechter- und demokratietheoretische Überlegungen." In Jarzebowski, Claudia & Anne Kwaschik (eds): *Performing Emotions. Interdisziplinäre Perspektiven auf das Verhältnis von Politik und Emotion in der Frühen Neuzeit und in der Moderne*. V&R Unipress, 241-258

- Sayer, Andrew (1992): *Method in Social Science. A Realist Approach*. Routledge
- Schaffar, Wolfram (2011): "Widerständige Ländliche Bewegungen und die 'Kunst, nicht regiert zu werden'." In Bruch, Michael; Wolfram Schaffar & Peter Scheiffele (eds): *Organisation und Kritik*. Westfälisches Dampfboot, 137-169
- Schatzki, Theodore R. (2001): "Introduction. Practice Theory." In Schatzki, Theodore R.; Karin Knorr Cetina & Eike von Savigny (eds): *The Practice Turn in Contemporary Theory*. Routledge, 10-23
- Schatzki, Theodore R.; Karin Knorr Cetina; and Eike von Savigny (eds, 2001): *The Practice Turn in Contemporary Theory*. Routledge
- Schumacher, E.F. (1973): *Small is Beautiful. Economics as if People Mattered*. New York
- Schuurman, Frans J. (2000): "Paradigms Lost, Paradigms Regained? Development Studies in the Twenty-first Century." *Third World Quarterly* 21(1), 7–20
- Scott, James C. (1976): *The Moral Economy of the Peasant. Rebellion and Subsistence in Southeast Asia*. Yale University Press
- Schwartz, Jeffrey M. & Sharon Begley (2002): *The Mind and the Brain*. HarperCollins
- Segal, Zindel (2011): "Mindfulness-Based Cognitive Therapy and the Prevention of Relapse in Recurrent Depression." In Kabat-Zinn & Davidson (eds): *The Mind's Own Physician. A Scientific Dialogue with the Dalai Lama on the Healing Power of Meditation*. New Harbinger Publications, 102-110
- Sen, Amartya (1999): *Development as Freedom*. Oxford University Press
- Senghaas, Dieter (1997): "Die Auswege aus der Armut sind bekannt." In Robert Kappel (ed): *Weltwirtschaft und Armut*. Hamburg, 336-339
- Seri Phongphit (ed, 1986): *Back to the Roots. Village and Self-Reliance in a Thai Context*. Rural Development Documentation Centre, Bangkok
- Seri Phongphit (2001): *People's Development. A Community Governance Tool*. UNDP Southeast Asia HIV and Development Project, Bangkok
- Shanin, Teodor (1997): "The Idea of Progress." In Rahnema, Majid & Victoria Bawtree (eds): *The Post-Development Reader*. Zed Books, 65-71
- Shanon, Benny (2010): "Toward a Phenomenological Psychology of the Conscious." In Stewart, John Robert; Olivier Gapenne & Ezequiel A. Di Paolo (eds): *Enaction: Toward a New Paradigm for Cognitive Science*. MIT Press, 387-424
- Shapiro, Lawrence (2011): *Embodied Cognition*. Routledge

Shear, Jonathan & Ron Jevning (1999): "Pure Consciousness: Scientific Exploration of Meditation Techniques." *Journal of Consciousness Studies* 6(2-3), 189-209

Sheets-Johnstone, Maxine (2010): "Thinking in Movement: Further Analyses and Validations." In Stewart, John Robert; Olivier Gapenne & Ezequiel A. Di Paolo (eds): *Enaction: Toward a New Paradigm for Cognitive Science*. MIT Press, 165-181

Sheya, Adam & Linda B. Smith (2010): "Development through Sensorimotor Coordination." In Stewart, John Robert; Olivier Gapenne & Ezequiel A. Di Paolo (eds): *Enaction: Toward a New Paradigm for Cognitive Science*. MIT Press, 123-143

Shigetomi, Shinichi (2013): "Development and Institutionalization of Communitarian Thought in Thailand." *Institute of Developing Economies Discussion Paper* 423, JETRO, Japan

Shilling, Chris (1993, 2003, 2012): *The Body and Social Theory*. Sage Publications

Shiva, Vandana (1992): "Resources." In Sachs, Wolfgang (ed): *The Development Dictionary. A Guide to Knowledge as Power*. Zed Books, 206-218

Shiva, Vandana (1993): "Monocultures of the Mind." *Trumpeter* 10(4), Athabasca University Press

Shivji, Issa (2013): "Self-Reliance and Self-Sufficiency: Nationalist Reaction to Globalist Imposition." In Rado, Istvan; Seri Phongphit & Nathaniel Long (eds): *Exploring Sufficiency Economy. Ethics, Practices, Challenges*. King Prajadhipok's Institute, 216-234

Silva, Guido Vaz; Daniel Pacheco Lacerda; Heitor Mansur Caulliraux & Lethicia Mallet Vivas (2013): "Power Relations in the Project of Economy of Communion: A Brazilian Case Study." *International Journal of Humanities and Social Science* 3(10), 279-289

Sims-Schouten, Wendy; Sarah C.E. Riley & Carla Willig (2007): "Critical Realism in Discourse Analysis: A Presentation of a Systematic Method of Analysis Using Women's Talk of Motherhood, Childcare and Female Employment as an Example." *Theory & Psychology* 17(1), 101-124

Somboon Siriprachai (2012): "Inconsistencies and Inequities in Thai Industrialization [originally published in 1997]." In Somboon Siriprachai: *Industrialization with a Weak State. Thailand's Development in Historical Perspective* [edited by Kaoru Sugihara; Pasuk Phongpaichit & Chris Baker]. National University of Singapore Press, 70-91

Somchai Jitsuchon (2012): "Thailand in a Middle-Income Trap." *TDR Quarterly Review* 27(2), 13-20

Steiner, Pierre & John Stewart (2009): "From Autonomy to Heteronomy (and Back): The Enaction of Social Life." *Phenomenology and the Cognitive Sciences* 8(4), 527-550

Steppacher, Rolf (2008): "Property, Mineral Resources and 'Sustainable Development'." In Steiger, Otto (ed): *Property Economics – Property Rights, Creditor's Money and the Foundations of the Economy*. Marburg: Metropolis, 323–354

Stewart, John Robert; Olivier Gapenne & Ezequiel A. Di Paolo (eds; 2010): *Enaction: Toward a New Paradigm for Cognitive Science*. MIT Press

Stewart, John Robert (2010): "Foundational Issues in Enaction as a Paradigm for Cognitive Science: From the Origin of Life to Consciousness and Writing." In Stewart, John Robert; Olivier Gapenne & Ezequiel A. Di Paolo (eds): *Enaction: Toward a New Paradigm for Cognitive Science*. MIT Press, 1-31

Suehiro, Akira (1981): "Land Reform in Thailand. The Concept and Background of the Agricultural Land Reform Act of 1975." *The Developing Economies* 19(4), 314-347

Sulak Sivaraksa (2005): *Conflict, Culture, Change. Engaged Buddhism in a Globalizing World*. Wisdom Publications, Boston

Sulak Sivaraksa (2009): *The Wisdom of Sustainability. Buddhist Economics for the 21<sup>st</sup> Century*. Silkworm Books

Surachet Vetchapitak (1986): "A Farmer's Enlightenment: Vibul's Way to Self-Reliance." In Seri Phongphit (ed): *Back to the Roots. Village and Self-Reliance in a Thai Context*. Rural Development Documentation Centre, Bangkok, 131-154

Suranand Vejjajiva (2011): "Romantic Dream of Land Reform Needs Rude Awakening." *Bangkok Post*, 18 February

Sutee Suksudaj (2010): *The Thai Social Capital as a Social Determinant of Oral Health*; Phd dissertation, University of Adelaide, Australia

Sutee Suksudaj (2013): "The Thai Social Capital of the People in Inpaeng Network, Sakon Nakhon Thailand." In Rado, Istvan; Seri Phongphit & Nathaniel Long (eds): *Exploring Sufficiency Economy. Ethics, Practices, Challenges*. King Prajadhipok's Institute, 188-214

Szeftel, Morris (2006): "Sir William Arthur Lewis." In Simon, David (ed): *Fifty Key Thinkers on Development*, Routledge, 144-149

Teasdale, John D. & Michael Chaskalson (Kulananda) (2011a): "How does Mindfulness Transform Suffering? I: The Nature and Origins of Dukkha." *Contemporary Buddhism* 12(1), 89-102

Teasdale, John D. & Michael Chaskalson (Kulananda) (2011b): "How does Mindfulness Transform Suffering? II: The Transformation of Dukkha." *Contemporary Buddhism* 12(1), 103-124

Thera, Nyanaponika (1962): *The Heart of Buddhist Meditation. A Handbook of Mental Training Based on the Buddha's Way of Mindfulness*. Buddhist Publication Society, Kandy, Sri Lanka

Thompson, Evan (2007): *Mind in Life: Biology, Phenomenology, and the Sciences of Mind*. Harvard University Press

Thompson, Evan & Francisco J. Varela (2001): "Radical Embodiment: Neural Dynamics and Consciousness." *Trends in Cognitive Sciences* 5(10), 418-425

Thompson, Evan & Mog Stapleton (2009): "Making Sense of Sense-Making: Reflections on Enactive and Extended Mind Theories." *Topoi* 28, 23-30

Tideman, Sander G. (2011): "Gross National Happiness." In Zsolnai, Laszlo (ed): *Ethical Principles and Economic Transformation. A Buddhist Approach*. Springer, 133-153

Tomasello, Michael (1999): *The Cultural Origins of Human Cognition*. Harvard University Press

Tomasello, Michael (2008): *Origins of Human Communication*. MIT Press

Torring, Jacob (1999): *New Theories of Discourse: Laclau, Mouffe, and Žizek*. Oxford: Blackwell Publishers

Turner, Bryan S. (2008): *The Body and Society. Explorations in Social Theory*. Sage

Turner, Stephen (2001): "Throwing out the Tacit Rule Book: Learning and Practices." In Schatzki, Theodore R.; Karin Knorr Cetina & Eike von Savigny (eds): *The Practice Turn in Contemporary Theory*. Routledge, 129-139

Ullrich, Otto (1992): "Technology." In Sachs, Wolfgang (ed): *The Development Dictionary. A Guide to Knowledge as Power*. Zed Books, 275-287

UNDP (2007): *Thailand Human Development Report 2007. Sufficiency Economy and Human Development*. Bangkok, Thailand

UNDP (2010): *Human Security, Today and Tomorrow. Thailand Human Development Report 2009*. Bangkok, Thailand

Varela, Charles R. (2005): "The Ethogenics of Agency and Structure: A Metaphysical Problem." In López, José & Garry Potter (eds): *After Postmodernism. An Introduction to Critical Realism*. The Athlone Press, 63-73

Varela, Charles R. & Rom Harré (1996): "Conflicting Varieties of Realism: Causal Powers and the Problems of Social Structure." *Journal for the Theory of Social Behavior* 26(3), 313-325

Varela, Francisco J. (1996): "Neurophenomenology: A Methodological Remedy for the Hard Problem." *Journal of Consciousness Studies*, 3(4), 330-349

- Varela, Francisco J. (1999): *Ethical Know-How: Action, Wisdom, and Cognition*. Stanford University Press
- Varela, Francisco; Evan Thompson; and Eleanor Rosch (1991): *The Embodied Mind. Cognitive Science and Human Experience*. MIT Press
- Vichit Nanthasuwana (1986): "Village Institution and Development Work." In Seri Phongphit (ed): *Back to the Roots. Village and Self-Reliance in a Thai Context*. Rural Development Documentation Centre, Bangkok, 23-43
- Vogt, Paul (2002): "The Physical Symbol Grounding Problem." *Cognitive Systems Research* 3(3), 429-457
- Walker, Andrew (2010): "Royal Sufficiency and Elite Misrepresentation of Rural Livelihoods." In Ivarsson, Søren, and Lotte Isager (eds): *Saying the Unsayable. Monarchy and Democracy in Thailand*. NIAS Press, 241-265
- Walker, Andrew (2012): *Thailand's Political Peasants. Power in the Modern Rural Economy*. University of Wisconsin Press
- Walker, Andrew & Nicholas Farrelly (2008): "Northern Thailand's Specter of Eviction." *Critical Asian Studies* 40(3), 373-397
- Wallerstein, Immanuel (1983): *Historical Capitalism*. Verso, London
- Wallerstein, Immanuel (2004): *World-Systems Analysis. An Introduction*. Duke University Press, Durham/London
- Wanna Prayukvong (2005): "A Buddhist Economic Approach to the Development of Community Enterprises: A Case Study from Southern Thailand." *Cambridge Journal of Economics* 29, 1171-1185
- Warr, Peter (2007): "The Economics of 'Enough': Thailand's 'Sufficiency Economy' Debate." Paper presented at *International Conference on Happiness and Public Policy*, Bangkok, 18-19 July
- Warr, Peter (2011): "A Nation Caught in the Middle-Income Trap." *East Asia Forum Quarterly* 3(4), 4-6
- Wegner, Daniel M. (2002): *The Illusion of Conscious Will*. MIT press
- Weiss, Gilbert & Ruth Wodak (2003): *Critical Discourse Analysis. Theory and Interdisciplinarity*. Palgrave Macmillan
- Werner, Karen (forthcoming): "Performing Economies of Care." In Roelvink, Gerda; Kevin St. Martin & J.K. Gibson-Graham (eds): *Performing Diverse Economies*. University of Minnesota Press

Williams, J. Mark G. & Jon Kabat Zinn (2011): "Introduction." *Contemporary Buddhism* 12(1), 1-18

Williams, J. Mark G. & Willem Kuyken (2012): "Mindfulness-Based Cognitive Therapy: A Promising New Approach to Preventing Depressive Relapse." *The British Journal of Psychiatry* 200(5), 359-360

Williams, Paul (2009): *Mahayana Buddhism: the Doctrinal Foundations*. Routledge

Williams, Robert Frederick (2004): *Making Meaning from a Clock: Material Artifacts and Conceptual Blending in Time-Telling Instruction*. Doctoral Dissertation, University of California, San Diego

Zadek, Simon (1993): "The Practice of Buddhist Economics? Another View." *American Journal of Economics and Sociology* 52(4), 433-445

Ziai, Aram (2004): "The Ambivalence of Post-Development: Between Reactionary Populism and Radical Democracy." *Third World Quarterly* 25(6), 1045-1060

Ziai, Aram (2006a): "Post-Development: Ideologiekritik in der Entwicklungstheorie." *Politische Vierteljahresschrift* 47(2), 193-218

Ziai, Aram (2006b): *Zwischen Global Governance und Post-Development. Entwicklungspolitik aus diskursanalytischer Perspektive*. Münster, Westfälisches Dampfboot

Zsolnai, Laszlo (2009): "Buddhist Economics for Business." In Zsolnai, Laszlo; Zsolt Boda & Laszlo Fekete (eds): *Ethical Prospects. Economy, Society and Environment*. Springer, 89-99

Zsolnai, Laszlo (ed, 2011): *Ethical Principles and Economic Transformation – A Buddhist Approach*. Springer

Zsolnai, Laszlo (2011): "The Contributions of Buddhist Economics." In Zsolnai, Laszlo (ed): *Ethical Principles and Economic Transformation – A Buddhist Approach*. Springer, 183-196

## Appendix

### List of Expert Interviews Cited

| Name          | Function                                                                        | Date and Place                                                                                  |
|---------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Artittaya     | ALRO officer from Bangkok                                                       | 21 January 2012, Kudbak district, Sakon Nakhon                                                  |
| Chamnan       | Inpaeng Network leader in Wangsammo district, Udonthani                         | 22 January 2012, Kudbak district, Sakon Nakhon                                                  |
| Ganya         | Vice-president of the Inpaeng Network; leader in Phuphan district, Sakon Nakhon | 18 January 2012, Kudbak district, Sakon Nakhon                                                  |
| Kamphun       | Manager of the herbal factory at the Inpaeng Center in Ban Bua                  | 25 January 2012, Kudbak district, Sakon Nakhon                                                  |
| Markus Peschl | Head of the Cognitive Science Research Platform at the University of Vienna     | 1 April 2014, Vienna                                                                            |
| Nao           | Inpaeng Network leader in Phuphan district, Sakon Nakhon                        | 18 January 2012, Kudbak district, Sakon Nakhon; 27 January 2012, Phuphan district, Sakon Nakhon |

|            |                                                                              |                                                       |
|------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------|
| Pao        | Manager of the Makmao factory at the Inpaeng Center in Ban Bua               | 17 January 2012, Kudbak district, Sakon Nakhon        |
| Pho Lek    | Village elder and founding member of the Inpaeng Network                     | 17 January 2012, Kudbak district, Sakon Nakhon        |
| Pho Serm   | Village elder and founding member of the Inpaeng Network                     | 27 January 2012, Kudbak district, Sakon Nakhon        |
| Praphat    | Inpaeng member and model farmer in Banmuang district, Sakon Nakhon           | 28 January 2012, Banmuang district, Sakon Nakhon      |
| Sawan      | Leader of the Thai-Bru Network in Mukdahan province (joined Inpaeng in 2004) | 21 January 2012, Kudbak district, Sakon Nakhon        |
| Sumet      | Secretary-General of the Chaipattana Foundation                              | 29 November 2007, Bangkok                             |
| Thawatchai | President and founding member of the Inpaeng Network                         | 17 and 26 January 2012, Kudbak district, Sakon Nakhon |

## **Abstract (deutsch)**

Buddhistische Ansätze finden heute in mehreren wissenschaftlichen Disziplinen (z.B. Ökonomie und Kognitionswissenschaften), sowie in therapeutischen Zugängen Anwendung. Dabei wird in den meisten Fällen der Buddhismus nicht als religiöses Glaubenssystem, sondern aufgrund der ihm eigenen epistemologischen Praxis nutzbar gemacht; diese besteht in der vorreflexiven Untersuchung menschlicher Erfahrungen. In meiner Dissertation geht es mir durch eine Verbindung relevanter theoretischer und praktischer Anwendungsgebiete um die Nutzbarmachung buddhistischer Praktiken für die Entwicklungstheorie und –praxis. Es handelt sich somit um eine Theoriarbeit, angefangen von der Ausarbeitung der wissenschaftstheoretischen Fundierung bis hin zur Verknüpfung mit einer entsprechenden Entwicklungstheorie und –strategie.

In meinen wissenschaftstheoretischen Annahmen stütze ich mich auf den „Enaktivismus“, einem Theorieansatz innerhalb der Kognitionswissenschaften, welcher sich im Dialog mit der buddhistischen Philosophie entwickelt hat. Wissen und Bedeutungen werden dem zufolge durch Interaktionen zwischen Lebewesen und Umwelt hergestellt. An dieser Wissensproduktion ist unsere gesamte kognitive Ausstattung – also auch körperliche physiochemische Funktionen – beteiligt. Dies sind unbewusste Mechanismen, welche sich durch Anpassung und Erfahrung mit Umweltreizen entwickeln. Damit handelt es sich um interpretative Kompetenzen des Körpers, welche unser Denken und Sprechakte beeinflussen. Buddhistische Techniken zielen auf die Bewusstmachung dieser körperlichen Interpretationsmuster ab, um deren Einfluss auf unser bewusstes Denken zu beschränken.

Einige meditative Praktiken dienen darüber hinaus dazu, Einstellungen und somatische Dispositionen gezielt zu kultivieren, welche Offenheit und Empathie fördern. Moderne achtsamkeitsbasierte Therapiemethoden liefern Hinweise, wie solche Techniken auch für Entwicklungsprojekte nutzbar gemacht werden könnten. Konkrete Anhaltspunkte hierzu liefern auch die „community economies“-Projekte

der Wirtschaftsgeografinnen J.K. Gibson-Graham: Sie fördern in ihren Projekten die Loslösung der Zielgruppe von gefestigten Diskursen und emotionaler Identifikation. Die Gruppenmitglieder werden mit Situationen konfrontiert, welche Offenheit und das Gefühl gegenseitiger Interdependenz erfahrbar machen. Auch hier werden diese Dispositionen gezielt gepflegt. Ziel ist somit nicht ein zu erreichendes Entwicklungsideal, sondern die Aneignung einer bewährten Grundhaltung. Diese beeinflusst wie wir in verschiedenen Lebenssituationen handeln und Entscheidungen treffen. Dass diese Entwicklungsstrategie nicht nur die Lebensrealität der jeweiligen Gemeinschaften ändert, sondern durch Interaktionen mit externen Akteuren auch gesellschaftlich wirksam ist, zeige ich vor allem im letzten Kapitel auf. Methodisch stütze ich mich auf eine Kombination des enaktivistischen Ansatzes mit der Positioning Theory. Ersterer liefert Begriffe und Erklärungen für die Analyse vor allem unbewusster Vorgänge. Ergänzend hierzu beinhaltet Positioning Theory Instrumente zur Erfassung diskursiver Praktiken.

## **Abstract (English)**

Scientific disciplines (e.g. economics and cognitive science), as well as certain therapeutic approaches are today increasingly engaging with Buddhist philosophy. This dialogue is inspired not by Buddhism as a religious belief system, but due to its epistemological praxis, which consists in the pre-reflective examination of human experience. In my dissertation I am exploring both theoretical and practical areas of this interface between science and Buddhism in order to present an encompassing framework, which helps to specify corresponding development approaches in theory and practice. I therefore regard the present work as a contribution to theory building by first clarifying the underlying ontological and epistemological assumptions, and subsequently by outlining a corresponding development theory and –strategy.

In my philosophical assumptions I am following “enactivism,” which is a theory within cognitive science and which has been developed with reference to Buddhist philosophy. Accordingly, meaning arises through repeated interactions between living systems and their environment. This generation of knowledge involves all of our cognitive capacities, including somatic physiochemical processes. These are unconscious mechanisms, adapting through experience to environmental stimuli. As such they constitute interpretive capacities of the body, which influence conscious thought and speech acts. Buddhist techniques are meant to bring these somatic patterns into awareness in order to limit their biasing effect on conscious thought.

Certain meditation practices are moreover meant to cultivate attitudes and somatic dispositions, which foster openness and empathy. Contemporary mindfulness-based therapies offer indications of how these techniques could be applied to development projects. J.K. Gibson-Graham’s “community economies” approach includes very specific measures in this regard: in their projects they encourage the target group to let go of solidified discourses and emotional identifications. The group members are exposed to experiences, which foster openness and feelings of interdependence. Here, too, these dispositions are actively cultivated. The development objective does therefore not consist in known ideals, but in acquiring a proven attitude. This attitude informs our decisions and the way we act in different contexts. Especially in the final chapter I will moreover illustrate that the effects of this development strategy are not limited to the life worlds of corresponding communities. Through interactions with external actors they also exert an influence on society at large. In terms of methods used in this work, I am relying on a combination of enactivism and positioning theory. Whereas the former theory offers concepts to capture unconscious processes, positioning theory includes tools for the examination of discursive practices in addition.

## Academic CV

### Academic Qualifications

---

|                              |                                                                                                                                                                                                       |
|------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <b>03/2007 - date</b>        | <b>PhD</b><br>Department of Political Science<br>University of Vienna<br><b>Doctoral Thesis:</b> “Enactive Development: Contributions of Buddhist Philosophy to Development Theory and Practice”      |
| <b>03/1999 –<br/>11/2006</b> | <b>Mag.rer.soc.oec.</b> (Master’s degree equivalent)<br>Department of Socio-Politics<br>University of Linz<br><b>Diploma Thesis:</b> “Chinese Business and Globalization – The End of the Asian Way?” |
| <b>08/2003 –<br/>05/2004</b> | <b>Thai Studies Certificate Program</b><br>Thammasat University                                                                                                                                       |

### Academic Employment

---

|                              |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                    |
|------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <b>03/2011 –<br/>05/2013</b> | <b>Project Manager</b><br><i>In cooperation with the King Prajadhipok’s Institute, Thailand</i><br><br><u>Responsibilities</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>▪ Organization of a conference on Sufficiency Economy and subsequent book publication in a team</li></ul><br><u>Achievements</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>▪ Designed the conference aims, themes, and structure</li><li>▪ Identified conference presenters from different continents</li><li>▪ Created the editorial guidelines and author guidelines for the volume</li><li>▪ Successfully coordinated with the prospective authors to meet deadlines</li></ul> |
| <b>04/2010 –<br/>04/2011</b> | <b>Assistant to the Faculty Dean</b><br><i>Faculty of Political Science, Thammasat University, Thailand</i><br><br><u>Responsibilities</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>▪ Co-organization of a conference</li><li>▪ Teaching assignments</li></ul><br><u>Achievements</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>▪ Recruitment of cooperative partners and sponsors</li><li>▪ Attracted funding</li><li>▪ Organized a post-conference excursion</li></ul>                                                                                                                                                                                  |
| <b>05/2006 –<br/>5/2010</b>  | <b>Program Director</b><br><i>Austrian Association of East Asian Studies in cooperation with University of</i>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                     |

Linz (Austria) and Thammasat University (Thailand)

#### Responsibilities

- Designed the academic program
- Promoted the program at various universities
- Acted as main contact person in Austria and Germany
- Fundraising

#### Achievements

- 100 participants from Austrian and German universities in the course of 3 years
- Built up a good reputation for the program

### **Publications**

---

- “Sustainable Community Development in Northeastern Thailand. The Inpaeng Network”. In: Brennan, Linda et al. (eds): *Growing Sustainable Communities: A Development Guide for Southeast Asia*. Tilde University Press, 179-196, 2013
- “Sufficiency Economy: From Social Movements to the State”. In: Rado, Istvan; Seri Phongphit & Nathaniel Long (eds): *Exploring Sufficiency Economy: Ethics, Practices, Challenges*. King Prajadhipoke's Institute, Thailand, 264-275, 2013
- “Thaksinomics in Light of the Heterodox View on Economic Development”. *Journal of Contemporary Eastern Asia* 7(1), 19-37, 2008

### **Presentations**

---

- “Enactive Development. Nutzen der Buddhistischen Philosophie für Entwicklungstheorie und –Strategie.” Presented at the *Tag des SOWI-Doktorats* (Poster Session) at the University of Vienna, Austria on 05/11/2013
- “Thailand’s Sufficiency Economy Strategy: Between Sustainable Development and Degrowth?” Paper presented at the *5th APISA Congress*, Taichung, Taiwan on 24/11/2011
- “After the ‘Postdevelopment Turn’: Implications for Regional and Global Governance Conceptions.” Paper presented at the *Regional Conference on Community-Building in East and Southeast Asia*, Manila, Philippines on 15/08/2011
- “The Contribution of Buddhist Economics to Contemporary Development Theory.” Paper presented at the *1<sup>st</sup> International Conference on International Relations and Development (ICIRD)*, Thammasat University, Bangkok on 20/05/2011

### **Internships and Extracurricular Activities**

---

- |                      |                                                                                            |
|----------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| 11/2004 –<br>12/2004 | Internship for the Commercial Counselor at the Austrian Embassy in Bangkok                 |
| 08/2003 –<br>11/2006 | Initiated the academic cooperation between the University of Linz and Thammasat University |

## Language Skills

---

German and Hungarian (mother tongue), English (fluent), Thai ("Intermediate Level" attested by *Intensive Thai Program*, Chulalongkorn University, 2009)