RESEARCH SCHOOL
FOR RESOURCE STUDIES FOR DEVELOPMENT

In Search of Common Ground
Reflections on Articulating Concepts and Theoretical Orientations in CERES

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Introduction

The board and directorate of CERES research school have initiated a synthesizing study of the various research programmes and projects which are part of the school. The objective was first of all to construct an overview of the variety of research questions and topics that are being studied by CERES researchers. On the basis of this overview our task has been to deduct the main lines or common ground within this wide variety of research projects and interests focusing particularly on concepts which emerge from the various research interests and demonstrate a capacity to bring together various research lines and working programmes. In this respect we use the terms articulating or clustering concepts. Our aim was furthermore to bring together and develop these concepts into a framework which reflects the common ground of CERES research. This common ground may guide ongoing and future development of CERES and clarify the identity and positioning of the school.

We started our project in January 2001 and took the following four steps:

We interviewed the convenors or chairs of each of the eight working programmes;

We studied the articles and books they put forward as key publications of their working programme;

Based on suggestions by various sources, such as the chairs and convenors, we made a selection of individual researchers who are known for their initiative and inspiring research. We strove for an even distribution of the respondents over working programmes, universities and disciplines (see annex). We subsequently interviewed them about their own research, fruitful concepts, promising developments in their field and what they thought about the concepts which had emerged in the earlier phases of our project;

We studied their key publications.

Other sources we were able to draw on were the official texts of the working programmes as well as the 10-lines research descriptions of each of the researchers in CERES. Moreover, we were able to test and discuss our preliminary thoughts and conclusions at the Summerschool 2001 held in Wageningen and in several other meetings.

It must be stressed that almost all of the researchers we approached have been helpful to us and have contributed wholeheartedly. We had the impression that this was partly due to the fact that our mission concentrated on academic content and concepts and was not related to administrative aspects of CERES. We encountered more tacit common ground and lines of joint interests than we imagined beforehand. CERES researchers have more in common than they know or are aware of. This report is a reflection of our effort to make this common ground explicit. It starts (chapter 2) with a discussion of the opinions and views of the various respondents and authors about the two central concepts which appear in the title and name of the school, i.e. resource dynamics and development. Of course, our aim is not to outline our own thoughts or positions, but the views of the various respondents and authors.

In chapter 3 we will portray some general theoretical orientations and trends in the research field of CERES. This constitutes the first step to give more substance to the content and understanding of the common ground of our school. We will end this chapter with a short feedback to the issue of resource dynamics. In chapter 4 we make the second step in outlining the common ground in CERES with an analysis of four concepts which have come up during our research and which are able to articulate various of the core themes of the eight working programmes and individual projects, i.e. globalization, livelihood, identity, and governance. In chapter 5 some basic characteristics of CERES research will be presented as we encountered them during our study. Some crucial methodological challenges CERES researchers face will be discussed as well.

The names which appear in our text refer to the respondents we have spoken to. With some exceptions the literature which appears in the text has either been indicated as key publications or as titles from writers outside of CERES who play an important role within CERES discussions. Of course, our selection of respondents and authors has its limitations. We nevertheless hope that the scholars who are not mentioned here will feel represented by the trends and contents we discuss.

Perspectives on central CERES concepts

The emphasis on the variety of research projects does not exclude the fact that there is considerable common ground among these projects. There are several ways to name or thematize this common ground. The most obvious concepts at hand in the first place constitute the central concepts which indicate the mission and identity of CERES as a research school and feature in its name: i.e. development and resource dynamics.

Development

Before we will discuss these clustering concepts we will look at the concept of development. It must be said, this concept does arouse much more discussion among the CERES researchers than the concept of resource dynamics. It turned out to be highly controversial. To quite a number of research projects, especially in working programmes 6, 7 and 8, the concept has no relevance because these projects cannot be positioned within what was commonly known as the traditional field of development studies. Researchers of other projects bring up serious objections or strong arguments against the concept.

We may distinguish three dimensions of the concept of development: (i) development as a characterization of specific processes of social transformation in terms of linear progress; (ii) development as a concept referring to policies, projects and programmes of intervention in social reality, the latter understood in a rationalistic and Weberian sense; and (iii) development pointing to pressing needs related to issues of inequality and environmental threats. Especially the first two dimensions provoke fierce criticism. Continued use of the concept would require considerable rethinking. Its historical burden of developmentalist connotations and modernization thinking is considered to be outdated.

This burden includes the ideological use of the concept, especially within the framework of the Cold War, damaging its analytical and conceptual value. This ideological use as such is an interesting topic for research (see Nederveen Pieterse, 2001) and the same holds true regarding the interrelationship between the constructions and narratives of development and modernity by policy makers on the one hand and local actors on the other (see Arce&Long, 2000). As a result, the concept is problematic when we try to use it in order to understand and clarify the nature of specific processes of social change themselves. According to which standards can we identify a concrete process of social change as a development process? Hardly anyone dares to be very specific or unambiguous in this respect.

This reluctance is also related to the fact that the concept has become closely linked to an evolutionary way of thinking in which so-called developing countries would have to go the same development path as the so-called developed world. Such a unilinear portrayal of economic, social, political and cultural transformation encounters strong opposition among CERES researchers. Evolutionary thinking discloses a clear-cut ethnocentric attitude towards so-called developing countries portraying the West as their example to strive for. If development thinking entails a presumption to

prescribe or tell others what to do and think, it meets with a strong opposition on the part of many CERES researchers. Some replace this evolutionary thinking with the idea of trajectories of transformation (Helmsing, 2000), indicating that there are several paths of change possible based on a given set of conditions, thus maintaining the idea that the number of such paths and options is limited. By contrast, others emphasize that any such attempt to stipulate into the future is futile and impossible.

Another development connotation that meets with criticism is the idea that the social world can be made, that social reality can be constructed and modified according to intentional and rational standards. The comfortable evolutionary optimism regarding the possibilities of achieving development goals in a self-propelling evolution after a limited input from development agencies and initiatives had been delivered, characterizing the early days of development thinking, has definitely been lost.

As a consequence, most CERES researchers adopt a much more modest claim in this respect despite or because of the fact that many of them are to some extent involved in policy oriented research. This modest claim is related to the fact that one of the strong points of many research projects within CERES consists of their actor-oriented character paying due attention to the intricacies and complexities of everyday situations and social processes. The awareness of this complexity calls for a modest position regarding the possibilities for steering such situations and processes from a purely intentional and rational point of view. Others within CERES, however, call for the need to reinforce management capacities, institutional reform and build up and organizational strengthening at various levels including the global level in order to regulate and counteract the negative consequences of globalization for the environment and labour standards (see below under ‘globalization’, Opschoor, 1999; Leisink, 1999).

Finally, the concept of development has been associated with the clear distinction between research topics in the Western world and those in other parts of the world. The development concept claimed a separate field of studies within certain disciplines for specific regions in the world. Almost all CERES researchers respond to the current trend in many social sciences indicating that such scientific parcellation is outdated. This is reflected in the trend that within CERES the number of research projects which are carried through in The Netherlands and other Western countries, is increasing. This holds true not only for relatively new working programmes such, but also for working programmes which until recently were almost exclusively focused on non-Western regions. Particularly interesting in this respect are research projects that study the connections between different sites in the Western and non-Western world.

Critical research agenda

It is thus no surprise that the concept of development - if at all - is used in specific research projects and publications in a rather vague and unspecified way. After all, hardly anyone wants to reactivate these uneasy connotations. Nevertheless, despite all this criticism the proverb of the baby and the bathwater regularly comes up in the discussions about the development concept. That is, there are some specific preoccupations related to the third dimension of the development concept (see above) which remain valid in the eyes of a large number of CERES researchers. First of all there is a specific research agenda featuring topics which have lost little of their relevance and ask for further study, discussion and understanding. These include the increasing world-wide gap between rich and poor groups, countries and regions. If globalization promised to close this inequality gap, until now it has not been able to deliver. Poverty remains as critical as ever in many countries and areas in the world. The enhancement of capabilities of poor people to confront the conditions that produce poverty and insecurity continues to be a research object of primary importance (see Bebbington, 1999). Institutional disintegration, violence, insecurity, environmental threats and climate change must be added to the list. A human development agenda is called for which focuses on (the need for) the expansion of the range of social, economic and political choices of groups and of individuals and the securing of a decent standard of living in terms of education, nutrition and health, freedom, democracy and human security as well as ‘sustainability’ (Opschoor, 1999: 3). The casuistic of expressions of these problems embedded in local, national and global networks, configurations and conditions calls for renewed scientific attention. One witnesses the emergence of a ‘global social question’.

Many researchers within CERES express some sort of tacit commitment with the livelihood and resource generating capacity of those who may be considered as poor, or marginalized, or deprived. For example, studies in working programme three featuring learning processes and innovation within global networks of companies, educational and financial institutions and governments, commodity chains and market channels in the end raise the question what all this means for local producers with relatively little options and resources at hand (Knorringa, 1999). There are relatively few researchers within CERES who adopt a clearly post-modern relativist moral or social position. It should be noted, however, that this commitment is not limited to the former so-called developing world, but also includes areas and processes in the former Soviet block and is also applied to questions of multiculturalism and social exclusion in Western Europe.

The latter fact is related to another preoccupation which is linked to the way development studies has evolved over the years and which merits attention, i.e. its critical attitude and research agenda *vis-à-vis* dominant processes and structures world-wide. This critical attitude is reflected e.g. in the study in working programme four on structural adjustment programmes and its impact on income distribution and productive capacity in countries where such programmes are applied or imposed. Some counterpose the concept of development to neo-liberal thinking. Others call for the need for combining discourse analysis with a revisited political economic concern for global power relations and ideological processes. In particular interventions in the name of development call for a critical research focus (see Zoomers, 1999). Especially the involvement of Dutch actors and institutions seems relevant here.

However, this critical attitude towards the interventionist connotations of the development concept and the involvement of Dutch actors and institutions in such interventions (the second dimension of development mentioned above) does not mean that CERES researchers position themselves at the sidelines of policy processes and social interventions. The opposite is the case. In line with the acknowledgement of a pressing research agenda featuring topics such as inequality and poverty, CERES researchers are actively involved in contributing to policy formulation and agenda setting as well as in acting as policy advisors and consultants (see also chapter 5 on policy orientation). Nevertheless, while being involved in processes of social intervention many researchers emphasize the need for a renewal and reformulation of existing conceptual and methodological frameworks of policy development and social intervention to avoid the reproduction of the above discussed historical burden and allowing for a deeper understanding of such processes. In this context the term complex societal transformations has been introduced expressing the need for a critical research agenda and policy involvement of CERES researchers dealing with the great contemporary social issues of our times.

Of course, it is not up to us to decide upon the question which concepts are to be used in defining CERES research in the future, but we may conclude that, with or without the concept of development, there remains a pressing research agenda which merits attention. This agenda calls for a critical attitude and approach towards the world-wide social issues of our times as well as towards the policies and interventions dealing with these issues while at the same time being involved in the reformulation and reworking of such policies and interventions. This leads us to a brief analysis of the key CERES concept of resource dynamics.

Resource dynamics

The concept of resource dynamics is central to the CERES research school. It is defined as changing systemic configurations of agents, resources and institutions. These configurations point to a spectrum of various kinds of capital, such as ecological capital (air, soil, plants, minerals, animals), economic capital (means of production, finance, investments), man-made physical capital (infrastructure, built environment), human capital (health, skills, training, competences), social capital (networks, contacts, connections, socialization), political capital (governance, legal systems, negotiation skills and frameworks), symbolic capital (repertoires, images, meanings, discourses) and cultural capital (identity formations, knowledgeability, morality, gender, ethnicity). Various of such classifications can be found. The point is that within these configurations of agents, resources and institutions the various kinds of capital are the focal point of constant negotiation, conflict, co-operation, discussion, regulation, production, and construction.

These configurations raise a number of important questions. Which principles and processes underlie and frame these interrelations between agents, resources and institutions? Which impact do strategies, policies and programmes exercise on these interrelations? What relations of inequality can be discerned in the distribution of resources among various agents and institutions? Which are the risks and opportunities arising from transformations of these configurations in a globalizing framework?

From the point of view of the various CERES researchers it must be said that they can easily fit their research projects and interests within this framework. There is a consensus among researchers about the fact that this concept of resource dynamics does provide an umbrella under which they can position their work. Moreover, from an analytical point of view the framework of resource dynamics does provides adequate conceptual tools to account for the various research projects in an encompassing and comprehensive way. It allows us to "think together" the central concerns and topics that arise from this wide variety of research projects. However, it should be noted here that there is some hesitation among several CERES researchers about the possible functionalist and system-oriented or technocratic connotations the concept might carry. The use of the concept can also include process-oriented approaches paying attention to the time factor (c.f. Dietz, 2000) and to experiential and subjective dimensions of such processes.

However, in spite of the general acceptance of the concept of resource dynamics, it does not play a prominent role in a more operational way. Its application in the everyday research practice is limited. In the various publications this concept does not arise as one of the most inspiring and fruitful ones in analytical terms. It serves very well at the level of the general research architecture, but has a low profile in the various individual research projects. This is not to say that it would be impossible to render the concept of resource dynamics more operational. Our search for clustering concepts can be seen as an attempt to provide more substance to it while at the same time making its relevance to the various research projects more explicit and visible.

Towards a reorientation of resource dynamics

While studying the various research projects and programmes, we were able to distinguish three basic characteristics which have come to orient the research designs and interests of CERES scholars in recent years. They run through much of the diversity of small and large-scale projects and programmes and can provide further substance to the concept of resource dynamics as defined as changing configurations of resources, institutions and agents.

In the following we will deal with three issues that play a crucial role in CERES. The first and the second describe general thematic and theoretical orientations within the field covered by CERES. The third issue attempts to describe a general conceptual and methodological focus in the study of these themes and developments. The issues are (i) an orientation towards the study of instability, insecurity and indeterminacy; (ii) an orientation towards the study of flows, networks and linkages as increasingly important phenomena in contemporary society, and (iii) an orientation towards actor-oriented approaches. Each of these orientations refer to both the specific issues, topics and problems they focus on, and to the theoretical considerations which inform this focus.

These three orientations are relevant to resource dynamics in various ways. For example, one may say that the orientation towards instability, insecurity, disorder and indeterminacy primarily deals with the access to resources. In a similar vein one may claim that in the second orientation towards the study of flows, networks and linkages the institutional settings in which actors try to make a living come to the fore. In the third orientation the actors themselves and their meaning making and experiences take the floor. We will take up this point further on in the text. We will subsequently discuss these orientations and finally link them up with the concept of resource dynamics.

Insecurity as normalcy?

The experience of change is usually accompanied by feelings of defensiveness, insecurity and even fear and resistance. CERES researchers are, *par excellence*, interested in phenomena such as the access to and the (struggle about) the distribution of resources that have been experiencing the combined effect of the accumulated results of long-term change and the disruptions caused by more

sudden but no less profound and lasting transformations. Moreover, CERES's unique orientation towards processes of societal transformation in highly diverse regions of the world makes it particularly apt to register and make intelligible the wide range of forms these changes acquire. The result has been the emergence of a general conceptual orientation towards insecurity, uncertainty, instability and so on, on the basis of a wealth of vastly dissimilar empirical research materials about resources, processes, actors and institutions. Many publications deal with the problems related to people trying to make sense of the turbulence. They register the cognitive and interpretative frameworks which people may experience as inadequate in their daily lives. A discussion of the consequences of globalization leads Opschoor (1999: 7) to the claim that it is 'creating new threats to human security: financial volatility, job and income insecurity, health and personal insecurity, political and community insecurity, cultural and environmental insecurities'. Arce and Long (2000: xiii) suggest that 'the 'state of emergency' has become not the exception but the rule for the majority of people in the world'.

Academic scholars, on their part, struggle with the shortcomings of old conceptual categories to describe and explain these developments: questions of the 21st century are frequently analyzed with concepts from the 19th century. In her analysis of the effects of structural adjustment programmes and liberalization on the socio-economic organization of Africa, Bryceson notes that national economies have become an amalgam of three sectors, that do not operate according to existing conceptual schemes. The formal, informal and peasant sectors 'have meshed to produce highly fluid, circumstantial networks of economic relations…' (1999: 186). To conceptualise such processes Bryceson has suggested to go beyond theoretical categories and development models that have prevailed for over thirty years. Interventions in societies, be it in the form of structural adjustment programmes ordered by the world's leading financial institutions, colonial policies or international donor agencies, almost always seem to contribute to an increase in complexity, fragmentation and, sometimes, disorder, because they rival with and mix with existing arrangements.

Sometimes these external forces are even explicitly oriented at the destruction of arrangements that regulated access and distribution of resources, e.g. state development agencies in Latin America in the 1980s. Insecurity and instability that are so characteristic of so-called transitions thus question the usefulness of existing development models and cognitive schemes. This is also suggested by scholars who work on former socialist societies. At a workshop in Bolivia that analysed the consequences of globalisation it was suggested that 'the knowledge maps that helped fix horizons and select possible routes have been destroyed' (RAWOO, 2000: 21).

These and other issues can be found throughout CERES. The focus on change and movement generates a number of prominent research topics highlighting the tensions between continuity and change, between stability and instability, with the ensuing risks and options. This tension is reflected in the emphasis on environmental degradation and the quest for sustainability (working programme 1). The quest for sustainability is emphasized in economic terms within the context of unpredictable trends and rapidly changing conditions in world markets (working programmes 3 and 4). In working programme 1 the establishment and reproduction of social security networks are studied in the face of the threats produced by ecological, economic and social transformations. In working programme 2 Salih amply discusses the political and economic causes and ramifications of "environmental insecurity". The study of man-made disasters and the rise of potentially dangerous expressions of nationalism against the background of rapidly changing and sometimes disintegrating institutional frameworks plays a prominent role in working programme 5. Insecurity can be the cause and product of conflict and use of violence among different rivalling agents. In this context it becomes understandable that issues of conflict and violence constitute an increasingly important theme of research in different working programmes (see e.g. Koonings & Kruijt, 1999; Richards, 1999; Robben & Suárez-Orozco, 2000; Salih, 1999).

The question whether the construction of a stable sense of self and identity is still possible and viable by actors facing a multiplication of cultural influences in a fragmented and multicultural context is a key issue in working programmes 7 and 5. Verkuyten (1999: 6) argues that in reaction to social developments contemporary discussions about identity emphasize variability, fragmentation and multiplicity. The fact that rational models of strategic management are being undermined by turbulence and flux in the organizational environment appears as one of the basic topics studied in working programme 8.

It is not difficult to see parallels with the work of well-known sociologists like Beck and Giddens, who write about the contradictory consequences of modernization. Beck speaks of the 'return of uncertainty' and of risk societies. He argues that 'today people are not being "released" from feudal and religious-transcendental certainties into the world of industrial society, but rather from industrial society into the turbulence of the global risk society. They are being expected to live with a broad variety of different, mutually contradictory, global and personal risks' (1992: 7). This requires new thinking and concepts.

CERES's comparative orientation can prove to be productive here. In their analysis of how pastoralists in the Sahel survive in harsh ecological and social conditions De Bruijn and Van Dijk (1999) take 'insecurity as a basic analytical tool' and criticise models that depart from some hypothetical 'normal equilibrium'. Their ethnographic research among the Fulbe suggests that insecurity is - since a long time - the dominant theme in the ways in which they organize their lives. The social, political and cultural domains of the lives of the Fulbe are structured in such a way that maximum flexibility and variability is guaranteed. Insecurity and the ways to deal with it constitute 'normalcy' (1999: 135). Are the Fulbe pastoralists providing other peoples around the globe with an image of what they are up to in the near future? It seems certain that lessons can be learned from them as well as from the concepts that have emerged from the study of their lives.

From bounded frameworks to connections?

Insecurity is not unrelated to the growing importance of concepts as networks, flows, connections and linkages within CERES. For example, economic disruption, violent political conflict or environmental insecurity, or a combination thereof, are often the root causes of flows of migrants and/or refugees. These migrants frequently (re)establish links between their host and original societies, which can result in the emergence of transnational communities. These processes profoundly affect conceptualizations of space and feelings of belonging, that can not adequately be described by old conceptual categories (Malkki, 1995). It could be argued that processes of fragmentation and disintegration on one level of society are, at least partially, offset by the construction of networks between similar or complementary agents in new configurations. In this respect, the concept of multi-spatial livelihoods is used. Global flows of people, goods, capital, ideas and images are both cause and outcome of the epochal changes that are transforming the contemporary world. The "world wide web" is perhaps the archetypal expression of a (virtual) world that is linked through digital nodal points, but there can be no doubt that in the 'real world' all sorts of agents are increasingly interconnected and interdependent. One of the most comprehensive attempts to conceptualize these processes to date is Castells's study (1996) of how information technology promotes a network society of global reach in which the space of flows of information, technology and finance replaces the space of place.

CERES research is tying into these shifts by initiating empirical projects that are framed by emerging conceptual and methodological tools. It shows signs of moving towards increased analytical attention to the nature of the *connections* between different agents or sites. With it comes the proliferation of concepts that possess the potential of innovation: flows, networks, fields, chains, linkages, and connections. Although networks and flows are often identified with the global, they can and are studied at diverse societal levels (households, but also international companies). It is precisely through the study of (inter)national networks of people, chains of goods and linkages between companies that an essential characteristic of these networks – that of constructing connections between actors and processes operating at distinct and apparently disconnected societal levels – can be described and explained. These flows form nodal points, junctions or hubs – frequently identified as the new role of global cities - where 'flow carriers' come together. Place thus becomes a crucial element in new processes of (social) inclusion and exclusion.

In working programmes 1 and 2 there is attention for the positioning, participation and exclusion of agents in (in)formal network providing access to resources, power and information. Agricultural and food networks embrace both industrialized and less industrialized societies. The politics of (biotechnological) knowledge networks is another important theme. In working programme 3 the focus is on the development of industrial technologies by different institutions as R&D departments, universities and state agencies within networks. The idea of networks of institutions is also present in a concept like regional or national systems of innovation. Furthermore in working programme 3 there are studies of global commodity chains and networks that play important roles in the organization of global

markets. These networks, commonly centred on large firms, consist of close sets of linkages between partners (such as companies, unions, government agencies etc.) on a trans-regional or trans-national basis. Van Dooren e.g. analyses the expansion of the garment production for the US market in Mexico and the ensuing reconfiguration of the bi-national garment commodity chains. For that purpose she looks at the structure and dynamics of productive networks that connect different types of companies in the US and Mexico. In the same working programme urban livelihood is linked to partnerships between various actors and institutions (Baud, 2000).

On the terrain of governance and politics, research is done on the workings of international networks of NGOs in particular local settings. Hilhorst (2000) has focused on the meanings of being part of such networks for a local Philippine NGO in terms of legitimacy and accountability. Salih (1999) has argue that an expanding international network of NGOs and advocacy groups constitutes the core of a 'global civil' society that has created an enabling environment for African liberation movements and NGOs to engage in such struggles. Long (2000: 187) has suggested that the nation-state or the transnational corporation can no longer be seen as the sole power-containers of important economic and social relationships in the global political economy. Instead, he points to global orders whose building blocks are groups and associations set within multiple and overlapping networks of power, which are constantly reordering themselves in the face of changing global conditions. In working programme 7, the global flow of cultural constructs and especially the linkages it establishes locally are a major research interest. Finally, in working programme 8 there is attention to the fact that many organizations are internally transformed into network structures. This is reflected in the use of organizational concepts such as autonomous business units, outsourcing, service contracts, business level agreements, and internal entrepreneurship. These developments are made possible and simultaneously demand the construction of complex information and communication networks.

These are all promising research reorientations that deserve further attention and continuous conceptual reflection. The growing focus on (global) networks and chains of people, commodities and symbols breaks down traditional societal and conceptual barriers. By doing so it opens up new questions and areas of research. The most significant characteristic of this new and general reorientation in CERES is that the accent is almost invariably put on the ways in which flows, networks, connections and chain are actually embedded in specific local contexts. For flows, chains and networks are not anonymous forces.1[1] This brings us to our last point.

Actors take centre stage?

The final issue deals with one of the strong characteristics of CERES research which is the fact that many researchers have adopted some kind of actor-oriented approach and orientation. Scholars do not subscribe to some agreed upon paradigm or methodology and there is sufficient room for debate. At the same time, there are many similarities and analogies between working programmes and different research projects, thereby demonstrating the widespread use of the actor-oriented approach. Arce and Long, who have been particularly active in developing this approach theoretically, recently defined it as presenting the study 'of development as concerning a field of contested realities in which struggles over values, resources, knowledge and images constitute the battlefield between different actors and their life-worlds' (2000: 23-24). In similar fashion, the actor-oriented approach provides tools for the study of livelihood, governance and modernity.

The Wageningen branch of CERES has been very successful in applying and elaborating the principles of this approach in a number of sophisticated case-studies. Nuijten (1998) analyses the organizing practices of peasants in an ejido in Mexico, most importantly in relation to the state. These organizing practices develop within what Nuijten calls a multiplicity of 'force fields', i.e. fields of power and struggle between different actors around certain resources or problems, that are informed by flows of ideas, i.e. narratives, stories and (pieces of) discourses and that can transcend the locality. The multiplicity of force fields and discourses opens up space for manoeuvring for the various actors involved. With the use of an approach that concentrates on practices, concepts of the state and power are also redefined in relational and practical terms. Hilhorst (2000) has studied the workings of a Philippine indigenous women's NGO from a comparable perspective. She looks at the processes

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1[1] For highly relevant conceptual and methodological reflections on this point see Burawoy (2000).

taking place inside the NGO and between the NGO and its surroundings by placing the actor's life-worlds and everyday organizing practices at the centre of her analysis. The result is the processual deconstruction of often assumed fixed entities, like the NGO itself, which she ends up understanding as 'a contested, often temporal outcome of organizing processes'. She deals with policy documents and discourses in a similar fashion and convincingly documents how apparently neutral and factual policy guidelines such as "transparency" and "accountability" are in fact the outcome of actor-constructed processes.

Equally rich in applying the principles of a praxis-theoretical and/or processual analysis of social phenomena is De Bruijn's and Van Dijk's critique of the model-oriented understanding of livelihood and the empirical underpinning of their own alternative views. They do so by putting the (cultural) repertoires of the pastoralists themselves at the centre of analysis and argue that the way people engage with insecurity does not correspond to models used for explanation and policy development, because the latter are too static and mechanical. It should be pointed out that there is an interesting potential in CERES to further discuss the conceptualization of livelihood that is behind much of the current debates about poverty and insecurity.

In relation to the dialectics of globalization and localization, both Vellinga (1999) and Kalb (2000) look at the ways in which the decision- and sense making by localized historical actors is crucial in 'materializing' and explaining the fluctuations in international competition. In working programme 8, sense making and behaviour by local actors differentially placed within complex organizations is a crucial characteristic. Just as in the case of Hilhorst and Nuijten, key emphasis is placed on organizing practices. The use of an actor-oriented approach changes the meaning of tradition, authenticity and culture altogether. These propositions directly reflect theoretical developments within the discipline of anthropology. Otto and Driessen (working programme 7) summarized them and argued that the debate about representation in anthropology in the 1980s resulted in a shift away from depicting people as performing roles and being perceived as more or less passive vehicles of cultural identities towards active and purposeful individuals that manage their identities (2000: 15). The study of identity has clearly shifted from systemic to actor-oriented approaches. The new, Amsterdam based, anthropological research project about contemporary religiosity and secularisation in The Netherlands further substantiates this profound reorientation through the focus on the praxis of meaning making and religious identity.

Orientations and resource dynamics

In short, these basic orientations which characterize most CERES research display three basic tensions. The first tension is the one between change, instability, insecurity and disorder on the one hand and continuity, stability, sustainability and order on the other. The second tension is the one between networks, flows, linkages and connections on the one hand and relatively stable frameworks such as households, communities, nations, states, corporate and hierarchical structures on the other hand. The third tension deals with the focus on actors with an emphasis on their agency on the one hand and the multi-layered character of their enabling and constraining social contexts on the other hand.

Thereby, this actor-oriented approach not only works out as a device for studying the interrelations between the actor's agency and his multi-layered context, but also as a way to analyze the first two tensions. The extended case study is often used to analyze these three tensions through a focus on the actors involved. As such the actor-oriented approach is perhaps more elaborated in a theoretical sense than the other two tensions (see chapter 5).

The positioning of CERES research within these three tensions provides more substance to the ways in which the constituent parts of resource dynamics (subsequently the access to resources, the institutional frameworks and the actors themselves) are studied and conceptualized. This positioning shows that CERES is able to account for current trends and developments in the glocalizing world as well as to link up with contemporary academic debates.

Clustering concepts in CERES research

These three general characteristics of CERES research have come to the fore while we studied the various research topics, project descriptions, and publications of CERES researchers. A close review of the key concepts and concrete projects has revealed another set – any suggestion of "deep structures" should be avoided! – of "thematic fields", which we have coined clustering or articulating concepts. These concepts play an important part in all or most of the 8 working programmes and will subsequently be discussed in this chapter. This discussion is not to suggest that these concepts replace or substitute the meanings and issues outlined above regarding development and resource dynamics, its objective is to complete our overview of the common ground among CERES researchers. Moreover, it must be stressed that the three research orientations presented in the preceding chapter are relevant to all of the four clustering concepts we present here. In each of these concepts the emphasis is on insecurity and change, on flows and networks, and on a focus on actors within their multi-layered social context.

Globalization and the global-local nexus

There is no doubt that the concept of globalization is a crucial articulating concept within CERES. But not only in CERES has the concept risen to prominence. It also permeates much of what is uttered nowadays in the media, in policy documents, business publications and political discourse. Perhaps Kalb is right when he suggests that 'globalization' has become the latest Grand Narrative that emerged after postmodernism had claimed the end of all grand narratives. Kalb talks about globalization in terms of a grand narrative because in the hands of the more radical interpretations of the phenomenon it becomes pretentious and all encompassing: 'it becomes a grand narrative that connects history with current politics, facts with virtues, and class with justice and truth', that is totalizing (2000: 5). Also Vellinga (1999) takes issue with interpretations that view globalization as a set of almost autonomous (economic) processes that behave like steamrollers across the globe. In the latter's interpretation globalization becomes synonymous to the ideology of free market neo-liberalism which preaches the truth and desirability of unregulated global capitalism. To resolve this confusion, Beck (1997) proposed to reserve the term globalism for the ideology of neo-liberalism, which can be distinguished from globalization that refers to the empirical phenomenon of shrinking space and time. Others have suggested to view neoliberalism as the current *form* of a more general *trend* of globalization (RAWOO, 2000).

Our point is that the relevance for CERES of the 'globalization' debate lies in the fact that it refers to a complex set of processes that are transforming most domains of society and human behaviour and that demand appropriate analytical tools. A large group of CERES researchers has taken up this task. At the most fundamental level this has meant that the CERES research community rejects regarding globalization as an anonymous and autonomous force (both ideologically and empirically) and instead proposes to look at it as a macro-phenomenon that is driven by micro-forces (e.g. companies) and as a social process based in and regulated by social and political institutions.

The concept has proven to be inspiring and fruitful for most of the CERES projects. The concept of globalization is not just an umbrella concept for CERES researchers. It has reached a considerable degree of operationalization in day-to-day research activity, analysis and thinking. It should be pointed out that the fruitful and critical adaptation of the concept of globalization/glocalization is closely linked to the fact that CERES provides an excellent framework for this adaptation because of its world-wide orientation. The variety of CERES research projects in fact covers the globe and its researchers are marked by their international or global orientation. Consequently, CERES constitutes a favourable breeding ground for this concept to flourish and to become operationalized in concrete and specific research questions, concepts and methods.

Time-space compression

Globalization is a complex, multifaceted and multi-layered process, but the principle that stands at its roots is about time-space compression. It refers to the fact that flows of people, goods, capital, finance, commodities, images, symbols, technology and information increasingly span the globe (Appadurai, 1990; Hannerz, 1992). Distant localities are linked in such a way that local happenings are shaped by events occurring many miles away and vice versa. Social relations become disembedded, that is, they are increasingly "lifted out" of the context of local interaction (Giddens, 1990). Definitions used by CERES researchers frequently draw upon these well-known descriptions.

The concept has gained popularity in recent decades, but some argue that it is in fact not a new phenomenon and that it goes back to at least the sixteenth century. However, the processes to which it refers have intensified considerably in recent decades and ever more people are increasingly confronted with global flows on a daily basis. We not only see that flows, relations and structures increasingly adopt global dimensions, as a consequence we also have to acknowledge that individual actors, groups, and local institutions are increasingly challenged in their ways of acting, operating and thinking by these global flows. They need to answer to these challenges by repositioning themselves, modifying their strategies, adapting their identities, reconstituting their boundaries.

Although we have stressed globalization as a multifaceted understanding, it has been the economic dimension that has attracted much attention. We may refer to working programme 4 that focuses on macro-economics, international economic factors, the role of the World Bank and the impact of national economic policies. For ISS economist Jansen globalization refers to the increase of foreign trade per capita or of foreign investments, to the repositioning of national economies within the world markets. In broad economic terms, globalization also entails the fact that the impact of the global economy on the livelihood of all mankind is increasing and the fact that economic inequality is as pressing as ever. In relative terms economic exchanges and interrelations still mainly take place between the three central regions of the world: North America, Western Europe and Eastern Asia. The share of most countries in Africa, Asia and Latin America as well as Eastern Europe in international economic indicators has not increased, but that does not deny the fact that in absolute terms also most of these regions face increasing flows of goods, investment, capital, and finance. Again, here we must take note of the fact that some regions, for example in Africa, have increasingly become delinked from global flows and that some countries, for example Iraq and Cuba, have largely been excluded from the “world community”. At the same time, there are countries that want to delink themselves (e.g. Afghanistan).

The global economy is also increasingly producing an informational economy, i.e. productivity and competitiveness increasingly depend on the capacity to generate and get access to knowledge based information, which exercises great pressure on countries that do not participate in global and corporate networks of technological innovation (Mani). Modern technologies have shaped the infrastructure of globalization in finance, capital mobility and export-oriented business activity. The revolution in information, communication and transport technologies has both been a condition for globalization to emerge and has set new standards globally in the economy and elsewhere. It has made possible the development of world-wide commodity chains and market channels (Knorringa, 1999).

Processes of globalization also manifest themselves in other societal domains that are being studied by CERES researchers. There is an increasing emphasis on studying problems of migration, diaspora, tourism and asylum seekers in working programmes 2, 5 and 8 (global flows of people). The study of globalization points to the focus on the comparison and interchange of business cultures in various parts of the world in working programme 8. In the area of international relations and politics, globalization is connected with a profound transformation of the previous territorial order on the basis of national states. These are undermined by the processes that concern the state’s capacity to control its territory in terms of administration and control (borders etc.) and legitimacy. The sovereign state as the platform for the ‘ultimate bundling of authority’ seems to be a thing of the past (see Dijkink & Knippenberg e.a., 2001, and the work of others in working programme 5). The contemporary nation-state is in fact “leaking” sovereignty upwards to the international arena and downwards through decentralization and the erosion of administrative capacities (see RAWOO, 2000). The interesting work done in CERES about NGO’s is also extremely relevant here (Hilhorst, Salih, Van Haaren).

The institutional consequences of globalization and the need for regulative instruments in the global framework are underscored by CERES researchers disclosing a critical attitude vis-à-vis global processes. In this context, Opschoor (1999) calls for radical reforms on a global institutional level aiming at controlling the risks and dangers that (can) result from unregulated globalization. This would include the reinforcement of states, institutions in civil society and international institutions. In similar vein, Leisink (1999) exemplifies the quest for global regulative mechanisms regarding labour standards such as ILO regulations, bi-lateral or multilateral agreements. These and other developments underscore Dijkink and Knippenberg’s e.a. conclusion that ‘the world is waiting for new institutional answers that resonate with the world of experience’ (2001: 19). Others within CERES call for a critical attitude towards such attempts of global regulation.

For anthropologists within CERES, the concept of globalization acquires meaning by looking at processes of culture change. For Van Binsbergen globalization means a radical increase of the importance of virtuality within local cultural conditions, i.e. an increasing and substantial part of local culture is made up of those elements which stem from elsewhere and whose reference to social reality within their original cultural and social context has been lost. As a result, the establishment of meaningful contemporary symbolic connections between alien (space and/or time) contents and other aspects of the local culture and society is increasingly problematic leading to fragmentation and confusion. Social space and geographical space no longer coincide, although this is more meaningful for some groups than for others.

Another way of operationalizing globalization is by looking at the flow of objects of material culture that are incorporated in different frames of meaning in various contexts, as is currently being done in a research project of Venbrux in working programme 7. The trajectory of material objects through different contexts, actors and meanings becomes a "looking glass" for more general questions. Where Venbrux studies the flow of objects through different cultural contexts acquiring different meanings in these contexts, Dahles and Van Meijl (2000) study the movement of people with a "tourist gaze" through different local settings encouraging local actors to redefine and reconstruct their sense of authenticity and identity.

The global-local nexus

Global forces, flows and the transformative effects they produce do not operate autonomously nor on a tabula rasa*. They are driven by (complex networks of) identifiable actors and they interact with actors and processes in particular regional contexts. The latter is an important issue for most CERES researchers as they argue against the view that globalization would be a process that leads to increasing homogenization and convergence all over the world in cultural, social and economic dimensions. Instead, they put forward a view that sees a close association and interaction between the global and the local, between globalization and localization. Hence, the concept of glocalization is frequently put forward, referring to Robertson's original contribution (see e.g. De Haan, 2000; Vellinga, 1999; Kalb, 2000). For some authors the interaction between the two elements constitutes the nucleus of globalization itself. Van Binsbergen has argued that globalization is about the interplay between unbounded world-wide flows and the selective framing of such flows within localized contexts, leading to an eddy of particularism, social localization, within the unbounded global flow (1999: 275). In short, the interplay between the global and the local is crucial here.*

In general terms, the notion of localization seems to possess two broad connotations. The first is minimalist and merely analytical and stresses the fact that all globalising forces are always mediated by local arrangements, bodies of meanings and actors etc. Concepts that relate to this interpretation are appropriation and embeddedness. The second connotation is more maximalist and political and refers to the more or less conscious attempts by (local) groups to oppose and answer to the (perceived) effects, challenges and threats of global forces. The latter interpretation is used in the study of regionalist or (sub)nationalist political movements and also in the case of the reinvention of tradition and identity as an answer to the loss of identity that may result from homogenizing forces (see working programmes 5 and 7). However, even the efforts of fundamentalist movements and countries to resist or partially delink from global processes, such as Iran, must be seen as an integral part of these processes themselves (see Robertson, 1992).

Within CERES there is ample attention to the processes of localization and mediation at different levels of abstraction. In working programme 2, the work of Arce and Long (2000) elaborates this point when looking at the concept of modernity. They explore how ideas and practices of modernity are appropriated and re-embedded in locally situated practices, thus accelerating the fragmentation and dispersal of multiple modernities and generating counter tendencies and divergent patterns of development. They propose to use the concept of "localized modernities" because it can account for the multiplicity of forms of modernity that leads to the de-centering of the once assumed homogeneous Western path of development. Instead they emphasize fusion, blending and counter-movements through the disembedding of Western standards, de-essentializing elements of modernity and re-embedding them in various local representations.

In working programme 7, Otto and Borsboom (1997) analyze the relationship between cultural change and external (read: (post)colonial) influence in Oceania. The resilience of local cultures is explained by the different modalities in which they have accommodated and mediated exogenous influences and that range from incorporation to displacement. In sum, they study indigenous interpretations and responses to external forces. A joint research project between members of working programmes 7 and 8 about the effects and meaning of tourism in Southeast Asia and the Pacific Region makes a similar case on the basis of local level ethnographic research. Dahles and Van Meijl (2000) argue that local people in popular tourist destinations should not be regarded as powerless victims but as actors who develop strategies aimed at using the interest of tourists in local culture to strengthen local identities and political agendas. Through their entrepreneurship in tourism, local people enter the national and global stage negotiating the margins of their cultural and ethnic autonomy and local self management (2000: 54-55).

The logic of localization and mediation of global processes is studied in other CERES working programmes as well. One can think of how global flows of technology and bodies of knowledge influence economic and environmental projects interacting with local knowledge (working programmes 1 and 2) or being counteracted by local production of knowledge influencing medical practices (working programme 6). Legal pluralism is an unavoidable consequence of the differentiation of legal institutional frameworks on supranational, national, regional, and local levels interacting with customary law (working programmes 1 and 7). In the study of economic processes, global and local processes can be seen to be active in the implementation of structural adjustment programmes elaborated by international or supranational institutions and the filtering of consequences for local producers and national economies in working programme 4. The reframing of problems of governance and politics within the global-local nexus will be discussed below under 'governance'.

In a fine piece of research, Zhang (2000) has studied the way in which global economic developments, policy environments and market conditions have shaped financial liberalization in Korea and Thailand. While both countries embarked on comparable projects, the strategies they adopted and the results the gained differed profoundly. He explains this by looking at the political and institutional sources of financial policy choices. This leads him to explore the specific nature of the history, politics and culture of crucial decision-making bodies and the relationship between the private sector and the state in Korea and Thailand respectively. The global push for financial liberalization was thus shaped critically by national institutional, political and economic characteristics. For Vellinga (1999: 5) 'the study of the interactions between global trends and subregionally embedded production and service systems, supported by social, political and cultural-regional idiosyncracies, is essential to our understanding of the movements and countermovements that form part of the globalization process.' As Zhang and Vellinga show, global economic forces are conditioned by nationally and regionally generated production, knowledge, institutional structures and power relations. These form part of the context for national and regional development and differ considerably in their capacity to promote, empower and guide innovative entrepreneurial activity, both private and public. Globalization is not an alien force that does away with these differences.

Also in working programme 3, Helmsing (2000) further elaborates on this point with concepts such as 'territorially embedded clusters' and 'learning regions'. In his view the workings of global forces and the degree with which they can contribute to sustained economic change is decisively conditioned by regional processes of learning. These involve the consolidation of business and policy networks and the sharing of tacit knowledge embodied in organizational routines and interactions between firms, universities, local authorities, financial institutions and intermediary and support organizations. The research interest in knowledge production and technology does not primarily lie in understanding rational, officialized and formalized expertise and technology. Instead, the ways in which such technology becomes incorporated, localized, domesticated, reworked and adapted to local, regional and national circumstances by groups or organized actors are stressed.

Empirical analyses in CERES tend to convey the idea that the process and outcomes of globalization depend on social power relationships, local development paths, territorially engraved social institutions and the nature of and possible action within social networks, and cannot simply be deducted from any general framework, let alone the reductionistic and finalistic version that has become the world's dominant Grand Narrative in the past ten years (Kalb, 2000: xx). This will enable scholars to account for complexity, contingency, diversity and contradiction.

Mapping a changing world

The dynamics of globalization and localization are gradually undermining our conventional mapping of the world. It no longer allows us to think in relatively ordered categories in which research projects can routinely be framed. Distinctions between categories such as Western and non-Western, developing and developed countries, or first, second and third world, between rurality and urbanism, territory and identity have been widely used, but among CERES researchers there is a growing consensus that such distinctions are highly problematic. They used to refer to comprehensible and identifiable objects, but seem to be losing their stable and circumscribed character. Boundaries are increasingly blurred. An ethnography of a rural village in Mexico will increasingly require attention for the interrelations between the villagers and their *compadres* who migrated to the United States (see e.g. Nuijten, 1998). A research project about Maghreb migration and multi-locality in working programme 5 further illustrates this point (De Haas).

It seems very likely that the concept of transnationalism will acquire more weight in CERES research in the near future. A study of the modern peasant economy will not only have to focus on peasant production and organization but will have to incorporate the study of spatial mobility, rural-urban interactions and the integration of agricultural products into global commodity chains. Work done by Bryceson in working programme 2 about sub-Saharan Africa has convincingly shown that the socio-economic effects of structural adjustment programmes and liberalization have generated profound shifts in the socio-economic and socio-cultural organization of peasant communities that are inadequately acknowledged by existing conceptual frameworks. They mask the linkages that individuals and households are establishing between urban and rural areas, between different occupations, income sources and social identities (Bryceson&Jamal, 1997; Bryceson, 1999). These studies convincingly claim that boundaries between informal, formal and peasant economies, between urban and rural livelihood in Africa are blurring.

Instead of the ordered image of clearly circumscribed categories such as those of state, economy and civil society within the framework of the nation-state researchers now look at networks of firms, state agencies, NGO's, donor agencies and UN-organizations. As a focus of research the junctions and disjunctions, the connections and tensions, the relations and interactions come to the fore as new research topics at the expense of formerly stable and bounded entities and categories. Research is shifting towards the problems of boundary constructions, cross-over, in-betweenness, connections, linkages and networks.

Furthermore, the concept of globalization not only points to the blurring of conventional categories, it also takes up connotations of rapid change, shifts and transformations. It points to turbulence, ambiguity, flux and instability. This dealing with change and movement generates a number of prominent research topics which highlight the resulting tension between continuity and change, between stability and instability, with the ensuing risks and options. This tension is reflected in the emphasis on the quest for sustainability *vis-à-vis* economic change and environmental degradation; on the need for social security networks in the face of livelihood being threatened by ecological, economic and social transformations; on the need for institution building *vis-à-vis* the study of conflict, man-made disaster and violence and of the rise of dangerous expressions of nationalism; on the viability of relatively stable identity constructions in the face of fragmentation and global flows of meanings; on the role of managers in organizations *vis-à-vis* the fact that turbulence undermines rational management strategies. In all these topics and cases the possibility and need for continuity and stability in a rapidly changing global world as well as the ways specific actors try to deal with these changes are at stake.

However, not all CERES researchers would agree with such a radical stress on change. Not everything has become fluid. There is a variety of opinions about the actual degree in which the blurring of boundaries and intense change is taking place. Several CERES researchers make a case for the continued academic attention to long-lived institutions. Scholars like Knippenberg and Vellinga stress that conventional categories such as territory and the state have not been erased from the global map; their roles have been modified and they have taken up different functions within the global context. According to Vellinga (1999: 6-8) the state has retained an important role in guiding and regulating domestic economic and social policies and still has considerable decision making power

with regard to national resources and geographical differences do have their impact on differential outcomes of globalization (Vellinga, 1999: 6-8).

Others have pointed out that an excessive focus on change and “movement” will run the risk of underestimating the strength of continuity and “tradition”. The past, continuity and tradition are not equal to stasis and ‘never objectively given but always and everywhere selectively and dynamically fashioned by the current generation’ (Otto e.a., 1997: 2). Finding a way between strong claims of territoriality or virtuality, between change or stasis, the local or the global is the task of a ‘sobering social science perspective’ (Kalb, 2000: 2) that can avoid the pitfalls of post-modern narrativism and globalism devoid of agents and institutions.

Livelihood

There is much at stake in a globalizing world. As outlined above, within the globalization framework there is a general concern for social security, stability, sustainability, safeguard against violence and disaster, trust, meaning and identity. Many of these concerns come together in the concept of livelihood. It is another of the articulating concepts. It highlights individuals and groups striving to make a living, attempting to meet their various consumption and economic necessities, coping with uncertainties, responding to new opportunities, and choosing between various value positions. It is not limited to a conventional anchorage point such as the household, the community, the production sector or commodity chain, but also chains of households, wide-ranging interpersonal networks embracing a variety of activities and cross-cutting urban and rural contexts and national frontiers. It not only includes conventional categories of material resources, labour and capital, but also time, information, identity, life styles, status, identification with or distantiation from other modes of living and types of social persons (Long, 2000: 196-197).

This outline of the concept of livelihood by Long shows that the concept points to a wide range of aspects of the life and life-world of specific actors, including ecological, economic, social, political and cultural aspects. Livelihood is about material conditions (ecological and biological), about material (re)production (variety of often combined economic activities) and the primary process of organizations, about social relations (kinship, communities and networks), about power relations in the struggle over resources, and about meaning-making, identity constructions, gender, and life styles. It is about objective as well as subjective dimensions: about means, meanings and the power to change conditions. It is similar to the concept of resource dynamics and can be defined in terms of access to various kinds of capital, as classified in terms of produced, human, natural, social and cultural capital by Bebbington (1999: 2022, 2034).

Although the application of the concept of livelihood and the concerns expressed by this concept are characteristic of various working programmes and a large number of research projects there is still considerable variety in the ways in which livelihood is conceptualized. The broad outline given by Norman Long mentioned above differs from the one proposed by Ellis (2000). The latter narrows the primary focus to households, writing strictly about household livelihood and includes wider social networks in his concept of social capital, whereas Long also includes chains of households and global interpersonal networks in his primary focus. Ellis focuses on rural livelihood whereas Long writes about livelihood in various contexts. Moreover, there is quite some variety as to the specific classifications of the various kinds of capital or assets that are at stake.

Ellis writes about various kinds of capital or assets, the access to which is determined by social relations, institutions and organizations. Together with contextual factors such as trends and shocks, the access to assets determines the livelihood strategies of households. These strategies influence livelihood security and environmental sustainability. Conceptualizations of livelihood strategies such as the ones by Ellis and Bebbington are framed in terms of models, factors and variables which may run the risk of becoming rather static (despite the fact that Ellis himself explicitly warns against such risks). On the other hand, we have approaches that demonstrate more process-oriented or diachronic ways of studying livelihood problems. Among several CERES researchers there is an interesting quest for a methodology which may enable such diachronic approaches.

The research by Van Dijk and De Bruijn is very interesting in this respect. They focus on the ways pastoralists in the Sahel deal with ecological and climate change in a historical perspective

emphasizing that resources and the relations between resources may not be the crucial point in livelihood strategies, but rather the ways the actors deal with them. They criticize existing explanatory models for reducing the intricacies and complexities of these ways to static models and standard situations. As a result, these models are incapable of grasping the very dynamic and unpredictable processes and may be more oriented towards control than towards understanding. In order to grasp these dynamics they put forward the concept of pathways that stress variability, opportunism, flexibility and improvization in an historical and strongly actor-oriented approach. In their view, the key to understanding how pastoralists confront insecurity lies in the reconstruction of this historical process of dealing with climate and ecological variation.

Livelihood, globalization and resource dynamics

Despite the differences among the various approaches to livelihood, the concept as such fits very well into the CERES framework. First of all, it expresses a genuine concern for the quality of live, of the actors concerned. It definitely looks at processes and problems of livelihood from the point of view of this basic concern. This concern expresses the same commitment as we mentioned in relation to the concept of development. The concept of livelihood has the advantage over the concept of development that it is not associated with a naive sense of developmental optimism nor with ethnocentric paternalism. Livelihood is used in a more modest or sobering manner about survival and coping with risks, problems, incursions and threats. It also lacks the limitation of development studies to the non-Western world. There is no reason why the concept could not be applied to the situation in the Western world (see the work of Coenen and others in working programme 5).

Secondly, the discussions about livelihood reflect the same concerns regarding globalization and as such it may provide a focus for research embedded in the global-local nexus. Where this nexus stresses difference and the blurring of boundaries, the same can be said about these discussions. Both Ellis (2000) and Bryceson (1999)2[2] point to the fact that the ways in which actors try to make a living are marked by a shifting variety of different activities. These activities may be realized by actors involved in complex networks. Difference is the key word here.

Thirdly, the concept of livelihood refers to assets and various kinds of capital and as such may easily be linked up with the concept of resource dynamics which uses a similar terminology. Because of its variety of relevant expertise CERES presents a fruitful framework for refining this concept of livelihood and support specific research programmes and projects on livelihood subjects.

The concept of livelihood includes both material and immaterial elements and dimensions. One of the contributions which CERES is able to make to the livelihood debate derives from its expertise in articulating both kinds of elements in its research programmes. We see this e.g. in the co-operation of bèta and gamma scientists in working programme 1 in which expertise of biophysical, ecological, economic, natural and spatial aspects is linked to knowledge about social, cultural, legal and political aspects. These linkages lead to fruitful hybrid approaches of processes such as ecological degradation, knowledge construction, economic inefficiencies, and social insecurities (see chapter 5).

Identity formation

The identifications of actors themselves are not forgotten by CERES research as actors feature in a central way in resource dynamics. There is attention for the construction of self, the formation of identity and processes of identification in relation to natural and social contexts. This holds true not only for working programme 7, in which the constructions of identity and self constitute the ‘core business’. In this programme, for example, the use of religion in such construction processes in Africa, Latin America, the Pacific and The Netherlands is highlighted. For example, a Free University based project (Droogers et al) studies daily processes of religious meaning making in The Netherlands applying qualitative research methods. They oppose the dominance of exclusively quantitatively based

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2[2] Bryceson criticizes those who use the concept for not paying enough attention to this variation, whereas Ellis includes this variation in his definition of livelihood.

claims about the loss of religion. Other cultural repertoires are studied for example as they are used in the construction of identities and identifications in situations of violence and conflict.

Also in other programmes these concepts are relevant. In working programme 8 one of the topics constitutes the processes whereby co-workers develop some kind of commitment to and identification with their work and 'their' organization in times of individualization and flexibilization of labour contracts and relations (Van Wijk, Verweel, Koot). In working programme 3 gender issues are taken up in the study of locally initiated development initiatives and the gendered consequences of structural adjustment programmes (Baud). The issue of gender is also taken up by Nencel (2001) in her study on Peruvian prostitutes. In working programme 5 the positions of ethnicity and nationalism are viewed as crucial elements of contemporary Central and Eastern Europe. Issues of identity and gender are also taken up in relation to agrarian transformation in working programme 2 (e.g. Howard-Borjas).

Most CERES researchers would agree that the concept of identity does not refer to fixed, clearly circumscribed and homogeneous definitions, but rather to layered and flexible narratives of self in which various symbols, meanings and identifications are clustered. To some extent these identifications and symbols depend on contexts. Moreover, the construction processes and the ways actors deal with these identifications, meanings and symbols rather than the relatively final meaningful "products" come to the fore. Hence the preference for the use of terms like "identification" or "identity construction" which are to be situated in the context of power relations and relevant discourses or cultural repertoires. A nice example of such approach is presented by the study of the constructions of 'aboriginality' by Borsboom and Hulsker (2000).

In a key publication of working programme 7 in which also researchers from other programmes collaborated, it is stated that the construction of identity and processes of identification need to be studied in a framework of meaning construction, power relations and cultural patterns on which subjects are able to draw. Three constitutive elements can be distinguished in instances of identification: (i) self-reflexive human actors who in their presentation to others appeal to identities to make sense of their relationships; (ii) acts of identification need cultural constructions or symbols to be effectuated; and (iii) the allocation of identities connects actors with a social environment characterised by differential access to economic, political and symbolic resources (Driessen & Otto, 2000: 11).

Globalization and multiculturalism

One of the strong points of CERES research on identity constructions constitutes the fact that its approach is firmly embedded in processes of globalization and localization as an ever more important framework in which identity constructions take place (e.g. Borsboom & Otto, 1997). Identity is a concept which may interrelate personal and public issues, refers to the ways people position themselves and others in changing social conditions. This positioning becomes ever more important when such changes become more dramatic, sweeping and encompassing in the framework of globalization. Networks of temporary and flexible social relations which span large distances and which include a variety of cultural influences emerge as the framework for identity constructions. Within this framework the former emphasis on stability, unity, certainty, clarity, and essence is giving way to fragmentation, insecurity, multiplicity, and ambiguity as basic traits of identity constructions.

There are several perspectives on the consequences of globalization for culture and identity constructions. Some use the term McDonaldization claiming that cultural convergence and growing sameness set the tone. Others hold that multiculturalism is becoming dominant on various levels with its opportunities (cultural differences as valuable resources for contemporary societies) and risks (cultural difference as causing conflict, rivalry, violence, social disintegration, social inequality, and exclusion). Still others highlight processes of bricolage, creolization, hybridization, the mixing of cultural elements stemming from different sources. In particular the multicultural conception and the mixing processes are taken up by CERES researchers stressing difference and process.

Multiculturalism emerges as a basic characteristic of contemporary societies, life worlds and organizations. It points to cultural pluralization connected to individualization, ethnification and globalization linked to the recession of traditional cultural and social frameworks, which for their part may be reinvented as constitutive parts of this cultural plurality. In any case, the former triad of territory, culture and identity is evaporating. Here the question is raised regarding the consequences of

multiculturalism for social inequality and cohesion. Another question points to the consequences of multiculturalism for the management of organizations.

Within working programme 5 research is conducted into very specific expressions of multiculturalism in class rooms in The Netherlands (Verkuyten, 1999) and the Ukraine (Janmaat, 2000). Researchers of working programme 7 and others within CERES put forward a conception of identity in general, and ethnic identity in particular, which tries to balance a focus on both interests and symbolic meanings, on cognition and affective aspects, on continuity and change, on similarities and difference, on particular individual choices and social determination, and on awareness of common origin and destiny and cultural differences. The effort is to articulate a focus on individual meanings, images, emotions and experiences of identity emphasizing mental dimensions with the study of publicly created and communicated categories and positions leading to expectations of behaviour, and paying attention to the pragmatic, strategic and political aspects of the use of identity constructions in social interactions (see e.g. Verkuyten, 1999).

Central questions

One of the central research questions regarding identity constructions deals with the interactions between the public images and identity formats, as they are constructed and propagated by institutions like churches, mass media and state organizations on the one hand, and the ways in which individuals and groups of actors deal with such public identities, rework them and adapt them to their own interests on the other hand. Such interactions are studied by Droogers and Miguez regarding pentecostal churches and 'lay' people and by Knippenberg in the form of state agencies and formats of citizenship and national identity. In working programme 8 similar questions are raised regarding the ways co-workers position themselves *vis-à-vis* identity images that are handed over to them in the form of management driven formulations of corporate identity.

Another cluster of questions focuses on the ways general social and cultural relations and power contexts interrelate with identity constructions. In which ways are general models of stratification and exclusion in ethnic terms reflected in the daily symbolic struggles. How can we understand the layered or composite character of self and identity related to various contexts and spheres of life in which the individual actors are involved? To what extent are individual actors still able to construct some kind of stability and continuity in their constructions and narratives of self in the face of rapidly changing conditions, individualization and turbulence? Do we see the rise of performative and relational aspects at the expense of rather self-identifying or biographical aspects of identity constructions? How are these narratives of self internally structured and how do they relate to social and natural contexts? How can we deal with the process-oriented character of identity constructions using biographical approaches?

Governance

The concept of resource dynamics refers to the interrelationship between actors, resources and institutions. To a large extent these interrelations are shaped by processes and initiatives of government, organization, policy, and management. In livelihood definitions the latter topics play a crucial role in mediating the access of actors to assets and capital.

To some extent each research project is related to such questions, not only those in working programmes 5 and 8 which concentrate on these topics in particular. Disjunctions between policies developed on the basis of the idea of some sort of basic equilibrium and standard situation which apparently needs to be restored on the one hand and the highly variable, opportunistic and flexible dealings of actors themselves are demonstrated in various research projects. They criticize the inadequacies of current policy conceptions and evaluation methods. In working programme 2 Rap shows that basic power struggles involving various institutional and political actors lie behind the daily management problems of irrigation systems in Mexico. The role of educational policies in fomenting nationalism is apparent in the studies in working programme 5 on Central and Eastern Europe. Also the role of political culture in management styles in Chile must be mentioned here (Peppelenbos, working programme 1).

In this framework the concept of governance is being stressed. It is not just about ways in which trendy policy concepts such as “good governance” or “institution building” or “participatory methods” or rather more theoretically based concepts such as “community based organizations” influence development policies and discourses. The concept also refers to problems such as the quality of service delivery and production which are outside the scope of “development” debates.

Networks and steering

In conventional terms governance refers first of all to the (functioning of) state agencies. Here it must be stressed here that there is a wide variety of conceptualizations of the state among CERES researchers. This variety stretches from a rather unitarian and centralized conception emphasizing its deliberate intervention capacity to a decentred conception, which implies a more modest view on its capacity of centralized intentionality and conceives the state primarily as a process of mainly tying together, multiplying and co-ordinating power relations, a kind of knotting or congealing of power (Nuijten). Different aspects of the state are taken up such as distinguishing levels of management interacting with the ways the primary process works (Gastelaars) or various levels of government (national, regional and local) and the trend towards decentralization (Helmsing).

Nevertheless, in the work of many researchers we see major shifts going on in theoretical as well as in research designs regarding state as well as private organizations. The institutional and organizational frameworks seem to be shifting away from well-established hierarchical and corporatist structures (states, firms) with narrowly circumscribed boundaries between organisation and environment to a more flexible approach which understands organizations as networks of temporarily established relations between various actors, groups and institutions with rather porous boundaries.

The concept of governance points to changing roles of government vis-à-vis society. It is no longer a matter of trying to govern in a direct way, but at a distance using instruments such as output financing and accountability mechanisms supervising (semi)autonomous organizations which are supposed to deliver a socially relevant service. This type of governing is related to the concept of new public management. Such a concept requires a critical deconstruction in terms of process, power, internal contradictions and the reworking of its consequences for practices and meaning making of individual actors such as clients, citizens and co-workers.

Where direct government intervention is reduced, governments become players among several others in for example economic networks and clusters. They provide market and product information, tools and technologies, and skills. We have firms and government institutions working together to create trade associations, apprenticeship programmes, labour education facilities, joint-marketing arrangements, regulatory commissions. We see business associations, private interest and government institutions facilitating negotiations between entrepreneurs and labour associations, establishing norms and standards for products, best practices and codes of conduct. In short, we see the rise of policy networks of firms, (labour and business) associations and government institutions developing common industrial policy (Helmsing, 2000).

Networks are also emphasized by research on the management of natural resources and the environment. This management is not just embedded and does not just depend on the institutional capacity of the narrowly circumscribed local community organization, but also on the relations of power and discourses within largely deterritorialized constellations. These constellations involve not only landless peasants and community-level authorities, but also absentee landlords and state officials in various cities and migrants (Nuijten, 1998). Here we see the emphasis on relational aspects instead of well defined categories and social units, as discussed above related to glocalization, now demonstrated in the field of organization and governance. The importance of NGOs in contemporary structures of governance and global networks and their contested embeddedness in discourses about globalization and development must be stressed (Hilhorst, 2000). The concept of network not only refers to relations between organizations, but also to the fact that organizations tend to transform themselves internally into networks.

The blurring of conventional boundaries and distinctions is closely linked to the concept of network. Also the conventional conceptual distinctions between state, economy and civil society as well as the difference between public and private organisations must be modified. In everyday

organizational life these distinctions and differences are becoming less important. Furthermore, the blurring of distinctions refers also to the hitherto rather separately developed theories and literature regarding policy and government influence on society on the one hand and management and organization studies on the other hand. Instead, we see a focus on organizing as a practice and as a process of sense making within these emerging networks which do no halt at national frontiers. It is a search for steering aspects in organizing practices related to discourse and narrative (see Leisink, 1999) in combination with paying attention to the ways these organizing practices are intertwined with power and ideological aspects (Nuijten, 1998).

The concept of governance must be located within this search for steering and organizing practices and in the context of the blurring of management and organizational questions on the one hand and government and policy problems on the other. Governance refers both to policy and societal steering processes and to processes of corporate and organizational management. In this respect there is no convincing argument to uphold any distinction between such problems raised in a Western or a non-Western context where the particularity of each specific context and situation comes to the fore.

Focal points

In addition to the redefinition of institutions and steering processes in terms of networks and governance other strong points as developed by the research within CERES can be mentioned. One of them is presented by the study of relations between actions and discourses linked to policies on the one hand and the ways clients, local communities, “beneficiaries” or “target groups” are dealing with these discourses and actions on the other hand. It highlights the increasing societal character of policy and governance involving a variety of actors and institutions interacting and struggling with each other instead of a centred, rational and instrumental conception of policy and government (see the work of Beukema and Van Berkel in working programme 5).

In a similar way Zhang (working programme 4) shows how various private and public actors are involved in shaping the financial liberalization policies in Korea and Thailand (2000). Nuijten (1998) calls for the need to study the ways in which rituals, administrative practices and techniques of government become articulated with organizing practices. She stresses, however, that we should not a priori presume the effectivity of administrative techniques or that they must end up in complete domination over individual actors.

There is much expertise about the embedding of policy and organization initiatives and practices within the life-world and livelihood of the social actors involved. For example, the relation between organizational performance in terms of the primary process of production or service delivery and its impact on the livelihood and life-worlds of specific clients and customers comes to the fore. Hilhorst applies the concept of organizational practices of a Philippine NGO, combined with a focus on creating boundaries, the embeddedness of the actors involved in their life-worlds and the discourses relevant in these life-worlds as well as the strategic use of various public discourses. The organization is ‘a contested, often temporal outcome of organizing processes’ (Hilhorst, 2000:15).

The emphasis in CERES research on organizations is on meaning more than on means and their embedding in life-worlds. Such embedding raises questions of culture, identity, socialization and biographical aspects of those actors in relation to their organization practices and those of others. A nice example of these relations between organizational practices and meaning making is presented by the fact that formal organizational accountability procedures such as control mechanisms of monitoring and evaluation may easily clash with the need for trust and confidence in daily interactions within and between organizations. This was demonstrated by the case of development co-operation between a Dutch donor agency and a Chilean NGO (Kamsteeg, 1999). The emphasis on the often shifting and temporary character of alliances and networks calls attention to the fact that the establishment of trust between organizations and actors constitutes a crucial factor in the development of such networks. In this respect a distinction is made between ascribed trust, based on kinship and common ethnicity, and earned trust accumulated in successful business transactions (Knorringa, 1999; Smets, Wels & Van Loon, 1999).

The multicultural embeddedness of policies and organizations appears as another issue in CERES research. For example, existing policy concepts of national citizenship tend to ignore the increasing

transnational character of identity constructions which emerge within networks as their basic institutional frameworks, as CERES research is able to demonstrate. Such existing policy concepts reintroduce new legal inequalities and deny the diversity in individual identities thus complicating social cohesion and co-ordination. After all, citizenship can no longer be based on culture when cultural and social space no longer coincide with territorial space (see Dijkstra, Geuijen & De Ruijter, 2001).

Another strong point which merits further elaboration concerns the impact of organizational networking on learning processes and the competence development of specific actors within organizational settings. It might open up an interesting road for further co-operation between working programmes 3 and 8. The same holds true for the management of economic and technological networks of global communication and information creating their own processes of exclusion and inclusion.

Clustering concepts and resource dynamics

The four clustering concepts discussed in this chapter shape our understanding of resource dynamics in a decisive way.3[3] Globalization is the process which increasingly permeates the dynamics of the configurations as well as of the agents, resources and institutions themselves. Each of the constituent parts of the dynamics of agents, resources and institutions is shaped by this process pointing to the blurring of boundaries, the emergence of new inequalities and rapid change creating new opportunities as well as risks in different configurations world-wide. The concept of livelihood takes up many of the concerns which are expressed about these risks and opportunities in glocal dynamics. It calls attention to the access of agents to a variety of resources, an access which is mediated by cultural patterns and social institutions. These cultural patterns and the ways in which agents individually and group-wise relate to them, touch the heart of the concept of identity formation. The fact that narratives of self and identification, for example in gendered or ethnic terms, are crucial elements of the strong actor-oriented orientation of many CERES research projects goes without saying. Particularly networks, governments, policies and organizations come to the fore among the social institutions which partly determine the access of agents to resources. They all point to importance of the concept of governance which is also very relevant for the policy orientation as basic trait of CERES research (see chapter 5).

There are many other relevant connections between these clustering concepts and the central concept of resource dynamics to be made. It shows that the further development of these clustering concepts may provide promising results for the further deepening of our understanding of resource dynamics.

Highlights of CERES research

In the preceding chapters the central concepts and the basic contents of CERES research have been discussed. In this discussion the wide variety of themes and topics has been alluded to and several of the qualities of CERES research as well as some basic methodological challenges have been dealt with. In this chapter some of the strong points and methodological issues will feature in a more systematic way as a contribution to the further elaboration of the research profile of CERES.

Global scope

A first basic characteristic of CERES research is the global coverage of its research projects. This global character has been reinforced by the recent expansion of already existing research projects

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3[3] We would like to stress here that central meanings of these four concepts become intertwined and interrelated in each of the eight working programmes in various ways and with different emphasis. In other words, our text should not be interpreted as a plea for reorganizing CERES research into four working programmes along the lines of these four central concepts. Such a reorganization would entail the loss of fruitful efforts to interrelate these concepts. Moreover, we also acknowledge the fact that not only cognitive, but also organizational and social considerations lie at the heart of the formation of the existing eight working programmes. However, the discussion of these considerations remains outside of the scope of our task.

and programmes into Western areas and into the former Soviet block. As such this coverage, linked to the thematic and disciplinary pluriformity of CERES research programmes, entails that CERES provides an excellent framework to render the concepts of globalization and localization operational and fruitful in research.

The capacity to operationalize this global approach means that within the CERES framework crucial research orientations can be taken up and receive central attention. Consequently, CERES is able to provide the framework for taking up acute, pressing and important societal and policy problems and to translate them into concrete empirical research. Without any claim of being complete or exhaustive we may bring forward as examples its focus on problems related to migration, conflict and disaster, urbanization, multiculturalism, nationalism, social security, threats to labour standards and diversity of biotechnology, environmental degradation, climate change, poverty and inequality.

Policy orientation

The fact that CERES provides a framework for paying due attention to such problems is related to the concern and commitment to contribute to solving such problems. In this respect the policy orientation of CERES must be mentioned. Of course, this policy orientation varies between anthropologists, geographers and development economists, but overall the policy orientation of CERES researchers is pronounced. CERES researchers are often called upon to provide policy recommendations and to do consultancy projects, and manage to acquire external and policy oriented funding for their research projects.

However, it must be mentioned that this policy orientation is strongly embedded in a field and actor oriented approach drawing on extensive expertise on the meaning making, interpretations and livelihood strategies within the life-worlds of the actors concerned. There is much attention to the social and cultural embeddedness of policy outcomes and interactions and a rather critical attitude towards imposing predetermined policy conceptions on social reality and the relevant actors. The classical and internally oriented or positivistically minded policy research focusing on counting policy outcomes using naive evaluative methods in general falls outside of the scope of CERES research.

Furthermore, there is a general concern among CERES researchers to avoid a situation in which their own research would become too dependent on policy oriented funding. Independent sources of access to the social reality under scrutiny remain important and the same holds true for setting their own research agenda. They stress the interactive relationship between the logic and demands of policy and the curiosity or academically driven research items that come up.

Critical profile

The intention to remain relatively autonomous in managing their own research agenda is related to the fact that most CERES researchers share a critical attitude. Many CERES researchers try to develop their research profile in opposition to dominant social and scientific discourses. Here the critical attitude as discussed related to the development concept comes to the fore again.

This holds indeed true for the critical approach of dominant development discourses and neo-liberal policies as propagated by international institutions and public opinion leaders. The critical approach of the consequences of structural adjustment programmes for the productive capacities and income distributions of local actors as developed in working programme 4 must be mentioned here. Moreover, in their critique on neo-liberal and classical views on economic growth both Helmsing and Leisink (1999) distinguish a high road and a low road to industrial growth. The neo-liberal and classical approach portrays labour standards and government interventions aimed at preventing exploitation of labour and social inequality as harming free market operations. Such an approach can only lead to a low road of industrial and economic growth, whereas a considerable level of labour standards and government intervention on behalf of labour regulation may enable a strategy leading to increasing flexibility of the labour force, productivity increase, the development of labour skills, more innovation and a better organization of the value-added process, i.e. the high road to industrial growth.

This critical attitude also refers to the critique formulated in various ways against the claim of universal applicability of rationally designed and officially regulated rules, technology and expertise. The breaking up of the dominance of rational medical discourses regarding health and disease, life and death in working programme 6 presents just one among many examples. The emphasis on the local adaptation and reworking of agricultural technology in working programme 2 is another of such examples. We may add the ways Arce and Long criticize the language of development as practiced and elaborated by international development agencies in which ignorance is created, attention is drawn away from local constructions in everyday life of specific actors and from political and social concerns in favor of a 'technical, 'objectifying', 'neutral', 'predictable, 'subject to control' like discourse on development.

Among many CERES researchers there is a critical attitude as to the claims of progress which seem to be attached to rational and scientifically elaborated expertise systems or technology. For example, locally produced knowledge is taken seriously as a source for livelihood. Moreover, there is critical research being done focusing on the political nature of technology production and control in working programme 1. The concentration of global control of agricultural technology in the hands of a few private companies may lead to a sharp reduction of biological diversity and of the access of farmers and peasants world-wide to inputs.

It also holds true for the critique formulated in working programme 8 against the dominance of technical and business administration approaches of organization and management, claiming a monopoly of instrumental rationality in the understanding and steering of organizations. The concept of organizational practices assumes an opposite approach in which the focus rests on trying to understand the daily interactions, practices and meaning making instead of adopting an exclusive management focus from the point of view of the optimization of production or profit. Moreover, the critical approach of supposedly universal and rational management and policy concepts and instruments such as transparency and accountability has already been mentioned.

Interthematic

CERES is also marked by its strong interthematic character. Various issues, topics and dimensions are often studied in an articulated way combining various perspectives and disciplines. For example we see the articulation of medical knowledge and anthropological approaches of meaning making of the actors regarding health, healing, illness, death, and life in working programme 6 as well as the attention paid to mourning, trance, the experience and meaning of pain and bodily religious experiences in working programme 7 (Versteeg). Another example is presented by the work of Verkuyten (1999), who tries to bring together anthropological and social psychological approaches of ethnicity emphasizing both mental constructions of ethnicity and their strategic use in daily interactions.

The interrelations between biological, ecological, and natural elements on the one hand and social, cultural and political elements on the other play a prominent role in working programme 1. A nice example of such research is presented by Kees Jansen's study of the construction and environmental certification of bananas comparing the strategies of two major players in this field. In his approach he both concentrates on the social, strategic and symbolic struggle over these certification procedures and on the validity of the technology claims of the environmental measures proposed by both companies.

Methodological challenges

There is a strong intention and encouragement on the part of CERES to come to comparative approaches and interlinked projects (see Dietz, Nunow, Roba & Zaal, 2001; Zaal, 1998; Koonings & Kruijt, 1999). In particular the need for longitudinal comparative research design is stressed. The wide variety of projects virtually covering the globe presents an excellent opportunity for comparative efforts. However, it remains difficult to work out a methodology and, for example, to identify common parameters to compare. CERES is then confronted with the dilemma of simultaneously wanting to capitalise *on context* and to draw more general conclusions *away from context*. Of course, working programmes which use mainly quantitative methods, such as working programme 4, have a clear advantage in this respect and are able to capitalise on this advantage. The qualitatively oriented

projects of working programme 7 have much more problems in working out a comparative method. In this case the comparison is limited to confronting and interrelating the material of a number of case studies. In general, however, we may say that most of the research maintains a clear case study character and that efforts to come to a comparative approach linking the experiences and materials of various case studies demonstrate a low profile. Some researchers see a clear task for the research school to encourage discussions in order to define a common list of questions and parameters, which would allow for capitalising on the potential for comparative research.

The dominance of case studies is expressed in a wide variety of topics and themes, but it must be said that most of the research projects focus on the micro level and to a lesser degree on the meso level. This focus on micro level is related to the fact that most researchers adopt some kind of actor-oriented approach. However, the macro level is not absent. We may refer to working programme 4 focusing on macro-economics, international economic factors, the role of the World Bank and the impact of national economic policies. Second, as some researchers will claim, the concept of glocalization demonstrates that processes on the macro level become visible at the micro level and as such can be studied from this point of view. Third, the macro level does not appear so much in studying large individual players such as multinational companies, but working programme 3 does have a strong point in studying complex and extensive networks of government agencies, companies, financial and educational institutions which may link various areas in the world. Such global players may be as important as individual large companies.

Nevertheless, the ways in which the various layers and levels of analysis (global-local; micro-meso-macro) can be studied as well as the methodological and conceptual problems posed in this respect continue to puzzle the various researchers and call for further methodological discussions. To give an example of the wide variety of approaches in this respect, some conceptualize the various levels of analysis between the global and the local or between the macro and the micro in terms of a hierarchy of structures on top of actors which are positioned exclusively at the local, micro or bottom level, whereas others call for global ethnographic approaches claiming that within individual interactions between actors the global and macro levels become visible and can be studied (Burawoy, 2000).

Many CERES researchers deal with such problems by adopting a focus on actors as the point of entry of the research projects and CERES has developed considerable expertise and experience in such research. The emphasis here is on process, diachrony, pathways, and trajectories. Within this actor-oriented approach there remains a call, though, for developing an adequate action theory of the ways in which people deal with e.g. war, disaster, conflict, and drought not just focusing on constructions of discourse, but also paying due attention to practices and their patterns. On the other hand we have research approaches with models and variables as their main tools, dividing their research object into subsystems and trying to grasp the interrelations between these subsystems. There is a considerable variety of research approaches in this respect.

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Annex 1: List of respondents

Name	*WP*	*Institution*	*Place*	Date
Bruijn, M. de	1	ASC-RUL	Utrecht	18 June
Dahles, H.	8	VU	Utrecht	19 March
Driessen, H.	7	KUN	Nijmegen	21 February
Droogers, A.	7	VU	Nijmegen	21 February
Dijk, van H.	1	ASC-RUL	Utrecht	18 June
Gastelaars, M.	8	UU	Utrecht	11 July
Geest, van der S.	6	UvA	Amsterdam	6 February
Helmsing, B.	3	ISS	Den Haag	12 April
Hospes, O.	1	WAU	Utrecht	15 February
Jansen, Karel	4	ISS	Den Haag	12 April
Jansen, Kees	1	WAU	Wageningen	12 July
Knippenberg, H.	5	UvA	Amsterdam	25 June
Leisink, P.	8	UU	Utrecht	18 June
Londen, S. van	7	UU	Nijmegen	21 February
Mani, S.	3	INTECH	Utrecht	18 June
Nuijten, M.	2	WAU	Utrecht	6 July
Opschoor, H.	4	ISS	Amsterdam	12 July
Venbrux, E.	7	KUN	Nijmegen	20 June
Verkuyten, M.	5	UU	Utrecht	6 July
Verschoor, G.	2	WAU	Wageningen	15 February
Vries, de P.	2	WAU	Wageningen	6 July