Translocal and Transnational Dimensions of Advocacy on Land Deals in Cambodia

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Abstract

The aim of this dissertation was to understand the involvement of translocal and especially transnational actors in resistance to land grabs. My particular focus was on the relation between ideas and geography. I studied place-based movements around three sets of economic land concessions in Cambodia and those movements' relations, and lack of relations, with various translocal and transnational actors.

My overall thesis is (1) that one important way (among others) in which outsiders influence the geographies of local land grab struggles is through spatial imaginaries, (2) that sometimes they do so as influential "imagineers" enacting such spatial imaginaries, and (3) that such spatial imaginaries are often transmitted through uneven embodied processes that result in uneven access to them. I present five sub-theses, comprising each of the three components of the overall thesis plus two others: that spatial imaginaries can sometimes lead to decisions that result in "technological" effects in the Foucauldian sense (pathways are established that limit actors' options and shape geographies in ways that those who set them in motion cannot easily control) and that translation processes contribute to unevenness in the transmission of ideas.

I provide empirical material on the three cases through which I substantiate and develop the five sub-theses. I examine a variety of spatial imaginaries (framings, ideas about geographies, abstract concepts, approaches, and spatial imaginaries of movements) to show how they have influenced, or could influence, geographies of resistance. I analyze technological effects related to community forestry and the "follow the money" approach to challenging land grabs. I study a number of translocal and transnational imagineers, primarily individuals working with non-governmental organizations (NGOs). I interrogate unevenness in connections related to spatial imaginaries, the work put into making and using connections, and mediation. And I explore

translation of international discourses of Indigenous rights, resulting in local actors accessing those discourses in hybrid form.

In none of the three cases did the geographies materialize through local place-based movements coming together organically in "convergence spaces" as is sometimes described in Political Geography. Instead, connections were heavily mediated, often by actors who enrolled others in projects of resistance.

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List of acronyms

AAP	Alliance of Asian Peasants *(pseudonym for a regional peasant alliance)*
ANT	Actor-Network Theory
AIPP	Asia Indigenous Peoples Pact
BANDA	*Pseudonym for an international NGO that supported Cambodian NGOs*
BDD	*Pseudonym for a Cambodian NGO working on the Hengfu case*
BOOT	*Pseudonym for a nation-wide network of grassroots activists*
BRIDGE	*Pseudonym for a group of grassroots activists from different provinces*
CAO	Compliance Advisor/Ombudsman
DOMA	*Pseudonym for one of the HAGL subsidiary companies*
ELC	Economic land concession
EWMI	East West Management Institute, a US-based organization
FAN	*Pseudonym for a Cambodian NGO that preceded BDD*
FNN	Farmer and Nature Network
GAIP	Global Alliance of Indigenous Peoples *(pseudonym for an international Indigenous peoples' alliance)*
GPS	Global Positioning System
Ha	Hectare
HAGL	Hoang Anh Gia Lai
IFC	International Finance Corporation
IFSF	International Food Sovereignty Federation *(pseudonym for an international network organization)*
KARTA	*Pseudonym for an international donor organization*
LVC	La Vía Campesina

MOVE	*Pseudonym for a regional network organization*
NGO	Non-governmental organization
OHCHR	Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights
PAN	*Pseudonym for a Cambodian NGO involved in the Pheapimex case*
PEN	*Pseudonym for an international NGO working on the HAGL case*
PGA	People's Global Action
SOLO	*Pseudonym for a network-based organization whose members are international and Cambodian NGOs.*
START	*Pseudonym for a Cambodian NGO working on the HAGL case*
TAPA	*Pseudonym for an international NGO that supported Cambodian NGOs*
TIAA	Teachers Insurance and Annuity Association of America
TOP	*Pseudonym for a Cambodian NGO working in the Pheapimex concession area*
UN	United Nations
UNDRIP	United Nations Declarations on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples
USAID	United States Agency for International Development
VGGTs	Voluntary Guidelines on the Responsible Governance of Tenure of Land, Fisheries and Forests in the Context of National Food Security
WIN	*Pseudonym for a local community network in the Pheapimex concession area*

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ONE. INTRODUCTION

The involvement of translocal actors in resistance to land grabs

Across the planet, small-scale producers are losing control of the land and other resources they have owned and used. This has, of course, happened over the centuries, through different processes at different times in different places. But a community of scholars describing many of these changes – especially those of particularly large scale or involving the shift of control into corporate hands – as "land grabs", "resource grabs", or something similar have suggested that the pace, scale, and depth of change have all increased in recent years (Zoomers, 2010; Cotula, 2012; White et al., 2012; De Schutter, 2011; Margulis et al., 2013; McMichael, 2013). Scholars have documented the massive negative impacts of these new land and resource grabs, in various forms including loss of livelihoods (Gerber, 2011; White et al., 2012), destruction of culture (Abbink, 2011), violence (Grajales, 2011), and environmental destruction (Gerber, 2011), among others.

The underlying aim of this dissertation was to understand how (differently situated) transnational actors who are genuinely committed to social justice may contribute to efforts to resist land grabs. To ground it, I would examine the involvement of translocal and transnational actors in resistance to specific land grabs in Cambodia, where I had worked for many years, in addition to studying the role of transnational actors in resistance to land grabs more generally. I would try to answer questions such as: How might different actors work together more effectively? How might transnational action address areas of greatest need? How might local actors have a greater voice in shaping international work related to land grabs? Beneath these were other questions such as: What effects might transnational actors have on actors engaged in place-based movements, for example with regards to how they think or their ability to maintain their movements over time? How might transnational actors' own actions in different sites affect land

grabs in particular places, for example by generating pressure on actors involved in the grabs or changing the regulatory environment in which they operate? How do coalitions around land grabs form, and how do existing coalitions take on the issue of land grabs? What are the dynamics within such coalitions? In short, I wanted to understand the geographies of resistance to land grabs as they relate to external actors. Scholars have increasingly documented resistance to land grabs (Baird, 2010; Baird & Le Billon, 2012; Hall et al., 2015; Borras et al., 2011; Smalley & Corbera, 2012; White et al., 2012; Gerber, 2011; Rosset, 2013). But that which was of interest to me – the involvement of translocal and especially transnational actors in resistance to land grabs and the relations among them and with those directly affected by land grabs – has generally been inadequately documented and analyzed, as I will demonstrate.

Of course, translocal or transnational actors may not play significant direct roles in any given case, though they may still play significant indirect roles. And it is important to recognize the agency of local[1] actors, which means recognizing forms of resistance that may be small-scale, that receive little media attention, and that involve nonlocal actors only indirectly. This point is made clearly by Baird (2017), who cautions against focusing too much on cases involving translocal or transnational actors and urges us to pay attention to (often small-scale) resistance efforts in cases in which outside organizations are not involved. At the same time, however, I argue that it is important to understand the role of translocal and transnational actors in resistance to land grabs, as I have set out to do in this dissertation, not just to provide a more complete understanding of existing social processes but to identify how those resistance efforts could be enhanced. While local agency is important, most readers will likely agree that for all external actors to simply leave

[1] In the context of this dissertation, I use "local" to refer to actors engaged in action to address issues specific to the immediate vicinity of their own home places. I use "translocal" to refer to actors engaged in action to address issues specific to places other than their own home places, and "transnational" to refer to those engaged in action to address issues specific to countries other than their own home countries.

local actors alone is not the answer; they will also certainly agree that only translocal or transnational actors are able to directly access – and act on – the scholarship produced on resistance to land grabs.

A number of political geographers have described geographies of activism in terms of "convergence spaces" through which local place-based movements come together organically (Routledge, 2003; Cumbers et al., 2008). However, the geographies of resistance to land grabs in the specific cases that I studied had little resemblance to convergence spaces. Instead, connections were heavily mediated, often by actors (many of them from outside of Cambodia) who enrolled others in projects of resistance.

My particular focus would be the relation between ideas and geography. My overall thesis is (1) that one important way (among others) in which outsiders influence the geographies of local land grab struggles is through spatial imaginaries, (2) that sometimes they do so as influential "imagineers" enacting such spatial imaginaries, and (3) that such spatial imaginaries are often transmitted through uneven embodied processes that result in uneven access to them. While I do not deny that many other influences also shape the geographies of local struggles, the role of ideas is important – as I will show here – yet receives insufficient attention in the literature on land grabs.

As I will explain in the following chapter, I use the concept of "spatial imaginary" in a more general sense than that in which it is most commonly used (Driver, 2005; Watkins, 2015; Boudreau, 2007), to denote ideas that imply particular geographies. I use the term to make the point that a wide range of ideas have specific geographic implications and can thus have real, material effects. These ideas could be frames, repertoires of contention, ideas about organization, scale, or other types of ideas which may make no direct reference to geography but have important geographic implications.

I draw on the concept of imagineer from Routledge et al. (2006:842), who use it to denote organizers who "attempt to 'ground' the concept or imaginary of [a network of place-based movements] (what it is, how it works, what it is attempting to achieve) within grassroots communities who comprise the membership of the participant movements." I generalize it to denote individuals who, guided by their own spatial imaginaries, shape the geographies of resistance movements to land grabbing in different ways.

Land grabs

The term "land grab" has been used over the years to refer to a variety of phenomena, including, for example, colonization of what is now the United States (Sakolski, 1932). It was coined by Karl Marx in Das Kapital (White et al., 2012). But there is a distinct, new, already sizeable body of literature on "land grabs" (sometimes called "resource grabs" or something similar) that some suggest began in 2008 with the publication of a report entitled *Seized! The 2008 Land Grab for Food and Financial Security* by an NGO named GRAIN (GRAIN, 2008). Scholars contributing to this literature often refer to "land grabs" but rarely use the term to refer to phenomena dating to much before 2008 (Baird, 2014b; Borras et al., 2012; Zoomers, 2010).

GRAIN claimed that a new phenomenon, "the global land grab", was being observed: with the global financial and food crises, transnational corporations had turned to invest in farmland due to dramatic declines in the stock market that accompanied the financial crisis as well as dramatic rises in the price of food, and governments of food insecure nations were acquiring land in other countries to ensure a future food supply for their populations. Scholars have sometimes explicitly responded to GRAIN's report (Baird 2014b; Brent 2015; Zoomers, 2010). More generally, the growing body of literature on land grabs has built on and nuanced GRAIN's

narrative, analyzing, for example, diverse forms, drivers, and outcomes of land grabs (Borras et al., 2012; Cotula, 2012; White et al., 2012; Zoomers, 2010; Borras & Franco, 2012; Smalley & Corbera, 2012; McMichael, 2012).

Within the new "land grabs" literature, the usage and meaning of the term "land grab" has changed over time. Initially, the term "global land grab" or "global land rush" was used and referred fairly specifically to the acquisition of large areas of land by foreign private firms or other states through leases or purchase (also referred to as "large-scale land acquisitions") (GRAIN, 2008; Cotula, 2012; Zoomers, 2010). The prefix "global" is often now dropped and the term "land deal" is sometimes used (Hall et al., 2015; White et al., 2012). Over time, scholars pointed out that other phenomena should also be included under the "land grabs" label, such as so-called "green grabs" (for conservation) (Fairhead et al., 2012; Borras et al, 2012) and various forms of loss of control over land due to capitalist processes (Borras et al., 2012). Scholars also pointed to commonalities with "blue grabs" – grabs over coastal and marine areas (Benjaminsen & Bryceson, 2012). As what is included within the land grabs concept has expanded, the terms "land and water grabs" (Allan et al., 2012), "resource grabs" (McMichael, 2013), and "control grabs" (Alonso-Fradejas, 2012) have sometimes come to be used instead.

Expansion in what is understood to be covered by the concept has not happened in all directions, however. While there is often a nod to mining and hydropower, acknowledging that they are forms of land grabs, they are generally not addressed comprehensively in this literature (Borras & Franco, 2012; Baird & Le Billon, 2012). There is also still a tendency to focus only on recent, especially post-2007, phenomena (Margulis et al., 2013). While scholars may recognize that territory grabs are land grabs, for example that the Americas are a giant land grab, such phenomena are generally not addressed in the land grabs literature (Rosset, 2013).

I use the term "land grab" here to mean, roughly, processes through which control of land that small-scale producers or communities have owned or used shifts into corporate hands, often on a large scale. I do not restrict myself to the post-2007 period, but do refer generally to transfers of control in recent decades. I use the term to (arbitrarily) define my object of study and to be able to engage with much of the land grabs literature and with many activists who identify themselves as opposing land grabs. A specific definition of the term has generally not mattered to my research, and in my interviews, sometimes I used the word "land grabs" and sometimes I did not.

Above, I noted that within the "land grabs" literature a significant amount has been written about the negative impacts of land grabs. They are generally perceived within this literature to be harmful. But this is not quite a closed subject, as there are claims, for example, that local communities do not necessarily object to land grabs, or that land grabs may benefit those who did not have land in the first place (Smalley & Corbera, 2012; Borras & Franco, 2012; Mamanova, 2015; Castellanos-Navarrete, 2015; Larder, 2015; Hall et al., 2015). I do not feel it necessary, however, to devote space here to demonstrating that land grabs, variously defined, are unjustifiable. And I will not try to explain in any detail the impacts of land grabs on people and the environment. Ultimately the question is political: who owns and controls the land. There are plenty of critiques of corporate control of land and agriculture (Friedmann, 1993), colonialism (Ashcroft et al., 1995), extractivist economies (Veltmeyer & Petras, 2014), eminent domain for private enterprise (Kelly, 2006), and fortress conservation (Peluso, 1993). For those with a more favorable opinion of corporate control of land, Olivier De Schutter, the former UN Special Rapporteur on the Right to Food, makes a compelling argument that the opportunity costs of transferring land to corporations must be considered when evaluating the legitimacy of large-scale land acquisitions – that there are always better uses of the land (De Schutter, 2011).

Contours of the Project

Translocal and transnational activists – by which I do not mean to imply necessarily either non-governmental organizations (NGOs)[2] or actors from the Global North – can play a variety of roles that may be crucial for resistance to land grabs and that it is important to understand. For one, outside actors may (directly or indirectly) influence whether local actors resist in the first place – even in the form of everyday resistance (Scott, 1985). They may shape how local actors assess the prospects of working as laborers on a plantation, for example, or their potential to succeed if they were to resist. Ideas from elsewhere, perhaps drawn from experiences of other local actors resisting land grabs, could shape the strategies local actors pursue. Resources from outside could enable local actors to maintain resistance over an extended period of time and let them try again if initial efforts are quashed.

Translocal and transnational actors (again, not necessarily NGOs or actors from the North) may also engage in action themselves at sites other than those where the land in question is located. Such action could entail, for example, targeting transnational drivers or enablers of land grabs or changing norms related to them, by engaging governments, corporations, inter-governmental organizations, media, academics, or publics. Such action could be called for or informed by local actors, but might well not be.

Translocal and transnational actors may be involved as members of coalitions of various forms, sometimes alongside local actors. Coalitions could bring together a variety of actors to target particular cases, companies, policies, or commodities, or could link actors involved in struggles against land grabs in different places. (Translocal or transnational actors may themselves

[2] Throughout, I use the term "NGO" to refer to organizations that are, formally at least, accountable to a board of directors, are supported by institutional donors, and have a paid staff.

be part of place-based movements in other places.) Existing coalitions previously working on other issues could also begin to address issues related to land grabs.

Political geographers are familiar with the ideal of linking movements across space – whether in the form of distributed local movements (Cumbers et al., 2008) or a massive unified effort (Harvey, 1995) – to deal with geographically extensive forces, where massive efforts are needed to bring about systems change. Coalitions linking place-based movements[3] would be particularly important to the extent that land grabs are a result of geographically extensive forces, such as the industrial agricultural system.

Transnational actors may play roles that translocal actors are unable to play or simply do not play. They may have experience with strategies, familiarity with discourses, or access to resources that non-transnational actors do not. They may be able to engage in action at sites to which non-transnational actors do not have access. They may be able to contribute to addressing geographically extensive forces in ways that non-transnational actors are not. Again, this is not to assert the superiority of transnational actors or the greater importance of their involvement. It is, rather, to point to the possibility that there are qualitative differences in some aspects of the roles of these differently located actors.

Understanding how local movements are supported, how transnational drivers or enablers of land grabs are targeted or norms related to them changed, and how coalitions form could point to ways to make resistance more effective. It could also help them address unevenness in the involvement of transnational actors in local struggles. Land grabs in certain countries receive more attention from transnational activists than those in other countries. And, obviously, any given

[3] Here and elsewhere, I use "place-based movements" in the context of land grabs to refer to collections of actors who are themselves directly affected by land grabs or are part of communities that are directly affected.

organization engages more in some places than others, and not at all in many[4].

With all of these considerations in mind, I posed the following research questions:

1. How are different transnational actors involved, directly and indirectly, in resistance to land grabs in different places?
2. Why are different transnational actors involved, directly and indirectly, in resistance to land grabs in certain places and not others, or with certain actors and not others? How do local actors influence the involvement of transnational actors?
3. What form do coalitions related to resistance to land grabs take? Why do they take these forms? Who dominates these coalitions, and why?

It is worth clarifying what I did not intend to do. I did not try to theorize land grabs or explain the drivers of land grabs, though I am interested in different actors' theorizations or explanations; many others have done this. (See, for example, Zoomers, 2010; Cotula, 2012; McMichael, 2012). I also did not try to explain in any detail the impacts of land grabs on people and the environment, as many others have done this as well (Gerber, 2011; White et al., 2012; Grajales, 2011). I took it for granted that they are unjustifiable, as discussed above. I did not try to explain fully the dynamics of contention around land grabs – for example, what transpires from the perspective of the grabbers and their allies – or to analyze fully the possibilities of resistance to land grabs. Finally, while recognizing that it is important, I paid relatively little attention to the agency of those directly affected by land grabs in resisting them or otherwise responding to them.

[4] Borras (2008) writes, for example, that La Vía Campesina – which would become an important voice internationally on land grabs – does not have members in many of the places where land grabs (privatizations of land) are happening. Also, over the course of this project it became evident that many Northern NGOs have paid considerably more attention to challenging Northern corporations involved in land grabs than, say, Chinese ones, though Chinese firms account for a large percentage of those grabbing land (Borras & Franco, 2011; Borras et al., 2013).

My emphasis was on the involvement of translocal and especially transnational actors in resistance to land grabs and the relations among them and with those directly affected by land grabs.

My methodological approach was two-directional. First, I would identify place-based movements around specific economic land concessions (ELCs) in Cambodia ("local" actors) and study their (direct and indirect) relations with other actors and their engagement in action at transnational sites. ELCs are, according to Sub-Decree Number 146 on Economic Land Concessions[5], areas of state land leased by the government to private firms for agricultural or agro-industrial exploitation, until recently typically for a period of 99 years. The primary justifications given for them in the Sub-Decree are that they are supposed to bring employment and generate state revenue. By 2012 they covered more than eleven percent of the land area of the country (Vrieze & Kuch, 2012).) They fit unambiguously into the "land grabs", "land rush", "resource grabs", or "land deals" literature and have been referenced within it (GRAIN, 2008; Deininger, 2011; Cotula, 2012). When granted to foreign firms, they are quintessential land grabs as the concept was initially conceived in the land grabs literature.

Second, I would identify actors involved in various ways in supporting resistance to land grabs (broadly defined) outside of their own countries but with no particular interest in Cambodia ("transnational" actors), as well as actors in Cambodia involved in supporting resistance to land grabs but with no particular interest in my specific cases ("transnational" and "translocal" actors). I would study their direct and indirect engagement in local struggles and their relationships with actors involved in such struggles. In order to understand unevenness, I would also study the relationships between these "transnational" and "translocal" actors and the "local" actors.

[5] This 2007 sub-decree and the 2001 Land Law form the main legal basis for ELCs.

After completing data collection, and after a lengthy period of data analysis and writing, I decided to focus the dissertation on resistance to three sets of ELCs in Cambodia that had been the focus of my fieldwork there, belonging to a Cambodian company named Pheapimex, a Vietnamese company named Hoang Anh Gia Lai (HAGL), and a Chinese company named Hengfu. (See the map in Figure 1 below.) This decision came in part from a recognition that the data I was able to collect outside of Cambodia were insufficient for the kind of analysis that I had hoped to undertake. Also, focusing on Cambodia would allow me to make more use of my years of experience in the country and background knowledge of the three cases.

The specific focus of my dissertation would become the role of outsiders (translocal and transnational actors) in shaping the geographies of local land grab struggles, in particular, the land people try to hold onto or get back and the configuration of actors with whom they engage. While the importance of understanding how actors decide what land to try to hold onto or get back is perhaps obvious, some words about the importance of understanding configurations of actors engaged in resistance to land grabs are in order. For one, ties enable collective action, and the configuration of ties influences the possibilities of collective action (Tarrow, 2011; Della Porta & Diani, 2006). Also, configurations of actors not only reflect power relations but also constitute them, for example whether Northern or Southern actors dominate. And geographers, in particular, have paid considerable attention to the extent to which networks approximate a constellation of linked place-based movements, which some seem to see as something of an ideal (Harvey, 1995; Bosco, 2001; Cumbers et al., 2008).

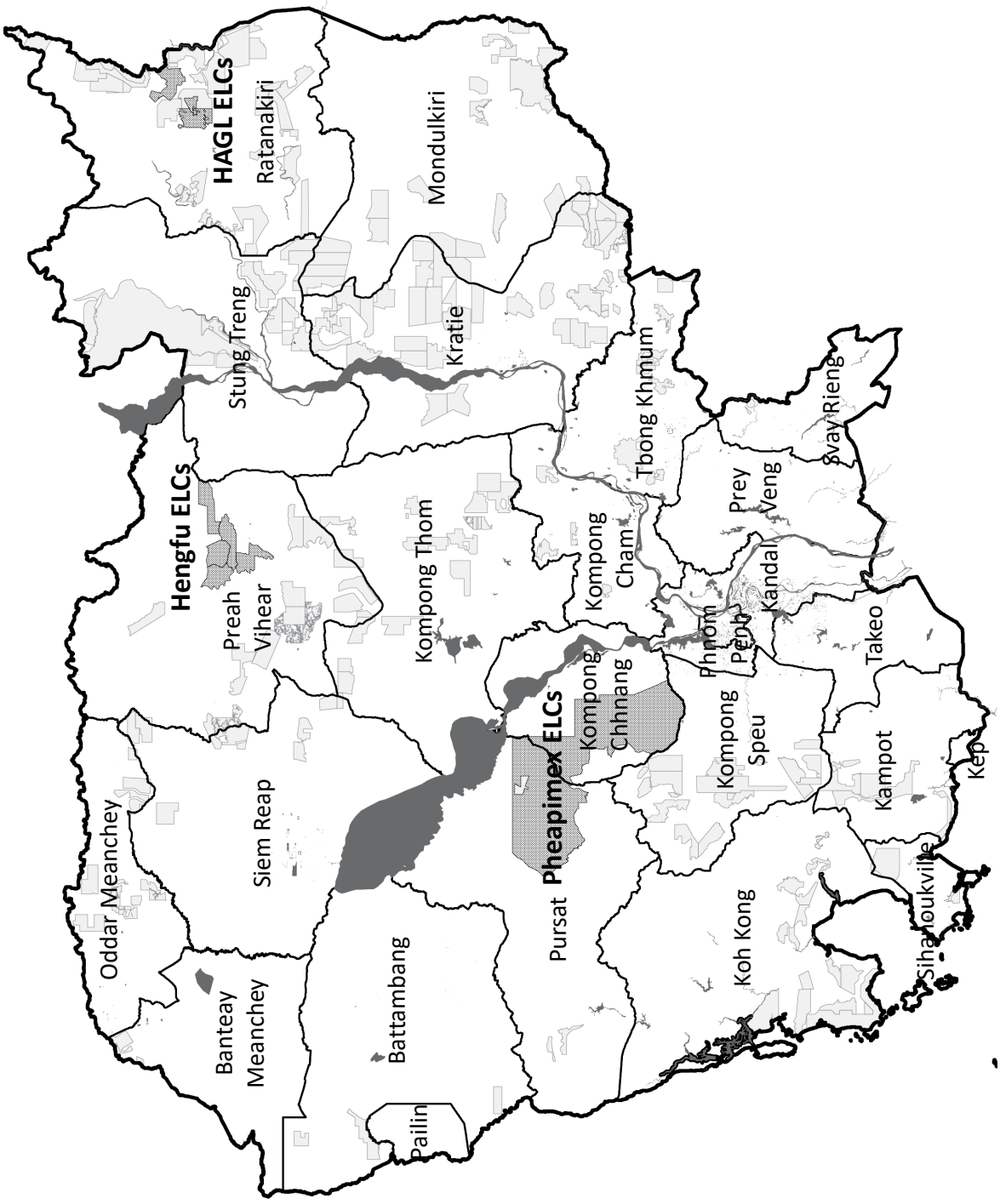

Figure 1. The three study sites. Sources: DIVA-GIS (Administrative Boundaries), OpenDevelopmentCambodia (ELCs), OneMapCambodia (water bodies).

A transnational actor in Cambodia

I lived and worked in Cambodia between 1992 and 2006 and continued to make regular trips thereafter. I was involved with various different organizations, including a British NGO named TAPA[6], which supported a number of Cambodian organizations around the country. They included several Cambodian NGOs that played important roles in land grab struggles. The areas of two of the sets of ELCs on which I would focus – the Pheapimex concessions in Kompong Chhnang and Pursat provinces in western Cambodia and the Hengfu concessions in Preah Vihear province in northern Cambodia – were sites with which I had particular familiarity through my work over the years. Neither TAPA nor I had any particular involvement in the area of the third set of concessions (owned by a Vietnamese company named HAGL) or Ratanakiri Province where they are located.

In the case of the Pheapimex concessions, TAPA supported a Cambodian NGO named TOP which was based near the concession area and which organized and supported a local network (WIN) that would actively resist the concessions. I was particularly familiar with this case. Sophal, a leader of TOP (about whom I will write extensively below), had worked with TAPA beginning in 1993 before founding TOP in 1996. I visited villages in the Pheapimex concession area numerous times over the years, beginning in 1996, before the concessions were granted, and knew many of the most active participants in WIN.

In the case of the Hengfu concessions, TAPA supported another Cambodian NGO, named FAN, which assisted communities in resisting a mining company that had a concession in an area adjacent to the future ELCs. I visited some of those communities several times over the years,

[6] Throughout the dissertation, I use pseudonyms for individuals, villages, communes (the next highest administrative level above villages), most organizations, and the one subsidiary of an ELC company that I name, to protect the identity of my informants. Organizations and networks for which I do not use pseudonyms include: PGA, AIPP, FNN, International Land Coalition, La Vía Campesina, Global Witness, and EWMI.

beginning in 2001. In 2010, a senior officer of FAN (a man named Chan) left to join another NGO, named BDD, and FAN became defunct. When Hengfu started up operations, BDD would play a role in the villages I had visited similar to that played by TOP. TAPA did not support BDD, but I made courtesy calls to Chan during most of my visits to Cambodia. TAPA did support a second Cambodian NGO in Preah Vihear Province that had two key leaders who came from these villages. One woman who worked at FAN for several years was also from the area, and by the time of my research, all three would again just be local villagers. I met two of them on all of my trips, and one on many of my trips, after leaving Cambodia in 2006. At the time I began the research, I was not really involved with BDD and not at all involved in the resistance to the Hengfu concessions, but was familiar with the communities.

My connections to actors involved in resistance to land grabs extended beyond my familiarity with particular cases. Over the years, I was involved with several grassroots-based networks, and with a number of Cambodian and international NGOs working at different levels, that engaged in various ways in advocacy on land grabs. Also, some individuals from TAPA and these other organizations and networks would go on to take on roles with other organizations and networks in which they were particularly influential in land grabs advocacy.

In short, I had years of experience in the country, prior relationships with many of the key actors involved in land grab struggles, and intimate knowledge of ELCs and movements around them – including extensive knowledge of the struggles in two of my field sites. I was also fluent in spoken and written Khmer (the national language).

An ethnography of connections

I have referred to my methodological approach as two-directional: starting with local actors involved in resistance to three sets of ELCs in Cambodia, and with transnational actors with no particular involvement in struggles relating to land grabs in Cambodia and transnational and translocal actors in Cambodia with no particular involvement in those three cases. The approach could best be described as an ethnography of connections between actors (de Bruijn & van Dijk, 2012). It was multi-sited, involving engagements with actors in Cambodian villages, towns and cities and diverse places across Europe, Asia, North and South America, and Africa – though much of those engagements outside of Cambodia happened over Skype or phone. And it was multi-method, the main methods being semi-structured interviews, observation (in some cases participant observation), and document study. I collected data between February 2014 and October 2018, but primarily between May 2015 and July 2017, and made a total of five trips, totaling four months, to Cambodia between June 2014 and June 2017[7]. My good contacts and considerable experience in Cambodia would allow me to do much more in four months than could someone new to the country.

In selecting actors on whom to focus, I was aware of the diversity in responses to land grabs. Scholars writing about resistance to land grabs have sometimes described those affected by land grabs as welcoming them or wanting to be incorporated into them, perhaps incorporated in ways more advantageous to them than those in which they currently are (Mamanova, 2015; Castellanos-Navarrete, 2015; Larder, 2015). We would not expect to find resistance to land grabs in isolation from resilience and reworking (Katz, 2001), and ignoring these other responses could

[7] The trips were in June 2014, May to June 2015, December 2015 to January 2016, May to June 2016, and June to July 2017.

lead us to miss important processes related to resistance. Resistance movements should also not be opposed in binary fashion against land grabbers; forces resisting and supporting land grabs will be intricately entangled with each other as one would expect to find in any situation of power and resistance (Foucault, 1982). We would also expect to find everyday forms of resistance that might be invisible to outsiders (Scott, 1985). And we would expect to find diverse perspectives among transnational actors. Borras et al. (2013) identify some of this diversity, pointing to three common political tendencies with regards to governance of land grabs: governance to facilitate land grabs, to mitigate their adverse impacts and maximize opportunities they offer, and to stop and roll them back. Ultimately, however, I was interested in understanding efforts to stop land grabs or significantly challenge them. In studying local actors, I could have chosen sites where people have at most sought some sort of accommodation with land grabs, but instead selected sites where there have been major struggles against them[8]. I could have studied transnational actors, like the World Bank, who have tried to reduce some of the more egregious abuses associated with land grabs without opposing them, but have instead focused on those who see their role as, at the least, to punish current land grabbers and create disincentives for future ones.

I conducted semi-structured interviews with about five hundred people, inside and outside of Cambodia. Interviews with most of those outside of Cambodia were by phone or Skype, and with most of those in Cambodia were in person. The value of interviews has been questioned and, to some extent, every interview is a performance; the interviewee does not simply report an objective reality or his or her own thoughts. But semi-structured interviews have been shown to be an important methodological tool (Crang & Cook, 2007). My interviews involved both what Peck and Theodore (2012) call "digging" and what they call "constructive engagement" with

[8] I made an effort, however, to understand the full range of community responses in these sites.

informants. Some interviews were aimed more at gathering "facts", some more at understanding how people think. I used interviews as a means of "understanding reality" when they could be corroborated through interviews with other informants or other means. I also used them for their textual value, but in such cases then often tried to go back to the informant to check my interpretation of the text.

Participant observation comprised mainly my participation in two campaigns: an international one challenging the investments of a US-based pension fund manager named TIAA[9] in land grabs around the world, and one targeting the Hengfu concessions in Cambodia. Both are described below. They provided excellent opportunities to observe the involvement of transnational actors in resistance to land grabs, their relationships with place-based movements, and the emergence and evolution of coalitions. I also observed various meetings and workshops.

Document study entailed reviewing documents related in various ways to different actors, cases, campaigns, network organizations, and events. They included primarily web pages, reports, statements, and other documents that I found online, for example on the websites of NGOs and other organizations, but also documents provided by informants or that I accessed in other ways. My interest was primarily the information they contained, though sometimes also their discursive content. Document study helped to identify actors relevant to my project and to understand these actors, cases, campaigns, network organizations, and events. I also made use of five online media archives. I used GRAIN's collection of media articles (found at farmlandgrabs.org) and La Vía Campesina (LVC)'s collection of documents primarily to understand LVC, both in terms of its activities and the discourse it used. And I used OpenDevelopment Cambodia (ODC)'s collection of media articles and the archives of the Cambodia Daily and Phnom Penh Post to study the history

[9] Teachers Insurance and Annuity Association of America.

of the cases I was examining. Finally, I followed many of my contacts on Facebook. Doing so helped me keep abreast of events and developments (especially in Cambodia) and afforded additional insights into people's thinking and relationships with others.

Three aspects of my methodology are particularly significant. The first is the tracing of connections to generate an in-depth picture of the webs of relations in which groups of actors are situated, which was particularly important in studying the groups of actors involved in resisting the ELCs in Cambodia. This entailed asking the actors I met whom they knew, from whom they received information, funding, and other kinds of resources, and by whom they were influenced in different ways. But it also involved "asking around" to identify actors who were involved even when no one had identified them, and whose involvement was not readily apparent. People involved directly in a struggle might not be aware of the involvement of some outside actors, and might also not disclose all the actors they are aware are involved in a struggle, for a variety of reasons. In addition, it involved studying documents, most of them accessed online, for evidence of connections (among other things). And I drew on my detailed knowledge of the history of the ELC struggles and prior relationships with many of the actors involved.

The second important aspect of the methodology is what might be called its "multi-scalar"[10] nature. I studied interactions between actors targeting bulldozers in their own villages and others targeting UN agencies. I studied interactions between groups of activists in villages and coalitions spanning the globe. In contrast, within the literature on resistance to land grabs, there is a tendency to focus on either place-based movements (Sampat, 2015; Martiniello, 2015; Moreda, 2015) or transnational actors (Margulis et al., 2013; McKeon, 2013; Künnemann & Suárez, 2013;

[10] I use scare quotes because referring to place-based movements and transnational actors as operating at different scales is problematic. See Marston et al. (2005) for a critique of the concept of scale.

Seufert, 2013), but not the interactions between them. However, such a "multi-scalar" approach is found outside this literature. My approach shares similarities, for example, with Routledge's (2008) "follow the network" approach to studying People's Global Action (PGA), a now defunct transnational anti-globalization network organization. (He physically followed key PGA organizers ("imagineers") as they traveled to places on the ground to build the network.)

The third important aspect of my methodology is the two-directional approach which I have mentioned. Routledge (2008) did not visit places that were well outside of the spatial scope of PGA, leading him to see the world from the vantage point of PGA's imagineers and participants, but not from that of people who had nothing to do with PGA. This enabled him to understand what PGA was doing, but less so what PGA was not doing. By also working from the direction of specific sites on the ground with no particular relation to the transnational actors I engaged, I was able to study unevenness. At the same time, working from the direction of transnational and translocal actors was part of "asking around" and helped to identify the involvement of outside actors in my three cases.

The methodology was designed for a project quite different from the one the dissertation ended up becoming. Cambodia was supposed to be the starting point of one of my two directions, not the single focus. However, the methodology did lead to some insights that a more Cambodia-focused methodology would not have. In particular, I was able to interrogate unevenness in a way I otherwise would not have been able to do. I was able to understand not only how and why certain actors were involved in different ways in land grab struggles in Cambodia, for example, but also how and why others were not. Also, even within Cambodia, tracing connections proved to be invaluable for understanding the involvement of outside actors in the three cases that would not otherwise have been evident.

Work outside of Cambodia

I was, and am, unaware of any text, in the academic or gray literature, that lays out the landscape of actors involved in transnational work on land grabs and that might have pointed to more than a few actors who would be relevant to this project. For work in the second direction, beginning with transnational actors outside of Cambodia, I therefore relied in part on a snowball approach and in part on review of documents to identify people to interview. I also found some people to interview by participating in various events, described below. It proved extremely difficult to get people to reply to my requests for interviews and, even then, to set up and conduct interviews. Initially I did not have a particular international focus, but gradually I came to focus more and more on La Vía Campesina (LVC), a network organization[11] comprising peasant organizations in over seventy countries, primarily because it is identified by scholars and activists alike as playing a particularly important role in opposition to land grabs and because of its role in mediating relationships between transnational and more local actors. I also came to focus on a collection of actors involved in the campaign on TIAA, in large part because the campaign provided access to transnational actors that otherwise it was difficult for me to get.

Aside from those I was able to conduct during the events in which I participated, interviews with most transnational actors (who were scattered across several continents) were by Skype or phone. Arranging interviews was exceedingly difficult and constituted the greatest challenge I faced in this project. Hundreds of people whom I contacted never replied to my emails. Numerous people agreed to talk but then never replied to my emails asking to set up calls. In a number of cases, where an interview had gone well and there seemed to be good potential for follow up, I

[11] Ordinarily LVC might be considered a network, but the term "network" is often used with a different meaning. I refer to LVC as a "network organization" to avoid confusion.

asked for second interviews, but was often unable actually to conduct them. Having someone whom I knew well introduce me helped in arranging interviews, but this was not possible in most cases. I was generally not able to build strong relations with informants with whom I communicated only by Skype or phone. Meeting people in person, for example at various events I participated in, helped somewhat, but still it was difficult to get my informants to care about my research or about me. Probably to many of them I was always just a researcher who was of little use to them. Many potential informants were extremely busy, and probably not answering my emails was the easiest way for them to deal with me. Two people specifically told me they were too busy to talk with researchers. Trust was probably an important issue for some, also, especially for members of the constituency-based organizations with whom I was especially interested in speaking[12].

I began participating in the TIAA campaign around October 2016, shortly after a US coalition involved in the campaign began to form. I had already previously interviewed about ten individuals involved in this group. I participated in conference calls, email exchanges, and a webinar and joined various activities related to the circulation of a petition on TIAA. In the United States, participant observation also involved participation in a conference on philanthropy, part of a conference on food sovereignty[13], a visit of Indigenous people[14] from Asia to an American Indian reservation, a session of the United Nations Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues, the annual meeting of a food sovereignty-focused organization, and a protest against the Dakota Access

[12] I heard second-hand that a woman from one such organization in Asia did not want to talk with me because she had been told that I was helping a Cambodian group become a member of a rival network.

[13] I will refer to food sovereignty again below. It has been defined by La Vía Campesina (2007) as "the right of peoples to healthy and culturally appropriate food produced through ecologically sound and sustainable methods, and their right to define their own food and agriculture systems."

[14] Here and throughout, I use "Indigenous people" in the singular to signify people who belong to Indigenous groups, and "Indigenous peoples" when referring to entire peoples.

Pipeline (DAPL). I also participated in an international conference on land grabs in Southeast Asia held in Chiang Mai, Thailand.

I would have liked to spend more time with more people, in person, outside of interviews – though I still would also have engaged numerous and diverse other actors around the world. Outside of Cambodia, I never really achieved the depth that I would have liked. In retrospect, it would have been good to identify one set of transnational actors early on and devote a considerable amount of time to building relations with them. It also would have been good to be physically located somewhere where I could have more easily met people in person, accompanied them, and observed interactions. To some extent this was bound to be a project consisting mostly of calls as people working on land grabs are scattered around the world – even people within a single organization, such as GRAIN or Friends of the Earth. But had I been located in a place such as Washington, D.C., New York, Rome, or Brussels, a greater number of direct interactions and more observation would have been possible. (I might also, on the other hand, have been tempted to focus more on narrow place-based networks.) I would have also liked to travel more to participate in more events, but I often heard about events too late or did not have funding to participate in them, and it was also not always clear in which events it would be useful to participate.

Fieldwork in Cambodia

Work in the second direction meant starting with actors affected by, and resisting, three specific sets of ELCs, belonging to three different companies, in three different parts of Cambodia. I selected Cambodia to ground the project primarily because my long work experience, numerous contacts there, and language skills would facilitate the research. Being able to work efficiently in Cambodia would leave me a substantial amount of time to interview people outside of Cambodia.

In addition, my detailed knowledge of the actors involved in work on land grabs in Cambodia, relations built over years, and insights from observing processes and being involved in them were all important resources on which I could draw by focusing on Cambodia. Cambodia has also been affected more than many other countries in recent years by land grabs, including in the form of ELCs (Zoomers, 2010). And Cambodia would provide an interesting site for understanding unevenness: overall, while there is more involvement by some types of foreign actors interested in land grabs than in many other places, there is less articulation of local struggles (on numerous issues) with broader movements than in many other countries. In many ways, land grabs in Cambodia have received less attention than those in other countries from some of the larger transnational actors most involved specifically in land grabs, such as GRAIN, Friends of the Earth, FIAN[15], and La Vía Campesina, though they have not been completely ignored.

Land grabs in Cambodia have taken many forms over the years. I chose to focus my fieldwork on ELC sites because movements around ELCs are more vibrant than those around most other forms of land grabs in the country, and ELCs are in some ways the quintessential land grab referred to in the land grabs literature, as noted above. My intimate knowledge of ELCs and movements around them was also a key factor in the decision.

The first site comprised the two ELCs owned by the Cambodian company, Pheapimex, in Kompong Chhnang and Pursat provinces in western Cambodia. Initially covering more than 300,000 hectares, they are still by far the largest ELCs in the country[16]. Of the three sites, they have been written about most (Beban & Work, 2014; Beban et al., 2017; Guttal, 2011; Henke, 2011; McInnes, 2015; Work & Beban, 2016). They currently directly affect dozens of villages

[15] Food First Information and Action Network.

[16] Data from OpenDevelopmentCambodia indicate a current size of 292,193.15 Ha.

whose residents are almost all ethnic Khmer[17]. I selected the site because these ELCs were one of about ten cases that had attracted the greatest attention from NGOs, local communities were involved in broader (including nation-wide) grassroots-based networks, and I had particularly intimate knowledge of the struggle and some of the communities, for reasons described above. Among the communities directly affected by the concessions, I selected one commune on which to focus (Rumduol, in Kompong Chhnang) because of its centrality in the organized resistance to the concessions, its centrality for TOP (a key NGO supporting the resistance, described above), and my own familiarity with the communities, knowing several people from the commune quite well over an extended period of time and having followed their activities over the years. Within Rumduol, I selected one village (Samraong) on which to focus especially because I had one good contact there, but also to purposefully avoid a neighboring village with an even better contact who is one of the most prominent community leaders from the entire area.

By the time of my research, most of these communities were no longer actively opposing the concessions. There had been a very active struggle, beginning when the company first started operations nearly two decades ago, but by 2013 it had, for the most part, come to an end. The communities on which I would focus felt that their land was now secure. Their leaders' attention was now concentrated on organizing community forests, which involved dealing with the Forestry Administration but not, it seemed, the companies. Many of the community members were working for the company, and there were various forms of struggle, including everyday resistance (Scott, 1985), related to the failure to pay wages on time.

The second site comprised the set of three ELCs in Ratanakiri Province in northeastern Cambodia owned by subsidiaries of the Vietnamese company, Hoang Anh Gia Lai (HAGL); they

[17] The dominant ethnic group in Cambodia

have received some attention in the literature as well (Baird, 2017; Baird & Barney, 2017; Gironde & Portilla, 2016; Bourdier, 2019). While each of the ELCs is less than the legal limit of 10,000, taken together they initially covered almost 19,000 hectares, and all or parts of fourteen villages whose populations are almost all Indigenous. In this case, there was ongoing advocacy involving a significant transnational dimension. Numerous interviewees pointed to the campaign on these concessions as one of two prime examples of internationalization of land grab cases in Cambodia, both having the same American NGO, PEN, playing a leading role. I selected this case because of its transnational dimension and because, compared to the other, I had a good contact who could provide inside knowledge of it. In general, however, I did not have any familiarity with the case and had not spent much time in the province prior to this research. I knew some of the organizations involved, though not very well. I would focus on one village in the concession area, Tapam, whose population was almost entirely ethnic Kachok[18]. I did this primarily on the basis of access: the NGO worker who would be my de facto field assistant was most familiar with, and best known in, this village[19].

The third site comprised the five concessions in Preah Vihear Province in northern Cambodia owned by subsidiaries of the Chinese company, Hengfu. As in the HAGL case, each of the ELCs is less than the legal limit of 10,000, but the total is about 36,000 hectares, and the concessions cover parts of more than twenty villages. The residents of these villages are primarily Khmer, though some are predominantly (Indigenous) Kuy. At the time of my first trip to Cambodia for this project, in June 2014, the companies had already begun clearing and planting land in their

[18] The Kachok are one of the smallest ethnic groups in Ratanakiri by population.

[19] Tapam was one of the villages where the NGO focused its activities, and a young man named Satya who assisted me in the field was the person responsible for work in the village. He spent a considerable amount of time in the village, participating in village activities and engaging people in conversation with the purpose of gradually encouraging more intentional solidarity-based community activities. The NGO, and Satya in particular, were involved informally in the CAO process, and he participated in activities related to the process from time to time.

concessions, and communities had already been resisting them, for several years. The struggles were also very much still ongoing. I selected the case because, like the others, it is one that has attracted considerable attention from NGOs, and because of my familiarity with the case and the actors concerned – without having been involved myself in the resistance to the concessions. At the time I began my research, there had been some effort to internationalize the case, but nothing like that in the HAGL case. I selected one of ten communes in the concession area on which to focus, Lovea, for the same reasons I selected Rumduol in the Pheapimex case. It was central in the organized resistance to the concessions and for BDD, a key NGO supporting the resistance, described above. I was quite familiar with some communities in Lovea, having visited them several times over the years since 1998 and followed their activities over the years. I knew a number of community members from Lovea, three of them extremely well: former staff of FAN and another NGO that TAPA had supported. I selected one village (Sambor) on which to focus, where two of my three good contacts lived.

My decision to focus on three sets of ELCs meant that I would have less time to spend at each site than if I were to study just one. But international actors had played, and were playing, very different roles in the three cases and there were potentially interesting comparisons to be made. I also hoped that having three sites would compensate for the fact that none of the cases was ideal. I knew the Pheapimex case the best, there had been considerable interest by United Nations human rights officials and donors, and because there was no active struggle I thought I would be able to spend a relatively large amount of time there – but there might not be much ongoing activity to study. I was not familiar with the HAGL case, and while interesting things might be happening there, the local situation was very sensitive and I might not be able to spend much time in the villages. Finally, the Hengfu case involved an active community struggle but did not have much

in terms of an international dimension (in comparison with the HAGL case), and the local situation was, like that in the HAGL case, very sensitive.

In all three locations, in my visits to villages I was sometimes accompanied by Cambodian staff of NGOs working in those villages and involved in the resistance efforts and sometimes accompanied by residents of the respective village. Though my time there was limited, many people in the areas of the Hengfu and Pheapimex ELCs opened up to me and I could get quite a lot done in a short time, due to my relationships with the communities and Khmer language skills. I felt that many (though not all) of the people I met in those areas were happy to talk with me. The same was not true of the HAGL area. I attribute this in part to people in the Hengfu and Pheapimex areas perceiving me as someone familiar and trusted who might be able to help them somehow, whereas in the HAGL area I was never more than a researcher, studying something very sensitive (ELCs and NGO politics). People in the HAGL area were in the middle of a process of negotiation with the company in which they were well supported by NGOs and had nothing in particular to gain from talking with me. Also, in the HAGL area many people could not speak Khmer (and I could not speak their languages) and my field assistant cum translator's familiarity with the communities was limited. In the other two sites, a number of people in the villages who already knew me could introduce me to others.

In addition to visiting villages in and near the concessions, I visited some other communities in the provinces as well as the respective provincial centers. In these towns, I met with some of the NGOs working with the affected communities as well as NGOs involved in other work related to land grabs. I also spent time in the capital, Phnom Penh, where many of the actors directly involved in the three ELCs cases are located. Outsiders' links to Cambodia are often through actors in Phnom Penh, so the city was a key site for understanding involvement in the

three cases and the involvement of outsiders in Cambodia more generally. It was in Phnom Penh that the approach of "asking around" was most important. Through conversations in Phnom Penh with people who were involved in various ways with work on land grabs more generally I discovered involvement in the three ELC cases that I otherwise would not have known about. These conversations also offered useful points of comparison and opportunities to test out my emerging ideas.

Overall, I spent approximately one week in villages affected by the Hengfu concessions[20], two weeks in villages affected by the Pheapimex concessions, and 1.5 weeks in villages affected by the HAGL concessions. I spent about one week in each of the first two respective provincial towns or other villages in those provinces and about two weeks in the third. And I spent about six weeks in Phnom Penh. From the beginning, I did not intend to spend much time in villages in any of the three sites. For one, ELCs are extremely sensitive places to be doing fieldwork in Cambodia and I knew that it would not be long before police came around asking what I was up to. I was told that in the Hengfu area, a visitor had previously been followed to the airport after spending time in the communities. In fact, on my second visit I was unable to spend more than a few days in the HAGL area before police did come to interrogate me, and on my third visit police told me I was no longer allowed to stay in the district. In the Pheapimex area, after one of my visits, my host was harassed by police. And by my fourth trip, it became almost impossible for me to visit the villages in the Hengfu area[21]. Second, for each site it was not just the local community but the collection

[20] In addition to meeting people from communities affected by the Hengfu concessions in their own villages, I also met them in the provincial town and in six days of workshops in other provinces. I also met people from NGOs in the province in the same workshops, on numerous Skype calls, and (in the case of an NGO named BDD), six days of travel together. (See below.)

[21] Other researchers have written about harassment faced when conducting fieldwork near ELC sites in Cambodia (Schoenberger & Beban, 2018, 2019).

of actors involved in the struggle – who included people in the provincial towns, in Phnom Penh, and in other countries – that was of interest to me.

One of my main interests in visiting the villages was to understand how the involvement of external actors played out locally. Which non-local actors did people know? What were those actors doing? How were people in the villages influenced by non-local actors? What were the local residents who had contacts with non-local actors doing in the villages? What did people think of the non-local actors and their involvement? Did any of it matter? What did people think of the ELCs?

Overall, because of my contacts and knowledge of the situation and actors involved, I could organize interviews and plan travel ahead of time. On each trip, I stepped off the airplane with a full schedule of interviews and activities planned for the first part of the trip. Once in the country, I was always able to stay a few days ahead in scheduling interviews and activities. And my knowledge of Phnom Penh enabled me to plan interviews in a way that would minimize time spent traveling between appointments. I was thus able to accomplish considerably more than others might in the same amount of time. Phnom Penh is also a relatively small city; I was able to conduct six or more interviews (of an hour or more each) per day.

It was exceptionally easy to arrange interviews in Cambodia, and I was generally able to arrange them with whomever I wanted[22]. In total, I interviewed about three hundred Cambodians or foreigners working in Cambodia. I spoke with most of my Cambodian informants in person, but did also interview some by Skype; all but three of those I interviewed by Skype were people I had already met in person. In one village in each of the three sites, I tried to interview a diverse range

[22] There were, however, some people I might have liked to interview but did not try to contact to avoid calling too much attention to my research, such as leaders of the main opposition party.

of adults in the village: men and women of different ages, living in different parts of the village, who supported and had participated to different degrees in the organized resistance to the ELCs (including not at all). People who accompanied me – individuals from the villages, and in the HAGL case, also an NGO worker working in the village – influenced whom I interviewed to different extents. I also specifically sought out individuals in these village and others in the concession areas who had played particular roles in the resistance or related community activity (for example, members of community committees or local networks) or who were linked in different ways to outside actors (for example, members of national grassroots-based networks). I already knew many but not all of them. And I met some people in villages around the concession areas opportunistically. In Kompong Chhnang, Ratanakiri, and Preah Vihear Provinces, as well as Phnom Penh, I also interviewed people involved in various ways in activities related to natural resources management, Indigenous rights, advocacy on ELCs, and related topics or having particular transnational links. I knew many already, and my long history in Cambodia facilitated interviews with those I did not already know.

There were certain individuals with whom I conducted multiple interviews, typically because of their central role in the three particular cases, in advocacy on ELCs in Cambodia more generally, or in linking local, translocal, and transnational actors. These included key local leaders, some of them involved in various grassroots-based networks, people working with Cambodian NGOs who played key roles in the different struggles, and Cambodian indigenous leaders, some of whom played particularly important roles in the HAGL or Hengfu cases. They included also a number of non-Cambodians who played particularly important roles in the different cases.

These individuals working with Cambodian NGOs and the Indigenous leaders were among many “translocal” actors to whom I had quite good access because of my language skills and

history in the country. As actors in the middle, translocal actors are often marginalized in research; there are parallels with research assistants, who are frequently left out of written scholarship despite their importance (Turner, 2010). Routledge's (2008) description of "acting in the network" is a good example of this: he describes his role in translating the imaginary of a global network, traveling to villages in Bangladesh with a group of six translocal activists, giving only the slightest glimpse of their thinking through a passage from one, translated for him by another. In part because of my interest in the involvement of outside actors in land grab struggles, but also in part because of difficulties I encountered in accessing transnational actors outside of Cambodia (see below), translocal actors became a particularly important focus of this dissertation. They were from different parts of the country, involved in struggles outside of their own home places, with a few exceptions supported by funding that could be traced to donors. Resources to which they had access provided opportunities and gave them influence over local actors, but they also generally found themselves working within the structures of NGOs and the constraints those structures implied. They negotiated the worlds of both local and transnational actors but were not really part of either.

Observation in Cambodia took a variety of forms and was sometimes participatory. I began participant observation of a campaign on the Hengfu concessions as it started to coalesce, beginning in May 2016. I participated in three workshops in Cambodia that BDD organized, and in numerous conference calls, related to the campaign. I spent time with BDD staff in their office in a district town and joined them in some of their travels. I also participated in several workshops, numerous discussions and other engagements with NGO workers and activists, meetings of the boards of several NGOs (in my capacity as board member), and, as mentioned above, visits to villages with NGO staff. In addition, I engaged in observation that cannot be described as

participatory: of a youth meeting in a village in the area of the Hengfu concessions; community meetings on community forestry initiatives in the area of the Pheapimex concessions; a community meeting on land claims and a discussion between community members and supporting NGOs about mapping their land claims in the area of the HAGL concessions; two trainings on land rights in the province where the HAGL concessions are located; an NGO meeting to coordinate advocacy in the area of the HAGL concessions and the respective provincial town; and five workshops in Phnom Penh involving actors engaged in various ways in struggles against land grabs. And I spent time traveling around the areas of each of the three sets of ELCs.

Overall, I feel that I spent an appropriate amount of time in Cambodia and used that time well. While I had moments of doubt, in the end, I feel the decision to study three different ELC sites was a wise one. What I learned from each site stimulated my investigations in the others, and the overall analysis was enriched by having three different sites to compare. It would probably not have been possible to spend significantly more time with local actors involved in the struggle against the Hengfu and HAGL ELCs, anyway. However, making numerous short trips to Cambodia had the disadvantage that I was not able to participate in as many events in which different actors come together as I would have been had I been there for a more extended period of time. I could plan my travels and interviews in advance, but often I did not learn about other events in time or could not work them into my schedule, or they happened when I was not in the country. In any case, however, one longer trip may not have enabled me to observe many of the interactions happening either, and might have resulted in greater attention being called to my presence in the ELC areas. Much of the communication that I was interested in happened by email or Facebook Messenger, and much of it was very sporadic – in some cases amounting to a few emails per year, even within some of the key relationships I was studying.

Data analysis

My approach was one of grounded theory, in which I developed theory based on the data I collected (Strauss & Corbin, 1997), though I was influenced from the beginning by various ideas in Social Movement Theory and Political Geography. From the vast and diverse array of data, stories emerged, and they would change over time. As I focused in the end on three sites in Cambodia, several stories that would speak to the land grabs literature and to Political Geography and Social Movement Theory, and that would also be useful to practitioners, coalesced for each site. To some extent they reflected areas that were of particular interest to me during fieldwork, and that I had investigated in particular depth. I assembled arguments that tied these stories together, and those arguments shaped the further development of the stories. Through an iterative process, I developed an overall thesis, five sub-theses, and eight stories through which the sub-theses are substantiated.

The dissertation

In the next chapter I present my theoretical argument in more detail and provide some background on resistance to ELCs in Cambodia. The three subsequent chapters are organized by study site (the Pheapimex, HAGL, and then Hengfu concessions). Each begins with an introduction which provides further background on the case and introduces the empirical stories (2-3 per chapter), explaining how they relate to the five sub-theses. The introduction is followed by a section that provides a brief chronological overview of the struggle, then the stories and a concluding section. In a final concluding chapter, I revisit my theoretical argument, this time drawing on the details from the three empirical cases, and discuss the broader significance and implications of my findings.

It would be quite tedious to indicate the sources for each element of my empirical accounts, and I have not attempted to do so. Except where otherwise indicated, each empirical statement that I make is substantiated by multiple sources, often informant interviews but also observation or texts as well.

As noted in a footnote above, I use pseudonyms throughout for individuals, villages, communes, most organizations, and one subsidiary of an ELC company to protect the identity of my informants. I also change some identifying details that are not important to the cases. Maintaining anonymity was a requirement for permission for human subjects' research, and some of my informants faced real security risks that could not be taken lightly.

TWO. LAND GRAB STRUGGLES AND IMAGINING RESISTANCE

Introduction

Scholarship on resistance to land grabs was notably absent during the first several years of the new land grabs literature. However, it was an important topic of the Global Land Grab II International Conference[23], papers from which were compiled in two special editions of the Journal of Peasant Studies (Hall et al., 2015). There is now a sizeable literature on the topic. However, literature addressing the role of translocal and transnational actors in resistance to land grabs remains limited. Although some has been written about geographies of resistance, ideas influencing resistance, and the interconnections between them (Alonso-Fradejas, 2015; Brent, 2015; Larder, 2015; Castellanos-Navarrete & Jansen, 2015; Grajales, 2015) – the focus of this dissertation – the attention these themes have received is inadequate. Most importantly, the connections between geographies and ideas, and their implications for understanding the roles of translocal and transnational actors, are not made sufficiently explicit.

A number of ideas from Social Movement Theory are useful for understanding the connections between ideas and geographies, including frames (Snow & Benford, 1992; Benford & Snow, 2000), repertoires of contention (Tarrow, 2011), and organizational forms (Tarrow, 2011; Clemens & Minkoff, 2007; Della Porta & Diani, 2006). I show how a broad range of ideas with implied geographies can influence how people link with others and for what land they struggle. In Political Geography, Routledge's work on imagineers showing how they enact network imaginaries in enrolling others in networks is particularly useful (Routledge, 2008, 2009). I show how a broader range of spatial imaginaries may influence how imagineers engage other actors. Social Movement scholars and political geographers have studied the diffusion or circulation of

[23] Organized by the Land Deal Politics Initiative (LDPI) and held at Cornell University on 17-19 October, 2012.

ideas (Tarrow, 2011; Soule, 2007; Larner and Laurie, 2010; McCann, 2011); I turn the question around and ask about access to circulating ideas, and highlight processes resulting in uneven access.

In this chapter, I will first review the literature on resistance to land grabs, then, drawing on Social Movement Theory and Political Geography, develop ideas about the connections between ideas and geographies that are the main themes of this dissertation, including the influence of spatial imaginaries, imagineering, and unevenness in access to ideas. I will then present the specific context of land grabs in Cambodia, and finally introduce the empirical stories through which I develop my five sub-theses (presented in the Introduction) in the subsequent chapters.

Resistance to land grabs

GRAIN's 2008 report sparked a flurry of activism and scholarship on what many called "the global land grab". As noted in the previous chapter, the report claimed that the global land grab was triggered by global food and financial crises and that on the one hand, governments of food insecure nations were acquiring land in other countries, and that on the other hand, transnational corporations had turned to invest in farmland due to dramatic declines in the stock market that accompanied the financial crisis as well as dramatic rises in the price of food. The report triggered interest in explaining processes of land grabs and their effects, but also in nuancing the story (Baird 2010; Borras & Franco, 2012; Deininger, 2011; Cotula, 2012; Borras et al 2011, 2012; Zoomers, 2010; McMichael, 2012; De Schutter, 2011; White et al, 2012). It became clear that the diversity of land and resource grabs did not comprise a single phenomenon at the global scale (Baird, 2014b) and that they could not be precisely distinguished from other processes of dispossession or exploitation (Borras et al., 2012; Borras & Franco, 2012). From an initial focus

on “the global land grab”, there has been a shift to studies of individual “land grabs” or “land deals” and of “land grabbing”, understood more broadly (Schoenberger et al., 2017).

The land grab or land grabbing framework has been used unevenly by scholars. From a review of literature on land grabbing in Southeast Asia, for example, Schoenberger and her colleagues (Schoenberger et al., 2017) identify two main contexts in which the framework is used within the region: oil palm plantations in Indonesia and land concessions in Cambodia and Laos. They find that studies of oil palm plantations in Indonesia demonstrate that the plantations largely fit the land grabs concept well, except that they predate the globally recognized phenomenon by two decades, and that scholars make use of the concept in writing about them. They note that studies of concessions in Cambodia and Laos generally emphasize individual cases, local dynamics, and the role of concessions in state territorialization, not global drivers. Land grab studies from both contexts, they write, tend to be “historically situated and context-specific” (pages 12, 15). In contrast, studies of large-scale land acquisitions in the Philippines generally emphasize agro-industrialization and rarely use the land grabs framework, and other countries in the region receive little attention in the land grabs literature. This is particularly noteworthy for the case of Malaysia, where high numbers of land deals have been recorded; they suggest that the fact that the companies grabbing land are domestic results in the land grabs frame not being used. The framework is just beginning to get some traction in Vietnam, where large-scale land acquisitions are uncommon.

One important aspect of the nuancing of the concept of land grabbing has been to highlight the role of host states in encouraging or enabling land grabs. Borras and his colleagues describe three main roles of states in land grabs: simplification, assertion of sovereignty, and coercion and violence (Borras et al., 2012). Often land is formally owned by the state, and where it is not, states

have a role in aggregating land (Hall, 2013). There are different explanations for why states are willing and eager to play this role. It has been attributed, for example, to general interest in attracting investors, promoting economic growth and development, and modernizing agriculture (Zoomers, 2010; Hall, 2013, Cotula, 2012); strengthening sovereignty in frontier areas (Hall, 2013); and corruption (Hall, 2013; Borras et al, 2012; Cotula, 2012). Discourse runs through many of these explanations, though Smalley and Corbera (2012) claim that its influence has been overstated. In the Southeast Asian context, Neef and his colleagues (Neef et al., 2013) write about the role of the state in legitimizing land grabs in Cambodia, Baird (2011b) writes about the desire of the Lao government to turn subsistence farmers into wage laborers (i.e., promote a process of primitive accumulation), and Baird and Le Billon (2012) and Baird (2014a) write about the importance of political memories (for example of Vietnamese sacrifices) for land grabs in Laos. Sikor (2012) attributes an absence of land grabs in Vietnam to dynamics of the Vietnamese state.

Another important aspect of the nuancing is attention to the possibility that land grabs do not materialize. Cotula (2012), for example, writes that land grabs are often not as large as reported or fully operational, and Smalley and Corbera (2012) write that many land grabs never become operational at all. One reason that land grabs do not become operational is opposition within the state. Hall (2013) writes, for example, of a massive project in Indonesia that was opposed by various government ministries, and more generally suggests that state officials are often not willing to carry out the evictions some projects would require. Baird (2010) describes some opposition within the Lao state to rubber plantations. More common, however, has been scholarship that highlights the role of resistance by affected communities in undermining land grabs.

Increasing explicit attention has been paid to resistance to land grabs in recent years, and there is now a sizeable literature on the subject. Two special issues of the *Journal of Peasant*

Studies (Hall et al., 2015), mentioned above, were devoted to the topic. Scholars have written, for example, about less visible forms of resistance (Moreda, 2015), the inhomogeneity of responses of communities affected by land grabs to them (Grajales, 2015), situations in which affected populations seek incorporation into projects rather than resisting them (Mamanova, 2015; Larder, 2015; Castellanos-Navarrete & Jansen, 2015), and discourses used in resistance (Alonso-Fradejas, 2015; Brent, 2015). Scholarship on Laos has highlighted resistance through state structures or the utilization of state discourses (Kenney-Lazar et al., 2018, McAllister, 2015), the role of political memories in community resistance (Baird & Le Billon, 2012; Baird, 2014a), the role of NGOs in community resistance (Baird, 2010), the contingent nature of resistance (Baird, 2017), and state responses to community resistance (Kenney-Lazar, 2018; Baird, 2010). Writing about Indonesia, Ginting and Pye (2013) describe the role of an NGO coalition and international pressure as well as local communities. Writing about Southeast Asia, Hall et al. (2011) highlight the role of discourses of indigeneity and the problems that the claiming of ethno-territories may present to others. It is the literature that examines the roles of translocal, and especially transnational, actors that is of greatest interest to me.

The importance of translocal and transnational actors in resistance to land grabs has been recognized (Hall et al., 2015). Scholars engaging the land grabs literature have written, for example, about the role of outside (non-local) actors in helping people access information (Gingembre, 2015; Milgroom, 2015) and learn about law (Baird, 2010), and their influence on the emergence of local organizations (Brent, 2015). They have written about funding and other direct support for local organizations (Borras et al., 2013; McKeon, 2013). They have written about the importance of discourse coming from outside the respective country, but less about the origins and migrations of that discourse (Alonso-Fradejas, 2015; Brent, 2015; Gingembre, 2015). They have

written about the role of outside (translocal or transnational) actors in carrying out research (Larder, 2015), publicizing struggles (Milgroom, 2015; Gingembre, 2015), making statements (Kandel, 2015), taking cases to court on behalf of affected communities (Grajales, 2015), and carrying out domestic campaigns (Alonso-Fradejas, 2015; Rocheleau, 2015; Sampat, 2015; Brent, 2015). They have written about transnational actors bringing people together within countries and between them (Connor & Benjaminsen, 2015; Larder, 2015). They have written about the role of transnational NGOs and La Vía Campesina (LVC) and other transnational civil society networks in pushing for the development of new governance mechanisms through the United Nations (Künnemann & Suárez, 2013; McKeon, 2013; Seufert, 2013; Stephens, 2013), in setting up and participating in private sector governance instruments (Fortin & Richardson, 2013; Goetz, 2013), and participating in the International Land Coalition (ILC), of which land grabs are an important focus (Borras et al., 2013).

Overall, within the literature on resistance to land grabs, the treatment of external actors and relationships with them is not very sophisticated. Vague terms like "militant peasant organizations" or "NGOs" are often used, and details of relationships between local and translocal actors are rarely given (see, for example, Gingembre, 2015; Rocheleau, 2015). Within the social sciences there is a general reluctance to emphasize the role of individual leaders, for reasons that Barker et al. (2001) summarize, and this holds true to large extent within the literature on resistance to land grabs (although see, for example, Baird (2017)). What this means is, essentially, that there is often a lack of serious attention paid to the geography of resistance as it relates to external actors.

In understanding the role of external actors, I have chosen to focus on the relation between ideas and geography. This is for empirical reasons, as the stories that emerged from my fieldwork all pointed in this direction. It is well known that ideas shape struggles; Marx and Engles, for

example, wrote about the importance of class consciousness for class struggle to happen (Tucker, ed. 1978) and Gramsci wrote about the need to develop workers' consciousness in order to challenge cultural hegemony (Gramsci, 1971). In post-structural writing, it is well-established that discourses influence people and shape action (Foucault, 1972 (1969), 1977 (1975)). Scholars of resistance to land grabs have also called attention to the importance of ideas. Baird and Le Billon, for example, write about the role of political memories in resistance to land grabs, as noted above (Baird and Le Billon, 2012; Baird, 2014a). Bourdier (2019:17) suggests, with regards to one of the cases in Cambodia that I studied, that encouraging villagers to "lead their campaign under the banner of, for instance, powerful transnational core ideas persuasively promoted by prominent scientists, La Vía Campesina, and other worldwide militant groups, like 'food sovereignty' and 'self-governance with alternative rules and procedures'" might have led to better outcomes. What I am calling attention to here is the way that ideas can shape the *geographies* of struggles through the *geographic content of those ideas*. Targeting one ELC or the system of ELCs, or seeing the problem as one of industrial agriculture or corrupt national officials, imply different geographies. Other factors, such as time, might also be important; I have chosen to focus on geographies of movements.

While ideas could shape the geographies of struggles in various other ways (for example, who receives funding), I examine how actors' ideas, especially those with transnational origins, influence what land they try to get back and the configuration of actors they engage. I build on existing scholarship to make three main points. First, I demonstrate the usefulness of paying explicit attention to ideas' implied geographic content and how they influence the geographies of resistance – how people connect and the land they fight for. Other scholars have written about specific cases; Alonso-Fradejas (2015) and Brent (2015), for example, both write about how the

"defense of territory" framing can serve as a bridge between peasant and indigenous movements in a way that earlier framings could not. The connection between ideas and geographies has been described, but generally not explicitly or in those terms (Larder, 2015; Castellanos-Navarrete & Jansen, 2015; Grajales, 2015). I suggest that a wide range of ideas have implied geographic content and can fruitfully be thought of as spatial imaginaries. Second, I show the usefulness of paying explicit attention to the way organizers and other key individuals – imagineers (Routledge et al., 2006) – are influenced by spatial imaginaries in enrolling others in networks. For example, while Bourdier (2019) writes about the roles of particular actors in enrolling people in a negotiation process between communities and the company (HAGL) that had taken their land, it would have been productive to have explicitly analyzed those actors as imagineers influenced by spatial imaginaries. Third, I show the importance of paying attention to relational connections through which actors access, or could access, internationally circulating discourses, and the unevenness of the resulting access. While Alonso-Fradejas (2015) and Brent (2015) write about the positive influence of the internationally circulating "defense of territory" discourse (Rosset, 2013) on movements in Guatemala and Argentina, they do help us understand why it is present in these countries but not in Cambodia. I interrogate such unevenness in access to discourses. These three points are reflected in the three components of my overall thesis, introduced in the previous chapter: (1) that one important way (among others) in which outsiders influence the geographies of local land grab struggles is through spatial imaginaries, (2) that sometimes they do so as influential "imagineers" enacting such spatial imaginaries, and (3) that such spatial imaginaries are often transmitted through uneven embodied processes that result in uneven access to them.

Spatial imaginaries and their influence on land grab struggles

In this section, I will develop the ideas of the previous paragraph further, drawing especially on various strands of Social Movement Theory and Political Geography. In doing so I will introduce two subsidiary points, relating to technological effects and translation. These literatures provide more explicit frameworks for thinking about the relationships between ideas and geographies compared to what we find in the land grabs literature.

Spatial imaginaries and the geographies of movements

As I noted in the previous chapter, I use the term "spatial imaginary" to make the point that a wide range of ideas have specific geographic implications and can thus have real, material effects. They could be frames, repertoires of contention, ideas about organization, scale, or other types of ideas which may not make any direct reference to geography but have important geographic implications. Examples from my case studies include framing land grab struggles in terms of forestry or food sovereignty, the "follow the money" approach to dealing with land grabs, discourses of land rights, and ideas about grassroots organizing.

I use the concept of "spatial imaginary" in a more general sense than that in which it is commonly used (Driver, 2005; Watkins, 2015; Boudreau, 2007), to denote ideas that imply particular geographies. Like others, I am concerned with the way spatial imaginaries have material effects by shaping human action (Jessop and Oosterlynck, 2008). But I use the term to encompass a broader range of phenomena than do others. While imaginaries are often defined as fairly specific types of phenomena, for example as mental maps (Jessop, 2012b, Boudreau, 2007), cognitive frameworks (Wolford, 2004), or stories or representations (Said, 2003), I do not limit them to any particular kind of idea. Spatial imaginaries are often thought to be spatially constituted or to have

explicit spatialities; Jessop (2012a), for example, provides a framework for studying spatial imaginaries that has four axes that are explicitly spatial: territory, place, scale, and network. In a review of the literature on spatial imaginaries, Watkins (2015) states that "a spatial imaginary's meanings are related to spatiality" and writes that scholars have identified imaginaries of places, idealized spaces, and spatial transformations. For me, however, any ideas that imply geographies can be analyzed as spatial imaginaries – whether they be discourses of land rights, approaches to resisting land grabs, or ideas about capitalist agriculture. While Watkins writes that Anderson's (2006) "imagined community" is not a spatial imaginary because it is fundamentally social in nature, for me it is one, because of the geographies it strongly implies. While some take spatial imaginaries to be collectively held (Davoudi, 2018; Said, 2003; Boudreau, 2007), I share the perspective of others that they need not be (Wolford, 2004). In short, for my purposes here, it is useful to open up the concept of spatial imaginary, to reveal how a wide range of ideas have geographic implications. I build on the writings of others who have identified the role of social actors in deploying spatial imaginaries (McFarlane, 2009; Boudreau, 2007) and the importance of spatial imaginaries to people's participation in movements (Wolford, 2004), again to reveal the diversity of contexts in which spatial imaginaries are important.

Alonso-Fradejas (2015) shows how framing land struggles in terms of "defense of territory" can enable peasant and indigenous movements to unite. Other land grab scholars also use the concept of frames in relation to resistance to land grabs, for example to show how the "land grab" frame has shaped transnational activism (Temper, 2018) and how community groups in Laos have framed their struggles within state ideologies (McAllister, 2015). Targeting one ELC or the system of ELCs, or seeing the problem as one of industrial agriculture or corrupt national officials, imply different geographies. The concept of frames, or "schema of interpretation", comes out of

the work of Goffman (1974). While he was interested in framing by individuals, later social movement scholars have looked at collective framing processes (Snow et al., 1986; Snow & Benford, 1988). Social movements "frame, or assign meaning to and interpret relevant events and conditions in ways that are intended to mobilize potential adherents and constituents, to garner bystander support, and to demobilize antagonists" (Snow & Benford, 1988: 198). Frames can be spatial imaginaries in the sense that they shape the geographies of movements by appealing to, and helping to recruit or link together, certain groups of people (Snow & Benford, 1992; Benford & Snow, 2000).

Alonso-Fradejas also examines the geographies of repertoires of contention (Tarrow, 2011) of local and national social movements in defense of territory. He identifies "grounded practices of resistance exerting pressure 'from below', together with politico-juridical advocacy 'from above', and support from research and social communication 'from the sides'" (2015:506), all part of broader processes of "strategic litigation". Seeing their local resistance as part of strategic litigation, he writes, leads grassroots groups to want to link with less local actors. Tarrow explains that tactical innovation by social movements is rare, and that they often draw upon existing tactics – repertoires of contention – with which they are (or become) familiar, rather than coming up with new ones. He explains also that repertoires of contention have geographies associated with them; innovations in repertoires of contention have meant changed geographies of social movements. For example, a shift from burning granaries to action over broader geographies, such as boycotts, is said to have accompanied the rise of the modern social movement (Tarrow, 2011).

Social movement scholars have been concerned about the links between organizational form and movements' abilities to mobilize and sustain participation, their trajectories, their aims, and relationships among organizations (Tarrow, 2011; Clemens & Minkoff, 2007; Della Porta &

Diani, 2006). Tarrow (2011), for example, describes two organizational forms – hierarchical national organizations and decentralized cells of militants – that have become legitimized as "cultural artifacts". He claims (p. 127) that the "success of these two models led to recurring polarities of organization in social movements around the world". These two organizational forms imply very different geographies. Ideas about organization can shape the geographies of movements by influencing the form organization takes.

Scholarship on the politics of scale also resonates with the point I am making here. Political geographers writing about the politics of scale recognize that actors may engage different scales by targeting different state institutions or engaging in "scale jumping" (Leitner et al., 2008); scales here are determined by the different jurisdictions of those institutions. In Political Ecology, the politics of scale seem to encompass an even greater diversity of scales, and a fairly direct link between scalar imaginaries and the geographies of assemblages is sometimes made. Cohen and Bakker (2014) show, for example, how thinking about environmental governance in terms of watersheds has implications for the relative influence of different institutions, and for configurations among them.

I will show that, more generally, ideas can shape the geographies of movements through those ideas' implied geographic content. This leads to my first sub-thesis: that spatial imaginaries can influence the geographies of local land grab struggles. (My specific interest is in ideas that come from, or are shaped by, external actors, particularly actors outside of Cambodia.) While ideas could shape the geographies of struggles in various ways (for example, who receives funding), I am especially concerned with how actors' ideas (with external origins) influence what land they try to get back and the configuration of actors they engage. Also, while the origins of spatial

imaginaries, and how they gain wider circulatory power, are interesting topics, they are not my main focus.

Technological effects

Writing about the HAGL concessions, Bourdier (2019) shows how one organization's ideas about how to deal with land grabs have geographic effects, though he does not use that language. He shows how those ideas led to the decision to engage a particular process involving mediated negotiations between communities and a company, which in turn resulted in newly elected community representatives criticizing community elders, tensions arising between and within villages, as many as one hundred people enrolling in the process, and commitments to ground rules keeping people from using alternative approaches to getting their land back.

These can be thought of as "technological" effects in the Foucauldian sense: the decision to engage the mediation process established pathways that limited actors' options and that were not easily controlled by the actors who brought them about. Behrent (2013:55) explains Foucault's use of the term "technology": "Foucault primarily typically employs the term […] to refer not to tools, machines, or the application of science to industrial production, but rather to methods and procedures for governing human beings." Pathways set in motion through the decision to engage a particular mechanism take on a life of their own. In the context of Actor-Network Theory, my "technologies" can be thought of as processes of translation that shape relations among actors in an actor-network (Law, 1992).

Technological effects of the sort I am concerned with here have been written about by various authors without using this language. Keck and Sikkink (1998), for example, note that the human rights frame often privileges lawyers and those with legal expertise. Development scholars

have written about development actors framing problems in technical terms that imply roles for the same actors in finding solutions (Ferguson, 1990; Li, 2005).

This leads to my second sub-thesis: that spatial imaginaries can sometimes lead to decisions that result in "technological" effects in the Foucauldian sense. I will explore the specific technological effects that Bourdier writes about, and also examine similar effects arising in other contexts.

Imagineering

The key actors whose ideas brought about the technological effects Bourdier writes about can be thought of as "imagineers", following Routledge et al. (2006). In all of my cases, I encountered imagineers, influential people who enrolled others into networks, who shaped the geographies of resistance movements based on their own spatial imaginaries. Those on whom I focused included NGO leaders and key activists outside of communities, but some were also members of grassroots communities, and I could have analyzed actors of other types as imagineers as well. The imagineers I consider were influenced by a range of imaginaries: framings of land grab struggles in terms of forestry, grassroots organizing, and the "follow the money" approach to land grabs, to name a few.

Routledge et al (2006) use the term "imagineer" in the context of writing about People's Global Action (PGA) to denote organizers who helped to enact the network. Routledge himself acted as an imagineer within PGA, helping to organize events and facilitate communication for PGA in different countries. In writing about imagineers, the main focus of Routledge and his colleagues has been imagineers' role in organizing networks (Routledge, 2008; Routledge et al., 2006, 2007; Cumbers et al., 2008). McFarlane (2009) draws on this scholarship to write about

imagineers organizing people into a network called Slum Dwellers' International (SDI) through work on the ground, in many ways analogous to the imagineers organizing PGA Asia. His interest was similar to that of Routledge and his colleagues: to show how the "assemblage" that is SDI was assembled. Davies (2009) also uses the language of "imagineers" to refer to organizers in the Tibetan Freedom Movement, but is more interested in how they helped to facilitate communication within the network than are these other authors.

All of these scholars have used the concept of imagineers to highlight the role of particularly influential individuals. Routledge (2008: 209) explains that the process of circulation is unequal: "some circulate more freely and extensively than others". McFarlane (2009:567) asks, "who or what has the capacity to assemble", and answers: "In a given social movement, different people have more or less capacity to call upon financial resources or personal contacts, to speak from a position of authority, or to promote or participate in the practices that go on."

Of these authors, Routledge (2008, 2009) pays particular attention to the way imagineers' ideas shape how they organize others, which is of particular interest here. He describes imagineers as "networking vectors" who enact the imaginary of the network – their own vision of the network is what guides how they enroll others. Writing in the context of global justice networks (GJNs) like PGA, he suggests that imagineers "attempt to translate the concept or imaginary of the GJN (e.g. what it is, and/or how it works, and/or what it is attempting to achieve in terms of campaigns and network goals) within the broader constituency that comprises the network participants" (Routledge, 2009:1890).

I submit that Routledge's point is more generally useful for understanding movements than is commonly recognized. This leads to my third sub-thesis: that the spatial imaginaries enacted by influential individuals (imagineers) are sometimes especially important, shaping how they enroll

others in networks. There are several parts to this: that it is important to pay attention to the role played by particular individuals within resistance to land grabs; that these individuals' spatial imaginaries deserve special attention; and that imagineers' spatial imaginaries are particularly important in part because of the influence these individuals have, coming from various sources, including their access to financial resources and their role in funding other groups. I do not mean to deny the agency of others or suggest that imagineers do not encounter friction in sharing or imposing their spatial imaginaries, but I rather want to suggest that imagineers are more important than is often recognized. They played key roles in all three land grab cases that I studied for this dissertation.

My focus with this point is on the material effects of spatial imaginaries due to how they affect what imagineers do, more or less in line with Routledge's writing about imagineers. While they are interesting questions, I generally do not interrogate (in much depth) where the imaginaries deployed by imagineers originate, how these imaginaries affect the thinking of others, or how they might gain wider appeal. It is particularly challenging to understand how imagineers influence the thinking of others; because of the resources wielded by imagineers, other actors may follow their direction even if they are not completely convinced by their ideas. Baird (2016a), for example, has shown that villagers sometimes feel the need to go along with influential NGOs. It would be difficult to determine whether this is the case during a study covering just a few years.

Access to ideas through uneven relational processes

As I noted above, Bourdier (2019:18) suggests that NGOs supporting communities in confronting the HAGL land concessions should have introduced them to food sovereignty discourses or ideas about "self-governance with alternative rules and procedures." These

discourses, he writes, imply "the deployment of meaningful sociopolitical mobilisations in which populations can affirm their identity, clarify their concerns with others, get out of their isolation, lobby for their rights on a broader scale, and join transnational peaceful movements if such networking is compatible with their intentions." In part, at least, these ideas could be useful for the geographies they might lead to, or what I refer to as their implied geographies. (I will make a point similar to Bourdier's in the next chapter with regards to food sovereignty-based discourses of land grabs.) And these are ideas to which these communities do not already have access, and which they could only access with the help of others.

Because of the potential importance of these and other ideas from outside, and their potential material effects on struggles, it is worth interrogating people's access to them. This is not to say that locally produced ideas are not important. But there are internationally circulating ideas that are also important, including those that Bourdier suggests, discourses of Indigenous rights, and others. The importance of ideas from outside is recognized in Social Movement Theory, in which diffusion of repertoires and frames, for example, is an important field of study (Tarrow, 2011; Soule, 2007). Particularly relevant here is unevenness in diffusion (Soule, 2007). Geographers have also written about the influence of internationally circulating ideas on local movements (Baird, 2011, 2015).

The communities about whom Bourdier writes might access ideas about food sovereignty through either "direct" or "relational" connections (as he proposes) or "indirect" connections (for example, by finding them online) (Tarrow, 2011). Empirically, as I write in the next chapter, Cambodian communities are very unlikely to access these ideas, as well as many others that could influence the geographies of their struggles, such as ideas about Indigenous peoples' land rights, through non-relational connections. It is thus worthwhile to examine their ability to access them

through relational connections, which, I contend, comes down to studying unevenness in these connections and unevenness in transmission of ideas through them. Various literatures pay attention to the transmission of ideas through relational connections. The transmission of ideas through relational connections is the basis of social network theory, for example (Granovetter, 1973). It is also an important focus of the policy mobilities literature, especially with regards to individual technocrats or transfer agents who facilitate information transfers (Larner and Laurie, 2010; McCann, 2011). The importance of information sharing in face-to-face gatherings is also often noted by geographers (McFarlane, 2009; Cumbers et al., 2008; Routledge, 2008).

In writing about how direct or relational connections come about, scholars have emphasized the importance of face-to-face interaction (Cumbers et al., 2008; Routledge, 2008), mobility (Leitner et al., 2008; Featherstone, 2008), language ability (Lindell, 2011), specific events or shared projects that bring people together (Routledge, 2008; Routledge et al., 2007; Peck, 2011; McCann, 2011), the sharing of something in common (identity, politics, experiences), the presence of feelings of sympathy, affinity, or solidarity (Bosco, 2001; Featherstone et al., 2007; Routledge, 2008; Davies, 2012), and technologies such as mailings, beauty pageants, and the internet (Lindell, 2011; Routledge, 2008; Cumbers et al., 2008; Davies, 2012; Faria, 2010; Fluri, 2006). Empirically, however, what became very clear was that connection, and making use of connections, requires work and often mediation as well.

Various geographers have written about the work that connection requires. Routledge (2008:201), for example, writes: “activist networks are never always already given but constituted through specific embodied practices in specific places”. Others use the concept of assemblage to write about connections and highlight the work of connecting. McFarlane (2009:562) writes that assemblage emphasizes the “labour of assembling and re-assembling” done in making

connections. Davies (2009) demonstrates the material practices through which connections are made. Elsewhere in Geography scholars have also written about the role of mediators in making connections and the possibility of them becoming powerful in the networks they assemble (Lindell, 2011).

This leads to my fourth sub-thesis: that uneven processes through which ideas are transmitted result in unevenness in access to external ideas. This sub-thesis has three important parts: relational or direct connections may be important for the transmission of ideas that shape the geographies of resistance movements; direct connections do not happen automatically when contact is made, even when enabling factors such as technology and language ability are present; and the dependence on direct connections of actors' access to ideas circulating internationally (or even those that circulate more locally) results in considerable unevenness in such access. Those looking at connections from the vantage point of those doing the connecting (Routledge, 2008; Davies, 2012), of those successfully connected (McFarlane, 2009; Lindell, 2011), or of those who have successfully accessed ideas (Cochrane & Ward, 2012; McCann & Ward, 2012) may miss the unevenness resulting from lack of connection and thus lack of access to ideas that concerns me.

It is worth pointing out a number of themes that are not my focus here. First, unevenness in indirect connections – related to unevenness in internet connectivity and literacy and language ability, among other factors – could be significant for unevenness in access to ideas. Some people, after all, do access ideas about food sovereignty and Indigenous rights through online sources. But I have chosen not to interrogate indirect connections, reflecting the data that I was able to collect. Second, I did not really study relational connections in the form of Facebook relationships, because, empirically, I did not find people accessing the ideas of interest through Facebook. Third, my focus here was not on how discourses circulate in the first place, for example why indigenous

rights or food sovereignty discourses have gained wider circulatory power, or why some imaginaries fail to circulate internationally. I have looked at already circulating discourses, and asked why some can access them and others cannot. Fourth, in focusing on access, I have not paid particular attention to how receptive people are to ideas, focusing more on whether they learn about them in the first place. And fifth, while unevenness in access to ideas could have implications for transnational power relations (to the extent that ideas translate into power), I did not examine those implications.

Translation

Ideas about Indigenous rights have been important to land grab struggles in Cambodia, as I will show in Chapter Five. Baird (2011) writes about the relationships (many involving NGOs) through which these ideas made it to Cambodia; Cambodian Indigenous people did not just pick them up from the Internet. Elsewhere, Baird (2015) describes similar processes through which ideas about Indigeneity were brought to Laos, and, of particular interest here, describes hybridization or translation that happened over the course of those processes. International discourses about Indigeneity did not arrive in Laos unaltered.

Translation is a well-developed concept, often associated with Merry (2005) and Tsing (2005). Tsing writes that universal ideas exist in international movements as traveling "packages" that are produced in one context and are translated in order to be meaningful in new local contexts. These packages provide tools and frameworks that local actors can use but are only effective once they have been adapted to local fields of meaning and social action. Merry employs a very similar framework, using the concept of translation to explain how universal or global concepts like human rights circulate internationally. Global ideas, she writes, must be translated into the local context

of power and meaning (or "into the vernacular") in order to have impact locally, to shape how people act. She claims that ideas are more transferable if they are in familiar forms, but more emancipatory if they challenge familiar forms. One place translation receives attention in Geography is within the literature on discourse mobilities: discourse "mutations" are essentially translations (Peck 2011; Peck and Theodore 2010).

On top of uneven relational connections, translation poses another obstacle to access, leading to my fifth sub-thesis: that translation processes contribute to unevenness in transmission of ideas. Even when local actors are able to access internationally circulating discourses, they are likely to access only significantly altered forms of those discourses.

Economic Land Concessions in Cambodia and resistance to them

In the three subsequent chapters, I will use three empirical case studies to develop these points further. To facilitate understanding of the case studies, I will now present background on land grabs in Cambodia (in particular, economic land concessions) and resistance to them.

Cambodia received early attention in the new land grabs literature (GRAIN, 2008; Deininger, 2011; Cotula, 2012; Zoomers, 2010) and, as noted above, is one of the countries in Southeast Asia (along with Laos and Indonesia) where the land grab framing is used most by scholars (Shoenberger et al., 2017). While initial interest related to news of deals with Gulf States for food production, since then the focus has been on economic land concessions (ELCs), as is the case with this dissertation[24]. There is now a substantial literature on resistance to ELCs in Cambodia (Baird, 2017; Beban & Work, 2014; Diepart et al., 2019; Lamb et al., 2017; Neef & Touch, 2016; Verkoren & Ngin, 2017; Bourdier, 2019; Young, 2019a, b). In this section, I will

[24] As I noted in the previous chapter, when granted to foreign firms, ELCs are quintessential land grabs.

review that literature as well as draw on my own findings. I will begin with a brief background on land governance in Cambodia and an overview of ELCs before examining community responses to ELCs and the role of external actors in resistance to them. More thorough explanations of the history, legal framework, and other aspects of ELCs can be found elsewhere (Diepart & Schoenberger, 2017; McInnes, 2015; Oldenburg & Neef, 2014).

Under the communist Khmer Rouge, who ruled the entire country from 1975 to 1979, and large parts before and after, private property was abolished and all land in Cambodia formally became property of the state (Kiernan, 2002). Previously, land dispossession had happened through a variety of capitalist processes. One particularly blatant form of dispossession was the creation of rubber plantations in the 1920s and 1930s through grants of land to wealthy French individuals and in the 1960s through the creation of state-owned rubber plantations (Slocomb, 2007; Baird, 2008, 2019; Diepart & Schoenberger, 2017).

After the Khmer Rouge were driven out of much of the country by the Vietnamese army (in early 1979), farmland came under the control of either individual families or "solidarity groups" (Work & Beban, 2016). In the case of Rumduol Commune (my focus in the Pheapimex concession area), people formed solidarity groups in the early 1980s and land was allocated to each group based on the number of people in it. Cattle were privately owned, but people plowed their fields together, and the crop was divided based on the number of people (divided into different categories) in each family. When the solidarity groups were later disbanded, land was divided among group members with the number of plots each family received based on the number of people (again, of different categories) in it. Families did not receive the land they had previously owned. Some reclaimed forest land which they or their families had owned prior to the Khmer Rouge period and only they were allowed to clear and cultivate it. Claiming new plots of forested

land was also possible in some places in the area. In the case of Lovea Commune in the Hengfu concession area, with the fall of the Khmer Rouge, for the most part people regained their prior land holdings, though they cultivated their farmland collectively and shared the crop. Families that did not have land, including newlywed couples, acquired land by clearing forest. Collective farming was subsequently discontinued, and later in the 1980s many families claimed additional parcels of forestland which they would later clear incrementally to expand their rice fields. In 1989, private ownership of farmland was formally recognized throughout the country, but large areas remained, legally, the property of the state (Un & So, 2011); the Khmer Rouge continued to control parts of the territory of the country and to engage the Cambodian government in warfare.

A number of different processes beginning in the early 1990s resulted in land grabs of various sorts. As the economy was liberalized, private accumulation of land exploded as people with the means began to buy up land (Guttal, 2007; Springer, 2011; Un & So, 2011). In addition, according to several of my informants, the ruling Cambodian People's Party (CPP) tried to assert control over as much land as possible at this time as Cambodia transformed into a multi-party state. In the 1990s, also, elite Cambodians acquired falsified certificates for land in many areas; this practice became especially widespread in the late 1990s in areas that Khmer Rouge forces had held, often until their final defeat in 1998 (Guttal, 2007). Military units acquired land around the country (Human Rights Watch, 2010). The Cambodian government granted the first ELCs in 1995, and the legal basis of them was established six years later with the 2001 Land Law (OHCHR, 2007). Reflecting provisions in the 1993 Constitution asserting that land in Cambodia belongs to the state, the new Land Law specified different forms of state ownership of land and the right of

the government to transfer land to private entities[25]. Mining concessions were also granted over large parts of the country (Slocomb, 2010), and several hydropower projects were initiated (Middleton et al., 2009; Baird 2016a). Elites continued to buy up more and more land, often in suspect ways, and the expansion of contract farming gave private firms increased control over the use of land without possessing it (Social Action for Change, 2011). There were media reports in 2008, cited in GRAIN's report (GRAIN, 2008), that Gulf States intended to acquire large areas of land in Cambodia, but the deals never materialized (Baird, 2014b). Landless Cambodians and smallholders also participated in an enormous migration into less densely populated areas, and their collective land acquisitions would rival these land grabs in overall extent (Fox et al., 2018). Beginning in the 2000s, Indigenous peoples lost large tracts of land as well (Baird, 2014b) and violent evictions in Phnom Penh also became common (Springer, 2013).

These processes unfolded differently in the three case study sites. In Rumduol Commune, in the area of the Pheapimex concessions, dispossession such as that described here began with the granting of these concessions; the contracts are dated 1999 but it was not until 2009 that the company began to assert real control over large areas of land in the site. Perhaps starting in 2008, people from outside the village also began to buy land there. In Tapam village, in the area of the HAGL concessions, at least one smaller company acquired land in the village in the 1990s, but otherwise there were no major disruptions until HAGL arrived in 2009. In the case of Lovea Commune, in the area of the Hengfu concessions, a mining concession was granted to a foreign company in the early 2000s, in an area used intensively by people in Lovea and several other communes, adjacent to the future site of the Hengfu ELCs. The company suspended operations in

[25] For more background on ELCs, including their history, the legal framework for them, and the process of granting ELCs, see Diepart & Schoenberger (2017), Dwyer et al. (2015), McInnes (2015), Neef et al. (2013), and Oldenburg & Neef (2014).

2004, but not long thereafter Lovea villagers confronted small-scale producers from other provinces who moved in and acquired land with the protection of local authorities. The community attempted to block this, with some success. Prior to Hengfu beginning its operations in 2012, also, authorities designated an area within Lovea Commune for a large development project. The community attempted unsuccessfully to block the grab, the land was taken, and outsiders flooded into the area following construction.

I have not tried to analyze the drivers of Cambodian ELCs in any depth, but it does appear that GRAIN's (2008) narrative generally fails to explain the phenomenon (Baird, 2014b). For example, ELCs in Cambodia had been granted for years before the 2008 food and financial crises, and many earlier ELCs were granted to Cambodian entities that appear to have only later found international partners or sources of capital. In many cases, investors in ELCs appear to have brought in little capital, instead generating capital in Cambodia through low-investment logging operations; in some cases, they are little more than logging operations (Diepart & Sem, 2018). While Vietnamese and some Chinese investors may have brought in more significant capital, informants suggested that geopolitical considerations were particularly salient in the granting of concessions to many of them. Baird (2014b) specifically challenges the attribution of land grabs by GRAIN and others to increased interest in farmland among global investors, pointing to the involvement of elite Cambodians and the role of money laundering instead. State actors may have granted ELCs for the purposes of patronage (Padwe, 2017; Un & So, 2011). Some authors point to a role of the World Bank, which promoted large-scale agriculture in Cambodia (Diepart & Schoenberger, 2017; Oldenburg & Neef, 2014). Relatedly, Keating (2012) attributes ELCs to discourses of developmentalism on the part of elites and Scheidel and Work (2018) write about cases in which the granting of ELCs was justified as contributing to climate mitigation. While

numerous scholars have noted that the granting and implementation of ELCs often does not follow the law (Morris, 2016; Diepart & Schoenberger, 2017; McInnes, 2015; Oldenburg & Neef, 2014), Springer (2013) emphasizes that it is the law which enables land grabs in Cambodia.

Although the Land Law stipulates that ELCs may only be granted on land belonging to the state, and then ordinarily only state land that does not have "public interest use" (Article 16), in practice, much of the area included within ELCs is land used and variously claimed by local and Indigenous communities. The Cambodian government has generally granted ELCs without addressing those "hidden" or "undocumented" uses or claims. Overall, much of the area granted in ELCs has not yet been cleared and planted by the ELC leaseholders (Diepart & Sem, 2018; Gironde & Portilla, 2016), but where operations have begun they have already had severe consequences for local communities – though some scholars entertain the possibility that there is potential for ELCs to be beneficial (Dwyer et al., 2016; Rudi et al., 2014). ELCs are often justified for the jobs they will create (Scheidel, 2016), but scholars have documented impacts on farmland, livelihoods, residential land, drinking water, cultural sites, and the environment, violence, and human rights abuses (Chev et al., 2011; Gironde & Ramirez, 2019; Gironde & Portilla, 2016; Guttal, 2011; Diepart & Schoenberger, 2017; Diepart & Sem, 2018; Neef & Touch, 2016; Neef et al., 2013; Neth et al., 2013; Padwe, 2017; Rudi et al., 2014; Schoenberger & Beban, 2018). Baird and colleagues have shown how ELCs may have impacts far from the actual site of the concessions (Baird & Fox, 2015; Fox et al., 2018) and how these impacts are intertwined with the impacts of hydropower dams (Baird & Barney, 2017). Some have written about particular impacts of ELCs on women and gender relations (Lamb et al., 2017; McGinn, 2014; Park & Maffi, 2017), and some about their impacts in terms of capitalist relations or land concentration (Diepart & Schoenberger,

2017; Oldenburg & Neef, 2014; Scheidel, 2016). On the other hand, it appears that many concessions are not even very profitable for the leaseholders[26].

By 2012, ELCs covered over eleven percent of the land area of the country (Vrieze & Kuch, 2012). In May that year, the Prime Minister announced a moratorium on the granting of new ELCs and a program to relieve some of the problems associated with them, measures that were codified as Order 01. Several more ELCs were granted in the following months (the official rationale being that they were already in the pipeline), but none have been granted since 2013. Under Order 01, parts of ELCs around the country were excised and much of that land titled to individual families (Diepart & Schoenberger, 2017; Dwyer et al., 2015; Oldenburg & Neef, 2014; Schoenberger, 2017; Un, 2013; Work & Beban, 2016). While some scholars are ambiguous as to whether Order 01 solved the problems associated with ELCs (Dwyer et al., 2016; Oldenburg & Neef, 2014; Schoenberger, 2017), particularly negative outcomes have been documented for Indigenous communities, as they were denied the possibility of communal land tenure when Order 01 was implemented[27] (Oldenburg & Neef, 2014). Some have suggested that Order 01 actually led to greater entrenchment of ELCs (Diepart & Schoenberger, 2017; Milne, 2013; Beban et al., 2017). While some concessions were cancelled, this happened with little transparency, including with regards to the fate of the land (Diepart & Schoenberger, 2017). In 2016 and 2017, though the granting of ELCs had stopped, a Law on Agricultural Land – that civil society groups have shown could open the door for more ELC-like transfers of control of land (MRLG, 2016) – moved through subsequent drafts before being shelved indefinitely.

[26] Ian Baird, Department of Geography, University of Wisconsin, personal communication, October 9, 2017.

[27] Under the 2001 Land Law and 2009 Sub-Decree on Procedures of Registration of Land of Indigenous Communities, Indigenous communities are entitled to collective title for their communal lands, including residential land, land on which they practice traditional agriculture, reserved land for expansion of traditional agriculture, spirit forests, and burial forests. For discussions of communal land titling, see Baird (2013) and Milne (2013).

Cambodian communities confronting ELCs have not always actively resisted them. Some community members I interviewed said that they had believed what they were told about the ELCs bringing development and jobs. Some said they had thought that resistance would be futile. Some said that people would have resisted if someone had led them, but no one had. And there are many other reasons why people might not resist. But often they have resisted. While Baird (2017) notes that resistance often takes invisible forms, some of the most visible forms of protest in Cambodia – a country not particularly known for protest – have been in opposition to ELCs (Young, 2019a). Rudi et al. (2014:564) goes so far as to suggest that ELCs have resulted in the "potential for a violent revolution". Scholars have documented a variety of responses, including confronting company workers and managers (Neef & Touch, 2016), complaining to local authorities and filing petitions (Diepart et al., 2019; Neef & Touch, 2016), local protest (Diepart & Sem, 2018), clearing and cultivating land within concessions (Gironde & Portilla, 2016), and road blockades and marches (Neef & Touch, 2016; Schoenberger, 2017). Un (2013) writes about villagers organizing networks to protect their land. Forms of resistance that I was able to document in the three cases that I studied included: complaining verbally to bulldozer drivers or village or commune chiefs; physically stopping bulldozers or forcing their drivers to bring the bulldozers into villages to be kept there; informing Cambodian human rights organizations; protesting at provincial government buildings; erecting boundary posts around community land; blocking roads; planting rice on land cleared by the company; building huts on farmland within the concession area; destroying crops planted by the company or sabotaging company equipment; submitting petitions or complaints to local, provincial, or national authorities; speaking out about the ELCs in meetings or workshops; registering Indigenous communal land; establishing community forests; calling reporters or speaking out on the radio; voting for an opposition party; speaking with UN Special Rapporteurs

or other international human rights workers; and filing complaints through international mechanisms. This list is not exhaustive and it includes only actions aimed at stopping the ELCs and not, say, trying to change the terms of local communities' incorporation into concession operations. Some involved the active participation of NGOs or other outside actors.

Following the implementation of Order 01 in 2012 and 2013, struggles against ELCs and the policy framework enabling them became less visible and widespread than had been the case previously. While there had been significant earlier efforts to challenge the overall system of ELCs, in general that does not seem to be the case post-Order 01, and a number of informants told me they felt that the situation with regards to ELCs had improved with the implementation of Order 01. One leading human rights worker told me that, following Order 01, "the big scandal of ELCs is something of the past. I don't know what the next big campaign on land will be. It can't be on ELCs per se. On ELCs, the next thing will probably be on labor." Others suggested that communities had given up or had placed their hopes in broad political change in the country. However, intense struggles against ELCs still continue in parts of Cambodia – including, notably, in the case of the Hengfu concessions (one of my three cases).

Scholars focusing specifically on community resistance have addressed a number of different questions. Baird (2017) highlights the importance of "histories, identities/ethnicities, politics and geography" in shaping whether and how people resist. Beban and Work (2014) write about the role of spirits in resisting ELCs. Of particular interest to me is agency and how resistance is organized. Some authors make resistance or protest appear to be spontaneous or at least due to structural factors rather than agency (Brickell, 2014; Cismas & Paramita, 2016; Young, 2016). Young (2016:594), for example, describes resistance to ELCs as "a result of adverse changes in socioeconomic conditions", noting that large-scale land acquisition "caused chronic contention

between and among the deprived communities, the government, and private actors who were involved". Others acknowledge the role of local leaders (Diepart & Sem, 2018). Verkoren and Ngin (2017) emphasize the importance of ethnic identity in the case they studied, suggesting that it is the basis for community agency. Some write about women playing particular roles in resistance because their leadership could minimize the risk of violence (Brickell, 2014; Lamb et al., 2017; Park, 2018), because they are "acknowledged as having superior negotiating skills" (Park, 2018:13), or because they have the most to lose (Kent, 2016). Others emphasize the role of actors outside the local community, to which I turn now.

As I will demonstrate in this dissertation, translocal and transnational actors have played important roles in resistance to ELCs and other forms of land grabs in Cambodia, though I do not mean to imply that such actors are always directly involved. Sometimes they have done so more openly or directly than others. The following chapters will provide details in the case of the three sets of ELCs on which I focused, but here I will give a brief overview of the roles some of these actors have played in resistance to ELCs in Cambodia more generally. Because of space limitations, it will necessarily be incomplete and leave out important actors and processes.

Some of the most visible and intentional involvement of non-local actors in resistance to Cambodian ELCs has been by Cambodian NGOs, network organizations comprised of NGOs ("NGO networks"), and what Ojendal (2013) refers to as "hybrid organizations" – groups of people from rural communities who maintain a "community" identity but are set up and supported by NGOs. There is a substantial literature on civil society in Cambodia which is useful for understanding Cambodian NGOs and hybrid organizations. Scholars have noted the absence in Cambodia of a tradition of civil society, considerable involvement of international actors in the

development of civil society, and domination of Cambodian civil society by NGOs (Christie, 2013; Ojendal, 2013; Ou & Kim, 2013; Dosch, 2012; Hughes, 2003; Baird, 2016a).

Cambodian NGOs, "NGO networks", and hybrid organizations have sometimes responded to communities' calls for help, but in all three of the cases I studied some got involved even before the ELCs were granted, informing community members in advance of the possibility of ELCs and other forms of land grabs. Some have directly supported community leaders, identifying and coaching them, offering advice, providing training, explaining relevant aspects of the law, providing material support, and helping them organize committees, for example (Henke, 2011; Verkoren & Ngin, 2017; Beban et al., 2017). Henke (2011), describing networking among community activists as "NGO-driven" (p. 302), provides an especially detailed account of the support provided by NGOs to land activists. Some Cambodian NGOs and NGO networks have helped communities file complaints, carried out investigations and prepared documentation, issued statements in support of communities, lobbied the Cambodian government[28], or assisted efforts to internationalize issues related to Cambodian ELCs (Diepart et al., 2019; Gironde & Portilla, 2016; Park, 2018; Young, 2016, 2017, 2019a, 2019b; Beban et al., 2017). While the role of NGOs has been described, the description has sometimes been only superficial (Park, 2018; Verkoren & Ngin, 2017; Diepart & Sem, 2018; Neef & Touch, 2016). The role of NGOs in resistance in several high-profile cases has received particular attention, including the Boeng Kak Lake case in Phnom Penh (Brickell, 2014; Kent, 2016; McGinn, 2014), ELCs in the Prey Lang forest area (Franco et al., 2017; Parnell, 2015; Verkoren & Ngin, 2017), and several concessions for sugarcane (Neef & Touch, 2016; Young, 2016, 2017; Diepart et al., 2019). Hennings (2019) describes NGOs

[28] Institutionalized forms of lobbying the government have included, for example, participation in Development Partners (DP) meetings and an annual National Advocacy Conference.

encouraging women to play particular roles in resistance to ELCs, playing on Cambodian gender norms. Many NGOs working with ELC-affected communities have assisted Indigenous communities with communal land titling (Baird, 2013) which would, theoretically, protect the land from future ELCs but, in practice, is unlikely to proceed to completion in the context of an existing ELC (Milne, 2013). Cambodian NGOs, network organizations, and hybrid organizations have also played other roles that have important but indirect implications for ELCs, such as protection of human rights defenders or support for democratic processes.

Other actors have contributed to Cambodian communities' struggles against ELCs as well. International grant-makers and their intermediaries (often international NGOs) have provided funding to the hybrid organizations and NGOs just mentioned. Foreigners in Cambodia and international NGOs have been involved in conducting analysis, contributing to the framing of advocacy issues related to ELCs, preparing documentation, advising on struggles, engaging UN agencies and mechanisms, pressuring investors, taking companies to court inside and outside of Cambodia, and carrying out social media campaigns (Bourdier, 2019: Diepart et al., 2019; Neef & Touch, 2016; Young, 2016; Young, 2017; Cismas & Paramita, 2016). Particular attention has been paid in the literature to the case of an internationalized campaign on sugar ELCs (Diepart et al., 2019; Neef & Touch, 2016; Young, 2016, 2017), though internationalization in the case of the HAGL ELCs (one of my cases) has also been written about (Bourdier, 2019). Donors such as Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit (GIZ), the German government's aid agency, have pressured the Cambodian government on ELCs over the years, and several years ago the Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation (SDC) established the Mekong Regional Land Governance project with a component in Cambodia focused largely on ELCs. Opposition

parties[29] have been vocal in their opposition to ELCs and have made strong statements against specific ELC cases. UN agencies themselves have become important actors (Cismas and Paramita, 2016). Though the attention they have given to ELCs has varied over the years, Cambodian and international media have raised the profile of the issue of ELCs and community struggles against them. Academics have also written about ELC-related issues, shared information with different actors, helped to make connections, and otherwise supported community struggles. I was not able to study the role of people within the Cambodian government, but many are sympathetic to affected communities or critical of the corruption and human rights violations associated with ELCs.

There is also work going on at the international level that has not focused on Cambodia but could have important implications for ELCs in Cambodia and struggles against them. Work on World Bank safeguards could affect the International Finance Corporation (IFC)'s investments in funds financing ELCs in Cambodia[30]. The Committee on World Food Security's *Voluntary Guidelines on the Responsible Governance of Tenure of Land, Fisheries and Forests in the Context of National Food Security* (approved in 2012) and the *UN Declaration on the Rights of Peasants and Other People Working in Rural Areas* (approved in 2018) could provide Cambodians soft advocacy tools to use in their interactions with the Cambodian government over ELCs. Work on a "treaty on transnational corporations and other business enterprises with respect to human rights", that might detail the extra-territorial obligations of states to regulate their corporations' overseas activities, could increase the leverage community groups and NGOs have over foreign ELC lease-holders, or over entities that have relations with ELC lease-holders.

[29] First the Sam Rainsy Party, later joined by the Human Rights Party, and later the Cambodia National Rescue Party, which formed through a merger of the two.

[30] The IFC is a member of the World Bank Group that provides financing and other support to the private sector.

A number of authors have written about the outcomes achieved through resistance. There is often retaliation and violence (Cismas & Paramita, 2016), though Beban et al. (2017:598) claim that state and non-state actors "are increasingly deploying the exclusionary powers of law and discourses of legitimation, rather than outright force". Some authors are generally dismissive of resistance, claiming that it has little impact (Un, 2013), while others describe some positive outcomes (Schoenberger, 2017; Young, 2019b). Young (2016, 2019a, 2019b) attributes the 2012 moratorium on ELCs and positive changes in the behavior of some ELC companies to NGOs. Some authors have tried to assess the effectiveness of different approaches. Cismas and Paramita (2016) find that the use of human rights mechanisms in urban areas was helpful and led to some successes. Some see potential in certification and engagement with Western market mechanisms (Beban et al., 2017; Dwyer et al., 2015). Young (2017, 2019b) analyzes success or failure not according to approaches used by those resisting but according to dynamics on the part of the company or state institutions.

Effects of NGOs on resistance by communities has received some attention. Cismas and Paramita (2016), for example, describe community protest being replaced by coordinated mediation between the community, company, and authorities following intervention by an NGO. Writing about the Prey Lang forest area, Verkoren and Ngin (2017) describe support from NGOs as fragmenting community activities and creating dependency on them. Writing about the HAGL concessions, Bourdier (2019) criticizes NGOs for undermining community resistance, as mentioned above – for engaging communities in "a mediation process which is nothing more than a sticking plaster over a major wound" (p. 18). Hennings (2019), who describes NGOs as encouraging women to play to particular gender roles in resistance to ELCs, as mentioned above, is critical of those NGOs for reinforcing existing gender norms.

I will contribute to understandings of the role of NGOs and other non-local actors in resistance to land grabs through the empirical chapters that follow. In doing so, I will pay particular attention to the connection between ideas and geographies. While other authors have written about the role of ideas in resistance to ELCs in Cambodia (Hennings, 2019; Lamb et al., 2017; Park, 2018; Schoenberger, 2017; Tat & Bagshaw, 2014), and the geographies of such resistance (Brickell, 2014; Cismas & Paramita, 2016; Diepart et al., 2019), I bring these two strands together..

Eight stories of imagining resistance

The empirical chapters contain eight stories that help to substantiate and further develop my five sub-theses. Here, I will briefly introduce the stories and provide an overview of how they relate to the sub-theses.

The first story for the Pheapimex case concerns the framing of the formal resistance to the concessions in terms of forestry. I analyze this framing as a spatial imaginary (sub-thesis 1), showing how it influenced the geography of the assembly of actors involved in the formal resistance and the land people tried to defend. I show how the framing led to the decision to organize community forests, which I analyze as a technology (sub-thesis 2): I demonstrate that the decision to organize community forests set in motion processes that led to the transformation of a struggle for tens of thousands of acres of land into a struggle to organize a community forest over a few hundred hectares of forestland. And I analyze an NGO leader, Sophal, as an imagineer (sub-thesis 3), whose efforts to organize a network among the affected communities was influenced by the forestry framing. A second story concerns territorialities of different NGO and community actors and ideas about a provincial border. I analyze the territorialities and ideas as spatial imaginaries (sub-thesis 1) and Sophal and a community leader whose engagements with the

communities are shaped by these imaginaries as imagineers (sub-thesis 3). A third story concerns the role Jessa, a particularly well-connected international actor, played, or did not play, in bringing international land grab discourses circulating within La Vía Campesina to Cambodia. I analyze these discourses, such as treatments of land grabs as the results of processes of capitalism, as spatial imaginaries (sub-thesis 1). And I show how the transmission of these discourses happens through embodied processes, requiring work, and that unevenness in relational connections and transmission results in uneven access to these internationally circulating ideas (sub-thesis 4).

Stories for the HAGL case include one concerning ideas about movements and resistance to land grabs. I analyze these ideas as spatial imaginaries (sub-thesis 1) and an American NGO leader and his colleagues who play a leading role in bringing about a mediation process as imagineers whose work is shaped by these ideas (sub-thesis 3). A second story concerns the geography of one village affected by the concessions and of the broader assemblage[31] of actors resulting from the mediation process. I demonstrate technological effects of the decision to engage the mediation process, including effects on which communities have been involved and which actors have become particularly influential (sub-thesis 2).

Stories for the Hengfu case include one concerning ideas about land rights and their origins in Cambodian law, in international Indigenous rights discourses, and among Indigenous actors themselves. I analyze these ideas about land rights as spatial imaginaries (sub-thesis 1) and examine the embodied process through which actors have accessed them (sub-thesis 4) and associated processes of translation (sub-thesis 5). A second story concerns the transnational connections of Chan, leader of a Cambodian NGO named BDD (mentioned in the previous

[31] McFarlane (2009:562) describes "assemblage" as emphasizing "gathering, coherence, and dispersion", "groups, collectives, and, by extension, distributed agencies", and "emergence rather than resultant formation". I find "assemblage" useful for thinking about the constellation of actors involved in resistance to a land grab, as it does not suggest the need to define who is "inside" or "outside" the way a concept such as "network" may.

chapter) and the engagement of Filipino activists in resistance to the concessions through him. I show how spatial imaginaries of the Filipino activists (imagineers), which shape their interest in linking with Chan and engaging in the Hengfu struggle, are quite different from those dominant within La Vía Campesina and lead to them linking up with Cambodian actors with whom La Vía Campesina would not link (sub-thesis 3). And I show how Chan's relational connections required work and mediation, which the Filipinos contributed, resulting again in uneven access to external actors and ideas (sub-thesis 4). A third concerns an Australian activist who undertakes a grassroots organizing project in the concession area. I analyze his ideas about organizing as spatial imaginaries (sub-thesis 1) and examine how those ideas shaped the local geography of resistance he enacted as an imagineer (sub-thesis 3).

Conclusion

In presenting the stories in the coming chapters I will attempt not to be overly constrained by the sub-theses, though in the conclusion to each chapter will draw out key findings relevant to them - providing evidence for them as well as expanding upon them. In the final chapter I will draw on the empirical material contained in the stories to flesh out the sub-theses systematically. Throughout, I risk attempting to force diverse empirical material to fit a single analytical framework, but the point is not to suggest that the framework of spatial imaginaries, imagineers, and access to ideas is the only one through which these stories can be analyzed. It is, rather, to demonstrate the usefulness of this framework for advancing our understanding of resistance to land grabs and of social movements more generally.

I begin, in the next chapter, with the struggle against the Pheapimex concessions. Of the three sets of concessions, these were the first to be granted, and the struggle was one of the first

organized struggles against ELCs in Cambodia. I have never seen or heard the case held up as an example of internationalization of a land grab struggle, though the communities' resistance efforts have received considerable attention (Schneider, 2011; Beban et al., 2017; Henke, 2011; McInnes, 2015). However, it has important international dimensions that I will explore.

THREE. THE ORGANIZED RESISTANCE TO THE PHEAPIMEX CONCESSIONS

Introduction

On 12 November, 2004, an estimated eight hundred people gathered to protest clearing of land within the Pheapimex concessions which had begun a day or two earlier. Community leaders had been anticipating the start of company operations in the concessions for several years. That night, as protestors were sleeping in a local village, someone tossed a grenade in their direction and nine people were injured, three seriously. The next day, the number of protestors grew to more than one thousand people. The protest resulted in the blocking of National Highway 5, one of the major roads in the country, leading provincial authorities to promise a meeting with the protestors the following day. The meeting was held, but resolved little (Vong & Cochrane, 2004; OHCHR, 2004; Beban & Work, 2014; Henke, 2011). A struggle would continue over the coming months as the company tried to establish eucalyptus plantations. Then, in March 2005, the company removed its equipment and sent its workers home, leaving only a few security guards at its worksites (Bandler & FGS, 2018; WRM, 2005). In subsequent years, people from other parts of Cambodia involved in struggles against ELCs and other threats would visit the area to learn from experiences of the communities.

The company operating these concessions in 2004-2005 was a Chinese company named Wuzhishan, which had formed a joint venture with Pheapimex (Global Witness, 2007). Pheapimex was, and is, one of the most powerful Cambodian companies (McInnes, 2015). It is owned by Choeng Sopheap, a close friend of Prime Minister Hun Sen's wife. Her husband, Lao Meng Khin, who is listed in Wuzhishan's registration with the Ministry of Commerce as one of its three directors, was a powerful businessman and would become a senator from the ruling party. In the early 2000s, Pheapimex had concessions that reportedly covered seven percent of the area of the

country (Global Witness, 2007; WRM, 2005). The two contiguous ELCs that were my focus, one in Kompong Chhnang Province and one in Pursat, initially covered 315,028 Ha; they included areas with varying degrees of forest cover and reportedly more than one hundred villages, with a total population of more than 100,000 (Bandler & FGS, 2018; OHCHR, 2004). (See the map in Figure 2 below.) Available documents show approval in principle granted in 1997 and formal approval granted in January 2000, almost two years before the 2001 Land Law that would allow the granting of ELCs was approved. That law would limit the size of ELCs to 10,000 hectares, and while a sub-sequent sub-decree on ELCs allowed exemptions from this limit for concessions granted before the law was approved, the Pheapimex concessions did not meet the criteria for exemption. Yet they were not reduced in size.

Pheapimex attempted to begin operation of these concessions in 2001, in one site in Pursat Province. But it met with community resistance and abandoned the site. I am not aware of any role of outsiders in this initial resistance, and there appear not to have been any further company operations on the ground until Wuzhishan – having entered arrangements with Pheapimex – started up in November 2004. The struggle in 2004-2005 received considerable attention from a range of actors in Cambodia, including an international campaign NGO named Global Witness, the UN Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights, Cambodian human rights organizations and other Cambodian NGOs, community-based activists, donors, media, and others (Sine & Phanna, 2002; OHCHR, 20; WRM, 2005; CHRAC, 2009).

A Korean firm named Booyong made arrangements to take over the concessions, but with the global financial crisis, its plans failed to materialize (CHRAC, 2009). Then, in late 2009, operations on the concession in Pursat would start up again, with (unknown) Chinese involvement

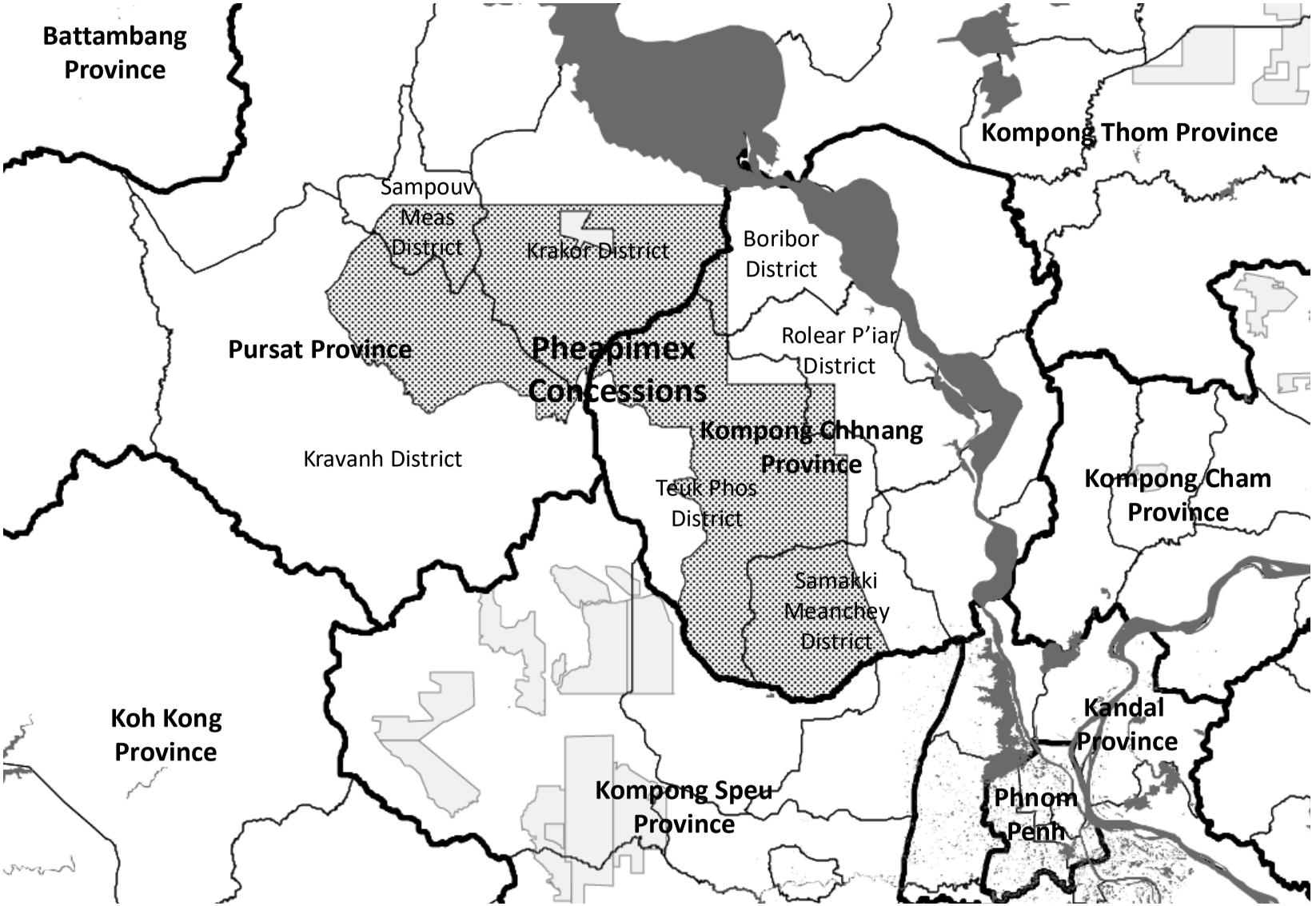

Figure 2. Map of the Pheapimex concessions in Pursat and Kompong Chhnang Provinces. Sources: DIVA-GIS (Administrative Boundaries), OpenDevelopmentCambodia (ELCs), OneMapCambodia (water bodies).

but the concession operator called simply "Pheapimex". This time, the company[32] initially planted acacia, then switched to cassava and later built a biofuel factory (Work, 2015). Numerous local communities attempted to resist the land clearing and control by the company, with varying degrees of success (Bandler & FGS, 2018; May, 2010, 2011a; Khouth, 2010). Some areas were excised from the concession (May, 2011a, 2011b) and then implementation of Order 01[33] and other subsequent land titling resulted in the excision of even more. In parts of Kompong Chhnang, the company paid local residents for land within the concession, which it then cleared and planted in cassava; other parts of the concession in Kompong Chhnang have been converted to sugarcane plantations whose connections to Pheapimex are unclear. By the time of my second field visit in 2015, the company seemed to be facing financial difficulties, at least with respect to operations in Pursat in an area near my field site. By the time of my fourth field visit, in 2016, it was largely inactive there and there were rumors that the concessions or parts of them might be transferred to another company.

I conducted fieldwork across a largely contiguous area centered roughly on the border of Kompong Chhnang and Pursat provinces. Community leaders from many of the villages in this area have been linked in their struggles against the concessions and are somewhat aware of what each other has done. I focused especially on one village named Samraong, in Kompong Chhnang but bordering Pursat. Most of the village lay within Pheapimex's Kompong Chhnang concession, and the study area across the border (mainly forested until cleared by the company beginning in 2010) was all firmly within the Pursat concession. Reachable from Phnom Penh in just a few hours,

[32] Work (2015) reports that thirteen companies were planting cassava within the concession at the time of her research. Not having information on the institutional arrangements, I refer to the concession operator(s) throughout as "the company".

[33] The Prime Minister's program to resolve conflicts between communities and ELCs by titling land in conflict areas.

Samraong is in Rumduol Commune, one of several communes in the concession area in which people are most connected to activist networks in Cambodia and to external actors working on land rights. Rumduol residents were involved in resistance activities in 2004-2005 – for example, many were present at the time of the grenade attack – though they were generally not at the core of the resistance. They were also involved in various events targeting the concessions beginning in 2010.

Three stories emerged from the fieldwork. The first is about the framing of organized resistance to the Pheapimex concessions in terms of forestry – that forests were important for local livelihoods, that the company was destroying forests, that the communities needed to join together in protecting the forest – and the effects of organizing community forests[34]. The second is about territorialities of different NGO and community actors and their relation to the Kompong Chhnang-Pursat provincial boundary. The third story is about the role a particularly well-connected international actor has played, or has not played, in bringing international discourses circulating within La Vía Campesina (attributing land grabs to capitalist processes) to Cambodia.

Each story contributes to at least two of my sub-theses. Two of the stories help show how spatial imaginaries shape the geographies of movements (sub-thesis 1) while also demonstrating how imagineers' spatial imaginaries are particularly important (sub-thesis 3). In the story on forestry, I analyze the framing of the struggle in terms of forestry as a spatial imaginary, which shaped how Sophal, a leader of the local NGO named TOP, organized people into a network to resist the concessions. In the story on territoriality, I analyze territoriality and ideas about the provincial border as spatial imaginaries which influenced Sophal and a community activist named

[34] Community forests are a legal mechanism, allowed by the 2002 Cambodian Forestry Law, through which communities may be given formal management rights over areas of forest.

Rona – imagineers – and through them, the geographies of the organized resistance to the concessions. The story on discourses circulating within LVC (what I refer to as food sovereignty-based discourses of land grabs) also helps to substantiate the first sub-thesis, showing the implications of those discourses for the land people claim and the actors with whom they link. In addition, in that story I show how transmission of these discourses happens through relational processes which result in uneven access to them (sub-thesis 4). Finally, the story on forestry demonstrates how a spatial imaginary (the forestry framing) can result in technological effects (sub-thesis 2), in this case through the decision to organize community forests.

In what follows, I will first give a brief outline of the history of the resistance to the Pheapimex concessions and the role of external actors, then present the three stories. As noted in the previous chapter, the Pheapimex concessions have received significant attention in the literature. Guttal (2011) describes the impacts of the concessions, and a number of authors have related the basic story of the struggle against them (Beban & Work, 2014; McInnes, 2015; Henke, 2011). Through the historical overview and three stories, I will provide a closer look at the role of different local and non-local actors than have these authors and others. I will end with a conclusion which clarifies how the stories have helped to substantiate and further develop the sub-theses.

The project of resistance to the Pheapimex concessions

There has been a significant organized component to resistance to the Pheapimex concessions since 2001, and external actors have played a substantial role in it – something at least one scholar seems to have missed (Schneider, 2011). Preparations of various forms had been under way for several years by the time of the protests of November 2004, when Wuzhishan began clearing land, and were closely linked with processes involving activists from around the country

and NGOs supporting them. While recognizing that unorganized and everyday forms of resistance have also been important, it is this organized resistance that is the focus of this chapter.

Sophal would play an important role in the organized resistance. She moved to Kompong Chhnang in 1996 to start up TOP, with support from TAPA (a British NGO), coming from her home in a rural village about 80 km away. She had been a full-time NGO worker, but also a small-scale soy farmer – an occupation she would now abandon. Short and dark-skinned, soft-spoken and friendly, she had a middle-school education and was by then in her fifties, married with two children. She could not speak English (and would never be able to). Coming from a densely populated part of rural Cambodia having little in the way of commons, and virtually no natural forest cover, she was captivated by the vast forested landscapes she encountered in Kompong Chhnang; from the beginning, she decided to focus on helping communities rehabilitate forests. She was very distrustful of the regime in power. She was also a strong feminist and had something of an activist streak. Soon after moving to Kompong Chhnang, for example, she would help free a child slave kept by her landlady, and on numerous occasions she helped women deal with abusive husbands. She was also something of a loner. She would not have a large circle of friends in Kompong Chhnang, and rarely returned to her home village. She would not get along with, and was highly critical of, many of the people from other NGOs and donor agencies with whom she interacted.

The organized resistance had its origins in Chey Commune in Pursat in January 2001, when Sophal visited. Two transnational actors, Robert (who worked at a network organization named SOLO, whose members are Cambodian and international NGOs) and Tom (who worked at TAPA) had been studying forestry issues together elsewhere in Cambodia, and Sophal had been working in nearby communities in Kompong Chhnang. Tom sent her to investigate forestry issues in Pursat.

She recalls that when she arrived in Chey, community members told her that people from a company had come to take forest land, the community had prevented company vehicles from entering the area, and the people had left. The company, it turned out, was Pheapimex, and community leaders were able to get copies of the contract and concession map from local authorities. The documents showed that Pheapimex had been given initial authorization to clear and plant 6,800 Ha in Pursat (OHCHR, 2004).

An organized effort to resist the concessions emerged through cooperation between Sophal, community leaders from Chey and other communes, Tom, and others. Mediated by Sophal, people from Chey would join what would come to be known as the Resource Protection Network – a network of community leaders around the country, primarily from different concession areas, which Robert and Tom helped to organize (Cock, 2016). Sophal worked with associates from villages in the concession area to make people aware of the existence of the concessions and their potential impacts; through processes that I will describe below, this led to WIN, a network of activists across about ten communes in the area (many of whom engaged in efforts to physically protect forests) which approximated the ideal of linked place-based networks. Sophal would become a member of a group of NGOs called the Working Group on Active Nonviolence, which trained community members, including people in this area, on nonviolent direct-action methods and helped them learn from each other's actions (Henke, 2011). Other actors would get involved as well, including Global Witness and various Cambodian legal aid, human rights, and advocacy NGOs. In 2001, some of these outside actors would help the communities file petitions calling for the cancellation of the concessions (Sine & Phanna, 2002; OHCHR, 2004). Donors would press the Cambodian government to reduce the size of the concessions. An international NGO named BANDA would fund TOP.

I asked one community leader if the communities had been prepared to resist Wuzhishan when it started up operations in 2004. “If we hadn’t been prepared,” he said, “we wouldn’t have gone. By the time of the grenade, we had lots of members. We got set up first, then the company came in later.” Community leaders had been anticipating the company’s return for several years, though the company had had no activities on the ground since 2001 (OHCHR, 2004; WRM, 2005). On 7 November, 2004, three days after Wuzhishan was granted permission to clear an initial 10,000 Ha in each province (Bandler & FGS, 2018; OHCHR, 2004), someone from Wuzhishan came to Rumduol Commune with a Forestry Administration officer. Community members followed them and one (Maly, about whom I will write more below) took pictures. On 11 November, when the company started to clear land, community members took GPS readings of the site. Community leaders prepared for a protest, in which they planned to block the highway, and a community leader and an NGO arranged for people from another part of Pursat and from other provinces to join the protests.

Following the initial protests, described above, repression suddenly became severe and community leaders’ movements restricted (OHCHR, 2004). Organized resistance by the communities continued, as community leaders tried to mobilize people to interrupt Wuzhishan’s activities and speak out locally against the company. A number of outside actors were also actively involved. Community leaders organized a ceremony for spirits associated with the concession area and ordained trees through Buddhist rituals. They tried to infiltrate the concession workforce and may have contributed to sabotage of company equipment by workers, which became increasingly severe until Wuzhishan removed its equipment in March 2005 (Bandler & FGS, 2018; OHCHR, 2004; WRM, 2005). Sophal provided regular advice to community leaders. The communities submitted a petition to the King, who passed it on to Prime Minister Hun Sen, calling for his

intervention in the case; in a letter of response, Hun Sen accused NGOs of inciting the communities. The UN Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR) had been interested in the case, and the Special Representative of the UN Secretary-General for human rights in Cambodia, Peter Leuprecht, raised the case with the Cambodian government and gave it special attention in a report on ELCs in Cambodia (OHCHR, 2004).

Though the company left, the concessions were not cancelled, and – with help from outside actors – community leaders maintained activities aimed at getting the concessions cancelled or at least reduced in size (Bandler & FGS, 2018; Schneider, 2011). They also tried to prevent the sale of land to brokers, which had become significant and seemed to be linked to the existence of the concessions (Bandler & FGS, 2018). Advocacy on these concessions targeting the Cambodian government, such as that which Global Witness, the OHCHR, and donors had undertaken, reduced considerably and would never become significant again. Global Witness left Cambodia, the emphasis of the Phnom Penh office of the OHCHR changed under new leadership, donors changed their approach to working with the Cambodian government, and the dramatic increase over the years in the number of ELCs in Cambodia would make it difficult to get the attention of organizations working at the national level for any particular concessions. Support for community activism would increase, however. TOP had previously been the main outside organization directly supporting the communities in the concession area in their resistance efforts, but now several others (mostly Phnom Penh-based NGOs) started to engage in this work. They provided money, training, and cellphones and other equipment to community leaders, typically the same individuals that Sophal had worked with over the years, and supported them in networking and conducting research; they seem to have been drawn by the leaders' activism, initiative, and confidence in speaking to people in authority. Sophal would complain about local activists directly approaching

donors for money, and she described a dynamic in which NGOs competed among each other for activists and activists paid more attention to the NGOs than to their own communities. People from these other NGOs would complain that she served as gatekeeper for the local communities.

The company returned in 2009, and the geographies of the company's activities and of the organized resistance were different this time around. While Wuzhishan's activities were confined to two locations in 2004, one in Pursat and one in Kompong Chhnang, within a short period of time in early 2010 the company cleared and planted cassava in more than ten worksites, all in Pursat, and it would continue to expand its operations. The company also appears to have been behind the construction of an irrigation system that was of considerable concern to communities (Bandler & FGS, 2018). While in 2004 TOP worked with people from a broad geographic area in both provinces to develop a strategy to resist the company, this time it worked with people from a much more limited area, primarily in just one district in Kompong Chhnang, and another group, BRIDGE, worked with other communities, primarily in Pursat. Communities that TOP worked with engaged in some local protest and complaints to local authorities as well as two major marches – one to the district office and one to the Kompong Chhnang provincial office (Beban & Work, 2014). Communities mobilized through BRIDGE in Pursat engaged in more militant action, for example blocking the national highway (several times) and blocking tractors (numerous times) (May, 2010, 2012; Khouth, 2010). Other tactics, such as a ceremony to curse the land grabbers, were also used in Pursat as well (May, 2011b). People in Chey Commune, who had been at the forefront of the resistance in 2004, were largely silent this time.

Land titling within concession areas through Order 01, announced by the Prime Minister in May 2012, would dramatically shape the course of the struggle against the concessions[35]. In Pursat, areas that the company had already cleared remained firmly in its hands, and it would continue to clear additional land, but in some places, areas the company had not yet cleared were titled to individual households. In some communes in Kompong Chhnang, including Rumduol, following the implementation of Order 01 there was almost no untitled land available for the company. Additional subsequent titling through another mechanism further reduced the amount of untitled land. The organized resistance largely stopped in some communes where communities had been among the most active in resisting the concessions. In one district in Kompong Chhnang, implementation of Order 01 resulted in areas being set aside for community use but not being titled, and the company was able to acquire land by making payments to community members. When the company later cleared these areas, there was no organized resistance as people felt that by accepting payments, they had given up claims to the land.

When I began fieldwork in 2014, the general picture conveyed to me by community leaders, NGO actors, and others who had been involved in the struggle against the concessions in Kompong Chhnang and parts of Pursat was that it was now over (Bandler & FGS, 2018). Community leaders in parts of Kompong Chhnang were now concerned about impacts on people's land and homes of a canal project funded through a loan from the Chinese government in this and nearby communes which they suspected, but could not prove, was linked to Pheapimex. In 2015, the deputy governor announced that "there is no more Pheapimex in Kompong Chhnang." By January 2014, concession operations had slowed and in 2016 I heard of workers complaining about

[35] The implementation of Order 01 in the Pheapimex concession area has been written about elsewhere (Beban et al., 2017; Work & Beban, 2016).

not being paid (Bandler & FGS, 2018). By June 2016 the company appeared to be essentially no longer active in the study area, and tens of thousands of hectares of land previously planted in cassava had been abandoned.

The forestry framing: a spatial imaginary

On my second day in Samraong for fieldwork in June 2015, I observed a meeting organized by TOP and community leaders to discuss community forestry with officials from the Forestry Administration. Community forestry is an official mechanism through which a community can get government permission to manage an area of forest. TOP staff explained to me that Forestry officials knew that about five hundred hectares of land remained available for a community forest in Rumduol after the implementation of Order 01 and subsequent titling, but did not know where it was and wanted the communities to help find out. They were eager for community forests to be established in Samraong and other villages and were encouraging communities to re-submit applications to the provincial governor to establish them, as previous applications had been lost. In the meeting, a Forestry officer explained that community members should thumbprint a request asking to establish a community forest, and most participants in the meeting gave their thumbprints. Following the meeting, I accompanied community leaders as they traveled around the village to collect additional thumbprints. Community leaders in Rumduol Commune were ultimately successful in collecting 707 thumbprints – enough to submit an application – without anyone knowing where the community forest would be.

Over a period of more than a decade, the community's resistance to the concessions had been reduced from participation in a struggle to have the 300,000 hectare concessions cancelled to participation in an effort by the Forestry Administration to establish a community forest covering

just five hundred hectares. In early years, community leaders had tried to get the Forestry Administration – whose officials had played a role in the initial granting of the concessions – to support their struggle. They were partly successful, and some Forestry officials helped the communities in their struggle, for example giving advance warning that the company would return (Schneider, 2011). Now, it was the Forestry Administration that was trying to get them to support the community forestry project. Leaders of the resistance were now key actors in implementing this project. And while protection of forests had once contributed to mobilizing people from different communes in a single struggle, community forestry now seemed to undermine what was left of that earlier struggle by drawing their attention away from ongoing developments with the company's operations. For example, as the community forest project advanced, the company ceased activity in its nearby cassava plantation, which occupied the space previously occupied by forests on which people in Rumduol and other communes had depended and for which they had struggled, and community leaders seemed hardly to notice.

In this story, I trace the forestry framing over the course of the struggle against the concessions and examine the material effects it has had, in so doing contributing to three of my sub-theses. I refer to a forestry framing in the singular, but it has not always denoted the same thing, sometimes, for example, referring more to forests as commons with a diversity of land cover, sometimes more to tree-covered landscapes. I show how the framing of the struggle in terms of forestry can be considered to be a spatial imaginary because of its implications for the land for which people struggled and the actors with whom they linked (sub-thesis 1). To some extent, this framing contributed to the production of the scale of the forested landscape as the scale at which networking and claims-making happened. It also facilitated links with actors concerned about forestry issues but not, say, land rights per se. I show how Sophal was a key imagineer, whose

various spatial imaginaries – including the forestry framing and an imaginary of a local community network – were adopted by others and shaped how she organized that network (WIN) (sub-thesis 3). I also show how community forestry acted as a technology (sub-thesis 2): the decision to organize community forests set in motion processes that led to the transformation of the struggle, required a specific form of community organization, and implied certain relations between the Forestry Administration and communities.

The struggle against the Pheapimex concessions was framed in forestry terms in part because that made sense to local communities, but also in part because of the involvement of outside actors. The area the company targeted in Chey Commune for its first operations in 2000 was forested. It had sizeable trees, and people in the commune continued to collect resin and wild fruits and vegetables there and in surrounding areas for their own use and sale. Areas with less dense forest cover were used for grazing cattle and buffalo. Between 2001 and 2004, as communities mobilized to resist Pheapimex, the company was not actually doing anything in the area. But what people in Chey, Rumduol, and other communities could observe was logging, which some community leaders suggested was being encouraged by local authorities to degrade the forest and legitimate the concession, and which those leaders consequently thought was an appropriate target for the resistance. Coincidentally, external actors such as Robert, Sophal, and Tom already had a particular focus on forest issues before learning about the Pheapimex concessions, and their interactions with the communities in Chey focused on the fate of the forest.

The forestry framing would shape the network that Sophal and other imagineers attempted to construct using funding from TAPA. WIN, the network they organized (beginning in 2001, at a time when Pheapimex was not active in the area) and that would play an important role in challenging Pheapimex was based on an imaginary of communities protecting the forest that lay

between them. Farmland played little role in this imaginary, even though there was farmland within the concession area and families did not have secure title to it. Soon after getting hold of the concession map and contract, Sophal and community leaders from Chey, as well as Svay Commune in Kompong Chhnang (where Sophal had been working) and neighboring Rumduol, set out to inform people in surrounding areas about the concessions and encourage them to think about resisting. Before long, people in Chey, Rumduol, Svay and other communes were involved in stopping loggers and organizing community forests with commune-level committees (OHCHR, 2004; WRM, 2005), committees that were linked together in the WIN network. Sophal and others were participating in and getting ideas from meetings of the Resource Protection Network, in which there was talk about organizing community forests as a way to impede company operations in concessions, as well as trainings and meetings on active nonviolence, in which there was talk about possibilities of direct action by communities to stop destructive fishing and logging[36]. The organization of local networks was also encouraged in both forums. While forest protection was linked in community leaders' minds to resistance to Pheapimex (Bou, 2001a), it appears that this was not the case for many participating community members. Many recalled having had no understanding at the time that the action had anything to do with Pheapimex.

Emphasizing forest protection focused attention on cooperation and sharing, as forest resources were shared across boundaries. It encouraged working together across a broad area with a forest at the center – even the participation of people who did not have land of their own within the concessions – and a physical way for relations between communities to form, in a way which a focus on protecting farmland would not have done. It also provided an avenue for action at a

[36] Henke (2011) describes the organization of networks around the country by NGOs at this time. WIN fits what he refers to as "NGO-driven networks" well.

time when the company was not yet doing anything. Participation in patrols was empowering for many, though it also led to disillusionment over time as people were unable to protect the forest successfully.

When Wuzhishan started clearing land in 2004, it did so in a forested area. In the cases of many other ELCs in Cambodia, people have not acted until clearing by the company has reached individually owned land, but in this case, they jumped to action with the specific aim of protecting commons. The forestry framing remained front and center in the ensuing struggle, though there were other framings as well[37]. When, the day after the grenade attack, protestors had the opportunity to meet government authorities, their demands were: (1) to stop the clearing of forests by the company, (2) to cancel the concessions, and (3) to let the communities manage the forests in the area as community forests. In petitions and statements, community leaders emphasized the value of the forest, and threats to it. They organized a tree ordination as a tactic for resistance (Bou, 2001b; OHCHR, 2004; WRM, 2005; CHRAC, 2009).

The forestry framing led to certain outside actors (Cambodian and international) getting involved, and kept them involved. Sophal was passionate about forest protection and that contributed to her active engagement with the local communities. SOLO and BANDA both had forestry programs, and through these programs they supported these communities (in BANDA's case, through funding to TOP). Global Witness, and key former staff of Global Witness, would no doubt have been interested in the case anyway, but the communities' engagement in forest protection likely resulted in stronger links between Global Witness and the communities than would otherwise have been the case. Some outside actors apparently assumed that only forest land

[37] With regard to other framings, community leaders talked, for example, about not wanting to become wage slaves, and criticized the government for "selling Cambodian land to the Chinese".

was really at risk anyway (WRM, 2005). An organization named East West Management Institute (EWMI) would later select the Pheapimex concessions and neighboring areas as a site for a USAID-funded community-based biodiversity project because of the involvement of these and other communities in forest protection. Overall, it seems clear that, had the communities focused on protecting only farmland, or been interested in claiming forested concession land to clear and farm themselves, they would have ended up with a very different set of allies.

When the company returned in 2009, framings varied from place to place. In Samraong, forestry still figured prominently, but now it was primarily the need for forest areas for grazing cattle and buffalo. Most of the village – rice fields, houses, forest, and so on – lay within the concession, but clearing by the company in 2010 generally struck not farmland but forest land. And the forest area on which the community most relied, across the border in Chey Commune in Pursat, where they accessed timber and grazed cattle and buffalo, and where they had patrolled in earlier years, was one of the company's first targets this time. When clearing of the area began in 2010, community members protested at the commune office. There, they met a company representative and, asserting the importance of the forest for both timber and pasture, demanded the area back from the company. It was not until the company had cleared the entire forest area and painted boundary markers within the village proper – enclosing farmland and residential land – that protecting non-forest areas became a priority. Even then, when people marched to the provincial office to complain, they raised access to forest areas for grazing cattle and buffalo as a primary concern. Later, when the company blocked community access to the formerly forested area in Chey, villagers would protest at the company's worksite, demanding that access be restored. Overall, when I asked people in Samraong what the struggle against the concessions had

been about, I heard comments such as: “to have land to graze cattle and buffalo, and for firewood,” or, “for land in Pursat for cattle, and for land in Kompong Chhnang”.

With land titling under Order 01, the organized resistance in Rumduol essentially ended, but the forestry framing remained alive – with those who had led the struggle until then maintaining a primary focus on establishing community forests, even when reality on the ground had changed and forestry was no longer nearly as relevant as it had been. The decision to establish community forests, which was a result of the forestry framing years earlier, had set in motion “technological” effects that continued to shape processes beyond the control of any of the actors involved. Initially, Sophal and others introduced the concept of community forestry (which was being discussed within the Resource Protection Network) as a way to obstruct the operations of the concession. It was a vague concept and at the time of the initial discussions there was no legal way to implement it. Following the 2003 approval of the Sub-Decree on Community Forestry Management, and now having funding from BANDA, TOP would begin to pay a Forestry official to help communities in Rumduol and other communes through the process of applying to manage community forests. They could not get very far because the proposed community forest areas were within the concession, but TOP remained committed – and funded – to produce community forests. Community leaders also remained committed to the project.

When communities in Rumduol first started talking about organizing community forests, around 2001, there was still a considerable amount of forested land in the area, but by the time of the meeting I observed in 2015, there was almost none. The forest that people in Rumduol initially patrolled and protected using the name “community forestry” without government sanction was across the border in Pursat; when the Forestry Administration started to help TOP with its community forestry project, they made it clear that an application by communities in Rumduol for

community forests in Pursat would not be approved. When the Forestry Administration finally agreed to the establishment of community forests within the concession, Forestry officials helped TOP and community forestry leaders map community forest areas within Rumduol Commune. Most of this land, it turned out, had long been claimed by individual households, something that TOP and BANDA do not seem to have been aware of. Many of those families cleared their land before the company returned in 2009. Then, through titling processes carried out under Order 01 and subsequently, some areas that had not yet been privately owned were titled to individual households, further reducing the area available for a community forest.

One set of technological effects resulted from community forestry committee members and other community forestry leaders in Rumduol seemingly requiring community forests to justify their positions. Maly, one of the key leaders in Rumduol for any land advocacy-related work, mentioned above, is one such person. She assumed an unelected position as head of a commune-level community forestry committee even before the Forestry Administration got involved and has never been elected to a community forestry committee, but continues to be identified locally as "commune-level community forestry leader" today. Others who were particularly active in forest protection in the community have also been identified as community forestry leaders. It appears that these leaders had a strong interest in establishing community forests somewhere, anywhere, and consequently settled for establishing them in Rumduol when they could not establish them across the border in Pursat.

That community forestry is a main focus today for many of those who were most active in the struggle against the concession seems to have contributed to them – and as a result, the communities in Rumduol more generally – not paying attention to real community concerns about the concessions. Labor violations have been severe (Bandler & FGS, 2018), and many community

members who were working on the cassava plantation were not getting paid when I visited the second time. Some workers were beaten. The company was poisoning the river flowing through Samraong, and poisoning the fields where buffalo from Samraong grazed. But community leaders were apparently taking no action on these issues. People in Samraong told me that they had achieved a mixed degree of success and that their work related to Pheapimex was over. When I or other visitors asked leaders in Rumduol what the main problems in the community were, the most common response was that they were having difficulty applying for community forests. One said, "People don't believe in the community [forest], they think it is taking too long, that it is useless. People believe in the authorities. Villagers don't trust us." By 2016, cattle and buffalo could once again freely graze in the area in Pursat where they previously had, as the company had suspended its local operations, but these leaders were apparently not thinking about how to take advantage of this situation either.

Another important technological effect was that community forestry shaped relations between Forestry officials and the communities in particular ways. While forestry had been a powerful framing for mobilizing and organizing the communities, it was not generally a particularly powerful one for engaging Cambodian government officials, who prioritized logging and agriculture over community use of forests. However, community forestry involved a defined process which required the involvement of Forestry officials, for example in holding community elections, mapping, approving by-laws, and approving applications. As illustrated above, Forestry officials ultimately came to drive the community forestry process, and community leaders seemed to have no problem with that.

The forestry framing in general, and community forestry in particular, thus shaped the geography of the struggle against the Pheapimex concessions in important ways. I have shown

how the forestry frame acted as a spatial imaginary, shaping the network that certain imagineers – Sophal and community leaders from Chey, Rumduol, and Svay – tried to construct, resulting in the WIN network comprised of communities surrounding a forested area. This framing encouraged people to fight for forest land, and thus the commons between villages rather than, say, their individual holdings. It enabled people to spring into action when the company started clearing forest in 2004, and again in 2010. And it shaped who would become allies of the communities in their struggle. The imagineers pushed community forestry, encouraged by the Resource Protection Network and with financial backing of TAPA and later BANDA. I showed how the community forestry project had technological effects. It continued despite becoming significantly less relevant over time, and led community leaders to ignore serious community problems as well as opportunities while empowering Forestry officials in their relations with the communities.

Territoriality, the provincial border, and the resistance

Over most of the struggle against the Pheapimex concessions, the main issue for people in Rumduol was forests, initially more for timber and later more for pasture. In the end they lost that struggle, as the company cleared forests and converted the land to cassava plantations, and blocked access for cattle and buffalo. But it was only when the company painted boundary markers within Samraong and other villages that the organized resistance really began to focus on protecting farmland in Kompong Chhnang. Still, on my first trip, Sophal gloated that there was no more Pheapimex in Kompong Chhnang and suggested that as far as people in Kompong Chhnang were concerned, the struggle had therefore been a huge success. (In fact, the Pheapimex concession never covered much of the total area of the district in which Rumduol is located, her main focus.) Not so for Pursat, and by implication the people there had not been as effective in their struggle.

This sentiment was echoed by community leaders from Rumduol and nearby communes in Kompong Chhnang.

The border between Kompong Chhnang and Pursat was of relatively little relevance to the struggle in 2004, but by the time the company returned in 2009 it was high in the minds of actors on both sides of it. It did not have to, but the border influenced how actors thought about the struggle and what they did. The story of how this came about intersects with a story about the territorialities of some of the key actors involved. Together, heightened awareness of the border and these territorialities help explain how what had started out as a shared struggle by communities in both provinces became one in which success was measured in terms of which province the company continued to have a presence in.

Here, I analyze ideas about the provincial border and territorialities as spatial imaginaries (sub-thesis 1), and Sophal and a community leader from Pursat (Rona) as imagineers (sub-thesis 3). Sophal's ideas about where TOP could and would work, and her ideas about Kompong Chhnang and Pursat, influenced the ideas of others and how she tried to bring people together. Rona's ideas about creating networks likewise shaped who was involved in the organized resistance to Pheapimex. Material and discursive resources from donors enabled the work of both, but what I want to highlight here is the influence that their own ideas had on the geographies produced.

One territoriality which has been important from early on, and which Sophal influenced heavily, is that defined by the WIN network. The forestry framing enabled the territoriality of the network, as I have described above, but it did not define it. The concessions were extremely large, and efforts by communities to link together to protect forests could have resulted in other geographies. Which specific communities were involved resulted from the relationships that

Sophal was able to build and maintain. In general, the WIN network only met when TOP and the community leaders with whom Sophal worked called meetings and TOP paid for them. The territoriality of the WIN network more or less defined the communities that were involved in the organized resistance in 2004-2005, and partially defined those involved from 2009 on. This territoriality became reified to the extent that during fieldwork, community leaders talked about the WIN network as comprising eleven communes in three districts, even when the network barely functioned and people from several of those communes no longer had anything to do with it.

Another important territoriality was that of a Phnom Penh-based NGO named PAN, which worked with community leaders in a single village associated with the WIN network, in Chey Commune (Pursat). PAN began to do this after the leaders had become active in protecting the forest. This engagement would have long-term ramifications, as PAN had quite different ideas about advocacy from Sophal and the other community leaders with whom she was working.

Rona, who was from a commune in Pursat bordering Chey, had his own competing territoriality, associated with a network he was able to organize. He was recruited as a leader of forest protection activities prior to 2004 by a leader in Rumduol Commune who, like Rona, was an activist for the opposition Sam Rainsy Party, and knew him through party connections. In 2007, he became part of BRIDGE, a group of activists from Pursat, Kompong Chhnang, and other provinces that formed that year, which I will describe in some detail in the following section. He was able to get money through BRIDGE to go to visit other communities in a commune that was imagined by others to be part of the WIN network, identify local activists there, and bring them into BRIDGE. When the company returned in 2009, he was able to use BRIDGE money to bring people from yet another commune into BRIDGE and to help people from both these communes as well as others in the WIN network mobilize locally to resist the company. He generally found

activists through his own party contacts in these communes. He found himself unwelcome in Chey, where community leaders had the support of PAN, and generally did not try to work there.

TOP's territoriality was initially essentially the same as that of the WIN network, but it changed over time for a variety of reasons, with implications for the overall struggle. While Sophal had worked with activists from Pursat from the beginning, when the protests began in 2004, she was no longer able to visit communities there. Even after the company had left in March 2005, local authorities in Pursat denied TOP permission to work there. Sophal also began having difficulties working with a number of the leading activists in Pursat, because they did not want to work with her, and like Rona, Sophal was unable to work in Chey. Sophal's relationship with Rona soured when, having become well-known among some Phnom Penh-based NGOs, he directly approached them for funding and – according to Sophal – complained to TOP's donors about her. Her relationship with other key activists in Pursat, as well as in other parts of Kompong Chhnang, also soured when, she claimed, they started to broker sales of forest land. WIN essentially devolved into several groups of actors with their own distinct territorialities; TOP would continue to invite people from across the area to meetings of the WIN network, but would come to focus primarily on the district in which Rumduol lies (where the area within the concession was relatively small) and parts of a neighboring district (where there was a much larger area within the concession).

These territorialities intersected with a provincial boundary. Initially, people worked together across the boundary, but over time it came to divide them more and more. There was considerable cooperation between communities on either side of the border when people organized to protect forests before the 2004 protests and during those protests. People from both provinces gathered and blocked the highway in Pursat before the grenade attack, and participated in the meeting with authorities from Pursat the next day. Community leaders from both sides participated

actively in the WIN network. But by the time the company returned in 2009, division across the border was considerable. This was due in part to differences in company operations on the two sides of the border and relations with government authorities, but also other factors that I will discuss shortly. Heightened awareness of the border was expressed in different ways, the most significant being that people in Kompong Chhnang felt that the struggle was over because Pheapimex was no longer present in their province. A number of people in Samraong told me that they were certain the border had been moved – that the forest area they had used was in fact formerly in Kompong Chhnang, and that some had seen boundary markers to prove it. I also heard complaints about Pursat activists from people in Samraong – that few turned out to protest, for example, and that they only turned out when their own land was directly threatened. In 2015, Maly, the Rumduol leader mentioned above, told me: "Before, people weren't divided by the border. Now they are".

Two formal government processes, establishment of community forests and land titling, contributed to the border becoming more important in people's minds. When people in the area first set about organizing community forests, they did not designate any specific community forest locations, and people from different communities, spanning the border, protected forests together. The forests that people in Rumduol were protecting were in fact in Pursat. It was only when Forestry officials helped Rumduol communities map proposed community forest areas with GPS that they learned for the first time where the formal border is. Later, when Order 01 was implemented in Rumduol, Rumduol residents with land across the border in Pursat (in Chey Commune) could not get it titled because it was not in Rumduol. Order 01 was never implemented in Chey.

Another factor leading to heightened awareness of the border was the territorialities of different actors, described above, and their differing ideas about how to resist the concessions. As noted, TOP ended up working primarily in Kompong Chhnang, and Rona primarily in Pursat; neither could work in Chey. Sophal's approach involved trying to maintain good relations with local authorities, and, in fact, provincial authorities seemed somewhat supportive of the communities in Kompong Chhnang with whom she worked closely. Rona valued relations with commune authorities, but he was less concerned what higher-level authorities thought and more inclined to lead protests. To some extent these differences reflected different political realities on the two sides, not just individual perspectives; authorities in Kompong Chhnang appear to have been more predisposed to addressing people's concerns about the concessions than did those in Pursat. This may be related to some of them being less well-connected than their Pursat counterparts, and also the concession in Kompong Chhnang having a much smaller area outside of families' farmland where the company could operate, especially in the district where TOP focused. Also, the deputy governor of Pursat was the provincial representative of the company. Chey leaders, apparently influenced by PAN, but also apparently feeling compromised after (unwittingly) giving their thumbprints in return for gifts from Pheapimex, did not encourage resistance on a sizeable scale. Sophal recalled a workshop in which people from both sides of the border met to plan a strategy to deal with the company's return in 2009: "[Rona] would say, 'I am tough, I will not work with the government.' After the workshop, people in Kompong Chhnang decided just to protect Kompong Chhnang." When I asked her if it is true that she was more concerned about Kompong Chhnang than Pursat, she said, "Yes, I am angry. Because they don't listen to us. […] [Rona] won't listen to us."

While the company and authorities invoked the border in 2004 to explain why they could not do more to address communities' concerns, in 2010 they seem to have done so more forcefully. When clearing across the border in Pursat began in 2010, Rumduol residents went to meet the commune chief and a company representative to complain about the loss of forest and land for grazing cattle and buffalo. They were told that they had no right to complain because the company was only clearing land in Pursat. One Samraong resident said that community members accepted that they had no right to complain, as "even the commune chief said that he himself had no right to resolve land issues in Pursat." When they went to meet the district chief and later the Kompong Chhnang provincial governor, Rumduol community leaders reportedly raised concerns about people having farmland across the border, though not about pasture there. The district chief reportedly promised to keep the company out of Kompong Chhnang until it had excised land from the concession for local residents, and the governor promised to keep the company out until it had first "studied environmental impacts and resolved problems with the communities". Following the meeting with the governor, the company continued to plow land used by people in Kompong Chhnang, but the governor reportedly said, "they are only operating in Pursat", and did nothing.

These spatial imaginaries – territorialities and ideas about the border – would materially influence the struggle. In Samraong, people stopped trying to protect most of the land they used in Pursat, and the company cleared that land and planted it in cassava. That land lay within Pursat's Chey Commune, and Chey residents never tried to protect it; not only was it land that they generally did not use, but their resistance overall to the concession was limited. Rona complained, "[Chey] was completely quiet. We could block the company, drive them out – they took the equipment out and put it in [Chey]." As noted above, Rona and other activists from other communes in Pursat stayed away from Chey, and people in Samraong felt they could not protect

their land there without the involvement of people from Pursat. Rona and Sophal's networks also left out other areas in both provinces where the company would be able to clear land from 2010 on with little interference. In Kompong Chhnang, this exclusion happened in a commune that was supposed to be part of the WIN network, but where TOP had stopped engaging with the communities because Sophal began to distrust the leaders with whom she had worked there. The company was able to acquire land by making payments to community members for it, as mentioned above, while Sophal was not even aware that the company had operations there. In the end, the border took on such significance that Sophal and community leaders in the district on which TOP focused felt the struggle was over because, in Sophal's words, "Pheapimex is no longer in Kompong Chhnang". They were no longer working on Pheapimex; they could claim to have succeeded, even though the company was still present next door in both Pursat and Kompong Chhnang, occupying land that they had previously struggled for and continuing to clear additional land. It was more correct to say that Pheapimex was no longer in the district, where it never really had that much land to begin with, though I could not verify that the concession was completely cancelled in the district.

Territorialities and ideas about the border are more inherently spatial than ideas about forestry described in the previous section. What I have showed here is the significant role these ideas played in shaping the geography of the struggle, including both the land people did and did not fight for and the actors with whom they linked. By referring to Sophal and Rona as imagineers, I am suggesting that their spatial imaginaries have been important to their organizing work. While it is overall not a focus of this dissertation, I have also showed how these imagineers' spatial imaginaries have influenced the ideas of others.

Relational connections and access to food sovereignty discourses

This next story is less about how ideas have shaped struggles than about how their absence – in particular, the absence of ideas circulating within La Vía Campesina (LVC), the global peasant movement – has meant that they have not shaped struggles. LVC has framed land grabs within a critique of the corporate food system and neoliberalism and a call for food sovereignty, which it defines as "the right of peoples to healthy and culturally appropriate food produced through ecologically sound and sustainable methods, and their right to define their own food and agriculture systems" (LVC, 2008:1). While the role of LVC in resistance to land grabs has been written about widely in the land grabs literature (McKeon 2013; Brent, 2015; Borras et al. 2013), LVC's ideas did not resonate much with the perspectives I was hearing from activists in Cambodia and did not appear to be very relevant to understanding the role of transnational actors in resistance to ELCs in Cambodia. However, one particular conversation, with a popular political analyst named Dr. Kem Ley shortly before his assassination, would suddenly make these ideas seem relevant. He was well known as an independent thinker who was willing to speak out about corruption and the failings of Cambodia's experiment in democracy (Handley & Mech, 2017). When I asked what should be done with ELCs if there were ever a change in government, he said that he had a solution – one that, given the opportunity, he would like to suggest to Prime Minister Hun Sen. Each ELC, he said, should be divided up among households in the community, and the company allowed to keep one parcel on which to build a factory; community members could plant rubber, sugarcane, or other crops on their own plots to sell to the company. This was precisely the kind of solution that LVC and its allies had been condemning as part of its critique of industrial agriculture as little if at all better than outright land grabs (LVC, 2012a; LVC, 2016). In retrospect, it is possible that Dr. Kem Ley thought that it was politically impossible for the government ever

to take back concessions that had been granted, and saw his proposal as making the best of a bad situation. But he genuinely seemed to think that what he described was a win-win solution. And I could not help thinking that exposure to LVC's ideas would have led him and others to work for more profound change, solutions that did not imply maintaining capitalist control of the means of production.

Following this conversation, I tried to understand the extent to which other Cambodians had picked up ideas from LVC and through which pathways. Some of the most direct pathways turned out to involve actors involved in resistance to the Pheapimex concessions. But the spread of these ideas in Cambodia among these actors, and among others involved in resistance to other ELCs, has been extremely limited, so I also tried to understand potential interest in such ideas (which turned out to be significant) and the reasons for such limited spread.

In this story, I will firstly show how what I will refer to simply as "food sovereignty-based discourses of land grabs" can be understood as spatial imaginaries, because of the geographies they imply (sub-thesis 1). Understanding ELCs as fundamentally wrong for putting land in the hands of corporate entities, denying the social value of land, and undermining possibilities for achieving food sovereignty – the food sovereignty-based discourse – suggests efforts to challenge the system of ELCs. Recognizing ELCs as a symptom of capitalist processes that are also implicated in contract farming, corporate supply of seeds, and industrial agriculture in general precludes solutions that involve other such capitalist relations and suggests forming linkages with people who are caught up in all of these relations. The solutions sought, and linkages formed, are likely to be quite different if one sees the problem instead as one of corrupt authorities who fail to properly implement the law, as many of my Cambodian informants did. Secondly, I will show how food sovereignty-based discourses of land grabs have not entered Cambodia on their own, but, to

the extent that they have entered at all, have been transmitted through relational connections. Those connections have been influenced by the spatial imaginaries of actors associated with LVC which have shaped those actors' willingness to engage others. Further, for these ideas to reach Cambodia, those connections have not just had to exist, but actors have had to make use of them: transmission of ideas has required work. Unevenness in embodied connections and transmission has resulted in uneven access to these ideas, with most of those living in the area of the Pheapimex concessions having essentially no access to them at all (sub-thesis 4).

While LVC engages in work on land grabs at different levels, someone working for LVC's secretariat, who has been deeply involved in LVC's work on land over the years, claimed to me that LVC's most significant engagement on land grabs is at national or sub-national level, through the work of its constituent organizations. Through participation in LVC gatherings, he suggested, members of those organizations develop analyses of land grabs, informed by LVC's collective thinking built up worldwide over the years, which they bring to their own particular struggles and which profoundly shape those struggles. In other words, it is the ideas circulating within LVC that are LVC's most important contribution to resistance to land grabs.

LVC is comprised of peasant organizations from different countries, and there is considerable diversity among member organizations and how they approach land grabs. There is, however, some consistency in discourses related to land grabs in the public statements made by LVC targeting international audiences – discourses that were consistent with comments made to me by a number of leaders and allies of LVC. These statements generally reflect the understanding that land grabs are a product of industrial agricultural and the capitalist systems, that consumers of food and small-scale producers alike are controlled through corporate domination of agriculture, and that the solution is food sovereignty, with land in the hands of peasants and other small-scale

producers practicing agro-ecology as the basis for land use and food production (LVC, 2009, 2012a, 2012b, 2012c, 2016). LVC does not have a monopoly on these ideas, but it is a particularly well-organized and well-known proponent of them.

These ideas appear to be largely absent in Cambodia. Instead, I generally heard ELCs blamed on corrupt and greedy officials and the failure to properly implement the law or to consult with affected communities[38]. The Cambodian country representative of an international organization that is active worldwide in fighting land grabs told me that ELCs are good, even necessary (to provide employment). A respected political analyst and close associate of Dr. Kem Ley said that the problem with ELCs was that they were granted too quickly – that the authorities who authorized them did not study the situation sufficiently before granting them. When activists involved in struggles against ELCs were asked in a workshop whether they agreed with the statement, "If there is land available locally that people aren't using, it is OK to grant it to a company as an ELC," about half agreed; some said that in such cases they indeed should be granted, because they could provide jobs. Rona, who had been leading the struggle against Pheapimex in Pursat Province, was one of those who agreed.

There are exceptions. Chan, mentioned in the previous chapter, the leader of a Cambodian NGO whom I will write about extensively in Chapter Five, is one. I cannot say that he analyzes ELCs in terms of capitalist processes, but he was comfortable with analysis in these terms and has taken these ideas up as he has increasingly been exposed to them.

It is possible to identify geographic implications of food sovereignty-based discourses of land grabs. These discourses suggest that the problem is the global food system and that what is

[38] That the granting and implementation of ELCs often does not follow Cambodian law is a common trope in the literature (Morris, 2016; Diepart & Schoenberger, 2017; McInnes, 2015; Oldenburg & Neef, 2014). As noted in the previous chapter, Springer (2013), in contrast, emphasizes that it is the law which enables land grabs.

needed is systems change – something that can only be brought about through global movements like LVC. When ELCs are considered to be acceptable in principle, we expect to hear proposed solutions such as better consultation in advance, excision of those parts that negatively impact communities, or value chain arrangements such as those Dr. Kem Ley proposed – not, say, outright cancellation of ELCs or termination of the system of ELCs. And we do not particularly expect to find linkages between struggles against ELCs and those against other exploitative capitalist relations. It is difficult to imagine communities steeped in the food sovereignty discourse saying that their work on the Pheapimex concessions is over, especially at a time when the company has become inactive and perhaps a bit vulnerable. Such communities might be expected to perceive links between the concessions and other problems they currently face: depressed prices for swine and vegetables due to competition from industrial production in Thailand and Vietnam, consequent difficulties surviving as farmers, and massive labor out-migration, for example. Indeed, Chan provides some evidence of these geographic implications. He is one of a small number of Cambodians I spoke with who seem genuinely interested in ending the system of ELCs in Cambodia. He has taken some steps in this direction, though he has not gotten very far and does not have much company in those efforts.

From Cambodia, the work on land being done by LVC members in Indonesia, India, and other countries in Asia, and by LVC as a whole, is almost invisible. LVC has a single member in Cambodia, Farmer and Nature Network (FNN), that is not active on land issues, and that reportedly told LVC that they "did not have a problem with ELCs." FNN has members in the area of the Pheapimex concessions but has not concerned itself with the concessions. And the spatial imaginaries of LVC and its allies, as reflected in their logics of engagement with others, restrict their potential involvement in land issues in Cambodia. LVC generally works through its members

in countries where it has them, and in Cambodia is confined primarily to working with FNN. Various US-based LVC allies I spoke with subscribed to what could be described as a principle of non-interventionism, engaging only with groups who have reached out to them – of which there are almost none in Cambodia, few even knowing they exist.

One particular individual, however, was uniquely situated to disseminate food sovereignty discourses of land grabs among actors in Cambodia – including among community leaders involved in resistance to the Pheapimex concessions – because of ties to both LVC and the Cambodian actors. Executive director of a regional organization named STM, Jessa is an important and trusted advisor to LVC; she participates in LVC international activities on land and helps LVC draft statements related to land from time to time. "LVC always wants [STM] to be present at their international conferences," she told me. "They trust [STM's] analysis." She is well known in food sovereignty circles and among LVC allies and other organizations around the world. She makes frequent trips to Cambodia and oversees a project with BRIDGE, the group of leaders and activists from communities in several Cambodian provinces, mentioned above, including a number from the area of the Pheapimex concessions. Her organization focuses on policy advocacy, but Jessa had selected Cambodia as a site where it could ground its work through engagements with communities. Some of the communities in the Pheapimex area are among those that Jessa, who otherwise primarily works more removed from communities, is most involved with, globally.

STM was established to, among other things, challenge neoliberalism and globalization, and Jessa has a strong Leftist orientation and personal commitment to food sovereignty and people's movements. She encouraged me to examine the role of market liberalization in land grabs in Cambodia. In various conversations with me, she took strong ethical stances and called attention

to unequal power relations. She questioned transnational actors' interest in supporting Cambodian movements and called for them to join struggles, not support them.

For various reasons, however, Jessa had generally not helped to disseminate key aspects of the food sovereignty-based discourses of land grabs within BRIDGE or link BRIDGE to LVC. While she told me that she had talked with BRIDGE about all of the components of food sovereignty separately, such as secure rights to land, control over seeds, and access to water, some of the politics was missing. BRIDGE members with whom I spoke had not heard a critique of capitalism and industrial agriculture from her, though she is in fact a fierce critic. And they had never heard of LVC. Jessa said that she did not want to push an agenda, especially after complaining about others pushing their agendas in Cambodia. Her real aim with BRIDGE, she told me, was to enable communities to implement their own initiatives outside of the control of NGOs. In practice this has involved supporting research on the Pheapimex concessions and support to Rona in expanding his networks in Pursat, among other things.

Jessa acknowledged that she had specifically not talked about capitalism with BRIDGE members. She explained: "Have I done a full-on analysis of capitalism like in India or the Philippines? No. I've been nervous. There is still a fear of socialism." I heard similar sentiments from several other Leftist foreigners in Cambodia as well. That the subject was taboo seemed obvious to them, given that Cambodia had experienced a genocidal Communist revolution. It is true that there is not much of a Left in Cambodia, something that I attribute to the former Khmer Rouge – the main organized Left – having primarily either been integrated into the Cambodian government (which took a neoliberal turn beginning in the 1990s), changed their politics, or become silent about their politics. Yet I found that many Cambodians, including people involved in all three of the three cases I studied, were interested in understanding capitalism, critiques of

capitalism, and analyses of ELCs from the perspective of critiques of capitalism. Dara, who worked with communities in the area of the HAGL concessions (Chapter Four), became quite interested in these topics after reading about them in a book and began to promote a critique of capitalism in his work; his mentor, a foreigner with a strong Leftist bent working in Cambodia, told me he thought he could not talk about them. Sophal, working in the Pheapimex area, said that she could clearly see that the theory she had learned as a teenager from Khmer Rouge cadres was playing out in reality: the landlord class (ELC companies) were oppressing peasants, for example, and peasants were becoming workers as they lost their land. Recalling lessons from her youth, she started to talk with people from the Pheapimex-affected communities about class conflict, and even tried to find books about capitalism in local markets. Chan attributed his receptivity to critiques of capitalism in part to a four-month program he attended in India.

One member of BRIDGE whom Jessa knows particularly well and has worked with over the years is Maly, mentioned above, the single member of BRIDGE in Rumduol Commune. She played an important role in the November 2004 protests, became increasingly influential over the coming years, and by the time the company returned in 2009 was a central leader in Kompong Chhnang in the resistance to the Pheapimex concessions. She has achieved some recognition nationally by civil society groups as a grassroots leader and is one of the community leaders in the Pheapimex concession area who has been best connected to outside actors involved in the struggle against the concessions; for people in Rumduol, she is a key link to many outside processes related to that struggle. She has also participated in various events with activists from around the region. I asked what she had learned from Jessa, whom she knows well and speaks with directly (through interpreters), and the answer was, “not much”. She said she had a difficult time understanding Jessa through translation in BRIDGE meetings. I asked Maly directly whether she had ever asked

Jessa or those working with her about anything beyond what they told her, and she said that she had not. “I don’t know what to ask,” she said. And she told me, “We don’t really understand what we should ask her.” Maly had never heard of LVC before I asked her. Jessa appeared often not to share outside ideas with community leaders if they did not ask, and Maly often did not ask. The discourses Maly relayed to me were similar to those I had heard across Cambodia, locating the problem with ELCs within the Cambodian government and the company and not within the broader economic system as discourses used by some of the regional activists she had met inside and outside of Cambodia might have done. What the international community needs to understand, she said, is the impacts the company is having on people, that it does not respect people’s rights or the law. The US government’s fault with regards to ELCs in Cambodia is that it believes Cambodian authorities and does investigate the situation for itself.

That people in the Pheapimex area would have been receptive to food sovereignty-based discourses of land grabs is clear. This is evidenced in part by the interest people showed in understanding ELCs from the perspective of a critique of capitalism, not only to me but also to visitors from Indonesia and the Philippines. It is evidenced also by interest shown in framing ELCs in terms of food. Community leaders had often framed arguments against Pheapimex in terms of the money local communities could earn from forest products (Bou, 2001a; Sine & Phanna, 2002; CHRAC, 2009), and in a letter to the community, the Prime Minister framed his own argument in terms of money: how little the forest provided communities. People in the area with whom I spoke could readily see that these arguments were not as strong as arguments that could be made in terms of food, in line with food sovereignty discourses. The absolute impact of the concessions on incomes is ambiguous; though some local families have less cash income than before, for example, others have more. But the impacts of the concessions, coupled with the expansion of industrial

food systems, on the availability of quality food is clear. Free, high quality food from forests, streams, and families' farms has been replaced by low quality, chemical-laden imported vegetables, poultry, and pork.

Discourses such as those circulating in LVC were, in fact, making it to Cambodia, but through pathways other than BRIDGE – though sometimes involving Jessa. To the limited extent that these ideas were reaching the Pheapimex area, it was primarily through BOOT, a group of activists from around the country with members in the area. Jessa provided one channel through which BOOT has accessed these ideas; by the end of my fieldwork, she had even begun discussing with BOOT the possibility that the group could join LVC. BOOT has also accessed such ideas through other channels as well. For example, a former leader of LVC's member organization in Cambodia is a leader of BOOT, though he no longer has any relations with LVC. BOOT took the lead on advocacy in Cambodia on a draft Agricultural Land Law (Soth, 2017), and their effort to challenge the law was based on comparing peasant and industrial agriculture – essentially the food sovereignty discourses that are my interest here. Jessa has discussed food sovereignty discourses much more with a women's group in Phnom Penh with whom she has been involved for years, and which had its origins in the work of a Leftist activist working in Cambodia. She has also discussed them to a lesser extent with the coordinator of another grassroots-based network in Cambodia. Importantly, certain groups have had greater access through Jessa than others to food sovereignty-based discourses of land grabs, with BRIDGE – her most direct link to the communities in the area of the Pheapimex concessions – having had very limited access. And in all of these groups, similar dynamics of selective embodied transmission of ideas accessed from Jessa and elsewhere have also been displayed, resulting, for example, in ideas not moving beyond

the groups' coordinators and not reaching other groups engaged more directly in struggles on rural land grabs.

The uneven access Jessa provided to ideas circulating outside of Cambodia, and that her contacts in various organizations and networks provided in turn, were contributing to a broader pattern of evenness in local access to internationally circulating ideas. Jessa was one person who could help facilitate access to ideas about land grabs circulating within LVC, but she did so selectively. While overall, discourses around land grabs relating to food sovereignty and critiques of capitalism and industrial agriculture, found elsewhere in the world, are largely absent in Cambodia as a result of specific histories, the ways that outside actors have engaged Cambodian actors have also been an important factor. In part it is because of the high principles of Jessa and LVC and its allies, which I have summarized as "non-interventionism", that ideas which are influencing movements around the world are largely absent in Cambodia. Of course, if Cambodians accessed these ideas through non-relational connections, for example from the Internet or radio, different patterns of unevenness would be found. But while Cambodians access plenty of other ideas through non-relational connections, food sovereignty-based discourses of land grabs appear to have generally come to Cambodia primarily through relational connections involving Jessa and leaders of BOOT and other organizations.

Maly's experiences with connecting to people in other countries demonstrates just how important Jessa's mediating role is. BRIDGE and BOOT provided Maly various opportunities to travel to other countries, but she could only name one person she had met on these trips and had never had any further contact with anyone she met on them. Just a few months after participating in a meeting that Jessa organized in Bangkok with people from different countries, she could not recall any names from the meeting, just that she had met an Indian and an Indonesian. Through

BOOT and BRIDGE, she has also participated in international gatherings in Cambodia, but similarly has not really met anyone in them. That she does not speak English and until recently did not use social media are key factors at work here, but not the only ones. She said that she had not written down the names of anyone she met in the Bangkok meeting. And when she returned from trips to other countries, she said, she put her notebooks in a bag to be forgotten. As with her interactions with Jessa, she seemed generally to access what others shared with her, and often did not ask for more. What Jessa shared with her, therefore, was particularly important.

I do not mean to deny local agency in generating ways of understanding problems, but have made the case that there is an appetite for food sovereignty-based discourses of land grabs among Cambodians struggling against the Pheapimex concessions and other land grabs and that they have generally not come up with similar ideas on their own. They have often defined the problem in terms of corruption and abuse of power more than the workings of capitalism or control of people's access to quality food. With reference to my sub-theses, I have shown that these discourses would have implied geographies different from those that I have observed: they can be thought of as spatial imaginaries. The geography of LVC itself, as a global network, reflects discourses such as these that imply that what is needed is systems change and thus peasants around the world uniting in a common struggle. I have also shown that these internationally circulating discourses have made it to Cambodia through relational connections such as those involving Jessa, the unevenness of those connections and transmission of ideas through them resulting in unevenness in access to the discourses by Cambodians. Unevenness is compounded and assumes a particularly local dimension as people like Maly, the main contacts for their communities for accessing certain types of ideas, rely on transmission of ideas through mediators like Jessa. Overall, Cambodians involved in struggles against land grabs have had little access to food sovereignty-based discourses of land

grabs and, while these discourses may be influential in some places, they have had little influence locally on land grab struggles in Cambodia. Finally, I have suggested that the spatial imaginaries of Jessa and LVC and its allies in the form of "non-interventionism" have contributed to unevenness, as has the spatial imaginaries reflected in Maly's apparent lack of interest in linking out and accessing ideas.

Conclusion

Through the stories in this chapter, I have begun to substantiate my sub-theses as well as develop them further. In concluding the chapter, I will try to summarize how the Pheapimex case informs the main themes of the dissertation. What can we now say about spatial imaginaries, technologies, imagineers, unevenness in access to internationally circulating ideas, and translation? I will return to this question again in the final chapter, where I consolidate the learning from all three cases.

The spatial imaginaries that I examined in this chapter (sub-thesis 1) took the form of framings (forestry and food sovereignty) and ideas about geographies (territorialities and ideas about a provincial border). These imaginaries had material effects. For one, they influenced whom people linked with and how imagineers enrolled other actors in assemblages. The forestry framing shaped how Sophal went about organizing a local network (bringing together people from communities around a forested landscape) and people's receptiveness to joining the network, even when their own private land was not at immediate risk. It attracted allies and became the basis for their continued engagement. Territorialities and ideas about the provincial border led Sophal to confine herself mainly to Kompong Chhnang and then only to certain places within the province, and Rona to confine himself to Pursat and to more or less avoid one commune. And they influenced

the extent to which people from Kompong Chhnang and Pursat provinces wanted to work together. Food sovereignty-based discourses, or ideas about ELCs framed in terms of critiques of capitalism and industrial food and agricultural systems, could potentially have led to links with farmers concerned more about the dumping of agro-industrial products and a range of other issues, or to interest in linking with others to challenge the overall system of ELCs. Jessa's agenda of community decision-making, and the non-interventionist stance taken by her and LVC and its other allies, also have material implications in terms of who they link with and the information they share. The imaginaries also shaped the land people struggled for. The forestry framing encouraged people to fight for forested land, something communities often do not do in Cambodia. Territorialities and ideas about the border led residents of one district to conclude that their struggle with the Pheapimex concessions was over when they were told that Pheapimex no longer had a concession in the district and thus thought that land within their own area was secured. Food sovereignty discourses and critiques of capitalism might have led people to pay more attention to the land that that Pheapimex had cleared but was no longer using, or to other impacts of the company and its concessions (such as on labor rights). In the case of territorialities and ideas about the border, geographies were explicit, but this was not as true in the case of the forestry framing. I do not think that Sophal was aware of the geography implied by the forestry framing, or that she adopted it because of that implied geography (for example, as an organizing tool). Geographies of food sovereignty discourses of land grabs are also not explicit, though it is not difficult to see that they imply local action as well as the need for peasants to unite worldwide, and it is possible that awareness of these implications is one factor that makes the discourses attractive to actors in LVC (Desmarais, 2007).

I examined one set of technological effects (sub-thesis 2) in this chapter: those associated with community forestry. The decisions to organize community forests (made before a formal legal mechanism was in place to recognize them) and later to try to apply for recognition of community forests (made once the formal legal mechanism was in place), conditioned by the forestry framing, set in motion processes that would continue to shape the struggle over the years. The focus of community forestry committees and other community forestry leaders would stay on small areas where community forests could be established, as these leaders seemed to require community forests to justify their positions. Community forestry defined particular roles for Forestry Administration officials, who would end up driving the community forestry process. While I did not examine it, the food sovereignty framing has also apparently had technological effects: while LVC emphasizes peasant leadership, it appears that this framing conditioned LVC's decision to push for incorporation of food sovereignty principles within the United Nations system and other international platforms, which then required the involvement of non-peasant experts like Jessa to expound upon the framing (Desmarais, 2007; McKeon, 2013).

I specifically analyzed two individuals as imagineers (sub-thesis 3): Sophal, a leader of a small Cambodian NGO named TOP, and Rona, a community activist in Pursat Province and member of a group of community activists named BRIDGE. Sophal and Rona's own geographic imaginaries shaped how they organized networks and supported the resistance, as noted above. Donor funding contributed to the influence of both. Sophal used resources from TOP's donors to fund organizing work and bring people from around a forested area together in meetings. Rona's organizing work was funded by donors, through BRIDGE. Both Sophal and Rona were also discursively supported by various Cambodian and international organizations. Sophal and Rona's ideas about organizing networks prevailed, but they also encountered friction: in particular, some

of the forces that shaped the territorialities of Sophal and Rona kept them from enacting their network imaginaries fully. Both were unable to organize people in certain places because community leaders there rejected their leadership. I have not focused on the way imagineers have shaped the ideas of others, but Sophal and Rona's network imaginaries appear to have gained traction within the area in which they operated. I also have not focused much on the origins of spatial imaginaries, but it is worth noting that Jessa (another important imagineer) has been key to the development of internationally circulating food sovereignty discourses of land grabs.

The story of food sovereignty-based discourses of land grabs has contributed to understanding unevenness in access to ideas (sub-thesis 4). I have shown that these discourses generally failed to circulate in Cambodia, particularly among those most involved in struggles against ELCs. What circulation of these discourses has happened in Cambodia has generally been through relational connections, with Jessa being a key node in those connections. (In Chapter 5 I will examine other pathways, involving regional and international networks with which Chan has relations.) A key advisor to LVC, she selected Cambodia as a site where her organization, which focuses on research and policy advocacy, could ground its work. She worked closely with BRIDGE, a group of grassroots activists including many from the Pheapimex concession area. But BRIDGE members accessed very little of the food sovereignty discourses of land grabs from her, in part because of her agenda of community decision-making and non-interventionist stand. Members of BRIDGE did not ask her about the ideas. There is work to be done in making use of connections, but those involved in the struggle against the Pheapimex concessions generally have not put in the work needed to access peasant movement ideas from Jessa. The non-interventionist stance has also kept other allies and members of LVC from sharing these discourses with Cambodians; LVC's principle of working in a given country primarily through its members there

has had a similar effect. Rona argued in a national workshop that ELCs are good in principle and should be granted in order to make use of unused land and provide jobs for local people. People involved in the struggle against the Pheapimex concessions and other ELCs have often perceived problems associated with ELCs as relating to corrupt officials, powerful companies, and inadequate implementation of the law. They have typically not seen them as part of a systemic problem with industrial agriculture or international capital – with consequences such as those summarized above.

In this chapter, I have not specifically addressed sub-thesis 5, that translation processes contribute to unevenness in transmission of ideas. However, I did mention in passing one example of translation that deserves attention. Jessa thoroughly understands internationally circulating food sovereignty discourses of land grabs, as one who has helped to produce them. But she told me that in conveying those discourses to members of BRIDGE, she presented individual elements of the discourse separately. Importantly, she did not include a critique of capitalism, which is in many ways central to food sovereignty discourses of land grabs, and thought that it would not be well received given Cambodia's experience with a genocidal Communist regime. Members of BRIDGE whom I interviewed understood individual pieces that Jessa had presented, but not the overarching concepts, and they seemed to have missed the usefulness of these concepts for thinking about land grabs. Jessa had translated the concept for them, and what they were able to access was a hybrid that was quite unlike the internationally circulating "originals".

This case did not involve a strong element of internationalization of the struggle. The struggle against the Pheapimex concessions had also largely wound down in the local area where I focused by the time I began my fieldwork. The next two cases, however, involve a greater degree of internationalization, and the struggles are also very much still alive. They also differ in that

while many communities in the Pheapimex concession area are particularly well-linked to national grassroots-based networks, those in these other cases generally are not. Imagineers here were largely local Cambodians, but in the next case, an American is particularly influential, and in the third, an American and several Filipinos. The next two cases also involve Indigenous communities.

The next chapter describes the struggle against the HAGL concessions in northeast Cambodia. I will show how ideas about movements act as spatial imaginaries. And I will show how spatial imaginaries are shaping the geographies of actors resisting the concessions, including through technological effects.

FOUR. FOLLOWING THE MONEY FROM CAMBODIA TO THE IFC

Introduction

Like the Pheapimex concessions, the three Hoang Anh Gia Lai (HAGL) concessions in Ratanakiri Province in northeastern Cambodia that I studied have a particularly high profile, but for different reasons. The HAGL concessions, for rubber cultivation, have been the target of a well-publicized advocacy campaign that was spear-headed by a US-based NGO named PEN and especially by its American director, John (Bourdier, 2019). Drawing on research that showed that the International Finance Corporation (IFC) had invested in a fund that was financing HAGL[39] (Global Witness, 2013), PEN helped the communities file a complaint with the IFC's Compliance Advisor/Ombudsman (CAO). The CAO agreed to act as mediator between the company and communities, and PEN and others targeted HAGL investors to bring HAGL to the negotiating table. HAGL assented to negotiations, and over the course of the ensuing talks the concessions were reportedly officially reduced in size in 2015 by more than sixty percent, from nearly 19,000 Ha, though I have not been able to confirm it[40]. Talks continued and HAGL agreed to return additional land, then in January 2019 it pulled out of talks following negotiations with another Vietnamese company (THACO) to take over HAGL's agricultural subsidiary (Cuddy, 2015; Work, 2016; IDI et al., 2019; Zsombor & Aun, 2015; Dwyer & Young, 2016; VIR, 2019).

In this process, John and others in PEN and an allied Cambodian organization named START have played key roles as imagineers. Their own spatial imaginaries have shaped how they

[39] Global Witness (2013) found that a fund owned by Dragon Capital Group Ltd., named Vietnam Enterprise Investments Ltd (VEIL), held equity in HAGL as well as in one of its subsidiaries (HAGL Rubber), and that the IFC was a shareholder of Dragon Capital as well as a direct shareholder of VEIL. Dragon Capital divested in 2015.

[40] An informant claims to have seen official government documents confirming the downsizing, shared confidentially. A recent media article (Viet Nam News, 2019) claimed that a subsidiary of HAGL had 21,800 Ha of rubber plantations in Cambodia. I do not know the source of this number, but HAGL may have other concessions in Ratanakiri that I was not able to document.

have enrolled other actors in networks. PEN offered communities in the concession area the possibility of filing a complaint with the CAO, a tactic it arrived at through its broader "follow the money" work – its signature approach that involves tracing investment chains to identify international pressure points through which investments in particular places and projects can be influenced (Dwyer & Young, 2016). Here I contend that the "follow the money" approach has important spatial implications and is intertwined with a number of other spatial imaginaries. PEN and START have been quite vocal in promoting the "follow the money" approach and related spatial imaginaries in Cambodia and have often found a receptive audience among civil society organizations there.

HAGL is a publicly traded Vietnamese company with investments in agriculture, mining operations, real estate, and other sectors. At 18,952 Ha combined, the three concessions studied here were considerably larger than the legal limit of 10,000 Ha. They were granted in 2009 to three subsidiaries of HAGL, along with at least another 28,418 Ha granted to another three subsidiaries; presumably this arrangement was designed in part to avoid exceeding the legal limit[41]. HAGL also acquired concessions in Laos at around the same time. The three concessions studied here included all or parts of fourteen villages of different Indigenous ethnic groups: Jarai, Kachok, Kreung, Tampuan, and Lao[42] (Global Witness, 2013; Bugalski & Thuon, 2014; IDI et al., 2019).

Resistance to the HAGL concessions began more-or-less as soon as operations started up on the ground in 2009, several years before PEN got involved. That early resistance appears to have involved few outside actors directly helping communities the way TOP and BRIDGE helped

[41] Article 59 of the 2001 Land Law states: "The issuance of land concession titles on several places relating to surface areas that are greater than those authorized by the first paragraph [10,000 hectares] in favor of one specific person or several legal entities controlled by the same natural persons is prohibited." Like several other companies in Cambodia, including Hengfu (which I discuss next), HAGL appears to have set up subsidiaries with the express purpose of avoiding the 10,000 Ha limit.

[42] Whether or not the Lao in Cambodia are Indigenous is a contested question (Baird, 2016b).

in the Pheapimex case. There were a number of major protests as well as smaller confrontations, though these seem to have died down by the time of implementation of Order 01, which began in mid-2012 (Bourdier, 2019)[43]. Global Witness published research in March 2013 linking HAGL to the IFC, ushering in the effort to help communities take advantage of this connection to recover as much of their land as possible.

The HAGL ELCs, and resistance to them, have received some attention in the literature. Gironde and Portilla (2016) examine the impacts of one of the HAGL concessions, and Baird and Barney (2017) analyze inter-connections between the impacts of the concessions and those of a hydropower dam upriver in Vietnam. Baird (2017) writes about resistance to one of the HAGL concessions, in particular what he refers to as "contingent contestations" to emphasize the role of local context in shaping resistance. Of particular relevance, Bourdier (2019) writes in a recent article about the changing geographies of resistance to the concessions and what I refer to here as "technological effects" of the decision to engage the CAO-mediated negotiation process (without using this language).

Of the fourteen villages, I focused on Tapam. It is one of six predominantly Kachok villages in the concession area, and possibly one of just seven in the world. There are four large ELCs in Tapam, two of them belonging to subsidiaries of HAGL. I studied all of them but focused on the ELC belonging to one of the HAGL subsidiaries, DOMA. I also visited nine other villages in the concession area, several of them twice. I was not able to spend much time in the area; on my second trip police came to ask what I was doing, and on the third, they made me leave.

[43] As mentioned previously, Order 01 established the Prime Minister's extra-ordinary land titling program (described in Chapter Two). I was not able to draw a direct causal link between the implementation of Order 01 and the end of large-scale protests. In the village I studied in most depth, Tapam, large protests had ended before the measures associated with Order 01 were announced.

I will relate two stories in this chapter, the first concerning ideas about movements and resistance to land grabs and the second concerning the geography of the assemblage involved in the mediation process. In the first, I analyze John and his colleagues who play a leading role in bringing about the mediation process as imagineers (sub-thesis 3) and analyze the "follow the money" approach and related ideas held by these imagineers as spatial imaginaries, showing how they influenced, or could influence, how these actors enrolled others in networks (sub-thesis 1). I also examine the extent to which these ideas have influenced the thinking of others. In the second, I demonstrate technological effects of the decision to engage the mediation process, including effects on which communities have been involved and which actors have become particularly influential (sub-thesis 2).

In both stories, I will make considerable reference to Bourdier's recent (2019) article, which covers some of the same ground. He is highly critical of the effects of engagement in the CAO process, broadly mirroring my claims about technological effects in the second story. However, he gives the impression that the NGOs tricked communities into accepting a process that undermined an ongoing struggle which a careful reading of the article shows is inaccurate, and overstates the technological effects.

As in the previous chapter, I will begin with a brief chronological overview of the struggle.

Community protest and mediated negotiations

DOMA was the first of the concession companies to arrive in Tapam, in 2009. The few people from the village who met people from DOMA on its first few visits were generally not particularly troubled by its arrival. In a meeting in the village hall, company representatives and officials accompanying them promised that the company would bring development. Pang, a

community leader about whom I will have more to say below, told me that he raised concerns about the company in the meeting, but was not listened to by other community members.

In 2009, DOMA plowed a road into the territory of Tapam and began clearing forest at a site where residents practiced swidden (shifting cultivation). Families whose land was impacted confronted the bulldozer drivers and later the commune chief, who was seen as having some authority to deal with the community's concerns. Following intervention by the commune chief, they thumb-printed statements for the company acknowledging that they could continue to farm their active fields but not expand them. Despite the statements, the company would make farming in the area increasingly difficult for them, limiting access (for example by digging trenches along access routes) and threatening to fine residents if rubber trees were damaged. Families gradually accepted the minimal compensation offered and abandoned their land in this area. But the community understood that the company would confine its activities to this part of the village's territory and seem to have come to terms with the presence of the company there.

Then, however, the company moved its equipment across a stream and began to clear forest in another part of the village territory. Community members protested *en masse*, and some seized the bulldozer keys and brought the keys back to keep in the village. The company halted for several days but then continued to clear land, and when it crossed another stream, there was another sizeable protest. A second company, owned by a Vietnamese military unit, also started up operations in Tapam. When it plowed a road into an area where community members grazed their water buffalo, the villagers gathered and tore down the company's tents, removed company property, and burned down the wooden tent structures. Following this third protest, the sole member of Parliament for the province (and brother of one of the most influential men in the province) visited, and people protested to him. Local authorities warned the community against

further such actions, but there was yet another sizeable protest, this time against DOMA. Police fired guns in the air, intimidating the protesters, and this seems to have been the last large protest in the village. There were apparently never any similar large mobilizations against two other companies (one a HAGL subsidiary) whose operations in Tapam primarily targeted forest areas not used for cultivation or pasture by the villagers.

In addition to these five events, each of which reportedly involved between sixty and one hundred people, overt resistance on a smaller scale – similar to that which confronted DOMA when it first entered Tapam – also happened occasionally over the same period of time (between 2009 and 2012). People confronted bulldozer drivers and sometimes complained to company foremen or local authorities when their own fields were threatened. Some guarded their own fields with knives in hand. And some sold land to another company, apparently thinking they would lose it anyway and might as well get something for it.

In other villages in the area of the HAGL concessions, resistance varied, though general characteristics were similar: people complained when their own land was threatened, and there were occasional large protests. There were also various cases of cooperation between neighboring villages (Bourdier, 2019). Across the area, outside actors did not play nearly the same role in these resistance efforts as they did in the Pheapimex case (Baird, 2017; Bourdier, 2019). There were existing relationships with a number of NGOs; at the time DOMA arrived, for example, Pang was employed by an NGO based in the provincial town that had previously helped the community deal with an earlier land grab in Tapam, and that was helping the community formally register its land. But there appear to have been no NGOs or other outside groups directly supporting community resistance. The grassroots-based groups networks mentioned in the previous chapter (BRIDGE

and BOOT) did not have members in the HAGL area[44]. By the time DOMA started to clear land in Tapam in 2009 – roughly the same time that operations restarted in the Pheapimex concessions – land clearing in ELCs was accelerating around the country and even someone concerned about ELCs would not necessarily have taken notice of DOMA and other ELCs in the area[45].

It appears that by the time of implementation of Order 01, overt resistance to the ELCs had largely ended in most of the villages, including Tapam (Bourdier, 2019). The community in Tapam was in the middle of registering its communal land (though that process was effectively suspended with the arrival of DOMA), but now families were given individual titles to the land that they were actively farming.[46] The companies suspended their operations while titling was underway, and in Tapam, DOMA and at least one other company (which had already cleared large areas of land in the village) apparently did not restart clearing operations after implementation of Order 01 ended[47].

Between April and July 2012, in the lead-up to and during implementation of Order 01, Global Witness carried out research on HAGL and other ELCs leased to Vietnamese companies in northeastern Cambodian and southern Laos, leading to its May 2013 publication of a report entitled *Rubber Barons: How Vietnamese Companies and International Financiers are Driving a Land Grabbing Crisis in Cambodia and Laos*. A Global Witness researcher had been investigating regional financing of investments and became interested in HAGL. The report identifies the IFC

[44]There is some tantalizing but inconclusive evidence of a connection with one national grassroots network prior to or during the protests; if so, the protests might not have been as spontaneous as they appeared. The coordinator of the network at the time claims that people from Tapam participated in activities with the network in 2007. A community leader in Tapam, who claimed to be the main leader of some of the local protests, also told me that he had visited the network's office in Phnom Penh. And Pang said he recalled two people from the network meeting him before the company came to warn him that it was coming.

[45] Deninger (2011) cites data showing 61 large land acquisitions in Cambodia between 2004-2009 totaling 958,000 Ha. Zoomers (2010) gives similar numbers.

[46] Not all land that was being actively cultivated was titled. In some cases, for example, the surveyors said the land was too far away and did not bother to survey it. See Rabe (2013) for an assessment of the implementation of Order 01 in Ratanakiri (though not specifically in the HAGL concession area).

[47] This could be related to the low price of rubber, which was noted above.

and Deutsche Bank as financiers of HAGL: IFC through the Vietnam-based intermediary Dragon Capital and Deutsche Bank through other intermediaries (Global Witness, 2013). Deutsche Bank would soon quietly withdraw its financing of HAGL (Worrell, 2013).

In the course of its research, Global Witness had consulted with PEN, which had experience investigating IFC connections and making use of them in advocacy. Between November 2013 and March 2014, following the release of the report, PEN helped its Cambodian partner, an NGO named START, conduct further research in the villages. PEN also facilitated a process through which communities affected by the HAGL concessions decided to file a complaint to the CAO and authorized a group of representative NGOs to submit a complaint on their behalf. From 2015, the company and community representatives from seventeen villages engaged in negotiations, more or less following the requirements of the CAO-mediated process. Dragon Capital divested in early 2015 but talks with HAGL continued. In July that year, HAGL confirmed that three of the villages lay entirely outside of the concessions, and so those villages withdrew from the talks. In September, breakthroughs were reached when the company agreed to stop clearing additional land, to return any land it had not yet cleared, and either to provide compensation for land belonging to the communities that it had already developed or to return it. Three villages with land in the concessions but where clearing had not yet started were thereafter no longer part of the negotiations. The company and the remaining eleven communities then undertook a joint demarcation process to identify community land that HAGL had taken (Cuddy, 2015; Work, 2016; IDI et al., 2019; Zsombor & Bloomberg, 2015; Bourdier, 2019). But following negotiations with another company (THACO) to take over HAGL's agricultural subsidiary, HAGL withdrew from negotiations in January 2019 (IDI, 2019). Two months later, four of the

representative NGOs submitted a new complaint to try to bring HAGL back to the negotiating table (IDI et al., 2019).

The most noteworthy material outcome for communities was the cessation of new clearing in May 2014 (de Carteret, 2014; Zsombor & Pheap, 2014). (Clearing in some villages by some companies may have stopped before that, even before the implementation of Order 01, as noted above.) That the concessions were reportedly reduced in size by about 10,000 hectares, following an agreement reached in September 2015 (Zsombor & Pheap, 2015; Cuddy, 2015), is significant, but the land would have been returned to the government, not the communities, and remained state land (Bourdier, 2019) – not to mention the fact that documents confirming the downsizing are not publicly available. One other concrete outcome was that the company provided $1,700 to each of fourteen villages in November 2015 to pay for buffalo sacrifices, to appease spirits angered by its operations[48] (Khuon & Bloomberg, 2015). The company also agreed to return hills of spiritual significance (mostly areas it had not yet cleared or planted in rubber), a move endorsed by provincial authorities (IDI, 2019) but not yet approved by national authorities. No areas planted in rubber have yet been excised from the concessions, and it appears that no rubber trees have been removed other than those uprooted in protest (Baird, 2017).

It was beyond the scope of this project to determine with any certainty what role the process led by PEN had in achieving these outcomes. The company does in fact appear to have stopped clearing additional land shortly after the CAO discussed the communities' complaint with the company, following its own investigation. But the company began its concession operations at a time when the price of rubber was near its all-time high, and the price plummeted soon thereafter.

[48] HAGL initially offered cattle (which it was raising in one part of the concessions) to the communities but was told that only buffalo were used in sacrifices, and made monetary payments instead.

HAGL may have assumed the price would turn around, but in the short term, rubber production would have looked like a precarious investment. By the time the company agreed to return a large part of its concessions, its financial situation was dire. Its share price had fallen considerably and the company had accumulated a considerable amount of debt. Shortly after the agreement was reached, HAGL would be bailed out by the Vietnamese government (VietNamNet, 2016). John attributed part of the reason for HAGL's troubles to the efforts of PEN and Global Witness to pressure investors, which had resulted in several investors divesting, and others deciding not to invest in the first place. He told me in November 2016, "It is the rubber business that is dragging the whole company down. In part it is because the bottom has fallen out of the rubber market, but we have also blocked their access to capital internationally." Paul, a researcher at PEN, said that it was this desperate financial situation that made HAGL willing to give up part of its concessions. Privately, some have suggested that the financial situation might have been sufficient, without the costly mediated negotiations, to bring HAGL to this point. However, it seems likely that without the negotiations and publicity around them, HAGL would have sold the concessions to another investor instead. Ultimately, the company's decision to yield a large part of its concession was probably related to a combination of factors, including its financial situation (which was not limited just to its investments in rubber), the then unfavorable prospects for rubber, pressure by PEN and Global Witness on investors and on HAGL, and publicity associated with the mediation process.

"Follow the money" and other spatial imaginaries

A number of conversations with people from PEN made the relevance of the concepts of "spatial imaginary" and "imagineer" stand out as especially relevant to this dissertation. One commentary by Paul was particularly notable:

> "I read a lot written by researchers who say this kind of casework takes the steam out of resistance. I hear it a lot. It is on our mind. And it often comes from people outside, people who think communities should be part of a bigger movement. I don't think a community should be sacrificed for the sake of a movement. We can just put options in front of people. A wide range of options. And not just [PEN] giving options. I have heard people say, 'You are stopping people from protesting'. But we talk to people who say they don't want to protest."

This statement stands in stark contrast to what I heard from some of the imagineers in the Pheapimex and Hengfu cases. Those imagineers saw their roles as organizers who would work with those members of communities who wanted to protest and help them convince others to join their project of resistance. Chan, for example, a key imagineer in the Hengfu case about whom I will write in the next chapter, was more focused on building a movement than on helping individual communities secure their lands and was concerned precisely that presenting options might take the steam out of resistance. This commentary and other ideas I heard from Paul and others at PEN – about helping a single community versus building a movement, for example, or about whom to target, or whether to link with NGOs or movements – were consistent in many ways with PEN's "follow the money" approach. They implied similar geographies. And by orchestrating engagement with the CAO mechanism, PEN was enrolling others in enacting such geographies.

In this story, I will examine the "follow the money" approach and four related spatial imaginaries that seem particularly significant, some of which are captured in Paul's commentary above (sub-thesis 1). My focus will be on the geographies implied by these imaginaries, but I will

also show how these ideas shaped how PEN enrolled others in networks (sub-thesis 3) and how the imaginaries have (to an extent) influenced the thinking of others.

"Follow the money" involves researching investment chains, identifying pressure points, and helping affected communities use that information in advocacy. While PEN did not invent the concept, it has been an important developer of the approach, mainly through its work in Cambodia. The approach is broadly consistent with a legal approach to advocacy, which characterized John's previous work. In Cambodia, PEN used the "follow the money" approach most famously in the case of concessions for sugarcane plantations, applying pressure on buyers of the sugar and through them on the concession holders. PEN's website explains that it hopes that its advocacy with affected communities can impose costs on investors that will deter future investments in projects that involve human rights abuses; John explained PEN's approach as trying to make use of existing mechanism to help communities fight for their rights while also trying to change those mechanisms. He considers himself to be quite progressive, but not ideological. "[PEN] works within the realm of reality and tries to strengthen hard legal accountability," he told me. "[PEN] is fighting destructive investment now, not in an ideal future world. […] If we put energy into a broader ideological struggle, there won't be anything left to defend." He described PEN as trying to make the system fairer, not trying to change the system.

The four spatial imaginaries related to the "follow the money" approach referred to above – in particular, that were consistent with that approach with regards to the geographies they imply – were ideas that I heard from John, Paul, and Eng, a Cambodian researcher at PEN. The first is the imperative to prioritize helping individual communities over achieving broader policy agendas. The second involves a number of related ideas: the recognition of diversity of perspective within communities; the notion that communities should be presented with a range of options, each with

its own geographic implications, that might appeal to different groups within communities; and that communities should be allowed to make their own decisions. The third is PEN's preference – or mandate – for pursuing international leverage points. And the fourth is a set of ideas about movement building and linking with movements. It seems likely that these ideas reflect a worldview that has been shaped by the "follow the money" approach but that also helped to nurture the approach, and that their coherence reflects the centrality of the approach to PEN's work. I present the ideas here to call attention to the possibility of approaches, ideas, and worldviews all contributing to similar geographies, while acknowledging the possibility of contractions within the ideas held by a single individual.

PEN is involved in a considerable amount of policy work, and John clearly enjoys punishing companies that violate communities' rights. But John, Paul, and Eng all made it clear that in working on cases like the HAGL concessions, the focus had to be on the affected communities. John explained: "[PEN] has a political agenda to fight land grabbing and advance corporate accountability, but it is essentially a legal aid provider and does casework. In that work, the interests of communities have to take precedent over any agenda that [PEN] has. [PEN] has an ethical obligation to communities." Eng said that while changing the IFC might be a side effect of PEN's work, it was not the main aim, which was to help specific communities get their land back. Still, PEN has used the HAGL case in its policy work, and the case features in efforts to bring about reform of the IFC. (See, for example, Oxfam's report on the IFC (Oxfam, 2015).)

Paul and John also emphasized letting communities make their own decisions, including the decision not to fight land grabs. Paul explained that communities are diverse, and while some may want to fight, many others may not. He was particularly forceful in saying that NGOs should present communities a range of options, not only those that fit their own perspectives. "We don't

lead people down any path," he said. "We support people in setting their own advocacy goals". He criticized other NGOs, like Chan's, for deciding the paths communities should follow. He claimed that Chan was leading communities down the path of protest and demanding cancellation of the concessions, and that while some people in those communities might want that, others want other options – such as negotiation leading to compensation and an end to the struggle – and that the only ethical choice is to present those other options.

> "We talk to people from the communities, and they say they want other options. We meet people, they say they are exhausted, they want to see what other options there are. […] We are being asked what options are available, and it is unethical not to share options. That is what we do. We aren't trying to lead them. It isn't up to NGOs to decide how to respond. I have talked to folks who have been to the villages, and there are a range of views. There are people who just want some land."

He also seemed to be defending PEN from the critique (introduced above) that it is suppressing protest and encouraging people to settle for compensation instead of return of their land[49]. He said of the communities in the HAGL concession area: "People should have the options. These people don't want to protest." John also defended PEN's decision to take communities' land claims "at face value", providing information – for example, on options for areas where the company had already planted rubber trees or on relevant provisions in Cambodian law – but not encouraging them to claim more than they said they wanted.

Despite calling for communities to be presented a range of options, PEN clearly does have its own set of preferred options which imply specific geographies. Paul would say that PEN simply presents options and lets them choose, and that others should do the same so that communities have a full range of options to consider. However, PEN seeks out situations where the "follow the

[49] Baird (2016a) describes suppression of protest by NGOs in another context in Cambodia – resistance to a hydropower dam.

money" approach has the potential to be most effective (where international pressure points are particularly promising) and presents "follow the money"-based approaches as options. In contrast, while PEN does support START's grassroots organizing[50] work, which it expects to lead ultimately to capacities for direct action and movement building, PEN generally appears not to offer direct action and movement building as options for communities to consider[51]. John told me that if there had been mass mobilization in the HAGL area, "maybe this approach would not have been appropriate. But there wasn't any." (In fact, it does appear that in the HAGL area, protest had largely died down by this time (Bourdier, 2019)).

Finally, Paul and Eng made very passionate statements to me about movements and movement building. They recognized the importance of strong, well-organized communities for PEN's advocacy work. But, as illustrated above already, they both rejected the idea that community advocacy efforts should necessarily be part of a larger movement. They were also cold to the idea of communities in the HAGL area linking with movements in other countries, though thought that some exchanges could be helpful, and PEN had, indeed, arranged some. Paul said that the Cambodian context could be foreign to those movements, and they might encourage people to try tactics that are too risky. On the other hand, he said it *was* appropriate for PEN to engage the communities, as PEN has people in Cambodia who know the context. Eng said that linking had to begin in Cambodia: "Even if some NGOs think it is good for them to connect to the outside world, the movement has to come from communities." And Paul said, "I haven't seen any movements in

[50] Grassroots organizing in the context of this dissertation is intensive work at the village level aimed at facilitating the emergence of new social relations, improved analytical, planning and leadership skills, and heightened political engagement within communities that enable those communities to take action to address problems that confront them.

[51] Other communities elsewhere were engaging in direct action and other forms of overt protest during the time of my fieldwork. See also Baird (2017).

rural Cambodia." The grassroots organizing work that START was doing, and which PEN was supporting, was still confined to a few locales in Cambodia.

These ideas have a geographic dimension: they are spatial imaginaries. Broadly speaking, PEN and START have taken a technical, NGO-centered approach that focuses on dealing with individual cases. This approach takes villagers' wants, or at least the wants of some of the villagers, at face value, and can be considered pragmatic, as John says. PEN's imaginaries suggest geographies in which individual Cambodian communities link to their neighbors and to NGOs. The "follow the money" approach situates solutions outside of Cambodia and, as I will show in the next section, puts NGOs like PEN and START at the center. A comment by one of PEN's close allies captures some of the implied geography:

> "[John] is great, but his mode of working is a thousand times faster and more impatient than groups in Cambodia. He works at one level, while others are working at another level. He speeds off over the horizon and people find it hard to catch up. Should [John] have slowed down? Should groups not have gotten involved internationally? Those cases are just stuck in the weeds. Whatever process started got stuck in Cambodian courts, in dispute resolution mechanisms. […] So, he is bringing in international leverage. If there are only domestic players, it goes nowhere."

In terms of what people aim for, PEN's imaginaries suggest discreet areas of land and (possibly) compensation.

PEN's work seems to be guided by these spatial imaginaries, but also by an understanding of what the appropriate role for an international NGO is. Paul said, for example, that organizing a network to address the system of ELCs in Cambodia might be a good thing to do, but that it would be inappropriate for PEN as an international NGO to attempt to do it. John agreed that grassroots organizing is important but said that it is not something that PEN could do. He also suggested that the nature of PEN as primarily a legal support organization leads to particular ways of engaging

that may be different from those of organizations of other types motivated by similar political commitments. And the "follow the money" approach happens to be just the sort of approach that an international legal support organization is suited to taking on. There are parallels here with Li's (2007) writing about NGOs framing problems in ways that NGOs are best suited to address them through "rendering technical."

START, as PEN's close ally and affiliate in Cambodia, has been actively promoting the "follow the money" approach in Cambodia and appears to embody many or most of the imaginaries identified above. One idea that Someth, START's director, expressed particularly forcefully was the need to internationalize cases because of the inadequacy of Cambodian institutions to deal with them. In the HAGL case, he said, "we have tried to use Cambodian law, but it doesn't work. […] So, we look outside of Cambodia." The member of START directly responsible for the HAGL case was dismissive of earlier community attempts to deal with the company locally: "When people went to complain, they were threatened. For example, in [Tapam], they were shot at, and authorities didn't resolve their problem. Now, with this [CAO] mechanism, the company comes to the negotiating table and listens to villagers' ideas. And there are some results." Someth is also disparaging of other NGOs' efforts at movement building, suggesting that it is necessary to start over from scratch.

The "follow the money" approach, the four ideas about movements and resistance to land grabs, and understandings of the appropriate role for an international NGO are all more or less consistent with each other. Sophal's adherence to the forestry framing in the previous chapter did not reflect such an all-encompassing system of thinking; in that case, the forestry framing was one of many of Sophal's spatial imaginaries that were sometimes contradictory. But there are contradictions within the system of thinking present in PEN, most evident being contradictions

related to ideas about grassroots organizing that I have mentioned. John strongly supports START's organizing work, which implies a very different geography from "follow the money", and he was a pioneer in introducing systematic approaches to organizing in Cambodia.

The ideas I heard from PEN, and refracted through START, stand in sharp contrast to others that I encountered among various other groups in Cambodia. A handful of young Indigenous leaders who are especially well-linked to international Indigenous peoples' movements, and who have been involved in various ways in the HAGL case, are one such group. Sombath, Buntha, Kheang, Dara, and Samnang all talk about the importance of movement-building. Kheang, who works with one of the five NGOs representing communities in the CAO complaint, is disapproving of NGOs for undermining movement-building. Buntha, who worked with a second of the five representative NGOs, has been supportive of the recent establishment of an indigenous political party, which he sees as one projection of the movement he is helping to build. He says of the party that "the aim is for people to begin to think of the long-term future." Dara, who worked with a third, complained that START believes too much in external mechanisms and not in people's movements. He pointed to changes in other countries coming about through people's movements, not through the application of mechanisms like engagement with the CAO. Dara rejected PEN's casework approach: "To resolve the HAGL case is to run from problem to problem", he told me. "Next there will be mining. I am thinking of the future. Set the HAGL case aside for now. Use the problem as an opportunity. Use the problem to mobilize people from village to village. […] The problem is, now we are not strong. […] If we organize ourselves, we can get the land back later. And get power. Now, we don't have power. If we have land but no power, that is not a resolution." He also rejected the idea that that the CAO mechanism was needed to get land back in this case. Buntha and Sombath were critical of negotiation, saying that it inevitably involves communities

giving up part of their land. Buntha said that if people hold out, and there is political change in the country, it may be possible for communities to get all of their land back. Samnang said the CAO approach was compromising, workable only if people do not demand cancellation of the concessions[52].

Chan, mentioned above, came into direct confrontation with PEN over ideas. PEN gave serious consideration to getting involved in the Hengfu case, in which Chan is a key imagineer, and conducted an investment chain analysis of the company. But Chan made PEN feel unwelcome, and PEN decided not to take on the case. At first pass, it seemed that Chan simply did not want to let another organization into its turf; there were also issues with how START (who would have assisted PEN in its work on the case) had interacted with Chan in the past. But it appears that differences of perspectives on how to deal with ELCs also played an important role in Chan's negative attitude towards PEN. Chan's position was that the Hengfu concessions had to be cancelled, and he was wary of any approach that could compromise that position. He could point to a decision affirming this stance made by a group of about thirty community leaders from across the concession area in a workshop in May 2016. In fact, only a fraction of any of the communities in the area took this position (many others perhaps seeing it as not politically viable), and Chan knew that many would settle for compensation. He clearly saw communities' stances as a contested project, produced with the help of outsiders, not something that existed as objective fact, and he had no problem saying that the communities demanded cancellation. He believed that they could bring about the cancellation of the concessions, but thought that PEN did not share this belief. "If [PEN] doesn't believe villagers can succeed," Chan said, "they will lead villagers to do something else that [PEN] thinks is possible." He rejected compromise, and was especially critical of

[52] Bourdier (2019) raises similar concerns about the limitations of the CAO mediated process.

approaches that involve compensation rather than getting land back, which he suggested PEN promoted in other cases[53]. He did not want people to know about other options. Listening to talk about compensation (which they might hear from PEN or START, and which was being talked about a considerable amount in the context of sugarcane cases in which PEN and START were involved) could lead activists in the Hengfu case to soften their stance calling for the concessions to be cancelled. Chan knew that people might want to make a deal and stop fighting, and that the company would likely agree to a deal. He knew that it is difficult to get people to fight, but easy to get them to stop; the project of resistance is very fragile. While Paul and Eng said that there are no movements in Cambodia, Chan was trying hard to build one[54]. For Chan, that was an important reason to support communities in their resistance to the Hengfu concessions in the first place, and part of the reason he was so concerned that people might strike a deal, getting some land back but letting the company have the rest, and give up the struggle.

Chan and the indigenous leaders were promoting an organizing approach that entailed using cases to build a movement, with collective action being key to solving problems with ELCs. The organizing approach takes wants as a project, not the given that PEN and START seemed to take them to be. The ideas of the Indigenous leaders and Chan suggest geographies in which Cambodians are linked and exercise power collectively – more like the ideal of linked place-based movements that I referred to in the second chapter. These imagineers rejected compensation and

[53] Baird (2016a) discusses the issue of compensation in the context of hydropower development in Cambodia.

[54] Baird (2017) presents a case of local resistance to an ELC in Ratanakiri Province which he suggests should be considered to constitute a movement.

were willing to see parcels of land sacrificed for the larger movement[55]. To use John's word, their approach may be more idealistic than PEN's.

John and his colleagues' ideas about "follow the money", movements, resistance to land grabs, and the role of international NGOs influenced the way they enrolled other actors into networks – in particular, into the assemblage engaging the CAO mechanism. While others confronted with the same information might have reached a different conclusion, John saw the CAO mechanism as a particularly viable and suitable option to present to the communities. This led to him facilitating certain linkages, between communities affected by the HAGL ELCs, NGOs, and the CAO, but with few other grassroots actors, and eventually led to the decision by affected communities to submit a complaint. Once this decision was made, there were various technological effects that I will describe in the next section, resulting in the affected communities not seeking links with other communities. The imaginaries thus had very real material effects: they led to a particular geography of actors.

PEN was able to advance its ideas quite effectively; it was well-resourced and able to mobilize others into its projects, and its leaders were well-connected and quite influential. It was not a large organization, but the expertise, confidence and drive of key people in it (John especially) more than compensated. PEN had a small team in Cambodia, but worked closely with START, a large, well-resourced Cambodian NGO (annual budget of about $800,000) led by an extremely competent director.

PEN was not able to enact its spatial imaginaries completely, however, and encountered friction in various forms. John explained that one of the representative NGOs was supposed to be

[55] Baird (2016a) describes a similar situation of tension between imagineers rejecting compensation and others trying to help communities get better compensation, in the case of a hydropower dam in Cambodia. Green & Baird (2016) describe negative impacts associated with compensation and suggest that it can deepen capitalist relations.

leading grassroots organizing work, and "when we saw they weren't doing that, we brought in [another organization] to do the work." A staff member of the second organization spent a fair amount of time in some of the villages in the concession area but seemed to achieve little in terms of organizing. A staff member from another of the representative NGOs was also supposed to spend considerable time in the villages but did not. Some community representatives took advantage of their positions rather than helping to bring about the inclusive community participation that PEN hoped for, as I will show below. And PEN could not control HAGL, which would withdraw from the negotiations in January 2019.

PEN and START assembled the assemblage of actors involved in the mediation process through a combination of discursive and material resources; the effects of the two are difficult to distinguish. They appear to have largely been able to convince people that asking the CAO to mediate negotiations with HAGL was the best option. Community representatives who were at the meeting in which the decision to file a complaint with the CAO was made uniformly told me that they had been well informed, carefully considered what they were entering into, and willfully agreed to file the complaint. Bourdier (2019), however, writes that some of the community members who were involved in making the decision to engage the CAO mechanism were coached to say that there was no other option, and that some of the NGOs involved were skeptical "of the capacity of the CAO to handle the case properly" (p. 9)[56]. To some extent the actors involved were probably swayed by the mobilization of resources to support submission of the complaint. PEN and START paid for visits to villages to hold community meetings and elect community representatives and meetings in the provincial town bringing together community representatives

[56] He may have spoken to different people than I did, and informants may also have changed their minds over time.

and representative organizations. The organizations continued to support the process materially after the complaint was accepted.

Despite early doubts, and while there may have been some discontent with the process that unfolded (Bourdier, 2019), there is evidence that PEN and START's spatial imaginaries significantly influenced the discursive landscape and the ways people understand possibilities within the concession area and beyond. The people with whom I spoke in the HAGL-affected villages were generally satisfied with the CAO process and thought it was effective. While I found frustration that land had not been returned and anger at some of the community representatives involved in the process, I did not hear people suggest that this was the wrong process or regret that the communities had accepted mediation by the CAO. One man in Tapam said, "If we didn't make the complaint, the company wouldn't have stopped." The common view in Tapam was that the new approach, described as "meetings", "filing a complaint", or "working with experts", was more effective than the old one, of protest. Protest was described as dangerous and unsuccessful in stopping the company. The company stopped, villagers said, because the complaint was filed with the IFC; otherwise it would not have. A number of villagers said they would use a similar strategy in the future to deal with the other concessions in their area. Many were not aware of the role PEN and Global Witness were playing in putting pressure on the company (though community representatives seemed to have some knowledge of this), or of the company's financial situation, and believed that it was the representatives' engagement, through the complaint and subsequent negotiation, that was bringing results. Comparing the earlier community protests with the CAO process, a representative from one village said, "We stopped the tractors, but they continued to clear land. Now the company can't violate our rights, because we understand the law and how to complain."

Among the NGO community in the province, the CAO process seems to have been viewed favorably by many – the Indigenous leaders cited above notwithstanding. (Whether those expressing these favorable views had the capacity to implement similar approaches themselves is another question.) One, a young man named Satya who helped me with some of the fieldwork, and who had been closely involved with the process in Tapam and other villages, explained to villagers the differences he perceived between the earlier community protests and the CAO process: "You seized tractors. What results were there? None. They kept clearing. They just stopped temporarily. What about the new process? […] First, they said, 'There are no results yet. We are waiting.' […] Then later, there were results. They had people go negotiate with the company. And there are more and more results." Another, whose organization worked closely with one of the representative organizations, said: "I think the process is good. We don't win at national or sub-national level, so we look at the sources of funding for the company. [START] has experience and can find things out and help. Lots of things have been resolved so far. […] The company promised to stop clearing and will repair damages." And another who was engaged in mediating disputes between communities and ELCs in the province, but was not directly involved in the CAO process, saw that process as a good example to validate consensual, "win-win" approaches to conflict resolution such as those his organization was involved with. Somehow, however, he was able to leave out the important role played by PEN and others in applying pressure on HAGL to bring it to the negotiating table. Such consensual approaches, he said, could help to bring about quicker solutions, and there may not be any better alternatives anyway.

Imagineers in both PEN and START actively promoted the "follow the money" approach, using the HAGL case as a success story, and the case had the potential to influence thinking far beyond Ratanakiri or even Cambodia. START was influential within NGO circles in Cambodia

and also active within regional and international networks. John was extremely well connected, in part because he had put considerable work into making connections; he was one of the two people working in Cambodia on land issues that my informants outside the country knew best. (The other was Jessa, whom I wrote about in the previous chapter.) He also lived in Cambodia for many years.

Still, the extent to which John's ideas have influenced others is difficult to ascertain. Some, for example, may have been influenced by the results of the CAO process more than by the ideas per se. Community members and NGOs watched the process unfold and saw various positive results: the company stopping expansion of its plantations, sitting down to negotiate with community representatives, and returning sixty percent of the area of the concessions, for example. In the case of the three individuals from NGOs just cited, it appears that the CAO process reaffirmed existing ideas more than shaping them. Within PEN and START there was strong support for John's ideas, but it is possible that some adopted them as a result of their relationship with him and the organizations rather than a firm belief in the ideas themselves. That community representatives and participating members of representative NGOs have accessed resources which PEN and START helped to mobilize for the CAO process, and that people from other NGOs in the province and even elsewhere are aware of the access PEN and START have to resources and their potential influence with their own current or potential donors, might also influence the positions they profess – a case that Bourdier (2019) makes well. Time will tell the extent to which John's ideas have really taken hold.

In analyzing John, Paul, and others as imagineers, and their ideas as spatial imaginaries, I am calling attention to their potential to shape the geographies of struggles and the influence of their ideas on how they do so. I am also calling attention to the possibility that their ideas influence the ideas of others, while noting the challenges in making a definitive determination in this regard.

These imagineers' ideas imply geographies in which communities are linked with NGOs centered on individual cases – cases in which there are particularly effective international pressure points. They do not say much about cases where such pressure points do not exist.

In this section I have focused on identifying these ideas and showing some of the contentions around them. In the next section I look more at the actual geographies that have resulted in the HAGL case as a result of these spatial imaginaries.

Imagineers and technologies

One immediately obvious feature of the geography of resistance in the HAGL case is the specific communities that are involved. Fourteen villages have been involved in the negotiations with the company, and twelve are part of a recent complaint to the CAO to try to re-start negotiations after HAGL withdrew in January. Two others are not part of the complaint because, following reduction in the size of the concessions in 2015, they no longer have land within the concessions. People from other communities expressed interest in being part of the process, and some reached out to the NGOs involved to ask if this was possible. But they learned that it was not, because the companies with ELCs in their areas were not subsidiaries of HAGL. During the fieldwork period, there were active protests around several ELCs in Ratanakiri (for example, see Baird, 2017), but they did not involve HAGL subsidiaries and the communities were thus not eligible to join the CAO process[57].

[57] There may have been communities affected by other HAGL subsidiaries who could potentially have joined the complaint but did not. Two people from PEN told me that they recalled that some communities affected by other subsidiaries did not join the complaint because they were not interested. On the other hand, in the case of the Hoang Anh Andong Meas concession, Paul told me that communities did not join the initial complaint because HAGL had divested from the company. (This concession was included in PEN and SMART's initial assessment of the concessions as one of four for which ownership by HAGL was confirmed.)

What was especially significant here was that the decision to engage the CAO mechanism, which came out of the "follow the money" approach, shaped the geography of the struggle in an almost deterministic way. The CAO mechanism acted as a technology, in that once in motion, it made certain choices possible and others impossible. It also led to certain actors becoming particularly influential. It defined a particular geography of actors, including the collection of actors who were involved as well as relations among those actors. John would have to play a key role because he was the only one who could do certain things necessary to make the whole process work: he was the one who could target HAGL's financiers and explain how to file a complaint with the CAO. START would also play a needed central role as coordinator among different actors inside and outside Cambodia.

While in the previous section I focused on ideas, in this section I focus on the geographies resulting from those ideas, in particular those geographies that can be considered to be technological effects (sub-thesis 2). They are technological effects because – as explained in Chapter Two – they result from pathways that limit actors' options and that are not easily controlled by the actors who brought them about, pathways that are established through decisions that are made, that are in turn conditioned by the ideas in question. I use "technology" here in the Foucauldian sense to refer to "methods and procedures for governing human beings" (Behrent, 2013:55). I will show how the CAO process defined a specific set of actors and to some extent their roles and interactions. The technological effects of the CAO mechanism shaped the geographies of resistance in ways that were beyond the control of the actors involved.

PEN had been working primarily in Cambodia and was interested in expanding its work there. PEN and START conducted research in the communities unrequested by the communities to identify the possibility of filing a complaint with CAO. Neither had previous experience

working in the province; they were attracted not through a relationship with the communities but because of the existence of potentially strong leverage points.

I have already mentioned a first technological effect of the decision to engage the CAO process: the determination of which villages could be part of the process. Another way the geography was shaped early on was through the election of people in each village to represent the communities in the complaint-making and negotiation process. In Tapam, a committee had been elected several years earlier to serve as the legal entity for registration of the community's communal land[58] – a process that came to a near halt when the company began clearing land within the land to be titled. Having an elected committee was something still quite new to the community; in the past, aside from government-appointed authorities, community leadership had been based on authority recognized organically by the community and not on elections. Now, with the CAO process, elections were held to rank the seven still active members of the committee in Tapam. The top two were given priority for participation in meetings, trainings and negotiation as part of the process and, in practice, they were often the only people from the village who would participate. They happened to be the two villagers with the most formal education. Number one was Pang, mentioned above, a former district police officer and also former NGO employee, at the time one of the most influential people in the village. In other villages, similarly, typically just two people per village would participate in most CAO-related activities. Many were young and particularly well-educated, in some cases Khmer (despite their communities being almost entirely Indigenous) because their literacy and Khmer language skills were deemed important to their participation in the CAO process. All of the representatives were men. Other outcomes were

[58] As mentioned in Chapter Two, the 2001 Land Law and 2009 Sub-Decree on Procedures of Registration of Land of Indigenous Communities allow Indigenous communities to acquire collective title for their communal lands, including residential land, land on which they practice traditional agriculture, reserved land for expansion of traditional agriculture, spirit forests, and burial forests.

possible, but it is not surprising that two men per village, typically having a higher level of formal education than others in their villages, came to be most involved.

The nature of community participation in the CAO process has been quite unlike participation in earlier, more community-centered resistance. In the earlier protests in Tapam, sixty to one hundred people had participated in each event, and families also engaged in confrontation and complaint-making on their own. The CAO process, in contrast, has primarily demanded the engagement of the community representatives, and community participation has involved joining meetings to hear updates or occasionally giving thumbprints on official documents. The representatives were supposed to report back to the community after participating in meetings or trainings, and from time to time were supposed to get their communities to prepare something (for example, documentation of impacts of the company) to take to the next meeting. Pang appears to have been quite diligent in doing this – contributing to the assessment of PEN and others that he was a very good representative – though he also expressed frustration at the low level of participation by his community in these activities. At the time of my field visits, Tapam residents' engagement generally seemed to consist of waiting for the two representatives to attend the next meeting or bring them some news. In other villages the situation was similar, and the view that community members were dependent on their representatives was widespread. Paul commented, "Working with community reps creates a community rep dependency. It is hard to avoid. It comes with risks of creating a bottleneck or power structure. A lot depends on how NGOs interact with reps, the character of the reps, and levels of commitment." Kheang, an Indigenous leader working with one of the representative NGOs, mentioned above, said, "Only the reps participate. People on the bottom rely on the reps. The mechanism is designed like that. We want everyone to participate, but in actuality, they rely entirely on the reps." Community connections to the outside, with regards

to the CAO process, have been primarily through the representatives. While representatives have been in numerous meetings together, strong linkages do not seem to have developed between their broader communities.

Bourdier (2019) writes about tensions between the newly elected representatives and existing community elders, including cases of representatives saying that the elders were useless and of community members unhappy with the role of the representatives or with the representatives themselves. Broadly consistent with this claim, in Tapam I found that a number of people in the village who had played active leadership roles in the resistance to the concessions in the past were now involved only passively. Jealousies also developed as the new representatives were seen as having increased access to resources. One older man in Tapam who claimed to have been a mastermind behind some of the earlier protests, and who claimed that Pang had been dragged into leading those protests because of his position as formally elected community leader, was furious about the situation. He had been a top vote-getter in the elections of the village committee for land registration, but now that there was money to support two community representatives, he was sidelined.

Dependency of community members on representatives was just one aspect of "the nature of the work" with representatives. People working with NGOs supporting the CAO process observed that many representatives began to feel like the burden and risk was on them, and some became inactive. One young man working with START said, "The reps feel that if there is a problem, if they are arrested, who will help them? In some communities, when reps see a lack of participation, they are discouraged." Other representatives, it would become clear, felt deserving of special benefits and tried to take advantage of their positions. This became a problem especially when in November 2015, to show its contrition, the company gave money to each community to

buy a buffalo to sacrifice (Khuon & Bloomberg, 2015; Bourdier, 2019). Despite admonitions by the NGOs not to do so, some of the representatives kept a portion of the money for themselves. Pang was supposed to be different: the selfless representative who did not try to take extra benefits for himself, the best of all the community leaders in the HAGL area. But it turned out that he and the number two representative in Tapam, too, had taken part of the buffalo money. It also turned out that they had previously borrowed money from the community to go to meetings for the CAO process, then failed to pay it back after the NGOs reimbursed them for their expenses. More stories about Pang came out, including about him accepting payments from the company, with people saying that they were afraid to confront him. When I told John about this, he said, "Why does it always happen to the best reps?" But also, "We can't just change reps. We invested a lot in them last year – they all wanted to quit." Again, this outcome is not particularly surprising, given the importance of the two representatives in each village. In the previous section, I suggested that this can be considered to be a kind of friction, preventing the realization of a geography of inclusive community participation that PEN would have liked to see.

The involvement of representative NGOs also flowed naturally from the decision to engage the CAO. To avoid risk to community representatives by giving their names in the complaint to the CAO, communities formally designated five representative NGOs to submit the complaint on their behalf, and people from the five NGOs would sit with the community representatives throughout negotiations with the company. They included PEN and START, who were involved from the beginning, but also other organizations that were supposed to work at different levels and contribute to the process in different ways, in ways that PEN and START could not. They were selected in a very rushed way, in order to get a complaint submitted quickly, and the communities did not necessarily know all of them; later, however, when efforts were made to reassess which

organizations should represent the communities, no other NGOs stepped forward, and the representative NGOs remained unchanged. START would occupy a central position among the five as the facilitator of communication among all, as well as main point of contract for the CAO, and PEN would also play a leading role among the organizations as well as with the CAO process overall. One sign that PEN played such a role was that when the director of one of the other representative NGOs strongly objected to the person CAO had hired to coordinate the mediation process, John seemed to reject the concern outright[59]. PEN and START had a considerable amount of funding specifically for this work (in START's case, more than $100,000), which the other representative NGOs did not. Kheang explained that sometimes his organization did not have funds to pay for the three staff who engaged full-time in this work. "In the beginning, we wanted to cooperate. But [START] submitted a proposal by itself, and we just have our own labor". A donor gave money to START for this work, he said, without telling the other Cambodian organizations. "So, [START] led the work. In the end, we didn't have any money. So, we are a little unhappy with [START]. They lead, they have money". He described START as an expert organization. "They are experts, they have lots of foreign advisors who write proposals. They don't need to cooperate with partner NGOs. It is unfair." A member of START responsible for the case hinted at something similar. "[START] visits the communities most because it has most resources. Other NGOs cooperate. They share information. They don't say this is [PEN]'s case or [START]'s. We shouldn't feel like that or the representative NGOs will split apart." Someth, director of START, did not seem to acknowledge that START had a special role in the case. He explained that the role of each organization had been clarified in the beginning, each organization knew its role, and there were no problems among them.

[59] Ian Baird, Department of Geography, University of Wisconsin, personal communication, June 28, 2019.

That the negotiations were between the communities and company, by design, was significant. Representative NGOs participated also, but state authorities were not really involved in the process until well into the negotiations, when the company brought them in. One result, it appears, is that people in Tapam and the other villages came to understand the company well (for example, where it got its capital), but they did not gain a similar understanding of government. When I asked them who had authorized the concessions, many in Tapam mentioned authorities from commune to provincial level, but failed to mention the role of the national government – an omission that could shape how they might think about any larger struggle on ELCs in Cambodia.

Ground rules were agreed to in one of the first meetings between the community representatives and the company, and they would limit possibilities for community action – a central point in Bourdier's (2019) argument – as well as community participation and possible alliances. For one, the ground rules stated, "For the duration of the CAO-convened mediation process, neither party will engage in a parallel process in attempting to address the issues raised in the complaint". Community representatives understood this to mean that not only protest but just about any kind of action or attempts to get media coverage for the case were prohibited. The ground rules stated also, "The discussions during the meetings and any documentation that is shared in confidence are private between the parties and should not be shared with the general public or media without permission from the other parties." This provision was interpreted very strictly, so, for example, a representative in one of the villages said it prevented him from talking with me about the CAO process altogether. Bourdier (2019:11) writes, "Implicit messages for the villagers were retain a low profile based on mutual respect and do not spoil the company's reputation." Together, provisions of the ground rules have precluded the possibility of communities generating public pressure against the company (Bourdier, 2019), an important technological effect. Dara,

who was closely involved with the process, said, “Villagers are inactive. We told villagers not to do anything to the company while negotiations are underway, so they are inactive. If the company changes, it may be hard to change. The communities have been inactive for two years.” A local reporter told me that people from the HAGL area no longer contacted him. Kheang said the ground rules had kept community members from speaking out about HAGL; when they participated in workshops with others in Phnom Penh, they did not dare talk. “[START] tells us, ‘Don’t forget the ground rules.’ I asked, ‘Why can’t the communities talk?’ I didn’t participate in making the ground rules. The ground rules constrain us.”

The mediation process seemed to require mapping, to identify what land in each community the company had taken. This was an important cause of increased tension between villages that Bourdier (2019) identifies. For example, it required delineation of a boundary between Tapam and a neighboring village which had until then never been delineated. When the NGOs organized teams of villagers to take GPS readings of the boundary, Tapam villagers claimed that people in the other community had “borrowed” part of Tapam to expand their settlement, and villagers in that community claimed that the Tapam community had grabbed part of their village territory.

Expert processes privilege the role of experts (Li, 2007), and the CAO process has similarly required the involvement of NGOs – PEN and START – who can navigate it. To be effective, the process has also required that outside pressure be applied to HAGL to bring it to the negotiating table and keep it there, something that only PEN could deliver. None of the Cambodian groups, and few groups in the world, could play this role. To get HAGL to agree to negotiations in the first place, John worked with others to get HAGL’s investors to attach conditions to their investments. Paul said, “We managed to block money from two investors. ‘We’ meaning the groups working

on this. And the share price dropped. It was not necessarily HAGL's good will that brought them to the table". A critic of PEN told me, "The problem I see wherever [they] are working is that people see the solution lying out of their hands. When people feel that the solution lies far away – where NGOs can reach, but they can't – they will be disempowered." But, paradoxically, most community members seemed to think that the solution lay in their own hands more than has in fact been the case, as noted in the previous section. Resources also needed to be channeled to the communities, human resources brought in (for mapping, training in negotiation, and so on), and communication among participants facilitated. PEN and START became the central hubs for all of these.

Overall, the CAO process has resulted in geographies in which communities in the area of the HAGL concessions have linked among each other and to the five representative NGOs, through their representatives – precisely the geographies that I claimed above were suggested by PEN's discourse. Links to the outside forged through the process have primarily been with the representative NGOs. The community representatives have generally not developed links with other communities in Cambodia, who are more or less irrelevant to the CAO process. To the extent that they or community members have engaged with other communities, it has often been more about learning than about working together. While there were a number of cases of ELC-related protests in the province during the time of my fieldwork, as noted above, they received no attention from the communities involved in the CAO process. Additionally, the people of Tapam, at least, seem not to have developed many connections with people in government through the process.

John and others at PEN would have been happy for the community representatives to develop relationships with activists across the country or pay more attention to other ELC cases in Ratanakiri. They clearly did not want to be in a powerful position with respect to the communities

or the other representative organizations. They would have been happy for a movement to emerge from empowered communities in the HAGL area. But what I have described here are effects over which they had little control once the decision was made to engage the CAO process: the determination of which villages are included, the need for community representatives and representative organizations and dynamics that resulted once they were in place, the lack of engagement of government in the process, the ground rules and limitations they imposed, mapping and resulting conflicts between communities, and the need for expertise and NGOs that could channel resources and facilitate communication. The "follow the money" approach, reflecting certain spatial imaginaries described in the previous section, led to the decision to engage the CAO mechanism which imposed various requirements and set in motion processes that shaped relations among actors. This did not necessarily happen in a deterministic way, but subsequent decisions – to invite two representatives per village to each meeting, or to bring in experts to prepare them for negotiation – were conditioned by the previous decision to engage the CAO mechanism.

In the introduction, I noted that Bourdier (2019) exaggerated the technological effects of the CAO process. He claims (p. 15) that "NGOs' unintended influence on the HAGL case has been to annihilate the political anger that was anchored during the confrontation period," ignoring the fact that the confrontation period was followed by a period in which there was essentially no overt resistance, before PEN presented the CAO option to the communities. He claims that the CAO process shielded the company from negative publicity, when in fact the HAGL ELCs have been written about more than other ELCs in the province, often with reference to the impacts they have had (Cuddy, 2015; Khuon & Bloomberg, 2015; Phak & de Bourmont, 2017; Kijewski, 2017). He claims that the CAO process shielded HAGL from a court case, though it is unclear who, other than PEN, might have initiated such a case. However, he is right to conclude that the CAO process

prevented people from engaging in other mechanisms. He correctly shows that engaging in the CAO process excluded possibilities of other ways of doing things and made it difficult to see things in a different way.

Conclusion

In this chapter I have focused on a group of imagineers in PEN and START whose spatial imaginaries – approaches, philosophies, abstract concepts – are broadly aligned with each other. For PEN, these spatial imaginaries are refracted by their intense awareness of their position as an international NGO. I have juxtaposed these ideas against those of other actors, including Chan and a number of Indigenous leaders. I have explored the imaginaries' potential geographical implications as well as certain actual material consequences they have had – in particular, technological effects resulting from the decision to engage the CAO mediation mechanism.

The spatial imaginaries took a variety of forms (sub-thesis 1). They are reflected in the "follow the money" approach, a technical approach to which John and his colleagues contributed significantly and that involves research, documentation, communication with companies and other "stakeholders", negotiation, and mechanisms of accountability. They are also reflected in the more general perspectives expressed by people in PEN. I identified four specific ideas that underpin PEN's work in Cambodia which, taken together, suggest geographies of communities linked with their neighbors and with NGOs and experts. The first is the ethical commitment to helping individual communities get land back, any benefits in terms of policy change being secondary, and a rejection of "sacrificing communities for the sake of a movement." The second is a recognition of diversity of perspectives within a community, emphasizing voices of those who want to compromise, questioning the representativeness of the views of more radical leaders, and

demanding that communities be allowed to make their own choices. The third is a preference for internationalization and "follow the money" approaches, and less interest in approaches based on direct action. And the fourth is dismissiveness towards movement building and rejection of linking with movements. These ideas are at odds with spatial imaginaries evidenced among some of PEN and START's critics that reflect an organizing approach – ideas that encourage embracing more radical community leaders who try to shape the views of community members and engaging more directly in movement building, whose implied geographies are more consistent with the ideal of linked place-based movements. The imaginaries of PEN and START have had material effects. They led them to offer engagement with the CAO as an option for communities and to facilitate linkages between communities affected by the HAGL ELCs, NGOs, and the CAO, but not linkages with other communities. Communities' own belief in the efficacy of the CAO mechanism also seemed to limit their interest in seeking links with other communities in the country.

I have called attention to what I have called technological effects (sub-thesis 2) to emphasize that they have followed from decisions taken as a result of spatial imaginaries, and that they have taken on a life of their own. The decision to engage the CAO process imposed certain requirements and had certain geographic implications. PEN and SMART may be perfectly happy with some of them, but not with others. PEN and START became central among actors involved in the CAO process, not just because they initiated the process, but also because of technological effects, leading to them becoming more central than they might have liked. Communities have become dependent on community representatives. Unlike the period of earlier, community-driven protest in which there was a high level of community participation, participation is now confined primarily to a few representatives. Actors involved used information available to them to make independent decisions, including decisions regarding how best to make use of the mechanism. For

the CAO process, it was not necessary to have two representatives per village, but the decision to have two was conditioned by the previous decision to engage the CAO mechanism.

PEN and START, acting as imagineers (sub-thesis 3), were able to enact their spatial imaginaries by convincing others that that mediation by the CAO was a good option, but also through adeptness at tracing investment chains, navigating the CAO mechanism, and organizing and supporting participation in it. But they also encountered friction, as other representative NGOs failed to do the quality organizing they were expected to do, and (perhaps in part as a result) as community representatives took advantage of their positions rather than helping to bring about the inclusive community participation that PEN and START hoped for. Both PEN and SMART are influential organizations. PEN is a small international NGO but led by someone (John) who is extremely talented, energetic, and driven, very well networked, and able to mobilize resources. START is a large, well-resourced and well-connected, and very professionally run Cambodian NGO. PEN and START paid for visits to villages to hold community meetings and elect community representatives and meetings in the provincial town bringing together community representatives and representative organizations. John appears to have influenced people in PEN and START, and perhaps other organizations as well, through his aggressive promotion of "follow the money" and other ideas. Generally, community members I met commented positively on their experience with the CAO mechanism, and to some extent their own ideas now reflect those of PEN and START. There seemed to be little interest in linking together for approaches relying on grassroots power or generating publicity against the companies. Filing complaints and negotiation were viewed as approaches to be used again in the future. Yet community members did not necessarily understand why the CAO mechanism was bringing results, many being unaware of the role that PEN and Global Witness, and the company's desperate financial situation, may have been

playing in generating pressure on HAGL. It appears to be mainly positive experience with the process that shaped these perspectives, though I cannot discount the impacts of what people may have heard through interactions with the NGOs. START's stature in Cambodia, and PEN's connections worldwide, ensure that their ideas have an audience far beyond Ratanakiri Province.

I did not call attention to unevenness in access to ideas (sub-thesis 4). However, the "follow the money" approach and related ideas can be thought of as internationally circulating ideas, and in this case, Cambodians, especially those in the HAGL concession area, have had greater access to the ideas than have people in other countries. Cambodia was a particular focus for PEN. Plus, in stark contrast to the non-interventionist stance of Jessa (whom I wrote about in the previous chapter), PEN has actively advocated for the "follow the money" approach within Cambodia and – looking for a case with significant potential international pressure points – was willing to approach communities in Ratanakiri uninvited to put it into practice.

This case is very different from the other two I studied in that the dominant approach used in formal resistance has been to internationalize the case, to bring about international pressure on the company through external pressure. The distinctive approach as well as distinctive ideas underpinning it, and the forcefulness with which PEN and START have advanced those ideas, brought out the role of spatial imaginaries particularly clearly. While the other two cases have helped to highlight questions related to Cambodians' access to external ideas, the HAGL case has instead highlighted questions about ideas being pushed from outside. Technological effects have also been particularly clear in this case.

The following chapter describes the case of a group of concessions granted to a Chinese company about two years after HAGL acquired its concessions. I will focus primarily on three key imagineers or groups of imagineers. The first is Chan, whose differences with PEN I have

described here, and whose visions of resistance included movement building and protest. The second is a group of Filipino activists who see support for resistance to HAGL as contributing to the own aims of their own national movements. A third is an Australian who leads a grassroots organizing effort, who rejects the "follow the money" approach, advocating instead for empowering communities through organizing. The theme of the first story is ideas about land rights and resistance to land grabs, and in it I will engage some of the ideas about these topics circulating in the HAGL case. The second is about connections – how they are formed and used to access ideas. As in the Pheapimex case, unevenness in access will again be a key concern. And the third is about spatial imaginaries associated with organizing.

FIVE. TRANSNATIONAL LOCAL RESISTANCE TO CHINESE ELCS

Introduction

The community struggle against the Hengfu sugarcane concessions was, like that against the Pheapimex concessions, particularly well known in NGO circles for the communities' strong stance against the concessions and militant tactics. KARTA, a Dutch donor, was an important source of financial support to the communities, through the Cambodian NGO, BDD, that I have mentioned in previous chapters. As Tom (from the British NGO, TAPA) was preparing for a trip to Cambodia in 2016, he spoke with Adrian, a consultant for KARTA, who was planning a trip to Cambodia himself and could arrange to be there at the same time. Adrian was young and energetic and had worked in Eastern Africa for several years. He was aware that Tom had some previous involvement with BDD, as well as with some of the communities affected by the concession. And he suggested trying to organize a meeting with people from around the concession area, along with the various NGOs that were supporting them, while they were both in Cambodia. That conversation led to a workshop in May 2016 that both joined, which in turn led to increased internationalization of the struggle guided to a considerable degree by Adrian.

Adrian had quite strong ideas about what should happen in the workshop, reflecting ideas about community-driven advocacy and a spatial imaginary in which affected communities were at the center, linked with other communities facing similar problems and with NGOs helping to internationalize the case but taking their lead from the affected communities. People from communities around the Hengfu concessions had already been meeting and planning together, with the help of BDD. Their efforts were mostly very local, including direct action in their villages, but also involved other tactics such as protests in the provincial center and filing complaints to authorities at different levels and in court (CNA et al, 2017; Aung, 2014; Ben, 2014; Sen, 2014;

Phak, 2015a, 2015b, 2016; Lay, 2016; May, 2014; Lipes, 2015). Adrian felt that those local efforts could be made more effective both by communities adapting their own tactics as well as by NGOs engaging in supporting actions at other levels. But he was also concerned that NGOs might bring their own agendas and undermine the communities' efforts that BDD was supporting. (PEN's work on the HAGL case, which I wrote about in the previous chapter, exemplified the kind of approach he was concerned about.) On Adrian's suggestion, he and Tom designed the workshop to facilitate the communities affected by the Hengfu concessions in coming up with common aims and with strategies to achieve them through their own efforts, to facilitate linkages between them and activists struggling against ELCs in other parts of the country, and to identify roles for NGOs in supporting the struggle at different levels, from local to international. From this workshop, a coalition grew, shaped significantly and intentionally by Adrian to enact his spatial imaginary.

There has been much more effort to internationalize this case and bring in outside actors than was true with the Pheapimex concessions. However, overall, efforts to internationalize the Hengfu case have not amounted to much and have not really been sustained. At the same time, BDD has played a role somewhat similar to that of TOP in the Pheapimex case, supporting activists in the villages and bringing them together, and affected communities have played a much more active and central role than they have in recent years in the HAGL case. A number of the affected communities have engaged in overt, militant resistance that has been widely reported (Aung, 2014; Ben, 2014; Sen, 2014; Phak, 2016; Lay, 2016; May, 2014; Lipes, 2015; Mech, 2016).

Like the Pheapimex and HAGL concessions, the Hengfu concessions are among the largest in the country. The concessions cover about 36,000 hectares in parts of three districts in Preah Vihear Province, in northern Cambodia – not very far from the border with Laos. Documents show the concessions being granted in 2011 to five companies which have been identified by PEN as

subsidiaries of a parent entity that is a partnership between two Chinese companies, Guangdong Hengfu Group Sugar Industry and Zhanjiang Huada Trading Company Limited. (Like others, I will refer to this parent entity simply as "Hengfu".) Like HAGL, Hengfu appears to have set up subsidiaries with the intent of evading the legal limit of 10,000 Ha for ELCs leased to a single legal entity (CNA et al., 2017). China's close relationship with Cambodia likely played a role in the granting of the concessions, as Cambodia's relationship with Vietnam likely did in the HAGL case. The concessions cover all or part of about 25 villages, including roughly eight Kuy (Indigenous) communities[60]. The companies began operations in 2012, and soon caused significant social, cultural, economic, and environmental impacts which have been documented elsewhere (CNA et al., 2017; Mackenzie & Ang, 2016; PCFS et al., 2019).

My village-level fieldwork focused on Lovea Commune, a large part of which lies within one of the HAGL concessions, and in particular on Sambor Village, where Kuy identity is particularly strong. Communities in Lovea had a number of important international connections. One current and one former staff member of BDD were from Lovea, and another woman from the commune named Mala (whom I will mention again later) had been a central leader of the national Indigenous peoples' movement.

Resistance to the Hengfu concessions by Lovea communities began as soon as the companies started operations in the commune in January 2012, several months before Order 01 was announced[61]. While the implementation of Order 01 would more or less bring an end to large-scale community resistance in the Pheapimex and HAGL cases, in Lovea, significant parts of the

[60] There are more than ten villages whose residents generally have Kuy ancestry, but many people with Kuy ancestry do not identify as Kuy. I have written about shifting identities among the Kuy elsewhere (Swift, 2013).

[61] Order 01 was the Prime Minister's order initiating a program involving land titling and other measures to resolve land conflicts.

communities would continue the struggle. BDD, which had been working with the communities in Lovea prior to the granting of the concessions, started to support community-based activists in linking with other communities around the concession in 2015 and brought people from around the concession area together in January 2016. These linkages were solidified in the March 2016 workshop mentioned above, and the coalition of Cambodian and international organizations that emerged from the workshop would work together actively for a period of time before essentially disbanding. Among other things, coalition members supported documentation and publication of the case and assisted with petitions. Individual outside actors who had been part of the coalition would remain involved, for example generating international publicity for the case and helping get it included in the agenda of the European Union trade commissioner (who was already paying attention to sugar from other ELCs in Cambodia). The company continued operations, but it is safe to conclude that it did not clear as much land within its concessions as it would have without the resistance effort (CNA et al., 2017). Several competing geographies emerged in the organized resistance, including one in which Adrian, working for an international donor, tried to steer an emerging coalition to take its lead from communities affected by the concessions; one centered around an Australian named Bob who led a grassroots organizing project in the area; and one in which Cambodian actors occupied the peripheries of international projections of progressive movements in the Philippines.

I had intimate knowledge of some of these activities. TAPA, where I had worked, had supported a precursor to BDD named FAN which worked with communities in Lovea beginning in 2000, and after Chan left that organization to join BDD in 2010, I made courtesy calls to him during most of my visits to Cambodia. At the time I began the research, I was not really involved

with BDD and not at all involved in the resistance to the Hengfu concessions, but that would change as I became a participant observer.

I will relate three stories in this chapter. The first is about two sets of understandings of land rights, both with origins outside of Cambodia: one is understandings based on Cambodian law, and the second a set of understandings based on discourses of Indigenous rights, translated into the local context. That story will examine understandings that I heard in the area of the HAGL concessions, in the area of the Hengfu concessions, and from Indigenous leaders in other parts of the country. The second is about Chan's connections, in particular his connections with a number of Filipinos who have been particularly important for the struggle against the Hengfu connections. And the third is about Bob's efforts to undertake grassroots organizing within the Hengfu concession area with the explicit intention that it would lead to effective resistance against the concessions in the future.

This chapter addresses four of my sub-theses. In the stories about rights discourses and grassroots organizing, I analyze those discourses and ideas related to organizing, respectively, as spatial imaginaries (sub-thesis 1). I show how these ideas have distinct implications for the land people fight for and how people link and organize. I also show how the Filipinos' spatial imaginaries were quite different from those of La Vía Campesina (LVC) and led to them linking up with Cambodian actors with whom LVC did not link. In the stories about grassroots organizing and Chan's connections, I analyze Bob and several of the Filipinos as imagineers (sub-thesis 3), showing how their spatial imaginaries influenced the approaches used (in Bob's case) and how they enrolled others in networks (in the Filipinos' case). In the story of Chan's connections, I show how the Filipinos put work into the making of relational connections and transmission of ideas through them, while Chan often did not, illustrating the unevenness of connections and thus of

access to ideas (sub-thesis 4). Finally, in the story on land rights, I examine how international discourses of Indigenous rights were translated into the local context and understood by Indigenous community leaders and show that the discourses accessed at the community level are significantly different from those circulating internationally (sub-thesis 5).

I will first give a brief overview of the history of the struggle before presenting the three stories.

Local resistance and the emergence of an advocacy coalition

The story of the organized resistance to the Hengfu sugarcane concessions is one in which BDD plays a key role. For example, it appears that some of the work done by BDD prior to the arrival of Hengfu would influence the Lovea communities' initial response to the concessions. BDD's involvement also appears to have helped those communities sustain their struggle over the years, contributed to at least some of the expansion of the organized struggle to other communities, facilitated linkages among communities, shaped the tactics used by communities, and influenced the involvement of outside actors and the formation of the coalition. BDD's involvement, in turn, was motivated in large part by the Lovea communities' active and visible resistance to the concessions and the defiant and articulate stances taken by community leaders. Other outside connections, to actors other than BDD, have also been important for the community struggle, however, and BDD's project encountered friction due to a variety of factors (including divisions within the communities, active counter-resistance by local authorities, and repression).

FAN, the small Cambodian NGO that Chan helped lead before establishing BDD, began to work with the Lovea communities in 2001 under previous leadership. FAN supported the communities in a struggle against a mining company that had a concession in the area adjacent to

the future Hengfu concessions and facilitated the communities' participation in the Resource Protection Network and active nonviolence activities (Henke, 2011) described in Chapter Three. After the mining company became inactive, the communities actively resisted a variety of other resource grabs, including a land grab in Lovea for a large development project. Individual community leaders developed additional external linkages through a variety of processes. BDD would help the community in Sambor begin the process of communal land titling[62], something that FAN had discussed with them earlier. When Hengfu bulldozers arrived, Lovea communities were thus not unprepared and not caught completely off-guard. Unlike in the Pheapimex case, the communities did not have advance warning that the company was coming, but they did have experience defending their land and numerous connections to groups elsewhere in Cambodia and beyond.

People in Lovea appear not to have taken any significant action while Hengfu was operating in a neighboring commune, but that changed when it began to build a road into Lovea. They confronted the commune chief, who told them he had no knowledge of the company; they then stopped bulldozer drivers, who showed them documents he had signed for the company. A period of resistance characterized by confrontations with local authorities and stopping or chasing away bulldozers had begun. Implementation of Order 01, which began in Sambor several months after the company started operations there, split the community. Samnang, a leader in the Cambodian Indigenous peoples' movement mentioned in the previous chapter, whose brother lived in Lovea and who grew up nearby, came to live in Sambor and assisted those who wanted to hold out for communal land title. In the implementation of Order 01, families were pressured to

[62] Communal land titling, described in Chapter Two, is a legal mechanism through which Indigenous communities can secure titles to parts of their territories (Baird, 2013; Milne, 2013).

accept titles for individual parcels of land, and those who got them were told they had given up all claims over other land. To over-simplify, some did hold out for communal title, and would continue the struggle against the concessions, while others accepted individual titles and gave up the struggle. After implementation of Order 01 ended, authorities continued to title families' individual plots, now being more generous – granting titles over areas of forestland and apparently even land belonging to those who refused individual title. Repression against those who refused individual titling was intense. The split in the community between those who accepted and those who refused individual titles continues to the present; from the beginning, it has had political overtones as those who have held out for communal title have been accused of being sympathetic to or allied with the opposition Cambodian National Rescue Party (CNRP).

Those in Lovea who continued the overt struggle against Hengfu deployed a variety of tactics, and outsiders got involved in a variety of ways. Community members established a camp on their farmland where they stayed to guard it, pulled out sugarcane, detained bulldozer drivers, and seized bulldozers. BDD assisted with documentation and contacting media, and a lawyer affiliated with BDD helped the communities file cases in court against the company. The communities' activism – and the visible role of a number of bold women leaders (Hennings, 2019) – attracted other people who had not previously been involved in the case; the camp, in particular, generated interest among people in Phnom Penh and other provinces, and many visited. Several organizations working nation-wide took this on as one of their focal cases. Various Indigenous people's organizations in Cambodia asked Asia Indigenous Peoples' Pact (AIPP), a regional Indigenous peoples' alliance, to help with the case; in January 2015, AIPP wrote to the UN Special Rapporteur on the rights to freedom of peaceful assembly and of association to ask for intervention in the case, and AIPP members from across Asia visited the concession area later that year.

Initial reactions in other communities around the concession area varied. The companies started operations at different times in different villages, and people were differentially affected by them – sometimes only indirectly, sometimes losing access to publicly owned forests, sometimes losing individually owned forested land intended for farming in the future, sometimes losing rice paddies (CNA et al., 2017). BDD was not involved in communities outside of Lovea, those communities had not had the same involvement in the Resource Protection Network or active nonviolence activities as Lovea communities had had, and they generally had fewer and less direct linkages to networks involved in land issues or Indigenous rights. In some villages, there were significant protests, but sometimes these were short-lived. In some villages, large numbers of people would go to work for the company. When Order 01 was implemented, in many villages people seem to have eagerly gotten individual titles; people in other Kuy communities in the concession area did not hold out for communal title as some did in Sambor, and many people were not even aware of what communal titling was.

Community-based activists supported by BDD began to reach out to people in villages outside of Lovea, and after a while BDD started to host meetings involving activists from across the concession area. Then, with the March 2016 workshop, serious efforts to coordinate action among NGOs and the communities began. Adrian was instrumental to all of these developments as he encouraged BDD to look at the broader concession area beyond Lovea, and a Cambodian consultant working with BDD, who had previously worked as coordinator of a national grassroots network, helped to facilitate some of these developments on the ground. The workshop was followed by a series of Skype calls, in which Adrian played a key role, and additional workshops. Adrian tried to keep the communities in the driver's seat, but in practice they were linked to each other and to the other actors in the coalition through BDD, and BDD had a more central role. In

the series of workshops, all organized by BDD, community members planned actions to stop the expansion of the sugarcane plantations. Coalition members helped to prepare a briefer on the case, helped the communities submit a petition to the Chinese Embassy in Phnom Penh (IPHRD Network, 2017), helped them submit letters to the UN Working Group on Business and Human Rights and a Norwegian bank that has investments in one of the financiers of Hengfu and Huada, and helped circulate news from the concession area.

The coalition was short-lived. Over time, the political situation became increasingly repressive, and BDD became less publicly involved in the resistance effort while continuing to work behind the scene. Communities' implementation of activities planned in the workshops lessened, in part because of the repression. At the same time, BDD started to host Bob's grassroots organizing project and organizing increasingly became the form BDD's support to the resistance took. After early 2018, BDD stopped organizing the workshops, which had played an important role in holding the coalition together but which had become reduced to BDD meeting with community members from around the concession area. Individuals and organizations who participated in the coalition have continued to be involved in the case in various ways, however. The Filipino activists who linked with BDD, and who were never really part of the coalition, have also undertaken a number of activities, including an international petition, protests at embassies, and a visit to the concession site by a team from different countries.

Resistance to the concessions has had effects. The companies have not cleared all the land that they might have within the concessions, and community resistance has imposed costs on the them. These effects have been largely the result of community efforts, sometimes through everyday forms of resistance and other efforts that outside actors have influenced little, sometimes through an organized project of resistance which outside actors have shaped significantly. Various

efforts to internationalize the case do not seem to have had much effect. International connections in this case appear ultimately to have had effects primarily in the same was as they have in the Pheapimex case – through support to grassroots activism. One form this has taken is funding of BDD by outside donors and moral and technical support from international actors to BDD. Ideas from outside have also been important, shaping the form community resistance has taken and helping to sustain it.

Land rights and land struggles

In Tapam and other villages in the HAGL concession area, described in the previous chapter, I tried to understand people's ideas about Indigenous land rights. What I found were seemingly narrow understandings of rights drawing on the Cambodian Land Law – an acceptance of the existence of areas of state land around the villages, for example, and of limitations on the types of land to which communities may have legitimate claims. In Sambor, in the area of the Hengfu concessions, I expected to find much stronger expressions of international concepts of Indigenous peoples' rights. Unlike those in the HAGL area, this community was relatively well-connected to AIPP, the regional Indigenous peoples' network. Several people in the villages had traveled outside the country on trips organized by AIPP and other organizations; two women from Lovea had been to meetings of the Expert Mechanism on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples in Geneva. Two young men from the community who were living in Phnom Penh and had finished university were among the key Indigenous leaders in the country. The community was known to be holding out for all the community's land that had been enclosed within the concessions to be returned to them, not willing to accept the return of just part of it.

My initial fieldwork seemed to confirm my expectations. Community leaders talked about their rights as Indigenous people and they linked the struggle for land to the need to protect their culture. One woman talked about Indigenous peoples' dependence on the forest and refusal to work as laborers. Large segments of the community were still refusing individual titles for their land and demanding recognition of the communities' communal land – all of it, I was told. Over time, however, as I made a considerable effort to understand how some of the most prominent leaders of the organized resistance thought about Indigenous land rights, it became clear that there was also a tendency to draw on discourses from Cambodian law when thinking about land tenure and land rights. And there was a tendency to view the law, especially the Land Law, as guarantor of Indigenous peoples' rights, when it demonstrably violates internationally recognized Indigenous rights. Various discourses of Indigenous land rights – ideas that can be analyzed as spatial imaginaries – coexisted within these leaders' minds.

Analysis of these discourses will help to substantiate my first sub-thesis, that spatial imaginaries can influence the geographies of local land grab struggles. I am not able to demonstrate definitively that they have shaped the struggle in Sambor but will show that they at least have the potential to do so. Discourses of Indigenous land rights from Cambodian law, international Indigenous peoples' movements, and community members' own hybrids suggest different collectivities holding rights and different areas of land over which such collectivities have legitimate claims.

An examination of the origins of these discourses in the minds of Indigenous community leaders will help to substantiate my fourth sub-thesis, that uneven processes through which ideas are transmitted result in unevenness in access to external ideas, as well as the fifth, that translation processes contribute to unevenness in transmission of ideas. These leaders have accessed

internationally circulating discourses of Indigenous rights through direct, uneven relations with Cambodian Indigenous leaders, and in some cases regional Indigenous leaders – especially through AIPP. This has been accompanied by processes of translation at different levels, often involving the use of outside concepts filled with local content.

The Land Law was shaped in important ways by international discourses of Indigenous peoples' rights, "translated" by NGOs and other actors who contributed to its drafting (Baird, 2011). But the law clearly violates Indigenous peoples' rights as spelled out in the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (UNDRIP) in important ways. It nullifies all land claims prior to 1979, denying Indigenous peoples the right to their ancestral territories. It is apparently designed to allow Indigenous communities to continue to practice swidden agriculture (shifting cultivation) and not to protect their broader land and territorial rights (Baird, 2013). It denies Indigenous peoples the right to their territories, instead providing only for the titling of truncated territories of individual communities, at the scale of administrative villages and then only including specific types of land. The remainder of their land is de facto state land (Baird, 2013), on which the same law allows for the granting of ELCs[63]; a sub-decree on ELCs calls for consultation with communities but not their free, prior and informed consent (FPIC) as required by UNDRIP. The law makes the state the owner of Indigenous communities' lands until the lands are titled. The overall body of Cambodian law also puts Indigenous peoples and communities under the direct control of the central government, denying them the UNDRIP-recognized right to their own political systems.

[63] See Springer (2013) for a forceful call for scholars to recognize that the law itself is the chief mechanism through which land grabs are legitimized in Cambodia.

In Tapam and other villages in the HAGL area, people's ideas about their land and territories, rooted in discourses from the Land Law, seemed to be having an important influence on their perspectives regarding what land is rightfully theirs and how they would associate. First, as noted above, many seemed to accept the discourse of state land (Dwyer, 2015; Dwyer et al. 2016) – that there is state land in the areas around their communities[64]. In one village, people said they started protesting the company only when it moved from clearing state land to clearing their community land. The "state land", it turned out, was the territory of a neighboring village. And people told me that it was acceptable for companies to have concessions in their area as long as they only covered state land. When I asked people where state land could be found in their area, they often could not tell me, but the point is that they believed it existed. Second, some at least seemed to accept that their communities are the rightful owners of only the specific types of land allowed by law. People referred often to these types and one community leader told me, for example, that if the company returned land of those types "there would be no problem". Third, community members did not have a sense of their peoples' broader territories. There are apparently only seven Kachok villages in the world, and six of them lie within these concessions, but they did not express a sense of Kachok territory or particular concern if land in another Kachok village was lost. (I do not mean to go as far, however, as to suggest that people do not feel a broader association with the Kachok people.) Importantly, the ideas I was hearing could accommodate ELCs and seemed to be setting the communities up for problems as they engaged in negotiations with the company. Also, by people not thinking in terms of territories of peoples, the possibilities of linking up between villages was diminished.

[64] Baird (2013) writes that the acceptance by Indigenous communities of the existence of state land around their villages (in particular, forested areas communities previously considered part of their own territories) may lead to their acceptance of loss of that part of their territories.

It is quite clear that, to a large extent, discourses from Cambodian law were introduced to these communities by NGOs. For example, in part of a training on "Indigenous land rights" that I observed, given by START[65], participants from the area of the HAGL concessions were taught about the different categories of land they were allowed to own and about state ownership of land. They were also taught that their rights came from Cambodian law. The trainer asked, "Which laws protect your rights?" "The Land Law," participants responded. "What other law?" he asked. "The Forestry Law," they responded[66]. "Those laws protect your rights", the trainer said. I asked several people who participated in the training if they thought the law could ever violate their rights, and the consensus was "no". Another training on Indigenous land rights that I observed, given for community leaders from nearby areas by another organization, was similar. Participants were taught about the different categories of state land that might exist in their area. People in all three of my study sites have participated in numerous such trainings on the law given by START, this second NGO, and other organizations. While a motivation for these NGOs is that villagers who understand the law are expected to be able to stop some of the most severe abuses of it, the training seems to encourage people to see the law as protector of their rights. Perhaps such training has contributed to the widespread belief, mentioned in Chapter Three, that the law is good and that the problem is implementation. In addition to such training, the communal land titling (CLT) process, which is strongly rooted in law and through which communities enact the law, also seems to encourage people to think that rights are conferred by law.

[65] The Cambodian NGO that is central to the CAO process through which communities have been able to negotiate with HAGL

[66] The 2002 Forestry Law includes some protections for Indigenous communities, such as protections of their customary user rights within logging concessions and of their right to practice shifting cultivation within their registered communal lands.

John, the director of PEN who was leading the engagement with the CAO process, acknowledged that he was not linked with Indigenous peoples' movements and did not seem to have particular concern about the ideas about land rights that I had heard in the villages in the HAGL concession area. If Cambodian law were properly followed, he explained to me, the communities would get much more than they currently have. And it was unethical to encourage communities to want much more than they were likely to be able to get. He did not seem overly perturbed by the prospect of the fragmentation of the territory of the Kachok people, nor did he seem to be thinking in terms of peoples or their broader territories. He was comfortable talking about areas of state forest existing within the HAGL concessions. He accepted the idea of state land and of individual village territories – spatial imaginaries of the Land Law. Perhaps he was being, in his words, "realistic".

In Sambor, what I found was that, in general, while people in the community were actively resisting the Hengfu concessions, they were generally framing their struggle primarily as a call to have the law implemented: to have the ELCs cancelled for violating the law and to have the communities' own lands titled in accordance with the law. This is evidenced by the views of Dina, one of the most prominent community leaders in Sambor, extremely courageous and able to stand up to local authorities and government officers and them how they and the company are violating the communities' (legal) rights. She, too, appeared to accept the discourse of state land, not just as a trope used when speaking to others, but in thinking about what land really belongs to her community. It turned out that, as far as she was concerned, the community was not really demanding all of its land back from Hengfu. Areas of state land could be excluded from the communities' claim. She also explained that the real problem with the company was that it had not consulted with the community in the beginning. "If the company had come and consulted with us,

it wouldn't have been so hard. We would have cut a part for the company. It would have been okay, because there is state land here." Sary is another of the key leaders in Sambor, who shares Dina's articulateness and courage. She, too, revealed an acceptance of the discourse of state land, saying that there had been state land in the area but that it had all been given to the company or made part of a newly designated protected area. She was quite certain that the law protects the communities' rights, though it had not been well implemented.

Unlike people in the HAGL area, these leaders and others in Sambor made reference to UNDRIP and concepts in it. Dina said that she had learned about UNDRIP from Samnang (who had come to live in Sambor) and other nationally prominent Indigenous leaders, and had also read parts of it herself. I asked her about self-determination. "Indigenous people have the right to self-determination," she said. "We can decide that we are [Indigenous]. We can decide to protect our land. No one can force us. We decide ourselves." I asked about territory, trying to get a sense if she was thinking at all about a larger territory belonging to her people, or anything beyond just Sambor and neighboring villages. "Have you ever learned that Indigenous peoples have territories?" I asked. "Yes", she replied, "we protect our Indigenous territory as far as it goes. Following our ancestors." But she later clarified that by territory she meant only the territory of Sambor. She was quite clear about free, prior and informed consent (FPIC): "If there is consultation, villagers agree, and information is given in advance, we can call it FPIC." Mala, mentioned above, is perhaps the single Sambor community leader most versed in international discourses of Indigenous rights. She learned about UNDRIP from Indigenous leaders in Cambodia but has also traveled extensively, and says that that has been helpful for understanding UNDRIP – because she has heard about how people have put it into practice. She told me that there is really nothing new in UNDRIP. "Actually, it is based on traditions," she told me. "Self-determination,

the right to live, it is based on tradition. […] UNDRIP is a book to document, to write down what we already have." While they spoke of concepts in UNDRIP, Dina, Sary, and even Mala had clearly substituted local understandings for some of the details in the declaration.

Samnang, Dara, and Veasna (who grew up in Sambor) are some of the Indigenous leaders from whom Sambor community members have learned about UNDRIP and Indigenous rights. All three spoke of UNDRIP as a codification of traditions, as Mala did. Samnang, who received training on UNDRIP from AIPP, talks about self-determination, and is very clear that Cambodian law violates Indigenous rights. But regarding UNDRIP, he said, "It isn't new, but we need to study it in order to understand it. Once we understand it, we'll know that we have already understood these things." Veasna, who learned about UNDRIP from Samnang, similarly said that UNDRIP is not much different from what people already know. UNDRIP, he said, tells us that "what people have respected according to their traditions, from their ancestors, they have the right to protect." And Dara, who said he learned about UNDRIP by reading and translating it into Khmer, explained that rights are just traditions. "Villagers don't know their rights, only their traditions. […] UNDRIP takes those traditions, and says, 'these are your rights.'" (It is noteworthy that both Veasna and Dara grew up in villages in which elders strongly emphasized history and traditions.)

Describing UNDRIP as a codification of traditions is an intuitive way of understanding Indigenous rights, and is a hybrid combining external ideas with people's own ideas about rights. Other Indigenous leaders, from other parts of the country, are versed in more "authentic" translations of international discourses of Indigenous rights. Buntha is one of those who has engaged most with regional and international Indigenous movements. For him, self-determination is the central right, from which rights to land, resources, culture, and so on emanate. "Self-determination is key for us", he told me. "Land is short-term […] If activists don't understand,

they just demand individual areas of land". He has a vision of linking different groups together in a long-term struggle. "We need collective politics to defend our rights", he told me. "That isn't just one generation or two, it takes time." He is pursuing a "long game", common among Indigenous peoples in different countries, aimed at shaping the relation between Indigenous peoples and the national government[67]. He is not very engaged in day-to-day struggles against land grabs. "I don't get so directly involved", he told me. "I think there are lots of people who can do it. I try to work at a different level." Kheang and Sombath have also learned about Indigenous rights directly from participation in AIPP, as well as from interactions with other Indigenous actors in the region and internationally. Kheang talked about the territory of his people, noting that it included a provincial center – where Khmer people and the Cambodian government are now strongly rooted. Sombath said that he only talks about Indigenous territories with those he trusts most, because it is such a sensitive topic. For Buntha, Sombath, and Kheang, Indigenous rights is about more than tradition – it is about the political status of peoples.

I believe that these different discourses of Indigenous rights – from those based in Cambodian law, to understandings of Indigenous rights as essentially the same as traditions, to understandings of self-determination and Indigenous territories based on internationally circulating discourses – reflect these informants' "private transcripts" (Scott, 1985), that is, how they see the world themselves. And, much as do ideas about movements and approaches to resisting land grabs described in the previous chapter, they imply different geographies, such as, for example, the land people might feel they have a legitimate reason to struggle for. If people accept their forests as belonging to the state, consistent with discourses from law, they might not defend them from ELCs as intently as they would if they understood themselves to be the rightful

[67] Marcus Colchester, Forest Peoples Programme, personal communication, March 1, 2016.

owners. If they understand UNDRIP to be about tradition, they might struggle to protect their rights to particular resource uses, but not their ownership of particular areas of land. If they think in terms of their people's broader territory, they might care more about what happens to other communities and seek to link with them. People might not challenge laws that violate their rights if they think it is implementation, not the law itself, that is problematic. And they might not challenge the system of ELCs if they accept them as legitimate in principle. Those who think that the end game is self-determination of one's people, and recognition of that people as equal to the Khmer people, might engage in a different kind of struggle – perhaps even be willing, as Buntha suggests he is, to give up some land now in favor of winning a broader struggle later.

As in the case of ideas about movements and tactics described in the previous chapter, these geographic implications are largely hypothetical, and I have not been able to demonstrate them in practice in Sambor. Accepting legal discourses of Indigenous rights has not kept the people of Sambor from putting up a steadfast resistance; they have often able to keep authorities from using the law against them through their own deft use of it, for example framing their direct action as acts necessary to defend what is legally theirs. There is, however, evidence of material effects for people in the HAGL concession area related to thinking in terms of individual villages rather than broader territories. As I have noted already, six of seven existing Kachok villages lie within the concession area, but people generally showed surprisingly little concern for what happened to the land in other Kachok villages. There is also evidence that it is understandings of the rights of peoples that motivate Buntha and Sombath to build a broader movement.

Different ideas about land rights thus imply different geographies. To some extent international discourses of Indigenous rights are similar to international food sovereignty discourses, discussed in Chapter Three, in that they suggest expansive community claims that leave

no room for ELCs. Discourses of Indigenous rights have arrived in Cambodia through uneven pathways; those I have emphasized involve Indigenous Cambodians having direct interactions with people from other countries through AIPP and them then conveying these ideas to others in Cambodia[68]. Along the way there have been processes of hybridization or translation. UNDRIP has come to be understood as a codification of tradition, for example. Territories have come to mean the territories of individual villages, rather than of peoples. I have shown the importance of connections to AIPP and Cambodian Indigenous leaders, providing more direct access to international discourse of Indigenous rights to some Cambodian Indigenous people than to others. Through the next story, I will explore unevenness in the formation and use of connections more explicitly, this time focusing on one non-Indigenous Cambodian: Chan.

Filipino connections to a Cambodian struggle

In June 2018, the Alliance of Asian Peasants (AAP), International Food Sovereignty Federation (IFSF), the Global Alliance of Indigenous Peoples (GAIP), and other organizations organized a visit to the Hengfu concessions. People from Malaysia, Thailand, and the Philippines participated, but most of the participants were from the Philippines, the political center of all three network organizations where much of the leadership of the three networks is based. They traveled discreetly around villages to conduct interviews, held a workshop afterwards to present their findings, and published a report on the findings. A Skype call between Tom, Chan, and a leader of IFSF that Tom had organized to get to know IFSF, and a visit to Manila by Tom, Chan and two

[68] I have emphasized the pathways through which the most "authentic" translations of international discourses of Indigenous rights circulating within international Indigenous peoples' movements appear to have reached Cambodian Indigenous peoples' movements. International discourses of Indigenous peoples' rights have also reached Cambodia through other pathways. As noted above, NGOs helped to introduce the concept of "Indigenous peoples" early on (Baird, 2011). Donors, government agencies, academics, and other actors also played roles in the transmission of these discourses.

others from BDD to meet Filipino activists in person, had blossomed into the active involvement of IFSF, AAP, and GAIP in the Hengfu case.

The involvement of the Filipino activists happened through their relationships with Chan. Through this story, I will examine how and why these relationships came about as well as how they were used by different actors. I show how the Filipinos got involved on the one hand, and how Chan has connected and made use of (or not made use of) his connections on the other. Making and using connections requires work, and the Filipinos put work into these relationships while Chan, in general, did not. There are echoes of the story in Chapter Three that analyzed how Jessa connected to Cambodians, but the Filipinos here have a very different logic of connection from her, one that is more proactive.

This story addresses the third sub-thesis, showing how the spatial imaginaries of imagineers – the Filipino activists – are especially important. These spatial imaginaries relate to their own national project in the Philippines, in which supporting resistance in other countries (including Cambodia) plays a role. Their spatial imaginaries help to explain why they connected to Chan. Chan is also an imagineer, but I do not really analyze him as such here.

This story also addresses the fourth sub-thesis regarding uneven transmission of, and access to, external ideas, though I focus more on the uneven processes of making and using connections than on the ideas that are transmitted through them. As noted above, I show the work needed to make and use connections, work that some actors put in while others do not. Chan was able to access ideas because of the work the Filipino activists put into making connections.

Chan is at the center of this story. In his early forties at the time of this research, his appearance is distinctive: tall, thin, and fair-skinned. He is Khmer, the son of farmers, and grew up in a rural village in Southeastern Cambodia. He attended high school as a Buddhist monk. While

in university, he attended a four-month program in India that would influence his thinking in important ways. In particular, through it, he became critical of neoliberalism and receptive to Leftist ideas. Following graduation, he took a job with FAN, and later (in 2010) left FAN to join BDD.

A Filipina woman named Nicole was important for Chan's later connections to the Filipino activists, by linking him to Adrian – the consultant for KARTA, who happened also to be Filipino. She took an interest in BDD and her organization started supporting it, with funds from KARTA. When Adrian visited Cambodia, he contacted Nicole, whom he knew and trusted; she introduced him to some of the Cambodian NGOs that her organization had been supporting and gave him a strong recommendation for BDD. Chan had heard about KARTA but had never thought of applying to it for funding since it seemed only to fund large organizations. Adrian met Chan and others in BDD, liked what he saw, and suggested that Chan submit a proposal to KARTA. He did, and KARTA started to support BDD.

I have already described Adrian's role as imagineer, above, showing how he worked with BDD and Tom to bring together a coalition to work on the Hengfu case and tried to impose a particular geography on it. Over the years, Adrian would be extremely supportive of Chan, perceiving him to be doing the kind of work he thought KARTA should be funding. He personally played an important role in getting KARTA to fund BDD, and shaped – apparently significantly – how Chan thinks about the role of NGOs and how they can support communities' struggles. He has done a considerable amount to help Chan and the campaign on the Hengfu ELCs, often without the knowledge of others in KARTA and without Chan requesting it. For example, he got other organizations to take an interest in the Hengfu campaign and in BDD, on his own initiative but as a result of his relationship with Chan.

Particularly relevant here, Adrian helped to link Chan with IFSF. Several years ago, Adrian encouraged KARTA to bring in a Filipino consultant to do some research with BDD and the consultant linked Chan to regional processes being led by IFSF and AAP. Chan participated in two workshops and joined various list-serves, but otherwise had little real engagement with these networks until March 2017, when Adrian helped to organize a Skype call for Tom and Chan with the international coordinator of IFSF. That coordinator, a Filipino named Angelo, knew Adrian, though they were not close. In that first conversation with Angelo, he already floated the possibility of a visit by an international team to the Hengfu concession area, petitions, and sending resource people to participate in workshops that BDD might organize. Shortly after, Chan and two of his colleagues from BDD visited IFSF, AAP, GAIP, MOVE (a network organization and member of AAP) and other organizations in Manila with Tom, on a trip that Tom initiated to get to know these groups. Angelo was ready to start planning to send people from these groups to Cambodia to participate in workshops that BDD was organizing, and two Filipino activists did in fact go several weeks later. In the months following the workshops, GAIP, AAP, IFSF, and MOVE began to be included more and more in communications of the coalition. In January 2018, Angelo contacted Chan, Adrian, and Tom to say that he had some funds available for a Mekong regional workshop on Chinese involvement in land grabs, and asked whether they could assist with organizing it. They agreed to help. The workshop was held, and Chan played an important organizing role. Following the workshop, IFSF hired a Filipina woman named Paula to assume responsibility for the Mekong region. She would present Chan a list of possible activities that IFSF, AAP, and GAIP could take on with regards to the Hengfu case, including publicity, statements, petitions, protests at embassies, and most significantly, a visit to the concession site by a team of people from different countries – something Angelo had talked about from the beginning. These organizations

did in fact organize all of these things. Paula made a trip to Cambodia to prepare for the visit, during which she provided training to Cambodian activists, and then the visit, described above, took place.

While Chan participated in AAP's and IFSF's list-serves for several years with little meaningful result, his relational connections (resulting from direct interactions) with the Filipinos described here, from Nicole to Paula, have been particularly important for him. It took work to make and use these connections, but that work has largely been done by the Filipinos, either in linking to Chan themselves or in mediating Chan's links with others. Adrian did a considerable amount of the work that went into making the relationship between him and Chan, a relationship ultimately centered on KARTA funding for BDD. He traveled to Cambodia, met Nicole to ask for advice regarding organizations to support, contacted Chan, and later continued to communicate with Chan and accompanied him to villages where BDD was working. Adrian mediated the relationship between Angelo and Chan, and Angelo followed up enthusiastically. In contrast, Chan contributed little of the work that went into forging these connections. The Filipinos have also put work into making use of the connections. Adrian tried to get other organizations to take action on the Hengfu case, and Angelo and others in the IFSF secretariat have been proactive in planning various actions on the case, with Chan as their key link to the communities but often without much involvement by him, or even his knowledge. Adrian, Angelo, and the others have generally decided what ideas to share with Chan because he has not asked them to share anything, despite their considerable knowledge in many areas that Chan wants to learn about, such as movement building, advocacy campaigning, critiques of capitalism and industrial agriculture, and food sovereignty. Chan has generally not asked them for ideas or for help, and they have taken the initiative in providing the ideas and help that they want to.

In their logic of connecting, these Filipinos provide an interesting contrast to Jessa. They could be described, simply, as more pro-active. Nicole and Adrian were both specifically looking for organizations and projects in Cambodia to support when they came upon Chan and BDD. Adrian, in particular, was impressed by the Lovea communities' struggle and saw supporting BDD as a way to support that struggle. He would repeatedly try to shape the actions of organizations funded by KARTA for the benefit of that struggle. On the other hand, IFSF, AAP, and GAIP all saw linking with Chan and supporting the communities' resistance to the Hengfu concessions as supporting their own movements in the Philippines. AAP has a new member in Cambodia and is interested in supporting it. But, unlike LVC, which seems to have no interest in working in Cambodia with anyone other than their single member there, all of these groups were interested in meeting any committed activists in Cambodia they came upon. And all were hoping to build their memberships with groups in Cambodia.

IFSF, AAP, and GAIP are all closely allied networks. The Filipino members of all three are part of the progressive movement in the Philippines and lie on one side of a political fault-line that resulted from a split within the Left in the Philippines (Rocamora, 1994). To an extent (just how much is highly contested) all three serve as international projections of that movement. I spoke with Angelo about why IFSF was interested in supporting struggles in Cambodia, and he explained that linking out in the region and internationally was important to the Philippine movement; it helped to lessen pressure on the Philippine movement. The motivation for AAP and GAIP may be similar. Groups friendly with those on the other side of the split (including LVC and Jessa's organization, STM) typically want little to do with these groups that were linking with Chan. AAP is often seen as a competitor to LVC. Jessa reportedly advised BOOT, a fairly important actor nationally in Cambodia on land-related issues with strong links with communities

in the Pheapimex concession area, which I wrote about at some length in Chapter Three and with whom she works closely, not to get involved with AAP.

If the Filipinos had reasons to link with Cambodians, Chan seems not to have felt much reason to link out or to have been motivated to do so – though he has appreciated the Filipinos' involvement in the Hengfu case. He has generally put little work into making connections with outside groups, other than with donors. This was evident from the trip he made with Tom to Manila and Jakarta, which he seemed to think of as a learning trip, not one to make contacts as he had described it when they were planning the trip. In reflecting on the trip, he emphasized what he had learned, not whom he had met. He had made earlier trips to both the Philippines and Indonesia, but had not made any connections with people there; when I asked why not, he replied that "to have relations with someone there has to be some interest", and that there was no common project that in which he and people he met from these countries were involved. Also, while he speaks English quite well and is adept at electronic media, he still finds email communication in English challenging and time-consuming, complicating the task of following up contacts made in other countries. When I asked him, generally, why he never initiated relationships with outsiders, he attributed it to his personality. He said he has never been good at asking people for help or following up contacts already made.

Chan is not unique. Other Cambodians I interviewed similarly seemed to put little work into making connections. Often, they seemed to have no clear idea why they might want to link with outsiders, or with whom they might want to link. Many were very mobile and had met many people, but meeting people rarely resulted in lasting relationships. Many had developed relationships only when someone had mediated their connections. Maly, a community leader from the Pheapimex area described in Chapter 3, who is one of those who has been most connected to

outside actors involved in the struggle against the Pheapimex concessions and a key link to many outside processes related to that struggle, is such an individual. Despite having numerous opportunities to meet others, including people from other countries, she has only ended up having meaningful relationships (related to the struggle against the concessions) with those who initiate them. She had had various opportunities to travel to other countries, but had never had any further contact with anyone she met on these trips and could only remember the name of one (and then just a few months after meeting her in a regional event). She had participated in international gatherings in Cambodia, but similarly had not really gotten to know anyone in them. She explained that she never really paid attention to trying to meet anyone. It also seemed that, like Chan, she saw the purposes of the trips and events as primarily to learning, though also to share information and appeal for help – not to get to know people. It is not just that Maly does not get to know people, but also that, like Chan, she does not make use of the connections she has; for example, she seems to access what others share with her and not ask for more. On the other hand, there certainly are some Cambodians who do put in the work to make and use connections with transnational actors, and a few groups have become particularly well known regionally as a result[69].

The process of making and using connections (through which ideas are transmitted) is thus highly uneven: there is unevenness across different Cambodians in the work they put into making connections – leading to a small number of Cambodians who put in this work almost monopolizing transnational connections – as well as unevenness across different transnational actors in the work they put in. Each actor may put more work into making some connections than others. Chan linked

[69] This became particularly clear when, speaking with various people in Indonesia working on land issues, I found that most knew people from just three Cambodian NGOs, who appear to have put a considerable amount of work into making connections. These three NGOs are very well-resourced and none of them works closely with rural communities on land issues, but their names appear again and again in the membership lists of different networks in the region.

up with certain people whose spatial imaginaries predisposed them to linking with him, for whom linking with him somehow served their purposes. One consequence is that the form and nature of transnational involvement in a Cambodian struggle against ELCs are being shaped by transnational actors (like Adrian and Angelo) who put work into making use of their relationships with Chan. A second consequence is that, to the extent that Cambodians are not putting work into making and using connections, they may not have access to ideas that could be of use to them.

Here, I have examined how the Filipinos' spatial imaginaries shaped their interest in connecting with Chan. In the next story, I will explore how the spatial imaginaries of another foreigner – Bob – shaped geographies much more broadly within the Hengfu concession area.

Hyper-local geographies of grassroots organizing

In June 2017, Bob asked Tom to help convince BDD to end all of its on-the-ground activities in the area of the Hengfu concessions. He was hoping to start up a grassroots organizing project in the area and was in negotiations with Chan about implementing the project under the auspices of BDD. He was concerned that any other activities in the area by BDD, or any other NGO, could interfere with the organizing he was planning. Tom spoke with Chan, and he agreed to Bob's request.

Numerous informants described Bob, an Australian who had been living in Malaysia, as pushing a particular approach in Cambodia. In some ways, he is quite similar to John, the director of PEN whom I wrote about in the previous chapter. For Bob, the Compliance Advisor/Ombudsman (CAO) process described in the previous chapter encapsulated all that was wrong with approaches other than organizing: "Communities have not been empowered, solidarity in the villages is weak, and people don't feel ownership over the process. […] You need to have

local people calling the shots." But like John, Bob has strong ideas, knows what he wants to do, and enrolls others in helping to enact those ideas. In both cases, their ideas about what form resistance should take suggest central roles for themselves. Bob had something very specific that he wanted to achieve in Cambodia: organizing communities. And through Tom and others, he was able to advance his ideas, with real material, geographic consequences for communities and other actors. These ideas were part of Bob's broader philosophy of change, which I tried to understand over many hours of conversation with him.

Through this story, I will analyze Bob as an imagineer (sub-thesis 3) and unpack the thinking that he brings to the struggle against the Hengfu concessions to show a coherent set of ideas that have specific geographic implications (sub-thesis 1). I will show how Bob was influential because of the force of his own personality but also through the help of resources flowing through NGOs. There are strong parallels with my analysis of ideas circulating within PEN in the previous chapter, though the ideas are quite different.

Bob had already established grassroots organizing projects elsewhere in Cambodia when Samnang, mentioned above, asked him to help him initiate one in the area of the Hengfu concessions. He first came to Cambodia to help with urban land issues and later helped a Cambodian NGO set up an organizing project. For many years, he had been affiliated with a Malaysian organization that had engaged in grassroots organizing in Malaysia, and while Bob did not do this work himself, he saw it close-up and developed intimate knowledge of the process followed. It was through this Malaysian organization's regional links that he connected with people in Cambodia. After helping set up one organizing project, he explored other possibilities to support organizing elsewhere in Cambodia. Samnang learned about Bob's work and got to know

him, they decided to start an organizing project in the Hengfu area, and they found an NGO to support them.

According to Bob, "progressive social change only happens when people on the bottom agitate". This would come about through grassroots organizing[70] which, he explained, "is about collective modes of action that can create sustainable demand or pressure for change." Bob brought a specific methodology of organizing whose genealogy he traced for me back to Saul Alinsky, who pioneered community organizing in US cities. It would result in flexible structures at the local level that could represent the interests of community members and through which they could undertake organized action. Bob explained that organizing involved cultivating good natural leaders who encourage community participation, building up community-based groups organically, helping community members recognize that they share common problems and identify viable solutions, and helping them gain confidence. Grassroots organizing is not about mobilizing people to take action that is reactive or cannot be sustained, he said, but helping people to organize, go on the offensive, and plan how to realistically achieve their aims through actions they take themselves. While John often sees international approaches, such as researching investment chains to find outside pressure points and applying pressure to them, as at least part of the solution, Bob emphasized local work and building the strength of local communities.

Not only was organizing Bob's choice of focus for his own work, but he also tended to see other forms of engagement around land grabs as either objectionable because they undermined organizing or at best ineffective. (To some extent his position may reflect that of one side in a debate within civil society about the importance of organizing versus the importance of

[70] I defined grassroots organizing in the previous chapter as "intensive work at the village level aimed at facilitating the emergence of new social relations, improved analytical, planning and leadership skills, and heightened political engagement within communities that enable those communities to take action to address problems that confront them."

advocacy[71].) He saw NGO work in the villages in the Hengfu concession area as generally undermining organizing. NGOs distract people from engaging in their own local struggles themselves, empower the wrong kind of community leader, and set up structures that are incompatible with organizing. He did not think BDD was any different or that BDD had played a particularly important role to date in helping the communities resist the concessions. BDD was not working closely enough to the grassroots and was not doing organizing, and the leaders they were working with were not very effective. He generally saw little value, and in fact saw potential harm, in communities linking to outside actors before they had organized their own groups on the ground. Ideas from outside might be important at some stage, after people have learned from their own experiences: "Historically people in village are less imaginative, and it is helpful to have outsiders with other frameworks to exchange – farmers have limited experience, which limits their range of thinking." But initially such ideas are not needed. "There are plenty of ideas floating around," he told me, "but no one wants to do the dirty work". Learning is often not useful, he said. "Knowledge is not power. Knowledge combined with action is power." In any case, learning is not important unless it is tied to action on the ground, and most learning is not put to use. Yes, sometimes people might be radicalized and turn to action after being exposed to ideas, but more often nothing happens. Outside connections or engagement in approaches involving work outside of the community could be a distraction from the important work of organizing: "The big issue is that there is a risk that people will prioritize outside solutions or solutions. […] It is better for villagers to do things directly. If outsiders come in, people will have hope, and be drawn away from local struggle, and feel powerless to solve their own problems. They will think the solution lies in the hands of outsiders." Appealing to the United Nations was a distraction and a waste of time. Court

[71] Ian Baird, Geography Department, University of Wisconsin, personal communication, February 4, 2018.

actions and pressuring the Chinese government were unlikely to be effective. The Filipino activists would probably not do much to help with the Hengfu case. Media attention could lead to more repression. Communities building up their own savings funds could lead to division and weakness. Adrian would probably not play a very constructive role. The one useful thing NGOs could do, in his mind, was to find out about companies and provide information to communities to enable them to plan more effective responses – to make organizing more effective. While the Hengfu concessions posed an immediate threat and land continued to be cleared, and organizing would offer only a long-term solution, for Bob, there was no other solution.

The outsiders whose involvement in struggles against land grabs he could respect were those engaged in work at the grassroots level (especially grassroots organizing) but also, importantly, those who had a stake in the struggle and were committed to it. “It is really important for outsiders who want to help to be committed to the struggle”, he said. “They have to go to villages, stay with people, and be willing to get arrested if they do. If you have an NGO, you have to be willing to let it be shut down. If your commitment is to help the community, you won’t worry about that.” When at some point villagers are ready for outside ideas, they should come from outsiders who are committed to the struggle. He was dismissive of most people involved in resistance to the Hengfu concessions who were associated with NGOs not just because their work was irrelevant or counter-productive but also because, he said, they were not committed to the struggle they were supposed to be supporting. “NGOs don’t have a stake in the game. And they have their own agendas.”

Bob’s ideas about organizing implied a hyper-local geography, but also, paradoxically, a key role for himself, an Australian working in Malaysia. Organizing had to be done in specific ways and required a specific kind of person to carry it out. While there had been numerous previous

organizing efforts in Cambodia (including by Sophal, about whom I wrote in Chapter Three), he thought that none had really been effective. An approach to organizing, and the discipline required to do it properly, would have to be brought in from outside. He could help identify people from rural villages with the skills and other characteristics necessary to become effective organizers and train and guide them. He would work closely with "organizing mentors" like Samnang who would coach the organizers directly and live and work in villages alongside them, and these mentors would be able to take over his role over time. The organizers would be able to move to new villages in the future. "For now, Cambodians will organize when outsiders come in," he told me. "But over time, there will be a cadre of people who can do this. This has worked in other countries around the world."

Bob's approach was paradoxical in two other ways as well. First, he wanted to select sites where there was community interest in organizing, while recognizing that unorganized communities were unlikely to understand what organizing is, let alone have an interest in it. And second, he wanted to target places where there were actual or looming threats such as mining, hydropower dams, or ELCs; already, in another province where he was supporting organizing, when a company dropped two of its concessions, and one of the project villages was no longer in a concession, he decided to replace it with another village within the concession area. Grassroots organizing was local, but would not just be done anywhere.

I questioned Bob's assertion that the best way for organizing to happen in Cambodia was for him to lead it himself. From my interviews and reading I had encountered several cases in Thailand, Indonesia, and the Philippines in which organizing had been led by university students or recent graduates from the respective country, in some cases having links to the Communist

Party[72]. Was is not possible that intellectuals or elites would become conscientized and that they, not a foreigner like him and his cadre of organizers from rural villages, would take on organizing with the aim of building a movement? Bob replied that while they had in the past, student movements would no longer play this role. He rejected the idea that people not from the grassroots could be conscientized and engage in anything useful. "The important thing is doing the work. People may be inspired by ideology but not do the work, not apply the ideology at the grassroots level." And even in the case of people from the grassroots, what was needed, he said, was not ideas or ideology but commitment to work at the local level and put in the work that was required. Action should come first; starting with ideas or ideology was unlikely to lead anywhere, and people would be conscientized not through ideology but through their own experience.

Reflecting these ideas, Bob had specific notions about the NGOs that were working, or interested in working, on the Hengfu case. Quite unlike Jessa, Bob was not shy about pushing his ideas – and he tried to enroll Tom in doing so. Tom first learned about his plans for organizing with Samnang one day before a workshop organized by BDD and other NGOs was to be held, and he asked Tom to try to get the workshop called off. He told Tom that the NGOs were unlikely to work closely with communities and did not have the capacity to help them anyway. They did not have a stake in the struggle and would have their own agendas. Bob was concerned especially that the workshop would lock in roles for particular organizations that could cause problems for the organizing work. The workshop went ahead, but (partly because Tom and others took Bob's warning seriously) did not lock in any such roles. Later, as I wrote above, he asked Tom to try to convince Chan to keep BDD's work out of the villages where organizing was going to happen.

[72] Bachriadi (2010) seems to suggest such a trajectory in North Sumatra, where a former student leader, Henry Saragih, led efforts to organize peasants after being inspired by La Vía Campesina.

The work of BDD or other NGOs could undermine organizing work, and he wanted a space with no NGOs in which to work. He did not want NGOs identifying community leaders, calling people to workshops, or involving them in outside advocacy activities. He explained, “The problem is that there are leaders who aren’t doing a good job and are being supported in the wrong way. The problem isn’t that no one is doing work, but that the leaders are doing negative things.” The NGO that had agreed to support Bob also talked with Chan about keeping BDD’s activities out of those villages while discussing the possibility of routing funding for the organizing work through BDD.

In enacting his ideas and the geography they implied, Bob encountered friction: he could enact them fully. For one, though he thought BDD was ineffective, he could not work without them because he needed a mechanism through which an NGO could support his work. Also, BDD did not stay completely out of the eight villages where organizing activities were implemented, something with which Bob was not happy. People living in those villages continued to participate in NGO activities, such as workshops organized by BDD. Organizing also did not go completely according to plan. By early 2019, only five of eight original organizers remained, and Bob and Samnang judged only two of them to be performing acceptably. Political repression that increased across the country was also felt in the project area, and police surveillance and pressure from local authorities severely restricted the activities of the organizers and of the communities. Bob was unable to go to the villages himself because of the political situation. Though the organizing work continued, at one point Bob said that he was unsure what it would be possible to do in the communities.

Bob is a particularly striking example of an imagineer enacting ideas and geographies. He had very strongly held, coherent understandings of the role of change agents, organizing, and connecting that had clear geographical implications. They implied a geography of local actors

engaged with, and accessing ideas from, a single outside actor – himself. And he was able to enact them through the force of his own ideas, his ability to convince others like Samnang, the backing of an NGO funding his work, and the help of people like Tom and Chan.

Conclusion

More so than in the other two cases, the Hengfu case presented a set of competing ideas about how to deal with ELCs. Sophal's ideas were particularly dominant in the Pheapimex case, and those of John and others in PEN and allied groups in the HAGL case. But in the Hengfu case, Adrian, Angelo, and Bob all had divergent ideas. Adrian promoted BDD as the best hope for community-driven advocacy whereas Bob felt that BDD was too far removed from communities and not sufficiently committed to the struggle, in contrast to Samnang and the organizers. Angelo was the most removed from the case, but also the most interested in internationalizing it through the involvement of activists elsewhere in the region. It has been clear that Adrian, Angelo and Bob's divergent ideas have implied divergent geographies, including who is involved, who is at the center, and how people are linked.

The spatial imaginaries I have analyzed in this chapter (sub-thesis 1) include the ideas of Adrian, Angelo, and Bob, but also diverse ideas about land rights. In some cases, these imaginaries were specific ideas (such as discourses from the law) that people held alongside many others, while in others they constituted much broader systems of thought (such as Bob's ideas about organizing and resistance). The Filipinos' ideas about projecting their own movement internationally influenced who they linked with, making them interested in working with Cambodians. Other ideas shaped the geographies that imagineers enacted. Law-based discourses have likely led local Indigenous leaders to organize less extensive networks than they might have had they drawn on

internationally circulating Indigenous rights discourses. Adrian's ideas about community-driven advocacy shaped the advice he gave in organizing workshops and Skype calls, regarding, for example, whom to invite and how to manage their participation. For Angelo, ideas associated with the movements he was involved with in the Philippines led to a workshop on Chinese involvement in land grabs and links among regional movements. Bob's ideas about organizing and local approaches to dealing with ELCs and other threats led him to attempt to maintain an area free of NGOs for organizing to avoid linkages between community members and NGOs. Ideas about land rights and Indigenous rights could shape what land people struggle for, potentially leading them not to fight for land they consider to be state owned or not helping to fight to protect land in villages other than their own. In the case of some imaginaries, such as Indigenous rights, the geographies implied are not obvious (though it is not very difficult to identify the scale of peoples and their territories implied by internationally circulating Indigenous rights discourses). In other cases, the implied geographies may be more obvious. For example, when Chan said that he was interested in organizing people across the country to address the issue of ELCs, Adrian specifically advised an approach involving horizontal networking rather than building a "national platform"[73], because of the more desirable geographic outcomes he thought would result: the imaginaries Adrian deployed (the approach he suggested) reflected ideas about preferred geographies. In Bob's case, his spatial imaginaries, particularly his approach to organizing and desire for local communities to be the drivers of change, had the paradoxical effect of seemingly requiring the expertise of a foreigner: himself.

[73] Approaches involving horizontal networking might consist, for example, of communities in different parts of the country engaging in local actions to express solidarity with each other. A national platform might involve communities from around the country engaging together in a series of actions targeting national-level institutions.

While I did not specifically analyze them as such, it is worth calling attention to several technological effects related to resistance to the Hengfu concessions (sub-thesis 2). First, the various workshops, Skype calls, and other activities that happened within the context of the coalition both helped the coalition form and shaped it in ways that were beyond the control of those leading it. For example, these activities ensured a central role for BDD (who organized the workshops) and for Adrian and Tom (who organized the Skype calls). Only some of those involved in the struggle could join the Skype calls, and they would become more central to the coalition, while others who would continue to be equally active in the struggle remained on the periphery of the coalition. It was Bob's concern about the technological effects of workshops and other NGO-led activities, that they would lead to the locking in place of certain structures adverse to organizing, for example, or the empowerment of certain community leaders, that motivated him to try to keep NGOs out of the area where he was working. Communal land titling has also had identifiable technological effects, requiring new community structures and changing the nature of communities' struggles[74].

The imagineers on whom I have focused in this chapter (sub-thesis 3) are Adrian, Angelo, and Bob. Chan, Mala, Samnang, and others are also key imagineers, but I have not really examined their role as such here. Above, I summarized how imagineers' ideas have shaped how they have enrolled others in networks. It is important to note also how they have relied on their access to resources in doing so. For example, KARTA and other donors have funded BDD, allowing it to send people to villages in the Hengfu concession area and organize workshops bringing together

[74] Communal land titling (CLT) requires, for example, the establishment of a community committee that can be recognized as a legal entity by the Ministry of Interior, much as community forestry requires a community forestry committee, as discussed in Chapter Three. My observations in numerous sites in Cambodia suggested also that CLT can bog communities down in technical processes of drafting by-laws and mapping land use that distract them from their political struggles.

people from those villages and various NGO allies. Adrian has been able to enroll people through influence gained through a relationship with a funding organization, KARTA, and some of those who joined the Skype calls on the Hengfu case may have done so in part out of recognition of the access to KARTA that he could provide. Imagineers also encountered friction. The coalition was never able to take its direction from the communities, as Adrian wanted, because communities were dispersed and the coalition only engaged them through BDD. Also, over time, without Adrian involved to keep the coalition going, it gradually fell apart. Angelo tried to enroll the Cambodians in a regional effort to challenge Chinese involvement in land-grabbing, but they had other priorities, not least of which was dealing with the repressive environment in which they were operating, and that regional effort has not yet really materialized. Bob was not able to completely keep NGOs out of his organizing project area, as BDD and others continued to invite community members from the area to various events. Community leaders in Sambor were not able to enroll those who chose to register their own private land parcels into the community resistance project. Though (as noted in Chapter Two) it has not been my focus, I have observed some evidence of imagineers shaping others' ideas. Adrian seems to have shaped Chan's ideas about the role of grassroots communities in advocacy; that he helped BDD access funding from KARTA was an important factor. Bob appears to have influenced the thinking of others, including leaders of an NGO that would fund him, convincing them of the merits of organizing and of his particular approach to it. Indigenous leaders like Buntha and Sombath have also shaped other Cambodian Indigenous people's ideas about Indigenous rights.

I have paid considerable attention in this chapter to relational connections, which are important for the transmission of many of the spatial imaginaries I have examined in this dissertation, elucidating processes that lead to unevenness in access to ideas (sub-thesis 4). I

showed that spatial imaginaries have influenced the set of actors with whom people link. Nicole and Adrian approached Chan and BDD more-or-less as donors for whom Cambodian organizations doing the kind of work BDD was doing were possible recipients of funding. Angelo, at least, and probably others from AAP, IFSF, and GAIP, were interested in projecting the Philippine movement regionally and internationally, and were already thinking of Cambodia as a possible site to further that project before Chan and Tom first had contact with them. Making connections does not just happen, but rather requires work and often mediation. Using the example of Chan, I showed that where two actors are connected, it is often because one of them did work to connect with the other or because a third actor mediated their connection. On the one hand, unevenness results as some actors put work into making connections and others do not. On the other hand, it results when actors who are already connected with others become increasing connected through successive mediation of new connections, as Chan's initial connection to Nicole led to connections with Adrian, Angelo, and others. While I did not discuss it in any detail, as a key point of contact in Cambodia for the Filipinos, Chan provides a channel for Cambodians to access food sovereignty discourses of land grabs (a subject of Chapter Three), though because he does not put the work into accessing those discourses himself, the access he offers to others is limited. Unevenness in access to ideas can be seen in the case of certain Indigenous leaders who have had direct connections with regional Indigenous peoples' movements: through these connections they have had much greater access to international Indigenous rights discourses than have other Cambodian Indigenous leaders or, for example, communities in either the HAGL or Hengfu concession area. While people in these communities may accept the notion that there is state land in their areas where ELCs could operate and that their communities can only legitimately

claim certain types of land, Buntha, Sombath, and Kheang talk about Indigenous territories and the fact that the law itself enables ELCs.

Finally, in this chapter I devoted considerable attention to understanding processes of translation (sub-thesis 5). I showed that international discourses of Indigenous rights had reached the community in Sambor Village affected by the Hengfu concessions, but that they appeared in hybrid form. Powerful ideas about the rights of Indigenous peoples, including rights to self-determination and to their territories, had been reworked into ideas about Indigenous communities' rights to their village territories and to control their own livelihoods. However, I showed also that young Indigenous leaders such as Buntha and Sombath were working with discourses much closer to those circulating internationally. One way that translation appeared to happen was that those who had most direct access to the international discourses, like Sombath, felt that concepts such as "Indigenous territories" were too sensitive to talk about, and in translating them for others made them less so. Another was that those learning about the concepts, like Mala and Dara, did not fully understand the concepts presented to them and filled them with their own content – producing hybrids for their own use and that they passed on to others, talking, for example, about rights as "traditions".

In the final chapter that follows, I will bring all three cases together. Having presented the details of each case, I am now able to flesh out my five sub-theses more thoroughly.

SIX. CONCLUSION

Introduction

In this dissertation, I have focused on the role of translocal and transnational actors in land grab struggles. As I noted in Chapter One, such actors may not play significant direct roles in a given case. And even where they do play important roles, other factors may also be important to the trajectory of a struggle. In the HAGL case, for example, the company's financial woes certainly contributed to its calculus regarding the future of its concession. A single variable cannot explain everything. Nonetheless, as I have argued above, it is important to understand the role of translocal and transnational actors in resistance to land grabs and this role has received inadequate attention in the land grabs literature.

In studying the roles of outsiders (translocal or transnational actors) in resistance to land grabs, I have focused on how they shape the geographies of local land grab struggles. Practitioners may not pay attention to the geographies of struggles, and certainly would not use this terminology. Differences between the approaches of the two Americans I have studied – Bob's grassroots organizing and John's "follow the money" – might, for example, more commonly be understood in terms of the effectiveness of community action as compared to that of mechanisms to apply pressure to companies. But these differences can also usefully be understood in terms of geographies, building strong linkages within a community (Bob's approach) versus strong linkages between community leaders and NGOs (John's approach), as can differences in approaches more generally. Both John and Bob have enacted geographies in which their positions are central, and in that way are quite similar. Over the course of this dissertation, I have shown the value of making the geographies of struggles an object of study.

In all three of the cases that I studied, I found that outsiders had shaped the geographies of local struggles in significant ways. In the case of the Pheapimex concessions (Chapter Three), a Cambodian woman named Sophal – a leader of a Cambodian NGO and originally from another province – led the organization of a local community-based network that approximated the ideal of linked place-based networks. Other mostly Phnom Penh-based Cambodian and international actors supported a number of competing processes, contributing to the emergence of several sets of local actors with their own distinct territorialities and various linkages to national and international movements. In the case of the HAGL concessions (Chapter Four), a constellation of actors emerged that centered around John, his US-based NGO (PEN), and an allied Cambodian NGO (START), as they applied external pressure on the company and helped communities engage in a mediation process through the Office of the Compliance Advisor/Ombudsman (CAO) of the International Finance Corporation (IFC). In the case of the Hengfu concessions (Chapter Five), several competing geographies emerged, including one in which Bob played a central role and involving his grassroots organizing project; another in which Adrian, a consultant working for a Dutch donor agency, KARTA, tried to ensure that an emerging coalition took its lead from communities affected by the concessions; and yet another in which Cambodian actors joined the peripheries of various international projections of Philippine movements.

In none of the three case studies did the geographies really materialize through local place-based movements coming together organically in "convergence spaces" as is sometimes described in Political Geography (Routledge, 2003; Cumbers et al., 2008). Instead, connections were heavily mediated, often by actors (many of them from outside of Cambodia) who enrolled others in projects of resistance.

Ideas – about forests, rights, resistance and so on – have contributed to the emergence of these geographies. Ideas have shaped how individuals have interacted and linked with others or mediated connections among others, as well as what land people have struggled for. Where a link between ideas and the resulting geographies is discernable, or where ideas imply certain geographies, I have referred to the ideas as "spatial imaginaries". Ideas are an important means through which outsiders influence the geographies of local land grab struggles, and through which key individuals – "imagineers" (often, but not always, outsiders) – are also themselves influenced as they shape those geographies. Spatial imaginaries may sometimes circulate primarily through relational connections (Tarrow, 2011), and unevenness in such connections may result in unevenness in access to the imaginaries.

Through the stories in the three preceding chapters I have provided empirical material through which to explore these points in detail. Now, in the sections that follow, I will draw on all of these stories to develop these points more systematically.

Spatial imaginaries and the geographies of land grab struggles

My first sub-thesis is that spatial imaginaries can influence the geographies of local land grab struggles. As I noted in Chapter Two, it is well known that ideas can shape struggles (Tucker, ed. 1978; Gramsci, 1971; Foucault, 1972 (1969), 1977 (1975)). What I am calling attention to are the material effects that ideas can have in terms of the geographies of struggles, in particular, cases where geographies are somehow implied (in a non-deterministic way) by the ideas themselves. My use of the term "spatial imaginary" to refer to such ideas is intended to highlight the way ideas which make no direct reference to geography may have important geographic implications. The concept of ideas implying geographies is not new and is familiar from literature on frames (Snow

& Benford, 1992; Benford & Snow, 2000), repertoires of contention (Tarrow, 2011), ideas about organization (Tarrow, 2011), and scales (Cohen & Bakker, 2014). I do not use the term to signify a bounded category of idea, such that an idea either is or is not a spatial imaginary, but rather to signify a quality that ideas may have to a greater or lesser degree. Empirically, I encountered numerous ideas that implied particular geographies. They included framings (including framing of land grabs or land grab struggles in terms of forestry and food sovereignty discourses), ideas about geographies (including territorialities and ideas about a provincial border), abstract concepts (including philosophies about movements, understandings of land grabs, and discourses of land rights), approaches (including the "follow the money" approach and grassroots organizing), and spatial imaginaries of movements (including regional and international projections of the Philippine struggle).

The spatial imaginaries that I have examined varied in terms of how specific or all-encompassing they are: whether, for example, they lie as one of many among other ideas in people's minds or are more like overall systems of thought or worldviews. In the case of the Pheapimex concessions, the forestry framing competed with territorialities and ideas about the provincial border, as well as ideas about organizing, empowerment of women, and active nonviolence, among others. In the case of the Hengfu concessions, discourses about Indigenous land rights from Cambodian law competed with translations of internationally circulating discourses of Indigenous rights and support for different political parties. Ideas I heard from John and others in PEN, on the other hand, appear to reflect a more-or-less coherent worldview that has been shaped by the "follow the money" approach but that also helped to shape that approach. They included the imperative to prioritize helping individual communities over achieving broader policy agendas; the recognition of diversity of perspective within communities; the notion that

communities should be presented with a range of options, each with its own geographic implications, that might appeal to different groups within communities; the idea that communities should be allowed to make their own decisions; the preference for pursuing international leverage points; and ideas about movement building and linking with movements. And the ideas I heard from Bob seemed to reflect an all-encompassing philosophy of change. They included the ideas that progressive social change will only come about through organizing; that other forms of NGO engagement were objectionable because they undermined organizing or are at best ineffective; that the only acceptable involvement of outsiders in a given struggle is by those who have a stake in it and are committed to it; and that what is important is not ideas but local action and commitment to work at the local level.

The spatial imaginaries that I have examined have influenced the geographies of land struggles in different ways. First, a number of them shape, or could shape, how people link with others. In the case of the Pheapimex concessions, I showed how a forestry framing enabled individuals to see the value in linking with people from other villages on the other side of a forested landscape from their own villages. In the same case, ideas about territoriality and a provincial border influenced the extent to which people from Kompong Chhnang and Pursat provinces wanted to work together. Ideas about food sovereignty might have encouraged farmers affected by an ELC to link with others dealing with dumping of agro-industrial products, had people had access to those ideas. In the case of the HAGL concessions, I showed how a belief in the efficacy of engaging the CAO mechanism contributed to community members not seeking links with other communities in the country. In the case of the Hengfu concessions, I showed how certain Filipinos' ideas about projecting a Philippine movement regionally and internationally could interest them in linking with Cambodians: they saw Cambodia as a possible site to recruit activists into that

project. Below, I will discuss other spatial imaginaries that have been important for shaping the connections through which actors have accessed ideas.

Second, a number of the spatial imaginaries have shaped the geographies that imagineers enact. Sometimes, these imaginaries have implied special roles for experts, such as the imagineers themselves, including John and Bob. I will discuss spatial imaginaries in the context of imagineers more below.

Third, a number of the spatial imaginaries have shaped the land for which people struggle. I showed how the forestry framing encouraged people to fight for forested land, something communities often do not do in Cambodia. Ideas about territoriality and the provincial border led people to conclude that their struggle with the Pheapimex concessions was over when land within their own area was secured. By delegitimizing ELCs and highlighting the social function of land, food sovereignty-based discourses might have led people to pay more attention to the land that Pheapimex had cleared but was no longer using. I showed that law-based ideas about land rights and Indigenous rights could lead to people not fighting for land because they consider it to be state land, and that internationally-circulating discourses of Indigenous rights would suggest fighting to protect land in other villages that are part of a larger Indigenous territory rather than being concerned only about land in one's own village.

The geographies implied by ideas have been more evident or explicit in some cases than in others. Some ideas have suggested quite obvious blueprints for organization, such as ideas about territoriality. For other ideas, the implied geography has been less readily discernable. The forestry framing is one example of the latter, though the associated scale of the forested landscape is not that difficult to identify. Ideas about Indigenous land rights are another, though again the associated scales of peoples and their territories can be recognized. Food sovereignty and related

discourses are a third, though these discourses have been used fairly explicitly, for example by La Vía Campesina (LVC), to suggest both local action and world-wide linkages to address global problems (Rosset, 2013).

One question is the degree to which actors are aware of the geographies implied by their ideas; another is the degree to which their spatial imaginaries are shaped by their ideas about the kinds of geographies they would like to see enacted. For LVC, it appears that the aim of uniting peasants worldwide, implied by food sovereignty discourses, is one factor that makes these discourses attractive to members. When Adrian recommended to Chan, an NGO leader involved in the resistance to the Hengfu concessions, that he encourage horizontal solidarities rather than organize a national platform if he wanted to challenge the system of ELCs, his ideas about the preferred approach seem to have been driven by his ideas about desired geographical outcomes. Though it does not appear to have been the case for Sophal, one could imagine people adopting a forestry framing because they know that it could encourage linkages among communities in a way that other framings could not. Sometimes, the imaginaries that actors deploy whose geographies are only implicit, and their more explicit ideas about desired geographical outcomes, might emerge together through entangled processes. But there are certainly times when people adopt ideas without awareness or consideration of the geographies they imply, or when there is mismatch between the ideas actors espouse and the geographies they would like to see materialize. In the case of LVC, for example, there is mismatch between the movement's desire to issue statements to a global audience or to engage the United Nations (the approach) – which cannot be done by peasants alone, and requires experts like Jessa – and its aim to be a movement of peasants (the desired geography). In the case of Bob, there is mismatch between his approach to organizing (which requires the expertise of a foreigner, himself) and his desire for local communities to be

the drivers of change. Technologies (discussed next) may exacerbate such mismatches as actors lose some control over the approaches they set in motion and thus over the resulting geographies.

In calling attention to the role of spatial imaginaries in land grab struggles, I make two separate contributions to the literature on resistance to land grabs. The first is to call attention to the role of ideas in shaping the geographies of resistance and to elucidate the processes involved, and the second is to call attention to role played by ideas in the involvement of outsiders in land grab struggles.

I also make an important contribution to Political Geography: broadening the concept of spatial imaginaries to make the point that a wider range of ideas have specific geographic implications, and can thus have real, material effects, than is often recognized. I broaden the concept in two main ways. First, I expand the type of idea that can be considered to be an imaginary. For Jessop (2012b), imaginaries are fairly specific things: they are mental maps that make sense of, and simplify, the world. For Driver (2005), they are something that is imagined. For some, they have to be collectively held ideas (Davoudi, 2018; Said, 2003; Boudreau, 2007), though for others they do not (Wolford, 2004). For some they must be taken for granted (Davoudi, 2018). For me, such restrictions are unnecessary. Spatial imaginaries may be framings, abstract concepts, approaches, and more. Second, I use "spatial imaginaries" to refer to ideas for which the geography is implied, not just for ideas with spatial meaning or for which the geography is explicit. In contrast, Watkins (2015), for example, claims that geographers have identified just three main spatial imaginaries: places, idealized spaces, and spatial transformations. He specifically asserts that Anderson's (2006) "imagined community" is not a spatial imaginary because its constitution is more sociological than spatial. Jessop et al. (2008) identify four spatial imaginaries, comprising four different ways of thinking about space (territory, place, scale, and network), a framework that

has been picked up by others as well (Davies, 2012). I suggest that Anderson's imagined community *should* be thought of as a spatial imaginary because of the geographies it strongly implies. Grassroots organizing should also: the approach definitely implies a geography, though does not make geography as explicit as a "network imaginary" might. Still, while all kinds of ideas have geographic effects, I want to reserve the concept of spatial imaginary for those ideas for which the geographies are somehow implied by the ideas themselves, in a non-deterministic way. The desire to get rich should *not* be thought of as a spatial imaginary, for example. While it may certainly lead to people linking with others, it could lead to all kinds of different linkages (with a local NGO worker, with a government official, with a wealthy relative) and thus different geographies. A belief that access to credit is essential to secure rural livelihoods is similarly not a spatial imaginary. It might lead to organizing people to build up their savings, linking them to banks, or facilitating land titling, for example.

I have demonstrated the value in expanding the concept. The forestry framing had real material, geographic effects, shaping how a local network formed and the land for which people struggled. Understandings of Indigenous rights based on Cambodian law enabled people to accept the system of ELCs in principle and focus on their own communities rather than linking with others. The "follow the money" and grassroots organizing approaches implied specific roles for foreign experts. Using the concept in a more limited way, as Jessop and Watkins do, we would miss important dynamics such as these.

There is precedent for broadening the concept. For one, scholars often identify Jessop et al.'s (2008) four spatial imaginaries (territory, place, scale, and network) in cases in which they are only implied. For example, McFarlane (2009) suggests that when activists build scale models of houses they are deploying a spatial imaginary of a particular scale, the home. Also, Jessop

(2012a:10) describes the four spatial imaginaries as "reference points for spatial imaginaries" and points to a diverse range of imaginaries and practices (seemingly conflating the two) which can be located within them: secession, peasant wars, and international solidarity movements, to name a few.

Technological effects

My second sub-thesis is that spatial imaginaries can sometimes lead to decisions that result in "technological" effects in the Foucauldian sense (Behrent, 2013): pathways are established that limit actors' options and shape geographies in ways that those who set them in motion cannot easily control. Through such processes, spatial imaginaries may have particularly significant material effects. As just noted, the result may be a significant mismatch between the approaches actors use and the geographical outcomes they would like to see. Technological effects do not result only from spatial imaginaries; the point is that one way in which spatial imaginaries have effects, particularly in terms of the geographies that imagineers enact, is through technological effects. Other authors have written about technological effects of spatial imaginaries without identifying them as such. Keck and Sikkink (1998), for example, note the way that human rights approaches privilege lawyers, which may be an effect that is not intended at all. Here, I am calling attention to these effects, making the link between spatial imaginaries and technological effects more explicit, and suggesting that these effects are important and worthy of more attention.

In the preceding chapters I examined two examples of technological effects. The first was in the context of community forestry, in the Pheapimex case, in which I demonstrated two main technological effects. Community forestry committee members and other community forestry leaders seemed to require community forests to justify their positions, and in their focus on

community forests, ignored important impacts of the company's operations (for example, on labor rights). Community forestry also required the involvement of Forestry officials and led to relations in which community members seemed to accept subordination to those officials. The second was the CAO process. There, the decision to engage the CAO determined, to a large extent, which villages could be part of the process that unfolded. In a less deterministic way, it led to the election of representatives in each village and the marginalization of other existing leaders and to the involvement of representative NGOs. It required an organization like PEN to help apply pressure on the company and navigate the CAO process. It entailed ground rules, which, perhaps more than anything else, limited communities' other options as long as they participated in the CAO process. And it resulted in relations among certain actors (such as the community representatives and representative NGOs) and not with others (such as other communities). There were also other technologies that I did not analyze as such. In the Hengfu case, the various workshops, Skype calls, and documentation that happened within the context of the coalition had various technological effects, ensuring central roles for Adrian and Chan's organization, BDD, and defining actors who participated in the activities and those who did not. It was Bob's concern about the technological effects of workshops and other NGO-led activities, that they would lead to certain structures adverse to organizing being locked in place or to the empowerment of certain community leaders, for example, that motivated him to try to maintain an area free from NGOs where he would undertake grassroots organizing. Communal land titling (CLT) has also had technological effects, demanding, for example, new community structures and a community focus on meeting government requirements.

In the case of both community forestry and the CAO process, decisions made to engage certain mechanisms were conditioned by spatial imaginaries (in particular, the forestry framing

and approaches to land grabs). The mechanisms, in turn, imposed requirements on the actors involved. But technological effects happened in other ways as well. Actors thinking about how best to make use of the mechanisms also made their own independent decisions, and those decisions – such as the decision to have two representatives per village to participate in the CAO process – were often themselves conditioned by the previous decision to engage the mechanism in the first place.

A friend familiar with the HAGL case claimed to me that while the transnational processes involving engagement with the CAO were NGO-driven, they were not necessarily preventing linkages with other movements from forming. However, given the analysis I have presented here, we would expect the technologies being deployed in those processes – meetings among community representatives, negotiations with the company, the issuing of press releases, the mapping of community lands – to limit the range of options available to the various actors involved. And, in fact, that seems to be the case, as certain actors have become more central, others more peripheral, and linking with movements elsewhere less of a possibility.

Imagineers' spatial imaginaries and how they enroll others in networks

My third sub-thesis is that spatial imaginaries of influential individuals ("imagineers") are sometimes especially important, shaping how they enroll others in networks. I use the term "imagineer", following Routledge et al. (2006), to capture the empirical finding that in all three cases there were individual actors who had outsized roles in shaping the geographies of assemblages. (Some might commonly be described as "organizers".) However, while Routledge and his colleagues write about networks being enacted or translated by imagineers attempting to "ground" network imaginaries (Routledge, 2008; Routledge et al., 2006, 2007), I am calling

attention to ways a more diverse range of spatial imaginaries and ideas have influenced imagineers as they enroll others in networks.

The concept of "imagineer" provides one way of thinking about power relations within land grab struggles. While it is important to recognize that rank-and-file community members have agency, in all three cases there have been relatively powerful individuals who have been able to shape the geographies of the struggles they have been involved in more than others, and their own spatial imaginaries have been key to how they have done so.

As noted above, I have shown how spatial imaginaries have shaped the geographies that imagineers enact. The forestry framing influenced how Sophal went about organizing a local network: bringing together people from communities around a forested landscape. Ideas about territoriality and the provincial border, too, shaped how Sophal (based in Kompong Chhnang Province), and Rona (a community leader in Pursat Province), went about organizing networks, as Sophal stayed within Kompong Chhnang, and then only certain places within the province, and Rona stayed within Pursat, more or less avoiding one commune there. I showed that John's ideas about strategies led him to suggest the CAO mechanism as an option for communities and to facilitate linkages between NGOs, the CAO, and communities affected by the HAGL concessions, but not other grassroots actors. I showed that ideas about Indigenous rights have apparently contributed to Indigenous leaders' ideas about movement building, as they think about the rights of peoples and engage in a more long-term effort to shape the relationship between Indigenous peoples and the national government. Law-based discourses of land rights, on the other hand, have led local Indigenous leaders to organize less extensive networks. Adrian's ideas led him to help bring together various actors involved in resistance to the Hengfu concession and shape the coalition that resulted. Bob's ideas about organizing and local approaches to dealing with ELCs

and other threats led him to attempt to keep an area free of NGOs in which to do organizing, to avoid linkages between community members and NGOs and the distractions that might bring. And the ideas of a Filipino activist from the International Food Sovereignty Federation (IFSF) named Angelo about Philippine movements led to a workshop on Chinese involvement in land grabs and links with movements in the Mekong Region. It is not just that actors like John are influential, but that they have particular ideas about what needs to be done and they put them into practice by enrolling others in networks. And in a less obvious effect of power, the ideas – and their geographic implications – of actors who may not appear to be powerful, like Sophal, may prevail.

In most of these cases, imagineers have relied on their own access to resources in enacting networks. Sophal used resources from her NGO's donors to fund organizing work and bring people together in meetings. Rona's organizing work was funded by Jessa's organization, through BRIDGE (the group of grassroots activists). PEN and the affiliated Cambodian NGO, START, are both well-resourced, and their funds have paid for visits to villages to hold community meetings and elect community representatives as well as to organize meetings in the provincial town, bringing together community representatives and representative NGOs. KARTA and other donors have funded BDD, allowing BDD to send people to villages in the Hengfu concession area and organize workshops bringing together people from those villages and various NGO allies. Even where NGO funds have not been used, actors have sometimes been able to enroll people through influence gained through relationships with funding organizations. Some of those who joined the Skype calls that Adrian helped organize to discuss the Hengfu case may have done so in part because they recognized that Adrian had access to KARTA, which funded some of their organizations and was a potential donor for others.

The imagineers have encountered friction resulting from the agency of other actors. In the Pheapimex case, Sophal was not able to work in some villages where community leaders rejected her leadership. In the HAGL case, PEN encountered friction in the form of community representatives taking advantage of their positions rather than helping to bring about the inclusive community participation that PEN hoped for, and representative NGOs not doing the careful organizing work they had agreed to do. In the Hengfu case, Bob was not able to maintain an area free of NGOs for the grassroots organizing project, and BDD and others continued to invite community members from the area to their events. At a more local level, community leaders were not able to enroll large sections of the community into the resistance project, especially those who chose to reach accommodation with the companies by registering their own private land parcels (which through registration were, in theory at least, excised from the concessions) and abandoning the effort to protect the communities' communal land.

My focus has been on imagineers enrolling others in networks, and I have not examined in much detail how they shape other actors' ideas. When actors show evidence of being influenced by imagineers, it is difficult to ascertain how much they have really been convinced, and how lasting their new ideas will be. As I noted in Chapter Two, other actors may follow the direction of imagineers even if they are not completely convinced by their ideas, because of the resources they wield. Still, it is worth noting some examples where imagineers appear to have shaped others' ideas. Adrian seems to have convinced Chan of the importance of approaches to advocacy that ensure a central role for grassroots communities. Jessa has shaped ideas within La Vía Campesina, as someone who helps to write for them. John appears to have influenced people in PEN and START, and probably other organizations as well, through his promotion of "follow the money" and other ideas, and I found general support among those most directly involved in the CAO-

mediated negotiations (community representatives and members of representative NGOs) for the approach taken. Bob has influenced the thinking of people in the NGO that would fund his organizing project, soundly convincing them of the merits of organizing and, specifically, his approach to it. Indigenous community members have clearly internalized translated versions of international discourses of Indigenous rights to which Indigenous leaders introduced them. Some of these imagineers have been particularly convincing on their own, but their access to resources has likely helped some push their ideas. John's deployment of resources certainly played a role in generating interest in the "follow the money" approach. Transmission of ideas by imagineers has also sometimes been enabled by conditions beyond their control; the enactment of the Cambodian Land Law, for example, paved the way for the construction of the concept of Indigenous peoples in Cambodia (Baird, 2011) and thus possibilities for Indigenous leaders to talk about the rights of Indigenous peoples.

The outsized roles played by individuals like Sophal, John, and Bob – that Sophal was a key actor in the organization of the local community network (WIN) and that John and Bob came in with their own ideas about what to do and pushed them – are readily apparent. It is not, however, just that these individuals are influential and are promoting their own ideas and approaches. It is also that those ideas and approaches have particular implications for the geographies these individuals enact: for example, for whether strong linkages are built within communities or between community leaders and NGOs, or whether certain actors play central roles or not. Key here is bringing the usefulness of understanding spatial imaginaries (for which I made the case above) into understanding the involvement of influential individuals.

I am again making two contributions to the land grabs literature here. First, I am calling attention to the role of individual actors in resistance to land grabs, in particular in enrolling people

in networks, and thus to unequal power relations in processes of network formation. While the role of individuals gets some attention in the literature on resistance to land grabs (see, for example, Baird, 2017), there is a strong tendency to emphasize collective agency (Alonso-Fradejas, 2015; Martiniello, 2015; Rocheleau, 2015). Second, building on a point made in a previous section above, that ideas are important to the role played by outsiders in land grab struggles, I am calling attention to the way these influential actors enact spatial imaginaries in enrolling actors in networks.

I also make another important contribution to Political Geography: broadening the concept of "imagineers". In particular, I identify as imagineers a broader range of individuals acting at different levels than have Routledge or others. Routledge and his colleagues have focused on imagineers with global imaginations who have attempted to enact global networks like People's Global Action (PGA) (Routledge, 2008; Routledge et al., 2006, 2007; Cumbers et al., 2008). McFarlane (2009) writes about imagineers mobilizing people into another international network, Slum Dwellers' International (SDI). In contrast, I have shown that imagineers may enact much more mundane spatial imaginaries, which may not be network imaginaries at all: for example, the territory of an NGO or a provincial border. And while these other scholars have focused on transnational imagineers, I have highlighted the roles of many translocal actors (Sophal, Chan, Rona, Someth[75], and numerous indigenous leaders) and even local actors (Dina, Mala, Sary, and Pang) as imagineers. However, while broadening the concept, we can still retain analytical precision. An imagineer should be guided by a spatial imaginary in enrolling others in a network. Someone who draws on a forestry framing but does not enact a network would not be an imagineer. Nor would someone who organizes people into a network based on their party affiliation. The two

[75] Executive director of START, a Cambodian NGO that played an important role in the HAGL case.

elements, enacting networks and being guided by a spatial imaginary in doing so, must both be present. And party affiliation would not be considered to be a spatial imaginary because it (ordinarily) does not imply any particular geography.

Expanding the concept of imaginer helped me to demonstrate how a wide range of actors have enacted geographies of resistance based on their imaginaries, with material consequences. John and Bob enacted very different geographies, in both cases with themselves in central positions. Among translocal imagineers, Sophal and Rona organized local networks, and helped people see the struggle against the Pheapimex concessions in terms of their own territorialities. Chan provided a link to Philippine movements and ideas circulating within them. Indigenous leaders introduced discourses of Indigenous rights that motivated communities in the area of the Hengfu concessions to hold out for more of their land than they might otherwise have done. I have described interactions between local, translocal, and transnational imagineers, and highlighted tensions between imagineers. Tensions were particularly clear in Sophal's relationship with Rona as well as her frustration with other (Phnom Penh-based) actors piggybacking on the network she organized locally.

Unevenness in access to external ideas

My fourth sub-thesis is that uneven processes through which ideas are transmitted result in unevenness in access to external ideas. This may seem obvious, but it is not sufficiently recognized in the literature. Too often there is an emphasis on the circulation of ideas, and not enough on the lack of circulation; the "acting in the network" approach (Routledge, 2008), specifically involving tracing networks and circulations through them, is a particularly good example of this. This sub-thesis is essentially a statement about gatekeeping, with a focus on access to externally circulating

ideas: gatekeeping that happens because only certain channels for flow of ideas exist and because information does not flow automatically through those channels, but, rather, work is required.

Fundamental to this sub-thesis is the importance of relational connections for the transfer of ideas. Unevenness in indirect or non-relational connections is certainly a source of unevenness in access to some ideas. But for many of the key ideas that I have studied, key actors in communities or NGOs have not accessed the ideas through such connections, and transmission has been through relational connections instead. It is these relational connections (or the absence of them) and unevenness in them has been my focus here; I have been less concerned with documenting the transmission of ideas through them, or the extent to which actors pick up ideas to which they have access. Also, while I recognize that these relational connections may be important in other ways, such as for collaboration and joint action, those have not been my focus.

Though there are likely to be others, I have particularly examined two main sources of unevenness in these relational or embodied connections. The first is spatial imaginaries: in particular, the way that spatial imaginaries influence the other actors to whom a given actor connects, which I have discussed already but highlight again here. Different spatial imaginaries imply different logics of connection, with different possibilities for who can connect. Both Adrian and Nicole, who introduced Adrian to Chan, approached Chan and BDD more or less from the standpoint of donors for whom Cambodian organizations doing the kind of work BDD was doing were possible recipients of funding. John and PEN's focus was Cambodia, they were looking for a case where there were significant potential international pressure points, and they were willing to approach communities uninvited. Jessa had selected Cambodia as a site where her organization, which focuses on research and policy advocacy, could ground its work. These logics of connection all made these actors open to linking with certain Cambodian actors involved in these cases. LVC,

on the other hand, had no particular interest in working in Cambodia aside from its engagements with its single member there, closing off possibilities of linking with most of the Cambodian actors involved in these cases.

Non-interventionism, a stance that I encountered among some LVC members and allies, and that appears to be widespread among such groups, is a spatial imaginary (or a logic of connection arising from a spatial imaginary) that is worthy of particular mention for the uneven effects that result from it. One LVC ally in the US told me, "We don't drop in like Indiana Jones. Our style is to work some place when we are asked by a community. Communities decide where we work." Another LVC ally in Europe encouraged me to study the ethics of groups like PEN going to work in villages without being invited by villagers. The principled stances evidenced in both cases contrast that of PEN: that what is ethical is to help communities get their land back if there is a possibility of doing so. These two logics of connection result in different possibilities for connecting with specific Cambodian actors. In particular, non-interventionism makes connection with many Cambodian actors unlikely, except for those who are best at connecting.

A second source of unevenness on which I have focused is the work that goes into connecting. I examined Chan's connections in particular, but could also have written similar stories about others. As I noted in the previous chapter, connection does not just happen. Where two actors are connected, it is often because one of them put in work to connect with the other or because a third mediated their connection. Adrian, in particular, put work into connecting with Chan and also mediating connections between him and others. Unevenness results as some actors put work into making connections and others do not. Additional unevenness results when actors who are already connected with others become increasingly connected through successive mediation of new

connections, as Chan's initial connection to Nicole led to connections with Adrian, Angelo, and others.

In the context of the struggle against the Pheapimex concessions, I examined how ideas flow through relational connections. Jessa, a trusted advisor of La Vía Campesina, worked closely with BRIDGE, a group of grassroots activists, including many from the Pheapimex concession area. I showed that BRIDGE members did not access some key aspects of the food sovereignty discourses of land grabs from Jessa, in part because she did not want to impose an agenda on them. (In fact, she had other agendas in working with BRIDGE, such as enabling community-based actors to further their own aims without the intervention of NGOs.) Also, members of BRIDGE did not ask her about these discourses. One BRIDGE member, Maly, said, "We don't really understand what we should ask her." Work is needed not just to make connections, but also to make use of them or for ideas to flow through them.

In the previous section I wrote about the imposition of ideas by imagineers, but here it is access to ideas, through relational connections, that is of interest. I am particularly concerned with access to internationally circulating discourses, such as discourses of Indigenous rights, food sovereignty approaches to land grabs, and so on. These discourses are sometimes described as though their circulation were nearly universal (see, for example, Desmarais, 2007), but, in fact, they can be found among certain actors in certain places, and not among others – with significant consequences for movements. An important reason that they do not exist in certain places, I suggest, is that actors do not have access to them. I showed that, not having access to discourses positioning land grabs within critiques of food and agricultural systems that circulate within LVC and among its allies, groups involved in the struggle against the Pheapimex concessions never framed their struggle in terms of access to quality food. One leader from the area (Rona) argued

in a national workshop that ELCs are good in principle and should be granted in order to make use of unused land and provide jobs for local people, something one steeped in food sovereignty discourses would be highly unlikely to argue. Certain Indigenous leaders have had much greater access to international Indigenous rights discourses than have communities in either the HAGL or Hengfu concession area, and thinking in terms of the rights of peoples seems to have motivated them to engage in movement-building work. People in those communities, on the other hand, may accept the notion that there is state land in their area where ELCs could operate without negatively impacting them and that their communities can only legitimately claim certain types of (non-state) land – limiting the potential scale of their resistance. Of course, actors may have access to ideas and choose not to use them, perhaps finding them irrelevant or inapplicable to their situation, but my point is that access is important.

Cambodia is in some ways very well connected. PEN, a particularly competent organization capable of achieving significant impacts with relation to land grabs, which it has made one of its main focuses, has a greater presence in Cambodia than anywhere else in the world. Global Witness, an important actor globally on land grabs, has also had a significant presence in Cambodia, more so than in most countries. Cambodia is one of a small number of countries to have an office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights, and the office has not only monitored land grab cases and raised concerns with the Cambodian government but also ensured that global UN bodies are well-informed of the situation in Cambodia with respect to land grabs. Cambodian groups are also relatively well-connected to international Indigenous peoples' movements, though they remain a bit peripheral to them. But when it comes to peasant movements, in particular, Cambodians are extremely unconnected. Jessa is one of just a few links between Cambodians and LVC, but many key Cambodians connected to her (like Maly) have not put work

into accessing peasant movement ideas through her. Various NGOs allied with LVC have less presence in Cambodia than in other countries in the region, including FIAN (Food First Information and Action Network), Friends of the Earth, and (until recently) GRAIN. Chan is now one of a few key Cambodian contacts for the Alliance of Asian Peasants (AAP), another important peasant movement network, but he has not put work into accessing peasant movement ideas from them. These ideas are reaching few Cambodians involved in land grab struggles.

While it may be obvious to practitioners that connections, and consequently access to external ideas, are uneven, it is likely that many do not recognize how they themselves contribute to this unevenness. This is particularly relevant for those "outsiders" who have the greatest geographic reach, those who are pre-inclined to link with some local actors but not others, or those who take non-interventionist stances or the position that "we will help if they ask". For example, those involved in a geographically extensive movement (like LVC or AAP), who are focused on building and strengthening their membership, may not sufficiently appreciate how others are effectively excluded from the web of relationships their movement entails. Those who put work into making connections, while those they link with do not, may also not appreciate the extent to which they determine who ends up connected and who does not. With the insights presented here, practitioners may see greater value in helping to make connections, and those already connected may see value in sharing a greater diversity of ideas that those they are linked to may not know to ask about.

I am making two contributions to the land grabs literature here. First, I am calling attention to the question of access to ideas. While some scholars have identified unevenness in ideas about land grabs, they have generally paid less attention to access to ideas as a factor explaining that unevenness (Mamanova, 2015; Larder, 2015; Castellanos-Navarrete & Jansen, 2015; Alonso-

Fradejas, 2015; Brent, 2015). Second, I am calling attention to unevenness in connections of transnational actors to different local places. Borras (2008) has written about the uneven reach of LVC, but has treated this as a question of uneven distribution of members rather than unevenness in LVC's connections to different places, as I do here.

In calling attention to unevenness in access to externally circulating ideas, I make three other important contributions to Political Geography. First, I am highlighting the importance of paying attention to local actors' access to externally circulating ideas; often there is an emphasis instead on co-production of ideas within networks (Cumbers et al., 2008; Featherstone, 2008). Such attention is found in the policy mobilities literature, but less with reference to movements (Cochrane & Ward, 2012; McCann & Ward, 2012). Secondly, recognizing the importance of relational connections to the flow of ideas (McFarlane, 2009; Cumbers et al., 2008; Routledge, 2008), I am calling attention to unevenness in such connections (Bosco, 2001; Lindell, 2011). Again, this receives particular attention in the policy mobilities literature, with regards to individual technocrats or transfer agents who facilitate information transfers (Larner and Laurie, 2010; McCann, 2011). Third, I highlight specific factors that influence the unevenness of connections and the flow of ideas through them. While the policy mobilities literature emphasizes the agency of technocrats (Larner and Laurie, 2010; McCann, 2011), it is important to consider the spatial imaginaries of actors who might potentially connect, as well as mediation (Lindell, 2011) and the work put into connecting and making use of connections (Routledge, 2008; McFarlane, 2009).

Interrogating unevenness in access to external ideas aids in understanding resistance to land grabs. For example, ideas circulating internationally within Indigenous and peasant

movements shape how people make sense of land grabs and their options in powerful ways. Yet those ideas have uneven reach, because of the factors just mentioned.

Translation processes

My fifth sub-thesis is that translation processes contribute to unevenness in transmission of ideas. Access to ideas does not just either happen or not happen. It is not just a matter of gatekeeping and connection, but also of translation. Individuals may translate ideas as they access them for themselves, perhaps through incomplete understanding of the ideas they encounter or because they think the translation is somehow better than the original. But they may also translate ideas for others, with the result that the ideas those actors have access to are hybrids.

I examined translation in the context of discourses of Indigenous rights. International discourses of Indigenous rights had reached the community in Sambor Village affected by the Hengfu concessions, but they appeared in hybrid form[76]. Powerful ideas about the rights of Indigenous peoples, including rights to self-determination and to their territories, had been reworked into ideas about Indigenous communities' rights to their village territories and to control their own livelihoods. On the other hand, I found that young Indigenous leaders such as Buntha and Sombath – operating at national level – were working with discourses much closer to those circulating internationally. One way that translation appears to have happened was that those who had most direct access to the international discourses, like Sombath, felt that concepts such as "Indigenous territories" were too sensitive to talk about, and in translating them for others substituted less sensitive content. Another was that those learning about the concepts, like Mala (a

[76] While, as noted previously, international discourses of Indigenous rights may first have reached Cambodia via NGOs (Baird, 2011), my focus here is on is the pathways through which the most "authentic" translations of international discourses of Indigenous rights circulating within international Indigenous peoples' movements appear to have reached Cambodian Indigenous peoples' movements – through Cambodian Indigenous leaders.

community leader in Sambor) and Dara (an Indigenous leader from a neighboring province who spent time with the community in Sambor), did not fully understand the concepts when they accessed them themselves, and filled them with their own content – producing hybrids that they used themselves and passed on to others.

There are other examples of translation that I did not analyze as such. Jessa, for example, thoroughly understands internationally circulating food sovereignty discourses of land grabs, as one who has helped to produce them. But in conveying those discourses to members of BRIDGE, the group of grassroots activists, she presented individual pieces of the discourse separately. "They want secure rights to land, control over seeds, social services, access to water," she told me. "All these are food sovereignty. They don't use that word." She also did not present BRIDGE a critique of capitalism, which in many ways is central to food sovereignty discourses of land grabs (LVC, 2007); she thought that it would not be well received given Cambodia's experience with the genocidal Communist Khmer Rouge regime. Members of BRIDGE whom I interviewed understood individual pieces that Jessa had presented, but not the overarching concepts, and they seemed to have missed the usefulness of these concepts for thinking about land grabs.

Translation thus contributes to unevenness in access to ideas. Even where connections exist and transmission of ideas happens, access to internationally circulating discourses may still be out of reach.

A methodological contribution

One reason that insufficient attention has been paid to the diverse ways in which translocal and transnational actors influence land grab struggles is likely that studying the roles of such actors is not easy to do. It requires multi-sited approaches and more than superficial relationships with

actors in different sites. Various tendencies within Political Geography also work against adequately addressing the role of translocal and transnational actors. For example, there is a tendency to study place-based movements and their networks and more local interactions or relations among subaltern actors, and a tendency not to focus on NGOs. There is a tendency not to employ network methods in data-collection (such as my Skype and phone conversations with people I never met in person), with a preference instead for being with people and accompanying them as they act in the world. Scholars in Political Geography might accuse me of attempting the god-trick, "seeing everything from nowhere" (Haraway, 1988). However, my methodology enabled me to study the role of translocal and transnational actors in a way that otherwise would not have been possible.

An especially important feature of my methodology was its two-directional nature: in particular, starting with transnational actors with no specific involvement in struggles relating to land grabs in Cambodia, and with local actors involved in resistance to three sets of ELCs in Cambodia. It was made possible by my experience in Cambodia, Khmer language skills, and intimate knowledge of the history of two of the cases and relations with actors involved. The two-directional approach had the particular advantage of helping me interrogate unevenness, as I had hoped it would. It allowed me to understand not only how and why certain actors were involved in different ways in land grab struggles in Cambodia, for example, but also how and why others were not. As I noted above, scholars studying connections from the vantage point of those doing the connecting (Routledge, 2008; Davies, 2012), of those successfully connected (McFarlane, 2009; Lindell, 2011), or of those who have successfully accessed ideas (Cochrane & Ward, 2012; McCann & Ward, 2012) may miss the unevenness that results from lack of connection and thus the lack of access to ideas that concerns me.

The two-directional approach also allowed me to identify some connections that I would have missed otherwise. In all three of my cases, I learned about the involvement of some translocal and transnational actors through the tracing of connections beginning with actors situated in Phnom Penh and outside of Cambodia. The potential value of this approach to other scholars is evidenced by the complete lack of mention of various key translocal and transnational actors in the literature on land grabs in Cambodia, including a number that I have written about here.

The three cases were not especially representative of ELCs in Cambodia or struggles against them. In particular, local, Phnom Penh-based, and international NGOs played more significant roles in all three cases than is typical. However, the two-directional aspect of my methodology made the specific sites less important than they would otherwise have been. In large part, I encountered imaginaries, imagineers, and unevenness through the disconnections, contrasts, and tensions between, on the one hand, the actors and activity in and closely linked to the three sites and, on the other, actors and activity noticeable only from the other direction. For example, the importance of food sovereignty-based discourses of land grabs first became evident not from studying the Pheapimex concessions but from conversations with people outside of Cambodia.

Loose ends

A number of questions remain unanswered and deserve further study. With regards to spatial imaginaries, these include: How do some spatial imaginaries gain wider circulatory power? What role do institutions with global presence play in the emergence and circulation of influential spatial imaginaries? Also, what evidence is there of the same spatial imaginary leading to similar geographical outcomes in vastly different contexts?

There is one concern with regards to imagineers that I specifically did not attempt to address but is worthy of further study. While I focused on how their spatial imaginaries shaped how they enacted networks, imagineers are clearly important actors for the circulation of ideas. How and why are their ideas adopted by others? How do they influence the ideas of others?

Finally, with regards to unevenness in access to ideas, while I have emphasized the circulation of ideas through relational connections, the importance of relational connections to access to ideas may in fact be changing. We might expect Cambodians to access more ideas online in the future, and I did find some evidence among translocal actors that this might be the case. Second, constraints on my access to transnational actors outside of Cambodia limited my ability to understand unevenness from their side. It would be good to better understand their roles in the circulation of ideas, in gatekeeping, and in access to ideas by translocal and local actors.

Conclusion

As I wrote in the introductory chapter, the underlying aim of this dissertation was to understand how (differently situated) transnational actors who are genuinely committed to social justice may contribute to efforts to resist land grabs. The three central points of the dissertation, (1) that one important way (among others) in which outsiders influence the geographies of local land grab struggles is through spatial imaginaries, (2) that sometimes they do so as influential "imagineers" enacting such spatial imaginaries, and (3) that such spatial imaginaries are often transmitted through uneven embodied processes that result in uneven access to them, suggest indirect answers to that question.

First, the preceding analysis suggests value in looking at the geographies implied by different ideas. Doing so may help to bring clarity to divergences between different perspectives

and approaches. In Chapter Four I mentioned Chan's criticisms of PEN, related to differences in perspectives on how to deal with ELCs. On the surface, the issue was Chan perceiving PEN as promoting a mediation process that might lead to compensation for communities in return for them conceding part of their claims. But, more fundamentally, Chan and PEN have different visions for the geography of struggles against ELCs. For Chan, what is needed is strong communities united to oppose the system of ELCs and other aspects of governance. For PEN, what is needed in the short-term at least is strong coalitions including affected communities and NGOs that can bring companies to their knees. Chan sees PEN's approach as potentially undermining his vision, and for PEN, Chan's vision is impractical and years away, and could lead to unethical choices as the needs of communities take second place to movement building. Looking beyond PEN and Chan's ideas, to the geographies they imply, also helps us see the way that PEN's ideas and approach have put PEN and its allies at the center. The analysis suggests that, in planning interventions, outsiders should pay serious attention to the geographies that their approaches imply – perhaps a central role for an NGO, perhaps linked place-based movements, among other possibilities. Likewise, it suggests that imagineers should pay attention to the ideas that motivate their action. What geographies are they likely to enact as a result?

Second, the analysis suggests value in paying attention to internationally circulating ideas and the obstacles to local actors accessing them. Around the world, local actors have benefitted from internationally circulating ideas, though such ideas are not inherently better than locally produced ideas, and accessing external ideas is not unproblematic. Some of these ideas may be extremely powerful. International Indigenous rights discourses have arrived in Cambodia, though access to them has been uneven, and some Cambodian movements at least seem to have benefitted from them. Access in Cambodia to discourses from international peasant movements has been

much less, in part because of selective access facilitated by key actors. There may be value in helping to improve access to such internationally circulating ideas, both by making the content more accessible (through translation) and through dissemination. Local actors can decide if and how to use the ideas. In any case, local actors *are* accessing other ideas from outside – developmentalism and neoliberalism, for example – with their associated geographic implications.

As I have noted several times, it is well known that ideas shape struggles. Still, scholars of land grabs and practitioners alike would do well to pay more serious attention to the role of ideas in shaping the geographies of land grab struggles. It is my hope that this dissertation has made a contribution in that direction.

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