



STUDY ON GOVERNANCE AND POLITICAL ACTION IN WESTERN AND SOUTHERN AFRICA

A Research Proposal developed by the Governance
Theme Team, SWARMU

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

List of Figures and tables	2
List of acronyms.....	3
A. Introduction.....	4
B. Literature review	6
B.1. Foundations: the Western State	6
B.2. Some characteristics of the African State	6
B.3. The emergence and survival of the neopatrimonial State	8
B.4. Civil society and the neopatrimonial regime	10
B.5. The interpretation of culture and history	10
B.6. Aspects of a historical and cultural reading	12
<i>B.6.1. Beliefs, witchcraft and politics</i>	12
<i>B.6.2. Corruption</i>	12
<i>B.6.3. Representation, traditional leaders and democratic appointments</i>	13
B.7. Why does this matter to us?	14
C. Research approaches and themes	15
C.1. Research approach	15
C.2. Research questions	17
<i>C.2.1. Research goal and purpose</i>	17
<i>C.2.3. Extractive research</i>	17
<i>C.2.4. Action research</i>	18
C.3. Underlying concepts	19
D. Research Methodology	20
D.1. Country criteria and selection	20
D.2. Management	22
D.3. Research phases and methodology	22
D.4. Methodological consideration for an action research	24
D.5. Calendar	25
D.6 Risks and risk management	25
E. Budget	26
Annex 1: Framework for the country profile	28
Annex 2: References	30

LIST OF FIGURES AND TABLES

Figures

Figure 1: Theory of change of the research project.....5
Figure 2: Interrelation between different research initiatives17
Figure 3: The research process24

Tables

Table 1: Comparative table for country selection21
Table 2: Budget details27

LIST OF ACRONYMS

CSGI:	Civil Society and Governance Investigation
GOTT:	Governance Theme Team
HIPC:	Highly Indebted Poor Countries
PAF:	Performance Assessment Framework
PRSP:	Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper
SII:	Strategic Impact Inquiry
SWA:	Southern and West Africa
SWAPs:	Sector Wide Approach Programs
SWARMU:	Southern and West Africa Management Unit

A. INTRODUCTION

In recent years, CARE has become increasingly aware that poverty cannot be combated without looking at structural barriers to economic and social development. Among these barriers is weak, non-transparent, and unaccountable governance. If CARE's initiatives are not grounded in rigorous analysis of these contextual issues, we risk being ineffective in the long-term, reproducing poor governance practices, ignoring power relations at play and aggravating social inequalities. In many Southern and West African (SWA) countries, CARE's governance programming has evolved from narrow civil society capacity building projects, to broader approaches helping civil society become a key player in local governance and more holistic conceptions of local governance, supporting the interaction between civil society and local government under decentralization. While much of this programming is good, we often make simplistic assumptions about the nature of power and citizenship in African countries, and thus sometimes miss the point in terms of the program activities that are needed to make a difference. Our causal and stakeholder analyses are not sophisticated enough, and we don't grasp the mechanisms for distribution of power and resources in the areas where we work. We must be able to understand better the modes of governance within State and Civil Society institutions and how history, society and culture shape these modes of governance, to ensure that our programming is adapted to local realities and addresses properly causes of poverty and social injustice.

SWA regional management unit (SWARMU), and more specifically its Governance Theme Team (GOTT) is therefore undertaking a research project on the social and cultural aspects of weak governance. This will contribute to the body of knowledge on governance; will allow to assess the appropriateness and effectiveness of CARE's programming, and to support the composition of a framework for better analysis and programming. The study will pay particular attention to the areas of civil society strengthening and support for democratic decentralization, two areas in which CARE has done extensive work.

The theory of change for the research project is presented on the next page (figure 1). The flow chart shows the different elements that will contribute (arrows) to our change objective. The change that we wish to effect through this research project is to transform governance programming to promote social justice and reduce vulnerability.

Throughout the research, we are constrained by generalization and the use of Western democratic labels and by the temptation to generalize due to the regional focus of this study. It is hoped that one output of the research will be the ability to develop a framework for a language on political action that is specific to those who live it and use it.

Key elements of the research project are a review of the literature, field research in four countries that will look at the social and cultural context of governance and how well CARE's programming is engaging with it, systematization of the findings, and production of a framework for governance programming. This will be carried out by staff and for staff with a strong focus on capacity development.

This study is intended as the kick-off activity for the CARE USA Strategic Impact Inquiry (SII) on governance programming in CARE that will start in 2008. It will constitute an integral part of the contextual foundation and the testing of research methodologies of this SII. It also forms a part of the CARE UK Civil Society and Governance investigation (CSGI) that will also begin in 2008.

This document presents the proposal for the research. Section B introduces a literature review and its relevance to us, Section C outlines the research themes, section D the research methodology. A budget is laid out in part section E.

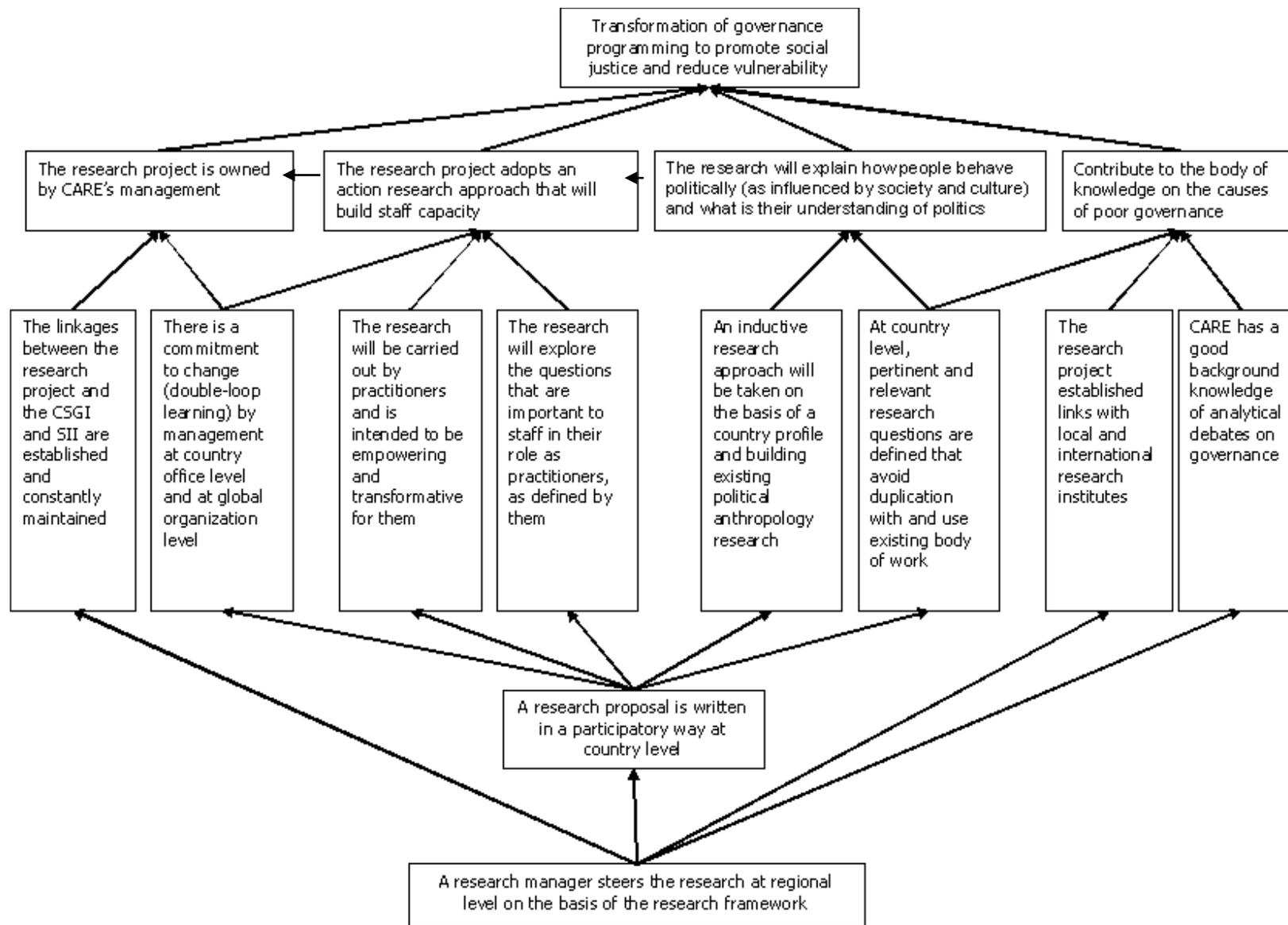


Figure 1: Theory of change of the research project

B. LITERATURE REVIEW

Forms of governance in low-income countries are neither traditional nor Western, but are, like elsewhere, constructed through complex combinations of specific historical, cultural and social factors to the exercise of power; contemporary forms of governance in low-income countries are idiosyncratic to these combinations. The development community has long played its part in promoting, shaping, imposing “good governance” and “democratization” on African countries, usually assuming a Western model of liberal democracy. This process has been happening in numerous countries in Africa¹ over the past decades but westernization as such has seldom truly happened. Moreover responsiveness and accountability of African countries has only marginally improved. The poor seem to get poorer and the benefits of economic growth rarely go to more than a small minority, a phenomenon that we believe is in part due to poor governance. State elites continue to lead lavish lifestyles in the midst of the stagnation or crumbling of their countries’ economy. In this section, we ask three questions: what does the African State look like? How has its predicament happened? And what framework can we use to better understand the processes at play in political action, in order to have a relevant role in defending, as is our vision, a world where social justice prevails and poverty is overcome? The section is divided in two critical parts: one that presents the dominant discourse on weak governance and neopatrimonialism and one that seeks to deconstruct this discourse.

B.1. FOUNDATIONS: THE WESTERN STATE

African States are described as weak in relative sense to the “Weberian ideal-type” of public administration and government found in Western democracies. For Weber, the Western State was born out of the feudal patrimonial struggle for power, which led to a “rational-legal” form of domination. Legal domination was constructed through the establishment of what is referred to as the Weberian bureaucracy. Main characteristics of the bureaucratic State are the existence of an administrative and legal order, an administrative apparatus that conducts official business, a binding authority over citizens in a specific area of jurisdiction and the legitimization of the use of force, all prescribed by law and a legally constituted government. Bureaucratic officials and political leaders are central actors for the functioning of a bureaucracy in which they play distinct and specific roles. Public bureaucracies are major players in making and implementing policies and act as intermediary between the State and society; there is therefore a clear nexus between liberal democracy and the Weberian bureaucracy, whereby the State is institutionalized through bureaucracy by way of its emancipation from society.

The State in the Weberian type (democratic bureaucracy) is understood to promote peace, stability, economic growth, freedom, etc. An analysis of these assumptions, and particularly how they have been challenged by Gramsci and Marx, is beyond the scope of this review. The point here is simply to remind ourselves of the prevalence of Weber’s theory today and of the perspective we are taking when we refer to “good governance” and “good government”. This is to remind ourselves that it is in reference to the Weberian ideal-type that we qualify African States as weak. We will not explore arguments about the morals of development aid and whether to impose the Western ideology is or not an insidious form of colonization. We do however take as a given that the aid community shares a common ideology based on concepts of democratization, community participation, liberal economy and Weberian democracy as the beacons of “development”, and the desirable paths for Africa. As an organization, CARE has so far broadly espoused this view.

B.2. SOME CHARACTERISTICS OF THE AFRICAN STATE

The hallmark of African politics is that the exercise of central political power has not been emancipated from the overriding dominance of localized and personalized political contests. The style of rule of the African political leadership is a combination of the colonial style authoritarian rule (enforcing order rather than promoting welfare) and village type patrimonial rule. Legitimacy of the State continues to rest on practices of redistribution along narrow networks rather than on

¹ Throughout this literature review the word Africa, African will be used to describe Sub-Saharan Africa. An assumption made here is obviously that there is such a thing as an homogeneous African political system.

management of the public good and the protection of citizens. As a consequence, no proper bureaucracy has developed in Africa; the bureaucratic institutions installed at decolonization and the political structures of democracy have been penetrated and domesticated by a patrimonial logic.

In their compelling work on African politics Chabal & Daloz argue "[The State] is illusory because its *modus operandi* is essentially informal, the rule of law is feebly enforced and the ability to implement public policy remains most limited. It is substantial because its control is the ultimate prize for all political elites: indeed, it is the chief instrument of patrimonialism".² The weakness of legal-rational rule and the fact that policies, and especially economic ones, are designed primarily to benefit the elite are amongst the causes of the permanent economic crisis in Africa.³ Chabal & Daloz describe the African State as: "... *vacuous* in that it did not consolidate, as was once expected, on the foundations of the colonial legacy but instead rapidly disintegrated and fell prey to particularistic and factional struggles. It became an empty shell. As a result it failed to acquire either the legitimacy or the professional competence which are the hallmarks of the modern State. It is *ineffectual* in that it has never been in the interest of the African political elites to work for the proper institutionalization of the State apparatus. Or to put it another way, its usefulness is greatest when it is least institutionalized".⁴

Main characteristics of the African State:

- *Presidentialism* and personalisation of politics where political power is concentrated in the hands of one individual, is a distinguishing feature of African regimes.⁵
- Second, *clientelism*⁶ is a main characteristic of neopatrimonialism, entailing a complex web of patron-client networks through which material gains are returned for political support, maintaining a relation of reciprocal dependency. It is therefore a self-regulating form of interpersonal exchange, anchored in community norms, the maintenance of which depends on the return that each actor expects to obtain by rendering goods and services to each other and which ceases once the expected rewards fail to materialize. This means that there is a constant struggle for creating and maintaining these relationships, one that obviously occurs between actors of unequal power and status. This relationship is particularistic and private, anchored only loosely in public law or community norms.⁷
- Thirdly, the *use of State resources* for the maintenance of the patron-client ties towards personal political gains, aggravated by the blurring of accountability mechanisms guiding State-society relations, means that there is no formal division between public and private goods.⁸
- Fourth, the neopatrimonial State is characterized by *autonomy of the State from civil society*: few organizations actually exist to openly engage with the State in policy debates. The State is not the aggregation of private demands but acts on its own policy preferences.⁹
- Fifth, the African regimes exercise a type of political domination which is characterized by *insecurity* about the behavior and role of State institutions and agents.¹⁰ The management of disorder and conflict is therefore highly relevant: where disorder is a resource, it will not be overhauled, but where disorder needs maintaining, crime will rise.

Finally, the African State has taken advantage of the weak institutionalization of political practices and in turn promoted it. Thereby the African State has *instrumentalized* institutional and economic disorder.¹¹ Unless there is popular will to depersonalize politics, prospects of institutionalization are bleak. Informal and unpredictable politics invade formal institutions. Informality and formality are

² Chabal, P. and Daloz, J.P., 1999, *Africa Works: Disorder as Political Instrument*, Oxford and Bloomington: James Currey and Indiana University Press, p 9

³ Van de Walle, N., 2001, *African Economies and the Politics of Permanent Crisis, 1979-1999*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press

⁴ Chabal and Daloz, 1999, p 14

⁵ Bratton, M. and Van de Walle, N., 1997, *Democratic Experiments in Africa: regime transitions in comparative perspective*, Cambridge and New York: Cambridge University Press

⁶ Clientelism is defined as the particular relationship between individuals, whereas patronage is understood as the relationship between groups.

⁷ See Bratton & Van de Walle, 1997

Brinkerhoff, D.W. and Goldsmith, A.A., 2002, *Clientelism, Patrimonialism and Democratic Governance: An Overview and Framework for Assessment and Programming*, Cambridge, MA: Abt Associates Inc, p 3

Chabal & Daloz, 1999

⁸ See Bratton & Van de Walle, 1997

⁹ See Van de Walle, 2001

¹⁰ See Brinkerhoff & Goldsmith, 2002

¹¹ Chabal & Daloz, 1999, p 18

intimately linked to each other in various ways and by varying degrees; and it is this particular mix becomes institutionalized.¹²

B.3. THE EMERGENCE AND SURVIVAL OF THE NEOPATRIMONIAL STATE

Several approaches attempt to explain the emergence of the neopatrimonial State, providing reasons why the State found today in Africa bears little relation to the Weberian model.¹³ The African regimes are understood as being *hybrid* States where the modern State meets the indigenous African State and is re-appropriated according to specific cultural and social characteristics through its historical development that then determines the type of political structures in place. Political crises and needs have determined differences between African regimes through the evolution of institutional structures. A variation on the model of the hybrid State is that of the *transplanted* State whereby the translation of the Western State has failed totally due to culture¹⁴, and institutions of the democratic nation-state do not perform the intended functions because they are supplanted by cultural norms and actions.

Within these broad characterizations, variants of the African regime are proposed. Historical factors such as the existence of a dominant party or multiple parties at independence typically led to the installation of a single party rule or to instable and/or coercive regimes, respectively. The extent of competition (or contestation) and the degree of political participation (or inclusion) thereafter became significant dimensions of the neopatrimonial State.¹⁵

One crucial question is to attempt to understand how neopatrimonial States have survived over time, particularly in the face of the economic crisis that has affected the continent since the 70s. Governments have been by and large very stable despite increased poverty and limited growth, meaning clearly that economic crisis cannot be equated to political crisis - a pattern that one would expect in a Western democracy. This of course proves the obvious that democracy is not in place in Africa. But it is not out of passivity that countries have been in permanent crisis, but rather African leaders have constantly sought to manipulate reform, allowing the maintenance of governments and their elites.¹⁶ Governments are characterized by a continuous effort to protect their elite; on the one hand this means that there is no genuine attempt to solve the economic crisis or to establish the rule of law, and on the other hand that the poor are most likely to be worst hit, as they are typically those who pay the costs for the maintenance of clientelist networks, that they are excluded from.¹⁷

In turn, the poverty crisis then further justifies the imposition of drastic measures. These measures are implemented. But reform takes place in a way that affects the poor badly, first because of the very nature of these reforms (as short term negative effects of structural adjustments are expected to be outgrown by prospective trickle down effects of a hypothetical economic growth¹⁸). Second, because reform is purposely poorly implemented whilst governments typically expect donors to pay up for the damage done. In this way, donors and INGOs, rather than governments, take on the responsibility of the poor by paying for the social costs of drastic reform. By doing so, any upsurge of civic dissent and contestation is killed off.¹⁹ This leads to never ending cycles of reforms in a way that cannot challenge the elite. Donors and INGOs themselves preserve a dominant position, either by being themselves part of an elite, or by fueling the elite through their actions.

Neoliberal reforms, financed by donors and supported by INGOs, have therefore made States withdraw from their sectoral responsibilities while retaining their ability to regulate the sector, and maintaining a steady flow of aid income serving clientelist purposes. "Development aid has played a

¹² Bratton & van de Walle, 1997, p 63

¹³ See Chabal & Daloz, 1999

¹⁴ Culture is broadly define here as shared acquired values, norms and beliefs that enables individuals be mutually intelligible

¹⁵ Bratton, M. & Van de Walle, N., 1994 'Neopatrimonial Regimes and Political Transitions in Africa' *World Politics*, Vol. 46, No. 4. pp. 453-489, p 470

¹⁶ See Van de Walle, 2001

¹⁷ This is especially true for the rural poor because they are even less likely to form part of the elites, as the bias toward urban dwellers and the neglect of the majority of Africans in the rural areas can be traced, in part, to a State system that encouraged elites to cultivate their urban constituencies. See Herbst, J., Winter 1996-1997, 'Responding to State Failure in Africa', *International Security*, Vol. 21, No. 3. pp. 120-144

¹⁸ See <http://www.globalissues.org/TradeRelated/SAP.asp> for a critical literature review on the issue

¹⁹ See Van de Walle, 2001

somewhat similar role to that of the incomes of the drug and diamond economy, by inducing an inflow of assistantship and clientelism favorable to corruption".²⁰ And aid keeps coming in, making non-implementation sustainable. The conditionality imposed by donors regarding good governance and democratization has proved toothless, encouraging poorly paid technocrats and politicians to become rent-seekers.²¹

The State therefore becomes an administrator of aid money, an administration that has sought to maintain a grip on patrimonial networks. The State is entirely autonomous from pressures of (a putative) civil society and governments have made continuous efforts to centralize power whilst partially implementing reform, always keen to preserve its own interests.²² For example, African States have been loath to address the question of lack of capacity in government because limited capacity serves well the functioning of clientelist networks. Moreover, young qualified people are discouraged to take policy initiatives that may rock the boat, or are seldom promoted as not yet part of the clientelist game, a position that would grant them a voice.²³ This raises questions about what are the true incentives for change for African States; development interventions are driven by the perception of obvious problems. But those are interpreted differently and solving them is not compelling.

A similar example may be taken regarding decentralization reform which has been happening across Africa. Although statutory and legal details and implementation paths have varied from one country to the other, decentralization reforms overall seek to promote political participation and government responsiveness and accountability through increased proximity. However an example from Ghana shows that decentralization reform throughout has only been partially implemented. On the one hand, decentralization had to face the centralization tendencies of the patrimonial State. On the other hand, more autonomy in the use of the State budget meant more corruption, and ill-installed institutions led to participation fatigue.²⁴ The logic that sought to render the State more efficient by decentralizing it seems flawed, the capacity of the decentralized State being merely equal to that of the State that puts it in place.²⁵

All in all, the facade of institutions does not mean that the institutions of the Weberian bureaucracy truly exist, but more that African regimes have sought to maximize gains whilst limiting constraints of reform. As Chabal and Daloz (1999) argue, "it simply cannot be a coincidence that, now that the West ties aid to democratization under the guise of multi-party elections, multi-party elections are taking place in Africa".²⁶ Political institutions have changed on the outside but fundamental structures have not altered over time, whilst political ideologies have been highly malleable, and contestation of centralized stable power outlawed.²⁷ Finally, while the Cold War allowed African regimes to play off countries against the other to access aid funds, they now negotiate the threat of chaos and conflict, assuring thereby the steady flow of aid money.²⁸

In this way, the main obstacle to change in Africa has come from the State itself, a State whose stability has been maintained through a regime of partial reform fueled by donors. Moreover, the effect of past reform influences the furtherance of patrimonial practices. It is the interaction between all these factors that leads to "non development" and to the maintenance of clientelism.

²⁰ Olivier de Sardan, J. P., 1999, 'A moral economy of corruption in Africa?', *The Journal of Modern African Studies*, 37, pp. 25-52, Cambridge University Press p 32-33

²¹ See Van de Walle, 2001

²² Ibid

²³ See Chabal & Daloz, 1999

²⁴ See Crook, R., 1994, 'Four years of the Ghana District Assemblies in operation: decentralization, democratization and administrative performance', *Public Administration and Development*.

²⁵ See Chabal, P. 2006, 'Etat et Gouvernance: les limites de la décentralisation', address for the Bamako Governance conference

²⁶ Chabal & Daloz, 1999, p 118

²⁷ See Bratton & Van de Walle, 1994

²⁸ Chabal & Daloz, 1999

B.4. CIVIL SOCIETY AND THE NEOPATRIMONIAL REGIME

The previous sections have shown that the establishment of a liberal democracy has failed. Therefore the notion of a neutral State as a catalyst or passive bystander cannot be sustained. And consequently one should ask to what extent is civil society²⁹ institutionalized and plays a role to defend shared interests in the workings of the State. Two approaches are being presented to explain the roles and positions of civil society.

Van de Walle (2000) argues that there are too few organized groups autonomous from the State that could exert pressure on the government to defend the existence of an institutionalized "civil society". The State is most commonly removed from any exigency of accountability, outside maybe from accountability to donors: "Not only do [technocrats] not have to handle public, opposition party, or media demands, in most countries they are not accountable to a parliament, to the single party rank-and-file, or even in some cases to the full government cabinet".³⁰ States have purposely repressed the expression of societal interests, which has been made possible by relying on external sources to finance their activities. Society is therefore entirely autonomous from the State. Patrimonial rule regulates both these spheres but society does not exert any pressure on the State.

Chabal and Daloz (1999) agree with Van de Walle's interpretation that there no evidence of a functionally operating civil society in Africa. But they argue that "because there is little distinction between the private and the public domains and because the organizational capacity of such movements is still limited, it would be misleading to argue that there is a politically salient cleavage between 'State' and 'society'", nor a constituted "civil society".³¹ For them the patrimonial networks work vertically from the higher levels of the State to the rural farmer; the dependency that is created through these networks restrains any possibility of challenging the State. Chabal and Daloz further argue that: "...the State ... has been 'captured' by society ... Governments have remained un-emancipated from society ... what needs to be stressed are the linkages between high and low politics, between the political elites and their clientelistic networks throughout society".³² NGOs are themselves caught in patron-client relationships. The recent emergence of NGOs on the continent should not be interpreted as a strong organized civil society keeping government accountable but are merely an extension of the clientelistic networks.

So much as the democratic State has not been constituted, its mirror cannot truly exist. Recently however, the concept of collective citizenship has emerged in light of the granting of rights to groups themselves and to the appearance of community as an object of governance and not as an apolitical group of people. Collective citizenship is defined as a "group-based, differentiated citizenship", which may present a more contemporary and useful alternative to the idea of civil society. This is justified by "the increasing number of particularistic groups and movements using the language of rights and obligations to raise questions about social and political injustices".³³

B.5. THE INTERPRETATION OF CULTURE AND HISTORY

The previous sections have sought to explore understandings of the neopatrimonial State. The neopatrimonial perspective provides an analytical framework for understanding African politics, but it does not describe or explain social change nor see specific cultural logics at play. It seems to construct an image of what African States are not and of what they should be rather than build on a cultural framework of what makes sense to people. Culture is treated either as an independent variable or neopatrimonialism is equated to culture. These approaches also assume that a linear progression is possible, from the patrimonial to the legal-rational rule, provided that defined conditions are in place. By trying to understand causes, and by using normative preconceived ideas, one is reduced to thinking evolutionarily and to confuse causes and symptoms.

²⁹ in the Western sense of formal organizations occupying a non-State public arena

³⁰ Van de Walle, 2000, p 48

³¹ Chabal and Daloz, 1999 p 30

³² Ibid, p 25-26

³³ See Buur, L. and Kyed, H.M, September 2006 'New Sites of Citizenship: Recognition of Traditional Authority and Group-based Citizenship in Mozambique', *Journal of Southern African Studies*, Volume 32, Number 3, p565

We acknowledge the importance of culture and history to understand State failure and the African predicament, and we recognize that things change over time through the influence of context. But we propose to move to a deeper level. We think that a proper understanding of African political action is not possible without gaining a deep understanding of the particular circumstances and behaviors of the nations concerned and of *what makes sense to them*. Until we look at historical and cultural specificities, until we leave behind stereotypic, idealized Western ideologies, we exclude the possibility of looking critically at African politics. Terminologies such as neopatrimonialism, by pushing us to using the same vocabulary for different political realities, forces evidence into limited models of historical development and evolutionary models. By saying what it looks like from our perspective, we say little about the processes at play, the historical factors and the significance of culture and meaning.³⁴

In an attempt to marry Geertz's theories of the interpretation of meaning to political science, Chabal and Daloz call for us to understand the development of the African State as a singular modernization that is not development, nor westernization.³⁵ This helps us to raise fundamental questions about the notions of "governance" and "civil society" and the norms we apply to them. They ask political scientists to seek to understand better how people structure their actions in a neopatrimonial setting, what constitutes choice and what restrains it. They propose to complement the framework of neopatrimonial rule with what they call a *theory of neopatrimonial action based on culture as a referent*. As they argue, "[culture] is quite simply one of the key fundamentals of social life, the matrix within which that which we understand as political action takes place. In other words, the field of politics itself has to be examined within its appropriate cultural milieu, as it were. Far from being a residual category, culture is in some sense that which constitutes the coordinates, the mapping, or the very blueprint of politics".³⁶

In other words, it is not that culture matters as an external factor to the shaping of politics, but it is part of political action and it is the point of view from which meaning is given to political action and from which politics can therefore be understood. Neopatrimonialism could be understood as one of the many manifestations of culture, as long as we try to understand how it is individually and socially motivated and interpreted. A cultural interpretation of political action understands politics in Africa as follows: political action is characterized by a common notion of the political realm which all political actors, from the political elites to the ordinary man and woman, share and seek to employ profitably. Within this realm, people's actions are rational (logical) although not along Western rationality. This is why political causality in the Western sense (elections bring democracy, growth brings modernity, etc.) does not make sense.³⁷ We therefore must understand the particular rationality at play. Only a cultural interpretation of political action in each specific contexts ("the webs of meaning") allows us to do so.

In order to demonstrate the significance of a cultural interpretation to political action, the next section explores the relevance of witchcraft, the processes at play with corruption and the issue of legitimacy and representation.³⁸ These are given as illustrations of how politics actually work in particular contexts. This clearly contrasts with the static demonstrations of previous sections of how African States do not work in comparison to Western models.

³⁴ See Chabal & Daloz, 1999 and

Chabal, P. and Daloz, J.P., 2006, *Culture troubles- Politics and the interpretation of meaning*, Cambridge University Press, p322 and Olivier de Sardan, 1999

³⁵ See Chabal & Daloz, 1999 and 2006. See also Comaroff, John.L. & Jean Comaroff, eds., 1999, *Civil Society and the Political Imagination in Africa: Critical perspectives*, University of Chicago Press, Chicago

³⁶ Chabal and Daloz, 2006, p21

³⁷ See Chabal and Daloz, 1999 and 2006

³⁸ These may or may not be relevant for the action research depending on what questions practitioners in the countries of study choose to explore.

B.6. ASPECTS OF A HISTORICAL AND CULTURAL READING

B.6.1. BELIEFS, WITCHCRAFT AND POLITICS

(2005) uncovers how particular events (mortal attacks of lions on communities) during an electoral process in the North of Mozambique have been interpreted through the cosmogony of traditional beliefs and allowed rural communities to formulate a nuanced critique of democracy *as they experienced it*, that is "as a regime that not only promoted irresolvable conflict in their midst, but also provided cover for dominant political actors to forego the responsibilities of authority and to feed themselves at the expense of others".³⁹ Local politicians failed in their engagement with the occult; the interpretation of this lack of engagement by communities has led to a loss of legitimacy, in turn associated to the ongoing electoral process.

Jensen and Buur (2004), in the South African context, also attempt to understand "how and to what extent do figures of public authority attempt to manage and control the occult".⁴⁰ They argue that legitimacy of authority is granted on the ability to control the occult, regardless of whether the policing takes place in or out of legal arbitration. "Because witchcraft transforms global issues into locally intelligible forms,... to be able to claim recognition from "the people", local justice enforcers must be seen to act, even in situations where they feel ambivalent, such as taking on and dealing with malign forms of the occult"⁴¹, as they are at threat that people can turn against them if they don't. The ability to engage with, control and manipulate witchcraft and religious belief therefore seems highly relevant to political action.

In fact, African politicians are likely to use words that evoke a link to the irrational world in this way endowing them with special powers. The use of "traditional" is indeed immediately convincing in the political discourse. Identity will often be constructed through a connection with ancestors on the native land. The irrational is ubiquitous for politicians, both for defining action and explaining events. For example, losing elections may be caused by not having paid tribute to ancestors, the public humiliation of that may have serious unintended effects and may even prove to be deeply destabilizing.⁴²

It is not the point here to explore specific anthropological studies on the meaning of the occult for political action, nor to overgeneralise, but rather to show that these aspects may be the specific *checks and balances* of African politics. In every setting, we must seek to understand, through people's own eyes, what satisfies needs and fears and how political actors go about satisfying them.

B.6.2. CORRUPTION

Materialist and developmentalist approaches limit the understanding of corruption to how it affects development, but do not seek to understand how it makes sense for the people involved and how it brings meaning to relationships of power as they are established within the neo-patrimonial system. Corruption is "part of a wider network of redistribution"⁴³ driven by particularistic social pressure...For those at the bottom end of society... the sale of the limited amount of power they possess is virtually their only means of survival. Higher up ... it enables the political elites to fulfill their duties, to meet expectations of their clients and, hence, to enhance their duties".⁴⁴ This form of redistribution is deemed legitimate; only those who do it for greed are punishable. It is a routine element of the administrative apparatus. Social norms of corruption have to be understood in the context of the absence of the notion of public good. Rural life and bureaucracy are "social universes torn apart by

³⁹ West, H.G., 2005 "Govern Yourselves!" Democracy and Carnage in Northern Mozambique, *draft essay*, SOAS, p 33

⁴⁰ Jensen, S. and Buur, L., 'Everyday Policing and the Occult: Notions of Witchcraft, Crime and "the People"', *African Studies*, 63, 2, December 2004, p194

⁴¹ Ibid, p 208

⁴² Chabal and Daloz, 1999 pp 62-76

⁴³ Van de Walle and Chabal & Daloz disagree on the extent to which clientelism and corruption are a form of redistribution. Of more relevance, is an understanding of who gains and who is excluded from such networks, and how they are maintained and whether they are sustainable for those who engage with them.

⁴⁴ Chabal and Daloz, 1999, pp 99-101

antagonisms, jealousy and quarrels. Both, however, protect themselves from external interference and hinder justice. Neither has internalized any shared conception of public domain in its daily practices".⁴⁵

Olivier de Sardan (1999) seeks to understand the rationality of corruption in Africa. He sees five key aspects: the logic of negotiation facilitated by the absence of rules for corruption ; a logic of gift giving whereby a social peer must be rewarded for the service rendered ; a logic of the solidarity through which a community sustains itself ; a logic of predatory authority, where corruption is considered as a rightful aspect of the office and finally a logic of redistributive accumulation through which the powerful is expected to redistribute and to show wealth to assert power.⁴⁶ The rationality of corruption, or the "*moral economy*" of corruption, does not automatically give rise to illicit practices. It appears that over-monetization of the rural economy, increasing social pressure and displacement of the limits of disapprobation have facilitated the disappearance of the separation between legal and illegal practices.⁴⁷

B.6.3. REPRESENTATION, TRADITIONAL LEADERS AND DEMOCRATIC APPOINTMENTS

A historical perspective of political legitimacy shows how decolonization displaced the rules of sovereignty. Sovereignty in precolonial Africa would typically have been over people rather than land, and it was established through processes of sharing and negotiation; "political organizations were created, and they rose and fell naturally in response to opportunities and challenges... they had to be acquired through the construction of loyalties, the use of coercion, and the creation of an infrastructure".⁴⁸ At decolonization, leaders were handed control over unnatural territories, in haste. And thereafter, legitimacy was to be established through all-the-more unnatural elections. The neo-patrimonial State consists therefore of 'pockets of sovereignty', which overlap or not with traditional and ethnic authority, sometimes competing with State sovereignty.⁴⁹

The locus of political legitimacy is found in the relation that is established with people through traditional and social codes, beyond the existence and belonging to modern institutions. Although these institutions often come to make sense of holdings of power, it is not the institutions per se that provides this power. People are often chosen informally and unofficially.⁵⁰ In fact, a better understanding of how people gather votes would help understand how legitimacy is gained in the context of democratic elections, what construct the relationship, the tie between leaders and voters, outside of ideology, economic programs or populist promises.⁵¹ A study of Northern Mozambique has shown for example that physical proximity, promoted by decentralization, does not necessarily mean legitimacy but was rather interpreted as a threat.⁵² Research in Mali, shows how traditional norms conflict with rules of democratic decentralization. Traditionally, a chief is a conqueror, he therefore does not share power, is not accountable and no one would dare ask anything of him. Elections are not understood as a legitimate way for a chief to gain/lose power.⁵³

A recent resurgence of the role of 'traditional authorities' in African politics has been either celebrated as a genuine form of local governance or detracted because of how these institutions have been corrupted through (de)colonization. But is there such thing as a single entity of "traditional authority"? The meaning and function of local leaders have changed and been manipulated through their

⁴⁵ Olivier de Sardan, 1999 pp 30-31

⁴⁶ Ibid

⁴⁷ Ibid, p 45

⁴⁸ Herbst, 1997, p 129

⁴⁹ Bertelsen, B. E., 2006, 'Violence, sovereignty and tradition. understanding death squads and sorcery in Chimoio, Mozambique', presented at the workshop *The State and traditional law in Angola and Mozambique*, Van Vollenhoven Institute in Leiden, p42

⁵⁰ Bierschenk, T. and Olivier de Sardan, J.P. Sept 1997, "Local Powers and a Distant State in Rural Central African Republic", *The journal of Modern African Studies*, 35, 3 pp 441-468 Cambridge University Press, p 456

⁵¹ Philip Keefer, 2004, 'From settler mortality to patrimonialism: weaving the dynamics of political competition into the political economy of development', *Development Research Group*, The World Bank

⁵² West, 2005

⁵³ « On ne passe pas d'éléphant à un poussin, un chef meurt sur le trône ». Beridogo, B. 2006, 'Recherche Action en Gouvernance Local sur les Facteurs Historiques, Socioculturels, Structurels de la Reussite des Collectivites Territoriales', *CARE Mali*

engagement with the wider political context over the years.⁵⁴ Varied definitions of tradition justify leadership, but it is not a tradition as defined by Weber in the model of traditional rule, nor tradition as defined by those who are the depositary of this tradition.⁵⁵

The question of political representation and legitimate leadership, and the relationships of loyalty and dependence in which they lie are present in African politics, "from the highest reaches of the presidential palace to the humblest village assembly".⁵⁶ Therefore, one must look beyond the facade of institutions of representation to understand the nature and function of the relationship between representatives and represented. A cultural perspective shows that the nature of the link is dependent on the conscious and unconscious understanding that both sides have of the very meaning of representation and of their own respective roles.⁵⁷ The nature of this link depends also on the symbolic meaning of power, a form of superiority over others "that is neither strictly economic nor simply rooted in 'tradition'"⁵⁸ or gained through elections. It is important to gain an understanding of the social and cultural legitimacy of political leaders, for example through the way leaders use and display signs of power. But political legitimacy cannot be limited to social legitimacy. We must also understand what is the degree of differentiation (meaning both the distinction and specialization of roles) between social and political roles and therefore the degree of institutionalization of political roles. In other words, we must try to understand the meaning that people give to representation and to the role of representatives, first from a social point of view but mostly for what it specifically implies for the institutionalization of political action.

B.7. WHY DOES THIS MATTER TO US?

A number of aspects seem of particular relevance to us.

1. A new standpoint: for us to understand political action in Africa and to make sense of modes of governance, we must use an approach that on the one hand 'consists in the rigorous and systematic exposition of heterogeneity and not in the often theoretically artificial attempts to systematize more and more events with less and less theory'.⁵⁹ We must attempt to understand differences, go beyond the complex of generalization, and gather sufficient evidence to sustain the assessment of the cultural dimension at stake. On the other hand, we must at the same time use an approach in terms of "meaning" rather than a comparative approach in terms of values.⁶⁰ So rather than envisaging African governance as a failure in reference to a Western ideal and to treat culture as an independent variable impacting on development, this approach makes it impossible to argue that values are obstacles to development. *Politics is culture*. As West points out "... democracy necessarily resides within the languages and terminologies used by "the people" to assess power's workings ... any regime failing to create a beneficial order, by the people's definition, can scarcely call itself democracy".⁶¹ Anthropologists have much to contribute to facilitating and strengthening democracy as variably defined by people in diverse locales around the globe. This research will challenge practitioners⁶² to look for difference and to explore their own assumptions, rather than looking for conformity and measuring things against these assumptions.

2. The poor: CARE seeks to address underlying causes of poverty, in order to make long term changes in the lives of the most vulnerable and marginalized. This encompasses those who are typically excluded from social and economic networks that would ensure access and control over resources. Women are especially affected by this form of exclusion, and CARE is particularly dedicated to changing the lives of women to attain economic and social wellbeing. The issue of poverty for women

⁵⁴ West, HG and Kloock-Jenson, S, 1999, 'Betwixt and Between: 'Traditional authority' and Democratic Decentralization in Post-war Mozambique', *African Affairs*, 98, 455-484

⁵⁵ Buur, L. and Kyed, H. M. , 2006, 'Contested Sources of Authority: Re-claiming State Sovereignty by Formalizing Traditional Authority in Mozambique' *Development and Change* 37(4): 847-869

⁵⁶ Bratton & Van de Walle, 1994, 459

⁵⁷ Chabal and Daloz, 2006 p 274

⁵⁸ Chabal and Daloz, 2006 p 321

⁵⁹ Chabal and Daloz, 2006, p278

⁶⁰ Chabal and Daloz, 2006, p 87, drawing on Geertz 'an experimental science in search of law but an interpretative one on search of meaning'

⁶¹ West, 2005 , p 34

⁶² In this document, "practitioner" refers to CARE staff and partners.

and the various levels at which power relations affect them negatively, as well as the scope for intervention for CARE has been widely studied.⁶³ The research will have to seek to understand the particular position of women in the political realm. Although this study will not focus solely on women, the power issues that affect women are relevant in themselves and can inform processes of exclusion for other categories of marginalized people. This research will try to better grasp how a neopatrimonial State works for the poor. It is reasonable to think that marginalization occurs for those without patron or whose relation with a big man is either over-exploitative or strictly charitable, making the relationship unstable, unreliable and without choice and agency. How significant is political exclusion for economic and social well being? To what extent does poverty impede political participation? We need to understand better the workings of power and exclusion for those we are working for in the context of political action.

3. Aid and NGOs: much of the literature points to the nefarious role played by aid and NGOs in fueling the neopatrimonial system. A large amount of aid money is said to have disappeared in the hands of patrons both at central and local levels. As was argued in the introduction, CARE does not always dedicate enough resources to in depth analysis or to effect change over the long term. We may have an impression that the well-being of the most vulnerable has improved, and because we state that this can only happen when power relations are challenged, we understand our actions as addressing these relations. But this is tautological. Often we introduce economic benefits that have a short term uplifting effect. However in the long run, we are supporting all the aid middle-men, the local politicians, the local businessmen, the educated villager, etc., that is, those who are already in visible positions of power over the most vulnerable. We have not yet understood whether, if or how the "trickle-down" effect from the powerful to the poor happens. We are often left to witness the widening of the rich-poor gap, the increasing urban poverty, and explosive situations around political events.⁶⁴ We must understand to what extent CARE is being instrumentalized by neopatrimonialism, and to what extent we can actually engage more pro-actively in the political realm thanks to a better understanding and awareness of how people interpret politics in the places we work.

C. RESEARCH APPROACHES AND THEMES

In this section we describe the different approaches that the research project will take and the different themes and questions that will be answered. This framework was developed and validated by the Southern and West Africa Governance Theme Team (SWARMU GOTT) throughout 2007.

C.1. RESEARCH APPROACH

This research project is build upon two different approaches with action research at its heart (see section D.3.):

- extractive research⁶⁵: to understand better the local context and to explore how politics work for people (inductive approach), this includes desk research on governance debates and on country level governance issues as well as field work;
- action research: to transform CARE's practice in governance programming, mostly based on field work.

An empirical approach would allow us to deduce general characteristics, that would come to enrich and validate the exist literature, whilst at the same time providing insight into the specificity of each country. An inductive approach would also allow us to understand how the realm of political action

⁶³ See Martínez, E. (with assistance from the global CARE International Impact Measurement and Learning Team), 'The Courage to Change: Confronting the limits and unleashing the potential of CARE's programming for women'; Synthesis Report: Phase 2, CARE International Strategic Impact Inquiry on Women's Empowerment', CARE, February 2006

⁶⁴ Examples are numerous, but the recent events in Kenya are a case in point.

⁶⁵ Throughout the document, the word "extractive" is used to qualify the phase of the research that will mainly seek to "extract" information on the context that is already available out there. Extractive refers in some ways to a research approach, in contrast to the approach that will be used in the following phase (action research). This approach has limited interaction with the subjects under study, is interpretative of the existing body of literature. It has a degree of field work, mostly for validation purposes and for preparation of next phases. In discussions with contributors, it was proposed that extractive research be replaced by "contextual research" but this terminology refers more to a research objective or content than to a methodology, as is intended here.

makes sense to the people in that particular country, and help focus not simply on evolutionary perspectives but more accurately on existing opportunities that we would want to “work with”. An deductive approach on the other hand, would ask of us that we determine variables of weak governance as pinpointed in the literature, that we validate and unravel these factors in field research and that we identify “drivers of change” that we would be able to act on. This view evidently presupposes that we have more of a deterministic approach whereby we have a long term defined vision of “democratic rule” that we can steer towards. Although both approaches take interest in culture, the former makes it central to the understanding of political action, whereas the latter treats culture as one of the many variables. We propose to take the first standpoint as we feel this is most faithful to the organization’s value of participation.

The first phase is contextual and should help the region and each country gain more in depth knowledge on “governance” as it is termed in the dominant discourse. During the extractive research, a key phase is to explore how people interpret this discourse, to understand their political behavior from their point of view.

This then leads to the action research phase, whereby, on the basis of the knowledge gained, practitioners embark on a double-loop learning process where they will question and analyze their actions in governance to fundamentally review practice and policies. This approach has been chosen following a recognition that governance programming in the region is fraught with superficial analysis, weighing down significant impact on the promotion of social justice and the reduction of poverty. The action research phase will be largely defined at country level using the standards and norms of action research.⁶⁶ It is carried out by the people concerned for the people concerned. The standpoint of the research will therefore depend on what is relevant to project staff and country offices, working or not on “governance projects”. Because this is an “Action Research” project, every research theme and research question must be approached from the point of view of its relevance to CARE. The research must identify critical points of leverage for the organization, in order for us to be able to facilitate significant change. In doing so, this research is fundamentally innovative and is really trying to find new ways to go about doing our business.

To a certain extent the research will be comparative in the sense that it will gather information from particular countries and commonalities and trends will be outlined. But comparison is not the true purpose of this work. Or rather we will not compare procedures and institutions, we will attempt to “contrast how political forms of ‘exchange’ like legitimacy, accountability or representation actually take place”.⁶⁷ Specific country studies and their findings will be brought together and analyzed jointly to inform our projects.

This study forms an integral part of the Civil Society and Governance Investigation (CSGI) project carried out by CARE UK and also serves as an experimental phase for a wider global investigation into the impact we are having and can have in governance (Strategic Impact Inquiry, SII). Figure 2 shows the interrelation between the different studies. The three pieces of research overlap in their objective of organizational transformation through the action research methodology. The extractive research will serve as a solid baseline for the SII, both in terms of framework and in terms of content for its SWARMU component. The SII has a strong focus on analyzing the impact that CARE has on “better” governance, which is not per se the purpose of this study. The CSGI for its part is looking principally at civil society, although recognizing that governance and civil society may not be so easily separable.

⁶⁶ See http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Action_research and <http://cadres.pepperdine.edu/ccar/index.html> and http://en.wikiversity.org/wiki/Action_research

⁶⁷ Chabal and Daloz, 2006

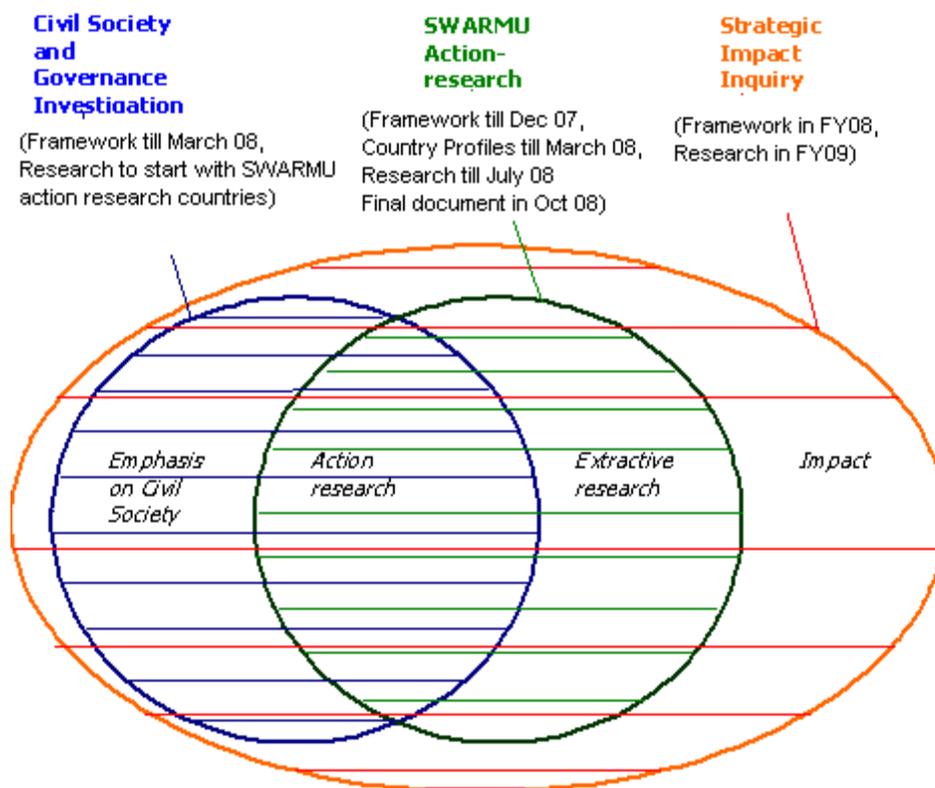


Figure 2: Interrelation between different research initiatives

C.2. RESEARCH QUESTIONS

Questions are detailed for each phase of the research (see section D.3., figure 3 for a brief presentation of the different phases).

C.2.1. RESEARCH GOAL AND PURPOSE⁶⁸

The research goal is to transform governance programming in a way that we can better promote social justice and reduce poverty.

The research purpose is two-folds:

- to explore how politics works for the most vulnerable and how social and cultural norms shape political action.

to develop strong practices and abilities in governance programming.

C.2.3. EXTRACTIVE RESEARCH

Country-level political profiles will be developed: we will carry out a monograph of political practice at local and national level in the countries under study using a guiding framework and relating it to specific social and cultural norms. This monograph will seek to expose the facts through an analysis of historical and current events about elite, decision making, accountability, centralization/decentralization, notion of public good and State capacity (see annex 1).

For the extractive research, specific areas of research are:

⁶⁸ See theory of change in section A

1. Local political action: In specific locations of relevance to CARE's work, we will explore the dynamics of political action and try to understand the degree to which the political realm is differentiated (existent, separated from the social sphere and performing specific functions). We will also study the extent to which westernization of politics, through processes such as decentralization, are being understood, interpreted, shaped by political actors. We will also unravel what is the relevance of religion and the occult⁶⁹ in political life and how and what is the function and meaning of traditional leaders. We will try to understand the relationship between informal power structures and effective governance. We will explore what people think about the governance discourse and the particular mode of governance they are under, as well as what they aspire to. As in all the other phases of this study, we will pay particular attention to understanding the space that CARE occupies in this realm⁷⁰.

2. Civil society: we will explore the relevance of a concept of civil society at local level and understand how people make sense of notions of self and other with reference to society and community, in order to sustain their social and economic status and make changes in their lives. What is the particular position of women in the political realm? What is the strength of idiosyncratic checks and balances? What interfaces produce contestation and accountability? What does "participation" mean to people? What is people's real ability to influence political processes and what strategies do they employ to do this? Is civil society counter-weight, accomplice or a complement to the State? What purpose does CARE fill by supporting local NGOs?

3. Politics and poverty: we will seek to understand how decisions are made around resource management and how people recourse to the political realm to sustain their social and economic status and how functional this is. In particular, we will attempt to understand how power is "distributed", gained and lost as well as the philanthropist or exploitative nature of clientelist networks. We will study the moral economy of corruption. Notions of power, in relation to particular economic and social functions and how is power manifested will be explored. In a context of shrinking resources, especially where natural resources are weakened, we will try to understand how patrimonial networks are negotiated. We will look at how much local governance, as it functions in the countries under study actually promote or impede well-being and social justice, and to what extent the poor are affected or benefit from this form of governance. We often wonder if people in rural Africa are happy as they are; can we make sense of that, in relation to governance? We will also analyze how our projects fit in with the context and bring positive changes.

4. Identity politics: we will explore the dynamics of who people identify with, what is their motivation for that choice, how has it changed and why. We will also look into how this process of identification actually relates to electoral behavior. We will try to understand to what extent identity and political action are linked. How does a shared *and marginalized* identity, such as ethnicity, gender, health status, profession, religion, etc.. become relevant to political action? How are identity and oppression manipulated for political gains? Are identity politics a means to empower the oppressed? Are identity politics compatible with models of liberal democracy, based on the notion of a common identity (nation-state) in order for society to function? Do affirmations of difference create or reduce opportunities for ending marginalization?

C.2.4. ACTION RESEARCH

For the action research, each country office will need to develop its own action research framework. Broadly we will reflect on our own interventions given the way politics actually works. We will explore understandings of governance by project staff and analyze how that works in practice in specific country contexts. As the methodology is more relevant than the content at this stage, the methodology section will provide more information (section D.3.).

⁶⁹ As in the literature review, the realm of the occult refers to mystical and religious beliefs and practices such as witchcraft and relationships to god(s), spirits, ancestors, etc.

⁷⁰ At this stage, this will probably remain superficial. But we must try not to leave any clue aside. The action research will go much deeper into this analysis. The Strategic Impact Inquiry, to take place at global level later in the year will also further this understanding.

C.3. UNDERLYING CONCEPTS

Our hypothesis is that by improving our understanding of governance in Western and Southern Africa, we will better support participation and empowerment of the poor and responsiveness and accountability of the State. CARE has a wide range of governance projects. Some approach the issue for a sector, such as better public health management, or access and control over water supply, support to school councils, etc. Other projects are involved in supporting the functioning of local councils in the context of decentralization, or support civil society movements, etc. But for all these projects, superficial analysis is often carried out – and such analysis is often needs-based and laden in assumptions about how things should be in governance. This research therefore proposes to explore in a few countries how much we can know and engage with in the structures and processes of local governance in the countries where we work and question and transform our existing practice.

In sections B5 and B6, we explained the limitations of an evolutionary and causal standpoint. We argued that the “good governance” discourse makes assumptions about what is right for people. Such assumptions may lead us to miss out on the great variety of modes of governance across countries. Even the word “neopatrimonialism” is toned with a judgment about what is understood as an idiosyncratic African political behavior. By focusing on the discredit of legal and bureaucratic structures in Africa, the inexistence of civil society, the prevalence of corruption, etc., we are missing out on the opportunity to really understand how people (can) live in dignity within their own culture. We must therefore look for the unique structures and processes of power and authority at play, particularly at local level.

In the same way as we are veering off from Western rhetoric, we do not wish to romanticize tradition, culture and history. We are not trying to return to a distant indigenous era, or to justify or to make moral judgements that because “it is in the culture it's OK”. We are simply trying to understand how people involved at different levels in African politics have interpreted political change and action in recent years, from their point of view.

There may be few voters in our areas of work, and a feeling of seldom engagement in political life, but we take on a broad definition of politics and assume that political action is ubiquitous and relevant for everybody, although the communities with whom we work may not be aware of it, or may have a different language to express this reality.

Most of the research will look at local politics, and mostly in the context of “decentralization”. But a decentralized State can not be dissociated from the central State it has weaned off from. This is why we will also look at some of the most relevant aspects of neopatrimonialism at central level in the countries of study, such as level of presidentialism, study of the elite, importance of clientelism and corruption, etc.

D. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

D.1. COUNTRY CRITERIA AND SELECTION

Four countries will take part in the study. They have been chosen by the regional Governance Them team on the basis of the following criteria:

- two countries in West Africa, two in Southern Africa
- at least one sample of each colonial heritage (limited to one for the Portuguese);
- one post conflict, paying attention to the nature of the conflict (linked to natural resources, proxy wars, ethnic conflict);
- at least one country with a party transition through electoral processes ;
- a variety of patterns of economic growth;
- existence of CARE governance projects;
- type of local government (decentralization, centralization, devolution, deconcentration);
- level and nature of donor relations;
- existence and strength of State and civil society institutions and attitudes to democracy;⁷¹

The four countries that were selected by the region's governance team are:

- Mali
- Angola (or Mozambique)
- Sierra Leone
- Zambia (or Malawi)

The following table provides a brief overview of how each country has been assessed over the chosen criteria:

⁷¹ To assess this criteria a quantitative criteria using the World Bank Governance Indicators is being used. Like most quantitative criteria in governance these have many limitations. It is, however, beyond the scope of this document to carry out an in depth analysis of qualitative data from other barometers. This will be done during the extractive research phase

Table 1: Comparative table for country selection

Criteria / Country	Mali	Angola	Mozambique	Sierra Leone	Zambia	Malawi
2 countries in WA, 2 in SA	West Africa	Southern Africa	Southern Africa	West Africa	Southern Africa	Southern Africa
Different colonial heritage	French	Portuguese	Portuguese	British	British	British
At least one post conflict	N/A	Nat. resources & proxy	Proxy	Nat. resources & proxy	N/A	N/A
At least 1 country with a party transition through elections	Party transition	MPLA as dominant party	FRELIMO as dominant party	Party transition	MMD as dominant party	Party transition
Patterns of economic growth ⁷²	5.3%	9%	8.1%	8%	3.7%	2.5%
Existence of CARE governance projects	Citizen participation in decentralization	Access to services in municipalities	Citizen participation in decentralization	Youth and civil society	Citizen participation in municipalities, access to water services	Participation in educ., citizen participation in decentralisation
Type of local government	Devolution	Centralization, devolution in municipalities	Deconcentration(districts),devolution(municip.)	Decentralization aiming towards devolution	Deconcentration(districts),devolution(municip.)	Deconcentration
Level and nature of donor relations ⁷³						
State budget	Financed domestically	Financed domestically	Mostly financed by aid	Financed domestically	Financed domestically	Financed domestically
HIPC ⁷⁴	yes	Yes	yes	yes	yes	yes
PRSP ⁷⁵	yes	draft	yes	yes	yes	yes
Budget support	yes	no	Yes (16%)	yes	yes	suspended
PAF ⁷⁶	yes	no	yes	yes	yes	yes
SWAPs ^{77, 78}	Yes in health, educ.	no	Yes in most sectors	No (in process)	Yes in health, educ.	Yes in health
Existence and strength of State and civil society, attitude to democracy ⁷⁹ :						
Voice & accountability	0.34	- 1.25	- 0.06	- 0.43	- 0.34	- 0.31
Rule of Law	- 0.32	- 1.29	- 0.59	- 1.21	- 0.61	- 0.46
Control of corruption	- 0.56	- 1.14	-0.57	- 1.22	- 0.78	- 0.74

⁷² Expressed here as average growth rate volume of GDP (Average yearly figure 1997-2005), source OCDE, 'Perspectives Économiques en Afrique 2007 – Tableaux statistiques', OCDE Development Centre, 2007 available at <http://www.oecd.org/dataoecd/41/24/38583187.pdf>

⁷³ Sources: IDD and associates, May 2006, 'Evaluation of general budget support 1994-2004', *International Development Department*, School of Public Policy, University of Birmingham, Birmingham, and www.aidharmonization.org

⁷⁴ Highly Indebted Poor Country

⁷⁵ Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper

⁷⁶ Performance Assessment Framework: a framework for the joint assessment of progress in all government activities and donor commitments

⁷⁷ Sector Wide Approach Programs: a pool of funds from various donors for a specific sector through an agreed programme jointly monitored by donors and governments and in some cases civil society

⁷⁸ The last four items are usually a sign of increased donor harmonization following the Paris Declaration (2004). Mozambique is the country with the most advanced architecture for harmonization.

⁷⁹ Source: Kaufmann, D., Kraay, A., Mastruzzi, M. July 2007, 'Governance Matters VI: Aggregate and Individual Governance Indicators, 1996–2006', World Bank Policy Research Working Paper 4280, The World Bank, Washington available on http://papers.ssrn.com/sol3/papers.cfm?abstract_id=999979#PaperDownload. The indicators are based on several hundred individual variables measuring perceptions of governance, drawn from 33 separate data sources constructed by 30 different organizations. A statistical methodology is used to construct aggregate indicators from these individual measures. *Voice and Accountability* measures the extent to which a country's citizens are able to participate in selecting their government, as well as freedom of expression, freedom of association, and a free media. *Rule of Law* measures the extent to which agents have confidence in and abide by the rules of society, and in particular the quality of contract enforcement, the police, and the courts, as well as the likelihood of crime and violence. *Control of Corruption* measures the extent to which public power is exercised for private gain, including both petty and grand forms of corruption, as well as "capture" of the state by elites and private interests

D.2. MANAGEMENT

- At regional level: we propose that the research be managed by a development practitioner, advised by a mixed team of practitioners and academics. This "Research Manager" will coordinate research activities and ensure the production of outputs, and at the same time collaborate and input into the developments of the Strategic Impact Inquiry and the Civil Society and Governance investigation. The Research Manager will provide continuous support to country offices embarking in the research, especially in terms of methodology and access to resources.

- At national level: every country of research⁸⁰ will design its own research proposal and process and will decide what human and financial resources to allocate to the research. As a major component of the work is "action research", project staff will need to be mobilized intensely for the purpose of the research. This will need to be incorporated in their work schedule and in the general work plan of the project(s) under study. Because the research is on the actions of a particular group (staff and participants), management of group dynamics in its many aspects thus plays a central role and will be an important skill for whoever is facilitating/leading the research. An important principle of this action research project is that we hope that staff will develop analytical skills; capacity development is therefore another important aspect of what will be done at country level, to be kept in mind when deciding about human and financial resources. Fundamentally, the research is carried by us, on us and for us. Our suggestion is that each country office appoints a research facilitator who can work with staff, participants and "experts" where required.

- At global level: this research is aimed at being deeply transformative for the organization and for partners, not just at country level or for those working on governance projects, but also for the organization at large and its partners. This study is purposely built on principles of action research. The study is a fundamental phase of both the Strategic Impact Inquiry and the Civil Society and Governance Investigation. To ensure that change will happen beyond project cycles and surmounting the limitations of staff turnover, senior management will be brought on board and will accompany the process, monitor the change, coach those at the frontline, etc.. At regional level, the Deputy Regional Director with responsibility for Governance will work closely with the Regional Director, the Country Directors and Assistant Country Directors for Programs to ensure that this study is not treated in isolation of key organisational dynamics.

D.3. RESEARCH PHASES AND METHODOLOGY

This section describes the key principles of the research methodology. This serves as a guideline for country offices, and will be important to help each country decide whether or not to embark in this research.

We are trying to generate knowledge both about political action "out there" and about our own actions in the political realm. The former falls more in the methodological field of classical "extractive" empirical research (phase B and C1 below), the later is more purely action research (phase C2). Both are participatory in nature.

We suggest that the different phases of the research be cut out as follows (the phases are illustrated in figure 3):

- A. Deep questioning: at country level, it will be important to unpack problems and to move deeper within the issue at hand. At this stage, we seek to facilitate the surfacing of what staff mean and understand of the issue. This step will help practitioners explore the questions that are important to them in their role. The literature review in Section B may be useful at this stage.^{81,82}

⁸⁰ We are aiming at four countries, but this may be reduced to two if sufficient funds are not procured.

⁸¹ The literature review may be too prescriptive and "leading". It may also not be relevant in terms of content for the purpose of the exercise.

⁸² The literature review therefore helps us define a set of argument from where we stand.

- B. Country profiles following the format in Annex 1: this could easily be carried out by an external consultant, and consists mainly of a country-level literature review and semi-structured interviews with specialist informants in the area of governance.
- C. Field research
1. Extractive research⁸³: desk and field research on country level political anthropology: countries under study will use research institutes and universities to gather both desk and field-based knowledge on political behaviors in the areas where CARE has governance projects, using as a central question and as research themes those laid out in Section C2.
 2. Action research: this is the research on our own actions in the political realm in order to transform our practice for better project performance. We will try to understand how our own actions and the actions of those we work with contribute or affect the “quality” of governance. This research will further enrich the findings of the previous phase with information about our own interaction with the people with whom we work. The central research questions and research themes may be valid for this phase but they need to be appropriated and reformulated by staff at country level. This phase is fundamentally cyclical. Each country will need to design its own “process of learning and change”. It involves a commitment to changing what we do or the way we do it based on what is learned through the process. Like much of our development practice, our aim is to research and work with people (staff and program participants) and not on people. So where we feel that our relationship with participants is strong and that participants are keen to engage in research, we should lead our research in a way that we and participants are the group under study. Research will therefore be designed to address specific issues identified by local people, and the results will be directly applied to the problems at hand. More detail is provided in Section D.4. on what is understood by “action research”.
- D. Closure at country level: the research process will be closed by “telling the story” of the research and what change it has brought and can bring.

Synthesis: the research manager will coordinate the presentation and analysis of data throughout all the countries under study. A short report will be produced and a concise document summarising the main elements of the process, findings, and changes will be presented at regional and global level for discussion, as well as to the Strategic Impact Inquiry team and that Civil Society and Governance Investigation team. (S)he will then orient a process of organizational transformation through a framework for programming, on the basis of the findings. As this process is longer than the actual mandate of the manager or the immediate scope of this study, the role of the Deputy Regional Director as explained in section E.2 is fundamental.

⁸³ We have separated here the country profile and the extractive research, to highlight the need for a country overview and to emphasize the link between understanding the context from a field perspective (extractive research) and action research. However, each country can decide to merge the country profiles in the extractive research phase if this is judged more appropriate.

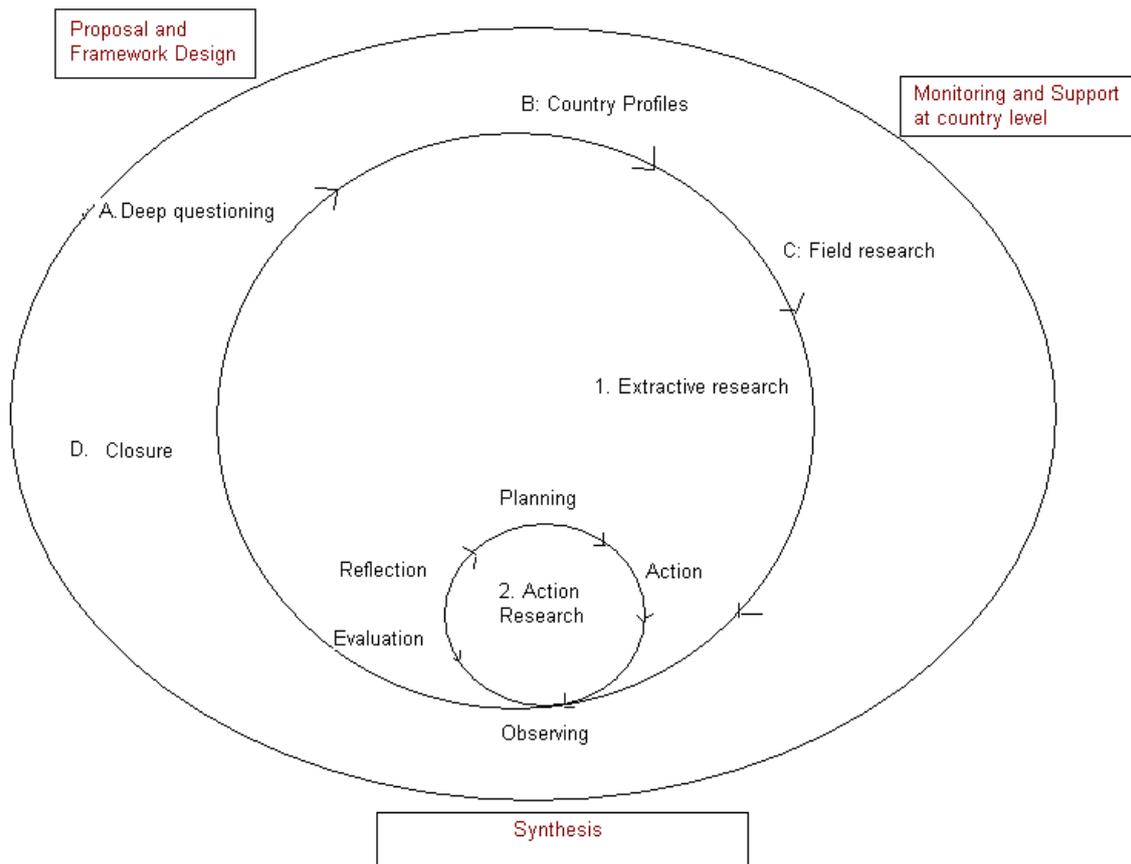


Figure 3: The research process

D.4. METHODOLOGICAL CONSIDERATION FOR AN ACTION RESEARCH

Participatory action research is a form of experimental research that focuses on the effects of the researcher's direct actions of practice with the goal of improving the performance quality of the community or an area of concern.⁸⁴ It is a reflective process of problem-solving carried out by those working on the very problem in order to understand underlying causes of this problem and make predictions about change. Action research therefore focuses both on actions taken, and on the research that results from the reflective understanding of these actions. It is based on the idea that knowledge is always gained through action and for action. It challenges the idea that discrete independent facts and variables may be uncovered outside of their relationship to human action. What this means to us is that this research is about action, about political action, based on our very actions in and on the political realm.

Action research is altogether about:

- achieving a research goal (e.g. understanding the causes of poor governance)
- achieving personal and organizational transformation;
- the researcher's agenda and the participants' agenda
- different levels of research: my actions, the organization's actions, the "world out there" (theoretical generalization)

It is grounded on the principle of "double-loop" learning. "Single-loop" learning occurs when errors are detected and corrected and organizations carry on their present policies and goals. "Double-loop" learning occurs when, further to the detection of errors, organizations question and modify policies and practices.⁸⁵

⁸⁴ See http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Action_research

⁸⁵ See Argyris and Schön, 1978 in http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Action_research

Action research involves the use of a systematic cyclical method of identifying major issues, planning, taking action, observing, evaluating (including self-evaluation) and critical reflecting prior to planning the next cycle.⁸⁶ "Participatory action research is not just research which is hoped will be followed by action. It is action which is researched, changed and re-researched, within the research process by participants".⁸⁷ This process is a continuous one. Participants in action research projects continuously reflect on their learning from the actions, and proceed to initiate new actions on the spot. Outcomes are very difficult to predict from the outset, challenges are sizeable and achievements depend to a very large extent on researchers' commitment, creativity and imagination. This is why the goal of an action research is better set as a change objective for the organization than as increasing the body of knowledge on a particular topic (although this is a definite part of the process). Typically an action research report will tell the story of the research and not just its outputs.⁸⁸

D.5. CALENDAR

The action research is scheduled from September 2007 to October 2008

Sept '07 – Dec '07:	Desk research
Jan '07 – March '08:	Country profiles
April '08 – June '08:	In-country research
June '08 – Oct '08:	Synthesis

D.6 RISKS AND RISK MANAGEMENT

As CARE is engaging in this research process, an acceptance that we are moving within the realm of politics, that we are ourselves political actors is taking place. Although this is much of a reality for staff and partners on the ground, others in CARE may not always realize or accept the political nature of our actions. We sometimes think that we are external to the workings of the political system and that good intentions and high moral grounds puts a distance between us, the international NGO, and the world out there. Members of the regional Governance Theme Team reflected on this aspect and felt that the reluctance to embrace this role fully, by seeing ourselves as benevolent bystanders in politics and by assigning ourselves the role of providers of well-being for the poor, does not serve well our objective of addressing underlying causes of poverty. The action research is an ideal approach to address this reluctance/lack of realization in a way where people can explore fears and limitations and make decisions on how to act on these. But as this is a deep transforming process, associated risks, such as that of frustrating staff who are not comfortable with this level of engagement, need to be properly anticipated and managed. At country level, this reflection will need to take place before the research starts.

There is also a danger that this research project is not properly understood by stakeholders. Although it is hoped that the collaborative and participatory nature of this project will limit this risk, we suggest that stakeholders be associated, where relevant, to the research process. We have suggested that some of the research be carried out along side local research institutes; this may help us in better sharing the project concept. As it is quite innovative, and possibly quite Western in its conception, it is important that a good appropriation takes place. Once again good management and facilitation skills will be important.

Throughout this document, we have been using "CARE and its partners" to describe the practitioners who will be involved in this study. CARE's practice of working "in partnership" is extremely varied; the

⁸⁶ See O'Brien, 2001; McNiff, 2002 in http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Action_research

⁸⁷ See Wadsworth, Y. 1998, quoted in http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Participatory_action_research

⁸⁸ One tool for participatory action research is the Participatory Video (PV). PV is a set of techniques to involve a group or community in shaping and creating their own film. The idea behind this is that making a video is easy and accessible, and is a great way of bringing people together to explore issues, voice concerns or simply to be creative and tell stories. It is therefore primarily about process, though high quality and accessible films (products) can be created using these methods if that is a desired outcome. This process can be very empowering, enabling a group or community to take their own action to solve their own problems, and also to communicate their needs and ideas to decision-makers and/or other groups and communities. As such, PV can be a highly effective tool to engage and mobilize marginalized people, and to help them to implement their own forms of sustainable development based on local needs (Quoted from http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Participatory_video).

most common approach being subcontracting but more and more collaborative partnership is taking place nowadays. Before engaging partners in this project, country teams must think about what approach they wish to take with partners. On the one hand, this initiative may be a powerful means to strengthen a weak or nascent partnership. On the other hand, the absence of a strong partnership based on common values, objectives and history may jeopardize the research.

Finally, although it is not the objective of the research, stories will most probably be told about human rights abuses, corruption cases, abuses of power, etc. Some stories may be difficult for us to hear and to accept and we may feel that action is needed. Or there might be disagreements on how to act with regards to a specific event. We must be able to "manage" our moral judgements. Where we feel that action is needed, we should be able to rely where possible on other organisations better positioned than us to act on these events (anti-corruption bodies, human rights groups, etc.). It is also very important that we protect and respect participants and staff in the stories they tell. We must also be able to anticipate our reaction to such stories and build this into the action research protocol and to also document how we have handled these.

E. BUDGET

It is estimated that the research project will require a part-time research manager over a period of 10 months, the cost of whom will be incurred by the region, for a total of USD 40,000.

At country level, a manager will dedicate half of his(her) time to the research over a period of 10 months; this cost will be covered by the country office at a value of USD 5,000 per country office (USD 20,000 in total).

The cost of the extractive research phase will be entirely covered by the country office to pay for a consultant for two months; it is estimated that this will cost USD 21,000 for each country office (USD 84,000 in total) . This is also the case for the action research (material, training, etc.): USD 2,000 per country office (USD 8,000 in total) as well as for the various workshops (launch, action research and data analysis): USD 15,000 per country office (USD 60,000 in total).

For in-country travel (for the managers, consultant and staff), each country office will cover USD 1,000 each (USD 4,000 in total for all country offices) and the region will cover USD 4,000. This constitutes a total of USD 8,000.

The region will cover all translation and document production costs, for a total of USD 4,000.

Therefore, the total cost for each country office is USD 44,000. The total cost to the region is USD 48,000. As four countries are supposed to engage in the research, the total cost of the research project is USD 124,000.

Where country offices judge that more funds are required, and provided that they can procure these, the budget will be adapted accordingly.

All costs have been broken down in the following table:

Table 2: Budget details

in USD	Descriptor	unit	months	unit cost	total costs	Cost for each country	Cost for region
Research manager	manager 50 %	person	10	4,000	40,000		40,000
Country level manager	manager 50 %	person	10	2,000	20,000	5,000	
Extractive research	consultant for each country	person	2	42,000	84,000	21,000	
Action research	fieldwork costs (material , training, etc.)	kits	4	2,000	8,000	2,000	
Workshop	launching, action research, data-analysis	workshop	12	5,000	60,000	15,000	
Travel	manager, consultant, staff travel	travel 4 countries	4	2,000	8,000	1,000	4,000
Translation and document production			4	1,000	4,000		4,000
					224,000	44,000	48,000

ANNEX 1: FRAMEWORK FOR THE COUNTRY PROFILE

The following framework is a suggested list of themes and questions put together by the regional Governance Theme Team. The framework is not prescriptive; every country should refine this framework according to the better knowledge of the country context.

Throughout this framework, it is suggested that significant events of the recent and colonial past be considered, in order to be faithful to our commitment towards understanding change. We also advised that both local and national levels be looked at.

1. Suggested areas of research to develop an understanding of the workings of the elite

- Elite mapping: who is the elite, where does the elite originate from, what is elite mobility, how stable is the elite? Where does its wealth originate from?
- What are the links between the business milieu, the party and the government? What characterizes the relationship between the elite and donors/NGOs?
- What is the basis for political appointments and removals? How is performance managed, measured and rewarded? To what extent is there an "unspoken hierarchy" in and around government, how specialized is it, are reporting channels clear?
- When appointments are on the basis of relations, to what extent does this have a negative effect on State capacity? What are possible benefits of this type of appointment?
- On what basis are political parties' representatives chosen (personalities, competence, etc.)?
- Is civil society differentiated from the political elite? How are elites influencing civil society and vice-versa? What is the relationship between the elite and the populace? What is the influence that the populace exerts on the elite, especially through patrimonial networks? Does the populace see any gain in this relationship? Is the elite in place considered "legitimate"?
- What elite interests overlap with those of the poor? Over what issues might fragmentation among elites create opportunities for alliances that may benefit the poor?
- What were traditional elites' bases for power? How might these be changing for emerging elites?

2. Suggested areas of research to understand the modus operandi of decision making processes

- What have been the significant policy making events? How were they policies designed and who is involved in their design and management?
- Who are the reformists, how are they treated? How relevant are existing policy institutes (national and international) for better governance? What is the degree of insecurity that is provided through political behaviour?
- How are instructions/reforms/decisions communicated and regulated ?
- What is the level of discretion in decision making ?
- What is the meaning of political participation? Is there a such an entity as a "citizen" and how can/does (s)he engage with political decision making?
- How is the role of parliament and the state understood? Are institutions performing the role they are expected to perform?
- In the context of the discourse on good governance and public sector reform, grasp how far the question of State capacity is a significant constraint to the functioning of State institutions at local level and does a status quo on poor capacity serve any interests?

3. Suggested areas of research to explore accountability systems and mechanisms

- What are the established modalities for combating corruption? What do these modalities reflect in terms of commitment to regulating the use of public resources?
- How are corruption and accountability defined?
- What is system for government to be held accountable for service delivery to citizens? Does the system work?
- What is the level of understanding of human rights, access, etc.?

- What are the systems, formal and informal for accessing information for citizens?

4. Suggested areas of research to assess the level of presidentialism and the workings of local government

- What is the degree of the fiscal deficit and how much is that a reflection of how the president uses discretionary powers to inflate the civil service and reward the elite?
- What is the track record of regal expenditure around the president (personal perks, budget of first lady, etc.)? What is the volume of personnel employed by the president and the number of institutions directly under his/her control or that of his/her prime minister?
- Is centralization rules-based or personalized?
- What overt and covert purposes is decentralization reform serving?
- How has decentralization affected resource flow and allocation and decision-making?

5. Suggested areas of research to gain an understanding of the notion of public good

- Does a notion of a public good exist, in urban and rural settings? How do government and people understand their respective role in its management ?
- What is the degree of institutionalization of a public ethic?
- What are people's perceptions/expectations/understanding of the State? Is there a notion of a social contract, and what are the foundations of such a contract?

6. Suggested areas of research to explore identity politics and tradition

- Is ethnicity used as a political argument? What effect does it have on civic mobilisation?
- What is the role of traditional leaders in politics and to what extent is their identity linked to "tradition"?
- Is the occult relevant for politicians and in what way?

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